

December 14, 2014

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Repairers

You shall be called the Repairer of the Breach

(Isa 58:12)

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? Does He who supplies the spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"? Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. *And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."* (Gal 3:1–8 emphasis added)

1.

Faith as an ontological reality—as having *existence* in the world of things and ideas—is exemplified by the deeds of the patriarch Abraham, who believed God and thereby acted on his belief when told to sacrifice Isaac:

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they went both of them together. When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. (Gen 22:1–10)

Abraham, believing God, would have killed Isaac and burned his son as a sacrifice to the Lord if not stopped by the Lord:

But the angel of [YHWH] called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, ***for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son,***

your only son, from me." And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided." And the angel of [YHWH] called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." (Gen 22:11–18)

What was promised to Abraham for having obeyed the Lord that wasn't previously promised? Offspring as sand rather than heavenly stars. Possession of the gate of his enemies? Did Abraham have enemies? Apparently so. ... What was promised to Abraham was confirmation and consolation of earlier promises; for Abraham's faith—his belief of God that was counted to him as righteousness—wasn't complete until it became an ontological reality, having *presence* in this world through lashing Isaac down so that he could cut Isaac's throat.

James says,

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead. (Jas 2:14–26)

Surely Paul had read the same Scripture as James read; so why did Paul neglect the reality of the Lord testing Abraham's faith? Why did Paul ignore Abraham putting a knife to Isaac's throat to slay Isaac as commanded to do so by the Lord? Wasn't Abraham's belief of the Lord manifested as a *reality with presence* in this world when he prepared Isaac, his son of promise, for death? Of course it was. But James, having the concept but not the words, called the ontological presence of faith *being justified by works* and thereby alienated himself from those Christian reformers [such as Martin Luther] who had been poisoned by the *works* of the Old Church, works such as lighting candles, saying prayers, offering indulgences, genuflecting before statuary.

Christians poisoned by the vain works of the Old Church made an idol of Scripture itself, and transformed the humanly written Bible—complete with redactions and spurious additions—into the infallible word of God, a closed canon to which no further revelation could be added. This meant, since the visions of Daniel were still sealed and kept secret (and would be so until the beginning of the 21st-Century), that these Christians could never understand biblical prophecy, let alone the plan of God. But

those who would reform the Old Church in the 16th-Century through the 20th-Century were powerful speakers—and the Christian laity wanted to believe an *easy* gospel that sold *cheap grace* and *faith* that lacked *presence* in this world.

For as long as faith remained a mental concept that didn't outwardly effect how a person lived his or her life, all was well within greater Christendom. As long as a Christian could live as a Gentile while sincerely claiming to believe God, all was well. But no Christian can live as a Gentile and claim to walk in this world as Christ Jesus walked. No Christian can long keep his or her faith—belief of God—concealed before that faith dies to exist no more forever.

Can a Christian, seeing another Christian poorly clothed and lacking food, say to the other, *My tithe is so small it would not help you. Go in peace. God will provide for you.* ... Pause and consider what has been said: *God will provide, I won't.* Is this not a declaration that the speaker is not of God? Indeed it is. For the speaker has announced that God doesn't work through the speaker. There is no commonality of purpose between God and the speaker. Whatever faith [belief of God] that the speaker had is no longer present in the speaker. Why? Because when the speaker was tested by God, the speaker failed the test. And when was the speaker tested? When the speaker truly couldn't afford to give to another. When the speaker would have had to give from the speaker's want, not from the speaker's surplus.

When giving hurts, not much needs to be given. When giving doesn't hurt, much needs to be given so that what's given touches the person who gives ...

