

## Commentary — From the Margins *Works of the Law*

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But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?" We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet *we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.* But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we too were found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! For if I rebuild what I tore down, I prove myself to be a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose. (Gal 2:11–21 emphasis added)

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God shows no partiality. For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but *the doers of the law who will be justified.* (Rom 2:11–13 emphasis added)

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### 1.

What are the “works of the Law” that justifies no one when it is the “doer of the Law who will be justified”?

The two Pauline epistles cited [Galatians and Romans] were written to different audiences and for different reasons. What Paul had to say to the holy ones at Rome, whom he hadn’t previously met, differs in emphasis from what he had to say to the churches of Galatia where he had taught his gospel. To the saints at Rome, Paul wrote a treatise about what he taught and would teach when he finally arrived there; whereas Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia a corrective epistle for having accepted a gospel other than what Paul taught.

Pause for a moment and consider the wall that separated Observant Israel from Gentiles: an Observant Jew couldn’t eat with an uncircumcised Greek, couldn’t serve in

the military with one, couldn't use the public bath or participate in athletic events without the stigma of outward circumcision reducing God's chosen people to second-class citizen status. For the previous two centuries, Jews that aspired to become part of the Greco-Roman world sought to remove the evidence of circumcision; whereas Observant Jews—equally stigmatized by Greek rejection—turned inward and elevated their status as *God's chosen people* to idolatry, actually making monotheism the idol that *God's chosen people* worshiped, the idol that Judaism took to the world and left with descendants of the son of Hagar and with descendants of most of the sons of Keturah. This is the idol that effectively prevents greater Judaism from coming to Christ Jesus and thereby being saved.

A mid-1<sup>st</sup>-Century CE schism occurred within the greater Christian Church that effectively rebuilt the barrier separating the Circumcised from the uncircumcised; the barrier Christ had torn down at Calvary. This schism came about through how Paul's Gospel was received and understood by converts that were not called by God, converts on both sides of the schism.

The physical elect were those Observant Israelites that kept the Commandments and that did not seek to become part of the Greco-Roman world. This physical elect offered sacrifices at the appropriate season; offered sin offerings for unintentional transgressions of the Law; made a point of fulfilling all aspects of Moses as they understood the writings of Moses. And when one of these physical elect became a Christian convert—and some did as evidenced by Paul's struggle with the Circumcision Party—these externally righteous Jews were absolutely convinced that Gentile converts had to become like them. Hence several of them had gone to the churches in Galatia and had taught these spiritual babes that it was necessary for them to be outwardly circumcised so that they could become full participants in the blessings given to Israel. And therein lay the ideological construct that caused Paul to write his corrective epistle to the churches in Galatia.

Mid and late 1<sup>st</sup>-Century CE, a spat occurred between the physical elect of God and the spiritual Elect of God, a spat that caused both sides to bleed, costing the loss of many physical lives and resulting in the death of the spiritual Body of Christ ... the Passover Lamb of God had both a Head and a Body. This lamb was sacrificed at Calvary, an earthly phenomenon that occurred on April 25<sup>th</sup> [Julian], a Wednesday, in the Common Year 31. But in the timeless supra-dimensional heavenly realm, this phenomenon occurs *while disciples remain sinners* (see Rom 5:8).

When the Passover Lamb of God was sacrificed at Calvary, this Lamb was the man Jesus of Nazareth, with the glorified Jesus being the Head of every disciple and with born-of-spirit disciples being the Body of Christ Jesus, analogous to a man being the head of his wife and his wife serving as the body [that bears seed] of the man. Yes, a man and his wife are born as two distinct human persons, but they become one flesh through marriage: head and body, as the glorified Christ Jesus is the Head of the Church and the Church is the Body of Christ, with the hope of Christians to be resurrected as the Bride of Christ.

There was no spiritual Body of Christ in existence until the glorified Jesus breathed on ten of His initial disciples and said, *Receive spirit holy* (John 20:22). And with that

the spirit was given: the Body of Christ was brought to life in a manner typified by Eve receiving life from the first Adam.

Since no person can come to Christ unless drawn by the Father (John 6:44), when the Father ceases to draw people from this world and deliver them to Christ Jesus, the Body of Christ will die when the last person truly born of spirit through the indwelling of Christ physically dies. The Body of Christ will then be resurrected from death when the Father again draws a person from this world and delivers the person to Christ Jesus for Him to call, justify [the reality of Rom 5:8], and glorify through the indwelling of Christ Jesus, the spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*] penetrating the spirit of the man [*to pneuma tou 'anthropou*] that is in the soul [*psuche*] of the man as a man penetrates his wife to produce offspring.

