

More on Matthew

Chapter Seven

1.

Matthew's Jesus, in this author's Sermon on the Mount, says, "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you" (Matt 7:1–2).

There does not seem to be much ambiguity in what Matthew's Jesus says, but in this Matthew's Jesus is at odds with the Apostle Paul, who told the holy ones at Corinth,

When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? (1 Cor 6:1–6)

Yes, that can be the case, but I'll get to a failure of wisdom and integrity within the Church in a few paragraphs. Right now, I want to hear what John's Jesus says about judging:

Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well? *Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.* (John 7:22–24 emphasis added)

Jesus commands the Jews who were seeking to kill to not judge upon appearances; not to judge on how things seem to be; but to *judge* [this would seem to be a command to judge] *with right judgment* ... if they were to judge rightly, they would certainly be judging the matter of whether it is proper to heal a man on the Sabbath, the "mental" or symbolic representation of entering into the Promised Land; of entering into heaven.

If Jews placed more importance on the hedge of regulations they had constructed around the Sabbath so that never again would the nation be guilty of collectively transgressing the Sabbath, then the work of their hands as they wrote regulations was of more importance to them than was the work of God in healing the invalid of 38 years. Was this the judgment they wanted for themselves? And they would have answered, no it wasn't. So the complaint the Pharisees had against Jesus

would have been based in jealousy: He could do what they could not. For they knew that they were unable to heal with their prayers, or with their hands.

John's Jesus also told Pharisees,

Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. *You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true*, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. (John 8:14–16 emphasis added)

The issue of judging according to appearances; according to the flesh was the problem for righteous judgment is not possible if the flesh—this carnal world—is foregrounded in making a judgment ... Jesus said He judged no one; yet earlier in John's Gospel, Jesus said, “The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father” (John 5:22–23). However, Jesus later adds to His statement that all judgment had been given to Him,

I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word [*ó logos*] that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. (John 12:46–48)

If all judgment has been given to the Son of Man, and if the Son of Man did not come into the world to judge anyone, but has left His word with His disciples as the judge of the doubter and the unbeliever, then judging has some complications that neither the author of Matthew's Gospel, nor Paul really address.

In fairness to Paul, what he says to the holy ones at Corinth doesn't sound like what, by the hand of Tertius, he wrote in his treatise to the holy ones at Rome:

Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? (Rom 2:1–3)

And the preceding citation seems to say what Matthew's Jesus told His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount: you will be judged by the same standard as you judged others.

Now, where judging becomes truly important: in John's Gospel, the glorified Christ Jesus after breathing on His disciples, said, “Receive holy spirit [no definite article]. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld” (John 20:22–23) ... Jesus gave to His disciples what the Father had given Him, the authority to judge whether sins should be forgiven or not forgiven. Jesus gave to His disciples the authority to make life and death decisions that affected others, and this without His disciples themselves coming under judgment (John 5:24).

If a Christian thinks about what the Father gave to Christ Jesus—again, “The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22)—the Christian should be concerned about denying Christ Jesus; should be concerned about walking in this world as Jesus walked; should be concerned that the person’s righteousness exceeds that of Sadducees and Pharisees. Then, if becoming a fractal of Jesus wasn’t enough to think about, the Christian needs to remember that the judgment the Christian meters out forms the basis for how the Christian will fare when rewards are added to the person; for after Jesus was glorified—had the glory He had before the world existed returned to Him (John 17:5)—Jesus gave to His disciples the authority to make judgments about whether sins should be forgiven another person. And these judgments are to be made on the word of Him that He left with His disciples.

Again, once His disciples were truly born of spirit through Him breathing His breath [*pneuma Christou*] on them, Jesus’ disciples should have begun to appreciate how serious a matter it is to rightly judge a situation; to judge a transgression of the Law.

Move forward nearly two millennia: the greater Christian Church is not born of spirit, doesn’t not walk in this world as Jesus walked, and consists of pious sons of disobedience. The judgment of Christians in the greater Church is based upon appearances; based upon the flesh; and far too often is of the sort Paul condemned at Corinth:

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. 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. 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 5:1–5)

Evidently, the holy ones at Corinth applied literally—even before they would have read these words—what Jesus said in both Matthew’s and Mark’s Gospels:

From Matthew,

But when He heard it, He said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt 9:12–13)

From Mark: “And when Jesus heard it, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mark 2:17).

