

The Enmity

By George Davis

History records a diametric polarization between the prophetic community hearing the Living Word of God and the priestly guardians of the written word. This enmity is something of a mystery to many. From the priests of old who killed the prophets to the Pharisees to the Christian fundamentalists of our day, this common thread of antipathy is seen throughout.

The word *enmity* describes the mutual hatred of enemies. The American Heritage Dictionary defines an enemy as, "One who feels hatred toward, intends injury to, or opposes the interests of another; a foe." There is no middle ground; either we are God's friend or His foe.



When we consider the enemies of God there is one that stands out above all others--the arch-nemesis Satan, alias "slew-foot." However, far and away God's enemies are most often those who lay claim to the greatest piety--those most loudly professing their undying loyalty to Heaven. Such were the Scribes and Pharisees to whom Jesus spoke these solemn words:

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt" (Matthew 23:29-33)

Later Stephen, who had been charged with blasphemy, stood before the same caste of priests and elders bringing the following indictment against them. "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers" (Acts 7:51-52). Stephen formally charged them with the crimes of persecuting the prophets and killing the Just One. The reason for this is significant.

They persecute because they resist. Because they resisted the Holy Spirit they were unchecked in their brutal persecution and murder of those who spoke by the Spirit. They were in a constant state of enmity toward God--always resisting, always persecuting. Only moments later they validated Stephen's words. They would fill up the measure of their fathers. Stephen's stone covered, blood-soaked body lay as a testimony and memorial of the truth he had just uttered. Only God knows the number of those from that day to this who suffered like fate by like men. Suffice it to say that this great enmity is ongoing--carried on by a new generation of those who "always resist the Holy Spirit." Those who say, "If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets."

The word and the WORD

The prophet Amos came bringing the Word of the Lord--the present voice of God--a word of judgment against king Jeroboam. As is often the case, the religious leaders did not receive it. At that time, the apostate priest class of the northern kingdom, Israel, had their own predictable and standardized professional prophets. These yes-men were trained in the accepted, less offensive, practice of prophesy

Amaziah, a priest who served in the court of King Jeroboam, sent orders to Amos, "Get out of here, you seer! Go on back to the land of Judah and do your preaching there! Don't bother us here in Bethel with your prophecies, especially not here where the royal sanctuary is!" (Amos 7: 12-13)

Amos' reply reveals the typical conflict between prophet and priest. "I'm not one of your professional prophets. I certainly never trained to be one. I'm just a shepherd, and I take care of fig trees. But the Lord called me away from my flock and told me, 'Go and prophesy to my people in Israel.' Now then, listen to this message from the Lord! You say, 'Don't prophesy against Israel. Stop preaching against my people.' But this is what the Lord says: Because you have refused to listen, your wife will become a prostitute in this city, and your sons and daughters will be killed. Your land will be divided up, and you yourself will die in a foreign land. And the people of Israel will certainly become captives in exile, far from their homeland."

Amos brought Spirit uttered truth--present truth what God was saying to Israel at that moment. As always they rejected it. Part of the judgment on them was given in the form of a prophetic announcement. "The time is surely coming," says the Sovereign Lord, "when I will send a famine on the land--not a famine of bread or water but of hearing the words of the Lord. People will stagger everywhere from sea to sea, searching for the word of the Lord, running here and going there, but they will not find it" (Amos 8:11,12).

This did not mean that all the copies of the scripture would be lost. Amos was not speaking of scripture here but of the Living Word, hearing the words of the Lord.

Robert D. Brinsmead wrote, "Throughout the Old Testament 'the Word' or 'the Word of God' primarily pertains to what is spoken and heard. It seldom refers to what is written and read. As a general rule in the Old Testament, while the Law may be read, the Word is heard."

This prophecy of Amos was spoken in or around the year 760 B.C., well preceding what is now called the 400 silent years, Where indeed, for Israel, there was a famine of the word. Hence they did "stagger everywhere from sea to sea, searching for the word of the Lord." And sadly, just as Amos had prophesied, they did not find it. All this was to happen immediately before the WORD incarnate was to appear on the earth (See John 1). The "famine" and the resulting great hunger and search for the Word, could only be satisfied by the bread from Heaven--the PERSON OF CHRIST--the living Word--*Ho Logos tou Theou* "The Word of God."

