

Bible Study #2

Determinism or Free Will

When is choice not a choice? Do prior events, including one's own thoughts and actions, casually determine salvation? And what is salvation? Is it not obtaining everlasting conscious life, a condition desired by human self-awareness? Do, then, the decisions made while in physical consciousness, a state that cannot last because of the inevitable termination of physical breath, determine whether a person can obtain everlasting conscious life? Will *good people* inherit everlasting life? If so, then should not every human being have within the state of physical consciousness the ability to *choose* to obtain everlasting life through acts and thoughts that are *good*? Salvation would then depend upon the person, and would become a choice to be made by persons who seem devoutly determined to sabotage their choice to receive everlasting consciousness. But is this so?

The above questions are the production of self-awareness, and could not be asked if human thought were confined to satisfying the biological needs of the body. Because communication barriers exist, humankind poorly understand the thought sophistication of, say, bulls and goats. Thus, human beings assign to so-called lesser beings a lesser degree of self-awareness and greater biological instinct, thereby assigning to "beasts" greater determinism than people assign to themselves. And the assignment of greater determinism mitigates any fault in the long standing cultural practices of using beasts for food and for toil—and for religious sacrifice. However, as humankind now assigns less determinism to itself than it did even a millennium ago, it also assigns less determinism to beasts. Today, within Western culture, a significant percentage of the population has even assigned "rights" (that are not enforceable by the beasts themselves) to invertebrates. No longer are animal sacrifices culturally acceptable, and the use of animals as food is questioned by a growing percentage of the population. Hence, as Western cultures accept self-government as the natural state of affairs derived from the inner yearnings of all human beings, Western cultures assign a lesser degree of determinism to both people and to beasts, giving to both rights that stem from a greater application of free will.

As determinism shrinks and free will swells with pride, culture demands of itself behavior standards that are derivatives of determinism: goats do not characteristically murder one another, nor do cattle abuse their offspring. Self-governing cultures need voluntary good behavior in the same way that the natural world needs the determined nature of beasts. But *good* is a truly indefinable term when isolated from a moral standard. Therefore, ancient philosophers sought to establish a consensus that defined acceptable social behavior, a code of conduct that was as universal as possible. The best thinkers of antiquity devised many codes, but inevitably had to resort to non-human arbitrators for the authority to enforce *good* behavior onto the less-thinking portion of the populace, thereby employing superstition for the welfare of the society.

Superstition works as an invisible arbitrator for determinism; thus, as the cultural assignment of determined behavior lessens, so too does the importance of superstition in the society. Today, taboos have all but disappeared as most individuals in Western cultures believe that they will go to heaven following death. The standard for behavior

worthy of entering heaven has become so low that most individuals in Western cultures apparently now believe that having drawn physical breath is sufficient.

Since some accounting for human self-awareness must be culturally made, Western and Middle Eastern cultures developed sharing a common assumption that descended from ancient Egypt through the Greeks: belief that human beings are born with an immortal soul. The fate of this soul was given to the person, with good behavior receiving a physically invisible after-death reward. (A visible reward would have been too easily refuted.) And with the use of invisibility, great promises can be made—and invisibly kept—thereby transforming determinism into rule by law, or by social decree.

What happens to individual choice when civil authorities dictate their definition of good behavior? Choice all but disappears. The wrong choice leads to death; the right choice continues then-existing life.

But the unborn person is unaffected by civil law codes, with the notable exception of required parental abortion. Until a person is born, the person is under no legal code. The person can make no choices, and even after birth, for a while tolerance for adolescent misbehavior is accepted. Making right choices only becomes expected with maturity.

If everlasting consciousness were to depend upon good behavior, then what constitutes good behavior for the human child who dies at birth? And a new question: can the state legislate salvation into existence, or scare it into existence, or must it bribe good behavior from its populace through the marketing of invisible rewards?

Rule by law is dependant upon respect for the law. Fear of the law is never enough to compel good behavior; fear makes for fearful outlaws. And if civil authorities need to use invisible rewards to support good behavior by the mass of humankind (because the social reward for good behavior isn't visibly sufficient to offset the visible and sensual reward for, say, thievery), then these civil authorities need each person to have an *invisible* life that is rewarded invisibly for good behavior. It isn't enough for only some of the people to have invisible life—the purposes of the state can only be served when all of the people have invisible life.

Now the question: does any state or trans-state power (such as a universal church) have the authority to compel human beings to receive everlasting consciousness? This is the same question as *can a state legislate salvation into existence*, with the same answer. No, none does. But none needs to have this authority when dealing in invisibility. All that's necessary is superstition: if the masses believe that each person has invisible life, then the state can manipulate this belief into good behavior by adding a work of penance to limited free will.

If such sweeping power as compelling everlasting consciousness resided in any collection of human beings, then salvation would be a thing of this world and the production of human beings through conscious decisions made collectively for individual and social good. Invisibility would then be marketed by a merchant guild, a religious priesthood, employed by the state to protect its interests. All competing merchant guilds would, necessarily, have to be ruthlessly eradicated; for the marketing of invisibility relies on fear. Too many salesmen lowers the fear factor. Plus, if the right behavior standard were identified, all human beings could join together to produce universal salvation, using the authority of the state to intervene in individual lives only when superstition fails. The cultural value of the state would then decline to where kings would only be figureheads.

The argument made by *the people of the Book* is that this right behavior standard is not of this world, but was given to Abraham, who obeyed the voice of the true God and kept that true God's ordinances, commandments, statutes, and laws (Gen 26:5). This argument insists that belief in every other deity except that of Abraham's God is only vain superstition that will, necessarily, yield to the *truth* when conflicts arise, such as between Moses and Pharaoh. Therefore, arguments between cultures can be settled by *people of the Book* through military conquest, with the victors possessing the better understanding of the true God's will and commandments. Hence, Islamic armies prevailing over Christianity after two centuries of crusades confirmed the ideological superiority of Mohamed's visions over the human reasoning of medieval Christian theologians. Likewise, Christian British and French occupation of the Holy Lands following the defeat of the Ottoman Turks in WWI illuminated the flaws that had crept into Islam since the crusades; thus, a reform of Islam was necessary, a reform that required going back to medieval Islamic beliefs, the logic for the Taliban. And the even stronger argument for ideological Islamic reform is Jewish occupation of Jerusalem.

