

November 15, 2010 ©Homer Kizer

## Commentary — From the Margins *For Freedom—*

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For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. / Look: *I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.* For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For *in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.*

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. But *if I, brothers, still preach circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!* (Gal 5:1–12)

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The issue Paul addresses in his epistle to the Galatians is that of circumcision—that of placing importance on the outer man, the tent of flesh in which the inner self dwells. The Circumcision Faction didn't understand that the outer man would not be saved; for flesh and blood cannot inherit kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:50). Rather, the Circumcision Faction with which Paul contended throughout his ministry held that a man must first become a physical Israelite, circumcised in the flesh, before he could become a *spiritual Israelite*, circumcised of heart [women were, for the Circumcision Faction, excluded from the temple of God]. And the Circumcision Faction seemed to have Scripture on its side:

And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner shall eat of it, but every slave that is bought for money may eat of it after you have circumcised him. No foreigner or hired servant may eat of it. It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you

shall not break any of its bones. All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. *If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you.*" (Ex 12:43–49 emphasis added)

Gentile converts were certainly strangers who would keep the Passover. Plus, the millennial prophecies of Ezekiel had the Lord saying,

And the Lord said to me, "Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes, and hear with your ears all that I shall tell you concerning all the statutes of the temple of the Lord and all its laws. And mark well the entrance to the temple and all the exits from the sanctuary. *And say to the rebellious house, to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: O house of Israel, enough of all your abominations, in admitting foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my sanctuary, profaning my temple, when you offer to me my food, the fat and the blood.* You have broken my covenant, in addition to all your abominations. And you have not kept charge of my holy things, but you have set others to keep my charge for you in my sanctuary. / Thus says the Lord God: *No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary.*" (Ezek 44:5–9 emphasis added)

The qualifier for what the Circumcision Faction taught is highlighted in the above citation: a man must be circumcised in the flesh when he enters a physical sanctuary to offer the fat and the blood of animal sacrifices to the Lord whereas Israelites [for sons of God are neither male or female, Jew or Greek — Gal 3:28] must be circumcised of heart to enter the spiritual or heavenly sanctuary. But it is Paul's writings that make evident that it is the inner self that is a son of God born of spirit, not the outer man born of woman. Therefore, in the Millennium, when there is a third temple and a physical sanctuary, Israelites must be circumcised in the flesh and of the heart to enter and serve the Lord. But in this present era before the kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man [see Dan 7:9–14; Rev 11:15–18), the Christian Church is the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16–7; 2 Cor 6:16), the temple that was destroyed when the Body of Christ died, the temple that will be seventy weeks [i.e., 490 years] in its reconstruction and dedication.

The importance of what Paul wrote cannot be ignored, for as Ananias said to Paul, *The God of our fathers appointed you to know His will* (Acts 22:14). Without the epistles of Paul, there would be no Sabbatarian *Christianity*—and without the misreading and abuse of Paul's epistles, there would be no Christianity as the world knows the ideology. There would neither be an endtime spiritual Moses nor an endtime spiritual Israel with whom, separately and jointly, the New Covenant will be made when the Lord takes the fathers of Israel [the nation circumcised of heart] by the hand to lead Israel out from a figurative Egypt

following the Second Passover liberation of the inner selves of Christians from indwelling sin and death.

As Paul understood, it isn't the outer man that is crucified with Christ; it isn't the outer man that is buried in baptism, or is, following baptism, resurrected from death in a resurrection like that of Christ Jesus (see Rom 6:2–11). Rather, it is the inner self that the Father raises from the dead (John 5:21) by giving to the person a second breath of life, the breath of the Father, the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]. It is this inner self that has been transferred [μεταβέβηκεν] from death [from being dead] and into life upon hearing the word [λόγον] or message of Jesus and believing the One who sent Jesus; it is this inner self that passes from death to life without coming under judgment; it is this inner self that receives eternal life—or life in the timeless heavenly realm—when this inner self believes the writings of Moses and hears and believes the voice of Jesus (John 5:24, 46–47).

