

Water & Fire 2006:

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Living Metaphors
“J” is to “P” as Stone is to Spirit

Chapter Four

The disciple practicing typological exegesis “reads” the history of ancient Israel as the shadow and copy of the history of the Church in the heavenly realm where the lawlessness of the Church is garmented by the righteousness of Christ Jesus (covered but not removed). Thus, the disciple practicing typological exegesis understands why the Apostle Paul was saddened [“I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart” – Rom 9:2] that his kinsmen, according to the flesh, had rejected Christ Jesus. This disciple will be saddened because his or her kinsmen, according to the Spirit, have likewise rejected Christ Jesus. As Paul said of his physical kinsmen, this disciple can say of his or her spiritual kinsmen, “They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory ... the worship, and the promises. To them belong ... Christ who is God” (*m.* 4-5). But as the physical body of Christ Jesus, physically circumcised and of natural Israel, was raised on the Cross where it died when it lost its breath, the spiritual Body of Christ Jesus, spiritually circumcised and of spiritual Israel (a nation that was not before a nation – 1 Pet 2:9-10), was crucified with Christ and died when it lost the divine Breath of God [Πνεύμα Ἅγιον]. And as the grave could not prevail over the physical corpse of Christ but gave up the body through Jesus’ bodily resurrection, the gates of hell will not prevail over the spiritual corpse but will give up the Body through the resurrection of the Church when the last Elijah, like the first who thrice covered the son of the widow of Zarephath with his body (1 Kings 17:21) before the breath of the child returned to him, covers the lifeless Church a third time with His living Body.

Yes, the argumentative claim being made is that the Church is today spiritually lifeless through having lost the Holy Spirit, the divine Breath of God, in the 1st-Century when the age of “miracles,” the speech-acts of the Father executed in this physical realm, ceased to occur. This claim will further declare that the spiritual Body of Christ, the Church, died while the Apostle Paul yet lived physically (all of Asia had left him before he was killed in Rome – 2 Tim 1:15); that this spiritual corpse hung historically visible but lifeless as Jesus’ body hung on the Cross from 3:00 pm to almost sundown; that this spiritual corpse ceased to be visible when the mystery of lawlessness, at work when Paul wrote his second epistle to the Thessalonians, caused disciples to quit living and walking as Jesus lived and walked (1 John 2:3-6). When disciples could no longer say that *they knew Christ Jesus by how they lived*, a statement evident by disciples not just practicing lawlessness but glorying in sin, the lifeless Body of Christ disappeared into the heart of the earth as Jesus’ physical body had when placed in the garden tomb, and as Jonah had when swallowed by the great fish. Additionally, this claim declares that the Body of Christ will again live when the Holy Spirit [Πνεύμα Ἅγιον]

empowers the Church in a manner foreshadowed by what occurred on that day of Pentecost following Calvary. This claim declares that the last Elijah first “covered” the lifeless Church with His Body in the 16th-Century when Radical Reformers [Andreas Fischer in particular] attempted to leave spiritual Babylon and reconstruct the Church from apostolic teachings. This claim declares that the last Elijah’ second covering was during the Great Awakening, from which a remnant left sin/lawlessness and returned to keeping the precepts of the law, with observance of the Sabbath serving as the visible indicator of having left sin—just as Sabbath observance by Fischer and his followers came from receiving “life” from the Holy Spirit ... visualize the first Elijah laying atop the corpse of the son of the widow of Zarephath, warming the corpse with his body, breathing into the nostrils of the corpse his breath. Visualize, now, the corpse warming, its lungs filled with the breath of Elijah (the child’s illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him – 1 Kings 17:17), but the corpse not returning to life. Visualize Elijah doing this a second time, realizing that for a moment, the child had breathed the first time he had laid atop the child. Visualize Elijah now doing this a third time, for life had almost returned to the child after the second time he had covered and warmed the child with his body. And visualize that on his third covering, breath returned to the child. Life was again in the child. And Elijah delivered the child to his mother and said, ““See, your son lives”” (v. 23). The widow woman replied, ““Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth”” (v. 24). When the second Passover liberation of Israel occurs, then the strangers dwelling among *Christians* will know that “truth” has been uttered through the Holy Spirit, not through the lifeless Body.

The claim is not that self-identified Christians are not the Body of Christ, but that these disciples do not today have the Holy Spirit, the divine Breath of God ... how does a “Christian” know whether he or she has been truly born of Spirit? Does baptism into the Body of Christ mean that the person has automatically received the Holy Spirit? It does not, does it? For baptism is into death, the death of Christ Jesus. Through baptism, the disciple dies with Christ and becomes part of the dead Body of Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote,

Therefore, as the trespass of one [alternate reading] led to condemnation for all men, so the act of righteousness of one [alternate reading] leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. Now the law came in to increase the trespass¹, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, **as sin reigned in death**, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

What shall we say then?² Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! **Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?** We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. **For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.** (Rom 5:18–6:5 emphasis added)

Sin reigns in the Church. Yes, it does! Just look at which day the Church, with a few exceptions, assembles together. Not on the Sabbath, but on the following day, when no one can enter into the

¹ Prior to the giving of the Law from atop Mount Sinai, sin or lawless was not counted or reckoned against human beings even though all men sinned and were under the penalty of death (Rom 5:13); thus, the giving of the law increased the trespass, thereby making those to whom the law was given responsible for sin. Thus, the death penalty for sin had to be “covered” through animal sacrifices, added because of the lawlessness of Israel, until the Son of Man covered Israel’s transgressions of the law through His death, Head and Body.

rest of God; when attempted entrance into God's rest is disobedience to God. Historically, the Church failed to enter into God's rest while the promise of entrance stood (Heb 3:16–4:11); so as the Lord delivered to ancient Israel statutes and rules by which that nation could not live (Ezek 20:25-26), God delivered to the Church statutes and rules and traditions by which the Church could not live. And the foremost of these latter statutes is Sunday observance, the fruiting spur on which the mystery of lawlessness will grow rebellion into the endtime “great falling away” (2 Thess 2:3).

