

## Commentary — From the Margins *Authority*

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[Authority] doesn't cause rebellion. It simply exposes rebellion. ... Not everyone rebels when under the authority of another, or [of a] governing body. Authority simply exposes rebellion. (Matt Hebert. Personal e-letter, dated Sept 11, 2015)

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### 1.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the holy ones at Corinth, “For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing [be with his father’s wife]. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord” (1 Cor 5:3–5). ... By what authority did Paul command these holy ones to put a person out of the fellowship, that is to *deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh*? For delivery of a person to Satan for the destruction of the flesh is serious: unless this person, having known the goodness of God, is returned to Christ, the person will perish eternally.

But the issue that pertains to “authority” is imbedded in the qualifier Paul placed in his command to these holy ones, a qualifier that is usually ignored: *when my spirit is present ...*

When would Paul’s spirit have been present in Corinth if Paul were absent in body? Can Paul’s spirit [*pneuma*] be *present* in a fellowship when Paul is not only physically absent from the fellowship but, say, deceased for nearly two millennium? Can Paul’s spirit be present in an endtime fellowship? And if it can be, what would cause Paul to command that a person be put out of the fellowship, that is *delivered to Satan*?

Paul’s inner “life force” that is represented metaphorically by the linguistic icon <*pneuma*> cannot be present at Corinth unless Paul is physically present. But this cannot be how Paul used the linguistic icon <*pneuma*>; so Paul’s use of *pneuma* cannot be read metaphorically; the icon cannot be read to mean Paul’s inner self, his soul [*psuche*] in which dwells his spirit [*to pneuma tou Paulou*]. However, if Paul’s *pneuma* is read metonymically—an aspect of the “whole of Paul” representing all of *Paul*—then Paul could be present in Corinth when he was physically absent; for his words do not have inherent meaning, but mean whatever auditors say the words “mean.” Hence, Paul’s spirit/*pneuma* would need to have been present before the holy ones at Corinth could have read his words as he intended. And his spirit would have been present whenever what he taught these holy ones was remembered by these holy ones.

My spirit is present in my scribblings. Yes, whenever you read my words—regardless of whether you agree or disagree with what I write and have written for the past thirteen years—my spirit is metonymically present ... again, my words, like all other words heard

or read, are without meaning until an auditor assigns meaning to them, stylistically, my pedagogical redundancy limits the assignment of meaning to my words. The reader who simply refuses to accept the presence of my spirit when he or she reads doesn't read many words, nor reads for long: this person will simply dismiss what I write, saying my writings are confusing; saying my words circle back on themselves and go nowhere; saying they make no sense. Sobeit. This person has refused to let my spirit enter into fellowship with the person. And such was the case with the Circumcision Faction refusing to let Paul's spirit into their fellowship.

Not all of mid 1<sup>st</sup>-Century Christendom received or accepted Paul's words, his spirit. In fact, much of the Jesus Movement would have nothing to do with Paul until decades after his death. And even today, there is an element within the Sabbatarian Church that actively rejects Paul, this element believing and teaching that Paul hijacked the Jesus Movement and that his epistles should be rejected.

But Paul was entrusted with a task, that of revealing to 1<sup>st</sup>-Century believers that the circumcision that mattered had moved from the flesh to the heart, with circumcision of the heart being a euphemistic expression for no longer being stubborn; no longer refusing to believe God.

As linguistic icons, words don't have one or two or even several meanings. Although an element of *Thirdness* [a linguistic trace] prevents every meaning from being assigned to a word, words routinely support most every meaning assigned to them. And the error imbedded in concordances and other biblical study aids is that of concordances' authors believing that words have meanings that can be determined through diligent study.

