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What Paul Can Teach Modern Man, 1962.

WHAT PAUL CAN TEACH MODERN MAN**The Fourth of a Series of Lectures
on the Truths of Other Faiths**

The Temple
April 29, 1962

Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver

There are encouraging signs about that our world is coming alive to the futility of religious bickering. We have quite enough on our hands without reviving age-old taunts and abusive hectoring. Given this determination, the tolerance for understanding, it is perhaps not surprising that a feeling has grown up that fundamentally, essentially, Judaism and Christianity are cut from the same bolt of cloth, that they are dresses of similar style and color and pattern, different only in their detailing, in their styling. If Christianity were a faithful detailing of Jesus' own religion, this case could probably be established. For there are indeed great similarities between our two faiths. Is not Judaism the mother and Christianity the daughter? Do Jew and Christian not worship the same God? Do we not revere and hold as sacred much the same Biblical literature? Was not Jesus, by birth and by conviction, a Jew?

There is great difficulty in accurately recreating the historical Jesus -- his biography, his temperament, his teaching. The gospel writings are, by and large, at second or third removed, and much that they tell us is so contradictory. But this much seems to be clear: that Jesus was a believing Jew; his Judaism was a warming and vital, vigorous part of his personality; he interlaced his Judaism with an insistence upon the immediate end of the world as he knew it and the coming of the Millennium; he was an apocalyptic

preacher. But this, in and of itself, was neither unusually nor cause for heresy. There were many others -- many others within the Jewish community at the same time who were saying much the same thing. The Gospel According to Matthew sums up or recreates Jesus' own attitude towards Judaism and towards the Torah:

Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I come not to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. But I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and of the Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

If Christianity were a reproduction of the personal religion of Jesus, a sound case might be made as to the fundamental identity of Christianity and of Judaism. But Christianity is not the religion of Jesus, but it is a religion about Jesus. It is a radically new religious departure. It is original, and its originality comes not from the teaching or the personality of Jesus but from the teaching and the personality of the second of its great founding prophets, the missionary Paul.

Who was Paul? Paul was a younger contemporary of Jesus whom, by the way, he never met. He was the son of a tent maker in Tarsus, a small community in Asia Minor. He was by birth a Jew. He was by training a Jew. But he was by culture and by attitude a product of the Greek Hellenistic culture of the world of Asia Minor. Paul claims himself to be, in his letters, a disciple of Jesus the Christ. He claims to be the missionary of Christ Jesus unto the Gentile. But these terms are misleading, for a disciple or a missionary preaches the teaching of his master, and the truth which Paul communicated was his own truth, the truth which had been directed and revealed to him by God. He was

not as a transmitter of Jesus' doctrine, but the inaugurator, the man who broadcast the truth about Jesus which had been revealed directly to him by God. And this truth, this revelation, if you will, is original, and unique, and forever moved Christianity from a sectarian, denominational movement within Judaism apart, set it aside, and gave it a uniqueness and a character and an identity quite its own.

The Judaism of Jesus, the Judaism of the Bible is essentially the teaching of a consecrated way of life. The signal event in Jewish history is the giving of the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai, and the fundamental, underlying beliefs of Judaism are these: God gave man life; in giving to man life, God gave him opportunity and a discipline; life is not evil, but potential, it is potentially good; and if man will abide this norm, this standard, the Torah, the God-revealed Law, he can serve his God, establish a sound community, and make himself happy. All of these fundamental tenets of Judaism Paul denied. Paul was a deeply troubled individual, introspective, burdened by life. He looked upon the Torah, his tradition, not so much as a great consecrated religious ideal but as a burden. It freighted him frightfully. He was troubled by the Torah because he felt his own inadequacy measured against its standards. He felt that the Torah made demands of him which he could not admit and which he could not fulfill. The Torah riddled him with a sense of inferiority and guilt, and instead of seeing it as the Jew traditionally has seen it, as an ideal, as a discipline towards which to strive; being a sensitive individual, he saw it as a demand imposed in all of its rigour upon him, and he sensed his own inability to fulfill its mandates.

Paul was a religiously troubled Jew. His Judaism gave him neither comfort nor peace of mind. It filled him with anxiety. Paul came to have peace of mind; where did he find it? He found it in a moment of ecstatic

religious enlightenment. Paul had what is known as a "conversion experience." Somewhere near Damascus, out in the open country, his mind was suddenly illuminated by an inner light. He came to see all of the pieces of the puzzle of life in a new perspective. He came to feel that he had been assured by God of a new truth. All his confusion disappeared. All his fear evaporated. There was now certainty, and what was that certainty? That God had revealed to him a new way, a new dispensation, a new gospel, a new teaching of good tidings. and he dedicated his life forever after to that teaching.

