

WATCHMAN'S TEACHING LETTER

Monthly Letter #88; August, 2005 By: Teacher Clifton A. Emahiser
1012 N. Vine Street, Fostoria, Ohio 44830; Ph. (419)435-2836

Fax (419)-435-7571; E-mail caemahiser@sbcglobal.net

TO THOSE WHOM THE COVENANT BELONGS

A NON-UNIVERSAL CULTURE AWARENESS INSTRUCTIONAL PUBLICATION

This is a non-copyrighted teaching letter.
Please feel free to make as many copies as you wish, but not to edit.

A MONTHLY TEACHING LETTER

This is my eighty-eighth monthly teaching letter and continues my eighth year of publication. With this lesson, we'll continue our defense series. With the last several lessons we've defended Herodotus, Josephus and Eusebius. Without these historians, along with several other classical historians, we would have little tangible evidence that our Bibles are true. Yet in spite of this there are those who would irresponsibly throw all this evidence to the wind, completely repudiating every thread of evidence. With this lesson we will start defending the apostle Paul's writings. It is simply amazing how many in Israel Identity, and even those in mainstream churchianity, are jumping on the bandwagon to bash Paul. It has now risen to epidemic proportions and is still growing.

Maybe someone should organize a national book-burning meeting for all these historians' writings along with Paul's epistles. They (not I) could go around to all the new and used book stores and collect all these writings after they have cleared out their own basements and attics. They (not I) could pick out a central location in the United States convenient for all like minded to meet for this great event. Maybe they (not I) could find a source where they could purchase all the matches, kerosene and razor blades at wholesale prices. Of course, they (not I) would have to get a burning permit from some local government, so the fire department could be standing by preventing the blaze from getting out of control. Maybe, after they have removed all of Paul's writings along with Luke's from their Bibles, they could donate the paper to some recycling operation. If they are really all that serious about what they are promoting, they should do all this to testify to others of their beliefs. Like the old saying, "Put your money where your mouth is."

And while they are burning all of Herodotus', Josephus' and Eusebius' works, they might as well destroy all the historical classics. I guess we really don't want to know how Zerah-Judah left Egypt before the Red Sea episode, settled the Dardanelles and Troy, became the Trojans, moved and settled Rome where some became the Julian family and other families of the Patricians, while later others went back to Greece, fought an engagement where Brutus bargained for a wife and several hundred ships, then sailed for Britain. I guess we really don't want to know how, as Herodotus records, a woman named Tomyris, a Massagetae-Israelite lady, after her husband the king had died, took charge of the Massagetae army, outwitted the Biblical Cyrus in his

military exploits, and killed many Persians including Cyrus himself. Cyrus, outmaneuvered by a lady Israelite! Her husband the king, before his death, had taught her well!

Before we address today's variety of Paul bashing, we really need to research its history from its beginning!

THE HISTORY OF PAUL BASHING

For this I will go to *Barnes' Notes*, volume 10 ,page vii, to the " Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans":

" This Epistle has been, with great uniformity, attributed to the apostle Paul, and received as a part of the sacred canon. It has *never* in the church been called in question as a genuine, an inspired book, except by three of the ancient sects deemed heretical – the Ebionites, the Encratites, and Cerinthians. But they did not deny that it was written by the apostle Paul. They rejected it because they could not make its *doctrines* harmonize with their views of other parts of the Scriptures. Their rejecting it, therefore, does not militate against its genuineness. That is a question to be settled *historically*, like the genuineness of any other ancient writing. On this point the testimony of antiquity is uniform. The proof on this subject may be seen at length in Lardner's works. The *internal* evidence that this was written by Paul is stated in a most ingenious and masterly manner by Dr. Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ*."