How and when did Israel fulfill the prophecy of Amos? In what way did they search for the word? And why did they come up empty? History is not silent regarding their search. Perhaps a brief overview of Israel's history, from the prophecy of Amos to the coming of the Word (Christ), may help us understand.

Because Israel and Judah defiled the land by refusing to extend freedom (the Jubilee) each man to his neighbor, God eventually sent them into Babylonian captivity 625-539. Being separated from the temple and their daily responsibilities, the priests attempted to preserve their religious and national identity by shifting their energies into the study and commentary of the scriptures. Here we see the humble beginnings of the rabbinic academies, Scribes and the Pharisees, the synagogue and the inception of the very first written commentary on the written word.

Frank E. Hirsch wrote:

"The more highly esteemed the Law became in the eyes of the people, the more its study and interpretation became a lifework by itself, and thus there developed a class of scholars who, though not priests, devoted themselves assiduously to the Law. These became known as the scribes, that is, the professional students of the Law. During the Hellenistic period, the priests, especially those of the upper class, became tainted with the Hellenism of the age and frequently turned their attention to paganistic culture, thus neglecting the Law of their fathers more or less and arousing the scribes to opposition. Thus, the scribes and not the priests were now the zealous defenders of the Law, and hence, were the true teachers of the people. At the time of Christ, this distinction was complete. The scribes formed a solid profession which held undisputed sway over the thought of the people. In the New Testament they are usually called (grammateis), i.e. "students of the Scriptures," "scholars," corresponding to the Hebrew (copherim) = homines literati, those who make a profession of literary studies, which, in this case, of course, meant chiefly the Law. Besides this general designation, we also find the specific word (nomikoi), i.e. "students of the Law," "lawyers" (Mt 22:35; Lk 7:30; 10:25.)"

This gives us a sense of the gradual and yet ever-changing shift from the prophetic to the scholastic. Dependence on scholastics is far greater during times of apostasy. Like a blind man whose other senses become more acute by way of compensation, when man does not receive truth through the Spirit he seeks to fill that void through too much study.

In post captivity Israel the shift toward traditionalism accelerated even more. Many traditions and legal determinations were added during this time. A group called "the men of the great Synagogue" is credited with fifteen new legal determinations. Philo called the synagogues "houses of instruction, where the philosophy of the fathers and all manner of virtues were taught." Hence the synagogues came to serve as melting-pots for the constantly evolving traditions of men.

Hence we see the emergence of the first synagogue, reminiscent of the Nicene council, wherein men set in conclave establishing new traditions and laws. Under Judas "the Hammer" Maccabee a new feast was introduced, "the feast of the dedication of the Temple." Throughout this time there were many disputes over the inspiration of

certain books and whether they should be added to the cannon. Over all we see the evolution of what Jesus called "the tradition of men." (Mark 7:8)

"Since the Babylonish exile, at least four revisions of the Canon took place within periods sufficiently distant from each other."(Alfred Edersheim)

The words of the prophets, which had been vehemently resisted, had since been proven true and were also preserved in writing. Hence Israel received Post facto in written form what their fathers had rejected. So a nation that once found its identity as a peculiar people before God, a holy nation, now sought purpose in the study of the law alone--exalting the letter beyond what God had intended, and in doing so making an Idol out of the law.

Regarding this idolatrous shift James A. Fowler wrote:

"Judaism became a book-religion based on the textualized Torah and reinforced by rigid, written tradition. Rabbinic theologizing and moralizing became inflexible and legalistic. Jewish religion centered around exegeting, interpreting and implementing precisely the truth of the Torah text, precept upon precept (Isaiah 28:10,13). The minutia of the written record became absolutized. The Torah and its traditions were regarded as eternal, inerrant and absolute. Religious reverence and allegiance to the Torah became idolatry. They had made an idol out of the Law and were worshipping the Book, the Law, the Torah, rather than God."

