

Scripturalism vs Judaism XIX

Ministry of Paul

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Beginning, as we have learned, with John the Baptist, God was separating the Church from Judaism. When we come to Acts 9, we find that God called Saul who was later to become Paul. Saul was one of the leading, if perhaps not the third leading Pharisee in Judaism in Jerusalem. The calling of Saul to become the Apostle Paul was really a tremendous thing to happen.

It literally turned the whole Jewish world upside down. So much so that even to this day the Jews will say, 'Christianity we understand, Jesus we understand, but Paul we will never forgive.' You will see why as we go through and look at some of the things that happened to Paul as we continue on with this series.

Acts 9: 22: "But Saul increased *even* more in power, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, **proving that this is the Christ.**" The one who is destroying Christianity, hauling them off to jail—to be beaten, scourged and tried—was now proving that this was the very Christ. You talk about a flip-flop; you talk about a total change.

Verse 23: "Now, when many days were fulfilled, the Jews consulted together to kill him." Interesting! How many times did the Jews go about to solve their problems by killing someone? How many times did they seek to kill Jesus? *Many, many times!*

Verse 24: "But their plot was made known to Saul. And they were watching the gates both day and night, in order that they might kill him. Then the disciples took him by night *and* let *him* down by the wall, lowering *him* in a basket. And when Saul came to Jerusalem, he attempted to join himself to the disciples; but all were afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple" (vs 24-28). I would imagine that would be hard to believe; very hard to believe. This is why Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, even though he did go into the synagogues to start his ministry wherever he went.

Verse 27: "Then Barnabas took him *and* brought *him* to the apostles, and related to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. And he was with them, coming in and going out in Jerusalem, and speaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then he spoke and disputed with the Greeks, but they attempted to kill him" (vs 27-29). Paul was about as popular as Christ at this particular time.

Verse 30: "And when the brethren learned of

it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.... [that's where he was born and grew up] ...Then the Churches throughout the whole of Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace indeed. *And* they increased, being edified and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit" (vs 30-31). Then there's a notable miracle that happened here the rest of Acts 9.

Let's understand something about Judaism: In its strictest practice would not allow a Jew to even be in the same room with a Gentile. Would not allow them to eat with Gentiles, fellowship with Gentiles. Gentiles were 'goyeem'—meaning that's a kind word for *cattle*. What Peter was about to embark upon here in Acts 10 was a very profound thing and caused great distress among the Jews. Still at that time, even Jews in the Church, had contemplated a national salvation by Christ's return. They did not understand that Christ was going to send them into the whole world and deal with men and women, but in particularly men uncircumcised. This, when you understand the covenant with Israel and the circumcision covenant, was a profound and mammoth change, which was another reason why Christ died.

When you change a covenant then you must die. So, in order for the New Covenant to be enacted and God to then deal with all people, He had to come and die to change those covenants and fulfill the other part of the covenants that He gave to Abraham. Of course, that was the hardest thing for the Jews to comprehend and understand.

Let's pick it up here with the account concerning Cornelius, and let's see what happened. This reminds me an awful lot of some things that we always need to keep in mind: Just like with Elijah: He said, 'Oh, Lord, just me.' And God said, 'Now, Elijah, there, there, quit feeling sorry for yourself, blow your nose, dry your eyes and put your sandals on and go do what I told you, because I have 7,000 that haven't bowed the knee to Baal. Elijah didn't know a single one of them! Likewise here with the account of Cornelius, this let's us know that God may be doing a whole lot of other things with a whole lot of other people that you and I don't know anything about. Maybe God will bring us into contact with them in the future; maybe He won't—we don't know. But if He does, we need to be prepared.

Peter had no clue about what was going to happen, so God had to intervene with a Divine

miracle on both parts: with Cornelius and with Peter. That's what this is all about, Acts 10:1: "Now *there* was in Caesarea a certain man named Cornelius, a centurion of a band that is called *the Italian band*, a devout man who also feared God with all his house, both in giving many alms to the people and *in* beseeching God continually *in prayer*. He clearly saw in a vision, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming to him and saying to him, 'Cornelius.' But as he fixed his eyes on him, he became afraid *and* said, 'What is it, Lord?' And he said to him, 'Your prayers and your alms have gone up for a memorial before God'" (vs 1-4).

What is this telling us? *Anyone who truly, with a true heart, prays to God, God will hear!* In this case *unto salvation*, in other cases of people not called to salvation, God will still hear and answer their prayers according to their faith for that particular thing. That's why prayers are answered for people who are not necessarily called to salvation, and to have a prayer answered in that way doesn't mean it's a salvational thing. It just that they prayed to God sincerely. Maybe God will deal with them later, you never know.

I remember one time when we were living down on a farm and I must have been about 9-years-old at that time. We had horses and cows, and I had to milk the cows every morning before I went to school, and milk them every night when I got back; separate the milk, gather the eggs, feed the chickens and we had a couple of hogs from time-to-time and we had some horses—King and Duke. We used the horses to plow and we had 20 acres and we raised our own hay. We had all the equipment that went with it, and part of the equipment was that we had these hay rakes—these big long things with the big wheels on them and the rakes come down and look like giant teeth coming down. You go through and you rake up the hay and hit a lever and the teeth come up and it leaves a nice windrow of hay.

