

## Commentary — From the Margins *The Texture of Scripture*

When the heavens opened and the prophet Ezekiel saw visions of God, he saw four living creatures, each with a wheel on the earth beside the creatures (Ezk 1:15)—and the appearance of each wheel and their construction was as “a wheel within a wheel” (v. 16). Their construction were as gyroscopes, used for navigation. The texture of Scripture is as wheels within wheels, or as shadows in a hall of mirrors. And it is the texture of Scripture that navigates disciples into the promised land of Christ’s rest.

Texture (as opposed to text, both terms used in their literary sense) purports that the meaning of a particular text or narrative isn’t necessarily contained within the narrative but resides within the context in which the narrative is received. Texture recognizes that meaning is assigned to words and to passages of words, that the literal or denotative meanings usually assigned to the words are not the intended assignments of meaning. In this, reading texture differs from reading symbolism that has been placed within the narrative. Texture is not contained within the narrative; it isn’t in the text. It is always in how the text is received, and it is conveyed through the use of certain literary conventions.

In Native American narratives, the primary device used to convey to the intended audience that meaning resides in the texture of the story is the storyteller’s use of archaic language. The unintended auditors [i.e., auditors being the audience for the text] hear the usually simplistic story, assign a child-like meaning to the story, then either dismiss the story or collect it to show the simplicity of the culture. The unintended auditor simply doesn’t understand the story even though this person understands the meaning of each word; whereas the intended auditor recognizes that in a story about Raven bringing the Sun then gathering seaweed every day instead of hunting seals that a person cannot rest on his or her past deeds but must work every day. No deed that the person has done in the past exceeds that of Raven bringing the Sun. And if Raven bringing the Sun didn’t secure his place within his society, then the person’s past deeds will not secure that person’s place within his or her society. Texture, therefore, serves to separate the narrative’s audience into intended and unintended.

Jesus said that the “sheep hear his voice” (John 10:3 — also verse 16). His disciples are His intended audience. The hirelings—those individuals who have been tending His flock—are not His audience. They do not hear His voice. They have never heard His voice even though they have been both shepherding and preying upon His flock.

The *Eureka!-now-I-have-it* biblical pundits that grasp a concept or two see one wheel of many wheels within a wheel; they see one shadow darkly in a hall of mirrors; they recognize that seaweed is not good food. They then proceed to build a spiritual house for themselves based upon the wheel or shadow they identify as the meaning of Scripture, of the Gospel, of prophecy. The disciples born in their spiritual house usually remain loyal to the pundits throughout their childhood. These disciples are then financially hamstrung and spiritually starved; for inevitably, the pundits teach that the only road to salvation runs through the houses that they have built.

We all see darkly, or see shadows. No human being can bodily cross dimensions and enter the third heaven. Until a disciple receives a glorified or incorruptible body, entrance can only be made by vision.

But Jesus told His disciples that knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven had been given to them (Matt 13:11), that to the person who has knowledge more will be given, but to the one who has not even what the person has will be taken from the person (v. 12). Jesus fulfilled what the prophet Isaiah said about speaking in parables to utter what had been hidden since the foundation of the world (vv. 34–35). Thus, through parables Jesus revealed to His intended audience what had been hidden from the beginning, while His unintended audience heard interesting but simplistic stories.

Those things that have been hidden from humanity since the foundation of the world have been revealed in the texture of Scripture, for Jesus spoke the words of the Father. He didn't speak His own words. And the hidden things that He revealed aren't in the text, but are in the context in which the text is received.

Anyone can read the parable about the wheat and the tares (or weeds), and can understand that, figuratively, seaweed isn't good food, that genuine disciples grow and mature with false disciples until the judgment when the genuine disciples receive immortality and the false disciples are cast into the lake of fire. The person who has raised wheat will additionally understand that the tares or weeds grow faster than the wheat, that when overlooking the field the tares look like the planted crop and the wheat appears as weeds. But the texture of the parable still eludes either of these auditors. The texture is in the typology. Both the Psalmist and the writer of Hebrews link the geographical promised land to God's rest (Num 14:30; Ps 95:10–11 & Heb 3:19). The hill country of Judea—the land promised to the descendants of the patriarch Abraham through Isaac and Jacob—becomes both the glorified Jesus sitting down at the right hand of the Father, and Christ Jesus' millennium-long reign over humanity. This hill country received an early and a latter rain. The crops of this land weren't flood irrigated as crops in Egypt were (Deu 11:10). The crops were not those of a vegetable garden, but grains, oil and wine (v. 14). And the hill country produced two grain harvests: the early barley harvest and the latter wheat harvest, each harvest dependent upon its corresponding rain.

