

RIVERBANK NEWS

A Publication of The Ol' Ship of Zion

MESSAGE 8 - 1995

THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN? WHO ARE THESE GENTILE JEWS?

By Gordon F. Nelson

"Behold, I will make (Gk.-deliver up, bring forth) them of the SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN, which say they are Jews (spiritual Israel), and are not, but do lie (legalistic charismatics); behold, I will make them to come (and repent) and worship before thy feet (acknowledgment of your God) and to know that I have loved thee." Revelation 3:9.

Who are these Jews mentioned in the context of the Philadelphia church (the church to be raptured)? Will these Jews in a Gentile church who lie, repent?

Before we answer these questions, there should be a clear identification of the gospel. *"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested."* Romans 3:21. Such a manifestation was only revealed to Paul. *"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed...But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man."* Galatians 1:8,11.

There is only one gospel. We are commanded, *"(You) Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life (unconditional eternal security)."* John. 5:39. The Apostle Paul, by revelation, received the truth of the gospel in the Arabian Desert. *"For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."* Galatians 1:12.

For all legalists and Arminianists, this is a terse statement; the true gospel was never preached until the Apostle Paul preached it. Pauline authority has been a stumbling block to many in the church. Three times, the Apostle Paul uses the term "my gospel"; Romans 2:16 and 16:25 and 2 Timothy 2:8.

Pentecostalism, in particular, must find their teachings in the sayings of Christ, whether or not applicable to Gentiles. *"Rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15) is foreign to the legalism that exists in Pentecostal circles. It is how you feel, not what the book says. If Paul would write a letter to the Pentecostal church today, it would be the same letter he wrote to Galatia. *"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you...Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"* Galatians 3:1-2.

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." John 1:17. Without Calvary there would be no salvation for anyone. Jesus died for the world! As a *"minister of the circumcision,"* Jesus came to "fulfill the law" and *"to confirm the promises made unto the fathers (Old Testament prophecies)."* Romans 15:8. *"He came unto his own (as their King), and his own received him not."* John 1:11. *"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."* Matthew 15:24. One

cannot confuse a Pentecostal with the facts--he is determined to sit down and eat at the "Lord's table" (the four Gospels) prepared for his children (the Jews), regardless. But it feels so-o-o good to sit at this table!

"The woman was a Greek (or Gentile), a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children (the Jews) first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs." Mark 7:26-27. Jesus, as a Jew fulfilling the law, called us Gentiles, dogs, to frighten us away! This bread is not for you!

But if we would humble ourselves as this woman, we could glean some crumbs that accidentally fall off the table to the floor. *"Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."* Mark 7:28.

Jesus said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I shall send receiveth me."* John 13:20. Jesus came unto the Jews, but He sent Paul unto the Gentiles. *"But the Lord said unto him (Ananias), Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me."* Acts 9:15. Hear ye him! If you Pentecostals would listen to Paul, you could get rid of some of your phylacteries. *"But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries (Gk.-a guard-case, i.e., phylactery for wearing slips of scripture texts), and enlarge the borders of their garments."* Matthew 23:5.

Apostle Paul in Galatians 1, boasts of the fact that the gospel he preached came by direct revelation from God. Men of less stature would have run to Jerusalem to sit at the Apostle's feet, but not Paul. The Apostle Paul's biggest boast of his gospel was, *"for I neither received it of man."*

When a young upstart of a potential preacher finally decides to preach, he enrolls in some organizational Bible College. What does he learn?--*"The traditions of men."* Mark 7:8.

I graduated from a three-year Bible school called "The Patten Bible College and Seminary." This is a Pentecostal Bible College with teaching little different than Moody Bible Institute--all about John Darby, C.I. Scofield and Clarence Larkin. God help us all!

"Neither went I up to Jerusalem (type of Bible College) to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia." Galatians 1:17. After three years in that Arabian Desert school, sitting at the feet of Jesus "after the spirit," he came away with the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Apostles which were before him at Jerusalem, had graduated from a three-year Bible College, being taught by a Christ "after the flesh." *"Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh."* 2 Corinthians 5:16. The one to really know is this Christ after the Spirit, introduced by Apostle Paul.

