

July 20, 2005 ©Homer Kizer

Commentary — From the Margin

Living Stones

Although King David assembled the materials, his son Solomon, a man of rest (1 Chron 22:9), built the temple in Jerusalem. The Lord told David that He, the Lord, would give Israel peace and quiet all Solomon's days. Solomon would be His son and He would be Solomon's father (v. 10), the relationship analogous to the spiritual relationship between God the Father and His Son, Christ Jesus. During Solomon's reign, Israel was to seek the Lord with the nation's mind and heart (v. 19). The circumcised nation was to live under the second covenant mediated by Moses as the lively shadow of the Church today and of humanity in the Millennium under Christ Jesus. Thus, Solomon was a type of the Messiah, and the nation of Israel foreshadowed humanity after the Holy Spirit has been poured out on all flesh.

The temple Solomon built was of stone and wood, sheathed in gold and silver, giving to these ordinary materials the radiance of Spirit. This glorious but inanimate temple anticipates disciples today being the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16-17), a single living temple constructed in the Jerusalem above. This living temple has been constructed as carefully as its lifeless shadow was constructed in the physical city of Jerusalem. And herein is the problem that obviously perplexes Sabbatarian Christians: the commandments of God written by the finger of the Lord on two stone tables and placed in a stone temple form the visible shadow of the laws of God written on two tablets of flesh (the hearts and minds of disciples) that is presently housed in the temple of flesh. Disciples are not under the law, but live inside of their hearts [their desires] and minds [their thoughts]; hence, disciples live as the inside of cups of flesh that they are to clean. They keep the laws of God not because these laws were uttered from atop Sinai, but because those laws are inscribed in their desires and thoughts through receipt of the Holy Spirit. They have actual life in the heavenly realm, not just the promise of life. They have been born a second time, born from above, born of Spirit, of the Breath of God {Pneuma 'Agion}. But as long as this life is confined to this physical realm as it is when it is embodied in a fleshly tabernacle, it remains subject to death—to the second death. And all disciples jointly form one temple.

Moving from physical to spiritual, stones become flesh. The elements of the earth in inanimate crystalline structures become animated through receiving the breath of life: they become naphesh, the Hebrew word used to convey the essence of a breathing creature. The addition of "breath" changes the taxonomical structure of the same elements that form stones, thereby imparting "life" to what was not living. And this is the analogy that the Sabbatarian Churches of God have never understood. Receipt of the Breath of God [again, Pneuma 'Agion] or Holy Spirit imparts spiritual or heavenly life to that which had no such

life before. This is what being born anew, or born again, or born from above means. A change of an even greater magnitude than from stone to flesh occurs within a drawn and chosen human being when born of Spirit. An actual son of God is born into the fleshly house of the one chosen to be an earthenware vessel created for special use. Life in the heavenly realm is given to this person in the same way that Elohim, in this physical realm, breathed into the nostrils of the first Adam (Gen 2:7), thus imparting life to a corpse. The red mud that Elohim used to fashion that first man didn't ask to become flesh. It was not significantly different than the mud next to it. But Elohim chose a few kilograms of mud, the remainder becoming stone, and from the mud chosen fashioned a living creature in the likeness of God. In a similar manner, from the descendants of Adam God chooses human beings, gives spiritual life through receipt of His Breath to those He has chosen (all humanity will eventually receive a second birth, the reality of resurrection from death), and He makes those He has chosen His sons in a procreation model suggestive of butterflies. Growth occurs in the worm (larvae) that doesn't die. Once the butterfly emerges, no physical change occurs. Glorified disciples are never "baby gods," as some Sabbatarian Churches of God teach, but are glorified as younger siblings of Christ Jesus, like Him in body and nature. Their growth occurs while they are housed in tabernacles of flesh that will not leave the "cocoon" of death. When they "emerge" in glory, they emerge in a timeless dimension that restricts change to what will co-exist with what is in a dance of oneness.

A circumcised Israelite in Judea during Solomon's administration lived in a stone (or in another inanimate material) house, and heard the law of God that was inscribed on stone tablets read when he went to Jerusalem three seasons a year. He was not his house—and the law was always outside of him. The law controlled what his hand and body did (or could get away with doing); thus, he was under the law. He was literally in bondage to the law once it was given at Sinai, for he would be "stoned" under the terms of the law for transgressions. Again, the difference between a human being and a stone is the breath Elohim breathed into the nostrils of the first Adam. Human beings did not receive an immortal soul prior to being driven from Eden (Gen 3:22-24). Human beings are not today in a fallen state. Rather, they are, with the exception of born of Spirit disciples, in a spiritually lifeless state. They are spiritually as stones are physically. And birth from above creates in mortal human beings a life, a spiritual entity, foreshadowed by the creation of the first Adam from red mud.

