

Commentary—From the Margins *More from Augustine’s “Prologue”*

But before I begin this task [instructing students], it seems proper to answer those who will condemn these precepts, or who would condemn them if we did not placate them beforehand. If some condemn them anyhow, at least they will not influence others, nor call them from useful study to vain idleness, as they might have been able to do if they had not found them already armed and prepared. (“Prologue.” *On Christian Doctrine*. D.W. Robertson trans. 1st paragraph)

In *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine gives his precepts for determining what is or isn’t “Scripture” — for Augustine, Scripture consists of texts “approved” by the greater number of catholic [universal] Churches, “among which are those which have deserved to have apostolic seats and to receive epistles” (2. VIII. 12) ... for Augustine, majority ruled:

He will observe this rule concerning canonical Scriptures, that he will prefer those accepted by all catholic Churches to those which some do not accept; among those not accepted by all, he should prefer those which are accepted by the largest number of important Churches to those held by a few minor Churches of less authority. If he discovers that some are maintained by the larger number of Churches, other by Churches of weightiest authority. Although this condition is not likely, he should hold them to be of equal value. (Bk 2. Section VIII. Par 12)

If Augustine’s third precept had been in play during Jesus’ life, every Jew would have deferred to the authority of temple officials: there would have been no *Jesus Movement*; no Christianity; no salvation for humanity. For if nothing else, Jesus’ disciples—contrary to what is declared in Acts—did not turn the world upside down theologically. Christianity remained an unimportant backwater theology that in secular writings that have survived, there are only four mentions of Jesus in the century after His crucifixion: two by Josephus, one of which is suspect; and two in the 2nd-Century CE. It wasn’t until after Emperor Hadian’s anti-Jewish edicts of ca. 135 CE did Roman Christians separate from Judaism, and Christianity as it is recognized today begin its emergence onto the world stage.

What if the majority of “Christian” Churches in the 4th-Century CE, at the end of which Augustine began *On Christian Doctrine*, had abandoned worship of the man Jesus the Nazarene and instead worshiped a false Jesus, one that did not live; that was not born from above when the breath of God [*pneuma Theou*] descended in the form of a dove upon Him and entered into [*eis*] Him, as John Mark records the Apostle Peter having taught in his saying? What if Augustine’s instructions to “students” of Scripture were employed to eliminate theological and political dissent? What if the Adversary had—in deceiving the whole world (Rev

12:9)—deceived “all catholic Churches,” not just the larger and more important Churches but the whole of Christianity? What is it that Mohammad claimed the angel Gabriel told him in vision, that both Christians and Jews had erred in their worship of God? Indeed. But unfortunately for Mohammad, his followers have also erred, and to a degree that their worship of God will not be accepted ... when the Adversary, the present prince of this world, is dethroned and cast from heaven, cast into space-time from which he cannot escape, the throne and authority the Adversary presently possesses will be given to Christ Jesus (Rev 12:7–12; 11:15–18; Dan 7:9–14), a one-time event that will see all authority in heaven and earth given to the glorified Jesus, thereby dating the resurrected Jesus’ words to His disciples as recorded in Matthew’s Gospel to the future (Matt 28:18–20).

How does diligent Bible study by the Christian not yet filled-with and empowered by the spirit yield to the student the understanding that Matthew’s Gospel isn’t about the man Jesus who lived physically in the 1st-Century, but about the indwelling Christ Jesus whose spirit [*pneuma Christou*] gives spiritual life to the *Christian* in whom Christ Jesus dwells? What textual clues make this “revelation by realization” apparent to the novice? Does God teach this revelation to students? No, He doesn’t. He didn’t in the late 1st-Century and He didn’t at anytime through the 20th-Century CE. He doesn’t need to teach this revelation in the Affliction, or in the Endurance; for this isn’t knowledge needed for salvation. Simply put, God doesn’t need to explain the textual contradictions between Matthew’s Gospel and between Mark’s Gospel or John’s Gospel ... in what color robe was the man Jesus mocked by Roman soldiers?

And the soldiers led Him away into the hall, called Praetorium; and they call together the whole band. And **they clothed Him with purple**, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about His *head*. And began to salute Him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote Him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon Him, and bowing *their* knees worshipped Him. And when they had mocked Him, **they took off the purple** from Him, and put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him. (Mark 15:16–20 double emphasis added: KJV)

And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put *it* on His head, and **they put on Him a purple robe**, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote Him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and **the purple robe**. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man! (John 19:2–5 double emphasis added: KJV)

Upon the testimony of two witnesses, a thing stands: Jesus was mocked for being a royal pretender by the Roman soldiers placing a purple robe on Him ...

