

Commentary — From the Margins

Chapter Six: A New War Scroll

In February 2004, in the Shaffer House at Old Bedford Village, Bedford, Pennsylvania, I wrote *A New War Scroll*, an e-book length essay that marked a transition in understanding from using typology to reread prophecy to using typology as prophecy. Chapter One appeared as the commentary dated March 27, 2008. Chapter Six is here presented:

Chapter Six

Following the signing of the *Declaration of Independence*, George Washington and the Continental Army took on perhaps the most powerful army in the world. It wasn't possible for Washington to defeat the British in a single all-out battle, but either intentionally or unintentionally he developed the strategy of just keeping an army in the field and letting the British make enemies of their Colonial allies. This is the essence of guerilla warfare. The invading army eventually alienates the civilian population simply by being an occupying force. All Washington had to do was to win a battle once in a while so that his forces appeared viable; he just had to stay in the field, stay fighting, keep the fight going. And this is the essence of Christianity. All a disciple must do is to keep fighting against lawlessness. Do what is right. Lawlessness cannot be defeated in a day, nor does it need to be. The fight is over a lifetime.

Once a human being—a son of disobedience—is born of spirit, lawlessness becomes an alien mindset, an occupying force arising from within the fleshly members that had been ruled by the “old man,” or old self. Lawlessness is the mind and nature of the Adversary. And the infant son of God must fight against the lawlessness that continues to reside in the flesh ... the Apostle Paul did not understand his own actions (Rom 7:15). He did not understand why he did what he didn't want to do and didn't do what he knew to do. What he concluded was that the law of God was in his mind, but the law of sin and death continued to reside in his flesh (vv. 21–25). And this is and will be the state of every disciple until the second Passover liberation of Israel, when disciples are empowered by, or filled with the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον], thereby leaving no room in their flesh for sin and death. Then, whatever the mind of the disciple desires to do, the flesh will respond: the mind of the disciple shall rule over the flesh. And the disciple who desires to keep the law of God and to serve God with heart mind and body shall be able to do so.

The second Passover is about the liberation of Israel from indwelling sin and death—and with liberation, the Son of Man shall be revealed (Luke 17:26–30). Both the presently uncovered Head [Christ] and covered Body [the Church] will be made naked, and will be covered only with its obedience. No longer will Christ Jesus need to bear the sins or lawlessness of Israel in the heavenly realm; for without indwelling sin, disciples will be able to cover their own nakedness with their obedience to God. And if they do not cover their nakedness with obedience, they will take sin back within themselves when no sacrifice for them remains: they will commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will not be forgiven them.

When the Father delivers Israel into the hand of the man of perdition (Dan 7:25) because of the lawlessness of this holy nation (1 Pet 2:9)—and Israel has indeed been a lawless nation—He will first empower disciples through the Holy Spirit so that no sin remains dwelling within their flesh.

As Paul commanded the saints at Corinth to deliver the man who was with his father's wife to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Cor 5:5); and as the Lord delivered first the house of Israel into the hand of the Assyrians, then the house of Judah into the hand of the Babylonians, the Lord of hosts shall cut off two parts of Israel—the sheep of the Shepherd whom He caused to be struck (*cf.* Zech 13:7; Matt 26:31)—and shall deliver these two parts into the hand of the Adversary and his agent for the destruction of the flesh so that their spirit might be saved in the day when judgments are revealed ... the Church does not miss any part of the Tribulation. It will not go to a place of physical safety. It will not be raptured to heaven. It will not spend the Millennium in heaven while havoc reigns on earth. Instead, it will perish because of its disbelief that has become disobedience. Only a remnant of the pre-Tribulation Church will enter the last 1260 days of the seven endtime years (Rev 12:17).

The woman of Revelation chapter 12 is Zion, the last Eve, and her offspring are the children she shall bring forth in a day (Isa 66:8). She, however, is not her offspring—and she will flee through the split Mount of Olives (Zech 14:3–5) that closes behind her to swallow the armies of the man of perdition (Ex 15:12; Rev 12:16) ... the 144,000 that follow the Lamb wherever He goes are not part of today's Christian Church, but are natural Israelites who are born of spirit, and born empowered, during the first 1260 days of those seven endtime years. They will be spiritual virgins, meaning that they will never have committed sin in the heavenly realm, which also means that they never had life in the heavenly realm when sin dwelt in their flesh to make the new creature obey its dictates. They were born of spirit after demonstrated obedience by faith—and it will take considerable faith to keep the Sabbath once the man of perdition attempts to change times and the law.

