

Commentary — From the Margins *What Remains*

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior;

To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. *This is why I left you in Crete, so **that you might put what remained into order***, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— (Titus 1:1–5 emphasis and double emphasis added)

1.

So that you [Titus] might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town—all had not yet left Paul, but would shortly for Paul writes to Timothy and says, “You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes” (2 Tim 1:15). To the Philippians, Paul writes, “For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things” (3:18–19). ... The holy ones that left Paul didn’t leave because they didn’t believe that Paul was a minister of the Lord, but because they didn’t believe that Paul was the only one appointed to know the will of the Righteous One (Acts 22:14). This was especially true of both the Galatians and of the Corinthians.

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. (Gal 1:6–9)

You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion is not from him who calls you. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. *I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view than mine*, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. (Gal 5:7–10)

For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For *if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.* Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things. (2 Cor 11:2–6)

That's where Paul's problem lay: there were others preaching Christ and Christ crucified, each claiming to be an apostle [i.e., a person sent forth], some coming from Jerusalem, all with a word of knowledge, all baptizing in the name of Jesus. Many were powerful speakers with a powerful message of salvation, but only one person was appointed by the Father and Son to lay the foundation for the endtime House of God. This person was the Pharisee Saul of Tarsus, renamed *Paul*.

One person and not one of the original Twelve was appointed to know the will of the God of Israel's fathers, to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice [spoken words — to hear the Holy Spirit, or *breath holy*] from His mouth (Acts 22:14), for this one person was to be a witness for Christ to everyone (v. 15).

By the words of two or three, a thing is established: the first disciples [the Twelve Apostles] were collectively the ones who delivered Jesus' words and a message about Jesus. They functioned as one unit, and effectively served as one witness, not twelve witnesses; for the Pharisees argued that these first disciples conspired together to tell the same lie, which wasn't a lie at all but the truth. Nevertheless, their testimony did not *legally* establish that Jesus had been raised from death by the Father; thus, another witness was necessary, one antagonistic to the Jesus Movement, an enemy whose testimony could not be grouped with the testimony of the Twelve. And this second *legal* witness was a *legalist*, a Pharisee, and not just any Pharisee but one extremely well versed in the law and zealous for God, one who upheld the traditions of the fathers and worked tirelessly to squelch threats to these traditions.

The one chosen by the Father and the Son to serve as the second witness for Christ functioned as a second son; functioned as Isaac functioned, as Jacob functioned, as Ephraim functioned—as the Christian Church, circumcised of heart Israel [the second *Israel*], functions. For it wasn't Cain, the firstborn of Adam, that was righteous, but Abel, the second born. And throughout Scripture, what's seen is that the first shall be last and the last shall be first: Paul was last ...

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. *Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For*

I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. (1 Cor 15:1–9 emphasis added)

The work that Paul was to do would be greater than the work given to the first disciples to do; for Paul would be the last apostle to see Christ Jesus before Jesus comes as the Messiah. After Paul, the work that was to be done would be entirely by faith ... to see the Righteous One gives to the person doing the *seeing* evidence that Christ Jesus was raised from death by the Father—and when confronted with evidence, the role of faith [belief in the intangible] is somewhat diminished. Paul, from his initial calling and blindness, had no doubt that Christ Jesus lived, but after Paul saw the Righteous One, the era of seeing the resurrected Jesus closed, not to reopen until Jesus returns as the all powerful Messiah, returns with a new name than no person knows (Rev 19:12).

Again, it wasn't given to many to know the will of the Lord; it was given to one, the Apostle Paul. Therefore, all who went forth from Jerusalem or from anywhere else with a gospel other than Paul's gospel went out as a false apostle, a deceitful worker, a false brother, a minister of the Adversary (see 2 Cor 11:7–15).

