

## 18 Conclusion: Preach And Teach From Jesus' Words Only

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### *The Duty to Distinguish False Prophets Is How to Show We Love God*

In Matthew 22:37-38, we read:

(37) Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

(38) This is the first and great commandment.”

Jesus is not only quoting Deuteronomy 6:5, as most commentaries mention. Instead, Jesus is also quoting Deuteronomy 13:3. In that verse, God explains why He allows prophets with true signs and wonders to appear who yet are false prophets. It is our duty to recognize their doctrines as false because they seduce us from following God's Law. (Cf. Isaiah 8:20.) God explains how this is a supreme test of the command Jesus says is *the most important*:

[Y]ou shall not listen to the words of that prophet, or to that dreamer of dreams: for Yahweh your God proves you, **to know whether you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul.** (Deut. 13:3, ASV.)

Thus, obedience to the command to love God with your whole heart and mind is associated with *distinguishing* true prophets from false prophets. God says He tests your love by allowing persons to come with true “signs and wonders” who you should identify as false due to

their doctrine. You must disregard their signs and wonders “that come true” because their doctrine teaches you to not follow the Law. It is a privilege and a supreme duty to make this assessment.

Even a man of God, and true prophet, should be recognized as having become a false prophet when he gives you permission to do what God has previously prohibited. This is the lesson the Young Prophet from Judah learned bitterly when he was deceived by the Old Prophet in 1 Kings 13.

In a revelation-based faith, such as Judaism and Christianity, it is no wonder that God puts such a high value on making such an assessment. Distinguishing true from false prophecy is *integral* to His plan to reveal Himself through writings of prophets. If we fail to honor God’s plan by obeying His command to distinguish true from false prophets, we are demonstrating a failure to love God with our whole mind, heart and soul.

Therefore, if you refuse to apply God’s word to test Paul’s validity, God says you do not love God with your whole heart, mind and soul. On the other hand, if you do test Paul’s doctrines by God’s revealed word, you are showing your supreme allegiance to God Himself, and not to any human hand that purports to speak in His name.

The conclusion follows that this is a duty from which we cannot shrink. We must make a finding no matter how unpleasant and contrary to human supposition.

### **The Question of Paul’s Apostleship**

The result concerning Paul’s supposed apostleship is unavoidable from all the evidence adduced in prior chapters. Paul was a false apostle. His evidence in support is totally self-serving. Jesus said even for Himself, a self-interested statement as the sole proof He was Son of God would mean Jesus’ claim was “not true.” John 5:31 (“If I bear witness of Myself, my witness is not true.”)<sup>1</sup> Tertullian in 207 A.D., speaking on behalf of apostolic Christianity, made the same

point about Paul. He said the proof that Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ was based solely on Paul's self-serving statements. Tertullian wrote in *Against Marcion*.

I must with the best of reasons approach this inquiry with uneasiness when I find one affirmed to be an apostle, of whom ***in the list of the apostles in the gospel I find no trace...*** [Let's] put in evidence all the documents that attest his apostleship. ***He [i.e., Paul] himself, says Marcion, claims to be an apostle,*** and that not from men nor through any man, but through Jesus Christ. Clearly ***any man can make claims for himself:*** but his claim is confirmed by another person's attestation. One person writes the document, another signs it, a third attests the signature, and a fourth enters it in the records. ***No man is for himself both claimant and witness.*** (See Tertullian, *Against Marcion* (207 A.D.) quoted at 418-19 *supra*.)

Tertullian's critical analysis is what thereafter thwarted the movement of Marcion. Why was it crucial to defeat Marcion? Because Marcion was claiming Paul's Gospel was the only true gospel. He claimed the Gospel Message presented in Matthew and John were legalistic, and no longer applied.<sup>2</sup> In response, universal Christianity as it existed prior to the rise of Roman Catholicism vigorously combatted Marcionism. It saw as horrifying heresy any notion that Paul had superiority over the message from Jesus carried by Matthew and John.

When the church was forced to address this crucial issue about Paul, the verdict was clear: the evidence for Paul's apostleship did not meet a Biblical standard. We have no choice but to concur. Other than Paul's own assertions, there is no proof anywhere in the New Testament writings

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1. For further discussion, see page 219.

2. See "Tertullian (207 A.D.) Says Paul Is Inferior" on page 408 *et seq.*

that Paul was appointed an apostle of Jesus Christ. None in the Gospels, none in Acts, and none in any valid apostle-epistle. This is why the doctrine of the early church on salvation ignored Paul, and preached Jesus' doctrine alone.<sup>3</sup>

### The Question of Being The Prophesied Ravening Wolf

Nor can we ignore God in the Prophecy of the Benjamite Ravening Wolf in Genesis warned us of the ravening wolf to come from the tribe of Benjamin.<sup>4</sup> He would come in the latter days — in the same epoch as Messiah. In Ezekiel, we learn the characteristics of ravening wolves. They would destroy the Law, cause people to no longer keep the true Sabbath, and cause the cessation of distinguishing the clean from unclean. Paul fit all these characteristics. The Benjamite Ravening Wolf Prophecy further said this Benjamite would divide his spoil. Paul did this as well, claiming the right to exclusively preach to the Gentiles. (Galatians 2:9.) Paul claimed in that verse the twelve apostles agreed to narrow their mission field to be exclusively the Jewish people. (Any notion the twelve *consented* to exclude themselves from a Gentile ministry, as Paul claimed, is ridiculous.)<sup>5</sup>

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3. See page 425 *et seq.*

4. See “Who is the Benjamite Wolf in Prophecy?” on page 347 *et seq.*

5. See page 350 *et seq.* This division in Paul's exclusive favor is dubious at best. At the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, Peter stood up and spoke. Paul was at his feet. Peter declared He, not Paul, was *the* Apostle to the Gentiles **by God's decree**: “God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.” (Acts 15:7 ASV.) Also, in the post-council era with Paul alive the Apostle Thomas was preaching the gospel in India. This is supported by Ephraem Syrus, Ambrose, Paulinus, and Jerome. (“St. Thomas The Apostle,” *Catholic Encyclopedia*.) At Mylapore, not far from Madras, “tradition has it that it was here that St. Thomas laid down his life [in 72 A.D. which] is locally very strong.” *Id.* If what Paul is saying were true, didn't Thomas transgress the Jewish-Gentile pact with Paul? But why would the twelve leave to one person (Paul) this important mission to reach the Gentiles? It begs all credulity to believe Paul.

Thus, even the early church writer and Roman church leader Hippolytus (170-235 A.D.) observed around 205 A.D. that the Benjamite “ravens wolf” prophecy of Genesis “thoroughly fits Paul.”<sup>6</sup>

Jesus likewise warned of the “ravens wolf” that was coming who would be a false prophet. (Matt. 7:15.) The false prophet would have “signs and wonders,” and come in Jesus’ name, tell us the “time is at hand,” teach eating meat sacrificed to idols was permissible, but be a worker of *anomia*.<sup>7</sup> *Anomia* in Greek literally means *negation* of *Nomos* — the sole and specific Greek word used to refer to the Law of Moses.<sup>8</sup> This ravens wolf false prophet would work the negation of the Law just as the Benjamite Ravens Wolf of the Genesis prophecy would work.

It takes enormous defiance of Jesus to ignore who is the subject of Jesus’ warnings. Paul declared all the Law abolished.<sup>9</sup> As to Sabbath specifically, even as Luther said: “Paul [Col. 2:16]...abolish[ed] the sabbath....”<sup>10</sup> Paul also abolished all distinction of clean versus unclean. (1 Tim. 4:4, ‘no food is to be rejected if prayed over and God is thanked’; Romans 4:2.)<sup>11</sup> Paul also said the “day is *at hand*” in precisely the words Jesus warned a false prophet would use, while “coming in My name.” (Luke 21:8; Romans 13:12.)<sup>12</sup>

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6. See page 351.

7. Matt. 7:15-23, viz., v. 22; 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22-23. See page 59 *et seq.* See also, Luke 21:8 (“time is at hand”) discussed at page 366. See, Rev. 2: 20 (false claimant to prophecy teaches us to eat meat sacrificed to idols.)

8. See “Why Anomia Means Negator of Mosaic Law” on page 60 *et seq.*

9. See Chapter Five.

10. See page 76 *et seq.* Paul never even endorses a one-in-seven principle. Even so, God condemns keeping a mandated festival on a day different than God’s appointed time. Jeroboam kept feast of tabernacles on a “day of his [own] choosing (invention).” (1 Kings 12:33.)

Paul fit Jesus' depiction of a false prophet in Revelation 2:20 who teaches it was permissible to eat meat sacrificed to idols. (E.g., Corinthians 8:4-13, 1 Corinthians 10:19-29.)<sup>13</sup>

Finally, Paul twice unwittingly pointed at himself Jesus' warning about the "signs and wonders" prophet who would seek to "seduce the elect."<sup>14</sup> For Paul said twice that "signs and wonders" prove his validity. (Romans 15:19 "in the power of *signs and wonders*... I preached the gospel"; 2 Cor. 12:12 "Truly *the signs of an apostle* were wrought among you in all patience, by *signs and wonders* and mighty works.")

Consequently, the coincidence of descriptions between the Benjamite Ravening Wolf of Genesis and the false prophet 'ravening wolf' Jesus described is too powerful to ignore. Their identical convergence on Paul is also too uncanny to deny.

### Seduction From the Law As Key Biblical Test

Moreover, Jesus also left a trail of clear doctrine by which to test Paul's doctrine on the Law of Moses. Even if we balk at seeing Paul as the ravening wolf, Jesus made it impossible for us to deny there is a blatant contradiction by Paul of what Jesus (and Prophets of Old) taught on what would be the Law *even* in the *era* of the New Testament.