Well, it is evident that we are not going to know a lot about all this Paul bashing unless we investigate these ancient sects: the Ebionites, the Encratites, and the Cerinthians! I assure you before we start, they're not the kind of people we would want to keep company with! To start this subject I will now go to *The Church History of Eusebius*, 2.27, with Philip Shaff:

" 1 THE evil demon, however, being unable to tear certain others from their allegiance to the Christ of God, yet found them susceptible in a different direction, and so brought them over to his own purposes. The ancients quite properly called these men Ebionites, because they held poor and mean opinions concerning Christ..

" 2 For they considered him a plain and common man, who was justified only because of his superior virtue, and who was the fruit of the intercourse of a man with Mary. In their opinion the observance of the ceremonial law was altogether necessary, on the ground that they could not be saved by faith in Christ alone and by a corresponding life.

" 3 There were others, however, besides them, that were of the same name, but avoided the strange and absurd beliefs of the former, and did not deny that the Lord was born of a virgin and of the Holy Spirit. But nevertheless, inasmuch as they also refused to acknowledge that he pre-existed, being God, Word, and Wisdom, they turned aside into the impiety of the former, especially when they, like them, endeavored to observe strictly the bodily worship of the law.

" 4 These men, moreover, thought that it was necessary to reject all the epistles of the apostle, whom they called an apostate from the law; and they used only the so-called Gospel according to the Hebrews and made small account of the rest.

" 5 The Sabbath and the rest of the discipline of the Jews they observed just like them, but at the same time, like us, they celebrated the Lord's days as a memorial of the resurrection of the Saviour."

A footnote to this reads: " That there were two different views among the Ebionites as to the birth of Christ is stated frequently by Origen (cf. e.g. *Contra Cels.* V. 61), but there was unanimity in the denial of his preexistence and essential divinity, and this constituted the essence

of the heresy in the eyes of the Fathers from Irenaeus on. Irenaeus, as remarked above, knows of no such difference as Eusebius here mentions: and that the denial of the supernatural birth even in the time of Origen was in fact ordinarily attributed to the Ebionites in general, without a distinction of the two classes, is seen by Origen's words in his *Hom. in Luc. XVII.*"

At Eusebius chapter 26, under the heading "Doctrines of Cerinthus, the Ebionites, and Nicolaitanes" we read:

"1. Cerinthus, again, a man who was educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians, taught that the world was not made by the primary God, but by a certain Power far separated from him, and at a distance from that Principality who is supreme over the universe, and ignorant of him who is above all. He represented Jesus as having not been born of a virgin, but as being the son of Joseph and Mary according to the ordinary course of human generation, while he nevertheless was more righteous, prudent, and wise than other men. Moreover, after his baptism, Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler, and that then he proclaimed the unknown Father, and performed miracles. But at last Christ departed from Jesus, and that then Jesus suffered and rose again, while Christ remained impassible, inasmuch as he was a spiritual being.

"2. Those who are called Ebionites agree that the world was made by God; but their opinions with respect to the Lord are similar to those of Cerinthus and Carpocrates. They use the Gospel according to Matthew only, and repudiate the Apostle Paul, maintaining that he was an apostate from the law. As to the prophetic writings, they endeavour to expound them in a somewhat singular manner: they practise circumcision, persevere in the observance of those customs which are enjoined by the law, and are so Judaic in their style of life, that they even adore Jerusalem as if it were the house of God.

"3. The Nicolaitanes are the followers of that Nicolas who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles. They lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is very plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John, [when they are represented] as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practise adultery, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. Wherefore the Word has also spoken of them thus: 'But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.' Doctrines of Cerinthus, the Ebionites, and Nicolaitanes."

By the way, this is the first reference that I have found that identifies the Nicolaitanes of Revelation 2:15. If Yahshua hates these kind of people, I surely wouldn't want to be counted among them! Had today's Paul-bashers lived during this early Christian era, this is the kind of company they would have kept! Like Nellie Babbs and Judy Nipps for instance. They would have been right at home with the Cerinthians, Ebionites, and Nicolaitanes (and Encratites as well) in bashing Paul! But we are only getting a good start on this thing!