Suffice it to say that from the captivity on, there was a subtle shift of dependency from the Living God to the letter of the law and the traditions of men, until finally the law was given all the known attributes of God. When John referred to Jesus as the "Word" it was a deliberate affront to this imbalance, an obvious attempt to address this bent toward exalting the letter over the living Word. Jesus repeatedly referred to himself using language currently being applied to the law. The Pharisees said that the law was "the way, the truth and the life," Jesus said "I am the way the truth and the life." They hoped to find life in the law. Therefore Jesus issued this warning, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life" (John 5:39-40). In their search of the scriptures they were in error. The search itself, the way they searched for the word and the results of their search were flawed. This subtle shift that resulted in an over-exalted view of the law and set the stage for the drama of the ages,

where Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, who rightfully exalted Himself above the law, would be tried and killed as a heretic.

Overall, we see the development of the traditions that Jesus would later confront. Christ met the prevailing religious consensus of His day head on. This consensus was based on the traditions of the fathers and propagated by the schools of Hillel and Shammai. Jesus came to emancipate Israel from the bondage of the traditions of the fathers. However, it did not stop there. For He had been sent to do the unthinkable! He had been sent to abolish the burdensome yoke of the Mosaic ordinances.

Any student of history cannot help but notice the similarities between this portion of Jewish history and that of the church during the second through fifth centuries. The two histories perfectly parallel each other. Like Israel the church fell into apostasy and had its own Babylonian captivity, wherein a Talmud-like body of doctrine and creedal traditions evolved. The church was also deeply effected by Hellenism--seen in the advent of platonic thought and sermonizing. They even embraced many pagan rituals and gods. There were also many disputes over the inspiration of certain books (epistles) as to whether or not they should be added to the cannon. The likeness between these two periods of history is simply uncanny. The Nicene counsels perfectly parallel their Jewish counterpart, the men of the great synagogue. The ease with which they made divine determinations and enforced them as Divine law is at the same time both mysterious and frightening. The stage was set. Just as the Pharisees had killed the prophets so would they. In the days that followed, the enmity between those walking in the Spirit and those serving the letter would become more and more pronounced and the bloodshed would increase accordingly.

The Enmity--Children of Abraham or Moses?

Abraham had no scriptures. Therefore we know that the faith of Abraham involved much more than mere mental assent to a text. The Faith of Abraham was based upon hearing the Living Word of God--proceeding from the mouth of God. Likewise, the faith of the primitive Christians was also based upon hearing. The faith that spread throughout Asia Minor was not a law-like textualism but of the Spirit as God powerfully spoke from Heaven. Christians thrived throughout the Roman Empire long before there were any New Testament Scriptures. They had the oral word only. Even the Old Testament scriptures were not accessible to most. Faith comes by hearing every word

every moment as they precede (present tense) from the mouth of God (Mat 4:4). This is what Jesus modeled throughout His earthly walk. He lived by every word proceeding from the mouth of God. He did only those things He saw the Father doing. He spoke only what the Father spoke. ". . . I (Jesus) speak to the world those things which I have heard of him (God) (John 8:26). His words were filled with authority. Even the temple guards, sent to arrest Jesus, were disarmed by His words, and their excuse for not bringing Him bound to the temple rulers was, "No one has ever spoken like that man" "He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit IS saying to the churches" (Revelation 2:11). Should it not be our individual responsibility to hear what God is saying NOW? Or do we prefer to keep a safe distance, like the children of Israel who said to Moses "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Exodus 20:19). Do we live as those under the law whose righteousness is based upon what God has said in the past and their present obedience to it? (See Romans 10:5).

Today there is much confusion concerning the New Covenant, resulting in even greater confusion regarding God's purpose in the earth. Preparatory to an understanding the New Covenant is the comprehension that it is the very covenant God made with Abraham, long before the law was given. We each need to access our relationship with God in this light. Do I relate to God in a dead-letter "Mount of trembling" manner? Or does my faith, like that of Abraham, rest upon the hearing of faith? It is important that we understand that a law-like covenant was never given to the Gentiles, but we were grafted into the "Root"--Abraham. It is also important to note that the covenant made with Abraham was based upon promise not law--of the Spirit not of the letter.