I need the preceding sentence to be fully realized: it is always a theological mistake to use a concordance as a dictionary ... in the history of the English language, dictionaries of rare or uncommon words—words the common person wouldn't know when the word was used by educated persons—have long existed, their history going back to the early years of the printing press. But it is generally agreed that the first dictionary of common English words was Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*, published 15 April 1755, with Johnson's Dictionary greatly influencing the history of the English language. Although Johnson said that *to fix* [as in fastening down] *a language was as attempting to enchain the wind* (my remembered paraphrase), his dictionary did greatly hamper the *drift* of the English language, thereby becoming an aid to book sellers, publishers, and printers. For if a language drifts far from when a book is printed, the book becomes unreadable by future generations. And the example I have previously used in *A Philadelphia Apologetic* are the opening lines from *Havelok the Dane*, a once popular English romance. Popular six, seven centuries ago. About as long ago as the centuries between Moses and the prophet Isaiah.

A dictionary, by design, is intended to limit thought by restricting the linguistic objects that can be assigned to a linguistic icon. Biblical concordances [especially Strong's] are far too often employed as dictionaries, especially so by theological novices as in the case of Paul's spirit being present in the fellowship of holy ones at Corinth when Paul was not physically in Corinth ... *pneuma* as a linguistic icon can metonymically represent Paul's voice; Paul's teachings; Paul's writings. Therefore, Paul can be metonymically "present" nearly twenty centuries after Paul died physically through Paul's voice revealing his teachings. Paul will be "present" whenever the

concepts espoused by Paul are injected into a religious service. And my spirit will be present whenever and wherever my teachings are expounded upon in a religious service.

My spirit isn't present outside of the context of acceptance of what I write. Thus, when two believers are discussing football or pouring a concrete slab, my spirit isn't among them, nor is Paul's spirit. But when these two believers discuss the Second Passover as the initiating event for the seven endtime years of tribulation, my spirit is present. Likewise, when these believers speak of the reality that in Christ there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek; that the flesh cannot please God, the Apostle Paul is present.

Paul's voice—his vocalizations—are inscribed in his writings: letters that express the movement of Israel from being the nation that is circumcised in the flesh to being the nation circumcised of heart, with "heart" used as an euphemistic expression for the person's soul [*psuche*] that houses the spirit of the person [*to pneuma tou 'anthropou*]. As the fleshly body of a naturally circumcised Israelite houses the "soul" of the Israelite, the "soul" of a person houses the "spirit" of this person, thereby introducing the concept that the fleshly body of the Israelite serves as the visible shadow and type of the invisible soul, the invisible inner man [person], with this inner man being neither male nor female but spiritual as angels are. As a result, this inner man cannot be outwardly circumcised, but can only be circumcised of heart, again a euphemistic expression for no longer being inwardly stubborn, unbelieving, hostile to God, resisting God whenever the person can.

Physically a person's fleshly body is what the person eats. The same is true spiritually. If a person ingests a diet of violence, the person is inwardly violent even if this violence is never outwardly manifested. If the person ingests a diet of human failings such as televised divorce court, the person expects the worst from other human beings; expects other people to behave as this person sees people behaving on divorce court or on televised reality shows such as Jerry Springer. The person will not expect people to behave uprightly for the person "feeds" on examples of people behaving badly. Likewise, if a person lives in darkness, lives in a literal or figurative cave, the person becomes "dark" inside: the person's inner man loses whatever advantage "civilization" has afforded humanity. And as cave-dwelling animal species lose their eyesight and eventually their eyes, human persons who dwell in darkness lose their ability to see. They become spiritually blind. And if they remain in darkness for an extended length of time, they are never able to recover their spiritual insight. Sure they can see with their physical eyes, but they cannot understand spiritual matters even if they diligently study the Bible from dawn to dusk, day after day.

