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Commentary — From the Margins

The Commonality of the Flesh

For as many of you [Galatians] as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. (Gal 3:27-29)

If disciples are Abraham's offspring according to the promise, they are spiritually Isaac (Gal 4:28-31) and Christ Jesus is analogous to, or functions as Abraham. If disciples are presently Isaac, then in the womb of Grace are two spiritual sons who have done nothing either good or bad (Rom 9:11), with one son hated and the other loved (Mal 1:2; Rom 9:13) even though neither has yet been born. The Apostle Paul says this *one hated, one loved* scenario exists "in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call" (Rom 9:12).

At the end of telling the parable of the wedding feast, Jesus has the king say of the guest without a wedding garment, ""Bind him hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,""" then says as Himself, ""For many are called, but few are chosen"" (Matt 22:13-14). Many disciples are called, but some pay no attention to their calling, some are too busy with their own affairs to be bothered with the things of God, some treat the servants of God shamefully, even to killing His servants. Of the many called, only a few will come to the wedding feast, and of these few, not all will come cleaned up, ready to participate in the wedding. It is not enough to be invited to the wedding or even to come as the person normally is—the few who will be accepted come with hearts cleansed by faith.

Being called of God is not an infrequent occurrence rarely seen in this era as it would seem based upon the number of disciples willing to obey God. Rather, many are called. Many are baptized into Christ, and many have put on Christ's righteousness as if it were a garment. For no person can come to Christ unless he or she has been drawn and called (John 6:44; 15:16), and as no corpse can command receipt of the breath of life, no living person can compel God to give the person the Holy Spirit [Πνεύμα Ἅγιον], the divine Breath of God, the means through which a person is born anew, or born again, or born from above, or born of Spirit—all expressions for receiving a second life that is not from this world, a spiritual life that is foreshadowed by physical life received through physical breath.

The secret and hidden things of God are seen by the things that are: the visible reveals the invisible (Rom 1:20). The hidden things of God have been in plain sight all along: foremost among the secret things is the *commonness* of the flesh

of every disciple born of Spirit. The distinction made in the flesh by circumcision of foreskins was abolished by Christ at Calvary (Eph 2:13-21). This wall of hostility was broken down, leaving the flesh of the Jew the same before God as the flesh of the Gentile, with the flesh of both being unsanctified and not consecrated. And here is where the absence of spiritual understanding has harmed the Church: following baptism, newly born sons of God [new selves born of Spirit] possess a commonality one with another that was foreshadowed or typified by the commonness of the generations between Noah and Moses, with this *commonness* best seen through the eating of meats.

The Flood of Noah's day was the world being baptized into death by water, and this baptism will be followed four plus millennia later by the world being baptized into life by the Holy Spirit. Then a little more than a millennium after that, the world will be baptized by fire into Spirit. The One who does the baptizing by Spirit and fire is the glorified Christ (Matt 3:11); the One who caused the baptism of the world by water was the One who came as His only Son—all three baptisms are done by the *Logos, Theos*, who is now the glorified Christ.

In type, the baptism of a disciple reaches behind the disciple to represent the watery death that came upon the *commonness* of man in the days of Noah, when among humankind, no distinction made in the flesh existed although distinction among the animals [clean and unclean] did exist. Without now offering evidence to support the claim, it will here be asserted that “the eight” were to the animals as spirit beings are to human beings. In one typological scenario, “the eight” represent Christ [Noah] and the angels to the seven churches [Noah's three sons, his wife, and his daughters-in-law], with this scenario coming into importance when spiritual Babylon falls and the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and His Christ. But another scenario has more immediate importance to disciples—and in this scenario human beings on the Ark are as new selves [the Apostle Paul's new man] born into baptized tents of flesh, with these “tents” being either clean or common when they entered the Ark and with this distinction losing importance when they disembarked from the Ark. Only what happens to the new selves has significance and is recorded in Scripture.

