

## Commentary — From the Margins

### *We Start Over — Again*

#### Part Five

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And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of spirit [*pneumatōs*] and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. (1 Cor 2:1–7)

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#### 5.

I arrived back in Alaska in late May, arrived on Adak June 2<sup>nd</sup>. And I did not come to Adak proclaiming the testimony of God; I didn't come proclaiming anything. Yet I do impart to those who inquire the secret and hidden wisdom of God, but there are not many who inquire when a person doesn't sound "religious" through using lofty speech and code words that shortcut thinking and serve to create pathos arguments that fail when examined closely or tested in trials.

It is on the Net, however, where I will advance logos arguments that cannot be refuted: they can only be accepted or rejected, with most rejecting them without good reason other than one person cannot be right and the remainder of the world wrong ...

I was gone from Alaska and from the Aleutians for too long. Dutch Harbor has become an international town; Anchorage, an international city. Even the people of Anchorage have changed. When the slogan, "The Last Frontier," was removed from state license plates because of how silly it sounded to many, it was time to remove the slogan for no "frontier" still existed. The frontier mentality that had existed even in Anchorage had succumbed to the business of "business" and the protectionism of publically-educated environmentalists. Old school Alaskans have become rare enough that television series are made about them, even when they live only twelve miles out of Homer, where the highway south ends—and these reality television series are watched and evaluated by media critics who find them amusing; for plot lines are always the same, what do the people have to do to get ready for winter. Well, what did old-time Alaskans do to get ready for winter? Not what I had to do at the tip of Michigan's Thumb, where the difference between winter and summer was only apparent in the origin of the strawberries on supermarket selves.

Getting back to the work of reading prophecy took a little longer than I expected—and isn't still done although new work has been posted on-line for a month. The expense of relocating six thousand miles away from where we were has not been covered, and probably won't be for the next year and a half. But the amount of red ink on ledgers is small by American standards, but large enough that not everything gets done that should be done: we were six weeks getting electrical service (on the Kenai Peninsula in 1975, I was a year), another three weeks getting telephone service (again, at Kenai, I was two years), and another three weeks after that before we had Internet available to us, taking us from early June to the beginning of the fourth week in August. And getting back on the Net would have taken even longer if not for a generous contributor who underwent relocation at about the same time we *started over again*.

While I did not arrive on Adak and begin “proclaiming testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom,” I find that after having gotten back on the Net, we have been “checked out” with our websites *googled* and links followed. More than one is interested in who we are—and to these someones, I say that I believe the best of my secular books (written in 2000, published in 2001) is *Like Rain on Kupreanof*, with *Euchre Creek* being the publication of my graduate thesis. I believe both are available from Amazon. But it is a longish passage from the essay “Smith, Logger, Fisherman, Writer” in *From the Margins* (2001) that I want to include here:

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A voyage into the unknown is living life itself, the unknown representing tomorrow, holding, perhaps, danger and excitement but most often the mundane. Literary heroes dared sail 20,000 leagues under the sea, or to the center of the earth, or more realistically, to trek over the Great Silk Road or mush dogs to the South Pole. A few of us humans have even walked on the moon. For more of us, though, a drift or fishing trip down Alaska's Kenai River is enough venturing into the unknown. We want to know most of what tomorrow will bring. We are not really looking for excitement, only for interesting things, those things that John Haines concedes to travel writers. The thrill-seeker is considered abnormal. We would like to have control of our lives. In literary shorthand, we want heaven when we die; we want to believe an idealized destination awaits us at the end of this voyage called life. Then the obstacles we encounter won't matter. The distance of our voyage doesn't matter. Only arriving matters. We can leave all of our problems in that metaphorical river we travel as if they were old tires or tin cans, oil slicks or biotoxins.

