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Commentary — From the Margins

The Deceitfulness of Participation

As a title, *The Deceitfulness of Participation*, lacks an important element: “participation” in what? Is a person not supposed to participate in anything, in everything? Surely a person isn’t supposed to withdraw from the world, climb the highest mountain the person can find, and sit atop it contemplating withdrawing to a more distant mountain?

Participation in anything requires a commitment to “the thing,” whether it is civil governance or a marketing group or a union local or a church choir. Participation takes time and effort, and takes time and effort away from other things. A person cannot participate in everything, but must choose what is important to the person—and for the person who has been called by the Most High, given the earnest of the spirit, and made a son of god, participation in things other than those things directly related to conducting the family business is a diversion of time and energy that will eventually take the person away from God.

Alas, the preceding statement has been used, in some variation, to abuse tens of thousands of sincere human beings who thought they were doing the will of God when they withdrew from the world into a religious enclave in a vain effort to enhance their spirituality and avoid contamination from the world and worldly things. But—here is the core question—for the Christian does abuse of the inclination to withdraw negate the validity of not participating in those things which are not of God?

In His prayer just before He was taken, Jesus asked His Father and our Father,

I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to

you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. (John 17:6–18 emphasis added)

Jesus asks that the disciples are kept in the Father's name, the name the Father gave to Jesus—what name is this if it is not in the name of God?

On the night that He was betrayed, the world (i.e., the cosmos or civilization) did not belong to Christ Jesus, who told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world, nor from this world (John 18:36). It didn't become His when He died at Calvary; it didn't become His when He was resurrected from death. This world will not belong to Christ until halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation, when dominion is taken from the four beasts (Dan 7:9–14; Rev 11:15–18). Until then, Jesus' prayer remains the same: He doesn't pray for this world, but for those individuals whom the Father has drawn from this world (John 6:44, 65).

Why wouldn't Jesus pray for this world? In Christian churches across America, prayers are routinely made for this world: for American troops overseas, for victims of natural disasters, for victims of political oppression, for national leaders and national political issues. Yet Jesus specifically tells the Father that He was praying for those who belonged to the Father and not for the world, and His prayer was that the Father keep them in His name and keep them from the evil one, for the world hates them.

Jesus' testimony is that His disciples are not of this world as He was not of this world, and it is because they are not of this world that the world hates them.

In Jesus' prayer is His testimony that He lost no one whom the Father had given Him to keep except the son of destruction, Judas Iscariot, who was called to fulfill Scripture ... that should be a frightening realization that the Father would call a person and give that person to Jesus to disciple so that the person would be in place to betray Jesus when the time came. This would suggest that at the time of the end the Father will call individuals to become "Christians" for the purpose of fulfilling Scripture about "many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And false prophets will arise and lead many astray" (Matt 24:10–11). This would mean that in this endtime generation, many Christians have been called to betray their brethren and to lead others astray.

But where would these false prophets and false teachers lead genuine disciples so as to lead them astray—other than back into the world once they have been called not to be a part of this world?

And how would a disciple know if another disciple has been called by the Father to lead

other disciples astray? What would be the telltale signs?

If a Jew is someone circumcised of heart and not necessarily a natural descendant of the patriarch Jacob—this is Paul’s claim, and the claim that caused Paul much grief (Rom 2:28–29; 9:6)—then those things that Moses delivered to the children of Israel on the plains of Moab should help endtime Israel identify false prophets.