The divide separating the Circumcised from and the uncircumcised that was abolished at Calvary was rebuilt in heavenly Jerusalem, with the circumcision that matters now being of the heart, the euphemistic expression that represents the person's inner self, raised to life through the indwelling of Christ Jesus in the form of His spirit [again, *pneuma Christou*]. Christians are today either circumcised of heart and therefore of the Elect (foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified), or not yet born of spirit and therefore not circumcised of heart. And it is this latter classification of Christians where most (nearly all) of greater Christendom unknowingly resides.

Observant Jews continue to think of themselves as the elect of God, with Islam having picked up and polished their idol of monotheism, and with Evangelical Christians determined to “convert” Jew and Muslim and other Christians whom they identify as having the dead faith of the Old Church [the Greek and Latin Churches]. And Sabbatarian Christendom seems ever more determined to poach members from other Sabbatarian fellowships; for Sabbatarian Christian recruitment is almost nil ... the Father simply isn't drawing many from this world at this time. With greater boldness than usually expressed—not that I have historically lacked boldness—I will put forward the idea that those who have been drawn from this world at this time have been so drawn to do (directly or through supporting) the work presently being done by *Philadelphia*, or to learn from this work since all of the other named churches will come through this work, not necessarily as part of it but as having been at least partially schooled by it.

The seven named churches that form the seven horns on the head of the slain Lamb (Rev 5:6)—that are the seven lampstands (Rev 1:20)—will be schooled by this present work of *Philadelphia* in the testimony of Jesus that is the spirit of prophecy (*cf.* Rev 12:17; 19:10); that is knowledge of what will happen, when and why. Of course, not all will want to initially believe that they must come to their brothers in Christ for knowledge. Most will think they have equal standing before God with *Philadelphia*, but they have not read the Book that John sent to all seven churches. They cannot read this Book because of their present unbelief that is, according to Paul, sin.

As unbelief [the negation of faith] prevented the nation of Israel numbered in the census of the second year from entering the Promised Land, unbelief will prevent greater Christendom from entering heaven. Only a tithe of humanity will actually be gathered to God—and this tithe of humanity will *believe* what most of today's Christians refuse to believe about the Law and the work of the Law.

Among endtime disciples, the divide produced by circumcision of the heart isn't—as it was in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century—between Paul's gospel and what was being taught by Christian evangelists coming from earthly Jerusalem, but between circumcised of heart Israel and not yet truly born of spirit Israel. Today, Paul's epistle to the churches of Galatia has been used by lawless teachers and pastors as justification for Christian lawlessness whereas his epistle to the holy ones at Rome is usually cherry-picked for apparent anti-Law verses, thereby missing Paul's Gospel, the first part of which is that all who sin, regardless of whether outwardly circumcised [under the Law] or uncircumcised [Gentile], will perish for it is the doer of the Law who shall be justified. The latter part of his gospel is,

When Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. *They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts*, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (Rom 2:14–16)

*The works of the Law justify no one* when these works are physical only; yet the *work of the Law when written on hearts* justify disciples irrespective of whether the disciple is or isn't outwardly circumcised. For when the work of the Law is written on hearts, the person on whose heart the Law is inscribed will have manifested love for God, neighbor, and brother. And in having manifested love for God, the disciple will keep the Commandments as the reasonable expectation of all who dwell in the household of God.

The physical works of the Law are sacrifice performed by human hands, historically the sacrifice of animals but since the destruction of Herod's temple, the daily sacrifice of prayers and service ... doing good deeds can come from many motivations, some self-serving, some godly. But the good deeds themselves do not spiritually benefit the person. It is the motivation behind the deeds that may or may not benefit the person, who will outwardly be rewarded by being well-thought-of for doing these deeds. It is only when these deeds go unknown by the world and its prince (the Adversary) that these deeds truly benefit the disciple. Hence, the non-Christian, spiritually discounted by the Adversary, who does good deeds doesn't do them to gain favor with God but as a reflection of the non-Christian's inner self; whereas the Christian who does good deeds believes that he or she will be rewarded by God for the deeds done in a quid-pro-quo relationship.

The person who is not an active part of *Philadelphia* yet chooses to voluntarily support *Philadelphia* will receive the spiritual reward of *Philadelphia* whenever this person repents of his or her unbelief.

Back to the subject at hand: a person reading both Romans and Galatians side by side might conclude that Paul was schizophrenic; for the Gentile who shows that the work of the Law has been written on his or her heart is justified by what is written on his or her heart, with what has been written on the heart excusing unintended transgressions of the Law by those who are not under the Law.

Are Christians *under the Law*, whatever that euphemistic expression means?

In Romans Paul says, No!

What shall we say then? *Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?* By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been

baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. *For one who has died has been set free from sin.* Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. ***We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him.*** For the death He died he died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. *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. What then? *Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 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?* But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. (Rom 6:1–19 emphasis and highlighting added)

(For Paul, *sin* is unbelief, the absence of belief/faith [*pisteos*], from Romans 14:23. It was because of sin/unbelief the nation of Israel that left Egypt could not enter the Promised Land [Heb 3:19].)