"Then after three years (graduate from Hard Knocks College located in the Arabian Desert) I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James (the less) the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not." Galatians 1:18-20. Paul is careful not to give any glory to man for his theology. "Mine is revelation knowledge." He was willing to compare their "Christ after the flesh" knowledge with his revelation of "Christ after the Spirit." He already knows there is little any of them can teach him about Jesus.

It is obvious these Galatian disciples didn't see the "big picture." Then, why do you Pentecostals and Nazarenes insist on a "four Gospel" gospel?

I heard Oral Roberts once say, "I've read the four Gospels over one hundred times. All you need in the Bible is the four Gospels." This man is sick and needs prayer. A typical Pentecostal mentality incubated in one of our "Heinz 57" varieties of Pentecostalism; namely, the Pentecostal Holiness organization.

I went for years as a Pentecostal, never being able to move into Romans in my Bible reading. I never knew why. I would greatly enjoy reading the four Gospels, the Book of Acts, and Revelation.

I was a legalist. The four Gospels teach legalism. As a legalist, you somehow feel you've walked into another world when you enter Romans. Romans is probably the most important book Paul ever wrote; it is the Magna Carta of our faith. It was not the first book Paul wrote, but placed first in the order of importance to your and my faith.

"Then fourteen years after I went up (again) to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and Titus (a Greek) with me also. And I went up by revelation." Galatians 2:1-2.

I was in Minnesota thinking never to return to California after graduating from the Patten Bible College. One night I had a dream and saw myself on a witness stand in a courtroom. I knew in my spirit what I had to do. I returned to California by revelation and my work was already cut out for me: to keep knocking on the D.A.'s office until someone would listen. Have you ever been moved by revelation?

I had already been prepared for the revelation. One Sunday morning C. Thomas Patten was bellowing away, stating publicly, "If you have plenty of money and smart lawyers, you can do anything and get by." He had no more than got those words out of his mouth and God spoke to me, "And you're going to stop him!"

"Me?! Why, I have no money or smart lawyers, just how do you suppose I can stop him?" I know God never listens to me. My opinions are zilch!

"Knock and it shall be opened." I knocked for one year on the door of the D.A.'s office before it opened. Fear of the state's involvement with religion, public reaction; caused the hesitancy. But, I knew God was going to bring down Goliath (C. for "Cash" Thomas Patten).

Paul *"communicated* (Gk.-to set forth, propound, declare) *unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles."* Paul had had it with these "apostles" of Christ after the flesh. He came by revelation to teach them *"that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately (one on one) to them (so called pillars) which were of reputation...But of these (pillars of the church, the apostles) who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me...)...for they (Peter, James and John) who seemed to be somewhat in conference* (Gk.-consult, about their Christ after the flesh and my revelation Christ) *added nothing to me."* Those apostles taught him nothing!

“And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship.” Galatians 2:2-9.

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthian Church, after this visit to Jerusalem said, *“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.”* 2 Corinthians 5:16.

Whenever you go to the four Gospels to look for Christ’s teachings, you’re opening a Pandora’s box of legalism, and a Christ after the flesh is what emerges. Paul had his fill on this second visit to Jerusalem.

When will you begin your adventure into Pauline truth? He wrote three-fourths of the New Testament, therefore Paul warrants your attention

Read Romans 15:8. Paul calls Jesus Christ after the flesh, a *“minister of the circumcision.”* He came to fulfill the law. He did it by being the only one able to keep the law. One must acknowledge that the Gospel was *“to the Jew first”*. This is what the four Gospels are all about.

“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as was the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.” Galatians 2:7.

What was the difference between these two gospels? One was to Jewish believers under Apostle Peter, the other to Gentiles under Paul. God extended His grace to Jews only whereby they could go to heaven retaining certain tenants of the law. *“Thou seest, brother (Paul),”* said James and all the elders, *“how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law.”* Acts 21:20.