In the natural world, the labor pains of childbirth precede the birth of the child for a short while. For a firstborn son or daughter, the labor pains might last as long as a day, possibly longer although today, a baby would be taken before allowing hard labor to go on for so long. The point is the hard labor pains of childbirth precede delivery, but when Zion brings forth a spiritual Cain and a spiritual Abel, childbirth will precede this woman's hard labor pains.

The prophet Isaiah records,

Before she was in labor
she gave birth;
before her pain came upon her
she delivered a son.
Who has heard such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Shall a land be born in one day?
Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment?
For as soon as Zion was in labor
she brought forth her children. (66:7–8)

The labor pains of the first Eve would have preceded the delivery of Cain, Abel, and Seth. But the labor pains of the last Eve, Zion, shall follow the birth of the three parts of humankind: Cain, Abel, and halfway through the seven endtime years, Seth. The first 1260 days of the seven endtime years of tribulation will be the hard labor pains for a spiritual Cain and a spiritual Abel, with the last 1260 days being the hard labor for a spiritual Seth. However, the woman shall be saved through childbirth, and those human beings who endure the first year of the last 1260 days shall be blessed. Those who endure to the end shall be saved (Matt 24:13), and this is the endtime gospel that must be proclaimed to all the world as a witness to all nations (v. 14).

Again, the first 1260 days of the Tribulation are the hard labor pains of Zion bringing forth two sons, one a murderer, one righteous ... in typology the visible things of this natural world reveal the invisible things of God (Rom 1:20), but they do so as a darkened [unlit] mirror.

When first examined, the natural things of this world form the spiritually lifeless shadows of the things of God: physically circumcised Israel is the lively representation (Jonathon Edwards' phrase) of the spiritually circumcised [i.e., circumcised of heart] nation of Israel. The natural Israelite dwelling in a house in Egypt and serving Pharaoh as Pharaoh's bondservant forms the shadow and copy of a born of spirit disciple dwelling in a tent of flesh in this world, serving the prince of this world as a bondservant to disobedience. This imagery is easy to visualize: a person merely has to observe his or her own shadow to see that the shadow is a lively but lifeless representation of the person in one less dimension than the person occupies. Light coming from behind a standing person will form a shadow lying on the ground that stretches horizontally in a proportional scale to the height of the person and the angle with which the light strikes the person. Therefore, the shadow cast by the humanoid image King Nebuchadnezzar saw—this image in heaven—stretches across history from Nebuchadnezzar to Antiochus Epiphanes IV, lying not on the earth but upon the mental topography of human beings: the vertical image casts a horizontal shadow, with God being the light that is "blocked" by the humanoid image of Satan's reigning hierarchy. And all of this is so simple that spiritual toddlers old enough to recognize symbols (meaning that they are spiritually equivalent in age to a human infant of 36 months) can grasp typological exegesis at this level.

With light coming from behind a person and as the person observes his or her shadow and reaches up with the person's right hand to tug on the person's right ear lobe, the shadow will display this same motion of tugging on the ear lobe that

lays to the person's right side. Now—and here is the catch—when this darkened shadow receives a little illumination as the moon dimly reflects the light of the sun, what is seen in the shadow is not the back of the person's head, where the light strikes the person to form the shadow, but the mirror image of the person's face ... the shadow faces the person as θεὸς faces θεόν (John 1:1–2), with the accents over the “o” disclosing this face to face relationship imbedded within the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*. As the Father looked “down” from heaven upon His firstborn Son, the Son looked “upward” from the earth toward the Father, thereby continuing the relationship that had existed prior to θεὸς entering His creation (v. 3) as His only Son (John 3:16; 1:14), the man Jesus of Nazareth.

The Promised Land of Canaan is a type of God's rest (Ps 95:10–11), for the “eyes of the Lord [*YHWH*] your God [*Elohim*] are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year” (Deut 11:12). And it is entering into this “presence” of the Lord—this continual observation—that constitutes entering into His rest. Moses records, “And he [*YHWH*] said, ‘My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest’” (Ex 33:14), and Moses came down from the mountain not knowing “that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God” (Ex 34:29). And from henceforth Moses put a veil over his face except when speaking the words of the Lord and when in the tent of meeting with the Lord. The glory that radiated from Moses' face was the ongoing testimony of the Lord that Moses had entered into His presence, into His rest. This glory was concealed from Israel by a veil that formed the shadow and copy of the veil of the temple that barred priests from entering into the Holy of holy, the presence of God, except on *Yom Kipporim* and then only after the high priest made an atonement for himself and for Israel.

In the shadow, the glory that shone from Moses' face was received prior to Moses putting on the veil—Moses entered into the presence of God prior to putting on the veil—but in the reality, the veil precluded Israel from entering into God's glory until that glory came in the form of the man Jesus of Nazareth. Then the veil was rent, top to bottom, for the eyes of the Father looked downward on His firstborn Son. The way was made by which disciples could enter into the Father's presence face to face whereas Moses could only see the back of the Lord, for Moses entering into the presence of God formed the lifeless shadow of disciples entering His presence.