The “Christian Church” willfully transgresses the Sabbath commandment, and to break the Law in one point is to break the Law (Jas 2:10). Thus, the Church can be likened to the nation that left Egyptian slavery only to die in the wilderness of Sin/Zin for its unbelief and disobedience. This nation was dead when it refused to enter into God's rest by faith when the spies returned (Num chap 14). Instead of entering into God's rest (Ps 95:10-11), this nation rebelled against God. And in forty years that were as forty days, all of the nation counted in the census (Num 1:1-2), except for Joshua and Caleb, perished as a man perishes when raised up on a cross. This is correct! The cross doesn't kill immediately, but slowly suffocates the person raised up by taking away his or her breath—in the forty years when neither sandals nor clothes wore out (Deu 29:5), the men counted in the census, one by one, lost their breath and returned to dust where they await resurrection (Ezek 37:1-6). The Church lost its Breath, the Holy Spirit, and now awaits resurrection.

How does a person know whether he or she has the Holy Spirit? The Apostle Paul wrote,

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. (Rom 8:5-7)

The mind set on the flesh; the mind that does not and cannot submit to God's law; the mind that has not been renewed through spiritual birth—this mind remains consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32), to lawlessness, to the prince of this world. This mind has not been set free from bondage to disobedience. It cannot keep the commandments; it has to break the commandments in at least one point. And again, to break the commandments in one point is to break the Law. Thus, false apostles, deceitful workmen, servants of Satan who has disguised himself as an angel of light [it is no wonder then that his ministers also “disguise themselves as servants of righteousness” – 2 Cor 11:14-15] inevitably teach “Christians” to keep nine of the commandments, or eight of the commandments (depending on whether these false apostles are Protestants or Catholics), but not all of the commandments, thereby causing spiritually lifeless “Christian converts” to confuse warm, fuzzy feelings in their hearts with being born of Spirit ... the disciple born of Spirit will keep the commandments, and will spurn all lawlessness, including breaking civil codes that do not conflict with the commandments of God. Therefore, the endtime disciple who, without moral qualms, speeds down the highway five or ten miles an hour over the speed limit willingly and willfully transgresses the law, and needs to realize that he or she is spiritually lifeless. At best, this disciple will be a brand plucked from the *Gebenna* fire when he or she turns to God and begins to live within both God's laws and civil laws because of an inner compulsion to be law-abiding.

The person who is born of Spirit has been mentally set free from being a bondservant to disobedience, whereas the person who has not been born of Spirit remains consigned to disobedience, and remains unwilling to keep the commandments, especially the Sabbath commandment. But keeping the Sabbath does not mean that a person has, necessarily, been born of Spirit. Rabbinical Judaism keeps the Sabbath, but remains spiritually lifeless because without faith, a person cannot please God. And the faith necessary for an Observant Jew to receive a spiritually circumcised heart (a euphemistic expression for the equally euphemistic expression of the laws of God being written on the heart and placed in the mind) is to profess that Jesus is Lord and to

believe that the Father [whom physically circumcised Israel never knew] raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:6-9). The Observant Jew must come to realize that the God [*Theos*] of the dead Abraham, the dead Isaac, and the dead Jacob died when He came as His Son to die physically and live again spiritually as the firstborn of many brethren, all sons of the Father. Thus, the man Jesus became the living Abraham, the father of the faithful, whose promised offspring is the living Isaac and the living Jacob. The Father is to Him as *Yab* was to the first Abraham.

The test of whether a person has been born of Spirit is whether the person will, by faith, keep the precepts of the law, and whether this person will, by faith, love God and neighbor more than he or she loves his or her own life. And while many will come claiming to have faith and love, these many will not keep the Sabbath, nor will these many reach out with all of their strength to bring others into covenant with God. They will not serve on the same terms as Paul served (2 Cor 11:12), but will ask for financial compensation for what they have been freely given. They are to be avoided; for it would be better for those who sell the gospel if they had never heard the name Jesus of Nazareth. This is doubly true for all who teach lawlessness to, or within the Church.

Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes. The two of them bore away Jesus' dead body, bound it in linen cloth as was the custom, and laid it in the Garden Tomb as the High Sabbath was about to begin ... while Israel roasted with fire the nation's Passover lambs, killed after the darkness that began with the crucifixion ended with Jesus' death (Matt 27:45), the Passover Lamb of God laid dead in the heart of the earth, roasting in the fiery sins of Israel that He had taken upon Himself. The Church, today, roasts in its fiery sins that it has taken upon itself through its lawlessness. God will not be mocked. Repentance by the lawless Church has become Peter crying *Wolf*; for the Church continues in visible sin week after week while believing that through Grace it has been "saved."

