

Holiness, Righteousness & the New Covenant

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Homer Kizer

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secular—

the leaning sun sends
long shadows
across sumac hunter red—
chokecherries along the railroad
are almost orange—
even aspens are tinged
pink where they mingle
with yellowed cottonwoods—
a hen searches for snowberries
missed by wild turkeys
that passed through
earlier this Sabbath day

home alone, nursing a scalded foot
I listen to radio pleadings
for a secular ministry—
what would a secular ministry preach

a few yellow apples still hang
among yellow leaves
on the seedlings
above the tracks
where a doe & her yearling
hide
from rifles & riflemen
intent upon harvesting
winter meat
& I start a venison stew
while dogs bark
at the mail carrier
honking

for me to sign
for certified letters
for debts I don't remember
for debts I can't pay
despite all the good work
I do

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Preface

I was in northern Minnesota visiting my middle daughter when my wife received word that she had cancer. She was upset, for obvious reasons, and wanted me to hurry home.

Outwardly, she appeared well fed but perfectly healthy. Her blood pressure was normal. No signs of diabetes. Her cholesterol was fine. No breast lumps. Nothing on a Pap smear. By every medical test, except one, she was healthy, and that test was a scraping of her uterine wall, not something routinely performed.

Her cancer was stage one. Surgery has been completed, and she heals as I write this manuscript.

Her diagnosis of cancer caused her to think about her mortality more than she has for some time. Her prayers have greater intensity. Priorities have been modified, not that they were greatly askew before. For her, the reality of Christian discipleship has become a tangible thing, with all of the aspects of *thinginess* that dishes or pots and pans or computer keyboards have.

And here I need to separate the philosophical from the applicable: each semester I have students who don't want to take a Composition class, who despise English, who just want to get the course out of the way so they can get about their business of earning a living. A long time ago, I was one of those students. I have a mild form of dyslexia that caused spelling difficulties all through school. I would ask grade school teachers how to spell a word, and they would tell me to *sound it out*. But I couldn't hear what letter the word started with, so I read page after page of the dictionary until I found a word I could use. I never anticipated being adjunct English faculty, or writing for a living. In school, I excelled in math, and was most interested in history, espe-

cially that of firearms. I became a gunmaker, a suitable vocation for a fellow with an inherited audio dysfunction.

However, in reading those dictionary pages in third, fourth, fifth grades, I learned more than if I would've searched only the necessary page. A handicap became a strength: I did sixth, seventh, and eighth grades in one year, started high school when twelve and college as a math major at sixteen. I took as an undergraduate one semester of Comp, and one of Lit, and 23 years later, I entered graduate school without a degree; my first degree is my M.F.A. in Creative Writing.

Reading those pages of Webster also caused a serious dislike for English and English teachers. Therefore, now that (through a long series of coincidences which probably weren't very coincidental) I teach English, I stress the process of producing the objective, which isn't a perfect paper, but the ability to write better than when enrolling in the course. Yes, teaching process versus product is the norm for most Composition programs today, but too often students believe the objective is the paper, and the process is only the means for achieving that objective. Thus, to this student a purchased paper, or an older sibling's paper satisfies the process as well as writing the paper him or herself. A high quality paper has been produced. The *how* is immaterial. And throughout the American culture, we hear some version of *all that matters is winning*, which declares all processes to be equally valid.

Too often, humanity thinks in terms of the wrong objective. When playing chess, the objective is checkmating your opponent's king, not capturing the most number of pieces. In my English Comp classes, the objective is writing better, not producing another essay about the evils of abortion. A few essays are exceptional, but most will be stored by the student in a basement box for ten or so years, then thrown away during a move. Very few essays students write as undergraduates are worthy of publication. Most are rehashed research of someone else, with recycled opinions vying for recognition among comma splices and sentence fragments, with purchased papers calling attention to themselves for their lack of grammar faults.

Herein lies the Christian dilemma: why the creation? matter? energy? the four known forces? Why life? humanity? All of this didn't just come about, regardless of how much evolution becomes the *truth* of our age. To think it did is an intellectually vacant position. So if it all didn't happen, then what is the objective? the reason for everything we see?

Since her surgery, my wife has had time to ponder the type of philosophical questions usually reserved for liberal coffee houses, and fundamentalist church picnics. These are questions I answered for myself long before I met her, questions answered in hunting camps, or in protected bays waiting out a North Pacific gale, or in a recently published collection of essays. So partly for her, partly for friends within the academic community, partly for the many pastors I know and will shortly know, I have set in print what we have been told, but what we didn't hear as a culture.

Nationally, we have tried to phonetically sound out this message about why we are here, but we were unable to determine how it begins. We know we have heard it, and in searching for it, we have learned much, most of which hasn't been useful except in the pursuit of trivia. So we really need a teacher to tell us where to start looking, since we have become confused about the objective, mistaking the product for the process. Those individuals who should be teaching have joined the circus, thereby leaving the hard work of wrestling with texts to storytellers, to this particular storyteller.

Our good works are worth less to God than student essays are worth to me; they are as menstrual rags. Certainly a few houses are constructed for those who couldn't otherwise buy a home. Hungry men and women are fed on Thanksgiving and at Christmas. Mentors give a few at-risk children role models. A pallet load of used eyeglasses is sent to the Ukraine. A container full of used wheelchairs is shipped to Costa Rica. Several containers full of outdated pharmaceuticals go to foreign clinics. All good. But our good works are neither very good, nor useful beyond our own sphere of influence. However, the process that pro-

duces our good works has value to our Creator. That process cannot be created directly by even an all powerful Sovereign, but only indirectly by the creation of conditions which causes the process to form.

What Paul didn't understand by his own admission about the war that raged between his flesh and his mind underlies the process that is the objective of our Creator: by choosing to do right, then losing to the flesh, but choosing again to do right, and again losing to the flesh, but yet choosing again to do right, we establish a habit of choosing to do right. That habit becomes a mindset which sculpts our character. Eventually, who we are is a person who chooses to do right, often does right, and hates him or herself when he or she fails to do right. This "character" has been truly created by God, and is useful to God, for when God tried to create perfect character directly in Lucifer, His attempt failed. But in humanity and by using an indirect approach, He literally produces the capstones for His creation.

The applicable reality of Christianity is that we are to make choosing to do what is right a habit. The amount of knowledge we have isn't very important. The accomplishments of choosing to do right aren't really important. The process is. Christianity should be a process oriented belief system, with the product of the process taking care of itself. It should be a way of life that has at its heart the endless choosing of doing that which is right, the definition of which having been written into the consciences of disciples, with failures to perform being blotted out by grace.

The philosophy of Christianity, however, focuses on knowledge, ritual, and to a lesser extent, on accomplishments. Thus, the question becomes, if a person believes that he or she must recite a liturgy and does, is the process of choosing to do right being exercised? If a different person believes that he or she must keep the law of God and does to the best of the person's ability, is the process of choosing to do right being exercised? And we now have a problem that a philosophy of grace cannot solve, for in the theology of grace the importance of choice is, too often, limited to merely confessing with the mouth and

believing with the heart. All choices after that are, seemingly, equally good (unless those choices involve dancing and card playing). In business a *saved* person can harpoon his competitors, can cut corners, can shade balance sheets, can use any tactic possible to gain marketshare since grace covers all of these choices (*once saved, always saved*). A *saved* person can shun a nonBeliever, can prohibit her kids from playing with the neighbor's, can judge the skirt length or hairdo or the amount of makeup worn by the neighbor. Love can be limited to those in your church, and then to only those whose appear "righteous." The decision making process of a philosophy of grace tends to prohibit God from extending mercy to sinners of any variety but your own. So the question really becomes, is such a decision making process of any value to God? Has grace been misused? or abused? Has the objective been confused with the means? Have texts been read askew?

In John's endtime vision, there are seven churches of God on the mailroute, only one of which is commended for keeping the word of God and His name. The other six churches, though, have saints in them. So, perhaps all of greater Christianity has been too quick to say who is of God, and who isn't; whose faith is dead, and whose isn't; who believes in works, and who doesn't.

The Lamb of God has seven horns, one for each of the seven churches, none of which are today's identified denominations. Each church has its own angel, or messenger. The letters are to these seven angels, and five of the letters begin, *I know your works*.

Introduction

In 1969–70, Georgia-Pacific underwrote the expense of an Oregon State University study of stream temperatures and salmon and steelhead alvin, fry and premigrant survival. Most of the testing was conducted near the Williams Ranch, twenty miles out G-P's South Fork road, on the Yaquina and Alsea watersheds of the central Oregon Coast. I have never read the official results of the study, but a friend and regular customer, then a student at Oregon State, was employed by the study. He kept me informed about the results being obtained, since he was surprised by how just a few degrees of temperature rise in the small, incubating streams resulted in the deaths of premigrants.

When Georgia-Pacific's logging manager learned of the results, he ordered all of the buffer strips that C.D. Johnson and G-P had left along stream banks logged.

Georgia-Pacific began as a southern lumber yard, with some timber holdings. The firm (not then named Georgia-Pacific) expanded quickly, and soon outgrew the available timber in the South. Its owner looked to expand into the Pacific Northwest where C.D. Johnson was looking for a buyer for what had been the world's biggest sawmill. C.D. Johnson figured the firm had fifty years worth of stumpage in its inventory.

Logging and the log market were, at the time, mostly controlled by six corporations, the Big Six. They were unwilling to pay what C.D. Johnson wanted for its mills and inventory, and since no one else was large enough to buy C.D. Johnson, they, I believe, felt they could dictate price and terms to the Johnson family.

The individual who would become the chief operating officer for Georgia-Pacific arranged to borrow an awful lot of money from an insurance company, so that the officer and his fledgling corporation

could purchase the holdings of C.D. Johnson (all of this is public record, and part of the firm's legendary rise to economic stardom). Whereas C.D. Johnson had supplied logs to the world's largest sawmill with three logging sides, Georgia-Pacific opened 25 sides, and sent 150 loads of logs a day out through Valsetz, and another 300 loads a day out through the Gorge. G-P sent so many logs to market in the late 1950s that the corporation depressed the log market for a decade. Supply far outstripped demand. But G-P needed to convert C.D. Johnson's timber inventory into cash as quickly as possible so it could pay back the short-term loan to the insurance company.

Georgia-Pacific had, however, followed C.D. Johnson's practice of leaving a quarter mile or so buffer strip along streambanks. The strips helped regulate stream flow, and somewhat controlled the flash flooding that tended to wash out summer bridges before the summer was over.

Some of the best timber in C.D. Johnson's inventory was in the buffer strips the firm had left.

When G-P's logging manager learned that the buffer strips moderated stream temperatures, thereby keeping the streams habitable for premigrants, he feared that the state legislature would mandate that buffer strips be left. I know this was his fear, for he said so in the gunshop where I then did my bluing (I didn't have bluing tanks at the time). A law aimed at saving salmon and steelhead premigrants could, potentially, bar G-P from logging some high value timber. So, despite knowing that logging those buffer strips would kill whole runs of salmon and steelhead, the manager ordered those strips logged, even where the timber was marginal.

The manager did nothing illegal. He made money for the corporation. He didn't pocket any extra money. There were no payoffs, nor bribes, nor illegalities of any kind. Everything was above board. I can give you this man's name. He had nothing to be ashamed of as far as he was concerned.

But what the manager did was wrong!

Herein lies the difficulty with writing a law, and adopting a legal code. The code can never account for every situation. It cannot be all-encompassing. And even if it were, we would have a lawyer say, *There was no prevailing legal opinion*. Prior to Cain killing Abel, there was no prevailing legal opinion against murder. Sure there was a law, but nobody had tested the law, so no prevailing legal opinion. And there was a law against what Cain did: God tells Cain ahead of time that “sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you” (Gen 4:7), which is a meaningless warning if Cain didn’t know the law, for sin is the transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4).

I moved to Alaska in 1974. In 1983, I returned to the Coast for a visit. A fellow outdoor writer and I fished the upper Siletz for summer steelhead, and where a decade earlier hundreds of premigrants had chased my fly across the tail of pools, now not a single premigrant could be seen anywhere. Where multiple dozens of steelhead had been stacked in pools awaiting the winter rains, no fish could be seen. The run was about dead, killed not by over fishing, nor by sunken Japanese gillnets, nor by seals and seiners, but by the fiscal responsibility of one mid-level corporate manager, who was part of a social construct that perceived natural resources as inexhaustible.

I cannot point too many fingers at G-P’s logging manager: I helped pitchfork the run of chinooks in Lincoln County’s Bear Creek into extinction. I have done more wrong than I want to admit publicly. Nothing horribly wrong by society’s standards. No drugs, no alcohol abuse, no domestic violence, no felonies. Mostly slipping a toe across that line which divides right and wrong. An untagged deer. A trap from another trapline. A Crescent wrench left laying in a rock quarry. Things I knew were wrong, but that didn’t seem too bad. Things that contribute to locking car doors, and freezers, thereby changing the culture from trusting each other to distrusting everyone. A gruesome murder changes the culture less than everyone cheating just a little on his or her taxes.

The righteous do that which is right (Rev 22:11). They do what is right in every situation. They don't kill fish runs in three river drainages for any reason. They make decisions based upon love, a touchy-feely word loggers avoid except in backseats on Friday nights when they are still young. They change themselves with their *right* decisions, until they no longer even think before they act to do that which is right. And righteousness is choosing one behavior over another. It is always action. It is doing.