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Corinthians 3:5-6)

The Galatian Error

The Galatian believers were being bewitched. They had begun gloriously but something tragic had happened. The Judaizers had deceived them with the lie that faith in Christ was not enough, teaching that in order to be a Christian one must also be circumcised and keep the law. These Judaizers resisted the Living Word Just as their predecessors, the priestly guardians of the written word (the Scribes and Pharisees), had tried to

silence the living Word (Jesus). So the Judaizers were attempting to silence the Living Word in Galatia. What was happening in the Galatian church? Answer: the letter was working its death in them. They had adopted an "I read, I do" philosophy of serving God. They had begun in the Spirit, dependent upon the life of the Spirit, and were now attempting to reach perfection by the energies of the flesh (Galatians 3:3) Paul's reply is critical, for it is foundational to true faith. With this in mind let us carefully consider the following question. (Galatians 3:5-6)

When reduced to few words, Paul's question to the Galatian church was, which will it be-- Moses or Abraham--the ministry of the letter or the Spirit--the works of the law or the hearing of faith? The use of the words hearing of faith as applies to Abraham is very significant. Which leads us to ask, how did Abraham hear God? How did Abraham come to believe God? As we have said, he predated the scriptures so it is certain that his faith was not based upon a written text. Abraham's faith was based upon what he heard God say directly by His Spirit. Thus the words the hearing of faith. Paul bore this out when he wrote, "Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God" (Romans 14:22). For this reason there was no specific standard of performance listed in Romans 14 except that of considering one another, not to offend. The rudimentary issue is this, ". . .whatsoever is not of faith (between the individual and God) is sin" (Romans 14:23). Whatever does not come directly by the hearing of faith, resolved between God and the individual believer, misses God's mark altogether.

God spoke directly to Abraham. Abraham believed God! Faith can be built on nothing less than this. All truth remains in the realm of theory until it is heard directly from God. Therefore Faith is based upon Him who supplies the Spirit (NOW), who works (NOW). It is faith IN God (NOW) and therefore belief in what He IS saying. The blessing of Abraham is the Spirit who spoke to Abraham. "That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:14)

Foundational to this understanding is the knowledge that the Abrahamic covenant, of which all believers are now a part, was ratified 430 years before Moses. Therefore Paul reasons, "Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise

of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator" (Galatians 3:16-19).

Perhaps the following graph will help us understand this vital truth.



The entire white portion of the timeline above represents a single covenant--"the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ." A covenant made with Abraham and His Seed (Christ). We see then, that the gospel was first preached to Abraham (Galatians 3:8). Paul understood that the covenant with Abraham was a covenant with Christ, Abraham's Seed. The covenant made with Abraham not only predated but also outranked and outlasted the Mosaic covenant. So what we call the new covenant is really an old one that was signed sealed and ultimately delivered in Christ. "The law is not of faith" (Galatians 3:12). "Only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham" (Galatians 3:7). The law was added parenthetically 430 years later because of the transgression of Israel. I say parenthetically in that, despite the beliefs of some, it was only to be a temporary interim measure until Christ the Seed came. The law was given to maintain order until the blessing of Abraham, until the Spirit should

come bringing the Kingdom of God, the reign of God, to every believing heart. shifting from an external schoolmaster (the law) to the internal control of the Spirit. In Abraham we see the promise given. In Christ (the Seed) the promise is fulfilled. However, it is the same covenant from beginning to end. The Law of Moses, being a temporary Jewish national law, was never given to the Gentiles. The early apostles seemed to understand this in that they refused to place a burden upon the Gentiles that neither they nor their forefathers had been able to bear. (Acts 15:10) However, there can be no doubt that they often vacillated in this understanding. The Jews of that day had never known any other way of relating to God except through the law. But now both Jew and Gentile would be justified by faith, *not* through the law. Just as it was with faithful Abraham 430 years before the law was ever given. Again, faith comes by hearing the Living Word of God, moment by moment, living by every word proceeding from the mouth of God.