To summarize a rather significant point: it is the spiritually immature person who uses a concordance to establish unfamiliar word meaning—and we were all there at one time—but it a spiritually blind person who refuses to leave the darkness and live in physical light as a son of spiritual light. When the spiritually immature person has become familiar with the text identified as the Holy Bible and has matured sufficiently in grace and knowledge to have added virtue to the person's faith, this person will rarely use an concordance, which is merely another person's understanding of what meanings this other person has chosen to assign to Greek icons and what vowels this other person

has chosen to assign to Hebrew consonant clusters, thereby converting these consonant clusters into words.

Spiritual blindness, however, is the more significant problem ...

Spiritual blindness grips humanity that, according to Paul, is without excuse for its bad behavior:

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. For *although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.* Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. (Rom 1:16–25 emphasis added)

Dwelling in darkness dishonors God, but God put *darkness* upon the hearts of those who once knew Him but did not honor Him as God—and how does a person who knows God fail to honor Him as God? By elevating the “self” over neighbor and brother, the first step to placing the creation over the Creator.

Where in Scripture is it permitted to cease from doing good? Where is it permitted in Scripture not to labor six days a week? Where in Scripture is “retirement” as “me-time” permitted? ... If a person refuses to labor the first six days of the week and rest on the seventh day, then why does the person need physical health? Why not confine the person to bed, letting the person rest for the remainder of the person’s short life? What good to God is the person who refuses to labor six days a week? And if a person doesn’t have to labor to earn his or her mundane living, then the person has the ability to spend the person’s days serving others. And if not called to preach, then this service to others isn’t growing flowers to please the self, but feeding the hungry and giving shelter to the homeless.

As Paul’s spirit was in his epistles, with Paul writing,

*We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.* Look at what is before your eyes. *If anyone is confident that he is Christ's, let him remind himself that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.* For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be ashamed. I do not want to appear to be frightening you with my letters. For **they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account."** Let such a person understand that

what we say by letter when absent, we do when present. (2 Cor 10:5–11 emphasis and doubled emphasis added)

my spirit is in my writings, with my intent being to destroy arguments that place importance on the flesh and the things of the flesh such as the sounds of utterances ... the authority any person has can only be for the building up of believers, and this authority isn't what the "authoritarian" thinks; for the one who would be great serves the most. The one who would be great strives for six days a week to feed the hungry and is not looking to be fed by others. The one who has authority has this authority in spite of the Adversary remaining the prince of this world, meaning that "this authority" doesn't look like worldly authority. This authority lies in Christ's spirit being in Paul's spirit, and in Paul's spirit being in my spirit.

Have I gone too far, said too much?

A believer must understand and must be willing to accept that not all of humanity will be saved or even wants to be saved. A believer must understand that greater Christendom rejected the spirit of Christ long ago—not only rejected, but built walls that prevented and continues to prevent potential believers from coming to Christ.

By the time the children of Israel arrived on the plains of Moab, the children of Israel had replaced the nation of Israel that left Egypt virtually man for man. Likewise, the third part of humanity (from Zech 13:9) in the Endurance of Jesus will replace greater Christendom that will rebel against God in the Affliction virtually person for person. So too will human sons of God replace rebelling angels—angelic sons of God—virtually son for son, meaning that however many glorified human sons of God there will be is close to how many angelic sons of God will perish in the coming of a new heaven and new earth. So for a person to want every human person ever born to become a glorified son of God, the person wants an equal number of angelic sons of God to perish ... of course the person wanting all of humanity saved doesn't consciously think this thought: the person is too spiritually immature to think this thought. This, however, is the reality of the Adversary's rebellion against the Most High God, with the Adversary counting on the debased nature of humanity to preclude God from glorifying any human person fathered by Adam. The Adversary's best argument for reincorporating condemned angelic sons of God into heaven is humanity's mockery of God.

How many of Hollywood's celebrities believe the words of Moses? Certainly not many. How many of today's celebrities are openly gay; are bisexual or now pan-sexual? These are the people who entertain Americans and to a large extent the world. They are the roles models the Adversary pushes upon the youth of America. And the majority of the nation passively laps up the swill being produced by the entertainment industry as America leads its youth farther and farther from God.

