

Commentary — From the Margins

Alpha & Omega

Part Nine: Walking in Darkness

14.

All is not as it seems: one long spiritual night began at Calvary, for with the twilight sacrifice of the Lamb of God—more specifically, the Passover Lamb of God—darkness came upon humanity, with Christ Jesus forewarning His disciples of this extended “darkness” when He said to the crowd following Him, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light” (John 12:35–36).

The one who walks in darkness does not know where he or she is going—

The Christian who walks in darkness—and all of greater Christendom walks in spiritual darkness—walks as a blind person walks, counting steps, groping walls, fearful that he or she will make a mistake, step off a curb the person didn’t know was there, walk into a street lightpost, into another person. Although a blind person develops another sense, an awareness of surrounding coming from feel, from hearing, from sensing the presence of animate and inanimate objects, the blind person is nevertheless “blind” and unable to see the obvious. And so it is spiritually with blind Christians who say that they can see the things of God, but can really see nothing. However, because they say that they “see,” their sins remain:

Jesus heard that they had cast him [the blind man whom Jesus healed] out, and having found him He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped Him. Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains." (John 9:35–41)

The Christian who is blind from lack of spiritual birth and who acknowledges his or her blindness—the person’s inability to understand spiritual things—will be given spiritual sight or insight when the person is truly born of spirit. Until then, the person needs to obey God, keeping the commandments by faith to the best of the person’s ability, and wait until the person’s change comes, with this “change” coming while the person still lives physically or with this *change* coming after the person’s physical death. And yes, being truly born of spirit brings about a change

in a still physically living person that someone not yet born of spirit cannot understand or comprehend.

When the inner self of a person is spiritually dead—the “dead” about whom Jesus said, *Permit the dead to bury the dead of themselves* (Matt 8:22)—the inner self of the person doesn’t know God, nor anything of the things of God; for the dead know nothing (Eccl 9:5). The dead do not even know to worship the Father. Rather, the pious dead will inevitably worship the Creator of all that has been made physically and sincerely believe that this pious person worships God the Father when that is not the case.

Neither the first Adam nor the Adversary could “remember” what had occurred before their creation: their memories began with their receipt of the breath of life. But a human child born at the end of this present era, while having no historical memories before birth, has a “history” when entering this world, with the mental development of the child in the womb providing awareness and even self-awareness (as evidenced by ultrasound imagery) to the child from shortly after conception. (All forms of intentional abortion is murder.) And because the newly born child has an awareness of presence somewhat like that of a blind person, the child enters the world of light, being able to see at first only short distances but with eyesight rapidly developing maturity, as the left hand enantiomer of the same person receiving spiritual sight [the right hand enantiomer] when born of spirit.

A Christian not yet born of spirit “sees” the things of God as a human infant in the womb *sees* physical things. A Christian not yet born of spirit senses the presence of God, senses an awareness of deity, feels pain, the urgency of self-preservation, but this Christian knows as little about God as the unborn child of an American mother knows about Abraham Lincoln.

In this era, a son of God receives spiritual life suddenly, with this son of God not usually having specific knowledge about Christ Jesus or about God the Father prior to spiritual birth—for the “Christ” of historical Christendom is a man who never lived. Thus, from God’s perspective it is better for one of His sons to start the learning process fresh; i.e., without all of the cultural baggage that comes with traditional Christianity.

Endtime Christians, through perceiving themselves in relationship to Judaism or in relationship to the nations [Gentiles], locate themselves in theology and in historical theology. Whereas even the early Christian Church could not mentally place itself outside of the moment. First Century Christians never imagined themselves as the spiritual sons of the second Adam—as either Cain, Abel, or Seth—borne by the last Eve although the early Church (as well as the latter Christian Church) was the last Eve, covered by the garment of Christ Jesus’ righteousness, this garment euphemistically known as *grace*.