Understanding typological exegesis at a child-like level overwhelms most Christians and leaves them lost and confused, but comprehending typology as an adolescent son of God causes even greater problems, especially for biblical literalists. The son of God who has grown in grace and knowledge will reveal the concealed mysteries of God that disclose the deceit and falseness of all literalists, but this son of God will not be understood by those spiritual infants still nursing the teats of *sola scriptura*.

When an earthly shadow of an intangible heavenly phenomenon receives even a little illumination, disciples realize, because the first Eve's labor pains preceded childbirth and the last Eve's labor pains will follow childbirth, that spiritual Abel will be revealed before Cain is: today, disciples collectively form spiritual Isaac (Gal 4:21–31), but are individually either of Esau or Jacob, twins sons of Isaac that have not yet been born through Zion giving birth to a nation in a day. Paul

wrote, “[W]hen Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call—she was told, ‘The older will serve the younger.’ As it is written, ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated’” (Rom 9:10–13). There is a correspondence between Cain and Esau, and between Abel and Jacob:

- At the second Passover, unlike in the 1st-Century when salvation came first to the Jew then to the Gentile, liberation from indwelling sin and death will come first to the Gentile convert now a professed Christian then to the Jew who today denies Christ.
- The nation born in a day will be liberated from indwelling sin and death prior to this nation eating the Passover sacraments of bread and wine on the night that Jesus was betrayed: today, few in Christendom take the sacraments as Jesus gave the example and as Paul commanded (1 Cor 11:23–26).
- When liberated from indwelling sin, all of Christendom will be as righteous Abel was.
- But when the man of sin is revealed (2 Thess 2:3), most of Christendom will rebel against God and will return to sin, thereby revealing who is of Cain; for those who rebel will seek to kill their righteous brothers.
- Yet today, while both sons are in the womb of grace, the one who will be of Cain is hated by God while the one who will be of Abel is loved even though no sin is imputed to either; for the one who is of Cain does not attempt to walk uprightly as a man before God.

In order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of call, two sons strive together within Christendom, one a son of light, the other a son of darkness who has been called by God as Judas Iscariot was called so that Scripture would be fulfilled (John 17:12) ... within Christendom are many sons of God called to fulfill Scripture about brothers betraying brothers and hating one another and false prophets leading disciples astray and the love of many growing cold (Matt 24:9–12). Within Christendom many disciples have been called to be made into vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction, endured for a season (Rom 9:22–23). Many have been called who will not be chosen (Matt 22:14). And disciples can today identify a large portion of *these many* by driving by church parking lots on Sunday mornings; for the son of God who will not attempt to enter into God’s rest while the promise of entering stands—Sabbath observance representing this rest—will take sin back inside the “Christian” shortly after being liberated from indwelling sin and death.

The son of light who has been predestined, called, justified, and who will be glorified must make war against the crucified (but not yet dead) old nature, the old self that organized its thoughts through lawlessness. This son of light must keep the fight going today against indwelling sin. This son needs to win once in a while, and must never surrender. Never accept a defeat, even when one occurs. Keep battling away. A liberator is on His way. Liberation is on its way. In a Christian’s walk with God, there are many more winters spent in Valley Forge

than actual skirmishes fought where shots are fired. These winters are called living by faith.

But the disciple who would walk as Jesus walked is too often tripped by other disciples, sons of darkness, who label sons of light as legalists, Judaizers, heretics. The end for these sons of darkness is already recorded: they are of Esau if they only “relax” the least of the commandments (Matt 5:19), and of Cain if they break a commandment once liberated from indwelling sin. The mark they will take is the mark of death [χξς’].

Because the earthly shadow is also the dimly illuminated mirror mirage of a heavenly reality, and because the Prophets reveal how to transpose the image revealed by its shadow, Moses and Aaron form the shadow and type of the endtime two witnesses, with Aaron as the spokesman for Moses and as his older brother disclosing that the spokesperson for the two witnesses will be the younger brother of the other. Every genuine disciple is the younger brother of Christ Jesus. So as Esau and Jacob correspond to Cain and Abel, and as all four form the spiritually lifeless shadow of two endtime nations that come from one nation born in a day (the second Passover), the two witnesses will be two brothers who are younger brothers to Christ Jesus. And these two brothers will not teach Israel to know the Lord, for all of Israel will know the Lord; rather, they will testify to what will happen to *the many* and to *the chosen* during the first 1260 days of the Tribulation. And their testimony will be that halfway through seven endtime years of tribulation, the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of the Father and His Christ. Death will be defeated. Satan will be cast from heaven and will come claiming to be the Messiah, but wars will continue to the end. And blessed will be those disciples who survive the first year after Satan is cast to earth. Their testimony will also be that they will be slain then raised from the dead after three days. They are the witnesses by which all can believe that Death, the fourth horseman, has been defeated; for a thing is established by the rules of evidence upon the testimony of two or three witnesses, not by the testimony of one witness who came down from heaven ... it takes faith to believe one witness.