The Seed of Abraham versus the seed of the Devil

Jesus at one point challenged the religionists of His day as to how well He was being received. The argument He uses is very significant. The Pharisees claimed Abraham as their father but Jesus disagreed. He accused them of practice totally uncharacteristic of Abraham. His argument was quite simple, "If you were Abraham's children you would act like Abraham, but instead you are trying to kill me--a Man who has come telling you the truth that he has heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do act like your father though." Somewhat impatiently they replied "We were not born out of wedlock; we have one Father--God!" To which Jesus replied, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded from Him. I did not come of myself. He sent Me. Why is it that you do not understand My speech? It is because you cannot hear to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the longings of your father you delight to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him." (My own translation See-John 8:39-44)

In what way could they have behaved like Abraham? Answer: by receiving the Living word, by the hearing of faith. just as Abraham did. This is very typical of the ongoing battle between those who serve the "letter" and those who serve in the newness of the Spirit--a battle wherein the guardians of the text and the prophetic community are at odds. Typically, when the Spirit comes prophetically to lead on with a "speaking word" or "present truth," the guardians of the text declare war on God. Remember Stephen's

words to the elders, and the scribes, "You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you." (Acts 7:51). This is an ancient cycle seen repeatedly throughout the history of Israel, accounting for the bloodshed of all God's prophets, and as we have said, the long illustrious list of martyrs includes the Son of God--the Living Word. How is it that those who would die in defense of the "letter" so often become the enemy of God? Why this enmity?

Law/Flesh-Enmity against God

Often, when Paul wrote of "the flesh," he referred to it in the context of the law or more correctly, the Christian's freedom from the law. (See Romans 2:28-29, 3:20, 7:5,18, 8:1, 3-5, 2Corinthians 11:18, Galatians 2:16, 2:19-20, 3:3, 6:12-13, Ephesians 2:3-16, Philippians 3:3, Colossians 2:13-14, 2:23).

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary (adversaries-enemies) the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that you would. But if you are led of the Spirit, you are not under the law. (Galatians 5:16-18

Those who attempt to keep the law are on the grounds of the flesh and manifest the deeds of the flesh. They have not yet learned the lesson of Romans 7 and are destined to struggle until they do. They may haltingly conform in action but will always come up short in spirit. The same is true of the New Testament. The moment you relate to the New Testament as ordinances to be kept, as commandments for righteousness, you immediately fall from grace to the level of the law (Galatians 5:4). Christ is become of no effect to you because you they take upon yourself the responsibility to do what only Christ can do, i.e., live out His life and righteousness through you. "Christ in you" (Colossians 1:27) is no longer your hope of glory. As a result, you are left to struggle until you learn the lesson the Schoolmaster was sent to teach; ". . .in me (that is in my flesh) dwells no good thing!" In short, you can't do it!

I have learned this lesson the hard way. Early in my walk with Jesus, I was taught how to relate to the love-letter (the Bible) as a rule-book. As so many others, I complied, feeling duty-bound to do so. I began to read and attempt to do what I read with all the energy within me. I could not have known what misery would result. Beforelong I was living out the graceless curse of Galatians 3:10. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continues not in

all things which are written in the book." I searched the scriptures for in them I thought I would find life.

Soon, a foreboding sense of dread filled my heart whenever I picked up my Bible to read. Like the law, it had come to expect much but gave no grace. It served as a constant reminder of sin and failure. It now became the instrument of condemnation, all because of how I related to it. I could not do what I read. The things I wanted to do, I could not do, and the things I didn't want to do, that I did. In some areas, which I felt I was doing rather well in, I compensated by browbeating those that were weak in those areas. In a perverted way this made me feel quite good, as it would any Pharisee.

"God, I thank you, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican" (Luke 18:11) But no amount of compensation could help. Soon I would find myself back to misery as usual, groaning under the weight of it all. "Who will deliver me from the body of this death?"

Thank God! He turned the lights on! In His mercy He delivered me from the curse resulting from relating to the New Testament as law. I experienced anew the life of wings. I realized that I had been duped into believing that God had delivered me from one law (The Schoolmaster) to a New Testament law.

My life had been reduced to an agonizing struggle, rather than the glorious workmanship of God (Ephesians 2:9-10), working in me to will and to do (Philippians 2:13). This is why I have such strong feelings about correctly relating to the Bible. It cannot be our all in all. I read the Bible every day. That does not make me righteous. I think I have a fair understanding of it. That does not make me wise. [For he \(Jesus\) has been made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption \(1 Corinthians 1:30\)](#). He is the stumbling stone, the Rock of offense that continues to offend our righteousness.

The law was designed to manifest sin--to convince man of the enmity of his flesh toward God. Here are the words of one who had fully learned that lesson. "[For I know that in me \(that is, in my flesh\) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find](#)" (Romans 7:18).