If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, “Let us go after other gods,” which you have not known, “and let us serve them” (Deut 13:1–2) ... If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or the wife you embrace or your friend who is as your own soul entices you secretly, saying, “Let us go and serve other gods,” which neither you nor your fathers have known (v. 6) ... If you hear in one of your cities, which the Lord your God is giving you to dwell there, that certain worthless fellows have gone out among you and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, “Let us go and serve other gods,” which you have not known, then you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently. And behold, if it be true and certain that such an abomination has been done among you, you shall surely put the inhabitants of that city to the sword, devoting it to destruction, all who are in it and its cattle, with the edge of the sword. You shall gather all its spoil into the midst of its open square and burn the city and all its spoil with fire, as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God. It shall be a heap forever. It shall not be built again. None of the devoted things shall stick to your hand, that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of his anger and show you mercy and have compassion on you and multiply you, as he swore to your fathers, if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, keeping all his commandments that I am commanding you today, and doing what is right in the sight of the Lord your God (vv. 12–18).

The prophet or dreamer of dreams who would have Israel not keep the commandments shall, under the first covenant, be put to death (Deut 13:5). The person of one’s own household who would have Israel not keep the commandments shall be put to death (v. 9). And when moving from physical to spiritual, the putting to death is no longer physical but spiritual with death coming by being cut off from God: the false prophet that shall arise, that is prophesied to arise, that the Father will call to test Israel (v. 3)—this false prophet and every false prophet like him or her who would have Israel serve (by not keeping the commandments) another God other than the Lord shall be cut off from the assembly and returned to the world (to Satan, the present prince of this world) where he or she belongs.

To be returned to the world is to be separated from the Father, with this separation the representation of the second death. Therefore, when the saints at Corinth delivered the man who was with his father’s wife to Satan (1 Cor 5:5), they delivered the man back to the world so that in the destruction of the flesh the inner new self might be saved ... the world consists of all those who are “dead” as in Jesus’ instructions, “Follow me, and leave the dead to bury

their own dead” (Matt 8:22). Hence, when a person who has been made alive by being given a second breath of life [B<,Ø:" 2,@Ø] is returned to the world, the person (by being cut off from God) experiences in type the second death. When judgments are revealed, this person will experience the reality of the second death by having angels cast the person into the lake of fire.

If Israel will not put out the false prophet who would have Israel neglect the commandments, or the false teacher whom the Father has called as He called Judas Iscariot to betray Christ Jesus—if Israel lacks the zeal for God to purge evil and the evil person from its midst (1 Cor 5:13), then Israel can expect the fierceness of the Lord to end Israel’s life, which is what happened when the Churches of God in the late 1st-Century and early 2nd-Century permitted false shepherds to lead fellowships away from living as Judeans. These false shepherds coaxed the Churches of God into accepting Hellenistic paganism as gospel truths; thus the Church that was crucified with Christ died as Christ died, for its death has kept the Father from utterly obliterating Christianity from the face of the earth as the Lord obliterated the ante-Deluge world that caused Him to regret that He had made man (Gen 6:6). And the Father delivered the corpse of the Church into the hand of the spiritual king of Babylon (Isa 14:4) for the destruction of the flesh at the Council of Nicea (ca 325 CE) in a manner analogous to the Apostle Paul commanding the saints at Corinth to deliver the man with his father’s wife to Satan.

Someone will immediately raise an objection, saying that Deuteronomy is “Old Testament” and that Christ is love and there is no love in killing (i.e., cutting some off from the assembly) regardless of the cause ... oh, did Jesus not, in the parable about tares, explain the parable to His disciples by saying,

The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. (Matt 13:37–43 emphasis added)

As endtime disciples, we don’t stone people or put cities to the sword. We only deliver lawless disciples to the evil one—they are his seed; let him have them—for it will be the task of angels at the close of the age to gather and throw lawless disciples into the lake of fire (i.e., deliver them to the second death). And yes, there will be great weeping and gnashing of teeth by those who sincerely believed they were serving God by teaching His sons to ignore the commandments. After all, they did great works in the name of Jesus (Matt 7:21–23). They toppled evil empires, built huge basilicas, fed orphans, and brought millions to Christ. They were acclaimed by the world for the good works that they did; so why would

Jesus deny knowing them when judgments are revealed? That seems unreasonable, considering the great works they have done for Him and the love they professed for Him, and the candles burned ... do we know who the sons of the evil one are? We do, don't we?