At Eusebius chapter 21, by Shaff, under the heading, "A Vindication of the Prophecy in Isaiah (VII. 14) Against the Misinterpretations of Theodotion, Aquila, the Ebionites, and the Jews. Authority of the Septuagint Version. Arguments in Proof that Christ Was Born of a Virgin":

"1. God, then, was made man, and the Lord did Himself save us, giving us the token of the Virgin. But not as some allege, among those now presuming to expound the Scripture, [thus:] 'Behold, a young woman shall conceive, and bring forth a son,' as Theodotion the Ephesian has interpreted, and Aquila of Pontus, both Jewish proselytes. The Ebionites, following these, assert that He was begotten by Joseph; thus destroying, as far as in them lies, such a marvellous

dispensation of God, and setting aside the testimony of the prophets which proceeded from God ...”

From the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, volume 1, chapter 15 under the heading, “Refutation of the Ebionites, Who Disparaged the Authority of St. Paul, from the Writings of St. Luke, Which Must Be Received as a Whole. Exposure of the Hypocrisy, Deceit, and Pride of the Gnostics. The Apostles and Their Disciples Knew and Preached One God, the Creator of the World”:

“ 1. But again, we allege the same against those who do not recognise Paul as an apostle: that they should either reject the other words of the Gospel which we have come to know through Luke alone, and not make use of them; or else, if they do receive all these, they must necessarily admit also that testimony concerning Paul, when he (Luke) tells us that the Lord spoke at first to him from heaven: ‘Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? I am Jesus Christ, whom thou persecutest;’ and then to Ananias, saying regarding him: ‘Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name among the Gentiles [sic. nations], and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him, from this time, how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake.’ Those, therefore, who do not accept of him [as a teacher], who was chosen by God for this purpose, that he might boldly bear His name, as being sent to the forementioned nations, do despise the election of God, and separate themselves from the company of the apostles. For neither can they contend that Paul was no apostle, when he was chosen for this purpose; nor can they prove Luke guilty of falsehood, when he proclaims the truth to us with all diligence. It may be, indeed, that it was with this view that God set forth very many Gospel truths, through Luke’s instrumentality, which all should esteem it necessary to use, in order that all persons, following his subsequent testimony, which treats upon the acts and the doctrine of the apostles, and holding the unadulterated rule of truth, may be saved. His testimony, therefore, is true, and the doctrine of the apostles is open and steadfast, holding nothing in reserve; nor did they teach one set of doctrines in private, and another in public.”

From the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, volume 1, chapter 6 under the heading “Do Not Accept Judaism”:

“ If any one preaches the one God of the law and the prophets, but denies Christ to be the Son of God, he is a liar, even as also is his father the devil, and is a Jew falsely so called, being possessed of mere carnal circumcision. If any one confesses Christ Jesus the Lord, but denies the God of the law and of the prophets, saying that the Father of Christ is not the Maker of heaven and earth, he has not continued in the truth any more than his father the devil, and is a disciple of Simon Magus, not of the Holy Spirit. If any one says there is one God, and also confesses Christ Jesus, but thinks the Lord to be a mere man, and not the only-begotten God, and Wisdom, and the Word of God, and deems Him to consist merely of a soul and body, such an one is a serpent, that preaches deceit and error for the destruction of men. And such a man is poor in understanding, even as by name **he is an Ebionite.**” [emphasis mine]

It is very regrettable to say, but there are those in Israel Identity who understand and promote Two Seedline who condemn Paul, thinking they are being spiteful to the bad-fig-Canaanite Jews, but in reality are doing quite the opposite! They unwittingly do so, as they take the same position as the Ebionite-Jews who practiced Judaism, and are in reality befriending them! This passage is part of an epistle of Ignatius, to the Ephesians who lived A.D. 30-107, and Polycarp and he were fellow-disciples under John. Thus, we surely can’t brush these words of his aside without great difficulty!