It is common today to hear it said that the Church is for sinners, not the righteous; so sinners are tolerated within fellowships as was the man who was with his father’s wife being tolerated in the fellowship at Corinth. The pious at Corinth apparently were not inclined to exclude the man even though according to Moses, he was worthy of death: “If a man lies with his father's wife, he has

uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them”(Lev 20:11).

Two principles are here introduced, the first is that the fellowship at Corinth did not have the legal authority to put the man who was with his father’s wife to death—just as the Jews in Jerusalem did not have the authority to kill Christ Jesus; under the Law of Rome, only Roman authorities could administer death sentences. Second, for Paul to command the fellowship at Corinth to deliver the man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, Paul commanded the saints to “kill” the inner spiritual man if the one with his father’s wife did not repent.

In what Paul commanded the holy ones at Corinth to do concerning the man with his father’s wife moved transgressions of the flesh from the “flesh” to the inner self; moved the Commandments from regulating hands and bodies to thoughts and desires. And in this Paul demonstrated what it meant to judge righteously, not by appearances.

But by Paul commanding the holy ones to deliver the man to Satan, Paul certainly—when absent in the flesh—made a determination of whether another person lived spiritually, or was condemned to the lake of fire if he didn’t repent. And this is about as serious a decision as Paul could make.

Apparently the holy ones at Corinth removed the man, thereby submitting to the authority of the Apostle Paul ... but what if they hadn’t? What if they had thought Paul overstepped the bounds of his authority? What if they thought the man should have a hearing before the congregation? What if they had read what Jesus said in Matthew’s Gospel—

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. *If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.* Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. (Matt 18:15–20 emphasis added)

The holy ones at Corinth apparently had no complaint against the man who was with his father’s wife—he was probably a *good guy*, pleasant, getting along with everyone—so it seems that Paul had the problem with the fellow. Should Paul have gone to him and spoken to him? And if he had refused to separate from his father’s wife, should Paul have taken with him two of three witnesses? And if he still refused to separate from his father’s wife, should Paul have then taken the matter before the Church, the assembly of holy ones at Corinth, who apparently seemed content to let the situation continue on as it had? ... This is what is asked of Christians today, especially within the independent Sabbatarian community.

First thing, *if your brother sins against you* ... against whom was the man with his father’s wife sinning, if against anyone? How about Moses? How about the

God of Abraham? How about God the Father? Yes, the man was transgressing commands given to Israel by the Word of God [*ó Logos tou Theou*] so that Israel would be a holy nation; so the “brother” was sinning against God—and Paul as the representative of God was not willing to permit the situation to continue.

Again, what if Paul’s authority would not have been recognized—and apparently that was nearly the case:

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. But *with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court*. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. For who sees anything different in you? *What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?* Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things. I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. (1 Cor 4:1–14 emphasis added)

What do you as a Christian have that you did not receive? And from whom did you receive it? Paul’s words, *If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?* Why would you say that you’re only taught by God when this is not true—and this is what Paul was facing at Corinth when he had to put what authority he still had on the line and command these holy ones to deliver the man with his father’s wife to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. (Apparently his father’s wife was not a believer, but most likely an attractive widow, free to marry again; so the issue wasn’t adultery *per se* but holiness.)

I feel as if I’m beating a dead horse; for Christians don’t really believe that they have the authority to forgive sins. Christians within the greater Church no longer really believe that Catholic priests have this authority; absolutely do not believe that a Pastor General has this authority; and you’ll never convince them that lay members have this authority—

The laity within greater Christendom simply refuses to accept the idea that with receipt of the holy spirit, they are to become fractals of Christ Jesus, and as fractals, they are to judge matters within the Body of Christ.

Returning to a previous citation: “Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?” (1 Cor 6:5–6). Wise enough, that’s uncertain, but there is no one “honest” enough to settle a dispute between brothers. It was inner integrity that was at play at Port Austin in 2004, when one alleged brother defrauded three other alleged brothers—what was seen is that most who call themselves brothers in Christ were themselves frauds, for they sided with the one who did the defrauding. After all, he was well known within the independent Sabbatarian churches. He published a news letter. He made determinations of whether a marriage was bound. And those who supported him were not born of spirit; and inwardly, those who supported him were cowards and men-pleasers.