Since the world's population has grown large, the marketing of invisibility now need not have only one sales force. Two, or three, or four are even better; for every understanding of invisibility requires suppression of every other understanding. Thus, war against another's marketing of invisibility becomes the self-justification for greater state authority. And the course of secular history, especially in the Western world, has been determined, as if were, by the cultural ascendancy of *free will* over *determinism*, with these two poles bridged by the writings of scores of philosophers and multiple dozens of theologians, and by the hundreds of wars between kings. The closer to *free will* a thinker positioned himself, the more legalistic the person seemed to be, for with choice comes the necessity to make the *right choice*. And the closer to *determinism* a culture ventured, the less legalistic was the marketing of invisibility, and greater was the elevation of *faith*. Hence, when the invisible fate of men has been predestined by non-individual factors, the more *faith* was emphasized by theologians. When invisible fate is individualized and the control of this fate is given to each person, the more legalistic are theologians, with each placing great emphasis on *works*.

Individualism requires a yardstick by which right choices can be measured. That yardstick for Judaism and Christianity is the Decalogue. Thus, the closer to *determinism* a theologian positioned him or herself, the more *Grace* prevailed over *the Law*, with the ultimate expression of *determinism* in human predestination, a teaching with which Christianity flirts but from which Christianity has consistently backed away. Whereas Christianity distinguishes itself from Judaism through one concept more than any other—*determinism*, the philosophical denial of *free will*—Christianity has always been embarrassed by *hard determinism* [the denial of any free will], and never fully accepted Augustine's, and by extension, Calvin's arguments for *predestination*. Instead, while condemning the man, Christianity accepted *Pelagianism* in varying degrees, none quite strong enough, though, to dissolve *original* or *hereditary sin*. Thus, while Jewish tradition gives to humankind the free choice to earn perfection and communion with God, Christianity gives with one hand and takes away with the other as if intent upon tormenting an already tortured soul.

The phrasing, *the marketing of invisibility*, is a self-mocking concept that has at its core the assumption that possession of invisible life is a hoax understandable within the framework of theoretical Marxism. Certainly, invisibility has been used for purposes

that are explainable by any social-economic paradigm, with great strides forward made in marketing invisibility when the ancient nation of Israel demanded for itself a king like its surrounding neighbors had. But what has been used for the support of civil authorities is a disguised version of the not-so-invisible God that appeared to Adam, and to the patriarch Abraham.

Because Christianity, unlike Judaism [and Islam], never forgave Adam for listening to his wife, Christianity assigns to humankind a fallen status that cannot be corrected through human acts, but requires the intervention of God through the death of His Son. Thus, living a good life as defined by keeping the Decalogue will, for the Jew, return the favor of God to the person, whereas for the Christian there is nothing any human being can do that will cause the regeneration of the soul separated from God by Adam's sin. In most schools of Christian thought, at conception every human being received an immortal soul that is foredoomed to separation from God in the lake of fire unless this soul is *made alive* in Christ through accepting Jesus' sacrifice at Calvary. But this teaching neglects an important consideration: Adam and Eve were driven from the garden of God before either ate of the Tree of Life (Gen 3:22-24) and could take immortality within themselves. Neither Adam nor Eve had any life but that which came from their physical breath, given by *Elohim* [singular in usage] when Adam became a breathing creature [*naphesh*], this breath transferred to Eve through the living flesh and bone [the rib] taken from Adam.

No king or emperor has need for a belief paradigm that doesn't lend itself to the marketing of invisibility. The king as ring-giver probably has enough gold to secure the loyalty of his nobles, but no emperor has enough gold to give every one of his citizens personal wealth. Not even late 20th-Century democratic states have this type of wealth although some socialistic states have tried to secure loyalty through broad public handouts. So civil states employ only those belief paradigms that support widespread marketing of invisibility. And Christianity's teaching that human beings have immortal souls in a fallen state until *saved* is the foremost means by which civil authorities have marketed invisibility for the past two millennia.

But there is a hole in Christianity's marketing of invisibility: no lump of clay had "life" in this world (this life coming through physical breath [*psuche*]) prior to when *Elohim* breathed into the nostrils of the first Adam (Gen 2:7), thereby transforming lifeless clay—stone ground into flour or dust, and mixed with spit (from John 9:6)—into a breathing creature. No man preceded Adam. Despite the traditional reading of the Genesis chapter one creation account, no breathing creature preceded Adam (Gen 2:4-20). Likewise, no human being had life in the heavenly realm until the *Logos* descended from heaven to be born as the man Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:1-2, 14), the last Adam (1 Co 15:45), a human being who was additionally born of Spirit [*Pneuma 'Agion*] (Matt 3:15-17) to fulfill all righteousness, thereby becoming the first tri-part human being [*soma, psuche, pneuma* — from 1 Thess 5:23].

The above paragraph passed by quickly: the physical creation of this world was complete in verse one of Genesis chapter one. Few details are given. For the details, the disciple must go to the Genesis chapter two creation story the so-called "J" account; for the *lacunae* between verses one and two of the Genesis chapter one account isn't unaccounted-for movement along an x-axis timeline, but vertical movement that transforms the remainder of the Genesis one account [and verses one through three of chapter two] into the synopsis of the spiritual creation story. Thus, no physical life

preceded the creation of the first Adam, and no human being had spiritual life [i.e., invisible life] prior to the birth of the man Jesus. No one from Adam to Jesus had any invisible life. No one had/has an immortal soul. And the marketing of invisibility was done for reasons that are only partially explainable by socio-economic theories.

But if a close reading of the Bible disclosed that there were no air breathing creatures in existence before the first Adam, and no born of Spirit human beings prior to the last Adam, then the Bible is not particularly useful to the marketing of invisibility. Hence, the widespread suppression of the Bible by the state church is explainable by economic theories—and the nearly cultural wide ignorance of what the biblical text says since the state church fell on tougher times has been necessary for the continued marketing of invisibility. (This ignorance is dependant upon two reading strategies: historical exegesis, and precept-upon-precept exegesis.)

