

“Aphorme” (Part 1)

(The crippling of the pastoral office)

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1. “Aphorme”

In Romans 7:8, our Apostle describes one of the functions of the Law of the Lord. He tells us the Law stirs the *open opposition of sin* which otherwise remains hidden, even dormant, in those professing Christ. He writes...

But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of evil desire. (AV)

The Greek word is usually translated “opportunity.” This very powerful word - “aphorme”- was used often to describe... “a staging (place) for soldiers to launch an attack against an enemy.” The 4th century B.C. classical Greek historian, Thucydides, used the term when he wrote:¹

The Lacedaemonians agreed that Peloponnesus would be **aphormen hikanen (a good base of operations)**. (Thucydides, i., 90).

The Law of the Lord is so powerful that the human heart cannot resist its penetration in convicting the heart of sin. The heart’s reaction, “aphorme,” means the heart is aroused to stage an attack against the conviction of the Law. Obviously, this takes many forms. The heart excuses and accuses others to justify itself (Rom. 2: 15). It engages in slanderous attacks through vilifying, gossip, lying, backbiting, guilt manipulation, doubts, and rage... and it opposes those who faithfully expose sin and evil. It defrauds truth and character, arousing God’s holy *vengeance* (“adikos” - I Thes. 4:6). Be forewarned: God DOES AVENGE a Christian who defrauds another! In short, aphorme is the process of the heart launching an aroused ugliness when challenged by the Law of the Lord.

2. God sets Judgment in the earth

Over the past 47 years of ministry, this author has heard more complaints about the church’s failure to guide people through cultural ensnarement: family discord, divorce and remarriage, abortion, feminism (inside and outside the churches), sex education (too often promoting sexual sin while claiming to teach abstinence for example), refusal to use Matthew 18 in settling differences, public schools, help for homeschooling families (aid and defending it within the church/pulpit), gay-rights, loss of faith among the young ... The list is endless.

God’s judgments are set in the earth. However, it is the Church that interprets such judgments. A classic example of what happens WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE of God’s WILLFUL EXERCISE of Judgment in the earth, occurred when King Josiah first read the book of Deuteronomy (rediscovered as an item in storage!). When he read Deuteronomy 28 he was terrified the judgments that had been falling upon Judah were directed as chastisements for their unfaithfulness as a people. Despite his sincerity and faith in the Lord, he had NO IDEA God had been chastening the land (cf. II Kings 22:11-13). People will interpret God’s sovereign hand in judgments as anything but His Will. Hidden sinful world views and enmity within their hearts will interpret life AS ANYTHING but His active Will. Climate change, evolutionary development, natural science, social norms, traditions, heritage... anything and everything will be interpreted “naturally” but not necessarily truthfully. However, as soon as people hear the Law of the

¹ I know it is common for modern "scholarship" to replace "B.C." (Before Christ) with "B.C.E." ("Before the Common Era") and "A.D." ("in the year of the Lord") with "C.E." ("Common Era") a transition shifting historical focus from Christ's First Advent as the turning point of history, unto a mundane, unexceptional "common" historical change without explanation as to why "Before" meant anything once history arrived at the nondescript "Common." The REAL reason? To accommodate “religious neutrality.” I agree that such is the reason, but I’m not “neutral.”

Lord preached, challenging their souls, “aphorme” rises up as the serpentine response of the heart. In rage, it seeks to counterattack and annihilate the offending Word...and the one preaching/teaching it.

3. Functions of the Law...missing in the churches

Pastors who preach the Law of the Lord are confronted with this phenomenon regularly. It may seem to be illogical to claim this phenomenon as a “function of the law of God” but God designs this to show us how deeply rooted our sins really are. It also shows us how shallow our worldviews are as well. Jeremiah said it...*The heart is deceitful ABOVE ALL THINGS. Who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)*

God’s design is to show us how deeply rooted our sinfulness really is AND how desperately we need His Grace. There are other functions of the mind that we will be handling in these reports, but it’s enough to say that the apostle Paul reminds us of our need to preach and utilize the Law of the Lord (cf. Romans 7: 7-15). And he does not mean just the Decalogue nor does he mean the Law as synonymous with the entirety of the Bible. How do we know this, you may be asking?

Christ clearly utilized the phrase “Moses and the Prophets” (cf. Lk.16:29; 24:27, 44; Jn 1: 46). His usage of the term “Moses” incorporates the Pentateuch - the writings of Moses! And if you do a quick study in an **exhaustive concordance**, you will find hundreds of references to “Moses,” as both Testaments cite that name far more than any other author...and they do it in a context citing “the Law.”

The prophets and the New Testament cite Moses far more than they quote each other. We haven’t even touched upon here the number and times the concepts originating in the Pentateuch are cited in both the prophets and apostles! In other words, Jesus divided his description of the Old Testament into two terms, “Moses AND the prophets”. The point is, since every book of the Bible has its own purpose just like the organs of your body and their respective functions, so in the Pentateuch is the foundation for the rest of the Bible. All issues of ethics and theology originate there...**and that is where “aphorme” takes offense.** Aphorme is exposed in such a way, that, for example, *parents are better enabled to see the sins of their children*, and *spouses can correct even intentional waywardness between themselves...* and *potential schisms in church and society can be identified, confronted, and averted.*

4. Life ...without the Church training in the Law of God

A singular truth needs repeating: NO FAMILY can function safely or well without a church guiding, instructing, and overseeing it. Family and church work together (and civil government cannot function justly without instruction from the Church). Too often, pastors fail to apply God’s Law to cultural applications. Why? As the Director of a seminary program, this author has reviewed curriculum widely throughout the country, finding two problems: 1) pastors are not trained in the Law (let alone cultural issues therein); 2) they learn some version of Liberation theology (Marxism), feminism, and/or statism.

This travesty leaves the church people denuded of justice. Innocent people are harmed by the churches every day. Pastors, ill-equipped or ill-disposed to help in times of family stress, for example, regularly “pass the buck” to “professionals” or state officers, not recognizing the vast majority of these are unacquainted with the Law of the Lord and are trained in worldviews antagonistic to biblical truths. People who DO recognize the danger that such “professionals” do even greater damage once they dig their claws into the lives of families (and never seem to let go), such then despair of finding pastors and churches who understand and can help them. Thus, Isaiah’s warning: *“To the law to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8:20.* (For those interested in testifying to the Truth for the establishment of righteousness in the Church of Christ, contact us at Visionviewpoint.com, or call us: 1262.597.2030 – Please, **do** leave us a message!)