What did Paul see on this open road near Damascus? He saw Jesus resurrected. Ever after he said, "I have come to preach the Christ crucified." To Paul the elemental, the signal historical event of life was the crucifixion, the death of Jesus and his resurrection with God, his "sitting at the right hand of God," protecting, and encouraging, and dispensing salvation.

Why was this important to Paul? Paul held that the world is essentially a confusing place. Life is essentially a bitter experience. Man is essentially hopeless in his struggle to find peace of mind, to find direction in life. There was no hope for him. There was, therefore, no hope for others. Life was fear, and life was anxiety, and life was trembling, and life was anguish. It was a bitter pill, one that man could do nothing but swallow, but one from which he could find no relief. But with the crucifixion of Jesus a new element entered into human destiny. The nature of life was forever changed. How was it changed? By taking back unto himself his only begotten son, God gave man hope. Until the crucifixion of Jesus, according to Paul, there was no hope for man. Man was burdened by life and he could not escape the burden. Now, with the crucifixion, God had allowed Jesus by his death to atone for man's sins. He had erased the original taint of

frustration of mortality for man. He gave man the possibility of salvation. If Judaism is essentially the teaching of a consecrated way of life, Christianity, according to Paul, as it developed under Paul's imprimatur, is essentially the teaching of a consecrated gospel of salvation. With the crucifixion promise entered life. Men who accept the divinity of the Christ, who accept his saving presence, who accept his death as justification for their existence, these men can find a new peace, a peace which was impossible heretofore, a peace which surpasses all understanding or, to use a theological term, a peace which allows man to be reborn, to throw off his old flesh, his old nature, his old way of being, and to become something wholly new, wholly re-created, totally different.

Now, why Paul chose Jesus as the central symbol of this drama of salvation we do not know. Paul never knew Jesus. Paul was not particularly moved by the human Jesus, by the teachings and the ministry and the healing of this man. It would appear that Jesus entered Paul's life by indirection. Paul had been present, some years before, at a taunting, at a hectoring of one of the disciples of Jesus, a man by the name of Stephen. He had taken no active part in this unfortunate incident, but it had scarred his soul. He had stood by silent while another human being had been disgraced, and the dignity of Stephen and his responsibility to his master, Jesus, had somehow made upon Paul a deep impression. Whether this was the reason that Paul chose or had deeply lodged within his mind the personality, the goodness, the character of Jesus; we do not know. This much is true: five years after the crucifixion, after the death, Paul, on this road to Damascus, saw Jesus in his dream, or rather saw the Christ, the saviour, in his dream, and forever after his life was changed. In this moment of ecstasy, Paul became another man, and this becoming of another man was the promise that he preached throughout the rest

of his life. It is as if, to use a modern example, a deeply disturbed individual underwent some kind of electrical or chemical shock treatment. He comes out of it, if it is successful, a different individual. His emotional makeup, his attitude he knows to be different. He senses what he was and what he has become, and he is deeply, overwhelmingly grateful for the change that has occurred. He has been reborn. So Paul was reborn. And so, by his passionate preaching, he attempted to give this gospel of promise wide distribution, to allow others to enjoy a similar privilege.

Paul's world, then, is a theologic world. Paul saw in Jesus not the man, not the teacher, not the preacher, not the healer, but the son of God who had taken in the flesh somehow, by some miraculous purpose, the humblest of human forms. And he saw the death of Jesus not as an abrupt, unfortunate end to a saintly life, but as the cardinal purpose of that life. God willed the death of Jesus. Jesus' life has no meaning; his death has the supreme meaning, for he dies as atonement for man and in this atoning death, by some theological miracle, man finds the promise of salvation.

Now from where did Paul draw this conjury, this nexus of ideas which he developed around the crucifixion of Jesus? There is here no basis within Judaism. He drew it from the Hellenistic world in which he was raised and the Greek world whose tongue he spoke. That world was a deeply troubled world, and in that world there were many cults which we now call mystery faiths, the faiths of Isis and Mithra and Osiris. And each of these had certain similar elements. Each held that life is unfortunate, that man needs to escape to be saved, that man cannot be saved by his own efforts. There needs to be a god, a god figure who will sacrifice of his own flesh for man. And when this sacrifice has taken place those who understand it, who are initiated into its mysteries, gain for themselves the salvation, the

immortality which man so desperately seeks. This is the world, the ideas, the Weltanschauung, the attitudes which Paul wove into his Christian doctrine.