So what is to be done if there is no one to judge a matter? Do the injured parties just grin and bear it, even when a home is lost? Is bearing the injury the just penalty for being trusting of an alleged brother in Christ? And what about taking the matter to the Church, as Matthew’s Jesus would seem—in the spiritual part of the spiritual portion of a squared narrative couplet—to have disciples do?

In the last half of Matthew’s Gospel, sons of God have matured spiritually and are mostly fractals of Christ Jesus; so it is appropriate to ask the question, *Do not born of Spirit disciples have the authority to hold or forgive sin?*

Yes, they do. When disciples collectively can exercise the authority that Paul exercised when he commanded the holy ones at Corinth to deliver the man with his father’s wife to the Adversary for the destruction of his flesh, disciples collectively can forgive or withhold forgiveness of sins. And returning to the one at Port Austin who defrauded his brothers, this one will not have his transgression forgiven until he brings forth fruit worthy of repentance. So far, this one has only brought forth bitter fruit ...

A brother in Christ shall be known by his or her fruits; for Matthew’s Jesus says in Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount,

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. (Matt 7:15–20)

When an alleged brother in Christ comes to you wanting you to invest money in real property, have an attorney look over the proposal, because there is no longer universally recognized authority within the greater Christian Church, which is leading to where I want to begin.

There are many, many would be and wannabe teachers of a second nation of Israel: look to see what sort of fruit they have borne—this is not to say to look to

see if they have prospered in this world, or if they have been accepted and received by an organization of men, but is to say that in judging a matter, what sort of judgment does the person make. Will bad behavior be excused because of the good work the person allegedly does, as was the case with Garner Ted? Will this bad behavior, however, not be imbedded in what appears to be good works? And it will be. And we have arrived at where Jesus in Matthew's Gospel calls the Twelve and sends them forth.

In Matthew's Gospel—all of which is, again, the spiritual portion of a squared narrative thought-couplet of which Mark's Gospel is the physical portion—and in its first part or natural part, Jesus brings His disciples to Him: “And He called to Him His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction” (Matt 10:1).

In Matthew's Jesus giving to the Twelve authority over demons, and giving to them the ability to heal infirmities, Matthew's Jesus delegates more authority to the Twelve than they have in Mark's Gospel:

And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those whom He desired, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles) so that they might be with Him and *He might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons.* (Mark 3:13–15 emphasis added)

In both Mark's and Matthew's Gospel, the Twelve have the authority to cast out demons, rebellious angels already condemned to death by being imprisoned in the Abyss, even though they are loose inside the creation which, again, is inside the Abyss. This authority to cast out demons is what the author of Matthew's Gospel would have found when he used Mark's Gospel as his source text (he would have also found that the Twelve were sent out to preach, something this author neglects for cause). But because Matthew's Gospel functions as the right hand enantiomer to Mark's Gospel, the author of Matthew's Gospel adds an additional spiritual authority, that of being able to heal every disease and every affliction. And it is easy to assume that the author of Matthew's Gospel was a superstitious man who believed diseases were caused by demons, but the literary sophistication of this author would suggest he knew of Galen's anatomy text, and that he knew diseases and afflictions had many causes that were unrelated to the supernatural.

In Matthew, Jesus giving His disciples authority over diseases and afflictions seems to suggest that Jesus gave to His disciples authority over all things physical (afflictions) and spiritual (demons).

In Mark's Gospel, after Jesus called the Twelve and sent them forth, He went home:

He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. *Then He went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that*

they could not even eat. And when His family heard it, they went out to seize Him, for they were saying, "He is out of His mind." And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons." (Mark 3:16–22 emphasis added)

Peter was one of the Twelve, perhaps the first one appointed; so Peter would have known what Jesus said to the Twelve between when He called them and when He sent them out, then went home. And apparently Peter never said anything more than, *He went home and His family thought Him crazy*, that John Mark recalled. For if John Mark's purpose was not to add-to nor falsify nor leave out anything what Peter taught, Peter never taught any of what the author of Matthew's Gospel has Jesus telling the Twelve.