One of the neighbors asked my dad if he could hire me to do his hay, to put it in windrows. We harnessed up the horse and put it on the hay rake and went tooling on down the road about a quarter of a mile—one of those old hard country dirt roads. Part of it was an area where the cedar trees came up real high and it was almost like going through a dark tunnel. Just beyond that area then was where the field was. So, I was down there raking the hay and the horse got spooked! Here I am, the horse takes off running like crazy. When they're spooked, there's nothing you can do. They just get going, and here I am on this rake, just fearful for my life.

It bolts out of the field, goes up the road, it's in this place where the cedar trees are with the overlapping and in the tunnel there, and I'm thinking to myself *how am I going to get off here; what am I*

going to do? This horse was just snorting and going down the road as fast as it can be. You just have this little seat that you're sitting on. It came to my mind, because I was taking gym classes, to get behind the seat, drop down and do some tumbles when you hit the ground. That's what I did. I dropped down, the horse went chasing on up the road and I did my tumbles and everything was fine.

When I got done I said, 'Thank you, Lord.' Well, God spared me! I was very thankful for it. The horse goes charging up the way and part of the tongue of the rake breaks off, it knocks over a fence post, my mother is running down to the road and sees this laying there. 'Oh, Fred's dead!' The horse went charging on about another half-mile, ran out to the main highway, and then ran into a telephone pole and that's where it stopped.

I can say that that was an answer to prayer at that time. God was not dealing with me on a salvational level at 9-years-old. I'm very happy that God intervened for me at that particular time. You can look out and see people that you know that God has answered prayers for them, maybe not for a salvational situation, but for whatever. Maybe God will deal with them later, who knows! Maybe in answering that prayer now, maybe later something else will happen. You don't know what God is going to do.

Here this is a profound account. Why? Where was the place they were to pray? *Jerusalem!* Where was the Gentile to be when he prayed? *In the court of the Gentiles*—a second-class citizen. Now you get the whole picture of what's happening here; this is profound.

Verse 5: "And now send men to Joppa, and call for Simon who is surnamed Peter. He is lodging with a certain Simon, a tanner, whose house is by *the sea*. He shall tell you what you must do.' And when the angel who had spoken to him departed, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who continually waited on him; and after relating everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. And on the next day, about the sixth hour as these were journeying and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray. And he became very hungry and desired to eat. But while they were preparing *the meal*, a trance fell upon him" (vs 5-10). God had to supernaturally intervene to tell Peter this message.

This is not a message to eat unclean foods! This is where many people turn to justify eating unclean foods, but they don't eat many of the things that are listed here. This is a special vision for a particular purpose.

Verse 11: "And he saw the heaven opened; and a certain vessel descended upon him, like a great

sheet, bound by *the* four corners and let down upon the earth; in which were all the four-footed beasts of the earth, including the wild beasts, and the creeping things and the birds of heaven. Then a voice came to him, *saying*, ‘Arise, Peter, kill and eat.’ But Peter said, ‘In no way, Lord; for I have never eaten anything *that is common or unclean*’” (vs 11-14).

Do you know the difference between something ‘common’ and something ‘unclean’ in the terminology of Judaism? *Unclean* has to do with the unclean foods as listed in Deut. 14 and Lev. 11. *Common* has to do with clean foods that a Gentile has handled. In other words, if you have a chicken that is raised by a Jew, killed by a Jew, cooked by a Jew, eaten by a Jew, that is *clean*. But if you have a chicken that is raised by a Gentile, killed by a Gentile, cooked by a Gentile, eaten by a Jew, that is *common*. They also have it with bread and other foods, and so forth.

Another law that the Jews have concerning *common* is this; has to do with bread: If it’s under the supervision of a Jew, over a Jew, it is *clean*. If it is a Gentile under the supervision of a Jew it is edible by the Jew for non-religious purposes because it’s *common*, because a Gentile handled it. So, this division was just wide and vast. Now God is going to destroy it. This is what this chapter is all about.

Verse 15: “And a voice *came* again the second time to him, *saying*, ‘What God has cleansed, you are not to call common.’ Now, this took place three times, and the vessel was taken up again into heaven. And as Peter was questioning within himself...” (vs 15-17). He didn’t run down and say ‘Hooray! Thrown on the pork! Let’s have pork loin tonight, I just got a new vision from God.’ No! Pigs have their place, trust me, we wouldn’t have the garbage problem if we used them properly. We could get rid of all of these toxins very simply, just feed them to the hogs. Oh no, we can’t do that, we’ve got to fill the mountains with garbage.

“...Peter was questioning within himself what the vision that he saw might mean, the men who were sent from Cornelius, having inquired for the house of Simon, immediately stood at the porch; and they called out, asking if Simon who *was* surnamed Peter was lodging there. Then, as Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are seeking you... [the sheet was let down three times, now here come three Gentiles standing without] ...Now arise *and* go down, and go forth with them, doubting nothing, because I have sent them.’ And Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius *and* said, ‘Look, I am the one you are seeking. For what purpose have you come?’ And they said, ‘Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous man and one who fears God, and who has a good report by the whole nation of

the Jews, was Divinely instructed by a Holy angel to send for you *to come* to his house, and to listen to words from you.’ Then he called them in to lodge *there....*” (vs 17-23).

