

No Other Evangel

Barbara and I are home again after a 5-week road trip that the Lord called “a missionary journey” to New England. This is Thursday, and we got back after 1:00am on Tuesday. I thought I’d cancel this week’s study, as we had to cancel the previous week’s while we were out of range in the White Mountains with our two newly adopted spiritual grand daughters, Katherine and Tatiana. But the Lord reminded me that there were other days this week that I could do the study, so I sent out a notice for tonight.

So...before we begin, Barbara and I want to greet the ecclesia at the Father’s house in Sandown, NH, home of the newly established Ministry Center of New England. Barbara founded the first Ministry Center in Dana Point, California, and later moved it to Washington, D.C. with the mission of meeting needs and healing hurts among top government officials from around the world. In fact only the top three officials from any government were invited to participate in an environment that was safe, where they could be saved, healed, delivered, and set free; and from which they could go forth to change their nations toward Jesus Christ. Taylor Faith, who is one of the top 10 hairdressers in the D.C. area, is the author of the book, “Oh, How I Love You!” and who specializes in helping young women recover from emotional trauma, was one of a handful of people outside of that exclusive governmental group to participate in weekly services at The Ministry Center at DC on Friday nights. Taylor carries on that work today in the DC area as the Lord leads, while Barbara and I carry it on here in Carmel, IN. The Lord sovereignly picked the house we’re living in now, in which we can accommodate the needs of individuals who need a safe place, like that in DC and now in New England, where individuals can find healing for their spirits, souls and bodies, and transform their lives into victory in every area. While we were in New England these past weeks, on our missionary journey, the Lord led Barbara to offer establishing The Ministry Center in New England at the Father’s house in Sandown, NH, with Laura and Dave Michael as pastors. We welcome them into the Ministry Center tabernacle. All of the Ministry Centers are ministry outreaches of Kingdom Communications, Incorporated, which is a 501 c-3, non-profit organization, eligible to receive tax-deductible, charitable contributions, tithes, and offerings, like any church in the United States. So, tonight we greet the ecclesia – the called out ones -- gathered at The Ministry Center in New England for our study tonight.

It was simply jaw-dropping to witness the sovereign hand of Almighty God, during our missionary journey to New England, setting into rapid motion the lives of those to whom He sent us and who were sent to us while we were in that land. Miracles, signs and

wonders followed as God went before us everywhere. And what He established in the lives of individuals and families, how He knit couples and whole families together was just astonishing to behold! We are so grateful to God for all He did and is continuing to do in that land.

God examines the heart, as the scripture declares in **1 Samuel 16:7** –

“The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at (sees into) the heart.”

God is watching what people do with the gifts He poured out over their lives during a journey He called Barbara and I to undertake over a period of five weeks. He is a good and gracious Father, but, as Barbara reminds me often, He's not playing. When He invests our lives in the lives of others, at His behest and on His behalf, there is an accountability on our part for every word we speak, every action we take, and every dime we invest. And there is an equal accountability on those who received us, who heard us, and in whose lives God invested ours. Of course, Barbara reminds me often that it's not only about where you are, but where you aren't, so, and we're already seeing what people did while we were gone with what God delivered to them through us before we left. We thank God for His grace, but I am freshly aware that His grace is abundant – Paul says it superabounds – in the lives of obedient sons and daughters. His mercy is required by those who rebel and on whose lives judgment falls.

Thank You, Father for Your grace tonight, Thank You for Your kindness and faithfulness to us in our lives that are hidden together in the Christ. Father, we lift our hearts to You in worship tonight, and our voices to You in praise for all You are and for all You are doing in our lives and in the lives, we pray, of countless millions around the world at this time in history. God, Your people are teetering on the edge of a cliff tonight, as the nations of the world contemplate formally dividing again Your promised land to Israel in the name of fairness as conceived mostly by the descendants of Abraham's other son, Ishmael. God we praise You for Your sovereignty tonight. Jesus, we exalt Your name above any other name, and we thank You that You will sort out the war between Abraham's kids as You alone are capable of doing. And we rest in You, Father. We renounce, refuse and reject the spirit of hype, feverish passion, and vain contention that threatens to engulf us as it seems to engulf the nations who presumptuously decide the fate of Israel and your people. God we pray for the peace of Jerusalem tonight, in Jesus name. We pray for the return of Israel's Messiah, in glory and power as the scriptures declare, to set right the wrongs done to Your chosen people, who are called by Your name. You alone, Lord, sit in judgment of the world. Your purpose of the eons marches

on, undeterred by the appearance of helplessness and hopelessness in the world today. Everything is exactly as You have ordered it; nothing is out of order, no matter how absurd it appears, because You, Holy Father, are operating the all in accord with the counsel of Your will.

So, Father, we rest in you tonight. We trust in You. We thank you for the holy spirit operating in us, guiding by Your peace, into all the truth. Father we seek Your face again tonight as we gather to study Your word. Be with us tonight, I pray, and guide us by Your spirit into all the truth. Take us where You will, Father; not where we will. And let Your will be done, in and through our lives as it is in the heavens. In Jesus name, we pray...and all God's people said: "AMEN!"

HALLELUJAH! Praise the Lord!

Something that has been beating in my heart and yearning within my spirit for many months is to look into the Apostle Paul's writings in depth, and to do so in the sequence in which he wrote them.

Up until now, our studies have been topically focused. I believe that we will find ourselves continuing to focus on specific issues, as we delve into Paul's writings, because they themselves address specific topics of life as we know it even today. Not only did Paul address doctrine and present a clear and yet uncommon revelation of God's "purpose or the eons," as he called it in Ephesians 3:11, but also deportment or behavior, conduct, and character as these issues apply to the individual, within the marriage bond, the relationship between members of the body of Christ as well as outside of it.