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11. Jesus, by contrast, merely implied that if one ate unclean food, this did not make you a sinner. Jesus did not abrogate the distinction. Rather, it follows from Jesus' statement that the law of unclean food was a health rule, which we should have known anyway from the words *clean* and *unclean*. Thus, Jesus did not abrogate these rules. He just put them on a different level than other commands. See Footnote 10, page 359.

12. See "Another Prophecy Aimed At Paul?" on page 366.

13. See "Paul Contradicts Jesus About Idol Meat" on page 117 *et seq.*

14. Matt. 7:22 (miracles and prophecy); 24: 24 ("false prophets [have] signs and wonders." Jesus warns again of false prophets in Mark 13:22. He says they "shall show signs and wonders to seduce, if possible, even the elect." For further discussion, see page 59.

First, Jesus told us that anyone who teaches us not to follow the “least command (in the Law of Moses)” would be “least in the kingdom of heaven,” but whoever told us to follow the “commandments (from the Law of Moses) would be the greatest in *the kingdom of heaven*.” (Matt. 5:19.) God had told us likewise beforehand that the “New Covenant” was based on “inscribing the Law (Torah) on our hearts...” (Jeremiah 31:31-33.)<sup>15</sup> When His Servant (Messiah) comes, God “will *magnify the Law* (Torah), and make it *honorable*.” (Isaiah 42:21 ASV/KJV.)

Jesus fulfilled this by condemning the Pharisees for teaching traditions that “make of none effect” express commands in the Law given Moses. (Matt. 15:16.) This included Jesus’ faulting the Pharisees’ notion that a special korban payment could excuse honoring your parents (by supporting them if they fell in poverty). (Matt. 15:16.) This included Jesus attacking the Pharisees’ emphasizing the duty to tithe to the neglect of the weightier matters of the Law of Moses. Matt. 23:23. This also included Jesus faulting the Pharisees for teaching one did no wrong engaging in adulterous lust as long as one did not follow through and commit the act of adultery. (Matt. 5:28.)<sup>16</sup>

Paul did not share any concern to correct the Pharisees’ *shallow* doctrines on the Law. Paul never shared Jesus’ concern that the Pharisees’ traditions had made of none effect the express commands in the Law given to Moses.

To the contrary, Paul, like the Pharisees, came teaching his own tradition which did away with the Law given Moses. However, Paul went further than most Pharisees. He abrogated it down to the very last jot and tittle.

For Paul said the New Covenant “*abolished*... the Law of commandments” (Eph. 2:15). Paul likewise said the Sabbath command was “but a shadow of things to come,” and

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15. For further discussion, see page 233 *et seq.*

16. For discussion of this and the other faults of the Pharisees which Jesus was identifying, see page 24; page 71 *et seq.*

henceforth let no man judge you for failure to keep it, for Christ “**blotted out** the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and **took it out of the way.**” (Col. 2:14-17.) Paul insisted that the Law given Moses was a “ministration of death engraven on stones” because the “letter of the law kills,” which now has “been **done away**” and “is **abolished;**” henceforth, instead, in the Lord we have “liberty.” (2 Corinthians 3:6-17.) Paul defined this liberty quite clearly: “All things are **lawful** but not all things are necessarily **expedient.**” (1 Cor. 6:12, ASV). “All things are **lawful** for me.” (1 Cor. 10:23.)<sup>17</sup>

Paul’s regard for the Law reached a total low-point in Galatians with utterances which no doubt would shock our Lord. Paul says the Law given the mediator Moses was “ordained by angels.” (Gal. 3:19 ASV KJV.) Anyone who wants to be in bondage to them desires to be in bondage to those who “are no gods” (Gal. 4:8) and is seeking to be “in bondage again” to “weak and beggarly elements (angels).” (Gal. 4: 9.)<sup>18</sup>

Paul then goes so far as to say in the same letter that even if an “angel from heaven” should come with a gospel different than Paul, such “an angel from heaven” should be “cursed.” (Gal. 1:8.) In Galatians, therefore, Paul put his words expressly above the same source he ascribed as the source of the Law given Moses: angels from heaven. Paul deliberately did so in order that we would accept his word as a superior authority to the Law of Moses. This was crucial because Paul was informing us that the Law of Moses was now abolished. Such a bold declaration only had validity if the Law “ordained by angels” was given by “angels of heaven” over whom Paul was asserting a superior authority — even a right to curse them. Only by this bold contrast and curse upon such an “angel from heaven” (Gal. 1:8) could we

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17.For a full discussion on how Paul applied this principle to Sabbath and eating meat sacrificed to idols, see page 80 *et seq.*

18.See “Paul Says the Law Was Ordained through Angels” on page 85 *ff.*



ever dare think a mere human could single-handedly abolish the Law given Moses. Paul's hubris had therefore reached as high as he could take it to justify his doctrine.

Paul did not limit this abolition to merely the commands in the Law applicable to Sojourners (*i.e.*, Gentiles). Paul taught this truth of abrogation also applied to all the Law's commands directed at Israel (*i.e.*, Jews/the twelve tribes). According to Paul, by the death of Christ, the Jews now experienced the death of the husband (God) who bound them to the covenant at Sinai. The legal effect of His death under the Law of Moses thereby released the wife (the Jews) to remarry a resurrected Jesus who no longer held out the Law of Moses as any sort of guidepost in the New Covenant. (Rom. 7:1-4.)

In Galatians 4:22 *ff*, Paul likewise said that the Jews of Jerusalem no longer correspond to sons of Israel, but instead to the son Ishmael of Hagar; and they continue in bondage (to the Law of Moses), and are thereby thrown out in the desert.<sup>19</sup> However, how could Paul be inspired by God in this when the same God said in Jeremiah 31:31 *ff* that He could never base a New Covenant other than on the Law given Moses or enter into it with any other people than the *seed* of Israel?<sup>20</sup> Eisenman is perhaps too kind when he says Paul's remarks in Galatians 4:22-31 contain "a series of sometimes outrageous allusions."<sup>21</sup>

These are all hard questions with unpleasant answers. The answers call us to trust in Jesus' words above Paul's words.

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19. See page 86 *et seq.*

20. For further discussion, see page 233 *et seq.*

21. Prof. Robert Eisenman, *The New Testament Code: The Cup of the Lord, The Damascus Covenant, and the Blood of Christ* (London: Watkins Publishing, 2006) at 587.

### *Jesus: Our Sole Teacher*

Now we are prepared to receive Jesus' doctrine on the centrality of His message. This is the meaning of *Jesus' Words Only* — it is a doctrine actually taught by Our Lord. This doctrine made His commandments the sole focus for the church. He will teach us that His commandments are necessarily diminished when we treat as inspired *every* word of any apostle (including the one we added by *tradition* as a thirteenth). Jesus clearly did not intend to impart such an authority to *every* word of any one of the individual twelve apostles merely because spoken by them. Because Jesus never extended such authority to any of the twelve, we have utterly no justification extending such authority to someone who was not even among the twelve, namely Paul.

This doctrine begins with Jesus' teaching that we have one Rabbi, one Teacher. We were not to call anyone in the church, even an apostle, a teacher. Speaking to *both* the apostles and the crowds, Jesus said: "Don't let anyone call you Rabbi [*i.e.*, Teacher] for you have only One Teacher, and all of you are equal as brothers and sisters." (Matt. 23:8 NLT.) "And don't let anyone call you Teacher, for you have only One Teacher, the Messiah (Christ)." (Matt. 23:10 NLT.)

Jesus was thereby admonishing the Apostles to not assume any authority above His message. As Matthew Henry explains this passage:

The disciples ***must not assume the authority and dominion implied in those names*** [*i.e.*, teacher]; they must not domineer over their brethren, or over God's heritage, ***as if they had dominion over the faith of Christians.***

Furthermore, because Jesus was addressing both *apostles* and the *crowd*, His remark that all in attendance were "equal" as brothers has a key significance. Yet, it is often overlooked. Jesus meant all Christians are equal "brethren" with a perfectly equal authority. In this sense, no one believer is higher in position or importance than any other

believer. Any sense of superiority or sense of inferiority among believers is to be avoided. None are to be masters or teachers in the church of Christ. We are all disciples of the same Master. Thereby, Jesus remains always and forever The Teacher, The Master, solely and uniquely.

Yet, as we shall see, the twelve apostles were commissioned to teach *something*. Thus, while they were to teach *something*, they still were not to be called *teachers*. In other words, they did not have the authority of a teacher apart from the message they were to teach. They held no unique superiority over anyone else merely because they had the function of teaching a certain message. Rather, the *message* that they carried from Jesus was what was *superior* to any other message. We miss this point because we do not have the immediate recognition as first century Christians would that the word *apostolos* means *messenger* in Greek. Thus, the apostles had no independent authority to teach apart from carrying the *message* of the words of Jesus.

This was in keeping with how Jesus explained the Holy Spirit would work in the New Testament church. The Holy Spirit will not say anything to us other than what the Spirit *already* heard from the Lord. The Spirit does not speak *from within* Himself *anything*! In other words, no inspired words will come *directly* from the Spirit unless the Spirit already heard it from the Lord. Please listen attentively to our Lord explaining this:

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: **for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear**, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. **He shall glorify me**: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you. (John 16:13-14 ASV.)

Clarke says this bolded language means “He shall teach *nothing contrary* to what I have taught you.”

Thus, the Holy Spirit would do three things: (a) guide them in all truth; (b) provide prophecy of future events, as John later received in Revelation; (c) but otherwise, only repeat what the Spirit already heard from the Lord Himself (thus never contradicting Jesus' words). Jesus tells us why! Because this would *glorify* Jesus.