What Matthew's Jesus tells His disciples is too much for one citation, even though this first segment that I intend to cite of itself seems overly long:

Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, "The kingdom of [the] heavens [plural, with its definite article] is at hand." *Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons.* You received without paying; give without pay. Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, nor two tunics nor sandals nor a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town. Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. (Matt 10:5–23 emphasis added)

The natural counterpart to forgiving sin—to holding the transgressions of a person against the person, or forgiving those transgressions—would be to heal the sick and raise the dead. So what the author of Matthew's Gospel writes, even if he never truly gets around to having his *Jesus* give to His disciples the authority

to forgive sin amounts to this authority through Him giving to the Apostles authority over death [the authority to raise the dead]. For as Paul reminded saints, the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23). Thus to forgive sin is to cancel “death”; to forgive sin is to take from the sinner the wages he or she earned for the person’s unbelief, for transgressions of the Law stemming from unbelief.

In sending out the Twelve, Matthew’s Jesus warns His disciples that they will be delivered to courts and flogged in synagogues, but this is not how they were received. They were not gone from Jesus for long enough to have built this sort of animosity against them. However, after nearly two millennia of so-called Christian conversion of unbelievers, Christianity has built in this world enough animosity that what Jesus told the Twelve could and does certainly happen.

Within the *Jesus Movement* there has always been martyrdom, beginning with Jesus Himself—and here is what the author of Matthew’s Gospel has his Jesus express well:

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. ... And do not fear those who kill the body [soma] but cannot kill the soul [psuchen]. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul [psuchen] and body [soma] in hell. (Matt 10:24–25, 28)

Because of the structure of Matthew’s Gospel as the spiritual portion of a squared narrative thought-couplet, the dynamics of direct address are at sometimes odd angles. For example, when John the Baptist raised Jesus from the waters of the Jordan in Mark’s Gospel, the voice from heaven [God the Father] speaks directly to Jesus: “And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased’” (Mark 1:11). And this would be appropriate, for until the spirit of the Father in the bodily form of a dove entered into Jesus, Jesus was only the unique Son of the Logos [ó Logos]. With receipt of the breath of God [pneuma Theou], Jesus became the First of the firstborn sons of God the Father in addition to being the unique Son of the Word of God.

But in Matthew’s Gospel, the author figuratively upped the ante:

And when Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He [Jesus] saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." (Matt 3:16–17)

Presumably, *this is my Son* is said to John the Baptist, but that doesn’t make sense for God had made known to John in advance that (according to John’s Gospel), *He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with holy spirit* (John 1:33). So John knew, simply from seeing the spirit of God descend and remain on Jesus, that Jesus would be the One who baptized with spirit as John was sent to baptize with water ... baptism by water is unto and into death, whereas baptism by spirit is into life, eternal life. So again in the ministries of John the Baptist and Christ Jesus, chirality is in play.

So if John the Baptist did not need to be told that the one on whom he saw the spirit descend and remain was *the One who was to come*, why would he need to hear, *This is my son*? He wouldn't. So who is the audience for, *This is my son*? How about you, the chosen one, foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified as fruit borne out of season? And by simply shifting the voice from heaven speaking to Jesus to speaking about Jesus, God the Father tells the chosen ones [the Elect] how it is that the person came to be a son of God ... Have I read too much into a shift in the auditor for the voice from heaven? Consider what the author of John's Gospel recorded:

Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." *The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered.* Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine. ..." (John 12:28–30 emphasis added)

The crowd didn't hear distinct words, but heard *noise* of the sort that comes from the sudden disruption of atmospheric stability—and Jesus said that the voice came for the sake of the crowd.

When the voice from heaven came in Matthew's Gospel when Jesus was raised from the Jordan, distinct words would have been heard by whomever was present; so for whose sake were these words heard? For the sake of those who heard the words? That would not have been the crowd, if any were present. That would have been for the sake of the Elect.

Luke's Gospel gets itself in trouble on this account ... again, what was said to Jesus in Luke's Gospel was "rewritten" in the 4th-Century to make it agree with Mark's Gospel, whereas the end of Mark's Gospel suffered a spurious addition that most translations note as being what it is, a late addition.

In Luke, we find,

Now *when all the people were baptized*, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, and the holy spirit descended on Him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are the son of me, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." (Luke 3:21–22 emphasis added)

The assumption has to be that *all the people who were baptized* heard something, thunder? Or did they hear words? If they would have heard words, then it would not have been possible for Jesus to keep His identity hidden—and in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells His disciples to tell no one He was the Christ: "Then He strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that He was the Christ" (Matt 16:20 also Mark 8:30).