Because the last Adam [Christ Jesus] figuratively ate from the Tree of Life before the creation of the last Eve, this last Adam through His faith, His belief of the Most High, covered the last Eve when the Church took to herself knowledge of good and evil, thereby eating forbidden fruit and dying seventy years after Calvary. But from the death of this last Eve will come the resurrection of the

Christian Church; for the gates of Hades will not prevail against the Body of Christ. However, the resurrection of this last Eve doesn't come until the Second Passover liberation of Israel, the nation to be circumcised of heart—and nineteen hundred years passed between the death of the Church (when the last person truly born of spirit died physically) and the resurrection of the Church (when the first person was truly born of spirit through the indwelling of Christ) ... the preceding parenthetical declaration will cause problems for those individuals who sincerely believe that they were born of spirit decades earlier: there is a difference between Christ Jesus administering mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a dead corpse, thereby breathing His breath into the person, and the person actually breathing on his or her own through the indwelling of the breath of life in the form of the spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*]. When Christ Jesus administers spiritual mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, the inner self of the person has not yet been glorified. The person can “pull away” from Christ and attempt to go it on his or her own, as evidenced by the many individuals who forty or fifty years ago began to keep the Sabbaths [weekly and annual] of God and who manifested the fruit of the spirit, but who became fossilized in their beliefs, or who embraced heresy as “new truth.” Most or all of these individuals had the glorified Christ breathe His breath into their inner selves as a paramedic breathes his breath into the lungs of a drowning victim. And almost without exception, once spiritual consciousness came to the person, the person pushed Christ aside and chose to follow a man, with Herbert W. Armstrong being the man most followed. Thus, when Armstrong died physically, tens of thousands of his disciples foundered around spiritually, with roughly a third part returning to the sea of common humanity, and with a third part being integrated into traditional Christianity, and with the last part either dying physically in faith or dying spiritually in a Sabbatarian heresy.

The person who sincerely believes that God gave to the person spiritual life forty or more years ago mistakes spiritual mouth-to-mouth resuscitation for the actual indwelling of Christ that causes the inner self of the person to be glorified and the person to be numbered among the Elect, those human persons foreknown by God the Father and predestined to be glorified while still alive physically (which doesn't mean that the flesh is glorified). Thus, for those individuals who began to keep the Sabbath a seeming lifetime ago, a schism developed, with brother turning upon brother as the shadow and copy of what will happen following the Second Passover liberation of Israel, when the last Eve actually gives spiritual birth to a spiritual Abel, then 220 days later to a spiritual Cain. This last Eve, after Cain kills Abel, will give birth to a spiritual Seth halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation, with this spiritual Seth being the third part of humanity addressed in Zechariah 13:9.

Spiritual Abel will be physically dead, and Cain will be spiritually dead—two of three sons of the last Adam—when the single kingdom of this world is taken from the Adversary and given to the Son of Man (Dan 7:9–14; Rev 11:15–18) on the doubled day 1260 halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation. The Adversary will be cast from heaven and will come to earth claiming to be the

Messiah. And Armstrong's disciples are preconditioned to worship the Adversary when he comes with the two horns of a lamb but speaking as a dragon (Rev 13:11); however, the mercy of Christ will prevent these Sabbatarians from worshipping the Adversary as the Messiah through the martyrdom of all Sabbatarian Christians who do not have the spirit of prophecy (*cf.* Rev 12:17; 19:10) ... yes, those Sabbatarian Christians who forty and fifty years ago received spiritual mouth-to-mouth resuscitation but who ended up following a man they could see rather than the glorified Jesus will, by dying in faith during the Affliction [the first 1260 days of the seven endtime years], receive heavenly life, albeit without the rewards they could have accumulated if they had not pulled away from Christ when first experiencing spiritual consciousness.

If a paramedic were to cease administering mouth-to-mouth resuscitation when a drowning victim first coughs, it is unlikely that the victim's lungs would continue to clear by themselves and that the victim would breathe on his or her own. Mouth-to-mouth resuscitation continues until the victim is fully conscious and obviously able to breathe on his or her own. But with Christ, spiritual mouth-to-mouth resuscitation only continues until the person turns away from Christ. Then the question emerges: has the person tasted the glory of God and rejected this glory? If so, then the person has blown his or her only opportunity for salvation. If this is not the case for whatever reason, then the person still has salvation before the person. And the question of whether the person tasted the glory of God and rejected its taste, or whether the person was genuinely deceived by another person, by a ministry, is a matter for Christ Jesus to determine.

What would have happened if the first Adam had not eaten forbidden fruit after Eve ate?

The mirror image of the first Adam eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge without first eating from the Tree of Life is the last Adam figuratively eating from the Tree of Life through Jesus' daily obedience to/of the Father before the creation of the last Eve, the Christian Church. But by the first Adam being the left hand enantiomer of the last Adam, the first Adam was effectively precluded from ever having eaten the fruit of the Tree of Life.

