

Commentary — From the Margins *The Question Asked, “Can You Help Me Understand Scripture?”*

I [Paul] am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For *what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.* So they are without excuse. (Rom 1:15–20 emphasis added)

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God gives it a body as He has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit [*pneuma*]. But ***it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural***, and then the spiritual. *The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.* Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, ***nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*** (1 Cor 15:38–50 emphasis and double emphasis added)

First Principle

1.

The man of dust cannot enter heaven, nor will the man of dust—the fleshly body that is perishable--inherit immortality, imperishability. It is only the man from heaven that has immortality and that can inherit an imperishable body. And no human person is humanly born with indwelling immortality; for indwelling eternal life is the gift of God

“in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23). Without Christ Jesus, no person can have the spirit of God [*pneuma Theou*], the indwelling glory of God, the bright fire that represents heavenly life (see Ezek 1:26–28). Only through the indwelling of Christ in the form of His spirit [*pneuma Christou*], His breath, His glory does any human person have an immortal soul. And except for the Elect, sons of God born out of season as fruit borne when it isn’t the season for fruit, no human person will be “one” with Christ as a wife is “one” with her husband (Gen 2:24) or as the spirit of the man [*to pneuma tou ’anthropou* — from 1 Cor 2:11] is “one” with the soul [*psuche*] of the man [*tou ’anthropou*] or person until the Wedding Feast when the Bridegroom will “marry” His Bride upon His return from heaven ... the preceding is correct, the physical things of this world, including the *story* of the creation of the first Adam [stories told or inscribed are physical things regardless of whether the story mimetically or metaphorically represents or doesn’t represent at all a phenomenon that occurred], precede and reveal the spiritual things of God.

A spiritual thing of God is the “story” of the creation of the second or last Adam when the breath of God [*pneuma Theou*] descended upon the man Jesus the Nazarene and entered into [*eis*] Him (Mark 1:10) in the bodily form of a dove.

Jesus being raised from a watery grave representing death was analogous to human birth; for a fetus doesn’t have a breath of life that is its own until birth. A fetus subsists on its mother’s breath until humanly born. As such the fetus is alive in the womb as a human person is alive in this world, with this world and its atmosphere functioning as a type of a womb. But until the fetus is born of water the fetus dwells in darkness while its life is sustained by its mother’s breath that crosses the placenta, the placenta functioning in type as the atmosphere of this earth for *the man of dust*. And as a fetus will eventually die in its mother’s womb if not born of water, the human person will eventually die and be no more if not born of spirit as a son of God, this spiritual birth coming through the second or last Eve, the *life giving spirit* that gives spiritual life to every son of God.

Again, to understand spiritual things—the things of God—the person has before him or her the shadow of all things spiritual in the form of those things that have been created; so the person is without excuse when it comes to *knowing the Lord* and knowing the things of God ... Paul wrote, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit [*pneuma*] and soul [*psuche*] and body [*soma*] be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess 5:23). Thus, according to Paul, a person is tri-part, consisting (prior to spiritual birth) of the spirit of the man [*to pneuma tou ’anthropou*] that is in the soul [*psuche*] that is in turn in the fleshly body [*soma*, the “o” being the letter *omega* in Greek].

Paul also wrote, “I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God” (1 Cor 11:3) ...

The spirit [*pneuma*] of the man/person is in the soul [*pneuma*] and is one with the soul as the *head* of the soul as the husband is one with his wife and the head of his wife. The soul [again, *psuche*] is then in the fleshly body [*soma*] of the person and is one with the fleshly body as its *head* as a husband is one with his wife and the head of his wife. The imagery is that of penetration: the soul that is non-physical is penetrated by the equally non-physical spirit of the man [*to pneuma tou ’anthropou*], and it will be this soul of the person that will be glorified, not the fleshly body [*soma*] of the person.

Hence, with God there is neither male nor female—attributes of the flesh—Jew nor Greek, free nor bond (Gal 3:28). With God, the fleshly body is of little importance. The fleshly body will not be saved: the inner self of the person, consisting of spirit and soul, is what will be saved when the spirit of the man [again, *to pneuma tou 'anthropou*] is *penetrated* by the spirit of Christ [again, *pneuma Christou*] thereby producing the indwelling of Christ in the person, now His disciple.