Saved from what? Certainly not from bondage to disobedience; for the history of Christendom is the sorry story of idolatry and openly manifest sin in the name of Christ Jesus. How do the Borgias differ from the Armstrongs? In magnitude only? Before God, does murder on the Vatican steps differ from adultery in a corporate jet? What has been done in darkness will be told in the light. There is nothing covered that will not be revealed; nothing buried that will not be resurrected, including the dead Body of Christ. It is small wonder that living disciples will be hated by the dead when the midnight hour of this one long night that began at Calvary marks death angels passing over all of Israel and all of Babylon to slay firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb. It will be this giving of life (Isa 43:4) that pays Death its ransom price for the lifeless Body of Christ. Yes, for a short while Death will be sated, its appetite blunted by the magnitude of the catastrophic disaster that brings back to life an empowered Church, covered only by its obedience to God.

The mantle of Jesus' righteousness, Grace, put on daily as natural Israel sacrificed its daily offering to the Lord, has concealed the lifeless Body of Christ as the Garden Tomb concealed the physically lifeless body of the man Jesus. The myrrh and aloes and wrapping in linen cloth—the rituals of death—became the stoning of Stephan, Paul's journey to Rome, and John's exile on the island of Patmos ... John believed in Jesus' resurrection when he saw the linen cloth that had been on Jesus' head not lying with the other linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself (John 20:6-9). Disciples will believe in the Body's resurrection when they see the events described in Revelation being fulfilled.

That the Body died and is lifeless does not mean, however, that Scripture has failed; for again, not all who belong to Israel are of Israel (Rom 9:6), and this applies to spiritually circumcised Israel, the "Israel" of the Apostle Paul (Rom 2:29). Not all who have been born of Spirit were the offspring of the living Abraham, the living Isaac, and the living Jacob. While the Body [the Church] hung on the Cross, crucified with Jesus, most of Christendom voluntarily identified itself as spiritual Ishmael, the natural firstborn son (Exod 4:22), born of bondage to Abraham, circumcised not on the eighth

day but at puberty. The Apostle Paul introduced the literary trope that made 1st-Century Christians the living Isaac, but his running battle with the Circumcision Faction discloses the reality that while disciples should be of the living Isaac, mid-1st Century Christendom was of Ishmael, who “sporting” with the weaned child Isaac, and for this “play” was exiled into the wilderness where he settled at Paran, the geographical location of rebellion against God, repentance, then attempting to enter into God’s rest on the following day. The history of visible Christendom is the history of spiritual Ishmael; for the lifeless Body of Christ was concealed in a figurative garden tomb while Paul, Peter, and John still lived. This Body is not to be revealed until hours after its resurrection on a second Passover, when “Israel” as identified by Paul is liberated from indwelling sin and death.

When the Body of Christ is resurrected in the darkness of the single long night that began at Calvary, the Body will be the living Isaac—it has been convenient to say that today the Church is the living Isaac, but this is not true. It has never been true. It was proposed by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians, who had succumbed to the blandishments of the Circumcision Faction, as the state in which these saints were to be. Thus, it has been easy to make the logical leap that because Paul said, “Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now” (Gal 4:28), disciples are the living Isaac. But Paul included an overlooked qualifier:

Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth? They make much of you, but for no good purpose. They want to shut you out, that you may make much of them. ... I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, for I am perplexed about you. Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. Now this may be interpreted allegorically: **these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai**, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. (Gal 4:16-26 emphasis added)

Disciples are not under the Sinai Covenant, but under the Moab Covenant, the second covenant mediated by Moses—it is this second covenant to which better promises were added when its mediator became Christ Jesus. The Sinai Covenant was abolished utterly (Eph 2:14-15) when its Grantor was slain by its Grantee. The ordinances that physically divided peoples have no relevance to the better covenant, initially ratified by a song, not the shedding of blood; for it is **the copies of heavenly things that are purified with blood**, not the heavenly things themselves for which better sacrifices purify, such as the rainbow (Gen 9:12-17) or the second song of Moses (Deu 32:1-43).

The Circumcision Faction consisted of those Jewish converts, including some of the leading men at Jerusalem, who taught that Gentiles must become physical Israelites before they could become spiritual Israelites. They had Scripture on their side:

If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it. There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you. (Exod 12:48-49)

Thus says the Lord God: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary. (Ezek 44:9)

Before Christ, anyone who would eat of the Passover must be physically circumcised. In the Millennium, anyone who enters God’s sanctuary must be physically and spiritually circumcised, with the introduction of circumcision of the heart made in the Moab covenant. One law, not two—did the Jerusalem Council wrongly decide the issue of whether it is necessary for Gentile converts to be circumcised (Acts 15:5)? Or was the Circumcision Faction without spiritual understanding even

though by mid-1st Century, the Circumcision Faction was the most visible movement within Christendom? Remember, Paul's epistles were not then either written, or recognized as Scripture. So rebuttals made from Paul's epistles then had no more authority supporting them than has this paper. Plus, even the fellowships Paul began in Asia had left him while he lived (2 Tim 1:15), so Paul was really without standing among the laity of the crucified Body of Christ (Acts 21:20-21).

