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## Commentary — From the Margins

### The School of the Prophets

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Now the wife of one of the sons of the prophets cried to Elisha, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the Lord [YHWH], but the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.”  
(2 Kings 4:1)

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During a period in ancient Israel’s history when the kings of Israel and Judah were devoted to idolatry and the worship of foreign gods that were no gods, the Levitical priesthood found no favor with these kings. Hence, in Israel’s history during this period appears two identifying phrases: the sons of the prophets and the school of the prophets. And while the first phrase suggests that the sons of the prophets were young people—teenagers—Scripture has one of these “sons” dying and leaving a widow with two weaned children, requiring that this “son of the prophets” was in his mid-twenties or older.

When a person lacks spiritual understanding and uses multiple translations, lexicons, and Bible aids to extract meaning from Scripture, little details get overlooked, details like no Levite faithful to Moses and God was then serving in the priesthood of Israel and Judah; none would have been receiving the tithes of Israel. And without having been given a land inheritance in Israel, the Levitical priesthood had no means of surviving short of joining with the false prophets then serving the kings of Israel, or banding together in and out of the cities formerly given to them ... as God’s representatives, the descendants of Levi were systematically excluded from the economic activity then occurring in Judea in a manner analogous to how those who do not take the mark of the beast cannot buy or sell in the second half of the seven endtime years of tribulation.

Some correspondences need to be established:

- As there was a first Elijah during the period that produced the sons of the prophets, there will be a last Elijah, the glorified Christ Jesus, who turns the heart of the Father to His children and the hearts of the sons of God to the Father prior to the end of this age. This last Elijah will turn the stony hearts of Israel into fleshly hearts cleansed by faith.

- Disciples of Christ Jesus are today the chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation: they are not merely Israel, but are spiritually analogous to the tribe of Levi. Thus, born of Spirit disciples are the sons of God who will serve God as the Body of His firstborn Son—as the Helpmate [Bride] of the Son.
- Every disciple is a “son” of the prophets, with Christ Jesus being the foremost Prophet, in the sense that disciples remain spiritual children or legal minors until they reach their majority upon glorification.
- Teaching spiritual sons of the prophets is about teaching disciples knowledge of God and explaining the message of salvation (Isa 28:9). It is not about teach disciples to be carpenters or auto mechanics. Nor is it about teaching those who are not yet spiritually weaned.
- Paul wrote that he gave to the Corinthians only spiritual milk for they were not—even when he wrote—ready for solid food (1 Co 3:1-3). Likewise, the writer of Hebrews wrote that although these Jewish converts should by then have been teachers, they were still in need of milk (Heb 5:11-14). So Scripture is spiritual milk for those disciples who are not yet ready for meat.

The school of the prophets is about teaching disciples the meat of God’s Word, and the prophet Isaiah says that knowledge of God and of His message is not taught line upon line, precept upon precept, for this is how the Word of the Lord will cause Israel to stumble, fall backwards, be broken, snared, and taken (Isa 28:13). The Apostle Paul wrote that “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth” (Rom 1:18). So it is the disobedience [lawlessness] to which every human being has been consigned (Rom 11:32) that suppresses the truth. It is “human nature” or that old nature with which every person is born that suppresses truth and elevates falsehood. Therefore, the school of the prophets is about mental separation from the world and its values (1 John 2:15-17), and the coming together of disciples to learn spiritual meat ... Paul wrote that disciples should not forsake assembling together as is the habit of some (Heb 10:24-25), for it is through these assemblies that the spiritual school of the prophets meets to learn the weightier matters of the law, and to hear God’s message about salvation.

What about teaching young people? How should they be taught? Certainly thought has been given to these questions by all of Christendom, and especially by Sabbatarian fellowships. I remember that more than forty years ago, the Seventh Day Adventists along the Oregon Coast worried about the retention of their young, for they retained only half of their youth, with the other half joining the world—and even if not rejecting the values of their parents, showing ambivalence towards keeping the Sabbath. Likewise, the former Worldwide Church of God spent considerable money and expended much effort to retain its youth, but one of its youth killed the organization and returned the fellowship to Evangelical Protestantism. So the education and retention of the younger generation is a problem, but is it a problem that needs “solved”?