All of humankind existed in the flour of stone that formed the dust of the earth prior to *Elohim* [singular] taking of this dust enough to make one man, not many men, and breathing physical life into this one man's nostrils. Likewise, all of the great nation promised to the patriarch Abraham existed in the same stone flour prior to Jesus being born of water from the womb of Mary, then born of Spirit when God caused His divine Breath to descend onto Jesus as a dove, thereby creating the living clay model that fulfills all righteousness. The flesh that is of dust returns to dust to be recycled into additional physical life while the Spirit that is of heaven returns to heaven where it waits in unconsciousness for the revealing of its judgment (1 Co 4:5) upon Christ Jesus' return—it waits in timelessness as if asleep, knowing nothing (Eccl 9:5).

Prior to Jesus' birth by Spirit, every human being was only body [*soma*] and shallow breath [*psuche*] (Matt 10:28). Jesus came as the spiritual Adam, the first man to have life in the heavenly realm, this life coming through receiving the divine Breath of God. And belief that Jesus is truly the last Adam is what distinguishes genuine Christianity from state-sponsored and utilized marketing imitations.

Again, the first Adam was driven from the garden of God before he could eat of the Tree of Life, before he could take immortality within himself. Thus, no descendant of the first Adam (no human being born of water and dust) has an immortal soul—and this is what was lost when “the best traditions of ancient philosophy from Pythagoras and Plato to Cicero and Varro” were retained by wild olive scions grafted onto the root of righteousness (from D.W. Robertson's “Translator's Introduction” to Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*). These 2nd and 3rd Century wild olive scions bore wild olives; the grafts bore true to the scion. And the stony fruit of these scions had post-Apostolic theologians assigning immortality to the shallow breath of human beings, thereby giving to mortal men an immortal soul, a teaching that produced a paganized Christianity from which has grown the spiritual bulls and goats that are to be sacrificed for the dedication of the living temple of God upon the coming of the Messiah.

Ancient Israelites selected, based upon birth and appearances, the bulls and goats that they would sacrifice—God didn't need these sacrifices. These ancient Israelites needed them to remind themselves that lawlessness carries with it a high price. Likewise, God doesn't need to witness any loss of life in the dedication of the living temple, but the angels need to see that spiritual lawlessness carries with it the very high price of death in the lake of fire. Angels and glorified sons of God—no exceptions will be made by God for even lawless sons.

The concept of unlimited *free will* is incompatible with the Father drawing (John 6:44, 65) a human being from the world through giving the person His Breath [*Pneuma Agion*] without prior consultation and without revealing to the person the consequences of receiving life in the heavenly realm. That hardly seems fair. But then, no human baby is consulted prior to its birth; nor are the consequences of human birth explained to the lump of clay transformed into flesh before birth. The lifeless clay, prior to birth, lacks self-conscious awareness, and even after birth, until achieving a degree of maturity the living clay form [the human child] simply cannot conceive what it means to be a human being. Likewise, a human being consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) to be a son of disobedience (Eph 2:2-3) lacks all spiritual self-awareness prior to being born of Spirit, and even following this birth from above, the person cannot comprehend what it means to be an actual son of God until achieving a degree of maturity.

In all things, the visible reveals the invisible (Rom 1:20), and the physical precedes the spiritual (1 Co 15:46). Therefore, visible human birth, infancy, adolescence, and reaching one's majority reveals and precedes invisible spiritual birth, infancy, adolescence, and glorification.

Birth by Spirit occurs when an air-breathing human being receives the Holy Spirit. Birth is not conception, and does not occur when the person is glorified, which compares with reaching a person's legal majority. For too long, would-be teachers of spiritual Israel had disciples being glorified as "baby gods," thus comparing receipt of the Holy Spirit with human conception. This has been and remains a false teaching. When glorified, disciples will be as Jesus is, as angels are. They will be as adult as they will ever be; for the type of change necessary for spiritual maturation is not possible in the timeless heavenly realm where "what is" must co-exist with "what will be."

Without being born by Spirit, no human being has any invisible life that is not alien in origin. The marketing of invisibility, though, allows hucksters to sell what isn't present...what a racket! Every sales person would like to sell an invisible product that cannot be tested for validity to willing buyers, all the while being supported by continued payments from the buyers—this is why the Apostle Paul established the criteria for testing whether these sales person are genuine (2 Co 11:1-15). If the sales person will not work on the same terms that Paul worked at Corinth, in that he took no support from the Corinthians, then the sales person is a false apostle, a deceitful worker, a disguised servant of Satan. And this test labels most Christian teachers as false ministers.

For reasons known to Him, in this age God selects human beings to be firstfruits (i.e., to be part of the spiritual early barley harvest), with Christ Jesus being the first of these firstfruits. Only the firstfruits are today offered salvation. The remainder of humanity will receive spiritual birth either when resurrected from death in the great White Throne Judgment, or if alive, when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation. Thus, those individuals who have died without being born from above are not lost, for the only life they ever had is that which came from physical breath: a person cannot experience the second death without receiving a second birth.

Salvation is not, today, contrary to what *Christianity* teaches, offered to most human beings. It is only offered [or given] to the firstfruits. Although everyone will be born of Spirit once—birth cannot be otherwise—no person chooses when he or she will be born of Spirit. Again, without consultation God withdraws a person from the world (from

enslavement to disobedience) by liberating the mind and heart of this person from disobedience by placing in them His laws and commandments (Heb 8:10 & Jer 31:33). So far, the person has no role in what has been done to him or her. The person hasn't made *a decision for the Lord*, hasn't chosen to receive the Holy Spirit, hasn't done anything worthy of commendation, hasn't kept the commandments of God, and has actually been hostile to God (Rom 8:7). The person can never point to this or that accomplishment and say, *That's why God gave me salvation*.

Was Judas Iscariot asked whether he wanted to fulfill Scripture (John 17:12) through being the son of destruction that would betray Jesus? Yet, Judas was, from the beginning, given by the Father to Jesus for the purpose of betraying the Son of Man. So what choice did Judas have? Could Judas have not betrayed Jesus? Could Pharaoh have let Israel leave Egypt before his nation was destroyed? Could the nation that left Egypt have entered God's rest (Ps 95:10-11)? Or did it take that different spirit which Caleb had to believe God (Num 14:24)?