Later, Jesus gave a contrast in John 7:18: "He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory." Thus, if anyone spoke new principles different than what Jesus already said, they actually were speaking for themselves alone. Their words would be to "seek their own glory."

Jesus helps us understand this in another passage. He says to the twelve that the Holy Spirit will bring "remembrance" of Jesus' words and "teach you all things."

But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and ***bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.*** Joh 14:26 ASV

Thus, combining John 14:26 and 16:13-14, it means the Holy Spirit "shall...bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." But the Holy Spirit will not cause a recollection of any words contrary to what Jesus said in the hearing of the twelve. This is so because the Holy Spirit does not speak of itself. Clarke explains John 14:26 thusly: "Here Christ promises them that inspiration of the Holy Spirit which enabled them not only to give a true history of his life and death, but also gave them the most perfect recollection of all the words which he had spoken to them...."

But what about the Holy Spirit's *teaching* and *guiding* in all things? What does this mean? Because the Holy Spirit would not speak from itself, and not speak anything other than what Jesus already said, we know the *teaching* and *guiding* would itself not involve distinct *new* commands or doctrine. Rather, to keep the glory of God focused on Jesus, its teachings would be solely explanation. It would be *teaching*

the meaning of Jesus' words. As Gill explains: the Holy Spirit would "explain all things which *Christ had said* to them; to make them more plain and easy to their understandings."

Moreover, we know Jesus was not implying this teaching operation of the Holy Spirit effected an instantaneous infallible understanding in the apostles, let alone anyone else who enjoys the Holy Spirit. Why is this?

First, because the function of *teaching* and *guiding* has always been a work of the Holy Spirit in all who have received it. As MacDonald comments on this part of the verse: "But it is, of course, true in all ages that the Spirit guides God's people into all the truth." (MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary*.)

And the Holy Spirit did not uniquely belong to the apostles in the New Testament era.<sup>22</sup> Peter says the "Holy Spirit God has given to them that *obey* Him." (Acts 5:32.) Peter said the Holy Spirit would be received by a crowd of 3,000 if they "*repented* and [were] baptized" in the name of Jesus. (Acts 2:38.)<sup>23</sup>

Thus, if the Holy Spirit did not uniquely belong to the Apostles, then Jesus could not possibly mean the teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit implied instantaneous infallible understanding. If instead He did mean this, then all who

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22. As Wesley comments on John 14:26, Jesus' promise of a teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit applied to "the apostles, and their *successors* in the faith...."

23. Jesus tells us how to receive the Holy Spirit. He does so in a story about the persistent widow. Jesus says we should follow her example, and persistently ask God to give us the Holy Spirit. Luke 11:10-13. Using the continuous present tense verb, Jesus says, "everyone who *keeps on* asking receives...." (Luke 11:10.) Then Jesus says "how much moreso shall your heavenly Father *give the Holy Spirit* to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:13.) Thus, it appears our "repentance" unto salvation and receipt of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) is not necessarily a quick process. Yet, we are promised by Jesus if we are persistent, God will answer, forgive, and give us His Holy Spirit.

“obey Him” and have “repented and been baptized” would have infallible identical understandings of church doctrine. Alas, no such miracle has yet happened.

Furthermore, Jesus’ choice of words appears intended to confirm there is no infallible result guaranteed by this work of the Holy Spirit: “He (the Holy Spirit) shall **guide** you into all the truth....” (John 16:13.) When you are *guided* to something, it means you can be at the wrong point of understanding along the way. The *Guide* here is *never* wrong. Yet, the *guidee* might be. As Clarke says, Jesus’ terminology is “as a father leads **a child** by the hand.” The Holy Spirit is teaching you the path; you are a child; your understanding may be imperfect along the path even as you hear and try to apprehend your teacher. Your teacher is infallible; you are not.

In similar fashion, Jesus compares the Spirit’s guiding role to that of a teacher. “He shall teach you all things....” (John 14:26.) Again this does not guarantee that the student will correctly get every lesson. The *Teacher* here is *never* wrong. But Jesus did not say the student will always correctly understand the teacher. The student can be wrong or growing in his or her understanding. Thus, all who have the Holy Spirit will be guided and taught by the Holy Spirit, but it does not mean any Christian can affirm they have an *infallible* understanding. This is true whether they are an apostle or the corner grocer.

Thus, the metaphors of *guiding* and *teaching* that Jesus used when the Holy Spirit operated in them was different than how Jesus described the Holy Spirit’s work in the apostles which He said will assuredly “bring to your remembrance” the words of Jesus. Their remembrance was guaranteed to be accurate. However, whether they (or any Holy Spirit-filled Christian) would understand the Spirit’s teaching or guidance infallibly was not guaranteed. This understanding was to grow from the Holy Spirit’s *guiding* and *teaching* assistance in understanding the infallibly-recollected words of Jesus.

What confirms that *teachings* had to be measured for accuracy against the words of Jesus is that Apostle John understood it this way. He is the one writing these words in John chapters 14 and 16. Therefore, his personal understanding speaks volumes. John said anyone whose teachings “go beyond” or “overstep” the “*teachings* of [Jesus] Christ doesn’t have God.” (2 John 1:8-11.) This means the Holy Spirit is not present (note the verb is *has, have*) in anyone when such a person insists the church follow doctrine that goes beyond or oversteps the teachings of Jesus.

John’s lesson paralleled precisely Jesus’ lesson that the Holy Spirit would not go beyond what Jesus ever said to the apostles: “for he [the Spirit] shall *not speak from himself*; but what things soever he shall hear.” (John 16:13-14.) Thus, anyone who comes with a teaching that goes beyond Jesus’ teaching is speaking “from himself” and not for Jesus’ glory, and hence without the Holy Spirit. Such a speaker does not *have God* at that moment or in those teachings. Their teaching can and must be ignored.

Thus, whether one’s teaching really reflects the teachings of the Holy Spirit depends crucially upon whether one’s words are truly *compatible* with the words of the Lord Jesus (both given to the twelve apostles and the prophets that preceded them).

If, however, anyone insists Jesus intended instead that the apostles could each be individual oracles of God on every teaching they uttered, and this was beyond testing by the words of Jesus or the Law and the Prophets, Jesus would Himself become a false prophet. He would be giving the apostles an authority that God previously said no prophet can have. Even a true prophet, like Balaam and the Old Prophet of 1 Kings 13, had to be tested by their consistency with what had been revealed first to Moses and then by the words delivered to every *verified* prophet thereafter. Balaam and the Old Prophet failed the test later. Jesus cannot establish a new group of super prophets whose words we are not permitted to

test for consistency with what preceded without Jesus Himself contradicting the word before Him. Thus, Jesus could never have intended any such class of super prophets.

Accordingly, we know instead that Jesus was telling us about the limited speaking authority of the Holy Spirit so we would know the *legitimate* and *limited* sources for church doctrine. It starts and finishes with Jesus' words. The Holy Spirit will help teach their meaning. But the Holy Spirit is not going to add as inspired canon *anything* apart from Jesus' words *any more*. The only other thing the Holy Spirit will do (and did do in Revelation) is give a message about things that are to come to pass.

In fact, the Book of Revelation is a perfect picture of how the Spirit was operating in this *self-limited* way after the Ascension. This book John calls the "Revelation of Jesus Christ." (Rev. 1:1.) John summarizes up front what His sources are: he "bare record of the word of God, the testimony of Jesus and all things that he saw." Nothing is spoken doctrinally that does not come from Jesus. The Lord Jesus is present throughout, talking to John directly just before the visions and just after they finish. (Rev. 1:8,11,17-20; 2:1-29; 3:1-22; 21:5-8; 22:12-13,16.) The angel explains the context of the various visions with Jesus present at all times. This is similar to what happened with the Prophet Daniel: the Son of Man (Jesus) tells the angel Gabriel to make Daniel understand the visions. (Dan. 8:15-16.)

Thus, here we see the Holy Spirit is giving all glory to Jesus. Apostle John hears nothing but Jesus' words and things to come. Otherwise, the Holy Spirit is relaying visions to John while Jesus is present observing everything. This tracks the Holy Spirit's role that Jesus explained in John 16:13-14.

### **The Importance of John The Baptist's Actions**

John the Baptist is placed in the New Testament by God partly to demonstrate to us the sharp break off of the work of the Holy Spirit once Jesus' ministry began. As we all know, John the Baptist was the "greatest prophet" of all the



prophets (Matt. 11:11). John had been preaching and teaching prior to Jesus' ministry. Yet, John saw that once Jesus arrived on the scene, John's prophetic ministry had to recede away. The Teacher and The Prophet had arrived. John then only gave a message that insisted everyone turn to Jesus to hear His doctrine. John's *independent* message was to decrease. John explained why:

***He must increase, but I must decrease.*** He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is of the earth, and of the earth he speaketh: ***he that cometh from heaven is above all.*** John 3:30-31 ASV.

John knew if he continued his own message distinct from that of Jesus, John would necessarily *diminish* from the centrality of the message Jesus was now bringing. To allow emphasis and allegiance to switch to Jesus and His doctrine, John the Baptist was willing to let the focus on himself decrease. In the above speech, John the Baptist gives a long explanation of why Jesus is now the focus. Had John lived past the ascension of Jesus, no doubt John would still have had a ministry that focused now on the centrality of Jesus and His words. That's why John the Baptist preached in John 3:36 that "all who keep on ***disobeying*** the Son, the wrath of God continues to remain on him."<sup>24</sup> John understood the gospel very well and repeated it. Teaching the nations to "obey all that [Jesus] commanded" (Matt. 28:20) was all that now mattered.