In marriage a woman functions as the body of her husband, who of himself is not able to bring forth offspring. But for a woman to function as the body of her husband in bringing forth her husband's "seed," her husband must penetrate her body and thus be "in" her body where evidence of her husband being her *head* will remain until human birth occurs ... with God, all sexual intercourse outside of marriage between one man and one woman is analogous to spiritual idolatry. With God, there can never be "marriage" between man and man, or woman and woman. Such relationships are abominations; for marriage between a man, who is the head of his wife as Christ is the Head of the Church and as God is the Head of Christ, and a woman, who represents the body of her husband as the Church represents the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27), has two individuals coming together to form one entity, with the attire of the wife visibly revealing the contents of her husband's heart, a bit of spiritual knowledge known in the 1st-Century but since lost to greater Christendom.

A Christian wife signifies to God and to angels that she is under the authority of Christ Jesus by her longish hair (actual hair length is of less importance than the general appear of long hair), and she signifies to her husband and to angels that she is under the authority of her husband by her secondary covering of her head, a covering of fabric.

To understand Scripture, the Christian or would-be Christian needs to realize that the man of dust is either male or female and as such can never enter heaven, nor will receive immortality. It is the non-physical inner self—the portion of a person that cannot be photographed nor X-rayed nor weighed and measured—that will become imperishable through spiritual birth. However, the man of dust makes the invisible inner self and the spiritual birth and maturation process "visible" so that this inner self can be known and understood through its type and copy.

Biblical prophecy functions in a like manner: ancient physical nations in the geographical region originally incorporated in the boundaries of Eden function as representations of the man of dust, these ancient nations representing mindsets of the non-physical inner self throughout the course of the Christian era. Hence the ancient nation of outwardly circumcised Israel forms the spiritually lifeless shadow and copy of Christendom that is to be circumcised of heart, but isn't as Israel ceased to be outwardly circumcised:

Behold, the days are coming, declares [YHWH], when I will punish all those who are circumcised merely in the flesh—Egypt, **Judah**, Edom, the sons of Ammon, Moab, and all who dwell in the desert who cut the corners of their hair, for **all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart.** (Jer 9:25–26 emphasis added)

Edom was of Esau, the elder brother of Jacob, and as such should have been outwardly circumcised according to the covenant made with Abraham when aspiration [the /ah/ radical] was added to his name (see Gen chap 17). Ammon and Moab were descendants of Lot, Abraham nephew. Egypt knew Abraham and knew the descendants

of Jacob, and those who dwell in the desert were of Ishmael, Abraham's son by Hagar. Judah was the southern kingdom of Jerusalem, and the House of Israel was the northern kingdom of Samaria, then in captivity. So all of the peoples named by the Lord and singled out to be punished were of Abraham, or had a long relationship with the descendants of Abraham. All of these people should have been circumcised of heart, a circumcision not performed by hands but by the soft breath of God. All of these peoples opened themselves up to being punished by God because they did not conform to the standards set forth in the Moab covenant:

These are the words of the covenant that [YHWH] commanded Moses to make with the people of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant that he had made with them at Horeb. (Deut 29:1)

And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I [Moses] have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where [YHWH] your God has driven you, and return to [YHWH] your God, you and your children, and obey His voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, then [YHWH] your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, and He will gather you again from all the peoples where [YHWH] your God has scattered you. If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there [YHWH] your God will gather you, and from there He will take you. And [YHWH] your God will bring you into the land that your fathers possessed, that you may possess it. And He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. And [YHWH] your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love [YHWH] your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. (Deut 30:1-6)

I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of [YHWH] your God that I command you today, by loving [YHWH] your God, by walking in His ways, and by keeping His commandments and His statutes and His rules, then you shall live and multiply, and [YHWH] your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving [YHWH] your God, obeying His voice and holding fast to Him, for He is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that [YHWH] swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. (Deut 30:15-20)

The Apostle Paul identifies this Moab covenant as "the righteousness based on faith" (Rom 10:6). Compare,

But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down)

Rom 10:7 or "'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. (Rom 10:6-12)

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For this commandment that I [Moses] command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. (Deut 30:11–14)

Paul quotes Deuteronomy 30:11–14 from the Septuagint rather than from the source text used for the Masoretic Text; hence the difference. But circumcision of the heart is textually introduced in the Moab covenant, with Moses telling the children of Israel on the plains of Moab,