Are you asked by God whether you want to be used for honorable or dishonored purposes (Rom 9:19-24)? Do you merely assume that you have been born of Spirit for honorable usage? And can you do anything to change whether you have been created for honorable or dishonored usage? (The answer to this last question is, yes, but only in the early stages of you being shaped by the Master Potter.)

The problem of scriptural *free will* comes from failure to appreciate that the Bible forms the lively, visible shadow of the invisible *Book of Life*, with the lives of disciples becoming the speech-acts of Christ Jesus, written in Spirit on the heavenly Scroll made from the processed Body of the Lamb of God. Therefore, because the natural nation of Israel had no life in the heavenly realm, the shadow cast by the spiritual nation from this supra-dimensional realm onto the mental topography of the natural nation "activates" or becomes the casual determiner of the otherwise unexplainable lawlessness of a people beloved for the sake of their forefathers.

- The invisible lawlessness of the spiritual nation in the heavenly realm (i.e., the sinfulness of the Christian Church) is made visible through the lawlessness of the ancient natural nation.

If the sinfulness of Church causes the spiritually lifeless natural nation to commit blasphemy against God, then is Grace unmerited pardon, or does the glorified Son of Man bear the sins of spiritual Israel in the heavenly realm as the Azazel goat bore the sins of the natural nation in this world? Jesus' death at Calvary was the reality of the goat sacrificed on the altar on *Yom Kipporim*. His life after Calvary is the reality of the Azazel goat...it took two goats to annually *cover*, as in cloaking, the sins of natural Israel, with a linguistic precipice separating the Azazel goat from the nation. And while the Azazel goat bears the sins of Israel, the Azazel goat doesn't die for these sins.

If Jesus came to abolish the Law, which He says not to think (Matt 5:17), then through abolishing the ordinances against humankind He need not have died as the acceptable sin-offering of God. Where the ordinances are abolished, no penalty for transgressing what has been abolished is applicable. Thus, Jesus' death at Calvary establishes, in perpetuity, not that the Law is abolished but rather that the righteous requirement of the law demands the death of the transgressor for every sin. Jesus was made sin in this world so that His righteousness would cover as a cloak the transgressor in this physical realm.

Natural Israel, without life in the heavenly realm, could not commit sins in this heavenly realm, whereas the Christian Church, born of Spirit, has life in the heavenly realm and can commit sin in that supra-dimensional realm, with each sin requiring a death in the heavenly realm in a way analogous to how bulls and goats covered the sins of the natural nation in this world until Calvary.

- When Adam and Eve were driven from the garden of God, they and their descendants were consigned to disobedience (again, Rom 11:32).
- While consigned to disobedience, humankind were the bondservants of the Adversary, with the Adversary *covering* or having responsibility for humankind's lawlessness; thus no sin was reckoned against human beings (Rom 5:13)
- Natural grace for the ancient nation of Israel (when no sin was reckoned against Israel) ended with giving of the Law.
- Between when natural grace ended and when the man Jesus of Nazareth became the acceptable sin-offering for Israel (Rom 8:3-4), the natural nation covered its sin with the blood of bulls and goats.
- Spiritual grace (where no sin is reckoned in the heavenly realm against disciples) ends with the liberation of disciples on the Second or Spiritual Passover. This event begins the endtime years of tribulation.
- Between when spiritual grace ends and when Satan, after the Millennium, is cast into the lake of fire as the reality of sin, spiritual Israel will cover its sin with the second deaths of spiritual bulls and goats, vessels of living clay created for dishonored use.

Again, the question: have you been created as a vessel for dishonored usage?

The hierarchal order of life has bulls and goats in a relationship with the man Jesus that is analogous to born-of-Spirit disciples with the anointed cherub Lucifer. A taxonomical hierarchy places human beings on a one-step more elevated plane from bulls and goats. The man Jesus came down from heaven to be born of flesh; thus, in a taxonomical hierarchy, Jesus is one step higher than other human beings, or two steps higher than bulls and goats.

Human beings born of Spirit are a little lower than the angels, who themselves are a little lower than arch-angels. Thus, in a taxonomical hierarchy, human beings born of Spirit are two steps lower than Satan, thereby placing them in relationship to Satan as bulls and goats are in relationship to the man Jesus.

In the first taxonomical relationship, all life is flesh in the physical realm although Jesus also had life in the heavenly realm. In the second taxonomical relationship, life is of spirit in the heavenly realm, but with the flesh of born anew disciples and with Satan confined to this world. Thus, the second taxonomical relationship bears to the first relationship the same relative comparison as Jesus bore to sacrificial livestock. And the importance of these taxonomical hierarchy comparisons has not before been grasped by disciples: God has drawn from the world [from disobedience] human beings for the purpose of becoming living clay vessels created for dishonored use—yes, for the purpose of serving as sacrificial offerings as bulls and goats served physically as sacrificial offerings until Calvary, when Jesus died as their reality. In the latter case, human beings have been born of Spirit to be sacrificed in the lake of fire until Satan pays with his life for all lawlessness after the thousand years.

Where is *love* in creating a vessel for dishonorable usage? Where is the Father's love in drawing a person from disobedience only to have the person fry in the lake of fire? Where was the Father's love in giving Judas Iscariot to Jesus as the son of destruction? Is fulfilling Scripture of such importance that human beings are sacrificed?

There is more life [i.e., living beings] than that which human beings have...why would a person eat the flesh of a chicken, or of a bull? Where is human love in cutting the throat of a lamb? Or in launching an arrow at a deer? Or in sending a laser-guided bomb into the headquarters of Saddam Hussein? Is not human love found in attempting to liberate a people from oppression, even if this attempt is not entirely satisfactory? Is not human love found in satisfying the desires of the flesh, even if these desires are less than perfect? Is not human love found in telling other human beings that life exists beyond what can be observed and measured?

So where is the Father's love in casting Satan from heaven? He created Satan as the signet of perfection; yet, He will cause fire to come out from the belly of Satan, thereby utterly destroying that which He created perfect. However, between when He created a bright morning star and when iniquity was found in this anointed cherub, something happened—and it is the story of what happened that lies across the mental topography of humanity as the casual determiner for why living clay vessels are created as sons of destruction.