- Should any Christian youth remain in a Sunday observing fellowship? Or should the youth of all Sunday-Observing fellowships make a journey of faith into the Promised Land of Judea where he or she will keep the Sabbath?
- Should any young person growing up in a Sabbatarian fellowship remain with this fellowship if the fellowship does not teach observing the high Sabbaths of God? No, the young person should not remain where he or she grew to physical maturity, but should move on to where Scripture is better taught.
- Should any young person growing up in a Sabbatarian fellowship remain with this fellowship if the fellowship inserts Rome or the Roman Church into biblical prophecies? No, the young person should not remain where he or she grew to physical maturity, but should move on to where prophecy is better taught.

To cleanse his or her heart in preparation for spiritual circumcision, every young person must make a journey of faith equivalent in mental distance to the physical journey made by the patriarch Abraham prior to his physical circumcision.

Young people growing up in the household of born of Spirit disciples do not automatically receive the Holy Spirit and spiritual circumcision. Baptism without a journey of faith isn't enough. The Roman Church "baptizes" infants and all that happens is the wetting of the forehead, for the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit is the keeping of the commandments by faith (Rom 8:7), and neither the Roman Church nor its youth keep the commandments. Southern Baptists "baptize" its youth in a Believers' Baptism, but the young person merely gets wet all over, for neither Southern Baptists nor its youth keep the commandments. Amish baptize in a Believers' Baptism, but as a sect these otherwise pious Germans absolutely refuse to keep the Sabbath—and to break the commandments in one point makes the person a lawbreaker (Jas 2:10). So should the young people in any of the fellowships remain in the belief paradigm of their parents? NO!! Absolutely not. They all need to make a journey of faith into God's rest (cf. Heb 3:16-4:11; Ps 95:10-11; Num chap 14).

The question arises: is it better for, say, a Mennonite youth to return to the world and to feel ambivalent toward the faith of his or her parents than for this young person to continue in the faith of his or her parents? For the perspective of making a journey of faith into keeping the commandments, yes, it is. The young person knows what the commandments are, and what God expects from the person. When this young person repents of his or her lawlessness, especially of breaking the Sabbath, the person will have—at that time—made a journey of faith of sufficient distance to cleanse his or her heart, the necessary condition to being spiritually circumcised, the rite of inclusion for being of the Elect.

Actually, when moving from physical to spiritual, all disciples are children of God in need of schooling. The Mennonite parents of the young person in the previous paragraph have as great a need for schooling as do their children. But as a person ages physically, the person

becomes less receptive to change. Even the Father delivering His words through Jesus—His words as modulations of His divine Breath constituted the healing acts of Jesus—on the Sabbath is not enough to convince the devout Mennonite to cease attempting to enter God’s rest on the following day, a day on which no person can enter into God’s rest: Sunday is not the Sabbath, never was, and never can be. Disciples already have a command to observe the Wave Sheaf Offering on the morrow after the Sabbath during Unleavened Bread; for Moses gave the command to observe what is now being called Resurrection Sunday. Plus, the congregations of Israel do not take up an offering at their weekly services: offerings are only taken up three times [seasons] a year. So Paul’s command to put aside an offering for the saints in Jerusalem has no bearing on Sabbath observance. Nor does breaking bread on the first day of the week, for bread was routinely broken when a meal was eaten through the 17th and 18th Centuries CE—and Paul had just celebrated the days of Unleavened Bread less than two weeks earlier (Acts 20:6). Nevertheless, the gray bearded Mennonite will be extremely reluctant to admit that for sixty or more years he has wrongly kept Sunday as the Sabbath. Instead, he will, most likely, continue his attempts to justify his lawlessness. Hence, it would be best for his sons and grandsons to “slip” away and quietly begin obeying God, living by all of His words, not by nine of ten commandments. Perhaps Christ, who knows this gray-beard’s heart, will determine that this disciple has only “relaxed” what the disciple considered the least of the commandments, thereby being in the kingdom of heaven even if called least.

All disciples will be in one of three categories:

1. The disciple who keeps the commandments and teaches others to do likewise will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:19).
2. The disciple who relaxes the least of the commandments and teaches others to do likewise will be called least in the kingdom of heaven (same verse).
3. But the disciple who teaches lawlessness, regardless of the mighty works done in Jesus’ name, will be denied in his or her resurrection and will perish in the lake of fire (Matt 7:21-23).