The juxtaposition of a first Adam and the last Adam, a first Eve and the last Eve must be fully appreciated...not every human being living in the days of Solomon was a circumcised Israelite, nor was every Israelite pleasing God by loving and obeying Him. In fact, physical circumcision was not confined to the descendants of Israel. Ishmaelites and Edomites were also circumcised, as were the sons of Keturah and all in Abraham's household. But only the descendants Jacob/Israel were the firstborn son of God (Exod 4:22). They were the beloved children of promise that too often rebelled against God as even Solomon would in the manner of his many foreign wives. Nevertheless, Solomon and Israel under Solomon form the lively shadow of humanity in the Millennium, when "rest" is given to the earth. Solomon's many wives turned his heart when he was old away from fully obeying God. So too will many competing economic and philosophical ideas remembered during the

Millennium turn humanity away from fully following God, with this latent rebellion becoming apparent when Satan is loosed for a short season after being bound a thousand years.

Spiritual circumcision, which comes with spiritual birth, is today the reality of physical circumcision, given to the patriarch Abraham. Ishmael as Abraham's firstborn son was rejected for he was of the bondwoman. Isaac, Abraham's second son, was born of promise and was chosen. Then Esau the firstborn grandson of promise was rejected. Jacob, the second grandson of promise and the one who wrestled with God and prevailed, was loved and chosen—and his sons were called the firstborn son of God.

A physically circumcised Israelite in the temple forms the lively shadow of a spiritually circumcised son of God dwelling in a tabernacle of flesh. As the movement is from Moses as mediator of the physical second covenant to Christ Jesus being mediator of the spiritual second covenant, stones move to become flesh, and physical circumcision moves to become spiritual circumcision. What was dead is replaced by what lives. The physical nation that was the firstborn son of God moves to become the spiritual nation (1 Pet 2:9), holy to God as the physical nation was holy (Exod 19:5-6). This spiritual nation of priests is today the firstborn son of God, born before the last Eve goes into labor (Isa 66:7-8). Again, the law of God, written on tablets of stone, moves to become the laws of God written on the hearts and minds of disciples. The old written code governed the hand and the body; the internalized laws of God govern the desires of the hearts and the thoughts of the mind. Anger and lust now break the commandments against murder and adultery. Thus, the new creature born of Spirit forms the heavenly reality that casts backward through time a lively shadow that was a physically circumcised Israelite in Judea, meaning that the Church is and has been as faithless as the circumcised nation was. And this is the ugly truth that will cause the greater Church to reject typological exegesis.

Disciples as the temple of God are living stones (1 Pet 2:4-5). They are living clay, turned on the Master's potter's wheel to form vessels for special or honored usage. The same clay that is used to form bricks, with refinement, is used to create humble chamber pots and royal soup tureens. The flesh of a drawn disciple and of a Muslim or of a Buddhist is the same. But so too is the flesh of a hypocrite and of a chosen disciple the same. The difference is the presence or absence of spiritual life in the first case, and of obedience in the second case. It is not enough to be chosen as a son of promise. Esau didn't value his inheritance enough to give his physical life for it—and this is required of disciples (Matt 10:39). At some point in their spiritual maturity, disciples will have to mentally wrestle with God as Jacob wrestled physically.

The simplicity of Holy Writ is that the commandments of God on stone tablets in a stone temple form the shadow of the laws of God on tablets of flesh in a temple of flesh. Not many temples. Only one. Each drawn and chosen disciple is part of the body of the Son of Man that will be revealed (or disrobed) when the seven, endtime years of tribulation begin. As such, those disciples who today steal in the name of God are of the many called who are not chosen...indeed, many are called, but few are chosen (Matt 22:14). Many who are spiritually

circumcised, like their physically circumcised shadows, refuse to renounce disgraceful, underhanded ways (2 Cor 4:2). They teach line upon line, precept upon precept like the drunk priests of the house of Israel (Isa 28:13). And they and those they teach stumble, and fall backwards. They will be cast into the lake of fire, for they refuse to crucify their old natures. They are special earthenware vessels that have made themselves worthless. They are presently of no use to God, for they will not be ruled by Father or Son. In fact, when their judgment is revealed, they will tell Christ about the good work they have done in His name, from prophesying to casting out demons to even starting a school of the prophets. And Christ will deny knowing them. Their hypocrisy separated them from Christ from their birth.

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