Where is the Father's love in casting a vessel created for destruction into the lake of fire? Is it not in the same place as where the Father's love is found when He gives birth to that which has no life otherwise?

You have no immortal soul. If the Father doesn't give you birth by Spirit, your existence will permanently end when you die. And this is what science confirms, what logic supports, what Scripture reports.

But you don't believe this--you have been sold an illusion by some very good sales people. You have been sold invisibility as if what isn't there were real, and you are not about to admit that you have been duped. So you will go on believing a lie...what will it take to cause you to change your mind?

It is the story of what happened to Lucifer that reveals why, from the same lump, one vessel is made for honored use and one for dishonored; it is the story of the temptation account.

An oft stated untruth is that born anew disciples will not taste death, but have permanently passed from death to life. Jesus said not to think this.

- Jesus said don't be surprised when the disciple who has done good is resurrected to life while the disciple who has done evil is resurrected to condemnation (John 5:28-29).
- Jesus said the disciple who relaxes the least of the commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, while the disciple who keeps the commandments and teaches other to do so will be called great (Matt 5:19).
- Jesus said that not everyone who says, *Lord, Lord*, to Him will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of the Father will enter (Matt 7:21).
- Jesus said that despite great works done in His name, He will deny in their resurrection all workers of iniquity (Matt 7:23).

- Jesus said that at the end of the age, the Son of Man will send out His angels to gather from His kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers and these will be cast into a fiery furnace (Matt 13:41-42).

The crux of the gospel message is that many disciples will be called, but few will be chosen (Matt 22:14). Most disciples will be lawless and will be condemned to the lake of fire. Thus, far more human beings born of Spirit will perish than will enter heaven. And those who perish will do so because of their willful sin. And today, except for a very small minority, the Christian Church is a lawless nation that relaxes the least of the commandments [the Sabbath commandment], while teaching spiritual infants to erase the laws of God that have been written on their hearts and placed in their minds through receipt of the Holy Spirit.

The Christian Church is truly a lawless nation—and indeed, it cannot be anything else. It is a wild olive tree grown large from wild olive scions grafted onto the root of righteousness in the 1st-Century CE.

Scions bear fruit true to the scion, not to the root. Every orchardist knows this. A wild scion grafted onto a cultivated rootstock will always bear wild fruit, not the fruit of the rootstock. It cannot bear any other kind of fruit except wild fruit. Thus, the Apostle Paul's analogy (Rom chap 11) does not have Gentiles grafted onto the root of righteousness, Christ Jesus, bearing the fruit of law-keeping, but the fruits of lawlessness. This must be remembered! It is the faith of these grafts that is counted as righteousness, not their works.

Natural Israel was given a law that would have led to righteousness (Rom 9:31) if pursued by faith. This law is the second covenant (Deu 29:1) made with the uncircumcised children of the nation that left Egypt, and made on the plains of Moab. In this second covenant, the voice of God comes through Moses, this second covenant's mediator. It is not heard directly as at Sinai. Thus, this second covenant goes mostly unrecognized by natural and spiritual Israelites.

The essential detail of the second covenant (Deu 29:1) is faith: if Israel, when having transgressed the Sinai covenant and having been exiled far from God's rest, would turn to God [an act of faith] and return to keeping His commandments and statutes [the critical act of faith], God would bring Israel back into His rest, giving to Israel a circumcised heart and mind (Deu 30:1-6), a euphemistic expression for receiving the Holy Spirit. It wasn't enough for Israel in Babylon for seventy years to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the house of God on orders from Cyrus—there was no act of faith on Israel's part. Israel's return was because of God's faithfulness in fulfilling His words uttered by the prophet Jeremiah, not because Israel returned to keeping God's commandments in a far land...returning to, or beginning to keep the commandments of God when there is no social pressure to do so is the acceptable act of faith that satisfies the second covenant.

When a Gentile who has never known God and is under no social pressure to obey God begins, by faith, to keep the commandments, this Gentile will enter into God's rest as a spiritually circumcised Israelite—and by keeping the Sabbath [the outward evidence of entering into God's rest], in particular, the Gentile will cause natural Israelites to be jealous (Rom 11:13-14) as evidenced by Judaism's relationship to the first century Sabbatarian Christianity, and now to the last century Sabbatarian Church...there are no "middle centuries" of Sabbatarian Christianity, just as there is no record of the middle years of Jesus' earthly ministry. Jesus is the *alpha* and *omega*, the first and the last, the

cornerstone and the capstone of the spiritual house of God. He is the creator of the first Adam and of the last Adam. And Scripture will disclose the first Acts of His disciples and the last acts of His disciples. The middle centuries saw the growth and maturing of the grafted wild olive scions into a wild tree anchored [as if penned] in this world by the root of righteousness.

Natural Israel geographically entered God's rest on the 10th of the first month (Jos 4:19), and was penned in His rest as the selected Passover lamb was penned on the 10th day of the first month (Ex 12:3). Jesus entered Jerusalem on the 10th day of the first month (John 19:31 with John 12:1 and 12:12), and was penned in Jerusalem until He was slain as the Passover Lamb of God on the 14th day, between the evenings as Pharisees then reckoned when paschal lambs were to be sacrificed. And as the natural nation of Israel is today penned in God's rest [i.e., in Sabbath observance], spiritual Israel is penned in the Jerusalem above by growing from the root of righteousness.

Both the penned natural and the penned spiritual nations of Israel are to be sacrificed as paschal lambs, the natural nation a sheep, the spiritual nation a goat [the paschal lamb could be taken from either the sheep or the goats — Ex 12:5].

Again, when a Gentile who has never known God and is under no social pressure to obey God begins, by faith, to keep the commandments, this former son of disobedience is no longer estranged from God. And as a corollary, when the Israelite quits keeping the commandments, this Israelite, natural or spiritual, separates himself or herself from God and inevitably walks away from God's rest, thereby returning himself or herself to being a son of disobedience. But if the Gentile, a son of disobedience, never begins to keep the commandments, this person, whether born of Spirit or merely a religious hobbyist, remains a servant of Satan—he or she will be a wild olive scion bearing wild fruit without the faith necessary to cause a natural Israelite to be jealous.