The man Adam by placing importance on Eve not even going near the Tree of Knowledge—not touching the Tree—was not able to “disbelieve” what his eyes saw: Adam's belief of God was fully incorporated in what his eyes saw, a situation unique to both Adam and the Adversary and not a situation that pertains in the same way to any person who developed an unconscious sense of presence while in the womb of the person's mother. Thus, Adam, even though the Lord God had said nothing to the man about touching the Tree, added to what the Lord told him when relaying the Lord's command to the Woman—and Adam's addition to the Lord's command, while well intentioned, produced the situation that permitted the serpent to tell the Woman the truth (she wouldn't die if she ate — Gen 3:4) and with “truth” cause Adam to sin.

It's one thing for the Adversary to deceive humanity through lies that can be ascertained over time, but it is quite another thing for the Adversary to deceive with the truth, or half truth as in the case of Abram having Sarai tell Egyptians

that she was Abram's sister (Gen 12:13) ... the Adversary, that old serpent Satan the devil, has deceived greater Christendom with the truth: Christ Jesus is the unique Son of God. But Greeks loved equivocation whereas Romans hated it: *the unique Son of what God*, the Most High God, the Host of the heavens, or the Creator God, the Logos? Jesus was humanly born as the unique Son of the Logos, who was God [*Theos*] and who created earth and everything physical (cf. John 1:1–3; 3:16; Phil 2:5–8), but He became the First of the firstborn sons of God the Father when the spirit of the Father [*pneuma Theous*] descended as a dove and entered into [*eis*] the man Jesus when He rose from baptism (Mark 1:10).

The first Adam didn't understand what he saw when he saw Eve eating forbidden fruit and not dying. He didn't understand obedience as a covering analogous to the hide (skin and hair) of a beast, that his obedience covered not only himself but his wife who was one with him. He didn't understand that regardless of what his wife did, he as her head had to obey the Lord God if either of them were to live, that her only chance was for him to continue to believe God, thereby giving to her time to repent and return to obedience.

The first Adam had to daily put on obedience based on his belief of the Lord God or he would know that he was naked; for he had no hair coat as goats have or as lambs have ... Adam had no self-realization that he and Eve were naked until he ate the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, fruit that the beasts of the field have never eaten; for a dog or a cow that are covered with hair coats (hide) are outwardly naked, doing what comes "naturally" to them, and incapable of comprehending nudity.

The people of Israel in Egypt as the firstborn son of the Lord (Ex 4:22) were the offspring of the God of Abraham and Abraham, through Sarah, with gender being relational (i.e., how one relates to another as *head* or *helpmate*) ... the people of Israel in Egypt had descended from Isaac, the fruit of Sarah's body, but in the Apostle Paul's tour-de-force analogy, Christians of the early Church were "Isaac" (Gal 4:21–31), with biological Israel being of the slave woman Hagar; being Ishmael, the Wanderer.

For the Apostle Paul, Christ Jesus was the last Abraham ("And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" — Gal 3:29), which will now have Christians born of spirit in the 1st-Century being "Isaac." But when the Church dies for want of spiritual breath after seventy years (ca 101 CE), the resurrected Church will briefly be spiritual Isaac; will be Isaac only until the Second Passover liberation of Israel. Then the Church as the last Eve, as Zion—the problem of mixed metaphors will always exist when all spiritual speech is metaphoric (see John 16:25)—will give birth to a son, a nation in a day (Isa 66:7–8). This son shall be spiritual Abel in that all of Christendom will be filled-with and empowered by the spirit of God [*pneuma Theou*], and thereby liberated from indwelling sin and death. However, 220 days later, at the opening of the Fifth Seal (Rev 6:9–11), the Apostasy of 2nd Thessalonians 2:3 will occur, and the last Eve will give birth to a second son, a spiritual Cain that will slay his brother (birth order is reversed in the mirror image).

What the Apostle Paul understood was that there is a physical nation of Israel descended from the human patriarch Abraham as well as a spiritual nation of Israel descended from the last Abraham, Christ Jesus. And as the physical grandson of Abraham wrestled physically with God in the darkness of night, the spiritual grandson of the last Abraham must spiritually wrestle with God and prevail.

Extending Paul's tour-de-force metaphor of Christians being "Isaac" and natural descendants of Israel being of "Ishmael"—a metaphor that works because it was directed to the churches of Galatia, fellowships composed of Gentile converts—endtime Christians will be either spiritual Esau, the hated son that was humanly born with an animal-like hair coat, or spiritual Jacob, the deceitful son that must overcome through struggle with God *after* dawn has come, bringing in a new day that has Christ Jesus as the prince of the power of the air.