I would have to say that they probably lodged them out somewhere away from where the Jews were. But they nevertheless lodged them.

“...And on the next day Peter went with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him And on the next day, they came to Caesarea. Now Cornelius was expecting them *and* had called together his kinsmen and *his* intimate friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him *and* fell at *his* feet, worshiping *him*. But Peter...” (vs 23-26) being the first pope, Peter said, ‘I am happy you recognized my office; kiss my ring and my feet.’ *NO!* If Peter was the first pope, here’s the first opportunity. *No*, didn’t happen that way!

“...raised him up, saying, ‘Stand up, for I myself am also a man.’ And as he was talking with him, he went in and found many gathered together. And he said to them, ‘**You know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come near to anyone of another race. But God has shown me that no man should be called common or unclean.**’” (vs 26-38). *That is the purpose of the vision!* There is the explanation of it.

One who is a Jew, unlawful. By whose law? Which Scripture? *It doesn’t say that!* The Scriptures say that you are to have *one law* for the stranger and yourself—correct? *Yes!* This is a law of Judaism; the laws of separation. This is the middle wall or partition that Christ was now breaking down that divided Jew and Gentile. This is a profound thing that was occurring. That’s why it’s recorded in the Scriptures.

Verse 29: “For this reason, I also came without objection when I was sent for. I ask therefore, for what purpose did you send for me?’ And Cornelius said, ‘Four days ago I was fasting until this hour, and *at* the ninth hour I was praying in my house; and suddenly a man stood before me in bright apparel, and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. Now then, send to Joppa and call for Simon who is surnamed Peter; he is lodging by *the* sea in *the* house of Simon, a tanner. When he comes, he will speak to you.’ Therefore, I sent for you at once; and you did well to come. So then, we are all present before God to hear all things that have been commanded you by God’” (vs 29-33).

What a reception! Completely unheard of opportunity—correct? And very startling for Peter. Later we’re going to see Peter’s hypocrisy cost him dearly (Gal 2). Peter should have known better. He was the very first one used of God to breakdown the

barrier, the middle wall or partition between Jew and Gentile.

Verse 34: “Then Peter opened *his* mouth *and* said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons.’” Very important!

- it’s not who you are
- it’s not what you are
- it’s not what you think you are
- it’s not what other people think you are
- ***it is what is your heart before God that’s important***

God is no respecter of persons! Yet, how many things were run in the Church by respecting persons? How many of those things then subsequently backfired? *Many of them!* Why? *Because if you respect persons—i.e. politics—then you are going against the will of God!* And it’s going to backfire!

This is what Paul was teaching, Romans 2:3: “Now, do you think yourself, O man, whoever is judging those who commit such things, and you are practicing them *yourself*, that you shall escape the judgment of God?” That’s what happens with respect of persons. Did we not hear that the qualifications of a minister applies to everyone but this one person. Did that backfire? *Yes, big time, over and over again!*

Verse 4: “Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance? But you, according to your own hardness and unrepentant heart, are storing up wrath for yourself against *the* day of wrath and revelation of God’s righteous judgment, Who will render to each one according to his own works: On the one hand, to those who with patient endurance in good works are seeking glory and honor and immortality—eternal life; on the other hand, to those who are contentious and who disobey the Truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish—upon every soul of man who works out evil, both of *the* Jew first, and of *the* Greek; but glory and honor and peace to everyone who works good, both to *the* Jew first, and to *the* Greek... [this is what God was beginning to open up through Peter] ...**because there is no respect of persons with God**” (vs 4-11).

Let’s see what had to happen. There are three distinct miracles that took place.

1. the angel being sent to Cornelius
2. the vision to Peter to send him to Cornelius
3. the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles

Three distinct miracles to show how God wanted the Gospel preached.

Acts 10:34: “Then Peter opened *his* mouth

and said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, but in **every nation...**’” (vs 34-35). This is a Divine prophecy, because they weren’t in every nation yet, were they? *No!* They were just in Galilee, Samaria and Judea, which was basically all of those who were familiar with Judaism.

“...the one who fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him. The word that He sent to the children of Israel, preaching the Gospel of peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), you have knowledge of; which declaration came throughout the whole of Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism that John proclaimed, *concerning* Jesus, Who *was* from Nazareth: how God anointed Him with *the* Holy Spirit and with power, *and* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all *the* things that He did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed Him by hanging *Him* on a tree. *But* God raised Him up the third day, and showed Him openly” (vs 35-40). This is a summary of the sermon. I imagine that this took several hours to go through and explain.

Verse 41: “Not to all the people, but to witnesses who had been chosen before by God, to *those of* us who did eat and drink with Him after He had risen from *the* dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to fully testify that it is He Who has been appointed by God *to be* Judge of *the* living and *the* dead. To Him all the prophets bear witness, *that* everyone who believes in Him receives remission of sins through His name” (vs 41-43).

Here’s the miracle, v 44: “While Peter was still speaking these words, **the Holy Spirit came upon all those who were listening** to the message.” Why did it have to be done this way? *Because in this Divine miracle, which was an exception, God was showing that He was going to give the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles the same way that He gave it to the apostles on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem!* The same way! That’s why!