The Apostle Jesus loved writes,

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he [Jesus] appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil (1 John 3:4–10).

The seed of the evil one are those who practice sinning, with sin being lawlessness or the transgression of the commandments. Therefore, the person who is a teacher of Israel and who teaches Israel to sin (i.e., break the commandments) is a minister of Satan ... indeed, Satan has ministers (2 Cor 11:14–15), who are disguised as servants of righteousness—as Christian pastors and priests—and it is Satan's servants whom the world praises as true servants of God. Those of us who would have Israel keep the commandments are “legalists,” a derogatory identifier in this world, but a name that we should embrace as a badge of honor for we are not of this world. If we were of the world, we too would be condemned with it. But we have been redeemed; i.e., set free to keep the commandments so that sin has no dominion over us (Rom 6:14).

When sin has no dominion over a disciple, there is no reason for the disciple to submit to sin by again transgressing the commandments. Unfortunately, as the Apostle Paul learned (Rom 7:15–25), sin continues to dwell within our fleshly members (within the tent of flesh in which the new creature dwells) so that when we want to do good, we find ourselves at war with ourselves and in a fight to make us do what we know is right. And frankly, we lose some of these battles, which is why the mantle of Christ Jesus' righteousness (grace) is absolutely necessary. Growing in grace and knowledge is all about winning the war we fight within ourselves, for as sons of God we grow bigger and stronger the more we inwardly strive against the lawlessness of this world.

The second Passover liberation of Israel is about being liberated from indwelling sin and death so that the fight we have been making within ourselves will become an outward fight against the world: we, as sons of God, will outwardly represent that desire presently within our minds to do what is right—and as difficult as it has been to overcome the flesh, it will be equally difficult to overcome the world once the endtime years of tribulation begin. But as we can overcome the flesh, we will be able to overcome the world when the time comes

... Satan will be no match for the sons of God when he is cast from heaven (Rev 12:7–10), and Satan’s seed will be no match for the sons of God (sons of Light) even though they severely outnumber the sons of God and despite them possessing the resources of this world.

It is not now, though, time to contend with the world. That time will come once the seven endtime years of tribulation begin. It is, now, time to cease participating in those things that belong to the world.

Is the above understandable? Today, pre-second Passover, disciples do not contend with the world, but with indwelling sin, with the desire of do right that is in the mind serving as a representation of Christ Jesus, the Head of every disciple. The Apostle Paul found that his fleshly members did the very things his mind hated (Rom 7:15), and so it is with every disciple: an invisible war is presently being fought between the mind and the flesh within disciples. But when the disciple is “liberated” from bondage to indwelling sin at the second Passover, this inner war will be over; it will have been won by Christ. But the Father will then deliver disciples into the hand of the man of perdition (Dan 7:25), the lawless one, and a new war that is in reality the same war will have begun: the disciple will have to overcome the world as the disciple had previously fought to overcome the flesh. And the disciple who has been actively fighting against indwelling sin will overcome the world as Jesus overcame the world, but the disciple who has been accommodating indwelling sin will accommodate the world and will be delivered into the lake of fire.

A disciple cannot leave this world as long as his or her fleshly body remains in need of those things that pertain to this world. A person has to work to provide for him or herself. And in working, the person engages in business in some form in this world. So the question becomes one of how much contact can a person have with this world before becoming a part of it? How close can a person snuggle up to this world before felling into bed with it?

The Lord commanded ancient Israel to remain separate from the world, to not let sons and daughters intermarry with Gentile neighbors, to not permit idolatrous cities and cultures to exist within Israel’s domain, to not adopt heathen religious practices—all things that pertained to the flesh, and all things that Israel ignored. Israel repeatedly rebelled against God, doing whatever the nation thought was right, behaving in the same way as Christendom has behaved for the past two millennia. And again moving from physical to spiritual, separation for the Christian is mental, not geographical. Not letting sons and daughters marry Gentiles pertains to not permitting sons and daughters to marry outside the faith, a teaching that flies in the face of multicultural diversity. Idolatrous cities equate to idolatrous heresies. And we have returned to theological Neanderthalism; for to sons of God who will be glorified, the Perez Hiltons of this world are as cancerous tumors, mentally grotesque anomalies that will kill the dead if it were possible. There is no tolerance of evil by sons of God.