But it takes no courage to continue living shackled to the trash the heavenbound person will leave behind at death (although nearly every religion believes humanity's ultimate destination is heaven, the focus of ancient Hebrew prophets was making the deserts here on earth bloom); it takes courage to clean up that left-behind trash, to pick up those pieces of our character that hang like plastic grocery bags on submerged tree branches ... I once sailed out of Kodiak, heading for Whale Pass and Raspberry Strait. We were outbound for a week of longlining halibut. My wife was putting away boat groceries, and after rounding Buoy Four, I looked behind us to see if a following vessel had made the turn or whether its skipper was heading directly across Marmot Bay. And there behind us, one every one hundred yards or so, were floating the cardboard boxes in which we

had packed our groceries aboard, each bobbing like a buoy. They were like the crumbs of Hansel & Gretel.

All of us leave a trail, but not all of us leave distinguishable footprints.

Courage is required to take that first step into an uncharted tomorrow, one in which our character is our only marker. It is there, at that first step, where most journeys end, or rather, fail to begin. Once a person is well on his or her way into the unknown, coping, adapting, learning, stretching oneself to do what wasn't before possible takes over. The momentum of the journey doesn't let a person think about not continuing. Explorer, pioneer, pilgrim—few have seen themselves as courageous. Survival is what the journey is about until the unknown becomes the familiar. Courage is about getting started.

In a piece recently posted to the [Sabbatarian Anabaptist](#) website, I briefly addressed why we left the tip of Michigan's Thumb for a return to the Aleutians—and what I didn't say, *we left because we could*. It's really as simple as that. Life had become too comfortable where we only had to open a door to gather herbs or pick fruit; where the sidewalk as well as the street were plowed by the village; where I could have a face-cord of seasoned ash firewood delivered for \$50; where we could shop at a nearby Mennonite grocery store that had in bulk and at low prices most everything we bought; where wheat could be bought as it came in from the fields at the Coop a block away, beans purchased from the Coop in a nearby village, oversize carrots intended for baiting deer but the same carrots as sold in grocery stores could be purchased for a few dollars a gunny sack full.

However, when I first sailed past Priest Rock and into Unalaska in 1979, I felt a sense of being "home" unlike any other place I had or have been. I didn't want to leave. Yet because of the implied obligation I had to be in Sabbath services every week [implied if not stated directly from podiums], I felt I should return to the mainland—and did for a few months. I was back in Dutch summer 1980, then in Kodiak in 1981. I left Kodiak in 1988 to enter graduate school at University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) when my middle daughter started college. From having lived in a dorm my Freshman year (1963–1964), I knew my daughter would be a better student if she lived at home with her father. She was a good student as was my youngest daughter, both of them graduating from UAF with bachelor degrees in Chemistry. Then as I pursued my doctorate, the journey away from Alaska began; this journey taking me into Pennsylvania and to the remnant of the Ephrata Cloister, 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Sabbath-keepers. But as a salmon journeys from wherever it hatched to the Bering Sea, then back to its natal waters, I have journeyed back to the Bering Sea and the Aleutian Islands.

While life at the tip of Michigan's Thumb was comfortable even though money was tight, I am not returning to the Lower 48 ... the house in Michigan will be sold, at a price too low to advertise. I know there are individuals in Michigan who read my writings. If someone is interested in an inexpensive summer home, drop me a note at POB 1917, Adak, AK 99546.

Every person truly born of God will leave footprints in this world for this person will not take the trail most travel; will not even take the trail less traveled, but the person will inevitably blaze his or her own trail [*pike* for those in Pennsylvania]. And if a person doesn't have the courage to cut a trail through the underbrush of culture, the person probably hasn't been born of God. For every son of God is a fractal of Christ Jesus, the

First of the firstborn sons of God—every son of God will be a firstborn son of God, for again, this person is a fractal of Christ; is the Body of Christ, individually and collectively (1 Cor 12:27), and therefore is “Christ.” For the indwelling of the spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*] will cause this person to walk in this world as Jesus walked. And about this, the Apostle John wrote,

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And *by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. Whoever says "I know Him" but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him*, but whoever keeps His word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in Him: whoever says He abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked. (1 John 2:1–6 emphasis added)

And,

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him [the Father]. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He [Christ] appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure. *Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness*. You know that He appeared to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin. *No one who abides in Him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him*. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. *No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God*. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. (1 John 3:1–11 emphasis added)