Verse 45: “And the believers from the circumcision were astonished... [because they figured that all Gentiles would always remain second class *church* citizens. But not so! God says, ‘Not so!’ So, they were astonished!] ...as many as had come with Peter, that upon the Gentiles also the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out; for they heard them speak in *other* languages and magnify God...” (vs 45-46).

Can you imagine hearing some Italians speak in Hebrew or Aramaic? Then they knew it was exactly the same; had to be!

“...Then Peter responded *by saying*, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be

baptized, who have also received the Holy Spirit as we *did*?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they besought him to remain *for* a number of days" (vs 46-48). He stayed there probably teaching and preaching and everything. Quite a thing! This had to be done this particular way to convince the apostles that God was now going to deal with the Gentiles in the same way that He had dealt with them.

Notice the political uproar it caused when Peter came back to Jerusalem, Acts 11:1: "Now the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God." This went like wildfire. Probably some of those with Peter went on back and told them in Jerusalem: 'Guess what happened? We were right there! We heard them! We saw it!'

Verse 2: "And when Peter went up to Jerusalem... [after he stayed there certain days] ...those of *the* circumcision disputed with him... [good ole Pharisaic attitude] ...saying, 'You went in to men who were uncircumcised and did eat with them'" (vs 2-3). You can almost hear it. You can just hear the words and the sounds the accusatory 'YOU did this, didn't you, Peter?'

Verse 4: "But Peter related *the event* from the beginning and expounded *everything* in order to them..." I want you to pay attention to this: They who were of the circumcision. It's important for us to understand that from this time forward there was a Circumcision Party that was in Jerusalem within the Church, as well as Pharisees not within the Church. We're going to see that this whole thing built up a head of steam until we come to Acts 15. So, there was a Circumcision Party. There was that division within the Church. I imagine that they went back and they read the Scriptures.

What did it say concerning the Passover? All males had to be circumcised before they could take the Passover. Now we're dealing with a whole other situation that not only was God dealing with uncircumcised Gentiles on an equal basis with the Jews, but that they did not have to be circumcised to take the Passover. You talk about a heated debate within the Church! That really set everything on fire!

We look back at the early New Testament Church and it was not all hugs and kisses and roses without thorns. It created a great difficulty. Then Peter told the whole story.

Verse 15: "And when I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came upon them, even as *it* also *came* upon us in *the* beginning. Then I remembered the Word of *the* Lord, how He had said, "John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit." Therefore, if God also gave them the same gift that *was given* to us, who believed on

the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I *to dissent*? Do I have the power to forbid God?" And after hearing these things, they were silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also has God indeed granted repentance unto life"" (vs 15-18). That was quite an episode here, and this was what you might call one of these earthshaking events that changed the history of the Church to the way that God wanted it to be, from the way that the Circumcision Party desired it to be.

Today we have a movement down in the Florida area and they're going around preaching sacred names and also saying that all the men must be circumcised, and everyone needs to be re-baptized in the name of Yahweh. That is going back to paganized Judaism coming within the Church. This is why it's important that we are well grounded and understand what God did, and understand the importance of this. That true Christianity is **removed from** Judaism; did not grow out of Judaism, but **removed** from it! So therefore, it's very important that we understand what Judaism is and what it stands for and what it does. God is interested in the heart, the converted heart. That is important.

Now, let's see what else happened here. I think this is going to be something we can look to. Here's what you would call some perfect evangelism.

Verse 19: "Now, those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose concerning Stephen... [which was several years before this] ...went through Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews only." **Even the disciples** going out were just finding the Jews only. But God didn't want it retained just to the Jews. He wanted it to go to all people.

Verse 20: "But certain men among them who were Cypriots and Cyrenians came to Antioch *and* spoke to the Greeks, preaching the Gospel *of* the Lord Jesus. And *the* hand of *the* Lord was with them, and a great number believed *and* turned to the Lord" (vs 20-21). Now we've got a lot of Greeks coming into this. The Greek's view of circumcision was complete repulsion! Now they're presented with a problem. What is going to happen here? How are they going to solve this?

Verse 22: "Now the report concerning them was heard in the ears of the Church that *was* in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced... [he saw the conversion, the Spirit, the grace of God] ...and he exhorted *them* all to cleave to the Lord **with purpose of heart**" (vs 22-23). That's really quite a profound statement there. Brethren, if there's any one thing we need today and that is *purpose of heart and to cleave unto the Lord!*

Verse 24—talking of Barnabas: “He was a good man, and was filled with *the* Holy Spirit and with faith. And a large multitude was added to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to seek Saul; and after finding him...” (vs 24-26). Saul then after he was called, converted and trained by Christ for three and half years in the Arabian Desert, went back to Tarsus and just was sort of put on hold until the time came that God was ready.

Here’s the beginning of Paul’s ministry. He then could come in with the Spirit of God, with the knowledge of God and having been a Pharisee of the strictest sect of the Pharisees. No little mean Pharisee. Not just a run of the mill Pharisee. Now with the teachings of Christ he could show the *true converted understanding* of the Scriptures and what God wanted for the Gentiles.

“...he brought him to Antioch. And it came to pass *that for* a whole year they assembled together with the Church and taught a great multitude. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians” (v 26). And a Christian is one who follows Christ. Then there was a prophecy of the dearth; a prophecy of the drought and Barnabas and Saul took the offering up to Jerusalem to the saints up there.