However, we see this same Gospel being preached by the Assemblies of God and Nazarenes who are also *“zealous of the law,”* going about establishing *“their own righteousness.”* This gospel was only admissible if you were a Jew and lived in the first century. If you’ll read the story in Acts 21:17-25, you’ll see the confrontation of James and Paul regarding these different gospels.

Peter was chosen by Christ to be the first pope, or leader of the early church. *“Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.”* Matthew 16:18. However, the flesh prevailed over the spirit. After a foiled fishing trip where he *“caught nothing”* (John 21:3), the disciples witnessing his nakedness (John 21:7), decided on a new leader. They choose (after Christ’s death) Jesus’ own “flesh brother,” James (the less). This James could not even believe in his brother until after the resurrection. James emerges as the General Superintendent of the church gathered in Jerusalem.

Strangely, the Assemblies of God, in doctrine, unknowingly are followers of James. Someway these Christians believe the law enhances grace. If Paul were to address this Springfield, Missouri organization, he would send the same letter to their headquarters that he sent Galatia. *“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?”* It was Judaizing preachers from James’ church in Jerusalem that bewitched them. In spite of scripture plainly teaching *“the law is not of faith,”* (Galatians 3:12) and *“the law worketh wrath,”* (Romans 4:15) a Galatian Christian can’t accept religion without the law.

Martin Luther believed the book of James should not have been recognized by the canon. James was a convert to the gospel of the circumcision.

In the realm of political science, it is recognized that you cannot move from a republic to a communist state by a single act. It is accomplished, however, through a process called “gradualism.” A frog thrown in hot water will immediately jump out! But, through a process of “gradualism” you will cook the frog. Democracy is the halfway mark between a republic and socialism. We are already half-cooked, and never realized we were even in a cooker. One day we will wake up under a socialist dictatorship and wonder how it happened.

God is as understanding as any political scientist. Recognizing that these followers of Moses’ law, who were forbidden to even pick up sticks to keep warm on the Sabbath, needed some grace (Numbers 15:35). In His abundant understanding and mercy God provided a special way for Jews to go to Heaven: the Gospel of the Circumcision. You as a Gentile better not try it, for Paul declares, “*Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*” Galatians 5:4. According to “unconditional eternal security,” this scripture is a lie. You cannot fall from grace.

Even James releases all Gentiles from the demands of the law. “*Wherefore my sentence is, that we TROUBLE NOT THEM, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that if they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication (with temple prostitutes), and from things strangled (to idols), and from (drinking) blood (to idols)...from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well.*” Acts 15:19-20,29. This pleased the Apostles and elders and the whole church. In the face of all this, why are there so many rules in connection with religion?

Abraham became the father of all our faith by the act of murder. What religion would condone murder? God wanted it known the demands of the law have no claim on “hearing faith” and promise.

When Abel saw that fire come out of heaven and consume his sacrifice, “*by which he obtained witness that he was righteous*” (Hebrews 11:4), he did not need ten commandments to tell him he was righteous. He saw his righteousness (the fire)!

Returning to our text, “*Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews (spiritual Israel), and are not, but do lie.*” Revelation 3:9. This scripture is sandwiched between Revelation 3:7-13 where Christ is addressing a Gentile church--Philadelphia. One day it suddenly dawned on me to ask the question, “Who are these Jews in a Gentile church?” You cannot get answers without first asking questions.

Some things can only be ascertained by seeing truth through persecution. Paul’s chief message to a religious world was, “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.*” Ephesians 2:8-9.

Who are these Jews that do lie?

During the hearing of C. Thomas Patten before a grand jury, I dared not go home. I feared for my life. C. Thomas constantly gave my father a warning to pass on to me. “Tell your son to call off this trial. I can’t be responsible for what my brother, ‘Rooster’, might do to him!”

Rooster was from the Tennessee hills, with scars all over his body from knife fights. My martyr spirit stood with Martin Luther unafraid, "I cannot, I will not recant, so help me God!"