Can endtime disciples begin to see why the Holy Spirit left the Body of Christ, and left a visible corpse hanging crucified? Thousands of natural Israelites believed that Jesus was the Christ, and believed that the Sinai Covenant still made them the holy nation of God (Exod 19:5-6). Gentile converts were given the decision of the Jerusalem Council that they needed only to abstain from the things polluted by idols, from meats that had been strangled, from blood, from sexual immorality, with whatever else they needed being heard when Moses was read every Sabbath (Acts 15:20-21), which for the Greek living as a Greek would represent a journey of faith of a similar distance and quality as the journey the patriarch Abraham took from Ur of the Chaldeas to Haran, then from Haran to Canaan.

What is wrong with the above picture of the mid-1st Century Church? The Sinai Covenant, ratified by blood (Exod 24:5-8), was abolished because it existed only as a shadow of the heavenly second covenant, initially made at Moab with the mixed nation of circumcised and uncircumcised Israel². Yet thousands of Jewish converts participated in the animal sacrifices that were shadows of Christ Jesus covering the sins of Israel with His blood and with His righteousness—and which are not a part of the Moab covenant. These Jewish converts lacked spiritual understanding. They were in need of a teacher when they should have been teachers (Heb 5:12-13).

But the situation with the Gentile converts was even more appalling: only for the Greek who lived as a Greek was abstaining from meats offered to idols, from meats strangled, from blood, from sexual morality a journey of faith sufficient to cleanse the heart. For the Greek who was reared in a “Christian” home, no journey of faith occurred if this child did only what his or her parents (who had left paganism) did. No heart was cleansed. Even though this child was “sanctified” because of one parent's conversion, the child was only made holy in the manner that all of natural Israel was holy; i.e., the child would be heard by God when this child undertook a journey of faith that would cleanse the child's heart. The child was not automatically saved, or automatically born of Spirit. Hearts are not cleansed automatically, and the heart that is not cleansed will not be spiritually circumcised. Plus, even though a person has been born of Spirit, without spiritual circumcision—the writing of the laws of God on the heart and mind—the person is not made a member of the

² When Israel left Egypt, the nation was circumcised, with the foreskin representing the natural “animal” covering of being consigned to disobedience by God because of the disobedience of the first Adam. Circumcision removes this natural covering and makes a male naked before God, covered only with his obedience to God, if a “free” person and not a slave of another master. So since Israel in Egypt was not a free nation but bondservants to the Pharaoh, Israel's disobedience in Egypt was covered by Pharaoh having authority over the nation as a husband has authority over his wife. Sin did not enter the world through Eve's disobedience, which was covered by Adam, but through Adam's disobedience, for Adam had no covering for sin but his obedience to God. Therefore, males born in the wilderness were not circumcised, for they were no longer covered by Pharaoh's authority over them, nor were they covered by Christ Jesus' righteousness [i.e., Grace]. They were only covered by so-called natural grace (Rom 5:13) through being born as bondservants to the prince of this world; through being born consigned to disobedience.

So when the Moab covenant was made, Israel consisted of those circumcised males who were too young to be counted in the census (who were now between 40 and 59 years of age), and of those uncircumcised males born in the wilderness. Those who were born in the wilderness would be circumcised once Israel crossed the Jordan (Josh 5:2-7), so all of Israel was circumcised immediately after entering into God's rest (Ps 95:10-11; Heb 3:19). Hence, since no uncircumcised person was to eat the Passover according to what was revealed to Moses, the uncircumcised children born in the wilderness did not cover their sins with the blood of the Passover lamb until they crossed the Jordan. Their lack of circumcision was the entirety of their covering for sin as it is for Gentiles today.

household of God. The person remains as a natural Hebrew infant male is between birth and seven days of age. It is on the eighth day of a journey that begins with spiritual birth when the heart is cleansed and circumcised.

The above also applied to the natural Israelite who was the child of a Jewish “Christian” convert: this child must also make a journey of faith equivalent to the journey Abraham made. This child’s parent made such a journey when he or she professed that Jesus is Lord and believed that God the Father, the God this Jew did not previously know, raised Jesus from the dead.

When a generation, descended from Jewish and Hellenist converts, journeyed no farther than its parents had mentally trekked, the Body of Christ died even though the Jesus Movement was still visible for the world to see. Once dead, the Body was made “sweet” smelling by the addition of pagan doctrines and philosophies [equivalent to the myrrh and aloes Nicodemus brought to Jesus’ natural body], teachings that were popularly accepted by learned scholars. But the Body of Christ no longer had the Holy Spirit. The visible Church became an organization of this world, controlled by the prince of this world, maintained as a useful tool to control rebellious elements within his own reigning hierarchy. The lifeless Body of Christ was buried in the garden of God, where it was protected from further decay and mutilation. The gates of hell would not prevail against this Body: it would be resurrected when the allotted time had transpired. And the Holy Spirit was only given to those few “Christians” who came to God in obedience and through faith, the terms of the Moab covenant. The Body itself has remained spiritually lifeless as a visible Christendom has taken *Christ to the world*, but not the Christ who lived as an Observant Jew and who came to reveal the Father to a nation that never heard of Him, but had made an idol of its monotheism.

Scripture has not failed. Christ has not failed. Israel failed to make a journey of faith.