When Peter asked Jesus how many times should he forgive a church member, Jesus said seventy times seven, a number which, for practical purposes, is unlimited. That is making the same decision a lot of times. And if Jesus thought it benefitted the disciple to repeatedly make the same decision to forgive because that was the right thing to do, then we can apply the principle to all aspects of our decision making process. We decide, fail, repent, forgive ourselves (Christ already has), then again decide to do what is right seventy times seven. A habit was formed in the first seventy times. Long before the seventh seventy times occurs, we have become a people who always chooses to do right, making that decision with neither conscious thought nor fanfare.

PART I

answering the summons—

the dogs barked when the pickup stopped
across the road at five a.m.
they wouldn't stop

a fellow rang the doorbell
now I'm a big guy
rough looking
but I must confess
I didn't much like answering
a knock in the dark

the young man said a retread
had come apart, that he had
neither jack nor spare
asked if he could use our phone
while keeping hands
inside jacket pockets

if Christ were to knock
how easy would it be
to invite him in when
too much has happened—

before I came here neighbors
just south of Pocatello
were murdered by someone
who exited the freeway
just to shoot someone else

not even in Eden
has this been a safe world
chances have to be taken
so on this rainy cold morning
I invited him
in to use our phone but

I never turned my back to him

The Second Covenant

1.

During a conversation about religious education, an Idaho State University faculty member in the English/Philosophy Department told me, “Much of your knowledge hasn’t been community tested.”

“You’re right,” I replied.

To have said more would have invited the antagonism that Jesus aroused when He identified Himself as the Son of God: His claim hadn’t been truth tested by the rabbinical community. It disagreed with everything the religious experts then knew of God. It stood monotheism on its head. In fact, Jesus’ claim of divinity precluded compromise or discussion. It was divine revelation, and it got Him killed.

The *knowledge* the professor referenced when he made his comment about being *community tested* was conveyed six weeks earlier in a conversation about the nature and scope of the new covenant. What I had explained still bothered him.

Truth, like trees, has a life expectancy of, hopefully, multiple decades. A few specimens will live centuries. Greeks and Carthaginians knew the earth was round. But their *community tested knowledge* died when bishops for the Universal Christian Church determined that God would not have made a round earth. Theirs was the new *community tested truth*, but the reasoning of these bishops remains as alien to me as is the chemosynthesis of tube worms living in deep water vents.

The claim the professor found most disconcerting was that the old covenant ended at Calvary, which shouldn’t even be a point of contention within Christianity: the writer of Hebrews says, “In speaking of ‘a

new covenant,' he [Jesus] has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear" (8:13—New Revised Standard Version used throughout unless otherwise noted). It disappeared when Roman legions sacked Jerusalem, *ca.* 70 A.D. The writer of Hebrews adds, "He [Jesus] abolishes the first [covenant] in order to establish the second" (10:9). Paul writes,

So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision" ...remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise...He [Christ] has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross (Eph 2:11–16).

So two covenants don't exist at the same time, one for those who are circumcised and one for those who are Gentiles, since the cross has made peace between Jew and Gentile, creating from the two *one new humanity*. Rather, the first covenant was abolished in order that peace might be established through the second. This promised peace appears to still be in the future even though circumcised and uncircumcised individuals have been drafted into the Body of Christ for two millennia. It appears futuristic because the circumcision of hearts that should have occurred under the Moab covenant when the remnant of Israel returned from Babylon didn't happen due to scribes and Pharisees not understanding the reason for Israel being in a covenant relationship with the Creating God. So, one covenant comes forward through time since Calvary, not two, a concept widely acknowledged but usually ignored, especially within the Church of God, and in the Charismatic Church. For both, it is more "convenient" to retain the old covenant as a prophetic governing shadow, with its blessings and cursings in tact and in force and the subject of weekly sermons about prosperity and liberty.

In a culture that values newness over tradition, the Christian ministry competes with the tentacles of Hollywood for marketshare. When a greater percentage of the population believed in eternal damnation in the flames of hell, marketshare was easier to maintain. A fire & brimstone sermon would keep pews filled for weeks. But so much love was preached forty years ago that hell shrank to barbecue pit size. A different message was needed. Old covenant promises of national prosperity were rediscovered, and they became central in messages about *what God wants for you*.

As the old covenant was mined for its promises of wealth, a younger ministry began at the front of the Book. Sermon series are built around, “So God created humankind in his image...God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it’” (Gen 1:27–28), without ever citing, “[T]he Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart” (6:6). It seems only half of the Book can be read by a generation, a charge many will direct at me.

The most apparent ramification of only one covenant now existing is that the houses of Israel no longer have a special relationship with God. This is the statement that caused the professor problems, for Christian fundamentalists teach some version of the modern nation of Israel having a birthright agreement to the land of ancient Judea, making the land claims of Israelis an unassailable right of Jewish peoples. These same fundamentalists also say silly things such as I heard last night by a popular televangelist from San Antonio, who said, “Joseph was a young Jewish boy—” Judah was the brother of Joseph, and the brother who suggested that Joseph be sold into slavery rather than killed. Descendants of Judah are Jews. By extension, descendants of the house of Judah (which included the tribe of Benjamin and the half tribe of Levi) are Jews. And finally, in modern usage, the dispersed descendants of all Israelites who returned from Babylon and who lived in the land of Judea at the time of the Roman occupation are identified as Jews. But Joseph was not Jewish. His ancestry is part of the so-called

lost ten tribes of Israel. Yes, he was the son of his father Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, so he was an Israelite. His descendants, since Jacob when blessing Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manassah placed his name on his grandsons, were identified as the house of Israel during the centuries when the descendants of Judah were identified as the house of Judah. Joseph's descendants have never been properly called Jewish; for Judah was Ephraim and Manassah's uncle. Descendants of Manassah do not take their identity from their great + however many greats are necessary uncle. You don't take your lineage and identity from your uncle. So before this televangelist preaches his sermon series, he needs to clarify in his mind the family dynamics of Israel.

The practical ramification of only one covenant existing is that practicing or observant Jews have no relationship with God unless they have that relationship under the terms of the second covenant, which will have stony hearts made flesh through faith in Christ and His sacrifice. This is not an anti-Semitic statement, but the truth of Christianity's claim of exclusivity: all who come to God must come through Christ. That is either true, or it isn't. There is either one way, one covenant, or salvation is a many spoked wheel, with every belief in God being equally valid. The internal claims of the accounts of Jesus of Nazareth's life, the internal claims made by Paul in his epistles, the internal claims made by James, Peter and John in their epistles—all state that Jesus was the Son of God, that salvation comes only through His sacrifice, that “the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23). So the documents that form the basis for believing a second covenant was made with humanity preclude the continued validity of first covenant claims of God having a special relationship with the physical descendants of Israel. And except for the expressions of preference made in the first covenant, where else does God establish a special relationship between Himself and the houses of Israel?

Allow me to repeat myself: Jews are not now in a covenant relationship with God, since the first covenant was made obsolete and abolished. Except under the terms of the new covenant, no covenant basis

exists for Observant Jews to have a relationship with God. A person either accepts the new covenant, or rejects it. Buddhists and Muslims reject it. Rabbinical Judaism rejects it. Atheists reject it, as do all who teach that the modern nation of Israel is now in a covenant relationship with Elohim. Under what covenant? the Sinai covenant? the Moab covenant? the two of which compromised the old covenant, and have been abolished, according to Paul. But, you say, God wants a relationship with everyone. Certainly, but does He have one with a Muslim? Why not? Is it because the Muslim refuses the terms of the new covenant? Likewise, don't rabbis who teach observance of the law of God and of the traditions of the fathers also refuse the terms of the new covenant? Then, do not Christian theologians who teach that Jerusalem and the house of Judah are now in a special covenant relationship with God equally spurn the terms of the new covenant? Yes, let's pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and for peace in Belfast. It sounds very spiritual to say, *The Jewish people have a special place in God's heart*, but so do Brits and Americans, Assyrians and Egyptians. Actually, it's the person who believes the Father enough to obey Him that has the special place in the Father's heart. Racial preference isn't part of the new covenant.

Ordained ministers who have taught from the Bible for forty years should know the terms of the new covenant well enough that three or four of them seated together don't parrot—in any variation—agreement of old covenant cursings still pertaining to physical Israelites, or old covenant blessings now pertaining to spiritual Israelites, what I heard from the San Antonio televangelist. Their echos deny Christ's sacrifice.

So the practical application of the second covenant having replaced the first makes the present conflict for Jerusalem more complex than Christian fundamentalists acknowledge: the conflict is between principals who desire to have a relationship with their Creator, but who, at this time, are not in any covenant with God. Both sides pretend that they are the chosen people, but there is a serious shortage of love in their posturing. As a result, while the Israeli claim to the city has

greater antiquity than does the Arab claim, it has no more validity than any other occupier's claim has to geographic territory. Nor any less validity. The United States' national and sovereign claim to vast areas of North America is based upon conquest, treaties, and occupation. Likewise, Israeli claims to Judea are today based upon purchase, treaties, and occupation—and Israelis retain their claims through military victories. They lost their divine rights to Judea when they were sent into national captivity by God. Those rights, however, will be restored when Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah. But those rights will come as yet unimplemented aspects of the Moab covenant are fully incorporated into the second covenant, aspects that will form the structural foundation of Christ's Millennium reign.

What, you might ask, is the Moab covenant? What I identify as the second covenant is actually the third, since Moses mediated a second covenant in Moab: "These are the words of the covenant that the Lord commanded Moses to make with the Israelites in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant that he had made with them at Horeb" (Deu 29:1). Almost every Bible student is familiar with the covenant made at Horeb, or Sinai, but just before the children of the Israelites that left Egypt were to cross into the promised land, God through Moses made an additional covenant with these second generation sojourners. Ezekiel refers to this covenant, as does Paul. But except in the tenth chapter of Romans, Paul unites the Sinai and Moab covenant, and identifies both as the first covenant. And that is how they are usually perceived.

However, much of the confusion about the old covenant would dissipate like fog burnt off by the morning sun if knowledge of what I label the Moab covenant were more widely known. Moses said, "But to this day [when the Moab covenant was made] the Lord has not given you [the children of Israel] a mind to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear" (Deu 29:4) the things of God. Moses' statement should strike us as strange. Why would God not give to these children who grew up wandering in a wilderness barely large enough to contain them understanding of what He was doing? That makes little sense in how we

have, as a culture, mentally constructed God as Love, as only wanting the best for His children. We truly cannot conceive of a God who doesn't now want humanity to understand the things of God, who doesn't want to reveal Himself to his chosen people. But Moses' statement is unambiguous. God marched these children of Israel around a mountain for forty years without letting them even see that their shoes were not wearing out. God was, for lack of any better term, testing these slave descendants to see if they would believe and obey Him on the basis of faith. Their parents hadn't—and their parents were literally being marched to death.

Within the last generation, ranch hands in the Intermountain area where I still have residence began breaking horses in a kinder, gentler way than the one-on-one contests of strength featured in saddle bronc rodeo events. They begin breaking a horse by slowly running the horse around a corral until the horse tires and wants to quit, but they keep the horse moving until the horse is willing to submit to anything to be able to stand still. God did the same thing nearly three and a half millennia earlier with the Israelites that left Egypt. He kept them moving until a whole generation, except for Joshua and Caleb, died, which is how we usually tell the story. But He kept them moving until they were willing to do whatever He told them. How many readers have camped for a summer or longer, or have lived in unsettled conditions? Husbands, what did your wife want most? Just to get settled somewhere? That is what mine wanted when we camped for extended periods, and when we lived on a commercial fishing boat. She just wanted to get into a place of her own, and settle down. These children of the Israelites that left Egypt were no different. For forty years, God had marched them around a mountain, and they were like unbroken horses, tired from running around the inside of the corral. A tired horse will stand there not wanting that saddle on its back, not liking what is happening to it, but wanting even less to keep running around the inside of that corral. And after forty years these children of Egyptian slaves were eager to cross the Jordan, were eager to swing their

swords, were eager to occupy the promised land, were eager to settle down, but unlike horses, they never gave up their idols, never fully believed God. They were spiritually unable to. Their neighbor's wives were too attractive, and they really were too much like horses (Jer 5:8).

After the golden calf incident, God realized that Israel could not obey the terms of the Sinai covenant. They, Israel, needed to be spiritually modified. The solution God proposed was that since they were going to disobey, and since He would have to send them into the promised national captivity because of their disobedience, when He gathered them again out of captivity, He would do the following:

Moreover, the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your [mind—*naphesh*], in order that you may live... Then you shall again obey the Lord, obeying all his commandments that I am commanding you today, and the Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all your undertakings, in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your soil. For the Lord will again take delight in prospering you, just as he delighted in prospering your ancestors, when you obey the Lord your God by observing his commandments and decrees that are written in this book of the law, because you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your [mind]. (Deu 30:6, 8–10)

So when God circumcises these Israelites' hearts after He returns them from captivity, they will love Him with their hearts and minds in order that they can obey His commandments. The connection between love toward God and obedience in this covenant seems solid, as is the connection between obedience and prosperity. With obedience comes physical prosperity. The sequence of events is that when God gathers again Israel from the exile into which He sends them, He will modify their hearts so that they can love Him, and by loving Him, they will obey His commandments, and He will prosper them because they obey His law.

The portion of the covenant I haven't quoted pertains to God gathering Israel from the lands to which He will scatter them when they break the Sinai agreement. In fact, the gathering of Israel that is prophesied to occur when the Messiah comes is contracted under this Moab covenant; it isn't contracted under the second covenant except as the irrevocable calling and gifts of God are claimed by natural Israelites through belief (Rom 11:all). As such, God's promises to gather Israel from where the people have been dispersed ended with the covenantor's death at Calvary unless specifically brought into the new covenant, which we see in, "[A]t the present time there is a remnant [of Israel], chosen by grace" (verse 5), and "And even those of Israel, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again" (verse 23). Israel's future relationship with God will be as a branch broken off and then grafted back into the Body. Those Israelites who were of the remnant Paul identifies as being chosen by grace no longer exist outside of the Body of Christ: "Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened" (verse 7). The elect long ago became part of the Body of Christ. Now, if a natural Israelite is to become part of the Body, it is through the grafting process, which is the same for Jew or Gentile.