To place importance on the outer self that is a Jew or Gentile; that is male or female; that is bond or free (from Gal 3:28)—to place importance on the outer self in which sin and death continue to dwell (Rom 7:15–25) even after the inner self has been raised from the dead; to place importance on the natural man takes the inner self out from under grace, the garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness. Hence, endtime Sabbatarian Christians who return to circumcising the flesh, or who place importance on how the tongue of the outer self pronounces the name of our Lord, or who look for reconstruction of another earthly temple in earthly Jerusalem will inevitably be troubled by what Paul wrote ... whether the Father and the Son are troubled by these physically-minded Sabbatarian Christians who fail to understand what was revealed to Paul, and what Paul faithfully revealed in his epistles will be made evident in the Affliction. From what has already been revealed, it seems fairly certain that these physically-minded Sabbatharians will be martyred in the Affliction so as to end their teachings, which are as spiritually unpalatable as green persimmons are inedible

In Paul's tour de force allegory in which he identifies two women—Hagar and Sarah—as two covenants, Paul wrote,

Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. Now this may be interpreted allegorically: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. (Gal 4:21–26)

If there is neither slave nor free when it comes to sons of God—what Paul claims in Gal 3:28—then the covenant made at Mount Sinai no longer has any power over Israel, a perverse turn of logic that is not true; for there was not one covenant made at Sinai, but two, the first ratified by blood (Ex 24:5–8) as an

earthly or temporary thing (see Heb 9:22–23) but the second ratified by the glory shining from Moses' face from having entered into the Lord's presence, or into the Lord's rest (Ex 33:14; 34:29–35). This glory that shone from Moses' face was a shadow and copy of the glory of Christ, the evidence of indwelling eternal life. Hence, the veil that Moses placed over his face when he was not in the presence of the Lord, or not speaking the words of the Lord—the veil that Paul claimed remained whenever the natural nation of Israel heard the Torah read (2 Cor 3:14–15)—was confirmed in the words of Moses when he told Israel, *You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day* (Ex 35:3) ...

The Sabbath represents entering into God's rest (*cf.* Heb 3:12–4:11; Ps 95:10–11; Num chap 14), which is entering into His presence. Life is represented by fire, the *dark fire* of cellular oxidation for physical life and the *bright fire* (see Ezek 1:26–26) of the glory of the Lord for spiritual or heavenly life. Therefore, a prohibition preventing the kindling of a fire on the Sabbath represents having no life in God's rest or presence—represents a prohibition against receiving indwelling eternal life, a prohibition that is maintained to this day by the natural nation of Israel.

The freedom promised Christians by the Jerusalem above being their mother isn't, however, *free*, but was purchased for a price, the physical life of Christ Jesus, the only Son of the Logos [ὁ λόγος] who was God [θεός] and who was with the God [τὸν θεόν] in the beginning (John 1:1; 3:16), and who became the firstborn Son of the Father when the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] descended upon Him in the visible form of a dove (Matt 3:16) to fulfill all righteousness (*v.* 15). Both the God [the Father] and the Logos gave *life* to the man Jesus of Nazareth, with the Logos being the first to give life to Jesus when the Logos entered His creation (John 1:3) as His only Son, and with the Father giving a second breath of life to Jesus when His breath descended upon Jesus as a dove. This giving of life to the man Jesus forms the shadow and type, or mirror image [the left hand enantiomer] of the giving of life to Christians, which will have the order of giving life reversed, with the Father first raising the dead (John 5:21) to give life to the inner self of the firstfruits, then with the Son giving life to who He will (also John 5:21) when judgments are revealed at His Second Coming (1 Cor 4:5); for all judgment has been given to the Son (John 5:22), with the Son then leaving His word [ὁ λόγος ὃν ἐλάησα — *the word which I spoke*] with His disciples as their judge (John 12:48). The Son gives life by causing the perishable flesh of the outer self [the natural man] to put on immortality.

The inner self and the outer self are “two” who form one flesh, with the inner self being analogous to a married man and with the outer self being analogous to the woman, his wife, with these two—man and wife—forming one flesh (Gen 2:24). Thus, the inner self is analogous to Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church, with the outer self being analogous to the Church, the Body of Christ ... this was a mystery of God that Paul tried to explain. So taking this analogy to its logical extension, what real freedom does the fleshly body of a person have? Yes, all of the girls are prettier at closing time, the argument of a country music song, but an argument based on bodily hormones effecting thoughts and thereby overruling

[or pushing against] the wisdom of the inner self. Yes, Paul found that his mind, which loved the laws of God and wanted to do what was right, could not rule over the fleshly members of his body in which a different law, the law of sin and death, resided (Rom 7:15–25). This was a mystery that Paul did not understand (Rom 7:15), with his lack of understanding of this mystery appearing throughout his epistles; for it wasn't yet revealed that there would be a Second Passover liberation of Christians from bondage to that indwelling sin and death which Paul observed in himself. So it was the inner self that the Father had raised from death that was free to keep the commandments, not the outer self in which sin and death continued to dwell. Thus, with the giving of the spirit [the breath of God], the Father began a war within every disciple that must be fought by the son of God against the Adversary to whom the flesh remained in bondage.