Natural Israel's adulterous affairs with the gods of their neighbors caused God to be jealous, a human emotion that best discloses the divine sense of loss when heavenly *oneness* is marred by disharmony and disobedience. Those things that are of the heavenly realm can only be expressed in this world through metaphoric phrases, and the employment of literary tropes. Use of the linguistic icon */jealousy/* becomes a tool by which God can convey the motivation He will place upon natural Israel to pursue righteousness by faith when the fullness of the Gentiles has been called. (A specific number of spiritual bulls and goats will be needed for the dedication of the living temple—for the dedication of Solomon's temple, 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep were sacrificed [2 Chron 7:5]. How much more valuable is the living temple of the Father in the Jerusalem above? How many lives will be given in the heavenly realm to purify what should never have been soiled by the best traditions of paganism?)

The Apostle Paul wrote to Gentile converts at Rome that he magnified his ministry to the Gentiles so that some of his fellows Jews would become jealous (Rom 11:13-14) and thereby accept Christ Jesus as their sin offering. And here is where consideration of what Paul taught enters into Christianity: will teaching Gentiles to break the commandments of God cause any of Paul's fellow Jews to be jealous of Christians? Of course not. Gentiles were already breaking the commandments before they heard the name of Jesus. So the only thing that could cause Paul's fellow Jews to be jealous would be for Gentiles to begin keeping the commandments without first being physically circumcised.

When a Gentile begins living as a Judean, keeping the commandments, especially the Sabbath, the pride of every natural Israelite is pricked. And if a Gentile, by faith, begins living as a Judean and causes the natural Israelite to transform his or her zeal for God into works of faith instead of works of the hands, then both the Gentile and the Jew will enter into God's heavenly rest; for before God, there is neither Gentile or Jew. However, if a convert remains living as a Gentile, thereby causing no Jew to be jealous of anything in the Gentiles' life, this Gentile convert is an unprofitable servant, except as a sacrifice for sin in the heavenly realm in the manner which bulls and goats were sacrificed in present day Jerusalem before Calvary.

Jealousy is not merely a green-eyed monster—it is the primary motivating force that will cause the broken off cultivated olive branches to come to the root of righteousness, and by faith, profess that Jesus is Lord (Rom 10:9). These broken off branches will already be keeping the commandments. Some of them will have been physically returned to the land of their forefathers. All of them are eligible to receive the Holy Spirit and birth by Spirit upon the single act of faith that they cannot [and know of no reason to] perform today.

The question of *determinism* remains: does the wild olive scion bearing wild fruit have a choice about whether he or she is a vessel created for honored or dishonorable usage? Can this wild olive scion begin, by faith, to keep the commandments of God, thereby becoming a faithful servant of Christ Jesus even though the scion continues to bear nearly worthless fruit? Or does this wild scion need to be given this faith by God? And if this faith is not given, then how much *free will* does the scion actually have, considering that the scion was a son of disobedience prior to being born of Spirit?

The scion without the faith to begin keeping the commandments remains a servant of Satan, albeit this scion is now disguised as a minister of righteousness (2 Co 11:15). Thus, the wild olive tree grown large from wild scions without the faith to keep the commandments is truly pleasant to the eyes and pleasing to the ears, but bears bitter fruit. The tree, itself, is a lie. Its fruit sets teeth on edge. And its branches will burn hot in the lake of fire.

Deuteronomy forms the covenant basis for righteousness based upon faith (Rom 10:6-8 — compare with Deu 30:11-14). The Christian theologian who seeks the terms of the second covenant must turn to Moses to find these terms, and to find the accusations made against Israel, natural and spiritual (John 5:45-47). Therefore, the centuries of *Christian scholarship*, a virtual oxymoron, that have rejected the writings of Moses have left most spiritual Israelites as blind as was the natural nation when Isaiah prophesied about Israel...remember, the second covenant is both a physical and a spiritual covenant (Deu 10:12-16 & 30:6, 9-20), with a physical [Moses] and a spiritual [Christ Jesus] mediator, made with the uncircumcised physical nation of Israel (Jos 5:2-7) and with the physically uncircumcised spiritual nation (Gal 5:2). But it is not a covenant made in the flesh. It is, again, the Apostle Paul's righteousness based on faith; it is a spiritual covenant added to the covenant made at Sinai. It **is not** the covenant made at Sinai. It should not be confused with the covenant made at Sinai, and it was not abolished at Calvary, when the put-away wife killed her Husband. It couldn't be abolished, for it had never been nationally implemented. Only an occasional Israelite had ever attempted to walk uprightly before God. And it is in this second covenant where Moses writes about Jesus (John 5:46-47 — compared to Deu 18:15-22).

Following Calvary the mediator of the second covenant goes from being Moses to being Christ Jesus (Heb 9:15), with the promise of physical life under Moses' administration (Deu 30:15) becoming the promise of an everlasting inheritance. Yes, with the change of administrations, better promises were added to this new covenant (in that it had not been previously implemented because Israel had failed to pursue the covenant by faith). These better promises included receipt of the Holy Spirit prior to demonstrated obedience, not after. Therefore, because the Holy Spirit is given before the spiritual Israelite has learned to walk uprightly before God, the born of Spirit disciple is cloaked in the garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness until revealed at the Judgment, or at the beginning of the Tribulation for disciples then still alive.

A key provision of Moses' administration of the second covenant is God setting before Israel life and good, death and evil. Israel doesn't decide whether it has free will. Israel has no option about not making a choice. God sets the two choices before Israel; God gives to Israel good and evil, with instructions to choose good.

Why didn't Israel choose good and life? Would not that choice have brought to Israel the blessings the nation desired? And how did Moses know that Israel would rebel against God? Is it because the actions of the shadow were casually determined by the spiritual nation's rebellion against God in the heavenly realm?

It isn't that human beings are intrinsically evil as a consequence of Adam's disobedience (such teachings disclose an utter lack of spiritual understanding). It is that God consigned humanity to disobedience by allowing the Adversary to reign over the mental topography from which conscious thought derives. Human nature is **not** a biological derivative. It is the manifestation of Satan's nature in the physical world. Likewise, the animal natures of beasts are derivatives of Satan's broadcast of disobedience.