Under the Moab covenant, when God would again gather Israel He promised to give them new hearts and minds, the foundation of the second covenant. The will of God is to again gather Israel into Canaan and into Judea, to circumcise hearts and to put His *Pneuma* in them. This gathering, though, won't occur "until the full number of the Gentiles has come in" (verse 25).

But as Paul says, "[P]rophesies will come to an end" (1 Corth 13:8—possibly a better translation than *prophecies can fail*). The end Paul references is, probably, the completion of the prophesied event, but the sense of the Greek can equally be rendered as *prophecies can be abolished*, which is what has happened to the prophecies of the first covenant. Those prophecies which are cited by self-proclaimed *watchmen* to prove that God will again bring national calamity upon the

modern descendants of the house of Israel have been abolished by the covenantor's death at Calvary. To proclaim otherwise is to make oneself into a false prophet. This does not mean that these modern descendants won't again experience loss of sovereignty; this means that God won't bring about that national catastrophe. If captivity comes, it will come from another source, either as the result of the internal consequences of corruption, or from eternal powers such as the little horn of Daniel's visions.

Paul separates the Sinai covenant from the Moab covenant by paraphrasing Moses: "Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law that 'the person who does these things will live by them.' But the righteousness that comes from faith says, 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven"'" (Rom 10:5–6). Paul's cite about righteousness by faith is part of the Moab covenant: he uses how righteousness comes to distinguish between the two covenants, and he continues his citation of the Moab covenant, so there can be little doubt that for Paul, the righteousness developed by the Sinai covenant comes from the achievement of commandment-keeping, while the righteousness derived from the Moab covenant comes by faith, which is the product of strong enough belief to produce obedience; for Paul adds, "[I]f you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and *believe* in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one *believes* with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved" (verses 9–10 emphasis mine). This belief isn't doubt-ridden acceptance, but the type of belief that causes a person to obey God. And confessing this sincere belief outwardly locks the person into publicly obeying God.

Jesus said to Pharisees, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matt 12:34). If a person believes God in the person's heart, then this is what comes from the person's mouth. But if this belief is merely doubt-ridden acceptance, then doubt will be what comes out, even if the doubt is voiced as bravado. A line from Shakespeare sticks in my mind, *Methinks the lady does protest too much*. I don't

know if I have correctly remembered the line, but its essence conveys the sense that if a person talks a lot about his or her humility, there's probably a lack of humility present. If a person talks a lot about personal wealth, there are probably creditors ready to take all the person has. If a person talks a lot about his or her great health, the person probably knows he or she isn't healthy. Advertisers have capitalized on turning a product's weakness into the focus of advertizing campaigns: if customers begin to think of the product's weakness as its strength, then the product's faults cease to exist. Likewise, the Christian who still doubts God will, usually, be the person who sings praise the loudest, for the confident person has no need to be heard by others. I have heard several pastors who were transferred out of a church area say, after they returned from reunions, that the people they thought were the strongest are always the ones who have fallen away. The strength of faith they saw was the masking of doubt. God judges hearts. Men judge outward appearances (I won't speculate about women). But when deeply held belief is manifest in obedience to God, then the mouth doesn't utter upward praise as much as the body practices outward love. Yes, the mouth utters praise, but it as often or more often asks how it can help the person who cannot return that help.

How I can help you is to teach what I know, for how can a person believe God, or even believe in God unless the person has a teacher, a paraphrase of what the Ethiopian eunuch asks Philip?

What Paul calls, in his letter to the Ephesians, *the law with its commandments and ordinances* is the Mt. Sinai covenant. A point I address in my previous works is the nature of metonymy, where a linguistic object is identified by an icon that represents an aspect of the object; e.g., "the White House today said blah, blah, blah." All mature users of English know that the White House said nothing; buildings don't speak in our reality. Rather, English speakers recognize that a spokesperson for the Executive Branch of the United States government said blah, blah, blah today. We recognize metonymy even if we don't know the name for this particular level of linguistic representation: we almost

instinctively recognize that so-called figurative language has been used as a shorthand way of signifying a complex object. This is, frankly, how we use language and how language works. The language templates installed in our minds at the Tower of Babel incident preclude us from not using levels of linguistic representation to which our audience assigns meaning based upon its accumulated knowledge. The speaker conveys sound, or the writer, symbols to which the audience assigns meaning. Thus, words do not have agreed upon meanings except within reader communities that form and reform as individual members of the audience progress through life, education and experience. A person might remain part of a single community for all of his or her life, but usually, schooling and maturity will change a person's musical tastes, interest in television programming, interest in theology, and the reading community to which the person belongs. So the text of any inscribed document changes in meaning with changes of reader communities. No text of any inscribed document is static, including that of Scripture—and if a text is not static, but changed by who reads the text, then claims for infallibility become problematic. I read a different text than do my students even though the words on the page are the same. My assignments of meaning reflect my education, experience, and culture. They might be richer and more complex than my students' assignments; they can also be more naive. As a teacher, my task is to convey to students as much of what I read as possible, while learning what I can from them. Not since Erasmus, or possibly John Milton, has everyone known all there was to know—and then, in some areas I know much more than either of them. So do you.

By the nature of how language works, all texts are “living documents,” in that they reflect their readers. No text has a fixed meaning. Therefore, what the Bible says changes with changes of culture. We will see this in Paul's assumptions about the Sinai covenant.

Literary criticism is always a determination of cultural values as an author either reflects or rejects those values. Unlike the mass produced literature of a culture, an apologetic is a self-aware explication of these

values that can be criticized through an examination of what has been included and excluded. Paul's epistles comprise his apologetic, which is divinely inspired but an interaction with the cultural values that formed the primitive faith. Those values included an awareness that the end of an age was at hand. This awareness colors all of what Paul, Peter, and John write, and becomes the mirror in which the audience sees itself. As such, every culture shaped by the epistles of these Apostles has believed it lives at the end of an age. The values of the 1st-Century became the traditions of the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 19th, 20th. The merits of the apologetic's claims are, then, not subjected to challenge by Believers. The text becomes infallible. It is heresy to suggest otherwise, or to suggest that the text cannot be read by those who have assigned their traditions to the public icons through historical exegesis. And the problem for Christianity is the values of Hellenistic Asia Minor have been the two-way mirror through which Believers have traditionally seen both Christ and themselves. The primitive faith was forced underground before it had the opportunity to change these values. Thus, the generational attempts to retrieve the primitive faith by disciples inevitably end in failure because of the inability of Believers to skirt the issue of textual infallibility and examine what the Apostles included and excluded in their apologetics.

From this point forward, I will trample on a great many toes as I "read" the biblical text as if it were inspired literature, not a theological idol. No one should be in doubt about whether I believe that Christ died for my sins. He did. And my belief is unto obedience. But I am bold enough to open the text, and criticize it in the form of an apologetic. This has needed doing for more than a generation.

Returning to the use of metonymy, the Apostle John uses the linguistic phrase "the Jews" to identify the Pharisees, or by extension, the temple police employed by the Pharisees. This can be seen in John 7:1, 11, 13, 15 where the referent of the phrase *the Jews* is identified in verses 32 & 45. In addition in chapter 9, verses 13 & 15, John uses the icon phrase *the Pharisees*, but for the same referent changes to use the

icon phrase *the Jews* in verses 18 & 22. Plus, enough other examples exist to establish that in John's use of language, the phrases *the Pharisees* and *the Jews* are interchangeable. John was himself a Jew. His derogatory slur, *the Jews*, wasn't ethnically applicable, but pertained to the conjoined religious and civil authorities that controlled the temple. These authorities set feast dates (i.e., the calendar) by their determination of when the new moon rose over the temple, and these authorities arrested and prosecuted Jesus. John knew that they would arrest and kill him if God allowed.

Likewise, the Apostle Paul uses the icon phrase *the law* as a metonymic expression for the old covenant. An example of this can be seen in Roman 5:12–21: Paul writes that “sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses” (verses 13–14). By implication and linguistic structure, for Paul, Moses introduces the law. However, John said that sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4), and Paul seems to confirm that without the law, there can be no reckoning of sin. Thus, when God tells Cain that “if you do not well, sin is lurking at the door” (Gen 4:7), God either gives Cain a meaningless warning, or Cain knows the law of God, the law which John addresses in his definition of sin. By extension, Adam sinned, so Adam had to know the law or his transgression would not be counted as sin. Therefore, though subtle, what we see in Paul's reference about death exercising *dominion from Adam to Moses*, with sin entering the world through Adam (Rom 5:12) but with no sin being reckoned until Moses, is Paul's acknowledgment that the law of God is holy and eternal (Rom 7:12), but that he will use the expression *the law* to identify the codified commandments, statutes and ordinances which Moses mediated. In other words, Paul identifies the entire covenant made between God and the Congregation in the Wilderness by that part of the covenant which the Lord spoke from atop Mt. Sinai.

We see Paul again referencing the first covenant as *the law* in Romans 7:1–6. Marriage is a covenant relationship. Paul compares

marriage to the Sinai covenant, with Israel compared to a woman who has married, a comparison Ezekiel establishes in his prophecies (chapters 16 and 23). When her husband—figuratively Christ—dies, the woman is discharged from her covenant agreement with her husband; “she is free from the law, and if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress” (verse 3). Paul then adds, “But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the spirit” (verse 6). Paul’s linguistic structure assigns the same referent to *the law* and to *the old written code*; both have identical meanings in Paul’s usage here. Thus, Paul uses *the old written code* (i.e., the old covenant) and *the law* interchangeably, even though he is well aware of the holiness of the law of God. If Paul meant only the tablets of stone upon which the Ten Commandments were written by God as the referent for *the old written code*, then he has left what he calls the dead works (Heb 9:14) of the law intact and in force. But that is not the case. Therefore, the context of Paul’s usage of the icon phrase *the law* determines whether he metonymically references the first covenant, or metaphorically references the will of God, spoken by God at Sinai, that produces righteousness when put into action with love. Paul uses the same icon phrase for two referents; thus, my task as a teacher is the same as Philip’s. Whereas the eunuch couldn’t determine who was referenced in the passage from Isaiah he read, greater Christianity is unable to identify the godly belief Paul links with faith. The demons believe (James 2:19), so belief by itself isn’t enough. The writer of Hebrews links unbelief with disobedience (3:19 corresponds to 4:6). Paul links belief and faith (Rom 10), and Moses links the same belief and faith with obedience (Deu 30:6–10). Therefore, to believe God is to have faith in God which is shown by obedience to God, displayed outwardly by observing the commandments of God and having love for even your enemies. Actual commandment keeping means nothing of itself; it is the product of obedience. God could cause dogs to begin keeping the commandments. However, the decision to believe God that leads to obedience is

of value to God, for that decision is the rejection of Satan's rule in one's life. That decision is one that none of the angels under Satan's rule made, as far as we know. So that decision separates us from angels. That decision places us on a spiritually higher plane. Thus, the good works that come from making that decision are the inevitable outgrowth of the decision. They benefit humanity only. The works themselves have no importance to God, but are what He expects from those who believe Him. Indeed, they are as a bloody rag to Him; they are meaningless at best.

Each of us begins life under Satan's reign, listening to his broadcast of rebellion. Under the terms of new covenant, we don't begin life in a covenant relationship with God. We must reject Satan as whom we obey, and voluntarily choose to obey the Father. All of the work has been done for us in getting us to the point where the choice is to be made. Our sins are erased. Our hearts have the law of God written on them, as have our minds; so we know, or can know what is right. All we have to do is choose to believe God to the extent that we obey Him and not Satan. Belief with doubts really isn't belief. Belief with limiting provisions really isn't belief. Belief with a few modifications to the covenant isn't belief, especially when those modifications are Satan inspired. Belief is unconditionally accepting God as your sovereign, even to the destruction of all those things that have made you who you are. And with this decision to unconditionally believe God comes eternal life, and the making of Satan your personal enemy. Now the work begins, for everything that came easy before resists your belief. Even your own body has become your enemy. The reality of having a relationship with God is that He isn't going to do everything for you from this point on. Spiritually, you are now a child. God will let you take some spills. They are actually good for you, even if they hurt at the time. And He will correct you, which usually isn't much fun either (but He also protects as a parent will). So don't think that because Jesus finished His work that your work is finished. Your work of enduring in faith has just begun. And for most of this work, there will

be two sets of footprints in the sand. Don't expect to get carried the whole way. You only get carried through the quicksand that would prematurely take your spiritual life.