*For freedom* Christ set disciples “free” to choose to either serve sin, which leads to death, or to serve obedience which leads to righteousness (Rom 6:16) as one or the other's servant. So Christians are not truly free to do whatever they want; for to not serve obedience is to serve disobedience. Christians do not have another option. They will either strive to keep the commandments, thereby separating themselves from this world that is the spiritual kingdom of Babylon, or they will, when bought for a price, return to Babylon and disobedience as a willing servant rather than as an involuntary slave.

Therefore, when Paul writes,

I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. *Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet.* For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control. (1 Tim 2:8–15 emphasis added)

Paul expresses in a *real world* analogy his prohibition of the outer self from exercising authority over the inner self, a situation that confounded him, or of the Church as the Body of Christ, from ruling over its Head, Christ Jesus; for it wasn't the Body of Christ that was created first, but the Head, with *Christ* being a synonym for the phrase, Son of Man.

A woman by her independent behavior confirms [via demonstration] that Christ Jesus does not rule His Church, His Body, for as long as sin and death continues to dwell in His Body. Thus, the Second Passover liberation of Israel is inescapable. Only then, when the mind of Christ has been inserted into every Christian, will women not strive to teach or to exercise authority over men; for the independence of thought characterized by, especially, American women is *prima facie* evidence of indwelling sin and death.

The outer self [i.e., the natural body] of the person will be male or female regardless of whether the dead inner self bears the same orientation or a differing orientation, with the inner self's orientation remaining in place until the inner self is raised from death through receipt of a second breath of life, the breath of God. Even then, the orientation of the inner self lingers for some while after the inner self is raised from death, with this *lingering of gender identity* seen as the reversed image of a human child acquiring gender identity ... a human infant at birth isn't aware that he or she is male or female. Such awareness comes sometime later, and comes to some extent from hormonal activity in the outer self. Hence, as the human inner self acquires gender identity with age—identity that agrees with, or disagrees with biological identity--the *raised-from-death* inner self that is a son of God will lose gender awareness with maturity; for again, according to Paul, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). And this growing absence of inner gender awareness should be outwardly reflected in a minimizing of importance placed on physical things, such as how the outer self pronounces the name of Jesus, or upon the things of this world—"the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possession" (1 John 2:16)—that will pass away with the coming of the new heavens and new earth (Rev 21:1).

A disciple is not to judge one another against one another, but is to judge him or herself against the standard that is Christ Jesus. And a disciple can make certain outward observations about the inner self as Paul made about himself: "I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Rom 7:15). But when the flesh is strong and the inner self is equally strong, and both the inner self and the flesh desire to serve the Lord, the flesh will obey the commandments and spiritual growth is more difficult to inwardly discern. In these situations, the presence of gender awareness can serve as a reliable indicator of spiritual growth; for as long as gender has importance, regardless of whether that gender is male or female, the mind remains carnal. Hence, the biological female who continues to be troubled by Paul saying, *I do not permit a woman to teach* (1 Tim 2:12), is a spiritual infant, if even born of God. Likewise, the biological male who uses Paul saying, *The head of the woman is her husband* (from 1 Cor 11:3), to exercise heavy-handed dominion over his wife is a spiritual infant, if even born of God.

Disciples have freedom for a day—the day of their salvation—with that freedom being to keep the commandments by faith out of love for God. If the disciple chooses to use that freedom to not keep the commandments, or to choose to keep eight of the commandments and break only two, then the disciple is as a rebellious woman who will not be ruled, now or ever. And Christ Jesus will choose His Bride by giving life to whom He will when judgments are revealed ... if you wouldn't want to marry the inner person that you are, do you think that Christ Jesus would want to marry this person?

*For freedom* is given to all sons of God not so that they are free to do whatever they want, but so that they can choose to be the obedient servants of the Lord that the inner person would desire the outer person—the tent of flesh in which this

inner person dwells—to be, with that outer person obeying inner dictates that are good and proper.

In himself, Paul represented the entirety of the Church, which would not do the things that its Head desired, but did instead the very things that the Head hated in a manner analogous to an independent-minded woman doing whatever she wills regardless of what her husband wants her to do. The Church teaches without having the authority to teach, and the Church exercises authority over the saints without having permission to do so. Whereas the Church was to be quiet and learn from her Husband, Christ Jesus, the Church has decided for herself how she will worship her Lord and her Head. And so too have Christian women, especially in America.

The visible reveals the invisible things of God (Rom 1:20), and the visible behavior of Christian women reveal how the Church appears to Christ Jesus.

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