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**Preparing for Spiritual Battle to Overcome the Equal and Opposite Errors:**

**“I Don’t Need the Father” and “I Don’t Need the Son.”**

Part 2 Excluding the Father and/or The Son

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Examining misunderstandings from two different directions that challenge the validity of our faith in both the Father AND the Son is another of those very large topics that I can only begin to address here. They are intertwined and can’t be fully separated. It is important for us, who face the boldness of the adversary who knows his time is short, to be as well grounded in the Whole Word as we can be so that we can walk in His authority! As we fight the good fight, we need to aim for the roots, not just the current bloom! Cutting off dandelion flowers alone doesn’t stop them, right? Aiming your fire extinguisher at the flames doesn’t work nearly as well as aiming it at the base of the fire!

Pursuing greater understanding and practice of our Hebraic heritage, we ran right into the same battles that were going on in the first century. I was also challenged that the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) IS the “Mother of all churches.” While there is truth to that because the “Protestants” came about in protest to what the RCC changed, the first base of the faith was never in Rome. It was from Jerusalem; in Israel that our God chose to carry out the plan of redemption. Prophetic words so important for today: Jude challenged us to “earnestly contend for the faith given once to the saints.”

My first question was: how far back do we have to go to get the faith once given? When I tracked this faith, through the “generations of promise” contrasted with the “generations of conflict” I could see the path back to the Beginning, the “once given,” and the explosion of denominations that came after the central focus of the assembly’s leaders shifted to Rome. (It is found on our website: <https://www.set-apart-ministries.org/our-teachings/tools-for-development/jude-3/>)

In the past two years, I have also learned more about the intertestamental years and the subversion of the original Levitical priesthood which led to the prominence of the Pharisees and Rabbinic Judaism…thus as many already know, Caiaphas, who condemned Messiah, was a political appointee, not of the Levitical system. (Co-opted from within.)

What IS the relationship of the God of Israel and today’s Christianity? Who is to be believed? Where did the confusion come from? How did it become so engrained and emotionally volatile? Why are we unaware of this history?

As I did my Bethel Series Teacher’s training from 1995-1997, I waited expectantly to get to “the good stuff” in the NT as we went week by week through the OT history and prophecy. (It was systematic study; not a denominational perspective.) When we finally got to the NT, **it felt so anticlimactic!** Like a series of thoughts: “Oh, of course, He would do … because in the OT it said….” Having a Lutheran Sunday School background with **“Bedtime Bible Stories”** at home, I knew all the usual Bible stories and many of the people. Until training as a Bible teacher, I had never understood it was all of one piece; like having a pile of beautiful pearls not realizing how they fit together to make a necklace. As I learned more Hebrew it only confirmed this continuity. I began to understand the significance of the covenant promises found in the OT that were and will yet be manifested throughout history! I wondered why this progression hadn’t been a part of my childhood teaching!

Bethel Series teaches via a series of pictures that incorporate themes and concepts. One was of Messiah, holding out His hands to people drowning, raising their hands to Him for help. One concept taught in this picture was that people were drowning in a sea of distortions and misinterpretations that had grown up from the Beginning until the present time, which Messiah was ready to address and remedy. Janell Schroeder, my prayer partner and elder in Set Apart Ministries, was in the class and recalls thinking: “I wonder how many distortions have crept in from Jesus’ time until now?”

I stated in the first part of this article that there has been compromise from within the ranks of churched people and that this has been an ongoing aspect of this division from the Beginning. Going back to the garden, we see how the adversary instilled doubt in the character of God as he ensnared Adam and Eve. This is a very effective tool and has been consistently revisited. This is part of what leaves people “poor, blind and naked.” It also leads them to rebellion.

A Hellenized/Roman current worldview sees the two Testaments as linear and separate, “old” as in no longer relevant and “new,” relevant. This is what I have called “I don’t need the Father.” Judaism, for the most part, has rejected the “new,” sometimes saying “I don’t need the son” but sometimes also saying “I’m still waiting for the Son.” Today, there are people who once believed and now deny the Deity of Yeshua who have come under this influence, in our opinion. (There are Jewish “anti-missionaries” with this very purpose.) A Hebraic worldview, sometimes called Messianic or Hebrew Christian, sees continuity in what is called Old and New Testaments. A Hebraic worldview is cyclical, not linear, and incorporates “block logic”…simply stated more of a “both/and” perspective rather than an “either/or.”

To examine the roots of this controversy, we go back to that volatile time period that followed Messiah’s birth, life, death and resurrection. There really IS nothing new under the sun. This current issue is also old.