A truism that will be difficult to accept is that when the Holy Spirit [the divine Breath of God — *Pneuma 'Agion*] is poured out onto all flesh as the flood waters of Noah's day covered the earth, human nature as well as the predatory natures of wolves, lions and bears will be changed (Isa 11:6-9). Within a short while, the harm that one person does to another will cease. The killing of prey species by predators will end. And except on the altar in the house of God, no blood will be shed, for there will be no disobedience in all the world.

Humanity doesn't return to Adam's original level with God, for Adam had no life in the heavenly realm. Humanity moves to a far higher level, because the least in the kingdom of heaven will be greater than the greatest born to woman; the least of those born to the Father is greater than anyone born of only the water of the womb. Thus, traditional Jewish understanding of the plan of God is greatly flawed.

If the spiritual nation [i.e., the nation born of Spirit and with life in the heavenly realm] has been created to be both vessels of honorable and of dishonored usage, then the actions of its shadow [i.e., the natural nation] are restricted to being the same actions as the spiritual nation made. And a logical impasse exists: how much freedom to choose good and life did the natural nation really have? If the natural nation's actions were determined by the actions of the spiritual nation in the heavenly realm, then *hard determinism* reigns in this physical world.

Did God set before the spiritual nation good and evil, with instructions to choose life? The answer every disciple wants is, **Yes**, but this means that the clay determines what it will be.

The lawyer's question to Jesus of what he must do to inherit everlasting life (Luke 10:25) was turned back upon itself. Jesus asked the lawyer what the Law said, and the lawyer's answer was based upon the second covenant mediated by Moses. Jesus told the lawyer that he had answered correctly (v. 28). Yes, the lawyer knew the Law well enough to know what the Law required to receive everlasting life, but loving one's neighbor always requires an act of faith. Likewise, loving one's enemies requires faith. And the lawyer had no love for his neighbor, the key component in righteousness based on faith for the person that keeps the commandments through cultural expectations.

Generations of converts have seen their children slip into disobedience even though these converts have reared their children to keep the commandments. It would seem that while God drew the parents from disobedience, God neglected to call the children. This would mean that God called the parents to be firstfruits, but left the children to be resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment, thereby not extending to the children the same favor shown to the parents. But is this truly the case? The rich young ruler, posing the same question to Jesus as the lawyer posed (Luke 18:18), could not do the act of faith Jesus asked of him (vv. 22-23). This rich younger ruler was, indirectly, asked to extend love to his neighbors through giving his wealth to the poor. And this young man could no more perform this act of faith than could the lawyer.

A wild scion is usually eager [perhaps too much so] to extend love to his or her neighbor through sharing the good news of Christ with not just neighbors but with the world; however, the wild scion will not preach keeping the commandments to his or her neighbor. That would be *legalism* (don't tell the scion, but Jesus was a legalist), and every Christian knows that Paul condemned *legalism*. Oh, where does the Apostle condemn living by the Laws of God written on hearts and minds, these laws the spiritual expression of the physically inscribed commandments of God? Certainly that condemnation isn't recorded in Scripture, so where might it be?

Neither the lawyer nor the rich young ruler would have preached Christ to his neighbor—and because the Jew will not preach Christ, and because the wild scion will not preach keeping the commandments, neither truly loves his neighbor as himself. But the question is, have both been consigned by God to their unbelief? Could either or both have love for his or her neighbor? And for this answer, disciples must return to Eden where God asks Cain, “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for [against] you, but you must rule over it” (Gen 4:7).

Can a vessel created for dishonored usage do well? Can a chamber pot be accepted by God? Apparently yes, if that which is without honor does well by ruling over the lawlessness dwelling in the flesh...in 1917, Marcel Duchamp entered a porcelain urinal in an unjuried New York art exhibit as a prank, but eighty-seven years later, giving to that chamber pot perhaps more honor than the pot deserved, Duchamp's “Fountain” was identified as the world's most influential piece of modern art. That which had no honor achieved honor; that which was displayed as a protest against the decadence of the bourgeois art establishment became the defining piece for what it mocked, such is the power of jealousy.

By faith, the wild olive scion should begin living as a spiritual Judean—and under the second covenant mediated by Moses, demonstrated obedience by an Israelite will cause God to give to the Israelite a circumcised heart. Thus, the wild olive scion who has already been born of Spirit and has a circumcised heart and mind, but who was created

as a vessel for dishonored usage [as a urinal], can become an influential work of modern art through doing well...a clay vessel remains as *greenware* until its shape is made permanent by firing; a living clay vessel remains temporary until baptized by fire. And what is temporary is subject to change although the vessel resists change as it dries.

A potter's shaping of a vessel begins with the turning of the wheel, when the clay can be anything. God's shaping of a disciple begins with spiritual birth when the disciple can be either a vessel for honored or dishonored use. How the disciple responds determines what the Master Potter will make from the lump of living clay.

As a brand plucked from the fire (Zech 3:2), the endtime high priest of Israel was, in the heavenly realm, given spiritually clean raiment and the promise of ruling over the house of God on the condition that he walk in the ways of God and keep His charge (*vv.* 3-7). The promise of honor was/is conditioned upon doing well. So in what God told Cain is the condition of all divine promises. Even promises that seem unconditional have overtly imbedded in them the condition of doing well. Abram is told to, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I [God] will make of you a great nation...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:1-3). If Abram had not gone as the Lord told him, the promise [i.e., the blessing] would not occur, or have occurred. Likewise, the Lord appeared to Abram when he was ninety-nine years old, and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless [the condition for receiving the promise], that I may...multiply you greatly...and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations" (Gen 17:1-4). If Abraham had not walked uprightly before God, he would not have become the father of a multitude of nations. Thus, Abraham, in leaving his nation, does well by performing the act of faith that makes him the father of the faithful (Heb 11:8). Abraham additionally does well by walking blameless (or nearly so) before God, thereby keeping His commandments, statutes and laws (Gen 26:5) after receiving the covenant ratified by circumcision, the act by which a man is made naked before God. Abraham's obedience to God covered his nakedness.

As Abraham demonstrates, *doing well* has two components: an act of faith, and keeping the commandments. Without faith, no one can please God (Heb 11:6). Without obedience, no one will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:19-20 & 7:21-23). Faith without obedience is not faith, but dead rhetoric (Jas 2:17).