From *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, J. D. Douglas, general editor, page 326, under the heading “Ebionites” we read in part:

“**EBIONITES.** The name is derived from a Hebrew word meaning ‘poor’ (cf. Luke 6:20) ... The Ebionites exalted the Law, though they considered it contained false pericopes (shortened renderings), rejected the Pauline epistles, and regarded Jesus as the son of Joseph and Mary, but elected Son of God at his baptism when he was united with the eternal Christ, who is higher than the archangels, but not divine. This Christ had appeared in various figures from Adam on. His work was that of a teacher rather than savior... They had their own gospel, now called the ‘Gospel of the Ebionites’; it has survived mainly in quotations in Epiphanius. Apparently it was a developed form of the ‘Gospel according to the Hebrews,’ i.e., essentially Matthew ... Along with other Jewish Christians they suffered heavily during the Bar-Kochba revolt (132-135), because they would not accept him as Messiah. They then gradually dwindled away, their last remnants being swept away by the Muslim conquest of Syria.”

The modern-day Paul-bashers have become modern-day Ebionites in every respect of the word! It may take me several lessons to confirm that, but confirm it I will! And Dr. [Ha!] H. Graber is no exception to the rule! The only thing H. Graber has going for him is the fact he is dead, and “thank God and Greyhound he’s gone”! While H. Graber was alive, he was a fool – now he’s a dead fool! He’s a dead Ebionite-fool! The Ebionites denied that Yahshua was Yahweh in the flesh, and such are antichrists! I pray to Yahweh that the reader will begin to see how dangerous all this Paul-bashing can become!

We will now go to the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, volume 4, chapter 65: “But since he asserts that ‘you may hear all those who differ so widely saying, ‘The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world’;’ we shall show the falsity of such a statement. For there are certain heretical sects which do not receive the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, as the two sects of Ebionites, and those who are termed Encratites. Those, then, who do not regard the apostle as a holy and wise man, will not adopt his language, and say, ‘The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.’ And consequently in this point, too, Celsus is guilty of falsehood.”

Then at the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, volume 7, under the heading, “That Even Among the Jews There Arose the Doctrine of Several Heresies Hateful to God”:

“**VI.** For even the Jewish nation had wicked heresies: for of them were the Sadducees, who do not confess the resurrection of the dead; and the Pharisees, who ascribe the practice of sinners to fortune and fate; and the Basmotheans, who deny providence, and say that the world is made by spontaneous motion, and take away the immortality of the soul; and the Hemerobaptists, who every day, unless they wash, do not eat, – nay, and unless they cleanse their beds and tables, or platters and cups and seats, do not make use of any of them; **and those who are newly risen amongst us, the Ebionites, who will have the Son of God to be a mere man, begotten by human pleasure, and the conjunction of Joseph and Mary.** There are also those that separate themselves from all these, and observe the laws of their fathers, and these are the Essenes. These, therefore, arose among the former people. And now the evil one, who is wise to do mischief, and as for goodness, knows no such good thing, has cast out some from among us, and has wrought by them heresies and schisms.” [emphasis mine]

From *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, page 415, under the heading “**ANCIENT PERVERSIONS: Relating To Mosaic Law**” we read: “... The Nazarenes used only the Hebrew edition of Matthew’s gospel, but at the same time they recognized Paul’s apostleship. **The**

Ebionites denied the virgin birth and deity of Christ, teaching that He was the natural son of Mary and Joseph and as such, just a man, howbeit, a prophet. Paul's apostleship was rejected; they considered him an apostate from the law ..." [emphasis mine]

This Ebionite sect may seem quite obnoxious, but I guarantee that the modern-day Ebionite Paul-bashers have gone far beyond those of the early Christian era, and that is an understatement! We'll be getting into all that as we continue this theme. If you think this is all that repugnant, wait until we expose the venom of Joseph Jeffers! You ain't heard nothin yet! I'm sure most everybody has heard the expression "straw-boss", meaning someone who has been given an insignificant amount of authority and it goes to his/her head. Well, we have a whole bunch of straw-one-verse-Bible-bosses going around churning out hay, wood and stubble rather than gold, silver and precious stones. Leading this group are the Paul-bashers!