The now-not-so-new covenant that replaces the first isn't based upon promises made and accepted at Sinai by either the Lord or Israel. It isn't based upon nationality, nor ethnicity. Nor is it based upon promises of physical prosperity for obedience, and divine cursing for disobedience. It, like the Moab covenant, is based upon faith—and then only after an individual has been drawn and modified spiritually by the Father. And herein lies the other cause of difficulty for the Idaho State professor: what the Christian community has truth-tested is open salvation based upon Peter citing Joel's prophecy on that first Pentecost (Acts 2:21) and Paul also citing Joel (Rom 10:13), but Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day" (John 6:44). Also, He said, "The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice....I am the gate" (John 10:2–3, 9). Because the disciples didn't grasp Jesus' first use of *gate*, He tweaked the analogy by making himself the *gate*. But before and after the tweaking, the Father is the gatekeeper, the one who does the drawing, which agrees with what Jesus prayed concerning His Disciples: "I have made your name [the Father's] known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me...I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours" (John 17:6, 9). Peter addresses his first epistle to "the exiles...who have been chosen and destined by God the Father" (1:1–2). Paul says of himself, "But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace" (Gal 1:15). So it is God the Father who draws or chooses or sets apart a person for His use, even before a person's birth as specifically mentioned in the cases of Paul and Jeremiah. The act of drawing or setting apart by the Father makes

the person holy. That person is no longer the master of his or her own destiny, but has become part of “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” for the purpose of proclaiming “the mighty acts of him who called [the person] out of darkness [and] into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). The person has been drawn and made holy by the Father to do the job of proclaiming the gospel. When this drawing occurs can be debated, but about the actuality of this drawing or setting aside there can be no disagreement.

If a saint is made part of a *holy nation* for the purpose of proclaiming *the mighty acts of Christ*, to whom will the saint proclaim these mighty acts if under the new covenant “they shall not teach one another / or say to each other, ‘Know the Lord,’ / for they shall all know [Christ], / from the least to the greatest” (Heb 8:11)? Obviously, not everyone now knows the Lord, nor does everyone have an interest in the new covenant. And what is the difference between proclaiming and teaching? I think most know. So if saints aren’t to teach one another to know the Lord, but to merely proclaim the mighty works of Christ, then community-tested knowledge must wrestle with Jesus’ instructions to, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19–20). Saints are to teach disciples *to obey* what Christ commanded, but saints don’t need to teach disciples to *know* Christ. Again, the distinction is subtle. By proclaiming Christ’s mighty acts, the individuals whom the Father has drawn will know that these acts are of God, and will believe; and through belief, these new disciples will obey everything Christ has commanded when this *everything* is taught to them by more mature saints. Under the new covenant, the minds and hearts of drawn disciples have been made ready to receive knowledge of God as soon as these disciples learn of Him. The task of saints is, in modern parlance, to be high profile. The *proclaiming* that saints are to do isn’t warning of impending national calamities, but advertising the mighty acts of Christ. The Father hasn’t drawn disciples to be *watch-*

men, or to teach the world to know the Lord, but to say, yes, Jesus the Christ did indeed raise the dead, heal the lame, open the eyes of the blind, feed the hungry, walk on water, and He was raised the third day after He was buried. This is a message about Christ, who, in addition, announced His coming rule of all nations and all peoples.

The Church of God sixty or so years ago began spurning a message about Christ in favor of teaching the message Christ brought, thereby conceding to Evangelicals the proclaiming of Christ's mighty deeds. This was a theological mistake. One of Christ's deeds was to proclaim the gospel, or the good news of the coming kingdom of God, but we are also to announce that He calmed seas and walked on water. One of Christ's deeds isn't inherently more important than any other. We aren't to aim our message at a perceived hole in our "competitors' message" about Christ. Christianity shouldn't be marketed as if it were laundry soap. It doesn't need advertising campaigns, nor market penetration studies, nor market share flow charts. In a pizza parlor, I once sat behind four prominent Anchorage, Alaska, ministers who loudly wrangled over how to divide up the city's Evangelical community, as if Christians were the sliced pie served them. That shouldn't be. Nor should be the type of targeted ministries spawned by megaChurches in their attempts to serve everybody. Christianity is a way of life; it is choosing to do right whenever choice is encountered, with grace through Christ's shed blood covering your shortcomings, not your choices to do what you know is wrong. It isn't for everybody today. It is for the person who has been drawn. As such, we don't need to find these people. They need to find us. The difference isn't a subtle semantic variation of saying the same thing. Rather, the difference is left versus right. The Body of Christ needs to be about its business of proclaiming His mighty deeds, and in the course of doing this proclaiming, those whom the Father has drawn will join with the Body. We don't need to beat the bushes for them as if they were partridges, or set up Christian rabbit drives or deer drives. Collecting disciples, drawn one way or the other, isn't the desired goal for the Body of

Christ. The disciples will come as we choose righteousness, thereby letting the product of our choices to do right become known first locally, then throughout the world. It is Christ's responsibility to make sure drawn disciples find their way to the Body. We don't need to do His job for Him; to think we do is presumptive. We need only to be doing rightly so that we are visible enough we can be located when a newly drawn disciple comes looking. And that reduces advertising budgets to a pittance, thereby leaving funds available for proclaiming the simple message of the mighty deeds Jesus did, and the even mightier deeds He will do as the all powerful Messiah.

Regarding Joel's prophecy that both Peter and Paul cite: the prophecy has a time qualifier that neither Peter nor Paul could understand. God says through Joel, "I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. *Then* everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (2:30–32 emphasis mine). These signs of blood, fire, columns of smoke, and the sun turning dark are parts of the first five trumpets of the Tribulation: "The first angel blew his trumpet, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were hurled to the earth" (Rev 8:7); and "A third of the sea became blood" (verse 9); and "The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light was darkened" (verse 12); and "[H]e opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and moon were darkened with the smoke from the shaft" (9:2). So the portents Joel references that are to occur before God through Joel says, *Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved* haven't happened. The miracle in the hearing of tongues that occurred on that first Pentecost isn't these trumpets of Revelation. But neither Peter nor Paul had the Book of Revelation available to them at the time. They thought Christ would return in their lifetimes. They couldn't know that two millennia would pass without Christ

returning. They couldn't know that Joel's heavenly signs are real signs that still remain in the future.

It is theologically easy to say that Peter and Paul address an earlier fulfillment of Joel's prophecy while the main fulfillment is to come later. That solution satisfies our sense of reality. We justify what would otherwise be mistakes by them, and we psychologically need them not to have ever made any mistakes. So labeling their use of Joel's prophecy an earlier fulfillment allows us not to think too deeply. Thinking deeply is first mentally exhausting; then it tends to create doubts. About what? That they were men like ourselves? Look and listen, Peter and Paul will be pillars in the family of God. They are and will be legends. And if they can make mistakes, so can you and I. Paul corrected Peter for one of his mistakes. I am today, correcting mistakes. Misapplied prophecies. False doctrines. Confusing the product for the process, reversing their importance. Doubts should never come from thinking deeply. Doubts are from unbelief, which produces no doing of that which is right. When belief becomes action, that action strengthens belief and thereby allows one to think deeply about the mysteries of God, one of which is how could He allow an Apostle to make a mistake. How is He to stop the Apostle from making a mistake and still allow that Apostle free will? I know there are ways, but will any of those ways further develop the habit of choosing to do that which is right in anyone? No. Job asked that his words be recorded, and they have been. Will his words help him to be humble and appreciate the difference between what he was and what he is when he experiences his change? I suspect so. Can this same thing be said of Peter and Paul? When they are glorified, do you think they will try to justify mistakes? These mistakes can be justified; they are really only mistakes because not all of their thoughts ended up in their speech or prose. By thinking deeply, I can supply for myself what didn't get said. I will write something that is only partially conveyed in print (this is in addition to the real mistakes I will make). I will think the concept is all there; it's complete in my mind, so I will read it as complete. But in

reality, much of what I thought I said I left still inside of my mind. Same for Peter and Paul. The difference is we have deified their words so we have to create a “partially fulfilled” doctrine to maintain that deification. I tell you with the authority of one who writes, Paul will wish that he had rephrased some of what he wrote. He will be angry at himself for using the words he chose; he could have used other words, other phrases, other examples. But if he had, the end result would be the same. He would still be mad at himself. What he really wanted to say still wouldn't be in the text. Readers would still have to supply meaning; thus, the meaning of what he writes (of what I write) is always limited to the depth of thought of the reader. The problem is, really, human language. We need Christ to bring a new language. None of ours works very well.

The Idaho State professor who worried about my knowledge not being community-tested said that he doesn't trust Revelation. For him, perhaps for cause. His interest is the High Church, with its almost anti-Revelation certainty of continuance, where all things will remain as they are. But I trust Revelation. I don't believe human life will continue as it has; I don't believe it evolved, nor do I believe that we must do such things as limit population growth to preserve life. Limiting population is limiting the number of potential sons and daughters who could be adopted into the family of God. Yes, my hunting and fishing would be better if fewer people were competing for the same buck, or the same bass. But my love for those who haven't yet been born is such that I would like to see them as family members. I am thankful Christ didn't return when Paul thought he would. I wouldn't have existed, and I'm well pleased with the fact that I do. I want as many more as possible to also experience existence even if that existence is difficult, for through existence comes the possibility of adoption. The truly terrible times they will have experienced in, say, sub-Saharan Africa will qualify them to receive the future joy and peace of a family relationship with God. Without that coming into existence through the union of egg and sperm, no potential for adoption exists. And if I want to see

these potential family members exist, how much more so does Christ? His sacrifice is great if only one person accepts it. It is billions of times greater if billions accept it. The more billions that accept it, the greater it is. So if I were Christ, I would want all who can be conceived to come into existence. Yes, they will clutter up stream banks and interfere with where I want to hunt, but I don't expect to complain much about either when glorified. Yes, their quality of life is likely to be poor. I wish that weren't the case. But people have a way of adapting to the worst conditions in order to survive for a while. That *while* will be long enough to learn to hate Satan, and all that he does, all that he stands for, all that he promotes.

As far as the inherent authority that the Book of Revelation possesses or lacks, I understand the trope used to seal its prophecies. So when I find in the trumpet plagues those very heavenly signs that Joel used to date when *everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved*, I am more inclined to believe Christ than I am anyone else. If Christ says those heavenly signs that must proceed open salvation won't happen until the Tribulation arrives, then for me, open salvation begins sometime after the fifth trumpet. When all passages are merged, I find that open salvation begins with Christ's return as the all powerful Messiah. Under inspiration, Peter understood the principle, but not the prophecy. He couldn't. Only the Lamb of God was found worthy to open the scrolls in the day of the Lord.

So, yes, Peter correctly cites Joel. He thought he was living in the last days, as did Paul and John. They weren't. But before Christ gave John His revelation, no one could understand that they weren't living during *the time of the end*. And Peter was correct in that salvation had become available by calling on the name of the Lord, but only to those whom the Father drew from the world. After Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah, that drawing by the Father will be of everyone. Jesus tells us that not everyone is now being drawn, which is also the evidence of our own observation. Joel's prophecy places a qualifier of heavenly signs upon **when** everyone who calls on the name of the Lord

will be saved. That qualifier didn't go away just because Peter cited Joel to explain what was happening on that first Pentecost. Salvation was then being given to those who had been drawn by the Father, salvation coming with the receipt of the Holy *Pneuma*. This is not understood within the Evangelical Church: neither Peter nor Paul can make qualifiers of heavenly portents disappear. All they can do is misunderstand Joel's prophesy, which Christ reenforces when He gives John the Book of Revelation. The heavenly signs are sure. They will happen during the Tribulation. Then Christ will return, and all who call upon Him will be saved.

In the Ephesians passage previously cited, Paul identifies, within humanity, a preexisting opposition between those who are *circumcised* and those who are not. He made his point about the law being abolished to set up his point that Jesus created "in himself one new humanity in place of two, thus making peace, [that Jesus] might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross" (Eph 2:15–16). In other words, the new covenant will be the means by which *one new humanity* is reconciled to the Father. Ethnicity/genetics will cease to be a barrier to having a relationship with God under the terms of the second covenant.

Under the Sinai agreement, God has a covenant relationship with only one human family: the descendants of the patriarch Israel, the younger son of Isaac, the second son of Abram. Through the prophet Amos, God says, "Hear these words that the Lord has spoken against you, O people of Israel, against the whole family that I brought up out of the land of Egypt: You only have I known / of all the families of the earth" (3:1–2). God didn't have a covenant relationship with Egypt, nor with Babylon, nor with Assyria, nor with the Chinese. Although promises were made to both Esau and Ishmael, God didn't have a covenant relationship with the descendants of either, both of whom were also circumcised. Rather, while Paul's metonymical use of *circumcision* can reference both houses of Israel, in practice he has restricted the term to the remnant of the house of Judah that had returned from

Babylon—by *the circumcision*, Paul means the Jews. So the spiritual division of humanity that resulted from the implementation of the Sinai Covenant ended at Calvary. Circumcision was no longer of value, a point Paul vigorously made during all of his ministry.

At Calvary, the birthright relationship with God that all Israelites had possessed since Moses ended. For too many generations, Israelites had not kept the commandments, statutes and ordinances of God. They had profaned sabbaths and committed spiritual adultery. Even the Pharisees were not keeping the law of God, but rather, they kept their own traditions based upon their assignment of linguistic objects to the codified icons received at Sinai. In other words, they had assigned their own meaning to the words of the law of God, and in doing so, they had scoured love from the law, leaving the law as hard as their stony hearts. And this is a point that needs stressed to all biblical students who almost automatically assume that the Pharisees were the ultimate law-keepers: Jesus said to Pharisees, “Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law” (John 7:17), and “You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition” (Mark 7:8—also verses 9–13). Plus, Jesus linked righteousness to keeping the commandments in Matthew 5:19, then said, “For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (verse 20), which, by implication, has the scribes and Pharisees not keeping the commandments as God intended them to be kept. One more example: Jesus said, “The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach” (Matt 23:3—also verses 23 & 28). So it is reasonable to assume that the scribes and the Pharisees were teaching that the law of God was to be kept (which Jesus said we should do [Matt 5:19]), but they were not keeping the law themselves. It is a major theological error to assume that the Pharisees were law-keepers; they were merely law-teachers, and then they weren’t very good at even doing that although Jesus commends one lawyer for his answer about the require-

ment of the law (“You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live” [Luke 10:28]). The lawyer, though, had a problem in recognizing his neighbor—he was either reluctant or unwilling to think in terms of *one new humanity*, an organization of humankind in which circumcision was of no importance. Therefore, because of long-term spiritual adultery and lawlessness through their lack of love in applying the law of God, Israel was rejected spiritually, just as both houses of Israel had been previously rejected physically when they were sent into national captivity. Their marriage covenant ended. Israel was free to remarry, if any deity would have her as faithless as she was.