Participation in the things or activities of this world take the disciple away from God ... has anyone ever wondered why “one day sales” are always held on Saturday? It is as if the world

deliberately chooses to exclude the children of God from participation in these super-savings opportunities.

Hutterites and Amish and a few other religious orders have chosen not to participate in the general commerce of this world. By wearing distinctive dress, they visually separate themselves from this world while spiritually remaining a part of the world's multi-cultural diversity ... there is only one outward sign that truly results in separation from this world—and that sign (Ex 31:13, 17) is Sabbath observance.

The vitriol expressed toward Sabbatarian disciples was captured by Jesus saying that “the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world” (John 17:14). The world loves it own; the world loves those that participate fully in the things of this world. The world loves those that pray for the world. The world will even accept those who are a little different as long as they sometimes participate in the things of this world. But the world has no tolerance for those sons of God who will not be a part of the world.

Every disciple has to make a choice when newly born (when the disciple first receives the Holy Spirit): the disciple has to choose life or death after the manner in which the children of Israel on the plains of Moab had to choose life or dead (Deut 30:15–20). And choosing death is as simple as choosing to keep one foot in this world.

Only by being fully committed to separating oneself from this world while continuing to live in it can a person avoid being trapped by Death, the name of a demonic king forming part of the spiritual “king of Greece” (Dan 8:21–22).

Now, what about the abuses? The urge to cluster together in a form of visible separation from this world leaves the disciple vulnerable to con men and hucksters and the servants of Satan. Plus, in clustering together, as those of Penn's Colony found during the French and Indian War, the cluster becomes part of this world and subject to the demands of the prince of this world. Only when separation is mostly invisible can the son of God escape participating in human governance ... even when human governance is advertised as God's governance in this era, that human governance is subject to the prince of this world.

[*The Philadelphia Church*](#) was formed in this era without central governance; for this is the only structure by which the Assembly of the Lord can be organized in the world without that assembly becoming part of the administration of the devil. As soon as one person places him or herself over another person in this present era, the person utilizes the dominion Satan was given when humankind was consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32), for disobedience still dwells in whomever is in charge. Of course, the Father can place a person in a position of responsibility, but the Father will also back up the authority He has given to the person as the Lord backed up Moses when Korah challenged the authority Moses had.

If a gathering of disciples (prior to the second Passover liberation of Israel) comes together without central authority, or a headquarters structure, then the type of abuses seen in

previous religious communes cannot occur—and if someone begins to take authority onto him or herself, genuine disciples need to flee immediately. But in order for a community to function without central authority (a theoretical anarchy), every person must necessarily be born of spirit and have achieved enough maturity to walk uprightly before the Lord even when no one is looking. Unfortunately, this is an unlikely occurrence prior to the second Passover. Therefore, until the endtime years of tribulation begin do not expect to see cooperating communities of saints, for any such community will be subject to the authority of the Adversary.

Non-participation means non-participation.

Everything will change following the [second Passover](#); then will change again halfway through the seven endtime years. Until these changes occur, disciples need to quietly fight the war going on within themselves, striving diligently to overcome indwelling sin that lies close to the person. There will be plenty of outward fighting to do once the seven endtime years of tribulation begin—and unless the person has developed the mental maturity to overcome sin within the person’s fleshly members, the world will utterly devour the disciple once the battlefield is enlarged to include all the world.

There are disciples alarmed by the things occurring in this world ... it is the world that needs to be alarmed by the things occurring in this world. Disciples need not participate in these alarms.

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