Metaphors become entangled around ankles, tripping disciples who, as spiritual zombies, stagger about blind and deaf, unable to see the trail markers for a journey of faith of the duration and quality of the journey Abraham had made while still uncircumcised. With pedantic repetition: without making a journey of faith comparable to Abraham’s, hearts are not cleansed, not circumcised, and the disciple is not counted as part of the household of God upon whom judgment has come (1 Pet 4:17). And if not now under judgment, the disciple will not have a part in the first resurrection.

The disciple entangled in figures of speech advertises that he or she is not under the law but under Grace without understanding that this disciple has not covered him or herself with Christ Jesus’ righteousness, but is covered only by natural grace through remaining a bondservant to disobedience and the prince of this world. Yes, this disciple has presented him or herself as an obedient servant to sin by attempting to enter God’s rest on the following day, the eighth day. This disciple (and the nation of such disciples) is directly analogous to Israel in Egypt, in bondage to Pharaoh, and unable to observe the weekly Sabbath even if God had so commanded the nation to keep the Sabbath, a speculative situation about which Scripture is ambiguous. Thus, the orthodox theologian who uses the argument that since neither Abraham, nor Isaac, nor Jacob, nor Israel in Egypt kept the Sabbath as far as can be seen from Scripture, Christians need not keep the Sabbath inadvertently also argues that the visible Church remains in bondage to the prince of the world as Israel in Egypt was in bondage to Pharaoh.

The lawlessness of the visible Church is covered by its continued servitude to the prince of this world, servitude that remains uninterrupted despite the disciple being born of Spirit. This born again disciple is, until he or she undertakes a journey by faith, as a Hebrew infant of less than eight days of age was in ancient Israel, a potential member of the holy nation if this infant son of God survives for a week and is taken to be circumcised on the eighth day.

The eighth day represents entering into judgment; represents being made a party to the great White Throne Judgment after the Thousand Years conclude. On the sacred calendar, this great White Throne Judgment is represented by Great Last Day, the high Sabbath day following the seven

days of Sukkot; the eighth day of the main crop harvest Feast. It is not when disciples who have been, today, born of Spirit want to enter God's rest.

There are two harvests of God, one at Christ's coming for all who were spiritually circumcised on a figurative eighth day; then a second harvest after the Thousand Years. The early harvest is that of firstfruits, of whom Jesus was First. This harvest is represented by Judea's barley crop, with Jesus' acceptance by the Father being represented by the Wave Sheaf Offering, the first shock of barley to be harvested and waved before God. Only afterwards could the new grain crop be eaten; for Jesus as the last Adam should not be preceded by another. Thus, until the Wave Sheaf was offered no one was born of Spirit; no human being had spiritual life; no one was gathered to God. No person is born with an immortal soul. And all teaching about human beings possessing everlasting life apart from receiving such life as the gift of God is not of Christ, but of the lying old serpent, the prince of this world, Satan the devil.

The harvest of firstfruits enters or entered into God's rest, represented by the seventh day Sabbath, through the promise of entrance (Heb 4:1) made to those disciples who hear Jesus' words and believe Him who sent Jesus (John 5:24). Hearing and believing the Son and the Father are represented through keeping, by faith, the precepts of the law (Rom 2:26) as the outer expression of inner love toward God and neighbor. Upon this person—the one who hears and believes; who keeps the precepts of the law—judgment does not come, for this person has passed from death to life through being spiritually circumcised on that eighth day. Nevertheless, the disciple who journeys far enough to cleans his or her heart, then turns from doing good and does what is evil will be resurrected to condemnation; for the person has voluntarily returned to death when judgment was not upon the person.

In effect, firstfruits are under ongoing judgment without condemnation if the firstfruits remain in covenant with Christ Jesus. Firstfruits leave the covenant through hypocrisy, through knowing good but choosing to do evil when good could have been done; for firstfruits have been mentally liberated from bondage to disobedience. Sin has no dominion over them. They are free to keep the commandments of God. It is only the weakness of the flesh that brings them into disobedience.

But even as these words are being written, within the bowels of the dead Body of Christ, a stirring to life has begun—and spiritually circumcised disciples are aligning themselves as one of two sons by promise, one son hated, one loved but deceitful, a usurper who will not wait for God to breathe His divine Breath into the nostrils of the Body but steals glory as if it were gold as this son seeks to *Preach the Gospel & Prepare a People*. What this usurper claims, though, will not happen. Rather, the hated son, struggling in the womb of Grace with his righteous brother, will bloody his righteous brother's nose so that his brother cannot breathe when born, but will die for lack of Breath. Only a remnant of the loved son will see the end of his hated brother.

When the Apostle Paul introduced the literary trope that would have mid-1st Century Christians being the living Isaac, he did not extend the trope to its logical conclusion. But the disciple practicing typology exegesis understands that the two sons of the living Isaac will be born empowered by the Holy Spirit in the near future, with this empowerment constituting their "birth." And when born empowered, the garment of Grace that will have made both sons acceptable sacrifices to God will be stripped away. The Son of Man will be revealed (Luke 17:30), Head and Body. When revealed, the Son of Man will be covered only by individual obedience.