Have you been in perils over the Gospel? I lived at Richard and Freida Borchardt's home for about a month, until God told me one Sunday, "I want you to attend Dr. Bebe H. Patten's church!" I thought, surely God has lost His mind, but I knew better than to question His wisdom. Hence, with my suitcase packed, I left the Borchardt residence in Richmond, CA and determined to obey God. This trial was at the grand jury level and I am going to attend Dr. Patten's church! God never has to appeal to your reason!

This was the most difficult thing I ever experienced in my entire life. I know what Abraham must have felt as he took out his knife to plunge into the heart of his only son. It is sheer blind obedience because you heard from Heaven.

Walking up the foyer of the church my knees buckled. I could not go on! I began to recite my long faithfulness to God, attempting to find an excuse to cop out! But I simply could not go one step further! Forgive me God!

At that moment and time I heard C. (for Cash) Thomas Patten bellowing like a bull calf. "It don't make any difference what I do with this money" (while taking up his all too familiar offering). "If I take this money and throw it in Lake Merritt, it is nobody's business!" Wow! It was like I had been injected with a hypodermic needle that rejuvenated my limp knees! I was ready to fight!

Brother Kiniken, the head usher, stopped my entrance into the church. Tom Patten yelled down to Brother Kiniken, "Go ahead and let him in. It's the law! But I'll say this, even a jackass ought to have more sense than to attend a church where he was not wanted!"

Tom unknowingly spoke my sentiments as well! This was not my idea of worship. As I was climbing the stairs to a packed out audience of over two thousand people, Tom Patten pointed me out to the congregation. "There goes the guy that threatens to blow this place higher than a kite. Gordon has buncoed on me!"

After he made those derogatory statements publicly, that I was Judas who had put his hand in the sop (meaning going to the D.A.), I suddenly felt safe! Tom Patten had blown it by his big mouth. Tom Patten and Jackie Gleason of The Honeymooners had one thing in common--a big mouth!

The following day I went to see C. Thomas. I warned him of his grave error by singling me out before two thousand people. "If anything happens to me physically, you're the first person the police will look up!" I never again ever feared for my life. Through obedience to His voice, I'm convinced is the only reason I am alive and well today.

Can we identify these Jews in a Gentile church from scripture? Let's try.

1. Synagogue -- a church incorporating the law.
2. To be a Jew, one "*resteth in the law.*" Romans 2:17.

3. “The oracles of God.” The Jews had the Old Testament “oracles of God” committed to them. Romans 3:2.

4. Circumcision--their eyes are opened to the fullest understanding of the scriptures. “Talking in tongues” (a type of circumcision) opens the scriptures for the Gentiles. *“But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit.”* Romans 3:29. Circumcision is administered to a Jewish boy on the eighth day. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire should be “entered into” as well by the eighth day after the new birth, as a second work of grace.

5. *“Desiring to be teachers of the law.”* (perfectionism) 1 Timothy 1:7.

“And when he had made a scourge of small cords (Gk.-a whip or Roman lash), he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” John 2:15-17. It was “The zeal of God’s house” that caused me to “bunco” on Tom Patten. He had just reported he had eight Cadillacs in his driveway!

“Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews (spiritual Israel)....behold, I will cause them to repent...” Revelation 3:9. *“The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee...and they shall call thee; The city of the LORD, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.”* Isaiah 60:14.

These particular Jews are a type of Joseph’s brethren. *“And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit.”* Genesis 37:19-20. God is prophesying a revival through this hard-hitting approach to where they can see their sin. God says, “I’ll deliver them up like a gift.” Hallelujah! *“For this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.”* Luke 15:32. “Tongue talking” is a type of circumcision, and through circumcision the eyes of a Jew are opened to the “oracles of God.” But because he “resteth in the law,” he is a Jew. A Christian resteth in grace. The law builds the synagogue, where grace builds the church.

“Blow the trumpet in Zion...call a solemn assembly...Let the priests (elders), the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?” Joel 2:15,17.