So far we have been addressing mainly the Ebionites, but there are others: the Encratites, and Cerinthians (all being in the same category as the Nicolaitanes) all of whom Yahshua hates, Rev. 2:15. Yes, if one is a Paul-basher, one is no better than the Ebionites, the Encratites, the Cerinthians or the Nicolaitanes.

Here is mentioned the Cerinthians. In order to understand the Cerinthians, we must refer to their founder Cerinthus. For this, we will go to *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by J. D. Douglas, page 207:

" CERINTHUS (c.100). Heretic who lived in Asia Minor. His theology appears to have been a combination of Ebionite theology with Gnostic speculation. The world, he taught, was not the creation of the Supreme God, but that of an inferior angel who held the world in bondage. According to him, Jesus was a normal man, the son of Joseph and Mary, who differed from ordinary men only in greater wisdom and righteousness. He was chosen by the Supreme God to proclaim Him and release the world from its bondage. For this task the Christ descended upon him at his baptism in the form of a dove, sent from the Father. This Christ departed from Jesus before his crucifixion, and it was only Jesus who suffered and rose again. Cerinthus taught also a carnal doctrine of the Millennium, in that at his coming Jesus would introduce 1,000 years of sensuous pleasure before the consummation. According to the Alogi, Cerinthus was the author [or falsely claimed to be] of the gospel of John and the Apocalypse." (G. L. CAREY)

Not only do we find out more about the Cerinthians, but we come closer to the origin of the theory of the so-called "Millennium" touted by today's phony-baloney futurists' views of Biblical prophecy. Here also is introduced the term "Alogi." For clarification on the Alogi we again go to *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by J. D. Douglas, pages 29-30:

" ALOGI. An obscure Christian group in Asia Minor about 175 which, in reaction to Montanism, questioned the authority of those sacred books on which they based their claims. Hence they rejected *en bloc* the gospel of John and the Apocalypse which, according to them, were written by Cerinthus. They also objected to the Logos theology of the Apologists. The nickname Alogi (Gr. *alogoi*) was scornfully applied to them by Epiphanius, who used it in a double sense to denote that they were 'irrational' people who were without the 'Logos'."

Now that we have a general view of what the Cerinthians were all about, let's take a look at the Encratites. For that we will go to the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, volume 5, chapter 8 under the heading, "The Doctrines of the Encratites":

"Others, however, styling themselves Encratites, acknowledge some things concerning God and Christ in like manner with the Church. In respect, however, of their mode of life, they

pass their days inflated with pride. They suppose, that by meats they magnify themselves, while abstaining from animal food, (and) being water-drinkers, and forbidding to marry, and devoting themselves during the remainder of life to habits of asceticism. But persons of this description are estimated Cynics rather than Christians, inasmuch as they do not attend unto the words spoken against them through the Apostle Paul. Now he, predicting the novelties that were to be hereafter introduced ineffectually by certain (heretics), made a statement thus: ‘The Spirit speaketh expressly, in the latter times certain will depart from sound doctrine, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, uttering falsehoods in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, to abstain from meats, which God has created to be partaken of with thanksgiving by the faithful, and those who know the truth; because every [sic. every clean] creature of God is good, and nothing to be rejected which is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.’ This voice, then, of the blessed Paul, is sufficient for the refutation of those who live in this manner, and plume themselves on being just; (and) for the purpose of proving that also, this (tenet of the Encratites) constitutes a heresy. But even though there have been denominated certain other heresies – I mean those of the Cainites, Ophites, or Noachites, and of others of this description – I have not deemed it requisite to explain the things said or done by these, lest on this account they may consider themselves somebody, or deserving of consideration.”