The mystery of lawlessness has, indeed, been at work within the bowels of Christendom, causing spiritual dehydration and diarrhea that weakened the crucified Body and left it unable to long live on the Cross of Christ. Though presently somewhat restrained, this mystery of lawlessness defiled the spiritual kinsmen of those early disciples who practiced typology exegesis ... Israel was a vassal nation within the Roman Empire with control only over the geographical territory representing the temple mount when the *Logos* came as the man Jesus of Nazareth. Then in the physical nation's

rebellion against Roman rule in 70 CE, the temple was destroyed and Israel lost what little control over its fate that it had. The nation was taken captive and dispersed throughout the Empire where it would remain as a physically homeless nation until 1948. But this physical people ceased being the *Israel* to which endtime prophecies pertain when it killed the Grantor of the Covenant.

So once Israel's idolatry reached a certain level, God gave Israel statutes by which the nation could not live, statutes that caused Israel to continue burning the nation's firstborns (Ezek 20:25-26), thereby transforming Israel into a vessel of wrath, a vessel prepared for destruction in the same way that Christ Jesus as the Master Potter forms lawless disciples into vessels of wrath to be endured for a season, vessels prepared for destruction as Judas Iscariot was given to Jesus as a son of destruction.

Israel controlled no geographical territory other than the temple when Jesus twice drove the money changers from the temple, for with the coming of Jesus as the last Adam, that which was physical would be spiritual. The temple would go from being a physical building to being disciples (1 Co 3:16-17). Israel would go from being a physical nation to being the Church, and God would go from being *Yah* on behalf of *YHWH Elohim* interfacing with natural Israel to being the Father, with the glorified Son as the Church's high priest interfacing with disciples. The relationships moved up a step on a taxonomical hierarchy that non-Believers and lawless disciples cannot understand.

The mystery of lawlessness served as a bacterial inflection producing weakness in the Body that led to an early demise—the Body was destined to die through loss of the Holy Spirit. This is what the metaphor reveals. But instead of stripes, the lungs of the Body filled with fluid as if pneumonia, the drowning in its own fluids, were the cause of its death. Thus, as Jonah prayed from the belly of the fish, so too prays the Body today:

Out of the belly of the grave, I cried, and you, O Lord, heard me. For you cast me into the darkness that passed over me as waves. Then I said, "I am driven from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple." Death took my life, darkness surrounded me. Metaphors were wrapped about my head until I could not longer think straight. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought me to life again. When my breath was fading away, I remembered you, O Lord. My prayer came to you, to your holy temple. Those who paid respect to idols have passed into nothingness; they forsook their hope of your steadfast love. They have returned to their vomit where they perished as dogs among wolves. But I, with the voice of thanksgiving, will offer sacrifice to you. I will bear your words. I will keep the precepts of your law. And what I have vowed, I will pay, for salvation belongs only to you.

Salvation doesn't belong to the Buddhist, or to the Muslim, or to the Hindi. It doesn't belong to the urban atheist who worships this world. It isn't a many-spoke wheel with many paths to heaven. Salvation belongs only to Israel. It belongs to no one else. And the Body of Christ, as proof that salvation belongs only to Israel, will live again, not through visible Christendom, the aberration of lawlessness that has become a hissing among the peoples of the world, but through the turning of Observant Jews to Christ Jesus following a second Passover liberation of Israel, one at which the lives of firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb of God will be given as ransom for the lifeless Body of Christ. Death will not be cheated before its time.

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From the perspective of hindsight, it is not difficult to understand what happened to the Church in especially the 2nd and 3rd Centuries CE: the decision made at the Jerusalem Council created the standard or benchmark of faith/belief that cleansed hearts so that they could be spiritually circumcised. This benchmark was the faith displayed by Abraham before he was circumcised (Rom 4:11-12). Whereas Abraham had taken a physical journey from Ur to the Promised Land, then had believed God that his offspring would come from his dead loins, with this belief counted to him as righteousness (Gen 15:2), the Jerusalem Council determined converts needed to make a mental

journey of an equivalent distance, and then needed to have belief equivalent to Abraham's. For a Pharisee, the mental journey and belief would be professing that Jesus is Lord, and believing that the Father raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:9), and this certainly was a difficult journey for a Pharisee to make, for Israel knew no other God but *Yah*. This journey required the Pharisee at the time of the Jerusalem Council to acknowledge a second deity. The difficulties of Abraham's journey were certainly no greater than the mental journey required of a Pharisee to acknowledge a second God, who was one with God ... the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Century Church could not make this mental journey, nor has visible Christendom since been able to make this journey of faith/belief. The dogma of a triune God absolutely precludes making this journey.

For a Gentile convert who came from polytheism, acknowledging a second deity was not a difficult journey. However, beginning to live as a Judean was an extremely difficult journey. For a Greek to abstain from blood, from meats strangled (so as to retain the blood), and from meats offered to idols; then to abstain from sexual immorality (meaning no more visits to temple prostitutes)—well, this journey of changed lifestyle was as long a trek for the pagan Greek to make from his former culture as Abraham's journey to Canaan was geographically distant from Chaldea.

The same quality of mental journey was required for both the Jew and for the Greek, with the same standard of belief through faith for cleansing hearts (Acts 15:9) also required. But because the Jew and the Greek didn't start their journeys from the same mental territory, they don't end up in the same place even though the one has journeyed as far as the other. It would take at least the journey of a second generation before Gentile converts arrived at the same mental landscape as where Jewish converts arrived in the first generation. And here is where and why the Church left Paul: the second generation of Gentile converts was taught by immature leaders that it needed to physically do no more than the first generation did. The children of Greek converts were taught that all that was required of Christians was to abstain from blood, strangled meats, idolatry, and sexual immorality. Today, those ministers of spiritual Israel who champion *sola scriptura* still teach disciples that nothing more is required of Christians than was set forth by the Jerusalem Council.