Acts 12—the martyrdom of James; the imprisonment of Peter. This is the second time with the imprisonment of Peter and then an angel came and let him out at night. That’s old routine to Peter. The next time he would get in jail he would say, ‘Well, wonder when the angel is coming?’ Here he got out again. Then it shows about the death of Herod.

Acts 13—this is where Saul is ordained as an apostle. He was not an apostle immediately. He was told that he was going to be a teacher, but not that he was an apostle. Acts 13:1: “Now, there were certain prophets and teachers in the Church that was at Antioch, including Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch), and Saul. And as they were ministering and fasting to the Lord, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Separate both Barnabas and Saul to Me for the work to which I have called them.’ And when they had fasted and prayed, they laid hands on them *and sent them out*” (vs 1-3). So there is an ordination.

Then we have quite an encounter here with Saul and Barnabas with a sorcerer called Elymas. This becomes profound. This tells us an awful lot about Judaism. Let’s understand that what is going on here is very similar to what we had back in Acts 8. Was not Simon a Sorcerer who bewitched the people? *Yes!* Was he not a Gentile? *Yes, he was!* Now we find here a Jew who has the same kind of religious practice.

(go to the next track)

Verse 4: “So then, after being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed away to Cyprus. And when they came to Salamis, they preached the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they also had John *as* an assistant. And when they had gone through the island as far as Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name *was* Bar-Jesus” (vs 4-6). What does ‘Bar’ mean? *The son of!* Jesus was a very common name then, so I would not want to say that he was going around saying that he was the son of Jesus Who was the Christ. The similarity cannot help but be kind of striking.

Verse 7: “He was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man, who called Barnabas and Saul to *him*, desiring to hear the Word of God.... [He was like other people searching, trying and find the Truth.] ...But Elymas the sorcerer (for so was his name interpreted) withstood them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith” (vs 7-8). Here’s a direct confrontation now with paganized Judaism with one of the leading false prophets: Elymas a sorcerer. This tells you an awful lot about the mystic Judaism, and it is sorcery; and it is illuminism.

Verse 9: “But Saul, who *was* also called Paul, being filled with *the* Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes on him, *and* said, ‘O full of all guile and all craftiness, *you* son of the devil *and* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the straight ways of *the* Lord?’” (vs 9-10).

Let’s understand something: There are the children of God and there are the children of the devil. The children of the devil are those who openly communicate with Satan the devil, who fulfill, carryout and do his will, and there are those people in the world who do that. Notice Paul’s confrontation directly with them, which is telling us that one day we will be confronted with it, too—won’t we? I think a lot of the things we’re seeing going on in the Church is all periphery of some of the things that have happened because of that very thing.

1-John 3:4: “Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness. And you know that He appeared in order that He might take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Everyone who dwells in Him does not *practice* sin; anyone who *practices* sin has not seen Him, nor has known Him. Little children, **do not allow anyone to deceive you...** [What are we talking about here in Acts 13? *Deception! Perversion!* Correct? And it’s what he’s talking about here in 1-John 3] ...the one who practices righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the

devil because the devil has been sinning from *the* beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil. Everyone who has been begotten by God does not practice sin because His [the Father's] *seed of begettal* [sperma] is dwelling within him, and he is not able to *practice* sin because he has been begotten by God" (vs 4-9).

You may sin, but God's Spirit will convict you so that you will repent. But you can't *practice* sin! You may even go a long time in a certain sin, but sooner or later God's Spirit is going to convict you! You can't practice it and live in it!

Verse 10: "By this *standard* are manifest... [revealed and known] ...the **children of God** and the **children of the devil**. Everyone who does **not practice** righteousness is not of God, and neither is the one who does not love his brother." So, there it is, the *children of God* and the *children of the devil*! This is important for us to realize that there are *children of the devil*, and they will come in and cause problems in the Church.

Matthew 13:36—this is the parable of the wheat and the tares: "And after dismissing the multitude, Jesus went into the house. Then His disciples came to Him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.' And He answered *and* said to them, 'The one Who sows the good seed is the Son of man; and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the **children of the Kingdom**; but the tares are the **children of the wicked one** [the devil]" (vs 36-38).

There will be times when there will be these confrontations and difficulties that will come along. That's why we need to know the Word of God. That's why we need to be armed with the Spirit of God. I don't know if we'll ever have to do like Saul—who's now called Paul. Let's read that again. He lambasted Elymas in no uncertain terms. Paul could do it because he used to be a Pharisee and he knew and understood what all of this was about.

Acts 13:9: "But Saul, who *was* also called Paul, being filled with *the* Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes on him [Elymas]... [He was not a coward; no politics here] ...*and* said, 'O full of all guile and all craftiness, *you* son of the devil *and* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the straight ways of *the* Lord? And now behold, *the* hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.' And immediately a mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking someone to lead *him* by the hand. And after seeing what had happened, the proconsul believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord. Then Paul and his company sailed away from Paphos *and* came to Perga of Pamphylia; but John departed from them *and* returned to Jerusalem" (vs 9-13).

This caused a little problem later on between Paul and Barnabas. I guess John was not the kind to travel around and get himself all tired and worked up. Paul was a worker! I mean, Paul would wear anybody out. There are some people who just work, and you can't deprive them of that work. But if someone else is around who is not of that same sort of work intensity, they'll wear you out! Paul was one of those, so John left. Later on that caused friction. We'll see that in Acts 15 between Paul and Barnabas.