Having come to these beliefs, having as a Jew rejected the Law as too burdensome, and having out of his inner disturbance sought for a new religious orientation, Paul developed this around the figure of Jesus as a god who died for the sins of man and by his death man can attain salvation. And he spent the next decades of his life going about the ancient Near East, what is today Turkey and Lebanon and Syria and parts of northern Judea, going around this world preaching his doctrine. It was a difficult doctrine to preach. It cannot be argued on the basis of common sense. It does not draw its terms from the mundane world with which we are familiar. "I am a fool for Christ," Paul said over and over again to his auditors. He communicated this message of his by the passion of his own testimony, by the detailing of his own mystical experience, and many came to feel that they had a similar experience, and there grew up about him in Corinthe, throughout the cities of Greece and Turkey, little congregations of people who came to hold close the Christianity of Paul.

Now, Paul's life was never an easy one. He was a wanderer and a wandering missionary. He depended for his funds upon those who would grant him of their charity. He had a difficult message to teach and many did not understand the full context of his teaching. And he was bitterly attacked from within. He was bitterly attacked by those disciples of Jesus, those who had known the human Jesus, those who were Jews, who remained Jews, and who looked to Jesus simply as a teacher/^{of apocalypse, as a teacher} of the coming of the Millenium. When Jesus had died a small group of his disciples had remained faithful to their master. They looked on Jesus as a prophet, as a partial messiah, as a man who was announcing the immediate coming of the kingdom of God. And they felt

that despite his death this kingdom was at hand. And they continued to meet together. They continued to obey the Law of the Torah. They continued to obey the ethical precepts of Judaism. They continued to observe the holiday ritual of Judaism. They continued to accept the act of circumcision as the covenant of Judaism. Paul moved against this whole tradition. Paul argued that this Torah, which had so disturbed him as a child, was irrelevant, that what man needed in his relation to God was this immediate ecstatic experience. All ritual, all rites, all ceremonies -- these Paul questioned, and, indeed, later Christianity, building upon Paul, had great difficulty in mitigating the extremity of Paul's position here. He would have no religious services as such, no prayer book, no organized prayers, no rituals. Let a congregation be summoned together, and let them sit, and let them rise when they are bidden to speak, and let them speak with tongues, let them speak with the voice of prophet, let them speak that which God has put into their hearts to speak. The Quaker Meeting, as it was known in early America, very much reflects the organized religious attitude of Paul. But how does one know whether the man who speaks with tongues, who is called upon, who feels compelled to speak, is speaking truth or simply speaking the fervid, disturbed problems of his own inner psyche? This problem troubled the church, as it has always troubled every organized religion which claims to ingest and to digest and to transmit the revealed word of God.

Paul moved -- deliberately moved -- Christianity away from its Jewish base. The historical person of Jesus became subordinate. The Christological features which were engrafted upon Jesus' life -- his being the son of God, his dying for the sins of men, his being resurrected for a second coming, his being again with God and acting there as the intermediate between God and man, his promise of salvation and of resurrection -- these are the elements which

become dominant in the teaching of the apostle Paul. And these elements are, for better or for worse, quite other than those of the parent faith, Judaism. Mother and daughter we are, but the daughter has not only a home of her own, but a mind of her own, and attitudes which not only disturb but are deeply questioned by the mother.

Paul, then, gave to the world a totally new religious orientation. His religion was not the doctrine of consecrated living, although Paul was a determined moralist, almost Puritannical in his ethical outlook. Rather, religion was to be a drama, a promise of salvation. Judaism tries to teach men how to be competent in the world. Paul tried to teach men how to be in the world but not of the world, in the flesh but not of the flesh. His problems were the problems within. His concern was with motivation. His concern was with the troubled soul. His concern was with the burdened personality. Judaism's concern is with developing the disciplines of life, with setting before man standards and goals towards which he can strive and after which he can drive. Judaism is not rich in this introspection. It allows each man the privacy of his own intimate struggle. It asks only that he struggle. Christianity is rich and suggestive in its understanding of the seething, roiling, disturbing soul within. Out of this concern there often comes a disinclination to be involved in the problems of the world. Man's concern is with his soul, not with his world, and much within Christianity can be understood best as an attempt to balance what Paul unbalanced. For Paul fought with the cosmic powers, Paul fought with the world within, and he was largely indifferent to the social and political forces of the world without. He was passive in response to the political problems of his day. States were organized as part of God's will for weal or for woe; man ought simply to accept them. There was slavery; man must abide if he is a slave,

in his slave state. But a great religion such as Christianity could not long admit this tolerance of evil within. A social gospel had to parallel the religious, the theologic gospel. And already in the New Testament, in the Epistle of James and elsewhere, we find currents which begin to balance off the excessive preoccupation of Paul with individual, personal salvation.