Abraham’s relationship with God had been based upon faith, not a birthright, nor a covenant. Paul, in citing the Moab covenant (Rom 10:6–8), said it was based upon faith. And the second covenant is based on what had made God’s relationship with Abraham work, faith. Without faith a person cannot please God, who had seen the result of more than seven centuries of faithlessness when He sent both houses of Israel into national captivity. But faith is based upon belief, as has been and will be seen.

Except for fundamental religious sects, the trend in Western cultures for the past fifty or more years has been to only think in terms of *one new humanity*: multiculturalism has become the intellectual horse scholars and politicians hope to ride to world peace now that universal destruction is obtainable. Most of these scholars don’t realize that the Apostle Paul precedes them by two millennia. Nor do they realize that Jesus in destroying one bipolar opposition, instituted another, which causes that *one new humanity* to become the paradigm of the Millennium, not of this present age.

Under the Sinai covenant, the Congregation in the Wilderness said as one, “Everything that the Lord has spoken we will do” (Exo 19:8). But they lied. Roughly forty days later, God, verbally disowning these Israelites, “said to Moses, ‘Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them’”

(31:7–8). Moses hurried down, and threw down the stone tablets, figuratively breaking the law before it could be fully implemented. And from there, the relationship eroded into a rift.

When the Logos came as the man Jesus, God had previously put away both the house of Israel and the house of Judah for their spiritual adultery. He gave them bills of divorce, but He was not free to enter into another covenant relationship until the first was broken by death, either His or Israel's. He could have annihilated all of both houses of Israel, which would have broken His promises to Abraham and to David. So He really had no choice if humanity were to be reconciled to its Creator: the God of the old covenant came as a human to die. And with the death of the man Jesus the Christ, the Sinai covenant ended. God will not go back and remarry either house of physical Israel. To do so would break a taboo (see Deu 24:4). Thus, the reconciliation promised to “Sodom and her daughters” and “Samaria and her daughters” (Ezek 16:53) and to Jerusalem and the house of Judah is based on the “everlasting covenant” (verse 60).

Although scholars of classical civilizations usually find that the concept of *polis*, or of the city-state, never developed in Semitic kingdoms, but the concept only found the human and economic conditions necessary to allow it to flourish along the shores of the Mediterranean (G. Charles-Picard, *Daily Life in Carthage*), God through Ezekiel treats Jerusalem as a *polis* after the house of Judah was initially taken captive by Babylonians. God through Ezekiel calls Jerusalem the house of Israel, thereby confusing biblical *watchmen* to this day. Thus when God says to Jerusalem, “Then you will remember your ways, and be ashamed when I take your sister, both your elder and your younger, and give them to you as daughters, but not on account of my covenant with you. I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the Lord” (Ezek 16:61–62), the second reference to a covenant—the covenant which God will establish—is the new covenant that began on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given to disciples. While it could be argued that God's usage of *Jerusalem* (verse 2—to

whom the chapter is addressed) is metonymical, the argument neglects the fact that both the house of Israel, and the majority of the house of Judah have already been sent into national captivity. Only a remnant population of Israelites remained in Judea. The great nation of David had been reduced to a city-state. And it is this *polis* which God now identifies as the house of Israel. There is no other sovereign house of Israel in existence. However, since scholars don't expect to find a *polis* in Egypt, Israel, or Persia, they haven't recognized how Ezekiel identifies Jerusalem. Thus, lesser scholars have dragged Ezekiel's prophecies into the new covenant, and still try to scare the modern descendants of the house of Israel into good behavior. Their sermons are powerful, but their scholarship is of spiritual adolescence.

In the Ezekiel cite of the above paragraph, the first covenant referenced (*but not on account of my covenant with you*) is the then existing Sinai and Moab covenants that are customarily considered the first covenant. However, without any specified termination of this existing covenant, God introduces the establishment of His covenant (*I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the Lord*) which contains the clause about knowing God, that clause being one of the defining features of the second covenant, since without spiritual modification the Israelites were unable to comprehend an invisible God. Their mental paradigms had no allowance for a God that wasn't represented by a thing, or had thinginess, a subject to which I will return. So under the first covenant, Israel never really knew God, could never conceive of a God without form and a face, and couldn't worship what couldn't be seen. By that clause about knowing God, we recognize the covenant to be established is the second covenant, and we can say with reasonable certainty that the prophecy to restore the fortunes to Sodom and her daughters, Samaria and her daughters, and Jerusalem has become part of the new covenant.

Again note God's use of the concept of *polis*: Sodom is a city-state in God's reckoning, as is Samaria and the other cities of the northern kingdom. So the question needs asked, does Sodom exist today? Not

that I'm aware. So is this restoration of fortunes (Ezek 16:53–63) to occur at the beginning of Christ's Millennium reign, or in the great White Throne Judgment? The flesh and blood resurrection of "the whole house of Israel" in the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1–14) will occur during the White Throne Judgment. If all of Sodom and her daughter city-states were destroyed by fire behind Lot and his daughters, then a physical resurrection will be needed before fortunes can be restored. The better promise of the new covenant is eternal life, and the resurrection when Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah is the resurrection of firstfruits in glorified bodies. No bones. No breath. So this is not the resurrection of the whole house of Israel that Ezekiel sees in vision. In that resurrection, life is tightly connected to breath. It seems, then, that the restoration of fortunes about which Ezekiel prophesies will occur during the great White Throne Judgment. I will here assert that this prophecy about the restoration of Sodom's fortunes isn't for Christ's return, but for the day of judgment. The restoration will be Sodom's chance to receive eternal life, not something ever before offered to the inhabitants of the city-state. And we can go to Jesus' comparison of the fates of cities in Judea and Sodom's fate in the day of judgment: Matthew 10:15; 11:23–24; and Luke 10:12. Evidently because Sodom, after being resurrected to breath and bones, will know and believe God when offered the terms of the new covenant, Sodom will have a better fate than the people of Judea who rejected Jesus as the Son of God.

The covenant under which God says, "I will take you [Israel] from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land....A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezek 36:24, 26) is the second covenant. Since I spend considerable time with this prophecy in the following essay, I will only say here that the house of Israel isn't restored to God under the terms of the first covenant. Rather, Israel is restored under the same covenant that breaks down the opposition of *circumcised* and

uncircumcised; Israel is restored under the new covenant when “if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom 10:9), that time to begin after Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah. This is the restoration prophesied by Joel that was previously cited. Israel is restored as part of the *one new humanity* of Christ’s Millennium reign. So this isn’t the restoration during which Sodom’s fortunes are restored. For God’s name’s sake, God restores the house of Israel at least a millennium earlier. This is the union of Israel and Judah about which Ezekiel prophesies (37:15–28). David shall be their king, and David as a prophet and as someone after God’s own heart will be part of the resurrection of firstfruits. So this second prophecy can be dated by King David’s resurrection, whereas the first can be dated by the physicalness of the resurrection.

So there is no misunderstanding, the covenant made between God and Israel at Mt. Sinai become obsolete when the new covenant made between God and spiritual Israel took effect on the Pentecost after Jesus’ crucifixion at Calvary. Spiritual Israel is comprised of individuals, who are not limited to any particular ethnic group. They are individuals whom the Father has drawn, and who, by faith, believe that Christ is the Messiah, that He died and was resurrected after three days, that He is now our high priest and savior, that the gift of God is eternal life. And both houses of Israel as well as all of humanity will be restored to the Father when Christ returns as the all-powerful Messiah—all who then call on Christ’s name will be saved. But until the Millennium arrives, those individuals whom the Father has drawn and made holy are to do the job of proclaiming the mighty deeds of Christ, which includes His bringing the good news (or gospel) of Christ’s soon coming Millennium reign.

However, returning to my earlier point: just as Christ destroyed one bipolar opposition, He established another. Until *the great and terrible day of the Lord* arrives, “No one can come to me [Christ] unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last

day” (John 6:44). Thus, until *the day of the Lord* at which time Christ will return, humanity is divided into those who have been drawn by the Father, and those who haven’t yet been drawn, since eventually, all of humanity will be. Not all of humanity is now needed to proclaim the gospel, and unless the Father has a job in mind for the person either before Christ’s return, during the Millennium, or during the White Throne Judgment, the person’s chance to accept or reject the terms of the second covenant lay in the future, either later in the person’s life, or in the great White Throne Judgment. The person isn’t lost, nor bound for hell. The person merely still awaits his or her time of salvation. What the writer of Hebrews says, “And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment” (9:27) is true: for the majority of humanity, judgment occurs after death and resurrection. This is not true, though, of firstfruits. Peter said, “For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God” (4:17). Jesus said, “Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his [the Son of Man’s] voice and will come out—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28–29). The judgment for both groups Jesus here references occurred prior to their resurrection, and actually prior to their death; they are of the household of God, upon whom judgment has come (verse 24). Those who have done good will be resurrected in glorified bodies; they will have been judged. Paul says, “Therefore *do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes*, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God” (1 Corth 4:5 emphasis mine). The time for pronouncing judgment is when Christ comes. While the judgment is now on the household of God, that judgment will not be individually known until *the Lord comes*, when some will be resurrected in glorified bodies. A person won’t have been in heaven for two thousand years awaiting the judgment of being cast into the lake of fire, which will exist since the beast

and false prophet have been cast into it at Christ's return (Rev 19:20). Nor will a person be in hell for a thousand years awaiting glorification. And if a person were in hell, the person's judgment would have been pronounced. Besides, who will be in charge of hell when the Father causes fire to come from within Satan, that fire to consume him and turn him to ashes on the earth (Ezek 28:18)?

So when Jesus says, *For the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear the Son of Man's voice and will come out*, we will either believe Jesus, or we won't. It is again that decision of whether we truly believe God. We will believe that the dead are in their graves, or we will believe they are not. We will believe that the dead in their graves hear the voice of Christ, or we will not. Our choice. We will believe those who are in their graves and *who have done good* will be resurrected to life, or we will not. If we believe anyone who has not done good is resurrected to life, we don't believe Jesus. Again, our choice. We will believe *those who have done evil* will be resurrected to condemnation, or we won't. While they could be resurrected into the lake of fire at Christ's return, the textual suggestion is that they will be resurrected at the end of the White Throne Judgment, when "anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:15). Therefore, it is our choice as to how we apply the popular quote that *it has been appointed unto man once to die, then the judgment*. The quote doesn't pertain to those who are of the household of God, since judgment is upon the household while disciples live; it pertains only to those who are not of the household of God. Also, the quote gives no indication of how much time passes between death and judgment. Since the dead know nothing (Eccl 9:5), they experience no sensation of time passing. For all who have died, their resurrection will seem to occur as they lose consciousness that final time. So we either believe Christ and find that there is a time lapse between death and the pronouncement of judgment when Christ returns, or we can reject what Jesus taught. We can, through the insertion of extratextual knowledge, choose not to believe God.

The Hellenistic values of 1st-Century Asia Minor were Platonic, in that the underlying societal assumption was that man had an immortal soul which went either up or down at death. Consideration that inspired Hebraic texts nowhere assign any life to humanity than what comes from breath wasn't conceivable. These Hellenistic converts couldn't even entertain the concept of men and beasts both returning to elements of the earth after death; men had to differ from their hunting dogs. They weren't the same in life; they couldn't be the same in death, regardless of what Solomon says. So the documents that make up the new covenant were strained to find any suggestion of a conscious afterlife. And all of the evidence needed was found in Luke's recounting of the Cynic fortune reversal tale Jesus told to mocking Pharisees. (See Appendix A.) But Jesus, by telling this Greek fictional story to these Pharisees, turned their mocking of Him back onto them in such a manner that the Pharisees' education became the means by which Jesus called these wouldbe teachers of the Law Gentiles. Luke apparently appreciated what Jesus did, but the other gospel accounts omit the story, which likely wasn't understood by Matthew and Mark. As a reader and writer of texts, I appreciate what Jesus did. Nothing else He could have said would have cut these Pharisees' mocking off half as well. Jesus denied the claim of which they were most proud, that of being Abraham's seed. He called them Greeks by the context and the form of the parable He tells them, but He did it in such a sophisticated way that two millennia of commentators haven't understood what He accomplished. I am, however, impressed. The mind that would think to do this to these mocking Pharisees hasn't been fully praised. And I wish to praise Him. While I can mostly answer the questions asked of Job, who didn't understand the gap between himself and the Logos, the gulf between humanity and God is so great that only on occasions can we begin to quantify it: the Lazarus-Dives parable is such an occasion. It has taken longer to grasp the dynamics at work in this story than it took to determine how the earth hangs in

space (Job 38:6), and then it took inspiration through His Holy *Pneuma*.

If the Father is responsible for drawing or not drawing, and if the Godhead is not a respecter of persons, then salvation becomes the responsibility of the Father, which He has given to Christ. It is, therefore, foolishness to think that a person is lost forever if the person was never drawn by the Father in this life, and without being drawn, a person just won't be interested in the things of God. The only plan of salvation the prophets of old knew called for salvation to occur in what we recognize as the great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11–15). That is, as I have written in the previous paragraphs, still true for the majority of humanity: salvation will be offered at the person's resurrection at the end of Christ's Millennium reign. So the person isn't now in hell, living life in a barbecue pit, but the person awaits his or her change in the grave.