Here we're going to have a confrontation again, and this has to do with how Paul came and preached, v 14: "Now after passing through from Perga, they came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day *and* sat down.... [this is their very first time into the synagogue] ...And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets..." (vs 14-15).

You have to understand this: in every synagogue they had a regular reading schedule; every Sabbath of every year they were to read the same thing through a 3-year period—go through all the laws and all the prophets called the 'triennial cycle.' It was very much like the Catholic missal. That lays out for the whole year in advance every word of every sermon that every priest is to give in every diocese and parish throughout the world. So it was with the Jews. **Whereas with the Church of God, God depends upon the Word of God and the teaching and His inspiration so that we learn the things in season**, rather than have it set out every jot and tittle that needs to be. That's why they become dead.

You go into a Catholic Church and the most exciting thing is hmmm, and they are dead! Go into a synagogue and it's the same way. The only thing they don't do in a synagogue is that they don't have crosses, crucifixes and statues of Mary, nor do they bow down on their knees—they are dead! They get up there and read what they are supposed to read and punctilious read it and that is it. Now, when they have someone new come in, as in this particular case, then they invite them to speak:

"...the rulers of the synagogue said to them, 'Men, brethren, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, speak.'.... [they didn't know what they were asking for] ...Then Paul stood up and, after beckoning with his hand, said, 'Men, Israelites, and those who fear God [Gentiles], listen *to me*. The God of this people Israel chose our fathers...' (vs 15-17).

Notice where he starts: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—I think we'll be astonished how much is in the New Testament and bypasses all of Judaism; that's the whole intent of everything that Paul wrote.

He goes back and says ‘Yes, if you’re circumcised that’s okay *if* you keep the Law. But if you don’t keep the Law that’s the same as being uncircumcised. Once you understand that, then you understand why this whole series—Scripturalism vs Judaism—God intended to bypass all of Judaism because Judaism is an unmitigated, demonic, evil religion—period!

People are going to say that I’m anti-Semitic. I am not! There are Jews who are against this kind of religion themselves, and to this day are fighting, even in Israel. I’m not against Jewish people. But God labels their religion that way. Was not Elymas demonic? A sorcerer? *Yes, he was!* At this particular time I’m sure that the synagogues were not laden that much with that kind of thing, yet. But today it is very, very much that way. That’s why it’s important that we understand about Judaism.

Paul stood up and he was saying, v 17: “The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and exalted the people when they were sojourning in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm brought them out of it.... [He’s telling the whole story of Passover and Unleavened Bread—correct? *Yes!*] ...And *for* a period *of* about forty years, He put up with their manners in the desert” (vs 17-18). What a summary! He did! God suffered! That’s what it means right there.

Verse 19: “And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, He gave their land to them by lot. And after these things, He gave *them* judges *for* about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul, son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, *for* forty years. And after removing him, He raised up David to be their king; to whom He also gave testimony, saying, ‘I have found David, the *son* of Jesse, **a man after My own heart, who will perform all My will**’” (vs 19-22).

I want you to notice the progression of what he’s speaking here. God chose the fathers, brought the people out and put up with all the sins in the wilderness, gave them judges, then gave them Saul and now here is David, who is a man to ‘fulfill all My will, a man after My own heart, who shall fulfill all My will.’ What is Paul trying to tell the Jews there in the synagogue? Are you going to be a man after God’s heart and fulfill the will of God? That’s what he’s trying to prepare them for. Notice the reception that he gets”

Verse 23: “Of this man’s seed has God according to *His* promise raised up to Israel a Savior Jesus, after John had first preached, before His coming, *the* baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.... [That’s where we started this series *Scripturalism vs Judaism*.] ...And as John was

fulfilling *his* course, he said, ‘Whom do you suppose *that* I am? I am not *He*; but behold, *there is* one Who comes after me, of Whom I am not worthy to loose the sandals of His feet.’” (vs 23-25). Let’s see the full account of this, because we’re going to understand that the Jews and the religious leaders of that time understood the times and the seasons, and they understood that there was the Christ Who was coming. There was going to be Elijah; there was going to be ‘the Prophet’; there was going to be ‘the Christ.’ But ‘the Prophet’ and ‘the Christ’ are two names for the same One being Jesus Christ.

John 1:19: “And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem... [Why would they send priests and Levites? *Because those were the religious leaders who were supposed to understand the Word of God who were going down to check up whether this was a fulfillment of the Word of God or not. John is out here doing all this baptism.] ...to ask him, ‘Who are you?’*” You don’t do anything that affects Judaism unless they understand who you are.

Verse 20: “Then he *freely* admitted, and did not deny, but declared, ‘I am not the Christ.’... [Why would he tell them that he’s not the Christ if they were not looking for the Christ?] ...And they asked him, ‘Then who *are* you? Are you Elijah?’...” (vs 20-21). What does this tell us? *They knew that Elijah was coming before the Christ—correct?* (Mal. 3-4).

So, they understood that. Remember when Jesus was born and the wise men came to Herod, they brought the chief priests and everyone in there and they said, ‘What does the Scripture say? Where was He to be born? *He was to be born in Bethlehem!* Where were the three wise men going? *To Bethlehem!* So, they knew! Likewise here, they knew when it came time for Christ’s ministry.