Traditionally, the *light/darkness* metaphor imbedded in Scripture has been used to pit *good* against *evil*, with these two opposing forces wrestling like schoolboys for dominance over humanity. A simplistic overview of Ellen G. White’s *Great Controversy* has Christ Jesus wrestling Satan for the souls of humanity in a manner similar to how the War Scroll’s angel of light fights against the angel of darkness. In Qumran’s War Scroll, God creates both the angel of light and the angel of deceit or darkness, a theologically troublesome position that makes God the source of evil. However, the conclusion of the Genesis temptation account has *Elohim*, in plural usage, saying that the man has indeed become like God, knowing both good and evil (Gen 3:22). Then *Elohim* [singular in usage] proceeds to drive the man from Eden before Adam can eat of the tree of life and thereby live forever.

An aside needs mentioned: Ellen G. White and other American prophets, notably Joseph Smith, pit *good* against *evil* as if they were two brothers or equals, both created by God as archangels, with God letting *good* fight against *evil* to win as much of humanity as has been predestined to be saved. However, if score were

kept, the clear winner of this fight is *evil*. But this entire premise is a resurrection of Bishop Arius' error that has the Father creating Jesus either in the womb of Mary or at some moment prior to the creation of the universe. The *Logos* who was θεὸς was never the servant of θεόν as Lucifer, Michael, and Gabriel were and are, but was from the beginning the Helpmate of θεόν as Eve was the helpmate of Adam. And beyond this, Scripture is silent. Scripture does not address whether θεὸς came from θεόν as Eve came from Adam. This possibility would require a second and probably a third tier in the supra-dimensional realm identified as heaven. Not enough information has presently been revealed from Scripture to affirm or to refute a claim about multiple levels or tiers existing in heaven although the probability of a second tier is implied by the creation of angelic beings.

If God knows both good and evil, and if Adam knew both good and evil after he ate the forbidden fruit, was it the fruit that gave Adam this knowledge? Does that fruit have anything to do with God knowing good and evil? Or is “good” obedience to God [i.e., not eating forbidden fruit] and “evil” disobedience, or more precisely, is evil determining for oneself what is good and what is evil? If God knows both, then it logically follows that it is God who defines or determines both. Thus, within this rubric, good is doing what God says, and evil is doing all other things, beginning with usurping the authority to determine what is good.

Taking a step back, the question must be asked, “Just how much knowledge can be quantified in a piece of forbidden fruit?” The prophet Malachi established the juxtaposition that returning to God amounted to bringing tithes and contributions into the storehouse so that there would be food in the house of God (3:6–12). Paul equated his teachings to milk, the food of infants in the house of God (1 Cor 3:1–3) as the Gentile converts at Corinth sought God. The writer of Hebrews equated the basic principles of the oracles of God to milk, not solid food (Heb 5:12). So a scriptural tradition exists that has food (as in the title of Judean fields) in the physical house of God forming the shadow and copy of knowledge in the spiritual house of God. This tradition, now, will have the *land flowing in milk and honey* being a land of controversy over what constitutes “true” knowledge of God, a typological step of too great a distance for infant sons of God to make thus a subject to which I will return in a later chapter.

Jesus told the rich young ruler that only God is good (Luke 18:19). Only God has the ability to know both good and evil and to then limit activities to only “good.” But the inherent singleness of the English linguistic icon /*God*/contains within itself an alien concept: “God” is a house, the house in which the Father dwells, a house like that of the tent of flesh in which a disciple dwells while here on earth. Paul wrote,

For we know that if the tent, which is our earthly home, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being unburdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. (2 Cor 5:1–5)

If the new creature born of spirit is of the heavenly realm and thus of a different dimension from the tent of flesh—our earthly house [ἐπίγειος ἡμῶν οἰκία]—in which this son of God dwells, then is the house [οἰκίαν] not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, of a different and of a “lower” realm from the Father, whose house this is? Typologically, this would be so, and this would make for a second level or tier within the heavenly realm, with God being the “house” in which Jesus went ahead to prepare many mansions (French usage of the icon) or stays (as in legal proceedings), and with glorified disciples being of this house and even pillars in this house (Rev 3:12), but with the one who occupies the house being of a higher realm than is the house ... and this is as far as Scripture allows disciples to speak intelligibly about the structure of heaven.