This is the lesson that the law was designed to teach. A lesson learned by the man of Romans chapter seven, who understood that sinful passions "were aroused by the law"

(Romans 7:5). What Paul was teaching here was the difference between those who serve in the "oldness of the letter" and those who serve in the "newness of the Spirit."

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. There is therefore now no condemnation to them, which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh ("the oldness of the letter"), but after the Spirit ("the newness of the Spirit"). It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that sets us free from the law of sin and death. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. . . . For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:1-5, Emphasis mine).

The word *condemnation* (Greek katakrima) in the above passage means a "damnable sentence." This condemnation is not the condemnation of the overt sinner but is descriptive of the Roman's seven dilemma and the sentence passed on all those who would try to be righteous by the law. "The sentence pronounced, the condemnation with a suggestion of the punishment following. . ." (Vines) The condemnation persists when we refuse to accept God's sentence on the flesh. When we continue to offer works for our righteousness, in effect, we refuse to accept God's verdict on the flesh, i.e., ". . . in. . . flesh dwells no good thing" (Romans 7:18).

Remember the context of these scriptures. "They that are after the flesh" and "those who serve in the oldness of the letter" are one and the same. They are those who "mind the things of the flesh." Elsewhere Paul wrote of such people as "the enemies of the cross," who "mind earthly things," choosing a form of godliness, "Touch not; taste not; handle not" ordinances over the living Word. (See Philippians 3:19, Colossians 2:21)

Paul commonly shared this knowledge wherever he went, which brought the fury of both Pharisee and Judaizer alike. The doctors of the law reacted, bring charges of blasphemy against him saying, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law" (Acts 6:13). The Judaizers were among those who accused Paul of irreverence toward law.

And so we see the enmity between those who serve in the oldness of the letter and those who serve in the newness of the Spirit. Those who depend upon the Spirit, who

are led by the Spirit, are offenses to those who find their sense of righteousness in their adherence to the letter. There is an enmity between the two--a flesh versus Spirit repulsion, seen in Abraham's two sons, one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman (Galatians 4:22). The one born of the bondwoman was born after the flesh. He was the fruit of Abraham's act of desperation and unbelief. He was born out of Abraham's attempt to fulfill the promise in his own energies. However, the son born of the freewoman was by promise. He was the miracle child, born of Sarah, who was barren. In her we have the picture of how the church ought to be. It is in those who have no hope of bringing forth the purposes of God in their own strength that the Son of promise will be manifest. These things are symbolic.

For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai (the letter), which according to Paul, "gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar" (Galatians 4:24) and the other son Isaac, the child of the promise. Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, the type of Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children (4:25). But Jerusalem that is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband" (4:26-27).

"Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, *even so it is now.*" (Galatians 4:28,29).

The enmity continues even unto this day! Nothing has changed. The consequent division continues to disunite God's children. It is the chief cause of strife.

The enmity between those who gather at Sinai and those who gather in Zion is still seething. The two are utterly repulsive to each other. For they have been separated by God himself, from of old, on that very day when he issued the command to Abraham, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman" (Galatians 4:30). Paul concludes, "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free" (Galatians 4:31). The law is yesterday's manna. Jesus is the bread for today!

The Son of Promise (Jesus) remains an offense and a stumbling stone to those who want their own righteousness by adherence to the letter. Saving faith is trust in Him, not in the letter.

What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." (Romans 9:30-33)

Christ or Righteousness is a stumbling stone to those who look to the letter for righteousness.

The Enmity and The Law of Commandments

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. (Ephesians 2:14-16)

Contained in the passage above is the key to unity. Not unity as man would attempt it, but God's unity! Christ himself is our peace! He has broken down the wall of hostility that separates. By his death He abolished the deep-seated, hatred between Jew and Gentile. There can be no doubt what Paul is saying here. That enmity is the schoolmaster, the law of commandments. Christ, in His death on the cross, abolished the Law! The Greek word for *abolished* in the above passage is *katargeo* [2673], which is defined as follows:

"1) to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative 1a) to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency;

1b) to deprive of force, influence, power

2) to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish

2a) to cease, to pass away, be done away

2b) to be severed from, separated from, discharged from, loosed from any one

2c) to terminate all intercourse with one." (*Strong's*)

The entire system of Jewish law that excluded the Gentiles was rendered idle, unemployed, deprived of its influence and power. All this was done that He might make

peace between Jews and Gentiles and in doing so creating "one new man." This could not be done however without first abolishing the enmity--the law of commandments.