Perhaps humanity had to wait until the 20th-Century before the paradigms of its social constructs could conceive the same concept of death's finality without a resurrection that 8th-Century B.C.E. prophets knew. The idea of a soul-man seems preposterous; yet, this Hellenistic Asia Minor concept remains alive within greater Christianity. However, within the Church of God and its advent spinoff a better understanding of the resurrection has vied with another set of doctrinal disconnects that have narrowly identified saints. These disconnects have the vast majority of all self-declared Christians being false. They might be, but that isn't our judgment, nor will their status be known earlier than at Christ's return as the all powerful Messiah. If Christ's objective is the production of righteousness character (i.e., the character to choose to do right in every situation), then doctrinal error is of little importance as long as the individual did what the individual *knew* was right, believing unto obedience that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died and was raised the third day and now sits at the right hand of the Father. We can expect Christ to get His Bride ready by eliminating

as many doctrinal errors as possible, but the amount of understanding a church has is the responsibility of Christ and of the angel over the particular church.

Saints in the sixth of the seven churches will have love for one another, and for the scattered saints throughout greater Christianity, or they will not have conquered Satan. Yes, we have better kept the words of Christ, but we are not genuine without having deep love for all disciples, especially for those in the household of faith who have been poorly taught by their teachers, or misled by carnival barkers. Their drawing by the Father has made them just as much a part of the Body of Christ as our drawing and obedience has made us. To us go the best promises, which are contingent upon practicing love for all humanity. We aren't offered a position in another church if we fail to have true brotherly love. This is one-shot salvation, with extremely high stakes at risk. "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved" (Peter 4:18), then why do we choose to exclude from the Body a saint with less knowledge, but with, perhaps, more zeal to obey? No, we cannot permit doctrinal error to enter the Church of God, but the Body of Christ encompasses fellowships we reject because of their errors. This makes our salvation difficult, for it is easy to withhold the extension of love to these fellowships.

In 1965, Georgia-Pacific's papermill at Toledo, Oregon, hired virtually every able-bodied man who applied for employment. I was one of those hired. But by the spring of 1966, the company didn't need help. Lots of men applied, because of the wages G-P paid, but very few were hired. The same for God in this age: Peter assures us that those whom the Father has drawn have a work to do—and in the foreseeable future, as in the 1st-Century, God will draw many because of the amount of work that must be done. He drew tens of thousands in the 1st-Century; He will draw hundreds of thousands at the close of this age. Perhaps millions. But He won't draw everyone. Many more than are drawn will have to await their resurrection in the White Throne Judgment before they have their first chance to accept the terms of the

New Covenant. This won't be a second chance at salvation for them. No one gets a second chance. However, until a person is drawn by the Father, Christ cannot offer the person eternal life. Christ has authority over the person, and the person can want to have a relationship with God, can believe that he or she has a relationship, but until drawn by the Father, the person has no relationship regardless of what he or she believes.

But just what does being drawn by the Father entail, if not the circumcision of the heart that leads to obedience through belief? Can we cast a sidelong glance across all of greater Christianity and say with love that God hasn't called any of them? Of course we cannot. But that is what we have done, and what the splinters of the Church of God continue to do. No, we cannot allow greater Christianity to devour the Church as it devoured the most visible administration of a generation ago. Yes, it is safer to have nothing to do with greater Christianity. But where is love in not even challenging the delusion God sent to those who were perishing seventeen centuries ago? For the sake of drawn disciples ensnared by Platonism, or enraptured by Christian theatre, we must again become visible enough we can be found in the midst of the religious carnivalism posing as the faith once delivered. We hold the primitive faith, we always have. We shouldn't fear contesting with the flamboyant showmen for the supremacy of doctrines.

Community tested truth has, for the majority of the Evangelical Church, the act of inviting Jesus into one's heart as the act of being drawn by the Father, which creates an illogical conflict over who makes the first move: God or humanity? Of course, not everyone perceives the question of who moves first as one of consequence. For those individuals, salvation isn't a chess game in which White always moves first.

No, salvation isn't a chess game; it isn't a game as Western culture thinks of games and gaming. But the Father always makes the first move. He is the gatekeeper who determines admittance into the inner court of the temple of God. Once a person has been admitted into the inner court, he or she will determine whether the person enters the

sanctuary and the holy of holies, or whether the person will stop somewhere short of the ark of the covenant. The person will stop him or herself by failing to endure, by not growing in faith and knowledge, by being overwhelmed by the cares and concerns of society, by practicing lawlessness which is sin. The person, as the law of God, should rest in the ark of the covenant, under the mercy seat.

The carnal objection to the concept of predestination is its limiting effect on tithes and offerings (because of the smaller pool of potential members), and its suppression of urgency for evangelistic efforts (the Elect doesn't need converted, but rather, taught what Jesus taught His disciples). So the concept has been ignored by the modern derivatives of greater Christianity. No longer does *community tested truth* have God knowing the Elect from before birth. It doesn't even have God deciding to draw some and not others after birth; rather, it has the Holy Spirit trying to gather as much of humanity under its wings as it can lure away from Satan, as the two battle for the greatest number of souls, with God presently losing to Satan. This is a variant form of Satan worship. If God truly wants you, He will have you. What He wants, though, is your decision to reject Satan. He doesn't need your neighbor's decision today. He wants yours, if you have been drawn. Predestination is the timing of when you will be drawn.

For Jesus, humanity existed as "the world," or as "His disciples." No other division matters spiritually, just as under the first covenant, no division mattered excepted circumcised, or uncircumcised. And even today, from a Christian perspective we divide humanity into these same divisions of *the world* and disciples. We know that Muslims are not now disciples of Christ. Nor are Buddhists. Nor are most Muslims or Buddhists likely to become disciples before they die. They, along with the vast majority of humanity, comprise *the world*. They are spiritually content with what they believe—and multiculturalism precludes our impinging upon their beliefs. They see no need to convert to another belief paradigm that also promises them life in heaven, or in some other state (not that true Christianity does)—and multicultural-

ism perceives all belief paradigms as equally valid. They will not become disciples of Christ unless the Father draws them out of their communities of truth-tested values—and multiculturalism prohibits evangelizing them. So no argument, nor any form of human reasoning will prevail against their “truth” that has withstood the vagaries of time. A miracle is needed before they will change spiritual paradigms, or even consider changing (a miracle and the demise of multiculturalism). They are, from greater Christianity’s perspective, lost and without hope, so the flavor of their being lost makes no difference.

At the heart of Christianity is really an *us/them* paradigm that is the antithesis of multiculturalism. We can wish that all of humanity accepted Christ’s sacrifice, but witnessing to them, putting a tract into their hands won’t save all of them. They will not now, nor can they believe God. The social constructs into which they have been born restrict or prohibit belief until they have been drawn by the Father, and spiritually modified. This doesn’t mean greater Christianity shouldn’t proclaim the mighty works of Jesus the Christ. It merely means that we shouldn’t expect *the world* to believe. Whom the Father has drawn will believe, will “convert,” and will be saved if the person endures in faith to his or her end. Everyone else will remain a Muslim, a Buddhist, a Jew, or whatever he or she was before.

So we shouldn’t have difficulty recognizing the inherent truth of the bipolar opposition Christ identified in His statement, “No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me” (John 6:44). We see the reality of Christ’s words in the people we meet daily, not considering that five-sixths of the world’s population doesn’t self-identify itself as Christian. What we see is the Father drawing some individuals now, while not drawing every Muslim or Buddhist or Environmentalist. We can wish that the Father would draw a husband or a wife today, but we know that some individuals are plainly not interested in having a relationship with God at this time. We also know that many of these spouses will become interested in the future. So people who are part of *the world* exist in a temporary state of separation from God, because,

frankly, the Father hasn't yet drawn them to Himself, which is the reality of being drawn by the Father and called by Christ.

Again, direction or who moves first is important: if those individuals who want no relationship with God at this time have cut themselves off from God, those individuals are responsible for their separation, and by extension, their lack of salvation. If, however, the Father hasn't yet drawn those individuals, then the Godhead becomes responsible for those individuals' separation and for their salvation. God's will is that no human is lost, so for now it is sufficient to say that Christ has authority over all humanity to give eternal life to all whom the Father has given Him (John 17:2). Thus, whenever the Father tells His Son that *John Doe* is now His, not Satan's, then Christ can and will call the person, who still has to respond. Some individuals respond immediately. Some after a while. Some after a very long while. And the downside of this is some respond, then for whatever reason[s] choose to return to *the world*. That person has made a high stakes bet with his or her salvation. Acceptance of Christ's sacrifice is truly a one shot affair. If the person has been genuinely enlightened, the person needs to return to the fold before the person sears his or her conscience and cannot renew faith. Otherwise, the person probably has made reservations for the lake of fire. Thus, the wager is whether the person was enlightened. Until death, there is time to return to the fold if the person is unsure about winning that wager. If the person has any doubts about winning, even the smallest doubt, the person was probably enlightened.

Once saved, always saved is a false doctrine, as is all are forever lost who do not today accept Christ's sacrifice. Everyone will receive one chance to accept redemption after being drawn by the Father. However, no one gets a second chance. Christ will not be sacrificed a second time for you. Bluntly put, you're not worth it. If you won't endure in faith the first time you accept His sacrifice, what makes you think you would endure the second time, or the fourth time, or the thirtieth time? But the Father's love for you is so great that He will make sure

you receive a chance, even if that chance for salvation is in the great White Throne Judgment. When you receive your chance, though, is the Father's decision. If it is now, don't blow it. You can sear your conscience to such an extent that wrong seems okay, and evil seems okay as long as it isn't too evil. You will not then necessarily choose to do right when confronted with a decision. Your spiritually modified conscience will no longer bother you when compromising with what you know you should have chosen, and you are no longer useful to God. The earnest of eternal life you received has become comfortable with Satan's broadcast of rebellion; you've joined the rebellion. That seared conscience cannot be renewed unless you get to work right now before the scarring gets any worse. Christ will help you and the angels will rejoice, but you will have to do the hard work of overhauling your decision making process—and it is your decision making process that God cannot create by Himself. That decision making process separates you from angels, and is the heart of your eternal destiny.

The problem with the concept of community tested truth should now be evident: every person who is part of *the world* lives in a social construct that is not of the Father, that is actually separated from the Father by its belief paradigms, by its determination of what is *truth*. Thus, the arbitrary nature of *community tested* knowledge prevents all claims of absolute truth from being taken seriously. Truth is whatever I say it is for my social construct, and it is whatever you say it is for your construct. Truth exists only in the relationship each of us has with God; yet absolute Truth exists. But it exists without being recognized by but one social construct. Jesus confirmed this when He said, "The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep...and the sheep hear his voice...the sheep follow him because they know his voice" (John 10:2–4). Those individuals who have been drawn by the Father hear Christ's voice, and will follow Him, even if they have been momentarily confused by Pretenders who claim to have been sent by the good shepherd. Those Pretenders are thieves and bandits and very pious ministers who teach myth, not the words of Jesus.

What the second covenant truly does is separate humanity into two distinct oppositions, one in a covenant relationship with God, one not yet in this covenant relationship. These oppositions compete unequally within and across the social constructs that form all of human society. Those individuals who are part of this new covenant try to evangelize the world, for they are unable to identify beforehand whom the Father has drawn. Thus, those individuals and communities who haven't yet been drawn vigorously oppose the overturning of their belief paradigms that is necessary before a person can have a part in this new covenant; the second covenant literally turns the world upside-down as it buries multiculturalism in the casket of wind and good intentions in which this imitation *one new humanity* was spawned.

Evangelism is, as I argued earlier, a difficult concept to incorporate. It is proclaiming the mighty works of Christ while teaching those things which Jesus commanded His disciples. It is not teaching humanity to know God, for under the second covenant, all know God—and if a person isn't now being drawn by the Father, the person cannot know Him, won't believe Christ, and will mock the things of God. Therefore, evangelism is being that beacon set on a hill, guiding those who know they are lost to God. It is high profile but not in your face witnessing. It is being visible above the carnival lights of demon worship. It is the small voice of silence that can be heard by even the deaf.

Even if everyone who has identified him or herself as a Christian is accepted as genuine, more of the world has no knowledge of, nor interest in the new covenant, than has accepted its better promise of eternal life. Frankly, either Satan as the Adversary is a far better salesman than is the Father, or the Father isn't at this time drawing everyone. You choose which you believe, for there really isn't a third option. Any variation of God is now drawing everyone, but not everyone knows to invite Jesus into his or her heart either makes God a respecter of persons, where He disciples some individuals but not others, or makes God's love for humanity akin to what we feel towards feedlot beef cat-

tle. Either way, Satan becomes more powerful than God because of his greater interest in humanity—and I can assure you, Satan has no goodwill towards humanity. We are to him what lab mice are to us. Our defects, according to him, are the reason why his schemes don't work. *The world*, according to him, would know peace if it weren't for our foibles. But peace at what price? Worship of him? He cannot rule his own household. He sowed rebellion when he went to war against Elohim, and he now reaps the rebellion he sowed, in that the kings of the North and of the South squabble like two schoolyard bullies, each blaming the other for their loss to God.