What is so hard to understand about what John writes? No one who makes a practice of sinning is born of God ... when was the Sabbath Commandment removed from the Law? It wasn't, was it? Therefore, the Christian who habitually transgresses the Sabbath Commandment is a Law-breaker; a sinner, someone who doesn't believe God, at least doesn't believe God enough to act on his or her belief. And this is someone without faith. For pedagogical redundancy, if you as a Christian keep on transgressing a Commandment, you as a Christian are not born of God, but are of the Adversary, a son of disobedience (Eph 2:2), consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) as a slave of the Adversary. You are so far from where you think you are—you're lost in spiritual darkness—that you will need God to lead you into the light for you'll never find it on your own ... you, as a blind crayfish in a cave, have lost your eyes. And while you may be

able to find food and a mate by feel, you cannot see who is watching you; you cannot see either angels or God, Father and Son. And really, you cannot see me watching you.

Today is a good time for you, too, to start over again in your walk with God. Father and Son ... that niggles you, the thought that I might be watching you: you don't think I'm really watching you, do you? But you will never really know—

If you only do those things for which you will never be embarrassed, it won't matter who is watching. “Nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known” (Matt 10:26), and this will be especially true following the Second Passover liberation of a second nation of Israel, when every Christian will be filled with spirit and therefore no longer under grace—no Christian will need the covering of Jesus' righteousness when liberated from indwelling unbelief. Christians will have the Law [Torah] written on hearts and placed in minds so that all *know the Lord* (Heb 8:8–12; Jer 31:31–34); all will know God, with John's Jesus praying, “And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3).

When all Christians *know the Lord*, all will only have to “endure to the end to be saved.” And all who endure to the end—and this something I haven't written in this way before—including Christians filled with the spirit in the Affliction will be saved because they *know the Lord* [in Jeremiah, *YHWH*, the Hebrew Tetragrammaton representing the conjoined deities].

Bishop Papias, as quoted in Eusebius' third volume, said that Matthew's Gospel was written in Hebrew style, a statement that over the centuries has caused trouble for uninspired commentators: Hebrew poetics are based on repetition of narrative or verse, with the first presentation being physical [of darkness, night] and the second presentation being spiritual [of light, day]. Matthew's Gospel bears this relationship to Mark's Gospel, the physical presentation; Matthew's Gospel being the spiritual presentation. But Matthew's Gospel also has this structure within itself, with the divide occurring in chapter 15.

In chapter 10, we find Jesus telling His disciples,

Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But *the one who endures to the end will be saved*. (Matt 10:16–22 emphasis added)

In chapter 24, we find Jesus telling His disciples,

See to it that not someone you deceive [literal translation]. For many will come in my name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and they will lead many astray [bad news]. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place [bad news], but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against

nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places [bad news]. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation [bad news] and put you to death [bad news], and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake [bad news]. And then many will fall away [bad news] and betray one another [bad news] and hate one another [bad news]. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray [bad news]. And because lawlessness will be increased [bad news], the love of many will grow cold [bad news]. But *the one who endures to the end will be saved* [good news]. And this gospel [literally, “good news”] of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matt 24:4–14 emphasis added)

In both the physical portion of Matthew's Gospel as well as in the spiritual portion, *the one who endures to the end shall be saved*. Taking this now to the Affliction [the first 1260 days of the seven endtime years—the physical portion of the seven years] and its chiral image, the Endurance in Jesus [the last 1260 days of these seven years—the spiritual portion], we find that everyone who endures to the end (or to their end) shall be saved, but enduring means, once filled with spirit, not committing blasphemy against the spirit of God by taking sin back inside the person; means not transgressing the Law, for the person has no “covering” but his or her own belief [*pisteos*] of God; no covering but his or her own faith [also, *pisteos* — from Rom 14:23].

The Christian who has diligently practiced walking uprightly before God while under the garment of grace, the garment of Christ, of Jesus' righteousness, will have no difficulty when liberated from indwelling sin in walking as Jesus walked. However, the Christian who has used the excuse *that Christians are under grace and not under the Law* for not striving to keep the Commandments won't last more than 220 day before rebelling against God and becoming part of spiritual Cain, who murdered his righteous brother.