Jesus sat for the portrait. Paul painted a masterpiece. But like much of the impressionistic, the surrealist art of our day, in the painting the outlines of the model became lost. Christianity can be understood best as the interplay of two forces. One, Judaic. One coming from the warm, humane ethical personality of Jesus, concerned with people, with the social situation, concerned with ethic and with right living. The other coming from Paul, being essentially unconcerned because it despairs of life within this world, being concerned with the individual to give him a means of escaping from this world, a promise of salvation here and a promise of salvation in the hereafter.

This is the Christianity of Paul. How are men to gain this salvation? By having this immediate mystical experience which he himself had sensed -- which he knew had converted him into another person. In time the church realized that not everyone was psychologically prepared and not every age was psychologically attuned to this kind of experience. And so the church developed a series of rituals -- the eucharist, and baptism -- which allowed people to sense that they, too, had experienced the presence of Jesus and have been saved.

But Paul, as we read him, has for all religionists -- Jew, Christian, or otherwise -- this one central truth which we ought never to forget: whatever we think of his theology, however much we may dispense with his metaphysics, Paul insists that no religious act has meaning unless there is intention. There must be absolute honesty in religious practice. He is violently, almost

viciously opposed to hypocrisy. He will have nothing of perfunctory forms. Religion is to Paul a matter of supreme concern in his life, and it must be in all life. Man must come with fear and with trembling to his church, to his mosque, and to his synagogue, and the religious act that he performs there must be performed with all honesty else it is worse than meaningless, it is a sin. It stands between man and that which he has brought into the synagogue, a sense of awareness, of contact with God.

Paul's epistles are brilliant in their insistence on the honesty, the absolute honesty prerequisite to any religious activity. They are difficult. They are difficult because of theologic implications which are involved, but they continue to inspire Jew and non-Jew by this one central conviction. Here is man. Man's life is difficult. Man's inner life is burdened. Man's personality is worried. Every man senses the conflict ~~between~~ ^{within} between his inclinations and his lusts, between his promises and his passions. Let him use religion as a means of working out his destiny, of finding honesty and integrity in life. And if we cannot accept the gospel which he teaches, we certainly cannot accept this truth, that within the context of religious philosophy, within the congregation of religious believers, within the hour of religious meditation there can come, there does arrive quietness, sense of purpose, conviction and commitment.

There are many that are very close to the gold of wisdom
bitterness, we have quite enough of our hands to give the gold &
the alms

It is perhaps not surprising that our literature to put up
old questions has led to a consideration of at least two or more
the same, can they not make a Daughter? Do not you?
surely be considered? Do not bills held sacred and as such
Biblical with? Was not Jesus a Jew by birth & by conviction?
Jesus - he was in our mind not the subject of a new
religion but the end of the mission of the old by knows
as the Hebrew people.

of X is more an fulfillment of Jesus's mission rather than a new one
completely one could make a long case for the
proposition that X is a part of the mission of Jesus and not a new one

but of the difficult and in detail, perhaps very
difficult interpretation of any of the ideas which made up a
universal message of Jesus - the N.T. testimony was misinterpreted
at the crucifixion
to show that Jesus was not the son of God - Jesus was
just a man and his judgment was made by men,
having no special status - not at all herald or
announced apocalyptic conditions about the imminent
end of the world - the new coming of the millennium, it
should not be seen as the beginning of the end of the world
reproduced Jesus's mission as the Task

The falling of the imposed identity in level 1 is not the
religion of Jesus, & it is a religion created from the copy
of his teaching & words, it created a new set of scriptures - it
has an original altered text to be a problem of copy, it
does so - became a copy - in essence as it was made
by the most creative of the great fallen - Paul - the
messianic prophet of Jesus,

Just as it is an mother & daughter - but the daughter has not
only a home of her own but also must inherit the mother
can not give no substance, - there was a son as the brother
of Paul