When Adam ate forbidden fruit (not when Eve ate, for Adam was Eve’s covering), Adam and Eve’s eyes were opened, and they realized they were naked (Gen 3:7) ... they were physically naked before, but they were covered by Adam’s obedience to his creator, with this obedience functioning as a garment that concealed physical nakedness from the eyes of both the man and the woman.

Paul ups the ante: for disciples, our fleshly bodies are equivalent to Adam’s obedience in a manner analogous to the tithe of the harvest of Judean hillsides equating to disciples’ knowledge of God, with the number of disciples holding knowledge of God translating to how full the storehouse of God is with the tithes of the house of Jacob.

- Intangible obedience to God in this world covers the nakedness of a disciple in the heavenly realm as a garment of animal skins covers nakedness in this world (Gen 3:21).
- Jesus’ obedience in this world becomes a disciple’s covering in the heavenly realm in a manner analogous to how a physically circumcised Israelite dwelt in a tent of animal skins in the wilderness.
- Thus, a disciple’s tent of flesh serves as his outer covering in this world, with the foreskin symbolizing the “covering” nature of the flesh.
- Physical circumcision is a making naked of the inner creature or self, requiring that this inner self cover itself with obedience in this world in which the flesh is visible for all to see.
- Circumcision of the heart is, now, a making naked of the new creature that is from heaven, requiring that this new creature, born of spirit, cover itself with obedience in the heavenly realm where spirit beings see this new creature’s nakedness.

Grace is the mantle or garment of Christ Jesus’ righteousness that covers the nakedness of disciples who are circumcised of heart ... when food in the storehouse of the temple in this world equates to knowledge of God in the Church, tents of animal skins and of fabric in this world equates to garments of obedience in the heavenly realm, with disciples either covering themselves with Christ’s obedience/righteousness or attempting to cover themselves with their own obedience as Esau was covered with a coat of hair. In this era, physical circumcision for theological reasons is a rejection of Christ’s righteousness. Physical circumcision is a rejection of grace.

When the rich young ruler asked Jesus, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life” (Luke 18:18), Jesus told the rich young ruler, “No one is good except God [θεός] alone” (v. 19).

- The linguistic icon /*God*/ represents obedience to the Father, with this obedience functioning as a garment or tent or house—

Jesus told Sadducees, “[H]ave you not read what was said to you by God [θεοῦ]: “I am the God [θεός] of Abraham, and the God [θεός] of Isaac, and the God [θεός] of Jacob?” He is not God [θεός] of the dead, but of the living” (Matt 22:31–32).

Remember, “In the beginning was the Word [λόγος], and the Word [λόγος] was with God [θεόν], and the Word [λόγος] was God [θεός]” (John 1:1). “And the Word [λόγος] became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory: glory as [of an only one—μονογενοῦς] from the Father” (v. 14). The man Jesus of Nazareth was the only Son of θεός (John 3:16). He was the only Son of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not of the Father [θεόν]. He was the firstborn Son of the Father, the firstborn of many sons. But He was an “only one” from the Father, for there were no others but θεός & θεόν who were of the house of God in the beginning.

- Obedience equates to life and is of the living, not the dead. God alone is obedient; God alone is good. And the house of God incorporates all who are obedient.
- Paul cites the Psalmist and writes, “None is righteous, no, not one; / no one understands; / no one seeks for God” (Rom 3:10–11 citation is from Ps 14:1–3 & 53:13).
- Until Jesus died at Calvary, He was not fully covered by obedience even though He was without sin. But following His death, His obedience to the end returned Him to the house of God, permitting the Father to glorify Him with the glory He had with the Father before the world existed (John 17:5). He had to endure to the end in obedience to be saved.

A human being’s fleshly body will die because of the transgression of the one man, Adam. This fleshly body is the person’s covering in this world; thus, death leaves a human being as naked as eating forbidden fruit left Adam and Eve naked. But death will not leave the disciple naked for disciples have a building or house from the Father, a house in which Jesus went ahead to prepare a room (John 14:2) or a staying. This house is the Father’s house. This house is to the Father as a tent of flesh is to the disciple, meaning that this house is not the Father, nor is it the Son, both of whom dwell in the Father’s house as glorified disciples will dwell in this house, one with the Father and the Son (John 17:20–23). The house is called in Greek, θε— (plus a case ending), and called in English (which doesn’t use case endings), God. Glorified disciples will be of this house—that is, of God—in the same way that the Father and the Son are presently of this house.