The inherent reality of the crowds hearing thunder when God speaks negates the undergirding premises behind multiculturalism ... to hear the words of God, the person must be of "Christ," of the Christ, Head or Body, meaning that to hear the many words spoken when Jesus sent out the Twelve, the Twelve had to have been called by God the Father, which now opens up a new ore vein: named among the Twelve was Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Jesus.

In John's Gospel, Jesus said of Judas Iscariot,

I am praying for them. *I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.* All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. *I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.* But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. (John 17:9–13 emphasis added)

If John's Jesus says that He is not praying for the world, but only for those disciples the Father gave to Him, why do Christians pray for the world; pray that the fishing fleet has a safe and prosperous year; pray that God protects American soldiers as they kill enemy soldiers; pray that lichens are not destroyed by caribou hooves as the caribou eat ten thousand years of lichen growth in a season. Does God answer such prayers? Is He answering when lightning shivers light the sky and thunder rolls through alpine valleys? Of course not. So when Jesus only prays for those whom the Father has given Him, how should disciples pray? Only for those who are genuine sons of God? And how is a person to know if another disciple has been genuinely born of spirit? What sort of polarized light can one son of God shine on another to see if the other is really of God?

How about returning to Matthew chapter 10, and reading the last words Matthew's Jesus said to the Twelve when He sent them out to the lost sheep of the house of Israel:

So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. *Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.* And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. *Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.* Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward. (Matt 10:32–42 emphasis added)

If, according to the author of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus did not come to bring peace to this world, why is Jesus taught in Christian religious services as a man of peace, bringing goodwill to men? If Jesus came to set a man against his father,

then isn't this Jesus a very different person than the Greek *Jesus* who *focuses on the family*?

There has been a reason why Christian pastors and theologians pluck a passage from here, trim away its branches until only a single leaf remains, then set it in a vase and deliver a homily about the goodness of Christ, using the bare twig as a threatening switch to cajole adherence to a rule of faith that has nothing to do with hearing the voice of God. Yes, there has been a reason why. And that reason is the anti-family message of Christ Jesus—*a person's enemies will be those of his own household*—had to be distilled to mellow its sharpness, filtered to remove sons against fathers, and aged until swords rusted away—so with the proper aging, Jesus became a man of peace and Christianity became the glue of the empire. Three centuries was enough aging; however it took another century before the personhood of the Holy Spirit could be captured, bottled and corked.

If every Christian can hear the voice of God in thunder claps, then the *specialness* of the chosen ones [the Elect] is denied—and the God of Abraham shrinks to being the invisible *sky god*, represented by the sun, with this sky god being Lord over a host of lesser lords that are the deities of land, water, storms, fertility, harvests, or whatever the people want to believe ...

But the author of Matthew's Gospel won't play along:

Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But *the one who endures to the end will be saved*. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, *you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes*. (Matt 10:21–23 emphasis added)

Matthew's Jesus delivers a message that is for the end of the age, regardless of when he believed that end would come—it would come with the Second Advent, the coming of the Son of Man. And what this author says through his *Jesus* is that brother will continue to betray brother, and rebellion will occur within families for as long as the Adversary remains the prince of this world. You, as a Christian, can dress up Jesus' words; can make them pleasant to ears, safe for the ears of children, but you cannot change the reality that Jesus intends to overturn every secular and religious authority of this present world, with these authorities being no more than tables in the temple. He came physically to form the left hand enantiomer of when He comes again.

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, and He has a name written that no one knows but Himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which He is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the

Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. (Rev 19:11–16)

It is this Jesus that spiritually sends out the Twelve. Even though the author of Matthew's Gospel doesn't have the imagery of John's vision, this author has the spiritual insight to know that the physical ministry of Jesus inadequately foreshadows the coming of the Lord and the 1260 days of the Endurance in Jesus (from Rev 1:9)

And it is here where I shall camp for today as I ponder why a disciple would deny receiving what the disciple received, boasting that the disciple was taught by God, not by a son called to teach? Paul didn't answer that question. Perhaps it cannot be answered.

* * *

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