“...And he said, ‘I am not.’ *Then they asked, ‘Are you the Prophet?’* And he answered, ‘No.’” (v 21). They were looking for the One that Moses spoke about: ‘that Prophet.’

Deuteronomy 18:15—here’s what Moses told them: “The LORD your God will raise up unto you a Prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, One like me. To Him you shall hearken, according to all that you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, so that I do not die.’ And the LORD said to me, ‘They have spoken well what they have spoken’” (vs 15-17).

Here’s God’s long-term answer. They didn’t want God at the mountain. They didn’t want His fire and brimstone, hail and voice coming from the

mountain, so God said, 'I'm going to send them 'the Prophet' being the Christ. So, if they won't 'listen to Me in the mountain, maybe they will listen to a man.' That's why Christ came as a man.

Verse 18: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, *One* like you, and will put My words in His mouth.... [Isn't that what Jesus said, 'I speak nothing of My own, but what I hear the Father say, that's what I speak. I do nothing of My own, but what I see the Father do, that I do.' There it is right there.] ...And He shall speak to them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, whatever man will not hearken to My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require *it* of him. But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in My name which I have not commanded him to speak or who shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die'" (vs 18-20).

Showing the people coming along, as Jesus said that the first thing to watch for is *false prophets*. This is also a prophecy of that there would be false prophets coming along using the name of Christ and trying to preach words, which were not the words of Christ. That's who they were looking for. They *knew!*

John 1:22: "Therefore, they said to him, 'Who are you? What do you say about yourself so that we may give an answer to those who sent us?'" They had to come back and give an official report. This is like an investigative committee from Congress coming out to San Francisco to find out what's going on out here in San Francisco. These came down from Jerusalem to find out what was going on down at the Jordan River so they could come back and give an investigative report to the priests and the Levites.

Verse 23: "He said, 'I *am* a voice crying in the wilderness... [Isa. 40] ..."Make straight the way of *the* Lord," as Isaiah the prophet said.' Now those who had been sent belonged to *the sect* of the Pharisees, and they asked him, saying to him, 'Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?'" (vs 23-25). Notice all these detailed questions. When you have detailed questions like that, you know that they *knew* something. So they did, they understood something. They didn't understand the Truth.

Verse 26: "John answered them, saying, 'I baptize with water, but there is one *Who* stands among you Whom you do not know. He it is Who comes after me, *but* Who has precedence over me; of Whom I am not worthy to loose the thong of His sandal.' These things took place in Bethabara across the Jordan, where John was baptizing" (vs 26-28). So, you see what Paul has done. He

- started out with the fathers
- went through the time of the Exodus
- went through the time of the judges
- went through the time of the kings—namely David
- then he came down to John the Baptist

Now let's see where else he's going with this:

Acts 13:26: "Men, brethren, sons of *the* race of Abraham... [notice what he's appealing to] ...and those among you who fear God, to you the message of this salvation was sent; for those who were dwelling in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor the voices of the prophets who are read every Sabbath, have themselves fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him*" (vs 26-27).

That's quite a thing—isn't it? Sometimes you can ask: How can people not know when they've got the words right in their hand? *Well, here the words were read every Sabbath Day! It's amazing*—isn't it? It is amazing! There's something about human nature and choice that if people don't want to hear, they won't hear. Then there comes a point that what happens is that God blinds their heart and stops their ears so they won't hear. It's kind of joint operation like it was with God and Pharaoh. Pharaoh hardened his heart *and God hardened his heart*. It's the same way here. If people will not listen; if they will not hear; what good does it do to read every Sabbath Day that the Sabbath is the Sabbath and then go out and break it? *Doesn't do any good!*

Verse 28: "And though no one found any cause *worthy* of death, they begged Pilate to execute Him. And when they had carried out all things that were written concerning Him, they took *Him* down from the tree *and* put *Him* in a tomb; but God raised Him from *the* dead. *And* He appeared for many days to those who had come up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we are announcing the Gospel to you—the promise made to the fathers—that God has fulfilled this to us, their children, having raised up Jesus; as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'You are My Son; today have I begotten you.' *And to confirm* that He raised Him from *the* dead..." (vs 28-34).

Now then, He goes from being raised from the dead: "...no more to return to corruption, He spoke in this manner: 'I will give You the faithful mercies of David.' Accordingly, he also says in another *place*, You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'" (vs 34-35). He's tying an awful lot of this together—isn't he? This is really quite a sermon! It really shows how thorough Paul was in his preaching.

Verse 36: "For David, after ministering to his own generation by the counsel of God, died, and

was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption. But the one Whom God raised up did not see corruption.... [Now he's ready for the coup de tat; now come the swords] ...Therefore, be it known to you, men *and* brethren... [I imagine that they were all kind of astonished sitting out there in the synagogue. They probably never heard anything like this.] ...that through this man *the* remission of sins is preached to you. And in Him everyone who believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses" (vs 36-39).

That's another whole deep, in-depth topic. Sufficient to say that all of the sacrificial routine that God gave to Moses for the children of Israel only justified them to the temple, not to God in heaven above. This is astonishing! Whenever you say anything that appears to be against the Law of Moses, you are in *deep trouble* with the Jews. That's why he went: *the fathers, the fathers, the fathers*. Now then, he comes to Moses and puts Moses in a subordinate position, which is where it should be.