Again, the ancient nation of Israel pursued a law that would have led to righteousness if pursued by faith (Rom 9:31-32), but Israel left faith out of *doing well*. And as the corollary to ancient Israel's lack of faith, the grafted wild olive scions grown into the very large tree that is "wild Christianity" will not, regardless of their rhetoric, enter the kingdom of heaven because of their lawlessness. No amount of television air time, no soft words and slick sermons, no satin dresses and silk suits, no shouting praises will convince Jesus to glorify a teacher of iniquity—God is not in the business of creating additional Adversaries. His love is for sinners, not sin. And if a disciple cannot separate the sin from the sinner, both sin and sinner will be cast into the lake of fire (Matt 13:41-42).

Doing well means separating the sin that lurks at the door from the sinner dwelling inside a tent of flesh, means placing a barrier between sin and the sinner, the barrier of pursuing a law that will lead to righteousness when pursued by faith. The second covenant is that law leading to righteousness, a law that is not too difficult for either natural or spiritual Israel to keep (Deu 30:11). And it is under the terms of this law that

every Israelite is offered the choice of life or death (*vv.* 15-20), that choice conditioned on doing well.

When Jesus answered the rich young ruler's question about inheriting everlasting life, His disciples were without spiritual understanding; hence, their question about who can be saved. Jesus answered, "What is impossible with men is possible with God" (Luke 18:27). With men, salvation is impossible. There is nothing any person can do physically that will give to the person life in the heavenly realm. That life only comes from God, and then only when God chooses to give it.

If receiving everlasting life is determined by when God gives it, then free will has nothing to do with being born of Spirit. Birth occurs because of decisions by the parent—and those decisions are made by criteria that might be understood in the future, but are at best poorly understood today. All that is understood is that some natural Israelites might be saved [these are Israelites who are already keeping the commandments] if the law they pursue through logic, reason, and ritual were pursued by faith. Same law: the second covenant. Therefore, to make Israel jealous (Rom 11:11), God grafted wild scions to the root of righteousness not for the fruit of these wild scions, but for their faith.

I am one of those wild scions that, hopefully, will make the broken off natural branches jealous.

The stony fruit of Christianity is bitter and sets on edge the teeth of every natural Israelite, as intended by God who doubly provokes to jealousy as He has been provoked (Rom 10:19-20). Natural Israel will have to acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ (*v.* 9) as the first provocation to jealousy; then Israel will have to acknowledge that there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile in the heavenly realm (*v.* 12). Likewise, the Gentile disciple will, by faith, have to live like a Judean if the disciple is to be holy as God is holy (1 Pet 1:14-19).

No person seeking to serve God can enter His rest on the 8th-day. Only a wild scion would even try. Only a spiritual bull or goat—a dumb beast—does *work* when he or she should be entering into God's rest.

- Moses wrote about a prophet who would come as he, Moses, came, with Moses being as God to Aaron and the nation of Israel (Ex 4:16).
- The natural nation of Israel is the firstborn natural son of God (Ex 4:22) as the Son of Man is the firstborn spiritual Son of God.
- As there was a first Adam, there was a second or last Adam (1 Co 15:45).
- As there was a first Elijah, there will be an endtime Elijah (Mal 4:5), and as the first Elijah slew the many prophets of Baal, the endtime Elijah will slay many false prophets.

The Lamb of God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth forms the reality of the bulls, goats, and lambs sacrificed by the natural nation for fourteen centuries (there were no sacrifices in Jerusalem while Israel was in Babylon). Thus, Jesus' death at Calvary ends animal sacrifices [actually, these sacrifices end with the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE].

A spiritual *lacunae* occurred at Calvary. What had been physical becomes spiritual. Unlike the Marxist model that has a determining base and determined superstructure, the spiritual plan of God uses a determining spiritual nation and a determined natural nation...natural Israel, with no life in the heavenly realm, visibly acted out in Judea the sinfulness (Ezek chap 20) of the spiritual nation in the heavenly realm. This mostly invisible lawlessness forms the reality of the natural nation refusing to walk in the ways

of God, while profaning the Sabbaths of God. And because of the nation's lawlessness, God gave to Israel statutes by which the nation would not live, and ordinances that caused the nation to defile itself with its gifts (*vv. 25-26*). God caused Israel to burn the nation's firstborns, just as God hardened Pharaoh's heart so that He might destroy Egypt/sin.

An Israelite, spiritual or natural, needs to fear lawlessness; needs to fear searing the heart and the mind so that repentance isn't possible. Israel sins, but God does the searing. God will send a delusion over endtime Israel that will prevent the nation from repenting. He will determine the fate of every Israelite when that Israelite refuses to *do well*.

Free will is not a spiritually perpetual condition. Every born of Spirit Israelite can *do well*, and can choose life, but cannot delay in making that decision for life. The natural nation provoked God ten times (Num 14:22). They were not permitted an eleventh time before God pronounced a death sentence upon the nation, as upon a man. And so will it be for every disciple. The patience of God is great, but limited by practicality. When extending no additional patience will benefit the disciple, no additional patience is extended—the fate of the Israelite is determined, regardless of how much longer the Israelite physically lives.

Will God reconsider His determination of a person's fate? A Father's love would seem to cause Him to reconsider...

By sending a delusion, God makes it so that the person will not repent, but will continue in sin. Question: how many disciples who know to keep the Sabbath, but who did not immediately begin to keep the Sabbath when the person knew to do so, actually keep the Sabbath? A few? None? The latter is probably the correct answer. Those disciples who would not separate themselves from the bleating flocks and bellowing herds when they first knew to do so are now a part of those flocks and herds.

The vertical movement that occurred at Calvary has the spiritual nation of Israel living through the long night of watching that the physical nation experienced in Egypt before the death angels passed through the land. Once the midnight hour of this single long night arrives, God will lead His holy nation out of sin, with that nation herding its flocks of dumb beasts destined for sacrifice in the heavenly realm through the wildernesses as ancient Israel herded its flocks through the wildernesses between Egypt and the Jordan for forty years. The difference will be that these bulls and goats have teeth and will seek to devour their shepherds.

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