Evangelical Christendom cringes whenever the reality of what Scripture reveals about Christ (Christology) or about the nature of disciples is discussed,

for that particular division of Greek Christendom (as opposed to American Christendom¹ or Judean Christendom) quickly points to the sin of Satan:

You said in your heart,

“I will ascend to heaven;

above the stars of God

I will set my throne on high;

I will sit on the mount of assembly

in the far reaches of the north;

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;

I will make myself like the Most High. (Isa 14:13–14)

For some reason, logically unexplainable, Evangelical Christendom has not thought through what it means to be born of spirit: if a disciple is a son of God—and the disciple is indeed a son—then it is not blasphemy for a son to call himself a son, whereas it would be blasphemous for a servant to call himself a son. Angels are servants; they can only be servants as Moses was a servant (Heb 3:5), able only to receive the promise of inheriting eternal life and not possessing such life. Disciples, however, are not servants but sons of God. They have been born of the spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]; they have received actual life in the heavenly realm. And if Jesus is not ashamed to call disciples “brothers” (Heb 2:11), and if Jesus is not ashamed to identify the Father as His Father, thereby making Him the Son (John 5:17–18), then disciples should also not be ashamed to call Jesus their elder brother (Rom 8:29) and the Father their Father, for all who are glorified will dwell together in the Father’s house as one. All will be of this single house surnamed *God*.

Obedience covers a person in the same way that the tent of flesh covers a person—and obedience can only be manifested through the tent of flesh living by every word that has proceeded from the mouth of God. If this tent of flesh covers itself with obedience, then there is no record of debt with its legal demands standing against the tent of flesh. Death has no claim against the tent of flesh even though this tent of flesh only has physical life.

But all of humankind has sinned and come short of the glory of God, for all of humankind has been consigned to disobedience so that God can have mercy on all (Rom 11:32). So every tent of flesh—because obedience is unavailable to the person—needs a second covering, with this second covering being grace, the righteousness of Christ Jesus, the garment of Christ (Gal 3:27). And this second covering will be needed until the Son of Man is revealed through the empowerment by the Holy Spirit of the now-covered Body of Christ.

¹ When pagan Greek philosophers gained control of the Jesus Movement following the Jewish rebellions in the 1st and 2nd Centuries CE, a differing form of Christianity emerged than had earlier existed when its center was Jerusalem. In the 19th Century a uniquely American form of Christianity emerged from the visions of Joseph Smith, with this American form of Christianity bearing to Greek and Latin Christianity a similar relationship as Greek Christianity had to Judean Christianity. Whereas a person within a Greek Christian sect will not recognize a person within an American Christian sect as genuine, a person within a Judean Christian sect will not recognize either the Greek Christian or the American Christian as genuine although it is probable that disciples dwell within tents of flesh locked into both Greek and American Christian sects.

Intangible *personhood* is not the tent of flesh, which will perish and will leave this *personhood* as naked as Adam was naked in the Garden ... the concept that “a person” is not the tent of flesh in which the self-aware essence of the person dwells should be readily apparent to every person who has aged beyond the person’s youthful decades: a man or a woman who has reached the age of seventy does not mentally identify him or herself as an “old” person, but as the person was when in his or her twenties or thirties. The tent of flesh will usually have weather damage of some sort, but the person dwelling within this tent of flesh has not usually weathered as the flesh has. Thus, an apparent *person* becomes trapped within a decaying tent of flesh, with the *person’s* only “out” being receipt of a new tent, a new house, a building from God. Therefore, it has been easy for the Adversary to convince first ancient and now modern philosophers that an immortal soul dwells within the person, with the consciousness of the person coming from that immortal soul. And it has been equally easy for the Adversary to convince a better educated, endtime generation that Greek Christendom promises more than it can deliver, that those attributes of *personhood* long attributed to the soul come from complex chemical interactions within the brain, thereby seeming to cause humans to have minds whereas the beasts of the field have only instinct and brains. (In American Christendom, this inner self-awareness is credited to an angelic being that has come from heaven to dwell within the flesh, and this false teaching has perhaps more logic than Greek Christendom’s teaching that a person receives an immortal soul from a man having his way with a woman in the backseat of a Chevrolet.)

Although ancient philosophers and theologians realized that human self-awareness was separate from the physical body, they did not have a computer to which to make an analogy: “human nature” is perhaps best described as the software of a computer’s operating system as opposed to the hardware of silicon chips, circuit boards and hard drives. This software doesn’t “wear out” as the bearings of hard drives do, but this software can be overwritten to do what it wasn’t intended to do in a way that the intrinsically rigid hardware cannot be. Hence, a person’s sexual identity can be at variance with the person’s biological plumbing, with this variance having explainable or non explainable origins. To the amusement of politically conservative radio talk show hosts, a person can mentally be in the biologically unexplainable classification of a male lesbian, a classification in which the person’s biology is male and the object of the person’s sexual interest is female, but the person’s gender identity is also female. Something happened to this operating system that doesn’t prevent it from functioning, but causes it to function in a socially unacceptable manner within the parameters of Christian mores.