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24. This is the literal Greek, reflecting correctly each present participle as a continuous tense. For an explanation, see Appendix A.

### Jesus' Warning Of Treating An Apostle On Par With Him

Jesus likewise warned us to not let any apostle's importance grow to the point the apostle's words were on par or greater than words from Jesus. Jesus said this plainly enough in John 13:16 but this is obscured in the KJV translation. Jesus said:

I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. ***Nor is the Apostolos (messenger) more important than the One who sends the message.*** (John 13:16 NLT with Greek *Apostolos* revealed.)<sup>25</sup>

Thus, if we put greater emphasis upon the words of an *apostolos* than Jesus' words, we commit the error identified in John 13:16. For example, if we dismiss Jesus' words as applicable only to a supposedly defunct dispensation, preferring some competing doctrine we like in a presumed apostle's letter, we would violate John 13:16. Yet, this is what a large segment of modern evangelical Christianity has opted to do in the doctrine of Dispensationalism. This doctrine gives a current validity to Paul's teachings while blatantly claiming any of Jesus' teachings to the contrary are defunct.<sup>26</sup>

However, to give any equal or superior authority as a teacher to any of the apostles when they were not quoting Jesus would be to allow the apostle to assume a role exceeding the bounds of their apostleship — their role as *messengers*. To allow an individual apostle to assume such a role in the church would permit focus on that apostle's doctrine apart from the lessons of Jesus. The Lord wanted us to have one Master, one Teacher: Himself. This was to protect His glory.

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25. This is a paraphrase of Isaiah 6:8. Notice the difference in the King James of John 13:16. It has the effect of obscuring needlessly Jesus' message is about *apostles*. The KJV reads: "The servant is not greater than his lord; ***neither he that is sent*** greater than he that sent him." However, 'he that is sent' is wholly incorrect. It is a noun nominative singular masculine, *apostolos*. How can this be read "he that is sent"?

26. See "Dispensational Strategy To Avoid Jesus" on page 387 *et seq.*

Thus, Jesus intended His message was what gave the apostles any cause to be a teacher. They were not authorized to be teachers in their own right, with their own unique doctrines. This is why the fact Paul barely mentions even one sentence from Jesus,<sup>27</sup> and paraphrases very few of Jesus' words, makes his doctrine completely his own.

As a result, we must reject Paul's statement in 2 Thessalonians 2:15 that we are to "stand fast and hold the traditions you were taught... by our epistle." Such a doctrine makes Paul's epistles on par with Jesus' words. If Paul were construing Jesus' words, it would not be so serious a problem. But Paul never mentions any *specific* doctrine of Jesus (except the smallest snippet).<sup>28</sup> And Paul has doctrines so contrary to Jesus that most evangelicals have made up the fiction of separate dispensations containing contrary salvation principles to rationalize the differences.<sup>29</sup> Thus, when Paul invites us to elevate tradition, including Paul's own epistles, to the point we should remain "steadfast" in them, we must reject that idea. Only Jesus' doctrine is something to remain steadfast in.

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27. See page 328 *et seq.*

28. It is a unique attribution of words to Jesus: "it is better to give than receive." Acts 20:35. Other than this, no attribution of words from Jesus on *doctrine* are ever given by Paul.

29. The Dispensationalists concede the Covenant of Moses did require obedience for imputed justification. (Deut. 6:25.) However, we are supposedly in a new dispensation. We are told by Paul we are justified by faith apart from any need to obey. (Eph. 2:8-9; Romans 4:3-5.) However, it is never explained why Deuteronomy 6:25 is abrogated when God declared repeatedly the Law given Moses was "eternal for all generations." See Ex. 27:21; 30:21; Lev. 6:18; 7:36; 10:9; 17:7; 23:14, 21, 41; 24:3; Num. 10:8; 15:15.

*Unwarranted Catholic Tradition Expanded  
Apostolic 'Binding' Authority*

Then what did Jesus mean by saying that “whatever” the apostles bound or loosed on earth was bound or loosed in heaven? (Matt. 16:19.)<sup>30</sup> The simple answer is the judicial function of adjudicating cases. It did not authorize them to make up new laws or doctrine not already given by God/Jesus. There are several clear proofs this was Jesus' meaning.

First, Jesus' terminology of 'binding-and-loosing' clearly was a reference to what a first century Christian knew was a function of a judge. In that day and consistently up until only a century ago, a judge would “bind” or “loose” a prisoner with a leather strap.<sup>31</sup> Jesus was merely alluding to what Jesus repeatedly told the twelve early in His ministry: they were going to be the “twelve judges” who were judging the “twelve tribes of Israel.”<sup>32</sup> Such judicial authority did not make them individually or corporately oracles of God or some new Moses-like law-givers from God. Such judicial authority merely allowed their decision on judicial matters to be bound in heaven.

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30. It is true this statement was actually spoken to Peter alone upon his being the first to confess Jesus was Messiah. However, as this discussion progresses, we shall see in John 20:21-23, Jesus will give all the apostles the Holy Spirit, and extend this power to all of them.

31. Gill (a Protestant commentator) insists the Talmud shows “times without number” this means the ability to declare what is “lawful and unlawful...” and God would have to accept such decrees in heaven. However, Gill is speaking too broadly. There is an important distinction. It is a judge's function to declare *in the particular* what is lawful/unlawful, reasoning from a *general* law. Such a role of the judges of Israel was not an authority to make up *new laws* or *principles*. Jesus refuted continually they had an authority to do so. When religious authorities do so, Jesus said then the people end up worshipping God with their lips, but their worship is empty. (Matt. 15:9.) For a full discussion of that passage, see page 71 *et seq.*

32. See page 14 *et seq.*

Second, Jesus explained a judicial authority is intended in Matthew 16:19 (binding/loosing) by means of an exactly parallel statement in John 20:21-23 where we read:

(22) And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: (23) **whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.** John 20:22-23 ASV.

Thus, the authority the apostles enjoyed was the power to bind their decisions on guilt or forgiveness in heaven as on earth.

It was a later Roman Catholic innovation to make this apostolic authority into more than it really was. The Catholic church claimed this 'binding' and 'loosing' meant an oracle-like power. This was to their advantage because they taught this power belonged to each individual pope who became the bishop of Rome in the footsteps of Peter. Each pope was thereby an 'infallible' oracle of God.<sup>33</sup> Whatever the pope taught was *de facto* on par with what Jesus *ever* said.

Pauline Protestants have proven equally anxious to have the twelve apostles have such demi-god status. Such Protestants unhesitatingly ascribe the same infallibility to each of the twelve based on this "binding and loosing" verse.<sup>34</sup> This way we evangelicals have been able to extend

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33. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* defines *infallibility* of the pope as: "it means exemption from the possibility of error." (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07790a.htm> (accessed 1/17/07).) Yet, the Catholic church will insist this does not mean the pope is *inspired*. Rather, the *Holy Spirit* supposedly gives the pope an infallible decision on *doctrine*. The distinction is one without a difference.

34. Clarke is a Protestant example of how to read Matthew 16:19. "The disciples of our Lord, from having the keys, *i.e.* the true knowledge of the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven, should be able at all times to... pronounce **infallible judgment**; and this binding and loosing... should be considered as **proceeding immediately from heaven**, and consequently **as Divinely ratified**."

this mantle of infallibility to Paul. We do so on the presumption that Paul's claim to being an apostle is valid. However, Paul was not one of the twelve apostles and did not enjoy whatever power Jesus was giving the twelve. Regardless, such an interpretation of Jesus' remarks is a Roman Catholic anachronism which needs to be finally recognized as such.

We must eject all Catholic traditions that do not have a warrant in the Bible itself. The notion of apostolic authority as binding in delivery of unique new doctrines, rather than when issuing a judicial decision or with inspiration relaying Jesus' words, is wholly unwarranted. This was a self-serving expansion of apostolic authority by the Catholic church. It is connived at by Pauline Protestants who find such doctrine conducive to giving an elevated importance to Paul's words.

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*Apostolic Decisions Were Binding In Heaven Only When Reached Jointly*

An example of the Apostles acting as judges over a case is when they decided to add Matthias as the twelfth apostle. This was their remedy for the transgression they found Judas had committed.<sup>35</sup> (Acts chapter one.)

Peter did not assume a superiority, and declare Matthias an apostle. It was a joint decision. Why did the apostles act this way on such a matter?

Because Jesus made it quite clear that the apostles, if they wanted their judicial decision to be binding in heaven, had to act jointly, and not in solitary fashion. (Matt. 20:26-27.) With regard to the question of a twelfth apostle, the apostles recognized this was the kind of decision they wanted bound in heaven, and not just on earth. That's why the apostles acted jointly.

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35. A judge's authority extends to remedies for transgression, even if sometimes third parties must fulfill the vow of another.

This is the true import of Jesus' lesson to the apostles in Matthew 20:26-27. Unfortunately, the translators do not assist us. They leave the meaning obscure. The correct translation is:

(25) But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the **supreme magistrates** (**archon**, plural) of the Gentiles lord against them, and their great ones exercise a full privilege over them. (26) Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become **first** (*protos*) among you shall be your servant (*diakonos*, deacon); (27) and whosoever would be **first** (*protos*) among you shall be your slave (*doulos*). (Matt.20:26-27.)

Jesus is talking to twelve new judges who shall be supreme over Israel. He is contrasting how *supreme judges* operate among the Gentiles. He wants the apostles to be sure not to copy how an *archon* operated among the Gentiles. An *archon* acted as the *first* over and above other magistrates, as a supreme solitary magistrate. An *archon* did so in his jurisdiction, thereby lording it over the people.