The parable of the tares and the wheat, now, must be placed in context with the hill country of Judea producing the twin harvests of God, and being the twin rests of God for each harvest. The rest of God occurs both individually to disciples and collectively to the Body of Christ. Within the spiritual life of each disciple is the history of the Body, beginning when the man Jesus of Nazareth had the Breath [*Pneuma*] of the Father descend upon Him as a dove (Matt 3:16) to when He was crucified, laid in the heart of the earth, then was resurrected and glorified—beginning when the glorified Jesus breathed on ten of His disciples (John 20:22) to when He reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords after seven years of tribulation. These years of tribulation, now, correspond to when Jesus laid in the heart of the earth, with the first three and a half years of the Tribulation being a period of death, a period of giving the little ones into the hand of the man of perdition (Dan 7:25 & 2 Thess 2:3–12), the period when the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse [i.e., Death] rides through humanity to kill a fourth of those alive. Individually, for disciples who have lived and died before the Tribulation begins,

the period that Jesus laid in the tomb prior to His resurrection and glorification represent the period when these disciples lay in the grave and await resurrection and glorification. So one *type* or shadow produces multiple spiritual realities.

The tares can be read—since the tares probably reference darnel, a wheat-like weed—as those disciples who rebel against God because they didn't love righteousness enough to walk uprightly before Him either during the Tribulation or during their lifetimes if they lived and died earlier. They look like the intended crop, but they were planted by an enemy. And the texture of Scripture has these tares growing both before Christ returns as well as during His millennial reign when the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon all flesh, the logic for why Satan is released for a short while (another three and a half years — from typology) after the thousand years (Rev 20:7–10). The angels do the separating of who is for God and who is opposed to God (Rev 14:14–20). Loyal angels do this separating at the beginning of Christ's rest; disloyal angels do this separating after a thousand years. And the juxtaposition of who separates wheat from tares extends to the marking of who is for God during the first half of the Tribulation with who is for the antiChrist in the second half of the Tribulation; i.e., observance of the seventh day Sabbath marks who is for God during the first half (marks these individuals for death from the man of perdition and the fourth horseman), while taking the mark of the beast [*chi xi stigma*] marks for the second death in the lake of fire those who are for the antiChrist.

The Breath of God corresponds to rain in Judea. In Hebrew, however, the same word can mean *rain in due season* as well as *a teacher of righteousness*. Both the barley harvest and the latter wheat harvest, then, are dependant upon teachers of righteousness that cause both tares and good seed to grow, are dependant upon rain that falls in due season upon the just and the unjust.

Jesus, in the parable of the tares, uses the narrative to quickly identify Satan as the deceiver of those disciples who do not love righteousness enough to practice walking blameless before Him under the cover of Grace, of those disciples who will come under the great delusion sent by God upon them, of those disciples who will join with Satan after a thousand years of Christ's reign over humanity. We now can see ourselves in this field of wheat and tares. Would we, after living a thousand years under the reign of Christ, join with Satan to rebel against God?

No, you say.

Well, will you now practice walking blameless before God? Of course, you say.

But if you are not today striving to live within the laws of God, all of them, including the Sabbath commandment, are you really practicing walking blameless—or are you like the person during the Millennium who will live year after year immersed in the Holy Spirit before joining with Satan by deciding to determine for him or herself what is right and wrong when Satan is loosed to again deceive humanity? Your determination today of whether you will strive to live within the laws of God truly marks you, just as assuredly as accepting the tattoo of the Cross will mark you during the second half of the Tribulation.

What is not in the narrative of the parable of the tares but in the texture is that each disciple chooses whether to be a tare or a stalk of wheat, chooses whether to be of the Adversary or of God. The choice made by the early barley harvest will be revealed when

Christ returns (1 Cor 4:5). The Spirit of God rains on the just and the unjust. You will grow as one or the other. About that, you don't have a choice.

Abraham as the father of the faithful "obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise" (Heb 11:8–9). Today, the Apostle Paul's new man dwells in a tent of flesh in a land of promise; he dwells as in a foreign land. He dwells in spiritual Judea. The wild olive branches grafted onto the root of righteousness will, by faith, live as Judeans, producing the fruit of the promised land: righteousness. They will no longer produce their natural fruit—if they continue to do so, they will be gathered and burned in the lake of fire. They will be tares. They will have chosen their fate.

Jacob wrestled with God when he returned to the land of promise. He grappled with God—and he prevailed not by defeating God, but by struggling and being defeated. He won by losing. He didn't quit. He held on, he fought on, he wouldn't let go. But in the end, he was no match for God. He knew this. He knew that God could have ended the match at anytime. And it is the same for each of us. We wrestle with God when we return to spiritual Judea after years of exile.

When called by God, my spiritual ancestors, like the patriarch Abraham did physically, moved from where they dwelt mentally as sons of disobedience to the land of promise where they lived as spiritual Judeans. The Apostle Paul tells us that this is how Peter taught Gentile converts to live (Gal 2:14 — the passage is usually poorly translated into English). But my immediate ancestors left Judea during the spiritual drought of a spiritual Ahab and Jezebel. They returned to the groves of wild olives from which scions had been taken for grafting onto the root of righteousness; they returned to living as Gentiles, not Judeans. So when I, like other disciples consigned to disobedience, was grafted onto righteousness, I had to wrestle with God. And I had to lose.

If I didn't lose, I would be a tare.

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