Were there things that Paul didn't know or understand? Yes, Paul says so (e.g., Rom 7:15):

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then [when glorified] I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. (1 Cor 13:9–12 emphasis added)

Paul knew in part—in a large part—the will of the Lord. He knew and understood what others did not. Yet there was nothing outstanding about his appearance or his rhetoric, nothing that would set him apart from other men that came from Jerusalem to the Gentiles in Asia and Achaia except his knowledge of the will of God and the fact that he alone laid the foundation [*Christ*] for the spiritual house of God, the foundation upon which all who are of God would stand and build (1 Cor 3:10–15).

Paul's gospel was simple. He reduced it to its utmost simplicity: *doers of the law will be justified regardless of whether the person is under the law or has no knowledge of the law*, for “all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law” (Rom 2:12). According to Paul's gospel, it doesn't matter whether a person is under the law or not under the law, if the works of the law [love for God and neighbor — love for neighbor and brother — for the person not yet born of God] are not written on the person's heart, the person will perish when judgments are revealed.

The above, truly right out of Paul's writings, is not the message that Christian orthodoxy takes from the Apostle Paul. Rather Christian orthodoxy today, almost two millennia after Peter wrote, does exactly what Peter observed in the 1st-Century:

But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the

ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. (2 Pet 3:13–17)

Lawless people use the epistles of Paul as instructions of destruction, of their own destruction and of those whom they teach ... to be found without spot or blemish will have Christians being doers of the law, not mere hearers or those who ignore the law, contending that because Jesus fulfilled the law they do have to keep the law; they do not have to walk as Jesus walked. So be it. Let the lawless continue in their sinful ways. Do not disturb them. Why make trouble for yourself—unless you love these Christians enough that you will fight them for their own salvation.

If you will not be a thorn in the side of lawless Christians but permit the lawless to remain in their spiritual comfort zones as they drift toward the lake of fire, do you truly love your enemies—and lawless Christians are the enemies of every Sabbatarian Christian. For in keeping the Sabbath, you convict the lawless of their weekly transgression of the Sabbath commandment. You make the lawless uncomfortable; for it isn't that Christian orthodoxy doesn't know that the seventh day is the Sabbath, rather, they know full well that it is. They just don't believe they, as Christians, need to be keeping the things of Moses. After all, Jesus was speaking to Pharisees, not them, when Jesus said,

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from people. But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? (John 5:39–47 emphasis added)

Every word Jesus said to Pharisees pertains to both Christian orthodoxy as well as to Sabbatarian Christendom: the love of God is not in either, the evidence of which is first in the lawlessness of Christian orthodoxy, and secondly, in Sabbatharians almost uniform refusal to take a second journey of faith, the spiritual journey equivalent to the physical journey Abraham took to the land of Moriah where he was to sacrifice Isaac (Gen chap 22), thereby proving the righteousness by faith credited to him when he had no seed (Gen 15:6).

Faith without works is, according to James to whom the Lord appeared after being glorified, akin to a corpse, a lifeless human body (Jas 2:26), an interesting analogy considering that the first Adam was such a corpse before *Elohim* [singular in usage] breathed into the man of mud's nostrils (Gen 2:7). The greater Christian Church is today such a corpse—and will remain a spiritually lifeless body until the Second Passover liberation of Israel. The greater Christian Church—Christian orthodoxy plus Arian Christendom—is not born of God; for if it were, it could not keep on sinning: “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for [His] seed abides in him, and he cannot

keep on sinning because he has been born of God” (1 John 3:9). And greater Christendom, in its neglect of the Sabbath, makes a long-time practice of sinning.

Paul’s gospel was not really a difficult message to understand: the hands and the body produce spiritually worthless work. But faith/belief of God in an era or in a region where there is no expectation of belief—this is why Paul was sent to Gentiles—this faith being manifested in striving to keep the commandments, will cause the law of God to be written on hearts and placed in minds before God intervenes in the course of human affairs to implement the New Covenant that has as its terms the writing of the law on hearts and minds (Jer 31:33; Heb 8:10).