How do we know this was Jesus' intention? First, because in context, Jesus is speaking to *twelve judges* he just gave such similar supreme judicial power *over* Israel. Second, Jesus was being disparaging of acting *first* among other judges, which is something we will in a moment discuss was the *archon* practice. Lastly, Jesus used the word *archon* to precisely mean such a supreme magistrate in Luke 12:58. When the Luke passage is translated, *archon* is always translated as *magistrate*. Somewhat perplexingly, in Matthew 20:26-27, its plural is always translated as *rulers*.

*Vine's New Testament* explains what *archon* meant in Luke 12:58. It says that

*archon*, a 'ruler,' denotes, in Luke 12:58 'a local authority, a magistrate,' acting in the capacity of one who received complaints, and possess-

ing higher authority than the judge, to whom the 'magistrate' remits the case.

Thus, when Jesus speaks of an *archon* in Luke 12:58, Jesus is talking about someone whose role included acting as a supreme court justice who acted alone. *Archons* in that judicial role did not function in a council to apply existing law to new cases. They acted as *first* among judges who were beneath them, reviewing cases sent them by lower level judges.

Why was Jesus concerned the apostles might copy the Gentile *archon* approach and behave as *first* over other judges, and thereby lord it over the church of Christ?

Jesus' intent is obvious when you compare the *binding* authority among judges under Jewish law of that era.

In Jewish legal tradition as of the first century, supreme judicial authority was always held by a joint committee. It was never held by a solitary individual. Jewish law required judicial decisions at the supreme level of the Sanhedrin to be done by joint votes. (*Tractate Sanhedrin*, Herbert Danby trans. (1919) at 68.)

This ancient text *Tractate Sanhedrin* then explained the *binding* nature of joint decisions:

If in a case, the **majority decreed a thing** to be unclean, it was unclean; if clean, it was clean. Thence did the legal decision go forth and spread abroad in Israel.

As John Gill notes, time and time again these judicial rulings of the Sanhedrin were said in the Talmud to be binding in heaven as on earth.<sup>36</sup> Thus, when Jesus gives the twelve a similar power to bind/find guilt or loose/forgive sin, they knew He meant such authority was to be exercised jointly. Consequently, when Jesus condemns the Gentile *archon* practice of operating as the *first* among what should be equals, we know Jesus is extolling the Jewish format of

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36. See Footnote 31, page 492.



joint *judicial* decision-making. Just as the Sanhedrin believed their joint council rulings were bound throughout Israel, the apostles were being told similar joint action by themselves on judicial matters would be binding on heaven as on earth.

Roman Catholic authorities ignore this background because they wanted to invest the solitary pope with a supreme authority acting as *first* among all officers of the church. Their entire theory of papal infallibility was on the presumption that Peter could be deduced to be *first* among the twelve. Not only did Jesus fault the apostles when they started to speculate who was the most important among them (Mark 9:33-34), but here in Matthew 20:26-27, Jesus gave clear direction against this principle. There is to be no *first* apostle among apostles on judicial matters. Jesus uses the word *first* twice to disparage the superiority principle among apostles on judicial issues. Jesus warned that such a unilateral approach can potentially lead to abuse of judicial power. It was not in Roman Catholicism's interest to bring out Jesus' meaning. Thus, they buried it.

Yet, since the same approach serves treating the solitary-speaking Paul, assumed to be a true apostle, as a solitary binding oracle, Paulinist Protestants leave in place the Roman Catholic tradition. No one faults the idea that a single apostle could act just like an *archon*. Jesus, in truth, abhorred this idea.

Thus, even if Paul were a valid thirteenth apostle, and even supposing Jesus meant a binding decision could extend to more than judicial decisions, Paul could *not* act in this regard on his own say-so.

Yet, in Scripture, the only evidence of a joint apostolic judicial decision is in Acts 1:23-24. To remedy Judas' transgression, the twelve put forth two candidates for a twelfth to replace him. Then they let the lot decide. Interestingly, there is no evidence in scripture of a joint decision by the apostles over doctrine.<sup>37</sup>

This means there was never any judicial decision by the twelve apostles confirming Paul was an apostle or a prophet. Paul thus never enjoyed a finding by the apostles about himself that was *binding* in heaven by the twelve which would ever give us justification to treat Paul's words as *binding* over Christ's church.

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*Violating JWO By Having A Second Master*

Accordingly, if we treat someone like Paul as an inspired voice who makes the criteria for salvation even in the *slightest* any different than what Jesus announced, we have a problem. We have created a risk of Two Teachers and Two Masters. However, Jesus told us what happens when you have two masters (teachers) competing for control of doctrine:

No man can serve two masters (*kurios*); for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will **hold to one**, and **despise the other**. (Matt. 6:24 ASV.)

Despite this warning, many hold to one Master (Paul) while despising the words of Jesus. This is most obvious in how they treat Jesus' words defining the Gospel.

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37. The decision in Acts 15 on whether Gentiles were to be circumcised was a decision over doctrine. No individual was on trial. Who decided this? Not the twelve. The twelve obviously did not regard their judicial authority as involved and only engaged in the discussion. In that case the twelve submitted to the superior authority of James, the Lord's brother and non-apostle, who made the final decision. James apparently had their consent, but there is no indication the twelve voted on the issue. Thus, the twelve must not have regarded their superior judicial authority extended into issues of doctrine. There, James as city-bishop, had authority to decide doctrine.

For indeed, Jesus' doctrine of salvation is not hard to discern. His Gospel was reflected right within the Great Commission itself. Jesus told the apostles to make disciples of all the nations, "teaching them to *obey* [*tereo*] everything I commanded you." (Matt. 28:19-20.) Why were these commandments to be taught and obeyed by the nations? Because Jesus explained in John 8:51: "I tell you the truth, anyone who *obeys* [*tereo*] My teaching will never die!"<sup>38</sup> To be more accurate, "obeys" is "*should* have kept on obeying" and "will never" is actually "*should* never."<sup>39</sup> Thus, it says, "all those who *should* have kept on obeying My Teaching *should* never ever die."<sup>40</sup>

Well then, to whom does Jesus affix the *absolute promise* of salvation? It is to only *one* type of person. In Matthew 10:22, Jesus says "the one who has endured (aorist active) to the end *shall* be saved (future indicative)."

Jesus said likewise in the Parable of the Sower. From among the four seeds, even the seed which sprouted and thus "*believed* for a while" (Luke 8:13) but fell in time of tempta-

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38. *New Living Translation*. The King James renders "obey" in this verse as "kept guard." In Greek, the literal meaning is "to attend to carefully" or "guard." Metaphorically it means *obey, observe*, etc. Here, the NLT's *obey* is the more contextually accurate meaning.

39. The word for *obey* and *have* are both active aorist subjunctives. The habit of the NIV and KJV is to translate any verse on salvation with *shall* rather than *should* to serve doctrine. This is because ordinarily the active verb which precedes is *believe*, e.g., John 11:26. Thus, due to this habit, they translate John 8:51 with *shall*, which no doubt they prefer not doing, since now Jesus links obedience to salvation. However, we cannot ignore the subjunctive. For why the verb *obey* and *have* should be translated as subjunctives, see Footnote 15, page 383.

40. This is exactly comparable to John 3:16 and 11:26 in proper translation. "All those who *keep on* believing *should* not perish but *should* have eternal life." (John 3:16.) Likewise, John 11:26 should read: "whoever *keeps on* living and *keeps on* believing in me *should* never ever perish." For discussion on how the subjunctive tense is often ignored to serve doctrinal biases, see Footnote 15, page 383.

tion, Jesus said only one was saved. Jesus said it was the fourth seed. It was the only seed which 'brought forth fruit with patient *endurance* to the end.'<sup>41</sup>

Thus, whenever the Great Commission is fulfilled by teaching obedience to Jesus' commands, including the necessity to *endure* successfully in them, the Gospel that saves is spread.

This is the same message in Jesus' parable about the one who builds on sand. "And every one that heareth these words of mine, and *doeth them not*, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand [whose end is destruction]." Matt. 7:26-27 ASV.

So what are these commandments which lead to life if obeyed in patient endurance, or hell if disobeyed? Here is a small sampling of verses from just the early chapters of Apostle Matthew's Gospel. None are parabolic. Hence, there is no mystery involved. All threaten damnation if certain principles are disobeyed. Or they promise eternal life if certain principles are obeyed:

- "One who is *angry* with his brother shall be in *danger of judgment*." Matt. 5:22.
- "Whosoever shall *say 'Fool'* shall be in *danger of Hell fire*." Matt. 5:22.
- "Every tree that *bringeth not forth good fruit* is hewn down, and *cast into the fire*." Matt. 7:19 ASV.
- "[B]ut I say unto you, that every one that *looketh on a [married] woman to lust* after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, *pluck it out*, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be *cast into hell*." Matt. 5:28-29.
- "[B]ut I say unto you, *love your enemies*, and pray for them that persecute you; that you may be *sons of your Father* who is in heaven." Matt. 5:44-45.

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41. See page 171 *et seq.*

- “And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather ***fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell***...But ***whosoever shall deny me*** before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven...He that ***findeth his life shall lose it***; and ***he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it***.” Matt. 10:28, 33, 39 ASV.
- “And behold, one came to him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have ***eternal life***? And he said unto him,... “[I]f thou wouldest ***enter into life, keep the commandments***. He saith unto him, Which? And Jesus said, Thou ***shalt not kill***, Thou shalt ***not commit adultery***, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt ***not bear false witness, Honor thy father and mother***; and, Thou shalt ***love thy neighbor*** as thyself.” Matt. 19:16-19 ASV.