Remember what John wrote, *No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil.*

For John, sin was unbelief or disbelief of God manifested in acts or deeds—in transgressing the Law. But under the New Covenant in which the Lord says, “I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more,” the act or deed will not be counted against the person; will not be blasphemy against the spirit. Simple unbelief, according to Paul (in Rom 14:23), will be sin; will constitute blasphemy against the spirit that fills the person. Therefore, feigned good behavior will not help the person, nor will a failure resulting from the weakness of the flesh when, say, the person is tortured to death hurt the person.

Under the New Covenant that will be implemented following the Second Passover liberation of a second Israel, the act of the person no longer matters. What the person believes matters; for it won't be the fleshly body that is glorified: “I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, *nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable*” (1 Cor 15:50 emphasis added).

Code words prevent thinking; Christian code words prevent Christians from thinking. It has long been assumed that the perishable flesh will be changed into imperishable spirit

when a person is resurrected from death ... what if crabs ate the flesh of a person lost at sea? What would be changed into spirit? The crabs? No, that's nonsense.

When Jonah was spewed forth from the whale, vomited out onto dry land (a change of mediums from water and the sea), what happened to the whale? We aren't told; we don't know; and it doesn't matter.

The relationship of the inner self to the outer self is analogous to the relationship between Jonah and the whale ... the whale didn't become a spokesperson for God. Likewise, it isn't the outer self—the fleshly body—of a son of God that is a messenger for and from God, Father and Son. Rather, it is the inner self, a principle reason why Paul didn't go to the Corinthians with lofty words and eloquent speech and great human wisdom. Rather, he let the power he had as a son of God speak for him.

Our fleshly bodies, male or female, are to our born-of-spirit, non-physical inner selves as the whale was to Jonah ... the soul [*psuche*] of a person cannot be found with probes or surgery; cannot be photographed or X-rayed; but is evident by what the person does, by the person having love for even his or her enemies. And it is this "soul" in which is the spirit of the person [*to pneuma tou anthropolou*] that will receive a new home/house in heaven when judgments are revealed. Will this house look like the previous house, the person's fleshly body? Does the glorified Christ that John sees in vision look like the man Jesus whom John was with for more than three years? Not really. And the truly born of spirit Christian will not, in heaven, look like the fleshly body in which this new creature temporarily dwelt here on earth.

All sons of God are starting over, again.

For those who read across websites, from postings on one website to postings on another website, I got the ladder built from two twelve foot long, pressure-treated four-by-fours, with two-by-three rungs notched into the four-by-fours. It is both sturdy and stable, and it allowed me to put stovepipe above the roof yesterday before it began raining hard. It has poured all night. But the Amish-built wood range we are using for heat draws better with the pipe's greater height. So things are coming together.

The last previous winter I heated a house with a wood range was 1968, when we moved from living in the town of Siletz to Twin Bridges, five miles up the Siletz River (Oregon Coast), and that wood range had a typical firebox, in which not enough wood could be put to hold the fire for more than a couple of hours. This Amish-built wood range has a large firebox and will hold the fire all night, or at least until I get up in the morning to write.

Old time Alaskans are going or have gone the way of old time Oregonians in the 1960s and 1970s ... there isn't room enough for them to continue in their former ways, even if they wanted-to. And most really don't want-to. It's easier to spend winters in Arizona than spend winters where ice has to be broken off the water bucket every morning as we had to do at Kenai for several years; where the outhouse seat was brought indoors and kept behind the wood stove so it would be warm in the morning; where moose blocked the path to the outhouse in the twilight of dawn.

My daughters were determined not to rear their children in the "adverse conditions" in which they were reared; yet the two younger ones, now middle-aged, have not chosen to live the life of suburban America. The oldest one is in the Seattle area.

My grandfather farmed in northern Indiana, and his seven children wanted little to do with the hard life of a subsistence farm. Except for his oldest boy and my dad for a few years, all of his children lived their lives in towns.

Overall, life has gotten easier for Americans, perhaps too easy for anyone other than sons of God to leave distinguishable footprints. This will certainly be the case following the Second Passover liberation of a second nation of Israel.

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