Sadly, the conflict is still raging between the messianic and Gentile churches today, wherein the finished work of Christ is undermined by the ongoing enmity. Both sides refuse to yield the law of commandments. In attempting to preserve what Christ has abolished, the enmity is nurtured and the two that Jesus died to make one new man remain divided. The messianic community attempts to get the gentile believers to join them in the keeping of feast and ceremonies that have long since been fulfilled in Christ, attempting to convert them to a Jewish brand of the Christian faith. Meanwhile the Gentiles endeavor to convert the Jewish believers to their westernized creedal brand of Christian faith. Hence they are divided because neither will yield their orthodoxy. Neither will let go the letter. So the middle wall of partition stands. The enmity remains and God's purposes in Christ go unrealized. The Gentiles must let go their creeds, counsels, bylaws and traditions of men that they, like the Scribes and Pharisees, have exalted above God. The Jewish believers must let go the schoolmaster. Both must live by the newness of the Spirit NOT the oldness of the letter.

So we see the fleshly tendency to return to Sinai, to repeat the Galatian error. Marked by the endeavor to be made perfect by the flesh--the works of the law. For the Christian this is Satan's strongest and most effective delusion. For it turns the glorious gospel of Christ into a dead letter. Causing the greatest love story ever told to be codified and lost in a morass of theological legalism. Which has set the feet of many on the path to bondage. Leading away from the true faith back to the mount of trembling. Resulting in the emergence of the New Testament law--a rigid Christian rulebook--the pretext for bondage. The prophetic, living Word is resisted by a new generation of Christian Scribes and Pharisees. Hence the Church has ceased to be a prophetic community, led by the Spirit of God and is now an institution led by the traditions of men. Wherein orthodoxy so thoroughly confounds the hearing of faith, that systematized theology is referred to as "the faith." Faith in ones adherence to the prescribed rituals (ones own righteousness) replaces faith in the finished work of Christ. He who has been made unto us wisdom is set aside and there in His place is the wisdom of man shared through platonic sermonizing. He who is himself our righteousness is replaced by the touch not, taste not, handle not, legalistic righteousness of the law. He who is our sanctification is ignored in deference to

humanistic trust in our own abilities. A strange mixture of the old Levitical and pagan priesthood fills the place of the priesthood of all believers. In refusing to drive out the bondwomen and her son, much of Christianity today substitutes the letter for the Living Word, and in doing so, continue to scale the craggy, hazardous peaks of Sinai.

Such was not the case in the early church. "There was one mistake into which the early Church was never in any danger of falling. In those early days men never thought of Jesus Christ as a figure in a book. They never thought of Him as someone who had lived and died, and whose story was told and passed down in history, as the story of someone who had lived and whose life had ended. They did not think of Him as someone who had been but as someone who is. They did not think of Jesus Christ as someone whose teaching must be discussed and debated and argued about; they thought of Him as someone whose presence could be enjoyed and whose constant fellowship could be experienced. Their faith was not founded on a book; their faith was founded on a person." (William Barclay, *The Mind of St. Paul*. London: Fontana Books. 1965. pg. 87.)

As it was with the Galatians who were bewitched to return to a dead-letter relationship with God, likewise history records a massive defection from the hearing of faith back to the "schoolmaster." Where once all believers were encouraged to speak as the oracles of God, sharing the present truth of God, now they would dutifully and quietly sit as men rehearsed rhetorically what God had said and done in the past.