Therefore, it is surprising that ancient philosophers and theologians who knew that the “self” was not the flesh did not ascribe the same characteristics to God as they saw in themselves, especially in light of Scripture disclosing that humankind was to be created in the image and after the likeness of *YHWH Elohim* (Gen 1:26). Greek paganism ascribed to its pantheon human characteristics of lust and love, jealousy and betrayal, but Greek Christianity was unable to envision the Father and the Son dwelling in a common house as a human father and his eldest son might dwell together.

- Intangible knowledge of God in this world becomes, for a disciple, the tithes and offerings of this son of God's increase in the heavenly realm thereby making the disciple's increase a function of the number of infant sons of God taught the principles of God in this world by the disciple.

The battle between *good* and *evil* isn't a wrestling match between Jesus and Satan; it isn't a war of strategic maneuverings between the angel of light and the angel of darkness. It is, simply, acknowledging Jesus before men (Matt 10:32) as the second lawbreaker on the cross did, as opposed to mocking Jesus as the first lawbreaker did. Both lawbreakers asked Jesus for what was possible for Him to do. Jesus could have saved Himself (John 19:11), but His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36). It was absolutely necessary that He be made sin in order for Him to die, for though tempted in all things as all of humanity has been, He never sinned. He never placed Himself in bondage to sin and death. The Cross had no lawful claim to His life, as the second lawbreaker acknowledges. Jesus voluntarily accepted death on a cross, thereby making Himself His Father's sacrificial Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.

The reality of the human experience hasn't been a battle between good and evil, for none are good but God alone, but the struggle for life against the inevitability of death. The Apostle Paul writes, "Did that which is good [the law], then bring death to me? By no means! It was sin [lawlessness — from 1 John 3:4], producing death in me through what was good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandments might become sinful beyond measure" (Rom 7:13).

The Apostle Paul says that which is good, spiritual, and holy produced death in him by revealing to him the nature of the lawlessness in which he was enslaved. He writes elsewhere that death through lawlessness entered the world through one man and spread to all of humanity, but that this lawlessness is not counted against humanity where there is no law (Rom 5:13). Sin isn't revealed to be exceedingly sinful where there is no law, and as such isn't counted against humanity. A person is judged by what has been revealed to the person.

The three crosses on Calvary represent all of humanity in judgment. The first lawbreaker to speak blasphemed Jesus, accusing Him, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" (Luke 23:39). This lawbreaker demanded that Jesus save physical life, which was placed in subjection to death when Adam was driven from Eden (Rom 5:12). Plus, the words of Jesus are that He came to die (John 12:27–33), and with His death, He "will draw all people to myself" (v. 32). He said that "whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matt 10:38–39). So the lawbreaker [all of humanity has come short of perfection and are lawbreakers] who seeks to save his or her physical life doesn't seek that which is above, or is of the heavenly realm. The person has not taken up his or her cross to follow Christ, and is not worthy of Christ. Rather, this person continues to hang on his or her cross, tethered to death, seeking to find or keep the person's life. This person is as the first lawbreaker was. This person will acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, but this person will not hear the words of Jesus, nor believe the One who sent Him (John 5:24). This person will not cover

his or her sins with the blood of the Lamb of God. Instead, this person will attempt to tell Christ how and when the sacraments are to be taken.

Again, all disciples sin even after being born from above. But those sins are covered by the blood of Jesus of Nazareth, who said *drink of this cup, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins* (Matt 26:28). Sins are covered by the blood of the Passover covenant. But those disciples who have consistently neglected to take the Passover sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed have voluntarily removed themselves from this covenant. They knowingly or unknowingly ask the Father to deliver them to Satan—they will not last long when liberated from indwelling sin.

The second lawbreaker to speak rebuked the first: “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation. And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong” (Luke 23:40–41). This second lawbreaker asked only that he be remembered when Jesus received His kingdom (v. 42), and this second lawbreaker was justified. This second lawbreaker received the promise of everlasting life.

The second lawbreaker was just as guilty of transgression as the first, but he acknowledged God and Christ Jesus, and he acknowledged his own guilt and the justice of his sentence to death. In doing so, he demonstrates that he knows God, knows that Jesus is unworthy of death and is as such being sacrificed, and he demonstrates that he knows the law is good. The Apostle Paul writes that the Israelite who lives by the righteousness that comes by faith (Rom 10:6 — cf. Deut 30:11–14) has only to confess with the mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in the heart that the Father raised him from the dead to be saved (Rom 10:9). So when the second lawbreaker confesses the justice of his death, he places himself into the Moab covenant as mediated by Moses. So when asking to be remembered, this second lawbreaker acknowledges with his mouth that Jesus is Lord, an acknowledgment that conveys his belief in his heart that God will raise Jesus from the dead. All that remains for this second lawbreaker to receive everlasting life is for him to have his sins forgiven, which is what Jesus does when He tells this second lawbreaker that this day [the day of him being raised up to judgment] he will enter Paradise.