Europe is receiving an inoculation of morality in the Muslim and Christian refugees fleeing Syria, Iraq, other Near and Middle East nations embroiled in civil strife between radical Sunni and radical Shia Muslims ... there is never anything "civil" about civil wars.

Spiritual blindness doesn't permit the person dwelling in darkness to have empathy for angelic sons of God, but God has empathy for His angelic sons. And without attempting to interact in any way with angelic sons of God, human sons of God also ought to have empathy for those angels that didn't rebel against the Most High, but who

are presently watching the ongoing demonstration of the Adversary's commitment to democratic governance. But the spiritually blind do not realize that they are "blind." Instead, the spiritually blind will inevitably believe they are pillars of spiritual wisdom; for they have great compassion for people who look like themselves.

To be sons of light, Christians must dwell in "light"; for in giving off light, a son of light illuminates himself as well as all around him. How can a son of light dwell in darkness when the son of light emits the light of the indwelling Christ from the person? It is only the person not born of spirit that can long dwell in darkness. So the person who intuitively chooses darkness over light hasn't been born of light; hasn't been born of God through the indwelling of Christ Jesus. This person may well want to be a son of light, but until the person willingly leaves darkness behind, the person's desires have no reality.

So when is Paul's spirit, again used metonymically, *present* during an end of the era church service? This question is germane today; for in Paul's inscribed thoughts lies Paul's mind ... again, Paul's spirit is present when Paul's words are spoken during a service; that is, when someone reads from Paul's genuine epistles during a service.

But in saying *genuine epistles*, the implication is that some of the epistles attributed to Paul were not written by Paul; hence, these epistles are not *genuine*.

Today, disciples have been deceived by the Adversary ("that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, *the deceiver of the whole world*" — Rev 12:9 emphasis added) into believing that the Bible as received from secular men four centuries after Calvary is the inspired Word of God ... that assumption is not true: the Book of Acts is a Second Sophist novel; Luke's Gospel is a secular redaction of the oral gospel, plus a redaction of Mark's Gospel as well as early inscribed sayings of Jesus. Linguistically, the Pastoral Epistles were authored approximately fifty years after Paul died. Thus, the Bible from which most Christian pastors preach (using Luke and Acts as primary sources for their messages) is not what it purports to be, that is the Bible is not the infallible Word of God.

Matthew's Gospel isn't historically factual, but it need not be for Matthew's Gospel is the biography of the indwelling Christ Jesus, the "spirit of Christ" [*pneuma Christou*] that "penetrates" the spirit of the person [*to pneuma tou 'anthropou*] as a husband penetrates his wife during human procreation ... Matthew's Gospel is about spiritual procreation; thus Matthew's Gospel is prophetic rather than historical. The chapter one and chapter two account of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel represents the royal birth of a human son of God and the exodus of the spirit of the person" from sin and death: in type, the "Jesus" of these two chapters represents what Paul writes when he said, "For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:7–8).

An unborn person is without sin even though when the person is humanly born, he or she will be born consigned to disobedience.

Now, back to the head quote: authority exists to expose rebellion. Paul's authority as represented in his epistles existed to expose rebellion. My authority as represented by my spirit in my writings serves to expose rebellion. And about this I will write more in the near future.

The human son of God, born of spirit, has a spiritually unborn prehistory as son of disobedience that figuratively dwells in Egypt as Moses dwelt in Egypt as a prince... the man Jesus of Nazareth had no indwelling sin so He would not have blocked the *light* that is God. There should be no physical record of Him prior to the beginning of His earthly ministry. Thus, Matthew's pre-ministry history of Jesus shouldn't exist except for its symbolic value, that of the disciple who will be born of spirit casting an earthly shadow because of his or her indwelling sin. And because the Jesus of Matthew's Gospel is the otherwise invisible indwelling Christ, every person truly born of spirit has authority in what he or she says, but authority to do good through feeding the hungry and giving shelter to the homeless, especially to those million plus refugees trapped between borders in Eastern Europe.