Who was he this brother of Paul? Big with a
son of Thomas - as a brother -
a young contemporary of Jesus - brother however he was not
Paul calls himself disciple of Christ & messianic of Christ
to the world - he was an apostle - for the

only - prophetic - transmitter sub -
Paul did not transmit - he - created Jesus last temple
betwixt had had directly revealed to him. Paul was a
prophet - he had received his will to him directly, revelation
also - Jesus on all hand of legal his will was revealed
what Jesus had provided - Paul needed to be revealed
of will - & Paul will power made own will as a
new set of doctrines,

Paul reported the intense concern that religious rules were
laid out for
you men a concerned way of life. / But as far as the
opening Testament concerning of Thomas - Paul had long been troubled
by the intense idea of the Paul law. ~~the intense~~ - troubled
person he found the Paul method hanging on his conscience. It
did not seem to be used & not met, it felt like a small which modern
psychology would call guilt feeling. It made him feel
independent - unhappy -

Paul wanted peace of mind & as my only known method was
to do my conscientious well effort - he could confess that it
helped his with a heavy & disturbing of mental burden -

Paul transformed it into a religious which was on the
basis of a concerned way of salvation.  By salvation Paul meant
the possibility of finding complete inner peace here & the assurance
of eventual peace in the hereafter -

Since his death & return - Paul's teaching. The social
movement & it & not the quest of the law had the crucial role
Calvary, which had a crucial role of the life of the
beatitude. With Jesus' death a change had place affecting all
life. Before Calvary man was bound to frustration - life
could not be able to be a confession or a burden - There was
no hope - after Calvary hope entered life. Man could now
find peace & be confident; Jesus died to buy man admission
to his life & the next.

When Jud. taught me to change themselves & use so called
for the better - Paul - Paul Paul (though Paul had changed
the way of life of his to give men a opportunity for
salvation.

How can Paul be the founder? We are told in the N.T.
that Paul ~~came~~ to it by way of a conclusion made at his own expense -
On day on the road near Paphos he fell to the ground
The crowd, all his hands & feet suddenly fell into place - He
experienced a transforming spirit illumination - He saw the
Christ Jesus seated in all his glory at the right hand of God -

Why did Jesus appear in Paul's mind. We do not know. I feel
by his own testimony some not far from the place where he was at that time in the N.T. and that Paul was somehow
present at a distance, conceiving one of the early days of Jesus
Christ - in which the Lord Jesus Christ was born and lived and was crucified
and buried and rose again and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God
his father. In any case - Jesus found the central focus of Paul's
life -

Paul was the Jesus of the New Testament - Paul Jesus to be used over
Jesus to be used - Paul the missionary - Paul Jesus must
understand particularly in Jesus the man - The early days of Jesus
Jesus must be able to be used - What Paul & Jesus in his mind
was Jesus the Christ - Jesus the son of God incarnate in man

which contained from which the personal copy
~~was~~ ^{was} ~~kept~~ ^{kept} - to be in Paul's name release

Paul was no task based theologian - he was a man of great
compassion, individuals well & decisions - once convinced that he
had revealed his mission - he spent the rest of his life making the
kings of Asia Minor - carrying his teaching - convincing many men
so much by the logic of his message - Paul's mission - he had received
as by the power of his formation - but what he called "to Paul for Christ"

His pull out copy - he was engaged & needed - engaged &
imprisoned for a variety of cases - actually at need of funds - offered
under the x the copy sent by the old law friend of Jesus who
held fast Jesus - my will can Paul

Paul possessed a mission - the mission is a mission to
the world - gradually the law of the old law - Paul came
dominated & drove out the mission of Jesus - What Paul
brought had special appeal to the law - call to the law - at
was for good of common law in beliefs - the truth
& confusion of law - the truth - The will to law was
divine help - This was my mission with - law,
mission - and will was law of law accepting one of law for
will of law & offer after mission submit to faithful

We have no explicit record of Paul's life on today - but
copy copy - my letter to me to include in will -
letter law will, law, individuals well - an appeal

Paul shared his difficulties & confusion - difficulty of
activity available from outside - see bodily activity -
Paul opposed to my mother - of calculated " the human predicament
" the plight of our common case of unfulfillment " - more
new conceptions of power of psychological experience - referred

Change

Walter - 04 of reception - proposed other interpretation

page



Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I come not to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. But I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and ^{of the} Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