A person can argue with Scripture if he or she desires, saying that what Jesus taught was for one dispensation, but since Calvary disciples are in another dispensation. The person’s argument is meaningless, for the Apostle John, decades after Calvary, wrote that if a person says he or she knows Christ but doesn’t keep the commandments and walk as Jesus walked (Jesus walked as an Observant Jew) is a liar, with no truth in the person (1 John 2:1-6). The Apostle Paul told the saints at Philippi to imitate him (Phil 3:17), and before Festus, Paul said that he had committed no offense against the law of the Jews, against the temple, or against Caesar (Acts 25:8). Paul lived his life as an Observant Jew. Hence, the person who argues to lawlessness and committing sin so that good will come from sin needs to be shunned. This would-be teacher of Israel is not of God, but of the idolaters whose spiritual ancestry goes back to the prophets that served the lawless kings of Israel and Judah.

Disciples have no fellowship with sin. They cannot assemble together with others embroiled in lawlessness and escape untarnished. Thus, a Sabbatarian should not assemble together with those who transgress the Sabbath commandment and mock God by calling themselves Christians.

The prophet Elijah had one apprentice, no more—and he only had this apprentice because God told him to anoint “Elisha the son of Shaphet of Abel-meholah” to be the prophet in his place (1 Kings 19:16), so that Elisha would put to death those who escape the sword of Hazael and Jehu (v. 17). Elisha was called by God to kill evildoers, for apparently Elijah had his fill of killing after slaying the 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah. Thus, instead of taking Jezebel out when she threatened him, he had fled from before her; so God called another to do the dirty business of cleansing the land.

If someone without spiritual understanding were to suggest that endtime disciples establish schools of the prophets to have their youth become apprentices of Elijah and Elisha, whom would those sons of the prophets slay?

- Elijah was given power to shut the heavens so that it would not rain for three years. In this, he is like the two endtime witnesses.
- Elisha receives double the Spirit that was upon Elijah, so when he cursed the boys [young men] who made fun of his bald head, two she bears tore up 42 of the boys.
- Both Elijah and Elisha were called to kill evildoers. No such calling exists today.

The sons of the prophets were not disciples of Elijah or Elisha. They were not commissioned by God to kill the priests of the kings of Israel and Judah. Rather, they were the ousted priesthood that had no inheritance in Judea. They were not apprentices in multiple trades; they were Levites learning how to serve God when access to the temple was denied them for several generations.

To the spiritually illiterate, establishing a school of the prophets where the sons of the prophets can be trained to build houses and learn all sorts of trades has a certain appeal; a place where the sons and daughters of endtime disciples can go to learn — what? What will they learn? The same thing they learn in trade schools, but in a “Christian” environment? Whose brand of Christianity? Is not this the reason for Harvard’s creation? It certainly is. What has since happened?

What young people need to be taught by older disciples isn’t how to make a living, but that they must—without exception—make a journey of faith equivalent to Abraham’s physical journey of faith if they hope to receive the Holy Spirit and spiritual circumcision prior to when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation. And this journey of faith can be as easily made in a secular university as in a

religious commune ... those who would shelter their youth from the world condemn their youth to be defeated by the world, not something I realized until I saw the evidence of it happening all around me.

Satan doesn't need immodest dress and obscene song lyrics to condemn a "Christian" young person to the lake of fire. Sunday observance and keeping Christmas will work just as well once the Tribulation begins—all Satan has to do is prevent the young person from making a journey of faith that will cleanse the young person's heart. And for Sabbatarian youth, clinging to the traditions and beliefs of the young person's parents precludes making any journey of faith without the young person going out as a missionary as Timothy did under Paul's tutelage.

A person deceives in the name of Christ by teaching that the visible things of this world are of spiritual importance, and the person who would establish a school for the youth of Sabbatarian Christendom would do better teaching the parents of these youth to cease thinking physically; to cease looking for physical fulfillments of endtime prophecies; to cease placing importance on physical separation and begin placing importance on mental separation. The flesh is only the tent that houses the born of Spirit son of God, an invisible creation or creature that has come from heaven in the form of the divine Breath of God. And this new nature that comes through a second birth doesn't develop where hearts have not been cleansed by faith.

A true school of the prophets prepares missionaries for field work. Anything else is a lie.

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