No person born of God makes a practice of sinning ... but this is only true until the Father, after the man of perdition has been revealed on day 220 of the Affliction, sends “a strong delusion” over those Christians who take sin back inside themselves because they “did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess 2:11–12). These Christians, newly born as sons of God filled-with and empowered by the breath of God [πνεῦμα Θεοῦ], refused to love the truth before their liberation from indwelling sin and death, and continue to reject the truth after spiritual birth; hence, they will be condemned to believe what is false so that they may perish without repentance (also v. 10).

2.

So many apostles, prophets, and teachers were coming in Jesus’ name to the cities of Asia—everyone one of them claiming to know the will of God; some claiming to represent Paul himself—that Paul had to establish a simple test to establish who was from him and who brought a different spirit and a different gospel about Jesus than the one he taught. The test was truly ingenious: if the teacher or prophet or apostle asked for support (asked for moneys, for donations), he was not of Paul but was of the Adversary.

The person sent forth by God to do a work for Him has no need to ask other men [or women] for support, but will ask God, the person’s employer, for support—and God will provide that support, usually through other men [or women] as He, God, moves hearts. Therefore, to ask those individuals a person teaches for tithes or offerings is to identify oneself as false, a teacher or prophet or apostle not sent by God, but going it alone, proving himself [or herself] to be of the Adversary. And this is equally true for those who teach within Sabbatarian Christendom as it holds true for Christian orthodoxy.

For pedagogical reasons, it seems necessary to repeat a point: Paul was sent to Gentiles, not to Jews. He was sent to Gentiles because there was no cultural expectancy of belief within Gentile mindsets. The word *Gentile* meant a person of *the nations*, someone not of Israel; someone who did not believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore, for a Gentile to profess that Jesus is Lord and to believe that the Father raised Jesus from the dead was analogous to Israel in a far land, after the blessing and the curse had come upon the people, to return to the Lord and obey His voice in all Moses commanded Israel under the eternal Moab covenant (Deut chaps 29–32). Both the Gentile, born into a culture far from God, and the Israelite who has been taken into captivity and expelled into a far land will, by faith, come to God and begin to keep the commandments.

The Gentile that without being outwardly circumcised and physically made a proselyte of Judaism, who begins to live as a Judean and not as a Gentile has made a

journey of faith comparable to Abraham's journey from Ur of the Chaldeans [Babylon] to Canaan, the Promised Land that is spiritually represented by Sabbath observance (cf. Heb 3:16–4:11; Ps 95:10–11; Num chap 14). This Gentile has done what Israel would not do ... Paul writes,

What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; but that Israel who pursued a law [the Moab covenant] that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone. (Rom 9:30–32)

Faith/belief cannot be obtained through the works of hands, but comes through a changed mindset, with the mental topography of disobedience covering humanity as water covers the earth. A person must leave the water and step out onto the dry land before the person is able to bring forth fruit of the spirit. And while Paul understood in part, Paul well understood that physical circumcision transforms budding faith into dead works—

Gentiles to whom Paul was sent in the 1st-Century are analogous to lawless Christians today; for neither, 1st-Century Gentiles nor 21st-Century Christians, walked/walk as Judeans, walk as Jesus the Nazarene walked. Both believed/believe that they served/serve God before they knew/know God, the former believing that they served God through sacrifice to idols, the latter believing that they serve through the cross, the visual representation of death. So Paul going to Gentiles in the 1st-Century is equivalent to *Philadelphia* going to Christian orthodoxy in the 21st-Century.