If a young person grows up in a home professing that Jesus is Lord and believing that God raised Jesus from the dead, grows up in a home that does not eat blood or meats strangled, grows up in a home that doesn't knowingly practice idolatry or sexual immorality, how far from home does this young person journey when the young person continues in the faith of his or her parents? Does this child of faith journey far enough to cleanse his or her heart? No! Absolutely not! And if a person wants to know how sin and death became so imbedded within the Christian Church, a person doesn't have to look any further than the Jerusalem Council: the decision of the Council was not understood by those who received benefit of that decision. Immature Greek converts, not understanding the secret and hidden things of God, thought that they were mature. Thus, they all left Paul while Paul still lived (*cf.* 2 Tim 1:15; Phil 3:18), taking with them the epistles of Paul, but twisting these epistles into instruments for their own destruction (2 Pet 3:16).

Every disciple must take—baseline requirement—a mental journey of faith [physical pilgrimages don't count] equivalent to the physical journey Abraham made from Ur of the Chaldeas to Canaan. Every disciple must journey from spiritual Babylon to the holy city of heavenly Jerusalem. Any journey of less mental distance will not cleanse the heart in preparation for spiritual circumcision.

But the route from Babylon to Jerusalem is not a marked roadway. Too many disciples who start this journey become lost and circle back to Babylon.

If a fellow in, say, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, spurns the materialistic and amoral values of 21st-Century America and chooses to live a simple life of serving others, this fellow has, like Anabaptists in the 16th-Century, started that long journey from Babylon to Jerusalem. How far this fellow has to go on his journey is between him and God. Greek converts were expected, once they quit eating blood and frequenting prostitutes, to listen to Moses read every Sabbath. Coming before God on

the Sabbath was entering into God's rest, something that cannot be done on the following day. So for this fellow in Philadelphia who has started well as a 1st-Century Greek who had quit eating meats strangled or offered to idols would have started well, growth in grace and knowledge remains before him through listening to Moses read every Sabbath. The expectation of God is that the fellow will enter into God's rest while the promise of entering remains (Heb 4:1), for this promise ends if continued lawlessness causes Christ Jesus to form the fellow into a vessel of wrath, a certain reality for all who do not keep the precepts of the law.

Today, the spiritual condition of the lifeless Christian Church can be discerned by the amount of knowledge and the understanding disciples, collectively, possess—and what is observable to all who are spiritual is that the greater Church continues to dwell comfortably in spiritual Babylon where it worships the Adversary's golden idol. Actually, spiritually circumcised Israelites almost don't exist. The world has absorbed those who would be of Israel into its mental topography. Christendom is merely another of this world's religions. And while it would be desirable to report that all who identify themselves as Christians have been spiritually circumcised, any such report would be false. In fact, it is extremely questionable if a hundredth or a thousandth of those who identify themselves as Christians have been spiritually circumcised. More likely, the number is many less than one in a ten thousandth.

The Christian Church spiritually looks like how physical Israel looked when a remnant left Babylon to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. Geographical distance has become theological distance, with Sabbath observance serving as the river Jordan. Those disciples east of the Jordan have not and indeed cannot enter into God's rest. They are theologically located in Babylon, where they worship on the eighth day, the following day about which God has said nothing concerning resting or entering into heaven. Those disciples who observe the Sabbath are mentally west of the Jordan; they dwell in God's rest, but not necessarily in the heavenly city of Jerusalem. They are, however, close enough to Jerusalem that they can journey there when they keep the annual Sabbaths of God; they will go to Jerusalem when they keep Sukkoth. And until they keep Passover and Sukkoth, they will not journey to the holy city where Paul laid the foundation for the spiritual house of God. They will only be close to where they should be without ever arriving.

An assertion will here be made that the return of a remnant of Israel from Babylon to Jerusalem in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah foreshadows and is a copy and type of a remnant of the Church leaving spiritual Babylon to rebuild the house of God in heavenly Jerusalem. It can also be asserted that the remnant of spiritual Israel led by the Radical Reformers of the 16th-Century was the first covering of the Body of Christ by the last Elijah. This remnant has been historically identified as Anabaptists, but it was their non-participation in the governance of this world that signified their exit from spiritual Babylon, the single kingdom of this world over which Satan reigns as the prince of the power of the air. And when this remnant returned to civil governance as in New England when ruled by the Massachusetts Bay Colony, or in Pennsylvania when governed by the Quakers, this remnant returned to spiritual Babylon, leaving only a remnant of the remnant to continue on toward spiritual Jerusalem ... the Body returned to its lifeless state.