Yet, despite the clarity of Jesus’ Gospel, how many evangelicals would teach obedience to the commands in these verses *actually* are crucial for salvation? Each verse expressly says so. Each verse points us away from thinking that John 3:16 means that faith *alone* should save. (John 3:16.) Now we realize that with equal force, Jesus says in John 8:51 that obedience *should* save. Jesus obviously intends us to read both John 3:16 and 8:51 together. When both verses are combined, it is *faith* and *obedience* that Jesus simultaneously says *should* save.<sup>42</sup> Where have we heard that before? In James’ Epistle! James says when faith is working together with obedience (works) in *synergy*, one is justified. (James 2:20-24.)<sup>43</sup> Jesus then assures us the result after a lifetime of patient endurance in both principles is that we “***shall*** be saved.” (Matthew 10:22.)

Thus, we cannot emphasize for salvation the importance of faith that neglects obedience. Nor can we emphasize obedience for salvation that neglects faith. They are working

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42. On the *should* versus *shall* issue in both John 3:16 and 8:51, see Footnote 50, page 506.

43. See Footnote 24, page 261.

together to justify one who calls on the name of the Lord. Jesus only gives *assurance of salvation* when both principles are operative.<sup>44</sup>

However, we all know that *no evangelical teaches the necessity of obedience to any of Jesus' commands* quoted above for *salvation-sake* itself, whether in patient endurance or otherwise.

Why is this?

There is no secret here. Most of us evangelical Christians claim that teaching that our salvation depends on any kind of obedience to any *Law*, whether from Jesus or Moses, is the heresy of works. For this proposition, we rely upon Paul. (Romans 4:3-5.) In fact, most evangelicals will mock anyone who dares teach the necessity to obey these commandments of Jesus to spare ourselves from damnation. More to the point, the Modern Pauline Gospel teaches us emphatically that we are saved without having “kept guard” or “obeyed” Jesus’ teaching, despite Jesus saying the opposite in John 8:51. This implies that anyone who teaches what Jesus teaches in John 8:51 is, in fact, *lost*. Thus, to most evangelicals, anyone who teaches the literal meaning of what Jesus taught in John 8:51 or any of the numerous verses quoted above is damned!

### The Evangelical Rationale

What is the rationale that explains away Jesus’ contrary statements? The evangelical position is that the only command we must obey from Jesus is *faith*. That supposedly

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44. Jesus said if we “keep on *listening* and keep on *following*” Jesus “we should not perish” and “*shall* not be snatched from my hand.” (John 10:27-28.) Notice the verbs are no longer about *believing* or *obeying*. They are now *listening* and *following*. Assurance has a different source than the specific principles of faith and obedience which *should save*. The terms Jesus focuses on are, instead, principles of *endurance*: listening and following. On the correct translation of this verse, see Appendix A: Greek Issues page ii for discussion of John 10:27-28.

answers all these other commands with a ‘not guilty’ declaration! Atonement applies across the board now and for every future sin as long as I said I believe in Jesus and trust in His work on the cross. That’s the only superficially-satisfactory explanation that has ever been offered on how to square these demanding words from Jesus with Paul’s doctrine.<sup>45</sup>

But no one cares that Jesus refuted that idea Himself. Jesus was emphatic that the atonement sacrifice does you no good if you have not *first* appeased the one you had sinned against. Jesus commands you to leave your sacrifice at the sacrifice-place (Jesus’ true words), and be *first* reconciled to the one you offended. Then come with the atoning sacrifice to the sacrifice place. Matthew 5:23-24.<sup>46</sup>

Jesus was saying nothing new. The Prophets of old always said that it was an abuse of the atonement-offerings for an unrepentant person to expect forgiveness from God by such offerings. Unless one already had repented from sin and turned from evil, the atonement had no application to you.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, no one seems to care that this inflated significance to atonement directly discourages taking seriously the numerous warnings of Jesus to believers. Where Jesus sows doubt, this argument sows assurance. Where Jesus wants believers to fear damnation, this argument sows the unalterable promise of heaven. Where Jesus exhorts the

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45. The Dispensationalists give up on the attempt to square everything from Jesus with Paul. They admit most of these passages contradict Paul’s Gospel. Their solution to the conflict is to toss all these verses from Jesus in the dust-bin of a supposedly defunct dispensation between God and Moses. For extended discussion, see page 387 *et seq.*

46. See page 265 *et seq.* for further discussion.

47. “The Prophets disparaged sacrifices that were offered without a regeneration of the heart, *i.e.*, a determined turning from sin and returning to God by striving after righteousness.” (“Korban,” *Wikipedia Encyclopedia*.) Some of the many such verses are: Micah 6:6-8, Joel 2:13, Hosea 14:1-2; and Malachi 1:10, 3:3-4. *Cf.* Isaiah 27:9.

sternest self-control to enter heaven *albeit maimed* (Mark 9:42-47), this view tells you to “relax, sit back” (J. Vernon McGee) and rely on the atonement alone.

When these incongruities were finally faced, the most absurd solution of all was offered. Calvinism teaches that Jesus uses these warnings to sow fear and *lack of assurance* to fulfill God’s supposed *absolute assurance* that God will never allow us to fall from His predestined will that we will be saved.<sup>48</sup> (This reasoning is compelled by Paul’s doctrine of predestination.) However, this makes God deliver a two-faced message. For God would be using warnings that are premised upon attacking assurance to accomplish the very assurance of predestination that Calvinists insist (based upon Paul) is the *real* truth. If predestination were true, then a believer would have every right instead to believe he has *total assurance* based on predestination. He thus would be free to disregard the *insecurity for his own salvation* that Jesus taught. Unless God wants us to accept He can lie to us, Jesus cannot utter threats which negate the very assurance that God supposedly wants us to know we have in the doctrine of predestination. In other words, if Jesus threatens an assurance of a believer, but it is false that any believer has any grounds to doubt his assurance (based on Paul), wouldn’t Jesus have to be a liar in uttering the threat in the first place? Of course, He would. The correct solution is to reject any doctrine of Calvinists (and Paul) that would make Jesus into a liar. One of these doctrines is predestination. If you assume Paul is telling the truth, then Jesus is the liar. If Jesus is telling the *real* truth that our salvation is at risk for certain misbehavior, then

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48. In 1878, the famous Robert Dabney put forth the Calvinist argument “The *certainty* that he will *not [apostasize]* arises... from God’s secret...purpose.... Among those appropriate motives [*God uses* in man] are these *very warnings* of danger and wholesale *fears* about apostasy....They are part of that plan by which *God ensures that he shall not.*” (Robert L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mi., Eerdmans, 1971 reprint) at 697.)



Paul's teaching that no such risk exists is false doctrine. I prefer to accept Paul has the false doctrine than swallow the idea that Jesus was deceptive, misleading, or worse.

These Pauline rationalizations are just more proof that much of Christianity has come to despise Jesus' words in preference for another Master: Paul. For what else could explain why anyone would take Jesus' threats and promises which hinge salvation on obedience, in part, and which are clearly *directed* at us, and yet claim they are really all resolved by Jesus' atonement? Under this Pauline view, all Jesus' warnings were really pointless. All He had to do is tell us about atonement and faith, and leave out all these troublesome threats and promises. What is really afoot is many have decided that rather than *let go of Paul and hold onto Jesus*, they prefer *letting go of Jesus* and *holding onto Paul*.

Bonhoeffer saw through these mental twists and turns. In his famous book entitled *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937), Bonhoeffer preached Jesus' words alone. He ignored Paul's doctrines. Bonhoeffer saw clearly that Jesus' doctrine of salvation turns on costly obedience to the Law, in particular the Ten Commandments in addition to faith. Bonhoeffer was blunt. He mocked the Modern Gospel as cheap grace. That Modern Gospel ignored Jesus' dominant theme of a personal costliness to receive eternal life. Bonhoeffer says the cheap grace gospel clearly is denying the words of Jesus. Bonhoeffer boldly calls this a "Christianity without Christ." (*Cost of Discipleship* (1937) at 39.)

### **Despising Jesus' Words Via Translation**

Thus, it is clear that much of modern Christianity has come to despise our True Master in preference for another Master. If this really is not what is going on, then why would many in the church consent to translators not properly reflecting "*keep on believing*" is the real language of John 3:16, preferring instead to make it appear a one-time faith ("believes")

is at issue?<sup>49</sup> What else explains why translators would change “*should* have eternal life” improperly into “*shall* have eternal life” in John 3:16?<sup>50</sup>

If the Modern Gospel has not led to the disdain for Jesus’ words, then why else would translators make it appear God’s wrath remains on those who “disbelieve the Son” in John 3:36 rather than what the verse actually says — God’s wrath rests on those who “*disobey* the Son”?<sup>51</sup>

If Christians have not become lax in loyalty to their Lord, why else would there be no anger about the twisting of our Lord’s words to Moses in Genesis 15:6? For the Lord told Moses that “he (Abram) reckoned it (the promise of 15:5) to Him (God) as righteousness.” Premier evangelical scholars of Hebrew concur this is what the Hebrew means if we did not have Paul’s words to deal with.<sup>52</sup> God was not reckoning anything to Abraham. It was the reverse: Abraham was reckoning God’s promise of Genesis 15:5 as a righteous deed. This is because the *he* we see in most translations before *reckoned* is not actually present in the Hebrew. It is an interpolation. So without interpolating the addition of this *he*, its meaning is unmistakable in both English and Hebrew syntax: “He (Abram) believed the Lord and reckoned it to Him for righteousness.” Hebrew’s syntax here is identical to English. The correct meaning for the subject of *reckoned* was the *he* from the earlier clause: Abram. (Later his name was changed by God to Abraham.) Therefore, this verse never had anything to do with the idea of justification by faith, contrary to how Paul construed it.