Paul is to me the great Apostle. He would probably argue with that designation, but here's why I stand by it. Paul alone was chosen as an Apostle by the sovereign act of the Risen Christ. He was schooled by Christ; that is, he received his revelation and understanding, as he declares in Galatians 1:12, "through a revelation of Jesus Christ." Paul was also "severed" by his calling to "the nations," the Gentiles, the non-Jews. Clearly there were Jews within the ecclesias throughout the middle east, Asia and lower Europe, to which the evangel of Christ was heralded in the first century. Today, we call them "completed Jews" who confess faith in Jesus Christ. Many then were and now are also filled with the holy spirit and operate within those gifts. However, Paul's unique ministry was to what he termed "the uncircumcision," as contrasted to the Jews whom

he termed, “the circumcision.” No other apostle was sent to the nations. All other apostles confined their ministry, and therefore their writings, to the circumcision.

Don’t misunderstand; there are many wonderful principles to be observed and lessons to be learned through the circumcision apostles, but Paul alone introduced the administration of grace, salvation by faith alone, justification, and conciliation. Paul alone looked into the long distant past, before the eons were set in motion, and into the distant future after their conclusion to see all saved and subjected to the Father who will be all in all, when all will be toward God who once existed in his heart and mind before anything or anyone was created.

Even today, Paul’s writings are generally misunderstood, and so the grandeur of his vision and the wealth of his revelation has, in large measure, been lost.

I want to invite you to recover Paul’s revelation together with me, as best we can. Look with me beyond the religious traditions and into his unique use of language. I knew a graduate student of classical languages whom I asked about Paul’s writings. He said, “Paul writes like no one else in the scriptures. He writes as if he has known you well for a long time; almost as if you were sitting across a breakfast table with him. Like old friends would converse with one another, Paul’s writing assumes that you know what he means. It isn’t polished Greek; it’s quite common, complex, and profound, all at once.

If you have a copy of the book, GO GOD, you’ll find toward the back a list of Paul’s writings in the sequence in which he wrote them, according to F. Lagard Smith’s study that led to his writing of the Daily Bible in chronological order. In that volume, he inserts Paul’s epistles into the book of Acts in historical order. The value of this is in tracing the development of Paul’s message, which he calls, “my evangel.” He used the term three times: twice in Romans (chapters 2 and 16) and once in 2 Timothy 2.

As we go through this process, if that is indeed what the Lord has in store for our studies together, I can’t promise that He won’t take us down some side roads; indeed, I expect Him to lead us together down whatever path He desires. I cannot think of a better road to travel and certainly no better guides than the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, whose job it is to guide us “into all the truth,” as Christ Himself declared in John 16.

One final note: I expect that questions will arise from these studies; I hope so. I encourage you to write them down and ask them, either during our study (to do that, just hit 5* on your keypad and I’ll see your hand raised on my computer screen); ask them

after we conclude each study, when I will unmute the line for group discussion; or by email as you ponder studies during your own time in prayer and studying the word of God. My email address is TT@ScriptureDoc.com. Again, that's TT@ScriptureDoc.com.

I want to read a section from the Concordant Commentary of the new Testament, to set us up for studying Paul's writings. If you have a printed volume of the Concordant Commentary, it will be a great help, to the extent that God leads us through Paul's epistles. If you do not have printed Commentary, go to the web site, Concordant.org, and in the search box at the bottom of the page, simply type the title of any New Testament book and hit enter. Click on the entry your interested in reading and Voila! – you have on your screen the entire Concordant Commentary of that book online.

READ Commentary, page 228

The first epistle Paul wrote was to the ecclesia in the province of Galatia. Its writing followed on the heels of the council in Jerusalem, around 48AD after a group of Jewish Christians went after Paul and Barnabas to “Judaize” the newly established gentile ecclesias, teaching them that they had to be circumcised to be saved, along with being baptized, and that they must keep the entire law as the Jewish Christians were. This is the council, you'll recall, from Acts 15. In fact, let's look at the setting together, to lead us into Paul's letter to the Galatians, who were really struggling over all this – they weren't just struggling...they were hoodwinked into trying to do all this stuff that the “judaizers” had put on them.

Acts 15:1-35

Daily Bible, page 1513, introducing the letter to the Galatians.

Commentary, page 279 – TEXT

Galatians 1:1-5 (CLNT page 440)

Commentary, page 280, Par. 1

Galatians 1:6-10 – where Paul discusses the rival gospels and their characteristics that conflict with His evangel that He delivered to the Galatians and other ecclesias in Asia (Galatia was a Roman province located northeast of Ankara in modern Turkey – Look up Galatia in Google and click on the Wikipedia entry. You'll see many of the names of provinces that Luke refers to in his chronicles of Paul's missionary journeys).

Recall how terribly corrupted the Corinthian ecclesia had become by the time Paul wrote his first epistle to them, yet, by the 4th verse of 1 Corinthians, Paul is thanking God for them.

Not so the Galatians. Their condition was even more serious than that of the Corinthians, who were only corrupted in following after their flesh. The Galatians had been spiritually corrupted, and Paul considered it so serious that he wasted no time in getting right in their faces. It's as if Paul says, *"Hey! I can't believe you people! I was gone five minutes and you guys fell for the load of crap dumped on you by people who I'm hereby cursing. What is up with you!"*

Anathema ("accursed" in other versions):

- 1) specifically, an offering resulting from a vow, which after being consecrated to a god (not THE God, mind you, but an idol) was hung upon the walls or columns of the temple (not the Jewish temple, but one devoted to the idol), or put in some other conspicuous place
- 2) a thing devoted to God without hope of being redeemed; therefore a person or thing doomed to destruction
 - b) a man accursed, devoted to the direst of woes