Again, with baptism, all flesh becomes “common” and analogous to Noah's descendants after the Flood for whom all meats were declared food (Gen 9:3-4). This collective *commonness* is central to understanding what Jesus referenced when He said, “Hear me, all of you, and understand. There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him. ... Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled” (Mark 7:14-16, 18-19). The new creature or self is not the flesh; so those things that pertain to the flesh cannot defile the new creature. Physically circumcised Israel could no longer be defiled by what was eaten or by the lawlessness of the flesh, for after Calvary physically circumcised Israelites became as “common” before God as were *the nations*.

The covenants of promise from which *the nations* [Gentiles] were separated by circumcision were not abolished at Calvary, for *the nations* were brought near

to these promises “by the blood of Christ” (Eph 2:13). The laws of God were not abolished when circumcision moved from being of the flesh to being of the heart, but these same commandments moved from outside disciples [written on two tablets of stone] to inside disciples [written on two tablets of flesh]. The so-called ceremonial laws were not abolished but moved inward so that a disciple’s prayer of repentance equates with an ancient Israelite’s sin offering, with words uttered in the spiritual realm equating to the blood and breath of livestock in this earthly realm. Thus there is no distinction between a person who “esteems one day as better than another” and another person who “esteems all days alike” (Rom 14:5). The flesh of neither is defiled by the acts of the hand and body: keeping the commandments or not keeping the commandments is the same to the flesh. Likewise eating swine or not eating swine is the same to the flesh, as they were the same to the people of Babel or to the generations of Shem from Arpachshad to Abram, Terah’s son.

Note the above: when a disciple is baptized, the disciple is as a person getting off Noah’s Ark, for the Flood represented the baptism of the earth into death as baptism of a disciple represents the killing of the old self. The new self is as a person on the Ark—and for those who departed the Ark, all meat was made food. But from all who disembarked from the Ark and their descendants, only one man was found to have faith pleasing to God, who, like the husband of an orchard finding a seedling fruit variety that has exceptional qualities, propagates the variety: God found in Abraham exceptional qualities and began to propagate Abraham’s seed by giving to Abraham a “son of promise,” Isaac. Abraham’s other sons were produced by the flesh and remain as wild or common seedlings, but Isaac became, to God, a cultivated variety [a cultivar]. And from Isaac through Rebekah, who could not have children until God opened her womb (Gen 25:21), came two sons of promise, Esau and Jacob, one hated, one loved (Mal 1:2; Rom 9:13), with these two sons of promise being types of spiritual sons of promise to be “born” when Israel is liberated from indwelling sin and death at the beginning of the seven endtime years of tribulation. Until then, disciples are like Isaac (Gal 4:28-31), but in this metaphor they are also dividing themselves in the “womb of Grace” into the still unborn Esau and the unborn Jacob. This analogy can be extended: when Esau and Jacob are “born,” spiritual Esau will be like Cain whereas spiritual Jacob will be like Abel. And they will be “born” through being empowered by the Holy Spirit, or “filled,” as in filling a glass with water, with the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the seven endtime years. Therefore, the era between Jesus coming as the last Adam (1 Co 15:45; Rom 5:14), with the Church created from a wound in His side (the end of Genesis chapter 2), and the birth of Cain (the beginning of Genesis chapter 4), is a spiritual period analogous to the Flood of Noah’s day forward in time through Israel on the plains of Moab, where the second covenant mediated by Moses was given (Deut chaps 29-32). The temptation of Eve (Genesis chapter 3) was the temptation of the Church, which believed the lie that the old serpent, Satan the devil, told when he said that the Church would not die, claiming this is what Jesus meant when He said that the gates of Hades would not prevail over the Church. This most subtle serpent told

disciples that they would not die for they had immortal souls. And as the serpent caused the first Eve to eat forbidden fruit, Satan caused the Church to disbelieve God and determine for itself right from wrong.

Heaven is a timeless supra-dimensional realm in which those who have been born of Spirit have actual life as sons of God that have not yet reached their majority. In this dimension living entities exist without possessing mass; they exist as an energy force that is metaphorically like wind in this earthly realm.