But this is not what Matthew’s Gospel declares:

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto Him the whole band *of soldiers*. And they stripped Him, and **put on Him a scarlet robe**. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon His head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head. And after that they had mocked Him, they took the robe off from Him, and put His own raiment on Him, and led Him away to crucify *him*. (Matt 27:27–31 double emphasis added: KJV)

Not all, but a great many Christians never noticed or have never noticed that in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus is mocked in a scarlet or red robe, not a purple garment ... for political reasons, Jesus would have been mocked in the color of royalty: purple. The man Jesus would not have

been mocked in a red or scarlet garment. So what the author of Matthew's Gospel writes is factually not true, but not a mistake as some would have the discrepancy be. Rather, I, as a Christian make no claim of earthly royalty even though royal ancestry exists. Rather, for me Jesus' sacrifice of His life makes possible inheritance as a son of God; so it is His sacrifice—His shed blood—that makes possible a claim for spiritual royalty. Therefore, secular authorities mocking Jesus by putting on Him a red garment mock the claim that His disciples can be, when born of spirit, literal sons of God dwelling in fleshly bodies as Jesus Himself was the Son of the Father, dwelling in a fleshly body when mocked.

But does any Christian need this knowledge tidbit to be saved? No. Salvation isn't dependent upon knowledge, but dependent upon "right choices"; dependent upon doing what is right whenever faced with a choice. Not dependent upon deeds or fleshly works, but dependent upon the state of the mind when confronted by a choice. For the mind can be willing, but the flesh weak, what Paul writes about himself in Romans chapter 7. Therefore, God will not teach a disciple knowledge the disciple doesn't need for salvation. He allows His prophets to teach Israel about the secret things concealed within Scripture; He allows kings to search for and discover what God has concealed, with Solomon writing:

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter. The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable. (Prov 25:2–3 KJV)

As the heavens extend upward beyond the limits of vision, and as the depth of the earth is greater than any man can dig, the hearts of kings is unknowable—the knowledge imbedded in the heart of a king is there so that the king can exercise wisdom and act justly. And in this matter, I will claim my heritage as a "Kaisar/Caesar," and as a poet, a wordsmith, who when finding that Matthew's Gospel contains factually untrue statements (such as the number of generations between Abraham and Christ Jesus), has to search out what has been concealed by God through the Hebraic-style of Matthew's Gospel. And what has been concealed is that Mark's Gospel [John Mark's remembering and putting in order Peter's teachings using Jesus' deeds and saying] and Matthew's Gospel, together, form a Hebraic narrative thought-couplet, a concept that Augustine could not have discovered because he abandoned Christendom's Hebraic roots. In these two Gospels, Mark describes the physical man Jesus, expounding upon what this holy man said and did and had done to Him. Matthew describes the glorified spiritual man whose spirit gives heavenly or eternal life to the Elect, thereby transforming ordinary human persons into the glorified "Body of Christ," living in the flesh similar circumstances to what Jesus Himself endured and prevailed against.

God does not—and this cannot be said strongly enough—teach the Elect that Mark's and Matthew's Gospels function as Hebraic narrative thought-couplets. God permits His prophets and His kings to discover and teach His secret things such as why you, as the Elect, when born of spirit, are infant sons of God that are called out from Egypt/Sin.

So for a Christian, any Christian to say that he or she has been taught solely by God is for this person to admit that he or she is without spiritual understanding of the secret things of God, hidden by God so as to be discovered by His prophets and His kings.

I haven't gotten as far as I wanted to go in this Commentary, but I'm working on a borrowed machine and must return the machine so that its owner can get the owner's work done ... I wanted, today, to acknowledge those in Norway, in the Russian Federation, in Beijing that have been reading what I write. I know for some disappointment exists because of the absence of new work: as the rainy season sets in here in the Aleutians, more writing will be

forthcoming. As of today, there are salmon in the creeks to be caught, and a roof on a second property to be repaired. Plumbing here to be repaired. A host of things to be done. But after three months off-line, the work again goes forward, thanks to the generous support of a few. Those few will receive the same reward as I receive; so really, it is for them and for those who will join with them that I continue to search out the hidden things of God. For it isn't God that teaches the secret things of Him to the Elect. It is His servants that do the teaching. And I am thankful that I was called to reread prophecy now more than fourteen years ago. The chance to return to the Aleutians after being away for too long (after being away to support the education of daughters at University of Alaska Fairbanks, then taking employment wherever available) is a gift beyond my ability to express thanks.

Augustine screwed up the thinking of Christians for centuries, but perhaps knowledge of Christ Jesus would have been lost in the flotsom of history if he hadn't been as influential as he was. It is not enough, however, to leave him alone: I will return to his writings; for by his teaching, *The Philadelphia Church* is a minor, unimportant collection of saints—and in this world, that is correct. But as a theology that can fly under the radar of the Adversary, *Philadelphia* gets a lot done with very few resources, thanks be to God and to those whom He has called from this world.

Every student of Scripture needs only to understand that whenever confronted with a decision, the Christian needs to do what the Christian knows is right, with the student having the obligation to grow in grace [spiritual size, as in a garment size] and knowledge.

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