**And when they heard *it,* they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; Acts 21:20 NKJV**

I wrote last time that the word “law” refers to the OT/Torah via the Greek word, “nomos” but that it has at times been reinterpreted to mean the new and different law of Jesus…even though the only Scripture that existed at that time was what we call the OT. It goes along with the belief that Jesus founded a new church. I knew that this was rooted far back. In large measure, it was through the work of one man, Marcion of Sinope (85-160 AD), of the early “fathers” of Christian faith. Marcion came under the influence of a Christian/Gnostic teacher, Cerdo, from Asia, and later surpassed his teacher. He founded his own parallel independent “Christian” church in many countries and was formally excommunicated in AD 144 from the existing church. Similar but not entirely in line with gnostic belief, Marcion taught that Jesus had nothing to do with the God of Israel; that there was no connection at all with the Old Testament/Torah and prophecies. He taught that the God of Israel was jealous, angry and vindictive, while Jesus was only kindness and love, and spoke of a different father. He wanted a completely Gentile church with no further involvement with the Jews/Israel. This is closely related to what is now called “Replacement Theology” and Marcion figures in today’s “Textual Criticism” movement, questioning the validity of the OT. He focused on Paul, believing him to be the only “apostle” who understood Jesus’ true (gnostic) nature. He developed his own “Bible” using only the Gospel of Luke, purged of any Hebraic references that would involve Paul, and his real history as a Rabbi in training, and just nine of Paul’s letters. He pointedly excluded the Book of Acts of the Apostle(s). (This information is easily found and is documented in multiple places, including Encyclopedia Britannica and online Encyclopedia. A brief synopsis is also found at: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/marcion-getting-unhitched-old-testament/> )

Marcion’s influence was strong enough that it had to be addressed, which forced the church elders of the time to systematically review the writings that were passed around about Jesus’ ministry and how believers were to live. **They specifically concluded that the church should NOT reject the foundation of the Torah/OT and included all 4 Gospel accounts, Acts, and the rest of the NT as we know it today**. The Bible translations used in the RCC today generally also include more books in the OT and Intertestamental time. (The Book of Enoch has continually been accepted as Scripture by the Church of the East but fallen out of favor with the Roman western church.) They declared these teachings to be “authoritative,” but not necessarily “inspired” as is said of the Torah/OT. Primarily, they contain eye-witness accounts of Jesus’ ministry, pastoral direction, and prophecy.

Marcion was one of the few heretics that both Greek and Latin theologians united to condemn. Polycarp, a disciple of John, called him **“the firstborn of satan.”** Tertullian wrote an entire book entitled “**Against Marcion”** to refute his teachings. There was an effort to “reclaim Paul” from the gnostic interpretations back to his original Hebraic heritage. This, too, is reflected in today’s accusation/belief that Paul refutes the OT/Torah which is a part of the “I don’t need the Son” view. (Reminds me of how the rainbow has been “co-opted” by the LGBT+ community while we would prefer to reclaim it for God’s covenant promise!)

As this battle was engaged among the Gentiles, back in Jerusalem, there were still struggles within Judaism between those who accepted Jesus/Yeshua as Messiah and those who did not.

Nevertheless **even among the rulers many believed in Him,** but because of the Pharisees **they did not confess *Him,* lest they should be put out of the synagogue;** **for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.**

**Then Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.  And he who sees Me sees Him who sent me…For I have not spoken on My own *authority;* but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.  And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”**

**John 12: 42-45…49-50 NKJV**

So we see the current battle is resurfacing from of old….and it came from within the ranks of churched people. Even though in the First/Second century Roman church, the importance of the Hebraic foundation was confirmed, the excommunicated Marcion still seems to hold a great amount of influence. Much of today’s Christianity is closer to that of Marcion’s persuasions. We don’t need the Father! We follow Jesus who is more of love than judgment…one with whom we are more comfortable. We are “free in the Spirit” to do whatever we want because we have been “freed from the bondage of the Father’s Law/teachings” thanks to the work of the Son.

We were warned about that, too:

**For *the* time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires,**

**2 Timothy 4:3 NASB**

The irony of this:

1. The Book of John has been commonly recommended for new Believers to read first.
2. This Book repeatedly confirms the oneness of the Father and the Son.

Yet somehow the understanding that the Father and the Son are One and teach the same thing has been submerged.

**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1 NKJV**

**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 NKJV**

**Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. John 14:10 NKJV**

As I wrote earlier, I believe that there are spiritual issues underpinning this rebellion and stubbornness of man against authority.

In the next part, we will take up the matters of authority, rebellion and stubbornness.