In the preceding passage, the infamous clause in verse 14—“you are not under law but under grace”—is not emphasized; for not being under the Law is not an excuse for willfully transgressing the Law, which establishes that the Christian is a slave of sin that leads to death. Not being under the Law, according to Paul, doesn’t permit the Christian to willingly ignore the Law which will condemn the Christian if transgressed. Not being under the Law simply means that the Christian is not automatically condemned to death by the Law ... where there is no sin, the Law has no authority over the person. The person who is without sin is not under the Law, what Paul laid as a foundational construct for the good news he declared: *one who has died has been set free from sin.* The Law serves as the document of condemnation that convicts the unbeliever of his or her unbelief.

Faith [*pisteos*] is belief of God that is manifested by what hands and bodies do in this world ... the reason for Paul’s condemnation of Peter at Antioch wasn’t because of what Peter taught (Gentile converts were to live like Judeans without being outwardly circumcised), but was because when the Circumcision Faction came from James in Jerusalem, Peter as an outwardly circumcised Jew separated himself from uncircumcised converts; for no Jew was to eat with an uncircumcised person. The sacred was not to be mixed with the profane. To ignorant but pious Jews, uncircumcised Gentiles were the profane of this world whereas outwardly circumcised Jews were the

sacred peoples of God, with the formerly imbreachable wall of outward circumcision separating Jew from Gentile [Greek].

About this wall, Paul wrote elsewhere:

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing ***the law of commandments expressed in ordinances***, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph 2:11–22 double emphasis added)

*The law [covenant] of commandments expressed in ordinances* is an expression easy to misread—in the United States, we presently have a situation analogous to that of early 1<sup>st</sup>-Century Judea, in that President Obama has used executive orders to bend, modify, or skirt laws passed by Congress, especially the Healthcare Law [the Affordable Care Act] and Immigration Law. A presidential executive order is an added ordinance to a law, or is dictatorial law of the sort kings and emperors make. In the case of immigration, President Obama's executive orders will prevent eviction of five million trespassers thereby breaking down the hedge that surrounds lawful residents of the United States ... after the success of the Maccabees in their rebellion against the Seleucids, Sadducees and later Pharisees added ordinances to the Royal Law to create a hedge that served as national ideological boundaries intended to prevent transgression of laws given by Moses. It was these added ordinances (having the power of law) that were abolished by Christ Jesus moving the Law from regulating hands and bodies to regulating the desires of the heart and the thoughts of the mind, thereby moving the circumcision of record from the fleshly *head* of a male descendant of the patriarchs to the invisible, non-physical head of a disciple [a Believer], euphemistically identified as *the heart* of the person, Jew or Greek, male or female, slave or free.

The preceding needs clarification: when the circumcision of record was of penises, a husband and his wife were physically one flesh when the naked "head" of the husband penetrated his wife for purposes of procreation. When the circumcision of record becomes circumcision of the heart (with both male and female, Jew or Greek able to be so circumcised), penetration of the euphemistic *heart* comes via the spirit of Christ entering into the spirit of the person, with Christ Jesus becoming the head of both male and female, Jew and Greek disciples. Therefore, outward circumcision no longer matters. It isn't the fleshly body of disciples that will be saved (see 1 Cor 15:50 second clause). Rather it is the soul [*psuche*] of the disciple that will be given a glorified body when the favorable judgment of the disciple is revealed.

Where Paul didn't express himself as clearly as may have been possible is in discussion of the movement of the Law from hand to heart, and the works of the Law from outward sacrifice to inward love for God, neighbor, and brother. ... The fleshly body of the person no longer mattered, which was why the "dividing wall of hostility" separating Jew from Greek, male from female no longer stood as a barrier to fellowship with God, Father and Son. It was now lack of spiritual circumcision—circumcision of the heart—that separated non-believers from Believers.

Yes, Paul's gospel was about the movement of the Law from regulating hands and bodies that offer sacrifice and outwardly do those things that were added to the Law because of Israel's unbelief in the days of Moses to regulating the desires of the heart and the thoughts of the mind. Paul's Gospel agrees in all points except stylistic presentation with Matthew's Gospel. And to comprehend Paul's Gospel, an endtime disciple needs to be able to separate the sacrifice done by hands and body from genuine love for God, neighbor, and brother as manifested in this world through giving belief of God *being*—a physical presence—in this world by the application of love to neighbor and brother.

A good deed done for selfish reasons looks a lot like a good deed done out of love for God. Discerning one from the other is difficult. Therefore, in attempting to determine the genuine from the false, schisms [divisions] have to occur within greater Christendom, with figuratively, birds of a feather flocking together ... false disciples seek out other false disciples with which to fellowship. Sobeit.

The work of the law that is to be written on hearts is that of genuine love for the usually unlovable neighbor and brother. Without this "love," no disciple will enter the kingdom of the heavens [plural].

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