Elohim concluded our defects were why we couldn't keep our end of the covenant to which we agreed at Sinai. The first covenant had a fault: the people couldn't keep its terms. There was nothing wrong with the terms, especially as modified by the Moab covenant (Deu 29 & 30). What had to change weren't the terms, but the people agreeing to the terms. The fault lie within the Israelites who agreed to those initial Sinai terms, and within their descendants (Heb 8:8). As such, God says, "I gave them [the Israelites in the Wilderness] my statues and showed them my ordinances, by whose observance everyone shall live. Moreover I gave them my sabbaths, as a sign between me and them so, that they might know that I the Lord sanctify them" (Ezek. 20:11–12), and "I said to their children in the wilderness, Do not follow the statutes of your parents, nor observe their ordinances, nor defile yourselves with your idols [the Moab covenant]...But the children rebelled against me" (verses 18, 21). So even after seeing Egypt systematically destroyed by ten plagues, then Pharaoh's army drowned in the Red Sea, neither the Israelites that left Egypt, nor their children could obey God. Nor could they keep the terms of the covenants to which they agreed. They made for themselves a golden calf and proclaimed it their god. They burned their firstborns, and murdered the prophets. And they should have been extremely thankful that they weren't all destroyed, because of their rebellion. God wanted to kill them all at Sinai. Only Moses' intervention stayed their destruction then. God

regretted creating humanity before the Flood (Gen 6:6), and collectively, we haven't done much to endear ourselves to Him since.

After Israel's rebellion, the Father decided not to enter into another covenant relationship with humanity collectively. No longer would individuals be faces in a crowded covenant, depersonalized by the vast numbers that also agreed they would die if God spoke to them directly. Those individuals at Sinai agreed to terms about which they knew little, other than blessings were promised for obedience and cursings for disobedience, thereby setting up the correspondence of good works equating to peace and prosperity. *Works for prosperity*, the essence of the first covenant. The second covenant is built around better promises, the foremost is the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Under the old covenant, eternal life wasn't offered as a reward for obedience. The concept of a future resurrection existed, but as I previously mentioned, old testament prophets knew of only one resurrection, which would occur at the end of days. For them, the period of history in which we live and in which many of us will shortly live through was a fog of successive events that appeared to happen simultaneously with events that will occur at the conclusion of Christ's Millennium reign. Daniel was told that his visions were for many days in the future (8:26), and that they were sealed and secret until the time of the end (12:4 & 9). Ezekiel apparently sees the physical resurrection of both houses of Israel, and the joining of both houses of Israel with David as their king occurring as a unified event instead of as two events separated by a thousand years. As I previously said, the physical resurrection of all humanity, which is bones coming together and breath being returned, occurs during the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11–15), whereas saints are resurrected in glorious bodies when Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah. David's eternal reign as king over Israel begins with Christ's reign as King of kings.

Again, under the Sinai covenant Israel was promised physical safety and prosperity for obedience. Some biblical teachers insert these physical promises into the new covenant, but they err when they do so.

Likewise, some teachers drag the curses forward to the time of the end and claim in their loudest voice that God will again bring national captivity upon the modern nations descended from the house of Israel; these are the *watchmen*. Both schools of thought are equally flawed. The Sinai covenant ended, as did the Moab covenant. The promises of blessings for obedience ended, as did the divine cursings for disobedience. The only covenant in effect is the new covenant, and there will be no other covenant in the future. The Godhead's relationship with humanity is based upon, and will remain based upon the terms of this second covenant.

When King David died, his *pneuma* or breath returned to God, and his bones were still in Jerusalem that first Pentecost. Peter testifies, "Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day" (Act 2:29), and "For David did not ascend into the heavens" (verse 34).

If David, a man after God's heart, didn't go to heaven at his death, nor at Jesus' resurrection, then who might have gone? Jesus tells His disciples that they cannot go where he goes (John 13:33). Previously, He told the Pharisees that even in the future they couldn't go where he was going (7:33–34). Under the new covenant, the gift of God is eternal life, but the wages of sin is death, not eternal life in hell, or halfway between heaven and a Greek underworld. Without that gift of God, a person has no eternal life; a person doesn't have an immortal soul that must go somewhere. Solomon writes,

I said in my heart with regard to human beings that God is testing them to show that they are but animals. For the fate of humans and the fate of animals is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and humans have no advantage over the animals; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are dust, and all turn to dust again (Eccl 3:18–20).

To think that God is not testing humans concerning what we believe about our life and about His gift of eternal life is theological quicksand—and then to believe that we already have eternal life without accepting the terms of the new covenant is the height of vanity. When did we receive eternal life if not by the terms of the second covenant? God didn't breathe it into Adam: “[T]hen the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a *nephesh*” (Gen 2:7), or breathing creature. This is the same breath of life furry critters have. No eternal life was imparted to Adam when God created him. The only life imparted was that which comes by breath, or by the oxidation of sugars within the cells of our bodies, composed of the elements of the earth. The only life Adam could impart to his offspring was that which crossed the placenta within Eve's womb.

But in His testing of humanity, God finds and has found much vanity, which He has winked at in the past. His winking days, though, have about ended. During the latter part of the Tribulation, God will kill those who insist upon believing demons about humanity having eternal life apart from receiving it as a gift under the terms of the new covenant. Demons have eternal life, which is why they are cast into outer darkness to await judgment. Demons want to return to heaven. But saints inherit the earth (Matt 5:5) after they receive eternal life as the gift of God.

I have explicated in two earlier books—*A Philadelphia Apologetic* and *Rereading Prophecy*—biblical passages used by Platonists to support their belief in an immortal soul, so I will not here again address these passages (an excerpt concerning these passages appears in Appendix A). The concept of an immortal soul enters Hebraic culture with the arrival of the Greeks, but it takes more than five centuries to be fully incorporated into the social constructs of the region. The concept entered Christianity about the end of the 1st-Century, its entrance traceable through the doctrine of Christ harrowing hell (if Christ weren't really dead, then He had to be somewhere until He was

accepted into heaven—but if Christ hadn't really died, then we have no sacrifice for sin, and no savior). And the concept became the major tenet of those who were perishing and upon whom God sent the delusion Paul mentions in 2nd Thessalonians, that future delusion not coming at the end of the age but with the gospel of Constantine replacing the gospel of Christ, that formalized change of gospels being the heart of the great falling away. The concept of an immortal soul remains the major tenet of those who have fallen away from the faith. It is the concept around which those who are perishing have constructed most of their belief paradigms and religious practices. And it is a truly ugly concept that consigns the majority of humanity to an ever-burning hell, that isn't quite hot enough to really get much cooking done.

The Platonist doctrine of soul immortality separates the Church of God from greater Christianity, from Islam, and from rabbinical Judaism. It and the Trinity are the two doctrines that prevent cooperation, and academic exchanges between the Church of God and the remainder of greater Christianity, as well as *the world*. Soul immortality cannot be found in Scripture, nor was it widely found in Hebraic culture prior to the writing of the gospels and epistles of the New Testament; however, a person can see its emergence in the popular fictional work, the *Book of Enoch*, which Jude cites. And it is a doctrine that must never be allowed to sneak into the Church of God, which is what the junior administration of the Worldwide Church of God tried to do before their plan blew up in their faces.

Jesus turned the mocking of Pharisees back onto them by using the Lazarus and Dives story to show how Greek they had become. And to this day, that story is not understood by those who would be teachers of the doctrines of Christ. (See Appendix A.)

The biblical concept of an afterlife comes only through resurrection and the gift of eternal life under the second covenant. If not for resurrection and the gift of eternal life, the atheists would have it right: once we die, that's it. However, there is a divine plan for humanity. We are

to create what God cannot, the character to forever choose to do that which is right. The Father and the Son have this character, but They were unable to create it in Satan, who was perfect at his creation and the pinnacle of Their creative efforts. They can create glorified bodies; They can give eternal life; but by Themselves, They cannot create the decision making process to always do that which is right. They can, however, create the opportunity for humanity to develop that process. They can then install that “righteous character” in a glorified body, and adopt this new creation as a son or daughter. This is our human potential.

Returning to searing one’s conscience: if a spiritually enlightened individual habitually wanders across the line that separates good and evil, blurring that line as a hitter might the chalked lines of the batter’s box, then the person loses his or her desire to always do what is “right.” Compromise seems desirable. The rigidness of always choosing to do what’s “right” becomes for this person divisive, judgmental, unenlightened, and not modern. I probably could use two dozen additional adjectives. It is homophobic, anti-woman, anti-choice, anti-Arab, anti-Semitic, anti-Satan. And the last is really what it is. Satan is the god of this world. Doing what is right is rejecting Satan’s rule over you. God takes Satan’s broadcast of rebellion and turns that broadcast against Satan by realigning your spiritual compass. You now rebel against Satan. If, however, your spiritual alignment won’t hold, then God wants to know now, before He glorifies you. He has no intentions of creating another (or billions) of Satans. You will be judged, and will cease to exist. There is no place in God’s family for someone who will not be ruled by Him, for someone who, as a glorified saint, will choose good most of the time. Who can trust that person? You can’t—and if you can’t, God can’t, and if God can’t, that person won’t be glorified.

God can create additional angels to sing praises to Him, if He needs more praise singers. He cannot create your decision to believe Him, and then to act on that belief. The evidence is in the history of Israel under the first covenant. Even when He modified us spiritually, the

epistles of the Apostles testify to His inability to produce universal belief that results in living in *light*. Jesus said not to be surprised by two resurrections, one for “those who have done good,” and one for “those who have done evil” (John 5:29). It is essential that saints set their hearts on doing what is right, knowing that grace will cover their failures. Saints should never choose to compromise. Too much compromising will occur because the flesh is weak as it is. The choice must be to do right.

2.

Since the fault of the first covenant lay with the Israelites, not with the terms, the second covenant, made on better promises, didn’t need radical reform to its terms but to the covenanting party, humanity.

The Godhead’s need to modify the covenantee became apparent as early as the golden calf incident at Sinai: the modification the Godhead then proposed was extermination of Israel, and starting over with Moses, a modification Moses vigorously opposed with an appeal to God’s reputation among the other peoples of the world. Most people would become extremely wary of entering into an agreement with a deity that destroyed them for a little backsliding, or for a party during which everyone was having such a good time. I jest, poorly perhaps, but the history of religion is the record of bacchanalian revivals in conflict with dogmas of austere piety with Western culture having finally reached the determination that religion shouldn’t be taken seriously by prospering humanity. Most individuals in the industrialized world who maintain a religious tradition merely want told what must be done for them to be on the good side of their god. Religion has become for too many superstition masquerading as divine revelation, as baptized paganism is today powdered with faith, dressed in praise music, and marched on stage to heal the infirm as another revival gains strength. Not much has changed since that golden calf magically appeared when Aaron tossed Israelite jewelry into the fire. No one takes credit for the hard work that went into molding the calf.

Apparently, at Sinai the Godhead didn't have a viable fallback plan ready to be implemented if the covenantee proved faithless: starting over again with Moses had unacceptable consequences, which Moses recognized when the idea was initially voiced. It actually took the Logos a little longer to see the difficulty with wiping out the Israelites, such as God's anger—and this is the anger many Christians dare arouse with their religious practices that unintentionally mock God. And for the person who contends that God foreknows everything, His anger would have been considerably lessened if He had known Aaron would cast that golden calf. Aaron's and Israel's actions took the Logos by surprise; His reaction assures us that Aaron's artistic inclination was unknown to Him beforehand.

To examine whether God has foreknowledge of our actions, consider what God said about Abraham offering up Isaac: after building an altar and binding Isaac, "Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel called to him from heaven, and...said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me'" (Gen 22:9–12). The textual implication is that even a minute earlier, God didn't know if Abraham would, indeed, go through with sacrificing Isaac. Abraham was actually in the act of killing Isaac before God was certain about what would happen. So, by extension, God doesn't know what we will do until we do the deed. He might have a good idea about what we will do, but He can't be certain until after the fact, a major reason for why Christians face trials. We are being tested daily, as Solomon reveals about God testing our belief concerning possessing eternal life. Peter says, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you" (1 Peter 4:12). And as often happens in human educational institutions, when tests are failed, the testing is repeated. We need to "get it right" before we go on to the next trial or lesson. Thus, because God has seen a saint's reaction to many situations prior to the saint's death, God knows how the saint will react in unexpected situations

encountered, so the saint will pass directly from death to spiritual life when Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah. Saints are not judged after death (John 5:24). Judgment is on them while they live (1 Peter 4:17).

The plan that the Godhead has for humanity was in place “from the foundation of the world” (Matt 25:34). That plan is the reproducing of itself, with born from above humans becoming the children of the Father: “For all who are lead by the Spirit of God are children of God...you have received the spirit of adoption...it is the very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:14–17); and Jesus said in His prayer the night of His last Passover,

I ask not only on behalf of these [His disciples], but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us...The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one (John 17:20–23).

The destiny of saints is to become one with the Father just as Christ is one with the Father. This concept of disciples being joint heirs with Christ as younger siblings has caused and will continue to cause significant problems for saints, for *the world* rejects out of hand and without Scriptural support the concept of an expanding Godhead. It’s too unsettling for our social constructs to think of mother-in-laws or son-in-laws someday becoming like Christ in every way, so we culturally deny that we may be one with Christ and with the Father as Christ is now one with the Father. One family. One God. Many siblings, with Christ the eldest brother. This is what Scripture teaches even if we cannot culturally embrace the concept.

Satan is the god of this world: when Satan took Jesus “to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world” (Matt 4:8) and offered to give Him those kingdoms in exchange for Jesus wor-

shipping him, Jesus didn't deny that the kingdoms were Satan's to give. Jesus identifies, somewhat obliquely, Satan as the ruler of this world in John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11. Likewise, Paul so identifies Satan in 2 Corth 4:4. The spiritual king of Babylon is Satan (Isa 14:4–20), who is also called “the ruler of the power of the air” (Eph 2:2). So, it isn't really debatable that Satan is, today, the ruler of this world. He, or one of his demon lieutenants are whom *the world* worships, and will continue to worship into the Tribulation (Rev 9:20). In the latter part of the Tribulation, “the whole world followed the beast” and worships “the dragon [Satan], for he had given his authority to the beast” (13:3–4). The world doesn't suddenly start worshipping Satan during the Tribulation; humanity has all along been worshipping Satan.