When an assembly has gathered to worship God as Paul taught the holy ones at Corinth to worship God, the spirit of Paul is present. Indeed, in Gentiles gathering together on the Sabbath to imitate Paul as he imitated Christ Jesus (1 Cor 11:1 *et al*), Paul's spirit is present in the assembly; for Gentiles simply gathering on the Sabbath is an "unnatural" act that causes these Gentiles to be special, sanctified before God, not necessarily born of God. Now Gentiles could have been gathered on the Sabbath in other locations because of the teachings of Peter or because of the teachings of another apostle or evangelist, but the spirit of Paul wouldn't have been in these assemblies. Rather, the spirit of Peter or of Thomas or of Andrew would have been in these assemblies. And so it is today: Lutherans gather together on the day after the Sabbath because the spirit of Martin Luther is then present in their assemblies. Methodists gather together on the day after the Sabbath because that is when the teachings of John and Charles Wesley, both English Catholic (not Roman Catholic), priests, would have them gather together to receive the spirit of John and Charles. The remaining splinters of Herbert Armstrong's ministry gather together on the Sabbath for that is when the spirit of Herbert Armstrong is present among these spiritually dead disciples. Likewise, Seventh Day Adventist fellowships assemble together on the Sabbath because that is when the spirit of Ellen G. White is among them.

So the question of whether Paul's spirit/*pneuma* was *present* in Corinth when Paul was physically absent can be answered affirmatively. Thus, the question of whether Paul's spirit can be *present* in an assembly of believers centuries later can also be answered affirmatively.

One last question: can the "spirit of Paul" as projected onto the regular Sabbath meetings of the holy ones at Corinth be projected into endtime fellowships to deliver a person to Satan for the destruction of the flesh? Yes, it can, the reality behind spiritually marking the person as *The Philadelphia Church – Port Austin* marked Norman Scott Edwards in 2004 for swindling his brothers-in-Christ out of their ownership positions in the real property formerly owned by the Air Force.

The *spirit of the Apostle Paul* wasn't Paul's inner self, nor was it the breath of Paul, but rather, it was what Paul had previously spoken; his previous utterances as remembered by the holy ones at Corinth. And to these utterances, Paul was adding inscribed instructions that needed as their "base" the implied authority imparted by Paul's previous utterances. What authority? The authority of being the teacher ... the one who teaches has authority over those whom this one teaches, not the type of authority

that a king has or that dictators have but the authority inherent to having superior knowledge. But this sort of authority is only recognized by those who realize their knowledge-inferiority. For the Roman soldier who killed the great mathematician Archimedes when Syracuse fell during the Second Punic War (212 BCE), according to Plutarch's popular account, did so even though he had been ordered to bring Archimedes alive to the Roman General Marcellus. Apparently upon encountering the mathematician, the soldier commanded Archimedes to come with him. Archimedes declined to go with the soldier, saying he had to finish working on the problem he hadn't yet solved, and the soldier, angry at being defied, slew the mathematician with his sword.

The Roman soldier would not have known enough math to appreciate the greatness of Archimedes. However, General Marcellus knew enough: he could appreciate this greatness—and even though he was the victorious commander of Roman forces, Marcellus would have deferred to Archimedes in areas of mechanical or scientific inquiry, thereby giving to Archimedes the authority of a teacher; of being his potential teacher.

The power to physically kill is merely the power of the Adversary; for death is the handmaiden of the disobedience to which God has consigned all living persons. Therefore, when Paul commanded the holy ones at Corinth to deliver the man who was with his father's wife to the Adversary for the destruction of the flesh, Paul was simply acting in accordance to the M.O. of the God of Abraham who delivered all of humanity to the Adversary for the destruction of the flesh in the days of Noah.

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