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49. See page 373 *et seq.* See also, Appendix A: Greek Issues.

50. The KJV preserves the correct tense of the subjunctive in John 3:16 although you have to interpolate it. “That whosoever believeth in him **should** not perish, but [*should*] have eternal life.” However, the NIV renders it “shall” have eternal life. For the rationalization of using Paul’s faith-alone doctrine to do so, see page 381.

51. See page 382 *et seq.*

52. See page 251 *et seq.*

Consequently, but for a primary allegiance to Paul, why would anyone tolerate any more the modern translations of Genesis 15:6 which even as they translate word-for-word correctly, mislead us by (a) interpolating the second *he* without bracketing it [*e.g.*, [he]) and (b) then capitalizing it. Watch how these two alterations trick your mind: “And he believed in the LORD; and **He** counted it to **him** for righteousness.” (NASB YLT.)<sup>53</sup> But in Hebrew, the meaning is the reverse: “[**he**] (*i.e.*, Abram) counted it to **Him** for righteousness.” Same words, but a totally opposite meaning!

But for transferring part of our allegiance from our Lord to Paul, why would anyone tolerate Paul’s translation of Habakkuk 2:4? It is no excuse that Paul relied upon the erroneous Greek translation of the Septuagint. Instead, to this very day, we know that Habakkuk 2:4 in Hebrew stands for the *opposite* of what Paul thought it said! Its true meaning in the original Hebrew is: “The just shall live by his **faithfulness**,” which in Hebrew means **obedient living**.<sup>54</sup> The verse thus had actually the opposite meaning from what Paul deduced. The obedient (faithful) are just. One is not justified by faith that is alone! Paul was simply using a wrong translation — a defect which was pointed out two millennia ago in the Dead Sea Scroll *Habakkuk Pesher*.

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53. The King James, NIV, and ASV correctly translate Genesis 15:6, including omitting any capitalization to the second-clause *he*. Yet, they do add the second-clause *he* without indicating it is an interpolation. Some publishers of the KJV do capitalize the second-clause *he*. Yet, the following versions *officially* capitalize the second-clause *he* (and fail to bracket it to indicate it is an interpolation): NASB and YLT. Some even blatantly change the *he* to the *Lord*: GWT.

54. See “Habakkuk 2:4: What Does It Really Say?” on page 274 *et seq.* Only a few translations are correct: “by his **steadfastness** liveth” (YLT); “faithfulness” (God’s Word); “faithful to God” (GNB). The Hebrew word *emunah* here is derived from *aman*, “to be firm, last.” When used as a personal attribute of man, it means fidelity in word and deed (Jer. 7:28; Jer. 9:2; Psalm 37:3.) It is solely a Pauline re-interpretation to replace its sense here by the solitary concept of a mere belief in some truth about God/Jesus/the atonement, etc.

What did this ancient commentary on *Habakkuk* say? It said Habakkuk 2:4 did not imply *faith* (as used in the Greek Septuagint) made one just, but rather *faithfulness* which in the Hebrew meant *obedient living* did so and made one “saved.”<sup>55</sup>

Thus, Habakkuk 2:4 has always stood for the exact opposite of how Paul understood the verse! However, due to Paul’s competing understanding, evangelicals refuse to see that Habakkuk 2:4’s view on obedience is the Gospel that the Lord Jesus repeats in the Great Commission, John 8:51, Matthew 10:22, His parables, and numerous other verses.

Yes, much of modern Christianity has come to accept a competing Master. As a result, it has despised the Lord’s words. It has added to and diminished from the Lord’s words in violation of Deuteronomy 4:2. The reason is that Paul’s doctrines are treated on par with Jesus’ words (whether Jesus expressed them in the New Testament or through the Prophets). This approach has made Paul a competing Master. This preference for Paul is what is used to rationalize skewing Jesus’ words in John 3:16 and elsewhere to fit Paul’s words. People criticize the cults (and rightly so) for translating passages to fit their doctrine. Before we evangelicals can take the speck out of their eye, however, we need to take the beam out of our own!

#### **A Clear Example of Suppression of Jesus’ Words**

People ask me for proof that they can more easily recognize that we have indeed killed off Jesus’ words in preference for Paul. They do not know enough classical Greek to uncover the mysteries of John’s Gospel. They do not know enough Hebrew to decipher the issues in Habakkuk 2:4 or Genesis 15:6.

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55. See page 297 *et seq.*

Thus, here is one of the clearest examples of the mental gymnastics used to suppress Jesus' words in preference for Paul's doctrines. It comes from Charles Stanley. No one needs training in classical Greek or in Hebrew to see this.

Charles Stanley is the head of the eighteen million member Baptist church. Stanley comments on Jesus' many parables that discuss "weeping and gnashing of teeth" which servants of His in the parables will suffer typically "outside in darkness." These servants' errors were:

- not having interest on their talents given by God. Matt. 25:14 *ff.*
- abusing fellow Christian servants. Luke 12:41 *ff.* Matt.24:48 *ff.*
- failing to have charity to the brothers. Matt. 25:31 *ff.*
- being once virgins who later let their oil burn out. Matt. 25:1 *ff.*
- being once a "friend" who accepts the "call" and is even seated at the great banquet but when the time for examination comes they lack a "proper robe." Matt. 22:2 *ff.*

Stanley confesses it is too obvious to deny that Jesus is warning Christians of this place of weeping and gnashing for misbehavior. So isn't Jesus warning Christians **hell** (weeping and gnashing outside in darkness) if they have the failings of the "unprofitable servant"? If they are an "abusive servant"? If they are "goats" who call Him Lord but do not provide food, clothing and water to the brethren? Etc.

Stanley says *no*. Charles Stanley insists this "weeping and gnashing" which is "outside in darkness" is in *heaven*, not hell: "It certainly **does not mean hell**...It clearly refers to being thrown **outside** a building into the **dark**. There is no mention of pain, fire or worms."<sup>56</sup>

In arriving at such conclusion, Stanley never discusses His true Master's words in Matthew 13:42. Jesus calls the place of "weeping and gnashing" in Matthew 13:42 the "**fiery furnace**" where the angels at the time of final judgment throw those who were "ensnared" in sin.<sup>57</sup> If Stanley

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56.Charles Stanley, *Eternal Security: Can You Be Sure*, *supra*, at 125.

discussed that verse, Jesus would no longer fit Paul. Losing Paul is too horrible a consideration. Thus, Jesus and His meaning are sacrificed. As Bonhoeffer said of the modern cheap grace gospel: "Jesus is misunderstood anew, and again and again *put to death*." (Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center* (1960) at 39.)

### The Dilemma of Two Masters

How did such serious and prominent Christian leaders succumb to positions that hold tightly to Paul, while blatantly disregarding Jesus' words? It is simple. When you have two masters, you have a dilemma. These Christian leaders solved their dilemma by choosing Paul on certain issues. Jesus says when you so choose Paul, then you will love Paul on those issues. Jesus told us the consequence: you will despise your true Master (Jesus) when He speaks on the same issues. Jesus, however, said we cannot live like this. We must choose one over the other. Yet, it is not an acceptable choice to choose Paul over Jesus. Jesus told us to have an allegiance for Him greater than any family or personal ties. (Matt. 10:37.)

Thus, if Jesus and Paul conflict, we *must* choose Jesus' clear meaning over giving the slightest weight to a contrary teaching from Paul.

However, this approach has not been followed. Modern Christianity in large part has, instead, left Jesus' doctrine in shambles. As Bonhoeffer said of the cheap grace gospel, it is a Christianity without Christ. It denies the costliness of grace. The root cause of this desolation of Jesus' doctrine is the Paul-Jesus division. Jesus explained the eternal principle at work:

Every kingdom ***divided against itself is brought to desolation***; and every city or house

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57. Stanley's claim also disregards God's consistent message that in heaven there is "no more sorrow, nor crying." (Rev. 21:4; *see also*, Isaiah 25:8 "God will wipe away tears from all faces"; Rev. 7:17.)

divided against itself shall not stand.  
Matt. 12:25.

Regrettably, mainstream Protestantism remains highly divided. The divide is typically drawn on lines that directly trace back to the Paul versus Jesus division. Lutherans who adhere to the mature Luther's *Catechisms* (like Bonhoeffer),<sup>58</sup> Methodists and Pentecostals along with Messianics tend to stress Jesus' words on salvation and the Law. On the other side are the Baptists, Reformed (conservative) Presbyterians and Evangelicals who accept Luther's youthful emphasis on Paul's doctrines. This Pauline side has several main sub-splinters based upon whether one believes something Paul said deserves greater emphasis than what other churches emphasize. For example, Predestination is highly important in Presbyterianism but is either sometimes ignored or sometimes rejected by certain Baptist scholars and evangelicals. See Dillow's *Reign of the Servant Kings*. Within this pro-Paul splinter, there are sub-groups who preach Law mixed with Pauline salvation doctrines. For example, some Baptist groups teach restoration of the Sabbath day. What we find then is there are sub-divisions even among Pauline Christians which sometimes lay partial emphasis on something Jesus taught to the detriment of accepting competing doctrine from Paul.

From these conflicts, however, a miracle recently emerged from the Paulinist side. This miracle shows Jesus is drawing the two sides closer together to accept one master both in faith and doctrine: Jesus Christ.

