

CELESTIAL ABSCISSAS

My earlier writings revolved largely around what I had perceived as the certain consequences of America's sins, and what to me were clearly the reasons for our dilemmas and impotency. Various themes, which to some bordered on madness and/or heresy, erupted out of me in an outbreak of exclamation marks, bold print and capital letters. My typing was exceedingly 'loud' as they say, in Internet vernacular. I desperately tried to convince whomever of the truths I had 'discovered' in the Word.

The middle portion of my life spent rearing three children sped by as the grass of summer. One day I'm praying in the hospital bathroom to dedicate my son to God, two days later he's graduating from high school, three days later he's building fighter planes. One day the second child, a daughter, was dragging a diaper full of muddy water from a rainy spring puddle; the next she's riding gaited horses, the third day I'm walking her down the aisle. The third, a son, who two days ago was hanging onto the back pocket of my jeans, yesterday dribbled past the keeper and today he's flying planes. Now all three are gone. My heart is still young, my body feels a little stiffness here and there, but little else has changed. As Will Rogers said, "Good judgment is based on experience, which is based on bad judgment." The only difference between me and my seed is thirty years of bad judgment. Fortunately, my seed and their spouses appreciate that. As my 38 year-old son said, "Dad, what you *do* is to just *be* there." Somehow that's bittersweet.

Those thirty years have wrought so many changes. **Then**, few queers, no pedophiles, no Web, scarce TV, responsible news, honorable statesmen, rural culture and associated mutual benefits, rare divorce, little cancer, rare Alzheimer's, autism, HDD, AIDS, chem-trails, and suicidal bombings. **Now?** –the list is imposing and surreal compared to thirty years ago. Thirty years ago Dad and Mom read and studied their Bibles; some actually passed that on to their kids. But *now*?

In the compilation of those papers written by me over the last twenty years, I have noticed the obvious, namely that there has been an evolution of my behavior from the volatile, frustrated, angry and emphatic to a little calmer, more sublime and meek natured (my wife would disagree...). One might say there is a (stretched) parallel between my writings and that of Moses, wherein after he had found out who he was, a Hebrew with a calling, his first act was to slay an Egyptian. Thence came 40 years of wearing down that anger, to the point God could trust him. My hope is that God can trust me just a smidgeon as I write. We will see.

Before laying out what I believe is at least one valid interpretation of certain scriptures, it seems appropriate to explain to the reader where I stand, relative to the Bible.

Late one evening in the early seventies, while reading my new Revised Standard Version (RSV),¹ I was touched supernaturally such that I wept, holding the Bible on my chest. I had only been born again three to four years. My sense was extreme gratitude that I had access to it. From that point until now, I have had the drive and hunger to study the Word veraciously, digging into the original meanings of words, their tenses, context, and relation to cross-references within the Word itself.

Suffice it to say that my RSV is now soiled, torn, with notes and underlined throughout.

Some say that the Bible is mistranslated and has errors in it; to an extent that is true, overwhelmingly so due to linguistic barriers and the natural evolution of language itself. The Bible's critics are unilaterally ignorant and oblivious to the workings of the Spirit of the Word upon and within those who study the Word. The written Bible is only a superficial, physical relationship in the communication with God. A secular mind has no concept of the Word becoming alive as occurs in a believer when he/she chews, gnaws, and studies the Word with the express purpose of knowing what God said.

Just the mere linguistic changes with time and cultural influences should prove the need to study diligently, for even the highest of intellects cannot draw out of the Word its numerous spiritual levels of meaning simply by reading it. Traditions and traditional sayings *about* the Word more often than not are inaccurate at best (due to hand-me-down errors), and deceptive at worst. Read *lethal* in many cases.

Traditions, particularly those that supersede and supplant the Word, lead many a soul into Hell. Like it or not, *every* man-made institution or denomination is fraught with traditions little akin to what the Word actually says. One tradition alarmingly man-made is the practice of sitting in a pew distracted by blackheads, deep wrinkles, dark rooted hair of the man in front, and listening (more or less imperfectly) to a man speak for 30-90 minutes. At best we get 10% of what he said, if any happened to be germane. Indeed, even this retention is ephemeral, assuming the "preacher" said anything pertinent in the first place. It is ludicrous to even consider the remote possibility that *one man* can be germane to hundreds of souls in the audience that have equal number of spiritual needs. It is even more ludicrous to assume one man can do that by subjugating his own spiritual frailties week after week. The whole concept is no more scriptural than praying for the dead. In fact, both those traditions originated in Babylon; how's *that* for tradition?

The deeper one delves into the Word, ingests it, the more one understands the apostasy of what is called the Church. There is a temptation to launch into a railing towards the plethora of faults and discrepancies within each of the man-made institutions; however, that is not God's way. Anger and condemnation do not work the works of Him who sent us. Just as History has recorded the apostasies, atrocities, and failings of the oldest religious institutions, so it will record the apostasies, atrocities and failings of the current man-made institutions. No wonder they forced Socrates to swig the hemlock...