The assertion that the return of physical Israel from physical Babylon is the shadow and copy of the return of spiritual Israel from spiritual Babylon is true. And if this assertion is true, then the Philistines' return of the Ark of the Covenant foreshadows and is a type and copy of the prince of this world's return of spiritual arks of the covenant to obedience to God—before the Philistines returned the Ark, God afflicted the Philistines. Before the Universal Church returned the spiritual arks, God afflicted the Church with the Borgias, a family of scoundrels the likes of which the world seldom sees. The boils or tumors that the Philistines suffered were no more physically painful than the Borgias were spiritually painful to the Church. So while the case that the Philistines' return of the Ark symbolizes or models that which is also represented by Israel under Ezra returning to Jerusalem

cannot be convincingly proven to the person who rejects typological exegesis, enough support should now have been made to proceed—

When the prince of this world hijacked Christendom (this capture made through the mystery of lawlessness when the Jesus Movement was without form or structure but existed as an energetic fog of electrons surrounding an atom's nucleus exists), the prince of this world needed to create a structure by which he could compel disobedience to God while not seeming to reject or rebel against God. The first Eve rebelled against God when she listened to the serpent, then decided for herself to determine good and evil. The last Eve rebelled by determining for herself what is good and evil. The woman taking upon herself the authority to determine good and evil was, itself, evil; for the woman is to remain silent, learning from her husband. She is not to speak words that are not her Husband's. But the Universal Church was born a harlot, the favorite whore of Greek intellectuals who left off having sexual relations with temple prostitutes to marry this fallen woman. She was never of God; for the Body was dead before the Universal Church entered onto the historical stage. This Universal Church was and continues to be an organization of occasionally celibate men that began as a coming-together of Greek philosophers steeped in Platonism. She has written her own history, which would have the Body alive and well throughout the post-Nicene era and into the dark age of Mediaeval Europe. But her history is not the history of the Body of Christ, which is concealed in the story of the Philistines capturing the Ark of the Covenant.

As in the story of the Philistines, the hand of the Lord was heavy against the early Universal Church, causing many to be martyred (including Justin Martyr) as they errantly practiced lawlessness in the name of Christ Jesus ... the martyrdom of so many saints, especially during the reign of Nero, wasn't because of how righteous these saints were, but rather, occurred so that God could see if they loved their physical lives more than Him; for these saints were unwilling to openly obey God, unwilling to keep the commandments of God, unwilling to practice Sabbath observance or observe the High Sabbaths of God. These saints were unwilling to do any thing that might be perceived as "Jewish." They derided, ridiculed, and spurned disciples who, by faith, clung to the traditions of the first Apostles. Therefore, because the majority of then visible Christendom was unwilling to be openly identified with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God brought open demonstration of faith to them in the form of mass martyrdom.

Jesus said that a disciple isn't above his or her teacher or a servant above his (or her) master (Matt 10:24), that it is enough for a disciple to be like the teacher. "If they called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household" (*v.* 25). Hellenist converts rejected the teachings of Christ Jesus rather than be maligned as *Jews*. And the spiritual glory that should have been theirs returned to God when they denied Christ by their lawless practices.

The dead, wood Ark of the Covenant disappeared when the glory of the Lord left the temple (Ezek chap 10). It never returned: neither the Ark of the Covenant, nor the glory of God returned to the destroyed temple. Nor did the Ark return to the two temples built by decrees from representatives of the prince of this world [i.e., Cyrus, and Herod]. And without the Ark, the glory of God was not in either temple. The Holy of Holies was missing its most important element: God. But because of the veil and because only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies once a year, the absence of God was barely noticed. Sacrifices were being offered. Showbread was being brought into the sanctuary. Tithes were being paid. The Law was being read. But once Jerusalem was taken and burned by the king of Babylon, the temple at Jerusalem was like a post-70 CE synagogue in any other town. The glory of God was not in it. And the glory of God would not return until the Ark of the Covenant returned.

The glory of God wasn't in the Church once God delivered this last Eve into the hand of Satan for the destruction of the flesh, but God's absence was barely noticed as the Church dealt with

emperors and despots, generals and infidels. God's absence wasn't noticed as the Church sent forth crusades to capture a Jerusalem from which God's glory departed in the days of king Nebuchadnezzar. God's absence wasn't noticed as the Church became the largest landholder in Europe, crowned emperors, and caused human princes to beg indulgences. His absence wasn't noticed when the Vatican was transformed into a brothel. Well, maybe it was noticed by the Reformers, who thought they could apply enough leverage that they could compel God to be present in Geneva, or in Bern, or in the governance of some other Swiss city. But as the Ark of the Covenant was not again seen, the glory of God has not been seen since the Church was delivered into the hand of the spiritual king of Babylon. The glory of God hasn't been seen since the spiritual Body of Christ died on the Cross.

The Ark wasn't returned when Cyrus, king of Persia, brought out the vessels of the house of God that King Nebuchadnezzar had carried away (Ezra 1:7-11). The physical Ark was no more to be found. And while speculation exists that the Ark exists in an African Coptic Church, the fact is that the Ark has disappeared. And with its disappearance, the glory of God left Israel. The covenant made at Horeb (or Sinai) ended in divorce; it would permanently end at Calvary. When the glory of God left Jerusalem, Israel ceased being the people of God: Israel became bondservants to the prince of this world as the nation in Egypt had been bondservants to Pharaoh.

Many disciples have wondered about why no miracles; why isn't God working in the same way now as He worked in the 1st-Century? The answer is simple: the Body died. The glory of God left the Body, the spiritual temple, when God delivered Israel into the hand of the spiritual king of Babylon in a manner spiritually analogous to how He delivered physical Israel into the hand of the physical king of Babylon. This glory will return, though, when spiritual arks of the covenant return to the Jerusalem above and are revealed as the unclothed, living Body of the Son of Man.

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