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen." (1 Peter 4:11)

The shift from the prophetic to the current scribe-like existence of most of today's Christianity has resulted in a very studious, seminarian, dead-letter relationship to God. Wherein men do not speak as oracles, sharing present truth--the words now proceeding from the mouth of God, but as holy philosophers pontificating yet unrealized ideals derived from the recorded words of men who once spoke the living Word of God. The prophets of old testified of a coming change in man's relationship with God. They spoke of a day when all would be taught directly of God and that it would be anticlimactic to say, "know the Lord" for all will already know Him. They spoke

of a day when sons and daughters would prophesy as surely as had Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc. (See Heb.8, Acts 2) They spoke of the end of the famine of the Word. However, despite these great and precious promises people are yet staggering "everywhere from sea to sea, searching for the word of the Lord, running here and going there. . ." They are running to conferences, going the meetings of highly sought-after Apostles, Prophets, evangelists, etc. They seek the word of the Lord, but they do not find it! What they most desperately need they do not find! For what is needed is the hearing (present tense) of faith--the Spirit bearing witness (continually) with their spirits, NOW, every moment, everyday--the close encounter with God in which faith is formed. This is the heritage of the children of Abraham, who have received the promise of Abraham (the Spirit) through faith. They have returned to the primal bases of the faith--a bases predating the law or "letter." The faith of Abraham is not "biblical-faith" finding its origin in the letter. It is based upon the hearing of faith, of the Spirit not of the letter. It is not theological faith--the letter-induced, slightly sanctified wisdom of man, but faith resting in the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Again, the basis of faith is not theological. It is not a mental ascent to the letter. Faith rests in the "power of God." So that "faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (See 1Co 2:5) I am speaking of a prophetic declaration of the gospel--the prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus--the Word spoken by oracles that speak what God speaks.

Unity and The Enmity

Any serious treaties on unity must address the enmity that is caused when men attempt to reach a letter-based uniformity. For it is this very thing that has disunited us. The myriad of excuses, offered for the fractured state of the church today, are all based upon scripture. So there are great biblical grounds to justify the current chaotic condition among God's children--which God has strictly prohibited. 2000 years of church history bears witness to the futility of attempting to be united around doctrine and creed. Even among the particular denominations of our day there is disunity. The reason for this is simple; their means of unity is replete with enmity. The enmity Jesus died to abolish. This means of unity has never worked. For it, like the law, is weak through the flesh. Because it is not God's unity, men must police it by their own energies, which leads to tyranny and abuse.

Only Truth can unify--the Spirit is Truth (1 John 5:6). There is the Spirit of truth, but there is also the spirit of error. Truth and error are not doctrinal issues, but are first and foremost a matter of Spirit. If the spirit is wrong, everything is wrong.

We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. (1 John 4:6) Remember the explanation Jesus gave for why the Pharisees, the children of the devil, did not hear Him. They did not hear Him because, like their father, there was no truth "IN" them. Conversely the indwelling Spirit of Christ brings truth to the inward parts (Psalms 51:6). Bringing a right relatedness to God as Father--a Spirit crying Abba, Father. And because we are sons of the same Father all true believers are brothers and sisters (Galatians 4:6).

Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Rightness (righteousness) is a Spiritual matter, dependent upon God's workmanship, not our diligence in keeping dogma. Dogma is not truth. It is man's attempt to systematize truth. Because Truth is Spirit and can be known only by the Spirit, man's dogmatic perceptions of truth, which are as varied and numerous as are the people who hold them, cannot be other than divisive.

Philip Schaff describes the antagonism between Truth and dogma as follows:

"We must not confound truth with dogma. Truth is the divine substance, doctrine or dogma is the human apprehension and statement of it; truth is a living and life-giving power, dogma a logical formula; truth is infinite, unchanging, and eternal; dogma is finite, changeable, and perfectible." (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church 1819-1893*)

Dear Brothers/Sisters, we must return to God's basis of unity--the unity of the Spirit that precedes the unity of the faith (Ephesians 4:3, 4:13) In His death Christ has abolished the struggle for doctrinal unity. We can no more be united around dogma than we can the law. Both bring enmity and division. Christ must be our peace or there will be no peace.

The following quote from Tozer's classic, *The Pursuit of God* serves as a perfect summation of this article.

"The Bible is the written word of God, and because it is written it is confined and limited by the necessities of ink and paper and leather. The Voice of God, however, is alive and free as the sovereign God is free. 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.' The life is in the speaking words. God's word in the Bible can have power only because it corresponds to God's Word in the universe. It is the present Voice which makes the written word powerful. Otherwise it would lie locked in slumber within the covers of a book."

God bless and keep you!

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