All institutions develop over time their individual manuals to support their particular in-house doctrines; if the Bible doesn't support their positions, they simply write another manual, supplement, filter the Bible, or adjust their traditions to suit their stances. The Word, as Supreme Counsel and Authority, has become effectively irrelevant in the world at large, 'cast behind their backs', as it were. Prayer, communication with the Almighty, is virtually non-existent even among self-professed evangelicals. The Word is explicit about what will happen to those peoples, nations (any nation), that do these two things. What standard *shall* we use? –our feelings at the time?

It is a rule of thumb that the longer a man-made institution has existed, the more indurate it becomes, and the more adroit it has become in its defense postures. It modifies its outward appearances to meld with the times. Its acceptance is required in order to continue with its dirty work of deception.

But tradition is so, so, so warm and fuzzy; so, so, so comfortable; so, so, so reasonable and accepted.

Then we die.

Insanity is defined as doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result.

As I sat by the window around dawn this morning, this idea of the train's whistle returned to the radar screen. When the train's whistle is a ways off, the timing between the blowing does not indicate to our minds the change in distance made by the train in the interim between the two sounds. As the train nears, the sounds tell us the train is closer and closer. In fact, the Doppler Effect takes over in the sense that the train's horn *appears* to increase in speed; the closer it gets, the faster it appears to approach us. As it passes us, and goes away, the sound appears to be farther and farther apart until it disappears. It's not that the train has varied its speed or the rapidity of its blowing the horn in any way; the Doppler Effect just makes it appear that way. To clarify, imagine yourself vertically above this scene, from a perspective high enough to see the whole scene in a single view. The train from this perspective is not changing its speed, nor the rapidity of the blowing of the horn. So from the horizontal, things appear one way, from the vertical quite another.

Taking this concept a little deeper, let us consider the various phases of our lives. When we are young, death and old age appear to be far off, almost inconceivable. As we near middle age, the concept of death and debilitating diseases, aches and pains, deterioration of all sorts, is still off the radar screen. Not to worry, we say. Then the kids leave the nest, a close classmate or two dies suddenly, there is a muscle or two that does not respond as quickly as before, and we begin to consider mortality. It really becomes manifest when both our parents die, and we suddenly are on the front row!

At the window this morning it became apparent that the phases of our lives, with its corresponding activities, are as the train's Doppler effect, but in reverse. In the early phases of our lives, the end of things seems far away; as time passes, that end appears closer and closer. As the times progress, the latter stages appear to converge at a faster and faster rate. The past is getting farther and farther away, more and more distant. The future is getting faster and faster.

But, time, like the train's speed, is not changing! It just *appears* that way.

This concept, then, begins to clarify why we do what we do. The apparent supplants the real, and in a most profound way, imprisons us. This imprisonment is not only by natural occurrence, it is by *preference*. The horizontal is much preferable to the vertical, primarily because it requires less exertion. Convention from laziness is paramount.

So it is with the young rabbit coming out of its lair; it cannot see around the corner of the tree in his view nor the bushes to its left and right. Neither can he see behind him. This is horizontal. Now picture the eagle far above the rabbit in a tall pine tree. From this aerie the eagle sees not only the rabbit, but the bushes around him, and the tree in front. This is vertical. Which has the advantage?

So the horizontal, and its associated imprisonment, is what sets the boundaries for our *modus operandi*; Like the rabbit coming out of its lair, we cannot see around the nearest bush. So immediately there is a sense of uncertainty. This uncertainty, due to our horizontal confinement and *perceived* vertical disadvantage, evolves into various forms and expressions of fear. Fear then, drives us to places and prisons. The bushes become real.

You say to me, "I have no fear!" To the which I reply, "Then why do you seek the confinement of a city, the solace of close neighbors, the enveloping of four walls? Why do you run after support groups of all flavors and sizes, from Harley clubs to church activities? Why are all your engagements horizontal, when none of your so-called friends have any thing to do with your birth, life, well-being, nor health?" Lastly, "Why do you buy insurance?"

As an interlude, I'm brought up short by thoughts about this thing of tradition; *what is it* for which we should fight, and for which we should exert our passions, our mental energies in study, defense and care? This group has their Qumran, that group their crystals, another its traditions, still another its manual, creed, mantra or whatever. There are those who even have the Bible plus addenda and commentaries which carry equal if not greater weight than the Bible itself.

Some groups tack the name of God onto their secret meetings in black rooms, and elevate their brotherhood mantra to supersede law, even the messing with someone else's wife. The 'brotherhood' overlooks another brother's faults, even murder itself. We say, "Why that's horrible!" Yet, like the so-called pacifist Muslims who harbor terrorists, we, as well as they, are accessories to the crime.

By association we are co-participants to the wickedness, and likewise we *shall* participate in their judgments. Ignorance by no means shall exonerate us. Neither shall ignorance of what the Word says, irrespective of our excuses.

“Sodom had no Bible,” spoke Leonard Ravenhill; it did not excuse them.

Neither logic, erudite arguments, nor contemporaneous acceptance will prevail to convince anyone of the difference between the Bible and any other religious book. So what *is* the dividing line, the gossamer thread of truth? What *is* the element that transcends logic and argument? Do you really want to know? Is a celestial abscissa preferable?

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One of the tribe of Issachar

¹ The Holy Bible Revised Standard Version (Zondervan Publishing House: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1971).