And now, Israel, what does [YHWH] your God require of you, but to fear [YHWH] your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve [YHWH] your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of [YHWH], which I [Moses] am commanding you today for your good? Behold, to [YHWH] your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet [YHWH] set His heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. *Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.* For [YHWH] your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. (Deut 10:12–19 emphasis added)

Now couple what Moses in the preceding quote commands the children of Israel with what Matthew's Jesus records,

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He will place the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." Then He will say to those on His left, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." Then they also will answer, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?" Then He will answer them, saying, "Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Matt 25:31–46)

Circumcision of hearts will cause the person to be *tender-hearted*, no longer stubborn, focused on the man of dust and the things of this world (see 1 John 2:15–17). Circumcision of the heart will cause the person to act justly, giving sustenance and

justice to the one who cannot provide for him or herself: for the orphan, the widow, the stranger, loving neighbor and brother as the person loves him or herself. Exercising the golden rule of doing for others what the person would have the one who is *other* do for the person.

All who have an acquaintance with Abraham are expected to love neighbor and brother, or be punished by the Lord. And what does Paul write about being of Abraham: "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (Gal 3:29). If you claim to be a Christian, then you have the moral responsibility to behave as if you truly are circumcised of heart, Jesus in John's Gospel telling unbelieving Jews,

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)

Every person who is of Israel has an accuser, Moses in the Moab covenant, with Moses writing the words of the Moab covenant in a book that was to be placed beside the Ark of the Covenant:

When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book to the very end, Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of [YHWH], "Take this Book of the Law and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of [YHWH] your God, that it may be there for a witness against you. For I know how rebellious and stubborn you are. Behold, even today while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against [YHWH]. How much more after my death!" (Deut 31:24–27)

The first principle of understanding Scripture is realization that the man of dust is not and cannot be born of spirit; that this man of dust that is outwardly recognized as a Christian or as a Gentile and that is either a man or a woman merely serves as a shadow and type of the inner, non-physical person. This man of dust is humanly born consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) as a son of disobedience (Eph 2:2–3); whereas in Christ, the inner self has been set free from disobedience and is therefore able to keep the Commandments in the person's mind and heart. And about this Paul writes,

For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code. What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order

that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. (Rom 7:5–23)

Being called by God doesn't free the person from responsibility for his or her deeds: although Paul wrote, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace" (Rom 6:12–14), he went on to write, "Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?" (v. 16).

The man of dust will fight for his freedom, his liberty, to do what? Do manual labor on the Sabbath? Vote for his political leaders? Engage in transactions? Yes, and much more. The man of dust will believe he is free when the Adversary through his ministers (see 2 Cor 11:14–15) tells this man of dust that he has been set free from bondage to the Old Law; that he no longer has to keep the Commandments, keep the Sabbath Commandment; that he is free to worship the creation rather than the Creator even though he knows better. For it is the Torah—the Old Law—that shall be written on hearts and placed in minds when the New Covenant is implemented (Jer 31:31–34). And this New Covenant wasn't yet implemented a quarter century after Calvary when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written (see Heb 8:8–13).

What was old and ready to vanish away a quarter century after Calvary wasn't abolished at Calvary—

Death reigned over all men from Adam to Moses (Rom 5:14), not from Adam to Christ Jesus; for death reigned over all until Moses entered into the presence of the Lord atop Mount Sinai, with the glory that shone henceforth from Moses' face (Ex 34:29–35) forming the chiral image and type of the glorified inner self of the disciple truly born of spirit.

The man from heaven—Christ Jesus and the indwelling Christ [spirit of Christ—*pneuma Christou*] that is the vessel from heaven able to "hold" in the human person the bright fire that is the glory of God—is not the man of dust; is not the fleshly person in which nothing good dwells; but is the inner person consisting of the spirit of man in the soul of the man, these two being one spiritual inner self, as a husband and his wife are one flesh in this world. Therefore when the spirit of Christ enters into [penetrates] the spirit of the man [person], the previously dead [without spiritual life] spirit of the man is spiritually born as a son of God, with the soul of the person

functioning for this now living spirit of the man as the woman functions for her husband.

Paul also wrote,

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Rom 8:5–8)

You can gauge yourself, knowing whether you are born of spirit or whether you remain a man of dust by your willingness to submit to God's Law. If you are unwilling; if you remain hostile to God, you are still in the flesh. The time of your spiritual birth is not yet upon you, but if you inwardly delight in the Law of God as Paul did, welcome aboard! We have miles to go before we sleep.

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