About *Philadelphia*, the glorified Jesus in vision told John,

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: “The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Behold, *I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them come and bow down before your feet and they will learn that I have loved you.* Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.” (Rev 3:7–10 emphasis added)

Does Christian orthodoxy claim to be Jews? Not really, but Christians within greater Christendom individually and sometimes collectively claim the promises made to the people of Israel, the plans for their good and not their harm—

For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you [Israel], and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For *I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.* Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you,

declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile. (Jer 29:10–14 emphasis added)

Jeremiah 29:11 is one of Evangelical Christendom's most quoted passages, but the passage is addressed specifically to Israelites captives in Babylon ... earthly Babylon formed the lifeless shadow and type of spiritual Babylon, the single kingdom of the prince of this world, that old serpent, Satan the devil. Only by Christians being spiritual slaves of the Adversary can what Jeremiah writes to the captives be applied to Christians, and indeed, Christians within Christian orthodoxy are still slaves of the Adversary, and will with almost no exceptions remain slaves until the Second Passover liberation of Israel. So applying the identifying phrase, *synagogue of Satan*, to Trinitarian Christendom is not a stretch, but is well within the symbolism of John's vision.

Jesus' promise to *Philadelphia* is, "The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name" (Rev 3:12) ... a pillar in a temple stands on the foundation and bears the weight of the ceiling joists and roof. Paul laid the foundation for the house of God, the temple of God, and *Philadelphia* stands on that foundation. *Philadelphia* builds on what Paul knew in part and prophesied in part, and the work of *Philadelphia* will not perish in fire or wind but will stand against whatever comes; for *Philadelphia* has kept Jesus' message about the Endurance, the last 1260 days of the seven endtime years, a message no other Sabbatarian fellowship keeps.

As Paul alone was to have revealed to him the will of the Lord, *Philadelphia* alone keeps Jesus' message about the Endurance, thereby giving to *Philadelphia* the same sort of difficulties that Paul faced—

3.

Why should a 1st-Century Gentile convert to Christianity in, say, a remote area of Galatia believe that Paul alone had received revelation from Christ Jesus? Didn't such a claim bestow distrust of Paul and his gospel throughout Asia and Achaia? After all, there were twelve disciples in the beginning and 120 before the Pentecost that followed Calvary. Paul wasn't one of the twelve or one of the 120. Rather, Paul was a Johnny-come-lately, a person untrained by the first Apostles. Yes, Paul possessed a certain understanding of Scripture, but there were many who claimed to understand Scripture—and much of what Paul taught seemed contrary to Scripture.

A revelation is difficult to support ... could the revelation Paul had have resulted from indigestion, or perhaps bad wine? Was the revelation really of God or of the Adversary? Who's to say, especially when Paul was accused of teaching that Jews in Asia need not circumcise their sons. Who's to be believed?

Today, within the Sabbatarian Christian community there are many pastors and teachers, some purporting to be *theologians*, some merely parroting the Sabbatarian giants who went before them. Each of these pastors and teachers is convinced that he or she has the *truth*; has what is no longer concealed, with not one of them yielding to the doctrines of another, but being as Paul was when he went to Jerusalem after fourteen years:

I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the

Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. But even Titus, who was with me, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. *Yet because of false brothers secretly brought in—who slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery—to them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. And from those who seemed to be influential (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those, I say, who seemed influential added nothing to me.* (Gal 2:2–6 emphasis added)

Paul did not yield to false brothers secretly brought in ... he didn't yield at Jerusalem, so who were these false brothers that could pass themselves off as genuine disciples to the holy ones at Jerusalem? And how could they fake spiritual birth?

Apparently the false brothers at Jerusalem were among the influential there—

Paul doesn't apologize for learning nothing or taking nothing away from his meeting at Jerusalem fourteen years after he began to teach. In fact, if anything, he seems rather pleased with himself that he hadn't yielded for even a moment to these influential *Christians*, thereby establishing the example that Sabbatarian pastors and teachers have followed throughout the 20th and now into the 21st Centuries. None will yield to another. And perhaps this is how it must be before the Second Passover liberation of Israel.

*

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright ©2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

* * * * *

[[Current Commentary](#)] [[Archived Commentaries](#)] [[Home](#)]