From *Who’s Who in Christian History*, under the heading “Tatian” we read:

“**TATIAN** (died c. 180) *Apologist and heretic*: Originally from Assyria (upper Mesopotamia), Tatian acquired extensive Greek learning. He became a Christian in Rome following a long period of travel. For several years, Tatian was an adherent of Justin and his teaching. But after Justin’s death, he retreated into the Encratite sect and lived mostly thereafter in the empire’s far eastern provinces. The Encratite doctrines were heavily Gnostic in character. The sect believed that matter is evil and maintained varied ascetic practices, including prohibition of marriage.”

For more on Tatian, we will go to the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series, volume 3, chapter 29:

“TATIAN who, while teaching oratory, won not a little glory in the rhetorical art, was a follower of Justin Martyr and was distinguished so long as he did not leave his master’s side. But afterwards, inflated by a swelling of eloquence, he founded a new heresy which is called that of the Encratites, the heresy which Severus afterwards augmented in such wise that heretics of this party are called Severians to the present day ...”

THE GOSPEL OF THE EBIONITES

We will never make any sense out of these various sects unless we consider their background and their motives. I get the following information from the *Dictionary of the New Testament*, “The Apostolic Church”, by James Hastings, volume 1, pages 494-495. I will not quote it, but will paraphrase it, filling in my own comments:

According to Epiphanius (*Hæc.* 30.3), the Ebionites accepted no Gospel except that of Matthew. Matthew alone they use as well as also the adherents of Cerinthus and Merinthus, as they call it “the Gospel according to the Hebrews.” The Book of Matthew alone was composed in Hebrew characters. It is true, Epiphanius adds, and repeats at 30.6 that Hebrew to be kept in the Genizah at Tiberias, which had proved useful in the

conversion of Jews. (No indication is made here whether these be good-fig or bad-fig Judahites.)

Anyway, this idea of a Hebrew Matthew obsessed Epiphanius, along with other early Christian writers. Importantly, for our present purpose, notice how he proceeds to make explanation that the Gospel used by the Ebionites was not the Greek canonical edition (30.13). The Hebrew edition used by the Ebionites began at chapter 3:1 “It came to pass in the days of king Herod”, completely omitting the story about the birth, and cutting off all the genealogy of the Christ.

Thus, it is apparent that these Ebionites, and like minded sects, rejected anything written in Greek. I guess this is about the size of the New Testament we would have today if we listened to today’s Paul-bashers. When Epiphanius speaks here of Hebrew, I don’t believe he is referring to Aramaic. If this is true, he was alluding to a narrow class of people, and who might that people be?

There are other passages, according to Hastings, where the Hebrew Matthew does not agree with the canonical Matthew. Hastings also demonstrates on page 495 that “the original text [of Matthew] was Greek, not Semitic.” For us, this should throw up all kinds of red flags! It should also throw up all kinds of red flags when we witness people bashing Paul’s writings! Maybe the modern-day Ebionites might have accepted Paul had he written everything in Hebrew which he also surely knew quite well!

The Ebionites were vegetarians, probably because they objected to all sexual relations as immoral. Consequently, any animals brought to life by such relations to them were unfit for food. Amazingly, we have those in Israel Identity today who also advocate total vegetarianism. How do those who demand such a thing get around 1 Timothy 4:1-3:

“ 1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, *and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.*”

Evidently Paul ran into this same thing at Romans 14:1-3, saying to us who eat meat that we shouldn’t judge him “who is weak [in the faith] who eateth herbs.” Yes, Paul identified those who advocated total vegetarianism in those days as “weak in the faith.” Of course, the modern-day Ebionites would reject Paul’s admonition here.

This lesson has been an effort to show that Paul-bashing is nothing new, and that it existed among those in early Christianity, and for the same reasons as today. As the old saying goes, “There’s nothing new under the sun”! I have to warn you in advance, I haven’t even scratched the surface on this subject yet. I felt it was important to start this series in defense of Paul right where it started in history. So with the help of my good friend William Finck, we’re going to come out with our guns blazing on this blatant mockery against the apostle Paul!