To the descendants of Jacob, the twice selected human cultivar descended from Abraham, God gave instructions regarding eating clean and unclean meats, ending these instructions with the reason for Israel to eat only clean meats: God said, "For I am the Lord your God [*YHWH* your *Elohim*]. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am holy" (Lev 11:44). Thus, the reason for Israel to eat only clean meats is to make a distinction between Israel and other peoples, with this distinction being an outward sign that Israel has consecrated itself to become holy as God is holy.

Since Calvary, no distinction made in the flesh causes God to favor one person over another. But actions are not distinctions made in the flesh, but are manifestations of the thoughts and desires of the inner new creature that exists without possessing mass.

The epistles of Peter are his fulfilling his commission to feed the lambs, tend the sheep and feed the sheep (John 21:15-19), with the first three chapters of 1 Peter directly relating to feeding the lambs, those disciples who are newly born of Spirit. And Peter tells these lambs that since He who called them is holy, they are to be holy (1 Pet 1:15-16); he then cites Leviticus 11:44 ... if disciples, who are free to eat or not eat any meat, choose to be holy as God is holy, these disciples will return to where God tells Israel how to be holy as He is holy. They will exercise their freedom by choosing to abstain from eating unclean meats. This is especially true if a disciple is to walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:4-6), or chooses to imitate the Apostle Paul (Phil 3:17) who, when on trial before Festus, said, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense" (Acts 25:8). Both Jesus and Paul lived as Observant Jews, and it is impossible to make an Observant Jew jealous—the reason Paul gives for why Gentiles are called (Rom 11:11, 14)—if a disciple lives as a Gentile.

Disciples today cannot be defiled by what they eat, the Apostle Paul's point in Romans chapter 14. But they can be defiled by what comes from hearts and minds. The distinction between an Israelite circumcised of heart who wants to please God and every other born of Spirit Israelite is that the person who wants to be holy as God is holy will do those things that show God this desire—not because the person has to do these things, but because the person desires to please God.

There is nothing that can be done to the flesh to cause God to recognize a distinction between Jew of Greek, male or female, bond or free. To God the Father, all flesh is the same. It is only what comes from within the heart and from within the mind that causes God to make a distinction between one person who has been born of Spirit and another, with those things that come from within

being manifest through the actions of the disciple, thereby setting the few who will be chosen apart from the many who have been called.

The acts or actions of the few determine who these chosen few are, for James said, “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can this faith save him? ... So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith and I have works.’ Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (Jas 2:14, 17-18).

Only when a disciple makes a journey of faith equivalent to Abraham’s physical journey of faith is the inner new self set apart from the *commonness* of the “many” that are called. And this journey of faith will come from believing God, with this belief counted to the person as righteousness as Abraham’s belief was counted to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6).

Sin has no dominion over the new self that is born free to keep the commandments of God or to reject obedience to God. Yes, disciples are truly free on the day of their salvation to choose life or death (Deut 30:15-20). They are free to eat or not eat any meats, for all meats enter the body through the mouth and pass out through bowel movements. The “cleanness” or “commonness” of meat does not pertain to this new creature which is not of this world. But the disciple who desires to be uncommon [i.e., clean] will not eat that which is common to all men: by a decision freely made, this disciple chooses to reject the *commonness* that came with spiritual birth, and chooses to make a journey of faith like Abraham’s journey of faith, with this disciple journeying from a mental landscape that is common to every son of God to a mental landscape that is analogous to Judea under the judges and the first two kings.

In 1996, at Feast of Tabernacle services in Vail, Colorado, Pastor Jim Turner of the new Worldwide Church of God (WCG) told me, “Isn’t it nice not having to be *special* anymore,” as he reflected approvingly upon the changed doctrines that returned the WCG to mainstream Evangelical Christendom. Turner felt free under the changes to return to the *commonness* that had come to him and to every other son of God when first born of Spirit. And I felt appalled that he could not hear what he had just said.