What was this miracle of God? It is John MacArthur's conversion to Jesus' Gospel. MacArthur first announced this in the 1990s. Since then, he has become progressively more centered upon Jesus' Gospel up through his latest work of

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58. Lutherans comprise 70 million of the approximately 350 million Protestant Christians. On how Luther's mature writings come close to *Jesus' Words Only*, see page 106 *et seq.*

2003.<sup>59</sup> MacArthur's writings hold clear earmarks of influence from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937). MacArthur's 2003 work *Hard to Believe* even has a subtitle drawn from Bonhoeffer: *The High Cost and Infinite Value of Following Jesus*. MacArthur has thus bravely weathered the charge of heretic as he holds dearly to the true salvation doctrine of Jesus. Yet, simultaneously, he avows his belief in the Paulinist-Calvinist doctrine of the 'sovereignty of God'<sup>60</sup> and the "faith alone doctrine."

How does MacArthur reconcile Paul's doctrine to Jesus' Gospel? MacArthur insists that we can simultaneously hold onto Paul and Jesus' true gospel if we just squeeze repentance and obedience to the Law under the meaning of *faith* alone.<sup>61</sup> MacArthur constantly is trying to thread a needle. He wants to keep all Paul's jargon but re-interpret its meaning in the hope of preserving Jesus' Gospel.<sup>62</sup> It is a valiant effort by a sincere but utterly conflicted man.

Yet, MacArthur represents an extraordinary movement of the Spirit bringing the Calvinist and Lutheran sides closer together on doctrine. MacArthur is speaking from the Calvinist side tilting in favor of JWO on salvation. Bonhoeffer speaks likewise from the Lutheran side in favor of JWO.

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59. See, e.g., "One Big Surprise" on page 366.

60. The 'sovereignty-of-God' doctrine is a euphemism for the doctrine that God directs and ordains evil thoughts and objectives yet supposedly remains untainted by such direction. See page 433. For MacArthur's defense of the 'sovereignty-of-God' doctrine, see MacArthur, *Hard to Believe* (Nelson: 2003) at 34-35. He admits evangelicals call this doctrine 'dreadful,' 'blasphemy,' 'God-dishonoring,' 'incongruous,' and 'the most twisted thing I have ever read.' Citing only Paul, MacArthur insists it is true. To deny it, MacArthur puts us in a box: it only can be denied if one is willing to deny Paul's validity. That's the step that MacArthur thought was unthinkable. However, it is that step which God's honor demands we consider. What John MacArthur supposed was unthinkable is the correct question rather than accepting a teaching so dreadful and God-dishonoring as what Calvinists euphemistically refer to as the 'sovereignty-of-God doctrine.'

61. See Footnote 23, page 399.



Thus, MacArthur and Bonhoeffer must reflect what is going on inside the hearts and minds of many believers. God is moving. God wants us to know there is no need any longer to live with such internal tension between two competing doctrines. Instead, there is one obvious solution. It will erase all this confusion and division. What if within Christianity, we all simultaneously agreed Jesus' words were the *sole inspired source* to formulate church doctrine? Jesus prayed that "they all may be one..." (John 17:21.) Jesus wanted this unity so *His* message would be unified and a *better* witness. What more sensible and better way to obey Jesus' intentions than to unite on the *single-source* of Jesus' words to formulate doctrine? It's the obvious solution to this nagging disunity. Unless we take this brave step, our witness for Christ is marred. And we will continue to defy our Lord's wishes of unity for us.

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62. To see MacArthur's conflicting reasonings in just one book, see John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to the Apostles* (Nelson: 2000). He condemns once saved always saved. (*Id.* at 158-159.) He then affirms perseverance of the saints. (*Id.*) MacArthur doctrine teaches salvation depends on repentance from sin and submission. (*Id.* at 7.) Yet, salvation is by grace through faith. (*Id.* at 8.) Jesus supposedly said little about justification. (*Id.* at 78.) While the Law can never justify, yet the true believer will persevere in obedience. (*Id.* at 9, 83.) But to what end is perseverance? Then MacArthur says that no-Lordship doctrine that prevails in evangelical churches is killing the church. It teaches salvation even if does not "continue believing" or turns into "hostile unbelief." (*Id.* at 33.) No-lordship wrongly teaches faith in "a message," not in Jesus *per se.* (*Id.* at 34.) True faith "necessarily impacts behavior." (*Id.* at 35.) MacArthur then tries to un-entwine faith and works so works is never a condition of salvation. (*Id.* at 36.) Yet, then he says that "faith that remains idle is no better than the faith that demons display." (*Id.* at 37.) One can see a valiant effort to hold onto Jesus' gospel despite the agonizing pressure to conform to Paul's gospel. It is a brave but ultimately unavailing effort.

### *Final Thoughts*

We can now finish the battle that the Reformers courageously began for Christ. However, we no longer can permit ourselves to turn a blind eye to the error in the Roman Catholic tradition that sees Paul too as an apostle of Jesus Christ. This was not the view of the earliest church when the question was squarely faced in 207 A.D. We can also now see Jesus gave us significant warnings of the “ravens wolf” from the tribe of Benjamin, not only through Moses and Ezekiel but also during His earthly ministry.

We must no longer be distracted from following our Lord’s teachings. We can now take the first step to a thorough-going reformation. This one will examine all doctrine in the exclusive light of Jesus’ words. Even doctrines that solely rely upon Paul.

When the Reformation started in 1517, there was a great advantage in using Paul to strike a blow at the Catholic doctrine of indulgences. Clearly, the Catholic church was selling a *work* of obedience as a means of salvation. An indulgence was a payment by a loved one to obtain a papal certificate for a deceased relative, whereupon the deceased was supposedly released from purgatory. They were now free to enter heaven. Certainly, such a doctrine violated Paul’s teaching that works of obedience can never contribute toward salvation. (Eph. 2:8-9; Romans 4:3-5.)

However, Luther overlooked that an indulgence was a work not required by Jesus. It was a *tradition*. Moreover, unlike Jesus’ doctrine of salvation, the indulgence doctrine taught salvation was achieved *without any personal repentance* of the person allegedly in purgatory. The indulgence doctrine negated Jesus’ salvation Gospel. His Gospel emphasized the centrality of repentance from sin. (Mark 9:42-47.) The Catholic doctrine of indulgences also depended on belief in a place called purgatory. However, it nowhere appears in Jesus’ words or any inspired Scripture. It too only had support in Catholic tradition based on the Apocrypha.

Thus, the young Luther overlooked a better strategy than relying upon Paul. Luther could have instead relied upon the Jesus' Words Only doctrine. With it, Luther would have easily blasted as unwarranted such traditions of the Roman Catholic church, including the notions of purgatory, indulgences, and countless other innovations. Luther did not realize he had a better weapon in hand than Paul. He had the weapon of the Exclusive Authority of Jesus over His church that neither popes, priests, nor ministers can claim to hold.

Unfortunately, Luther's emphasis on Paul and failure to use Jesus' Words Only to attack indulgences has had a terrible consequence. It has led to a teaching even more horrible than the doctrine of indulgences. We have taken any of Jesus' doctrine which does not comport with Paul, and found ways to ignore it and suppress it. When that would not work, we altogether dismissed such conflicting doctrine from Jesus as belonging to a supposedly defunct dispensation.<sup>63</sup> We have thereby drained Christianity of Christ's teachings. We have consequently arrived at a "Christianity without Christ" to borrow Bonhoeffer's expression.

However, I now look forward to the renovation which Bonhoeffer first let us glimpse. Not a word of Paul influenced him to depart from his loyalty to the words of Christ. Every word of *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937) is a testament to a man convicted by God of the verity of the Jesus' Words Only proposition. He did so bravely. Bonhoeffer died a hero as well as a martyr, suffering being murdered by the Nazis. Thus, let Christ be victorious for you as well, as He was in the end for Bonhoeffer. MacArthur likewise gives us hope that evangelicals and Calvinists will realize that Christ is the *Way*, the *Truth* and the *Life*, and "no man comes to the Father but through me." (John 14:6.) Soon I trust we will no longer

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63. See "Does Jesus End up Marginalized To Make Room For Paul?" on page 367 *et seq.*

teach the lost about a pathway to Christ other than what Christ Himself taught. All who come up by a different path than what Jesus taught are “thieves and robbers.” (John 10:1.)

This change in our pathway to God, based on what Jesus alone taught, can never possibly end up with a dangerous doctrine of salvation. This is because we are solely relying upon what Jesus said was required for salvation. We are still saved and justified solely by grace. But God’s conditions for grace is not solely a one-time faith. Rather, as Bonhoeffer clearly explained, Jesus insisted upon a costly grace. Jesus rejected any notion of a cheap grace.

But when will we know we have a tangible victory for Christ based on Jesus’ Words only? When no Christian during devotions treats Paul as a director of doctrine, but relies instead upon Our Lord’s words alone. Then this battle is won. When no Christian would think of buying a Bible any longer that contains the words of a false apostle and false prophet, we will have grasped a victory for our Lord. When Paul is treated just like the Apocrypha, which Christians pressured the King James Bible in 1825 to drop from canon, we will have seen a tangible result. When all Christians relinquish every doctrine not of Jesus Christ, we know the Church has finally given glory where the glory belongs.

Is making this change all that hard? Tony Coffey in *Once A Catholic* made an interesting statement. In appealing to Catholics to focus on Jesus, and jettison Catholic traditions, he said he had a “heart filled with the conviction that if we follow Jesus Christ, we will never be lost.”<sup>64</sup>

I wholeheartedly agree. If Protestants can tell a Catholic this is true for the Catholic about their traditions, then Protestants should agree it is true about their own traditions. A Protestant should agree there is nothing dangerous in following Jesus’ words alone. There is, in fact, only danger in not doing so.

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64. Tony Coffey, *Once A Catholic: What You Need to Know About Roman Catholicism* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 1984) at 15.