In 1979, I spent a Sabbath moored to the transit float in King Cove's small boat harbor. The weather was fine. I had halibut gear (longline gear) aboard so the local fishermen knew why I was headed for the Bering Sea, but none of the fishermen at King Cove understood why I wasn't continuing on to Dutch. A few came by and made polite conversation. One invited me to his house for lunch (he wanted to trade a couple of kedge anchors for two of my small navy gear anchors). But it was a Native boat stopping by and offering me their day's catch of red salmon that most impressed me: they said their catch was too small to take to the cannery (about fifty fish), that I could use the salmon as bait for halibut. In reality, I could use the salmon as food for myself; I could use the heads for halibut bait. ... Sometime during the day I had said in a passing comment that we—my wife served as deckhand—were eating what we caught. What I said was heard and produced a response, the fifty fish. For at King Cove, I was told that I was the only boat that had ever come from Kodiak with an appropriate anchor (an oversize anchor that would hold the boat close to the beach without much scope), and it was thought that I knew more about the seas of the Lower Peninsula than I did.

Were the two brothers fishing the Native boat truly too ashamed of their fifty fish catch to sell it? At the time, reds were about \$5.00 apiece ex-vessel. Their catch would have paid at least their day's fuel expenses.

I'll never know for certain, but the "feel" of the gift of the fish was that of being fed, with the indirection of Native culture not permitting a more direct offer of hospitality. ... We sailed in the evening, spend the night passing Unimak Island, crossed the Pass, and reached Akun Island by midafternoon. We ate red salmon for a few days, caught halibut both on heads and entrails, and sailed into Dutch with a nearly full hold—we were without ice so we had to sell as soon as possible.

Giving when it hurts produces genuineness of the sort the newly wealthy seldom experience ...

Did Abraham offering up Isaac, knowing for three days or more beforehand what he had to do, produce in this world *existence* or *presence* of his faith? Again, did not Abraham's faith possess an ontological reality?

Does the faith of a Christian who lives as a Gentile, eating unclean meats, conducting mundane business on the Sabbath, ignoring the High Sabbaths, have an ontological *presence* in this world, or does this Christian's faith slyly hide in the Christian's mind, never possessing *existence* in this world—a concept akin to telling the hungry, *Go in peace, God will provide*, when it is within the Christian's ability to feed the person who hungers?

The breach that separates man from God is represented by non-oxidizing fire that consumes what isn't made fireproof by manifested faith.

All nations can be *justified* by manifested faith—belief of God that has *presence* in this world—through the works of the Believer; that is though what the person does with what the person knows is right. And every Christian has read Scripture, has read what Paul wrote about imitating him as he imitates Christ Jesus. Every Christian has read John's first epistle in which John writes,

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. *And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. Whoever says "I know Him" but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him*, but whoever keeps His word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in Him: whoever says He abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked. (1 John 2:1–6 emphasis added)

And,

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure. *Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness*. You know that He appeared in order to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin. *No one who abides in Him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him. **Little children, let no one deceive you.*** Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as He is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. *No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God*. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. *By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers*. But *if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? **Little children, let us not love in***

word or talk but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:1–18 emphasis and double emphasis added)

Now, who has been deceived? Has not greater Christendom been deceived, sincerely believing that faith without *presence* is sufficient for salvation? But what does Peter write?

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. *For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.* For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. (2 Pet 1:2–9 emphasis added)

Is not greater Christendom so nearsighted as to be blind; for according to Peter, faith alone is not sufficient for salvation? Faith alone gets a person into fellowship with God—and gets the person into a position where God will test the person's faith as the Lord tested Abraham's faith. And the Christian will either pass or fail the test ... the one who fails will be retested, with each test becoming more difficult to pass, a realization coming from adding knowledge to virtue.

I have a brother who has faith manifested as love toward neighbor (real love), but whose faith is not manifested as love toward God. He will be again tested in the Second Passover liberation of Israel. But then, all of greater Christendom will be tested by the death of uncovered firstborns at the Second Passover. Greater Christendom has been warned. It really has been. But greater Christendom sees with human eyes and hears with human ears and cannot hear the voice or words of Christ Jesus; for greater Christendom does not believe the writings of Moses (see John 5:46–47) ... as if a horse, you can lead a Christian to knowledge, but you cannot make them believe for between faith and knowledge lies virtue, implementation of the Law in the Christian's life.

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