The eating of unclean meats which does not defile a person because the meats enter the flesh through the mouth and does not enter the inner new creature—this is what Jesus said and about which Mark or some later scribe commented upon in the parenthetical insert, “(Thus he declared all foods clean)” (Mark 7:19)—does however defile the inner new creature if this new creature lusts after that which will make him *common*. All flesh was given to the descendants of Noah as food. All meats are given to born of Spirit sons of God as food. But of all the descendants of Noah, only one had faith that would be counted to him as righteousness; from only one will come the firstborn sons of God (Ex 4:22); from only one will come those who are liberated from indwelling sin and death as ancient Israel was liberated from physical bondage to Pharaoh; from only one will come those who are commanded to be holy as God is holy; from only one will come those who walk as Jesus walked, and who will walk as Jesus today walks.

And the descendants of spiritual Abraham will make a distinction between clean and unclean meats so they can willingly be holy as God is holy; as the One who called them is holy.

Again, disciples are born free to keep the commandments of God; they are not under bondage to sin unless they voluntarily place themselves there by returning to disobedience—sin has no dominion over the new creature (1 Co 6:14). So disciples are not under the law. Obedience is voluntary and comes from what is within the heart and mind. Likewise, disobedience—which the newly born son of God is free to choose—is voluntary and comes from what is within the heart and mind. And disobedience will defile the inner new creature, just as lusting after *commonness* defiles this new creature. If Turner had not previously defiled himself, he did so when he expressed his pleasure in *no longer having to be special*.

The various Sabbatarian Christian fellowships and sects that legalistically attempt to enforce observance of the law and its many provisions upon disciples have better intentions than theology when they exercise their heavy handed *Nicolaitanism* over disciples in their fellowships ... no son of God has to leave the *commonality* of the “receiving the Holy Spirit experience” and mentally journey into the uncommon territory of obedience to God. Every son of God can stay with the common pool of the *many* who have been called to be disciples. In fact, too many of these sons of God will be like Terah, who started out well in his journey from Ur of the Chaldeans to “the land of Canaan” (Gen 11:31), but who got part way and settled in the land of Haran, later to be the land of the Assyrians, the geographical landscape that represents death. Today too many Anabaptist Christians, descendants of the remnant of spiritual Israel that left spiritual Babylon in the 16th-Century CE, still dwell in a mental landscape analogous to Haran—they are antitypes of Terah, Abraham’s father, and if they do not resume the journey begun by the remnant they will die in disbelief and disobedience.

Except for a few stalks of a remnant of a remnant, the Anabaptist remnant that left Babylon in 1525 CE in a manner analogous to the remnant of natural Israel that left Babylon by order of King Cyrus have stopped and built spiritual houses for themselves as Terah settled in the land of Haran—they stopped before they entered into God’s rest, what the Psalmist called the Promised Land (95:10-11) and what the writer of Hebrews identified as Sabbath observance (3:16-4:11). They did not turn around to reenter sin as Israel in the wilderness desired to do (Num chap 14), for they never left sin and the *commonness* that comes through disobedience even though sin had no dominion over them. They used the cover of Grace as a roof to shield their disobedience from God’s wrath little realizing that it is not the Father who will judge them but the Son under whose righteousness they hide. They bet that the Son does not see what occurs under the cloak of His righteousness, or if He does see that His love for them is great enough that He will overlook their continued disobedience and *commonness*.

Returning to what Paul wrote, “[I]n order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works [what the flesh produces] but because of his call” (Rom 9:11) one son while still in the womb is hated, and one son is loved,

which is not injustice on God's part but God having mercy upon whom He will—and God having mercy upon whom He will is being numbered among the few who will be chosen (again, Matt 22:14).

All sons of God are as the descendants of Noah were when disciples are baptized. Those sons of God who choose to remain a part of this world and have a part in the governance of his world are as the son of Noah were who remained in Chaldea, dwelling in the great city of Ur. Those sons that left Babylon as Radical Reformers in the 16th-Century are as Terah, Abram, Lot, and Sarai were when they left Ur for the land of Canaan. And the disciples that entered into Sabbath observance are as Abram, Lot, and Sarai. But Lot settled in the land of Sodom and never went up to where Jerusalem would be—disciples who keep the weekly Sabbath but not the annual holy days are as Lot was. Abram paid tithes to Melchizedek, king of Salem, of whom Christ is the reality. Those disciples who are the seed of spiritual Abraham will, for the sake of election, also give of all they have to the spiritual king of Salem as analogy after analogy circle around upon themselves to form a clay vessel with rotational symmetry. The vessel that will be chosen for honored use continues God's purpose for election, which isn't to favor one vessel over another but to take into heaven those sons that voluntary decide to be holy as He is holy even to spurning their *commonness* that gives them fellowship with “the many.”