Today, Sabbatarian Christians struggle a little with this world and its prince, but Sabbatarians in North America live fairly well, a situation that doesn't really apply to Sabbatarian Christians in Africa or on the Indian subcontinent. Still, even when the struggle is small and of short duration, a great many Sabbatarians fall by the wayside; for they refuse to think of endtime obedience as the garment with which they are to clothe themselves. They are to put on this garment as *the daily* that is pleasing to the Lord, with this latter *Israel* forming the helpmate for the last Adam, the last Abraham. It is this garment of obedience that will be stripped off when spiritual Cain is born and *the daily* is taken away (Dan 8:11–14).

Two lambs of the first year, the first sacrificed at twilight, going into the darkness, and the second sacrificed at dawn, going into the daylight—ancient Israel collectively was not obedient to God, and Christendom collectively flees from the Law. Neither covered/covers itself with the garment of obedience. Yet out of ancient Israel came Christ Jesus, who did, indeed, live without sin, without transgressions; and out from endtime Christendom come the two witnesses who will live without sin being imputed to them. These three are the three ribs in the mouth of the bear, the king of the Abyss, the three that this king can kill physically but cannot keep dead and thus cannot devour. It is their garment of obedience, of righteousness through faith, belief, that causes each to live again, thereby dealing Death its mortal wound. And each gave or will give his physical life for His/his brothers, Christians who love God enough that they count their mortal bodies as nothing to be valued or preserved.

Moses was to the God of Abraham as the man Jesus the Nazarene was to God the Father ... as endtime disciples do not hear the voice of Moses with their ears but read his words with their eyes, endtime disciples hear the voice of Jesus emerging from Moses' words, but hear not with their ears but with their minds ... with the razing of the second temple in 70 CE, the sacrifice of the *daily* ended. Although Simon ben Kosiba, re-surnamed Bar Kokhba (Aramaic: *Son of a Star*, for the Messianic prophecy of Number 24:17 that some Jews believed Bar Kokhba was fulfilling with his early successes in the third revolt against Rome), attempted

to rebuild the temple and reestablish *the daily*, in reality the daily ended with the destruction of Herod's temple.

But Herod's temple had no standing before God. Note what John's Gospel records:

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple He found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And He poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And He told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." So the Jews said to Him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But *He was speaking about the temple of His body*. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. (John 2:13–22 emphasis added)

Although Christian scholars generally believe that Jesus drove the moneychangers from the temple only one time, and that this one time was the cause of *official* Jewry determining to kill Jesus, these scholars are without understanding: the moneychangers and livestock merchants knew that they should not be in the temple conducting business, that all transactions pertain to this world and have no business in the temple of God. Thus, Jesus could have driven these merchants out of the temple every day, and these merchants would have done nothing other than to set up shop outside of the temple. These scholars don't understand the authority of power, and how the person who knows he or she is in the wrong is intimidated by the exercise of righteousness ... Nazi Germany could not have perpetrated the Holocaust if they had believed they were in the wrong. In order to use the authority of power, the person or organization must believe their cause is righteous. Their enemy has to be demonized in some way, the purpose of propaganda. Nazi Germany's final solution to the so-called Jewish problem came about after the citizens of the nation and its military had been "prepared" to execute this solution through education and entertainment. Even then, care was taken by administrators to make sure that Germans guarding Jews in the camps were physically elevated above prisoners, who were kept dirty and appearing as subhuman as possible.

For any person to exercise the authority of power, the person must believe that the cause the person serves—the person's ideology—is right and just. When the cause is no longer that of righteousness, as defined by the person, then the person's will to resist or to pursue victory evaporates even when the person actually has the means to defeat the other. The moneychangers and livestock merchants knew that if David were king they would not be in the temple. Again, they knew they were in the wrong. So Jesus driving these capitalists from the temple was not and could never have been the reason why officials of Judaism

were determined that Jesus die. As far as they were concerned Jesus had to die because He in his person represented a challenge to Judaism's monotheism, a challenge rooted in the *Star Prophecy*: "And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion and destroy the survivors of cities!" (Num 24:19) ... if that one from Jacob were Jesus of Nazareth, then Jesus would have been a Son of God as Moses was *the son* of Pharaoh, with Moses destroying Pharaoh and all of Egypt, analogous to Jesus destroying official Judaism and Judaism's privileged relationship with Rome.

But it takes being born of spirit to "see" the star prophecy in the light of day, or to realize exactly how much destruction Christ Jesus will bring upon this world, destruction analogous to that of the Flood when the world was baptized into death ... the world's baptism into life will be no less traumatic.

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