Verse 40: "Take heed, therefore, lest that which is spoken in the Prophets come upon you: 'Behold, you despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work that you will in no way believe, *even* if one declares it to you'" (vs 40-41). There are just some people you can say things to directly. How is it some people never get the point? Well, some people can be told directly—they can read it, they can hear it—but never get it. That's something! He's telling them! He's warning them here!

Verse 42: "And when the Jews had gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles entreated *him* that these words might be spoken to them on the next Sabbath." Here's a very important proof, section of Scripture, showing that the Gentiles kept the Sabbath. Here would have been a perfect opportunity for Paul to say, 'Listen, you Gentiles, God has abolished the Sabbath, ya'll come tomorrow, because Sunday is for you Gentiles.' NO! Even the Gentiles knew better.

Verse 43: "Now after the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the Jews and the proselytes who worshiped *there* followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God."

Let's stop here for a minute. This is very profound! ***The grace of God and Sabbath-keeping go together!*** There it is right here. Next Sabbath continue in the grace of God, so therefore, the grace of God and Sabbath-keeping go together hand-in-hand, ***not as the Protestants say:*** 'grace and Sunday; Sabbath and bondage.' Not so! They go together!

Imagine what happened the next week; look at the response the next Sabbath. Everyone was

telling everybody. This was a gigantic uproar, which started out as a nice sweet little visit in a synagogue.

Verse 44: "And on the coming Sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the Word of God." What happens when the Jews see that they're losing control? And this happens over and over again! You see it in today's world.

Verse 45: "But when they saw the multitude, the Jews were filled with envy..."—because:

- they didn't have the multitude
- they couldn't control the multitude
- they couldn't manipulate the multitude
- they couldn't make them become followers of Judaism.

That's what they were angry about.

"...and they spoke against the things proclaimed by Paul, *and* were contradicting and blaspheming. But Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly, saying... [They really told them! Paul didn't back down to anybody!]: ...'It was necessary for the Word of God to be spoken to you first; but since you reject it and do not judge yourselves worthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles'" (vs 45-46).

This was the worst insult you can give any Jew, to say that 'we are rejecting you for the 'goyeem'—could be nothing worse! If you want to understand what this is equivalent to today, think of this way: The whole world imposes upon Jews in Israel today the solution of Yasser Arafat for peace in the Middle East. Can you imagine the reaction? There would be an uproar, a tumult, riots, hatefulness, blaspheme—right? *Yes!* So, when Paul said that 'we turn to the Gentiles' let's see what they did because of that:

Verse 47: "'For so the Lord has enjoined *upon* us: "I have set You [Christ] for a light of *the* Gentiles that You should be for salvation unto *the* uttermost parts of the earth.'" And when the Gentiles heard *this*, they rejoiced; and they glorified the Word of the Lord, and believed, as many as were appointed to eternal life. And the Word of the Lord was carried throughout the entire country.... [notice what happened to the Jews and Judaism]: ...But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the principal men of the city, and raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their borders" (vs 47-50).

Got them up, took them out, threw them out of the city. I mean, this is really quite a momentous event that took place. We can put it in terminology today, this is something! This tells us how we ought to preach. That's why I believe that when there's going to be any public preaching later on, it's going

to be short and sweet and to the point and over with. God is not going to put up with a nice social little things.

Do you have stress in the workplace? *Yes, everybody's got stress in the workplace!* So what! That has nothing to do with Christianity. Christianity is:

- Do you *love* God?
- Do you *believe* God?
- Do you *believe* His Word?
- Do you *believe* Jesus Christ?

And just as Paul told them what they were doing was wrong, so the religions of the world have to know what they are doing *is wrong!* They have to know in no uncertain terms.

Verse 51: "And after shaking the dust off their feet against them, they came to Iconium. Then the disciples were filled with joy and *with the Holy Spirit*" (vs 51-52). We could put another verse in there if we wanted to: And the Jews were grumbling and griping and envious and set against the disciples. That what they were!

Let me just cover one thing here. The world and the religions of the world are going to have to know that

- they have *annulled* the judgment of God
- they have *judged* the Word of God
- they have *condemned* God

—so that they can keep their own righteousness. They need to be told in those words and in those terms. I can tell you one thing, when that is said in public, we'd better all have a way of escape somewhere.

Wasn't Paul telling them that they were fulfilling the Words of the Scriptures about them? *Yes!* He was saying 'You are fulfilling the words of condemnation against yourself because you won't believe.' The Scriptures are correct in two instances:

1. If you *believe—salvation!*
2. If you *don't—condemnation!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 9:22-31
- 2) Acts 10:1-34
- 3) Romans 2:3-11
- 4) Acts 10:34-48
- 5) Acts 11:1-14, 15-26
- 6) Acts 13:1-10
- 7) 1 John 3:4-10
- 8) Matthew 13:36-38
- 9) Acts 13:9-25

- 10) John 1:19-21
- 11) Deuteronomy 18:15-20
- 12) John 1:22-28
- 13) Acts 13:26-52

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Deuteronomy 14
- Leviticus 11
- Galatians 2
- Acts 15; 12; 8
- Malachi 3; 4
- Isaiah 40

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