Again, within the womb of Grace are two sons struggling with each other, one hated, one loved. Both sons come from the *commonness* of all disciples; both begin by being numbered among the many who are called ... many are made into disciples through being drawn from this world, but few will be chosen for few will show God that the disciple knows and appreciates that God has sanctified the person by this person choosing to observe the Sabbath (Ex 31:13). Few will show God that the person knows that God has consecrated the person by not eating “common” meats—and the faith that will have the disciple doing those things that pertain specifically to Israel now causes this disciple to make a distinction between him or herself and all other disciples who will not make such a showing.

With pedagogical redundancy, let it again be said that every person baptized into Christ has been made spiritually “common” and is placed in a relationship with God [the Father – Θεός] that is analogous to the relationship Noah and his descendants had with God [Θεός] when they disembarked from the Ark. Even though a distinction between clean and unclean was made for animals prior to when they entered the Ark, all meat is given to Noah as food following the baptism of the world into death. All of humankind is of the same breath, the same spirit. No distinction exists. Likewise, with disciples, no distinction exists when they are raised from the watery grave of baptism. All meat is food for them, but as God [Θεός] made a covenant with Abraham that in him “all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12:3), God [Θεός] gave to the man Jesus those whom He chose from this world so that through them *all of the families of the earth shall be blessed*. As Abraham did not represent all of humankind that had departed from the Ark but was a chosen variety (chosen for his faith), those who are of Abraham and who make a spiritual journey of faith that is the equivalent of

Abraham's physical journey of faith will likewise be chosen—and are today the selected cultivar Isaac. But they are also dividing themselves into the twin sons of promise, Esau and Jacob: even before Esau was born and before he had good or evil reckoned to him, God said that He hated Esau, who would sell his birthright for a bowl of porridge. Esau did not value the things of God over the panting of the flesh. And those disciples who are of spiritual Esau will not choose to live as Judeans when the choice of eating or not eating is placed before them; when the choice of observing the Sabbath or not observing the Sabbath is before them.

When a person is baptized into Christ, the person becomes a *common* son of God as the person was before a common [or uncommon if circumcised] son of man. As long as this son of God remains as he was born, he has fellowship with the *many* other sons of God who have been called out from this world. He is not distinctive in any way—and there is nothing the tent of flesh in which he dwells can do that will defile this son. So if this son of God does not desire to be *special* he can do what other sons of God do as Terah's neighbors in Ur could do as they desired. But this son of God needs to be mindful that of the *many* who are called, only a few will be chosen for the purpose of election is to weed out those sons of God who do not want to be holy as God is holy ... the *many* who are called are not those who do not answer a call as some Sabbatarian fellowships will teach, but the *many* who have become Christians. Those Sabbatarian disciples who have chosen to be special have difficulty recognizing these *many* as Christians possessing the spirit of God, but they are included among the ones who will be empowered by the Holy Spirit when the Second Passover liberation of Israel occurs—and it will be from these *many* that the *great falling away* comes (2 Thess 2:3).

It is really pointless for a Sabbatarian disciple to argue with the *Christian* who wants to continue in the *commonness* that came with receipt of the Holy Spirit; for the person who desires to be *common* has adequate scriptural support for doing so, especially since meaning must be assigned to every word forming Holy Writ. Let this person be like Pastor Jim Turner, who is only special in that he is named here as one who celebrated his return to *commonness*. But let the disciple who desires to be numbered among the chosen few show God that this disciple knows that he has been sanctified and consecrated by this disciple choosing to keep the Sabbath and to eat only clean meats. The disciple cannot spiritually defile himself by choosing to walk physically as Jesus walked physically. Nor will the disciple be numbered among the *many* who will not so walk physically.

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