The second lawbreaker knows what his judgment shall be; his judgment has been revealed. He is one of a few exceptions whose judgment is revealed prior to Jesus coming in power as the Messiah. But this lawbreaker doesn't precede Jesus to Paradise, thereby making him the first of the firstfruits. Jesus will lie in the grave three days, so He will not be in Paradise the day of His death. Rather, the cross represents death. Taking up one's cross is to take hold of one's death, to break one's tether to the world, and to carry one's death as the person follows Christ, that death now covered by the blood of the Lamb of God.

At Calvary, the three men raised on Roman crosses retained physical life for a short while after their official deaths. Figuratively, they lived after death as if resurrected. And while still alive but bound on a cross, they were as humanity will be in the great White Throne Judgment when every word uttered determines the person's fate. For the mass of mankind has not been afforded the opportunity to take up their crosses and follow Jesus. They never had the choice of life or death

placed before them. They were created from dust (Gen 2:7), given the same breath of life as given to beasts (Eccl 3:18–20), and died because sin and death dwelt in their hearts and minds and flesh. Adam was driven from Eden before he could eat of the tree of life and live forever (Gen 3:22–24).

Judgment, however, is today upon the household of God (1 Pet 4:17), and every word uttered determines the disciple's fate, the reason for *yeas* to be unadorned *yeas*, and *nays* to be *nays*. But if judgment is upon a disciple today, and if the disciple is given the criteria by which he or she will be judged, then the disciple has also been given control of the disciple's fate. So yes, a provision of the Moab covenant has judgment being given to disciples, who have had life and death set before them (Deut 30:15–20). They are told to choose life, which comes down to hearing the words of Jesus and believing the One who sent Him (John 5:24). But believing is more than acknowledging, for even the demons believe that God is. Believing for born-from-above disciples is living by the laws of God that will be written on hearts and minds through being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is the way by which born-out-of-season disciples acknowledge that the law is good, just as the second lawbreaker acknowledged the justice of his death. And grace is Christ Jesus bearing the failures of disciples to overcome the law of sin and death that dwells in their members. Grace is not a license that allows disciples to jettison the laws of God that will be written on inner tablets of flesh following the second Passover.

Ultimately, since all disciples sin, a disciple's judgment is reduced to whether the disciple will cover his or her sins by the blood of the Lamb of God. If the disciple will drink from the cup as Jesus established the example, then the disciple chooses life and covers the new creature with the obedience of Christ. If the disciple determines for him or herself what is good and if the disciples either doesn't drink of the cup or drinks from an alien cup, the disciple chooses death. The disciple would not hear the words of Jesus and believe the One who sent Him.

Death by crucifixion differs from other forms of civil execution in that physical life was extended beyond legal death. A beheaded person died instantly. A person drawn and quartered died within moments or minutes of being drawn. But a person crucified could hang around for a day or longer before he tired enough he could no longer raise himself on the nails to breathe: crucifixion kills by taking away breath. A person lives by receiving the physical breath given to Adam. A son of God lives by receiving the spiritual breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] given to the last Adam (Matt 3:16). So crucifixion is the one form of execution that physically symbolizes a spirit being or a born-from-above disciple losing spiritual life by being cast into the lake of fire. The symbolism of crucifixion works far better than burning at the stake. But equally important, this form of execution allows for conversation after legal death, which came with being raised up. As such, crucifixion becomes a graphic representation of spiritual life imprisoned in time.

Again, the battle between *good* and *evil* isn't a wrestling match between Jesus and Satan, and it isn't a war of strategic maneuverings between the angel of light and the angel of darkness, sons of light and sons of darkness. It is, simply,

acknowledging Jesus before men (Matt 10:32) as the second lawbreaker on the cross did, as opposed to mocking Jesus as the first lawbreaker did.

Obedience to God means abandoning Satan, and joining the other side ... my German professor taught English in the University in Vienna before the WW2. When the Nazis drafted him and gave him a rifle, he began walking toward the English front lines. He dropped his rifle when he crossed the front, raised his hands in surrender, and kept right on marching, not even breaking stride. Disciples need to leave disobedience just as quickly if they can—and if they can't, they need to fight their out.

* * *

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

* * * * *

[[Current Commentary](#)] [[Archived Commentaries](#)] [[Home](#)]