Again, Christ's death at Calvary ended one bipolar division of the world (*the circumcised* vs. the uncircumcised), but established a new division: *the world* vs. the saints, who are drawn disciples following Christ. There is no other spiritual grouping of humanity. Christianity is exclusionary—the only way to the Father is through Christ—and Christianity shouldn't apologize for its exclusivity, which isn't of man but by divine will. Jesus, referring to His return, said, “Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left” (Matt 24:40–41). So the division of saint and *the world* continues to the end of the age.

Adoption into the Godhead was never offered to angels, the reason why being the subject of a later section of this manuscript. Satan, from his creation, never had the potential for being an heir of the Father. Thus, as the god of *the world*, and with his ministers appearing as ministers of righteousness (2 Corth 11:14–15), Satan has taught the concept of a closed Godhead: the Trinity is a demonic doctrine that has humanity worshipping the Breath [*Pneuma*] of God. You don't assign personhood to your breath, nor do you pray to your breath, nor sing praises to your breath. It's insanity to, as one Evangelical philosopher

does, make love to the Breath of God, the creative power by which Elohim works.

Linguistic objects are assigned by tradition to linguistic icons. Letter combinations don't carry around backpacks with their meaning wrapped up as if it were their lunch. Rather, when a reader encounters a letter combination, the reader assigns a meaning to that combination, or the reader dismisses the combination as nonsense. What the reader assigns depends upon the reader's community. The Greek combination of letters that has, by tradition, been translated as Ghost or Spirit is *pneuma*, which is also translated as breath. When scholars needed to find a closed Godhead for philosophical reasons, they assigned personhood to this combination of letters. But this is akin to me assigning personhood to each word I write: each becomes a little person who, armed with a sword, will attack what you believe. Oops, that one tripped. He's getting up. Ahh, he's okay. He's on his feet and marching forward. Can you see him? He's small, and he just entered your mind.

Satan has to resent the fact that his lab mice are offered a destiny greater than any he could potentially have had even though he was created perfect. If there is one thing he wants to squelch, it's knowledge of humanity's destiny that comes with the union of egg and sperm. We aren't created perfect, but in the backseats of cars, or in bedrooms when parents aren't home, or in a host of other places that shouldn't be. However, regardless of how we arrive breathing, we have the potential to be Christ's adopted siblings, with all the rights and privileges that come with being a family member. But a considerable amount of testing will occur between when we draw our first breath and when we are glorified. It is the will of the Father that everyone makes it, but we know the reality is that some won't for a host of reasons, the foremost being that they don't believe such a destiny is possible, the reason why Satan wants to suppress the knowledge, even within greater Christianity.

As far as is revealed in Scripture, Elohim is composed of two entities who are one in unity. They are the Father, and now the Son, who was

the Logos, or the God of the first covenant. They, like the angels they created, existed prior to the formation of the universe. Their existence is outside of our capacity for thought, since thoughts are electro-chemically generated productions of what has been created by Elohim. Our thoughts reach to the edge of all that has been created, but they are technically incapable of penetrating that which is not part of the creation, one reason why scientists can go to the moment of a big bang, but not behind that bang. Only by divine revelation can we know anything of what is beyond the creation. Thus, the pursuit of Logos Christology is an exercise of vanity.

But Satan as the ruler of *the world* doesn't want his lab mice knowing what the Godhead has promised as part of the second covenant. He has and will continue to do everything he can to deceive *the world* about the makeup of the Godhead (Rev 12:9), even to eventually declaring himself the true Messiah after the armies of the king of the North are destroyed by the Mount of Olives swallowing them as they pursue escaping saints.

What this manuscript purports to be is an extended essay, an apologetic: I'm not bringing *community tested truth* to bear upon a particular subject. Rather, I am attacking community tested knowledge by asserting that existing theological discussions within the greater Christian Church have focused on the gospel of Constantine instead of the gospel of Christ. It is my intention to be party to reinserting the primitive faith of the early church into 21st-Century philosophical discussions. God will open the door, and many who have accepted Platonism as part of the Christian message will turn from their error and again embrace the primitive faith. Many others who have rejected Platonism but have never had a good understanding of the second covenant will, hopefully, perfect their knowledge of what Christ taught as they make themselves ready as the Bride of Christ. As such, I write, as the end of this age nears, as part of a small, but growing cadre of disciples that won't be kept quiet any longer. At times what I write is necessarily repetitive, and pedantic. But the nature of an essay allows me to pause

during the presentation of an idea, and engage the audience in something more akin to a dialogue.

And here I want to pause: Paul said in Galatians that his knowledge of the second covenant came “through a revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:12). We know the nature of Christ’s revelation to John about what would happen during the Tribulation, but we don’t know if Paul had one vision, or many, or if he just knew what he didn’t know before. How does revelation come to disciples? And does revelation still occur? *Community tested truth* says no! that with the writing of the Book of Revelation, all knowledge was given to saints that was necessary for salvation, that nothing more was to be added to Scripture. But Peter on that first Pentecost cites Joel about sons and daughters, young men and old, free and slave prophesying, seeing visions and dreaming dreams. So as we enter these last days, we should expect existing belief paradigms to be tested by revealed knowledge being given through prophesying, visions and dreams occurring in frequency and quantity that might now make drawn disciples cringe.

Protesting Christianity made an idol of the Bible after rejecting the plaster and wood idols of the Universal Church. By making an idol of the Bible, the Protesting Church could limit interpretation and ignore criticism as historical exegesis became the final arbiter of what was true. Ask most any highly visible televangelist why he observes Sunday and not the Sabbath, and he will cite the decisions of the 325 A.D. Council of Nicea; he will cite the Gospel of Constantine, which made official the great delusion. He will not challenge the orthodoxy derived from post Council of Nicea historical exegesis.

Some men and women have claimed to have received revelation since John wrote the Book of Revelation. Joseph Smith claimed he was a prophet, but I reject his claims because they conflict with my reading of Scripture about the nature of a person; I don’t believe people have angels in them who don’t remember heaven. Ellen G. White claimed to have visions, one of which supported the observance of Easter. But the early Church didn’t observe Easter, nor support the Easter narra-

tive. Rather, Passover was observed, its observance finally driven underground by Constantine. So I reject the authority of Ellen G. White's visions, especially so since lying spirits can also bring messages to false prophets (Ezek 22:28).

So let me here say with certainty that I haven't seen visions, nor do I claim to have received any revelation in the manner which John received the Book of Revelation. But over the last few years—after being a disciple of Christ's for nearly thirty years—I “know” some things I previously didn't know. I can't say for sure how I know what I now do. I teach writing as a means of discovery; I somewhat understand the discovery of knowledge that can occur through writing. I have, at least on one occasion, lectured on Freud's resistance to learning. And certainly, much of what I didn't know five years ago has come since feeling in January 2002 a previously unfelt compunction to write theological material, but the process of understanding what I hadn't previously been taught actually began in 1997 or 1998; I can't say which.

I believe I was drafted into the Body of Christ thirty years ago to do a job at this time, that I literally was a benchwarmer until needed. I started college as a sixteen year old math/physics major, but mainly because of the freedom afforded me by being declared an emancipated minor while still sixteen (Mom committed suicide in October of my Freshman year; Dad had died five years earlier), I left Willamette University, transferred to Oregon Tech, and studied gunsmithing for a year before marrying at eighteen, and going to work for Georgia-Pacific. English was my weakest subject in school. It was the area in which I had least interest. It is the area in which I never would have, on my own, pursued a career. Yet fifteen plus years after being drafted into the Body of Christ, I felt a need to express myself in print. And I wrote a novel for which I received a contract. I wrote a few magazine articles, but I really wasn't very good. Yet, in 1987, circumstances came about in my life that caused me to contact University of Alaska Fairbanks about entrance into their graduate writing program even though I

didn't have an undergraduate degree, nor any English course work beyond the beginning Composition sequence. I was accepted based upon the strength of my work, and upon my G.R.E. scores, which were above average. And in 1991, Idaho State University awarded me a Doctor of Arts degree fellowship in English. So I actually know a little about writing, the writing process, and the discovery of knowledge that comes through writing.

Midyear 1978, the most serious conflict of personalities to have occurred in the then most visible administration of the Church of God resulted in a yearlong struggle for control, with the State of California appointing a receiver to manage church finances. Then in 1987, doctrinal changes began to be made in this most visible administration. Awareness came that the new covenant hadn't been well understood. And for the next seven years, doctrines were altered until that administration became part of the Evangelical Church. These changes cost that administration dearly in terms of membership and assets. They were tests of everyone's faith, and they were apparently necessary before the Bride of Christ could dress herself in her wedding garment. They allowed personality conflicts to surface. They revealed a serious lack of love by too many saints, and they entirely missed making the changes that were appropriate, substituting instead human approval for true belief in God. The two men visually most responsible for these changes seem well satisfied with themselves for gutting the Church, slaying thousands of sheep, and misleading thousands more. God will judge them. They would not fair well with my judgment. My own daughters are among their slain.

As in my previous cite of Peter, drawn disciples are *a royal priesthood, a holy nation* for the purpose of proclaiming *the mighty acts* of Christ: disciples are drawn to do a work. Apparently, as changes began in the then most visible administration of the Church of God in 1987, Christ decided that I needed to warm up in the bullpen and come in as a relief pitcher if needed. The work for which I had been drawn decades earlier was to literally sit on the bench and wait. I was mostly

content to wait. At times I wondered why I had been drawn—and there is no doubt in my mind that I was drafted into the Body of Christ. I received my induction notice the summer of 1972, the story of which I tell in *A Philadelphia Apologetic*.

In order to pitch in the big leagues, I apparently needed training I didn't then have: not many individuals enter graduate school without an undergraduate degree, or without even course work in the subject, but with God, all things are possible. I earned a M.F.A. degree in Creative Writing, and was offered a D.A. degree fellowship—the foreign language requirements stand between me and that degree. But after receiving training in how human language works, I apparently still needed knowledge which hadn't been previously taught in the Church of God. And here, a person can enter my text and deconstruct it if the person so desires: at what point is knowledge revealed by God, or the product of a fertile imagination, one with a degree in Creative Writing? This, you, the reader, must decide. The sheep will hear the shepherd's voice; the goats will not. If Christ now speaks through my words, His sheep will hear...I had been fearful of misleading spiritually so since I began writing in 1979 until this year, I wrote only a handful of poems that had spiritual subjects. But beginning Thursday, the second full week of January 2002, the call was apparently sent to the bullpen to bring me in. As I pulled into the parking lot of Southeastern Illinois College where I was to teach a couple of sections of Composition that day, I felt an almost overwhelming need to write what I knew. No voice. No vision. Just a very strong feeling. And I knew my audience wouldn't be limited to the Church of God, but would include all of greater Christianity. What I didn't then know is that hundreds of Evangelical pastors would eventually read my writings and turn to God, repenting of their theological errors, rejecting baptized Platonism, and thereby assuring themselves of their place in the first resurrection. As I write this (Summer 2002), that hasn't yet happened. The best test of the truth of what I write is whether those who now believe they are part of spiritual Israel will turn from their dogma of an

immortal soul and acknowledge that God has loved those who have held onto the primitive faith from the beginning. I will assert that Christ “will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying—[Christ] will make them come and bow down before [the Church of God’s] feet, and they will learn that [Christ has] loved you [the Church of God at Philadelphia]” (Rev 3:9), that this bowing down will occur prior to when the antetype antiChrist declares himself the Messiah at Jerusalem. The Greek text implies that only a portion *the synagogue of Satan* will actually bow. Right now, greater Christianity doctrinally hates the Church of God. For any portion of greater Christianity to admit that God has loved those of us who have been drawn and given a job to do in the Church of God would be a miracle. But this is a miracle that will occur in the foreseeable future, not during the White Throne Judgment. And by this, you can determine for yourself the validity of what I write concerning other aspects of the doctrine of Christ, and about what will happen during the Tribulation.

At the moment, some readers are offended by what I have written concerning the Trinity, which is not a concept that Jesus or James or Peter or John or Paul taught, but a concept developed by Greek philosophers to explain that which was previously unexplainable. Jesus, by bringing knowledge of the Father to His disciples, torqued monotheism into permanent opposition with itself. How can two entities be one God? or two entities not be a form of polytheism? The concept, however, shouldn’t be that difficult for us to understand. How can there be two Homer Kizers (actually, there was a third one somewhere in Arkansas)? There can be because I am the son of my father. I have as equal a right to my name as he had, and I look like him, even to having the same short inseams. I react to stimuli in somewhat the same way he did. If someone would have taken my photo at 42 [Dad’s age when he died] and set it alongside Dad’s, the person would only be able to tell us apart by me being the one with the beard. If a person saw me then, they saw my father at the same age.

Elohim is now a family, one in unity. What the relationship was between the Father and the Logos prior to Jesus' birth isn't revealed and cannot be determined until saints are glorified. But the relationship between the Father and the Son has been understandable since the Logos came to reveal the Father to those whom He loves. Saints are to become younger siblings by adoption into the family of God. Christ will always be the eldest brother, and the Father will always be the head of the family. The promise of the new covenant that Satan has worked the hardest to erase is sonship with Christ in the family of Elohim. It is the promise never offered to him, and the promise *the world* rejects. But the promise is sure.

Within the Church of God, the promise of sonship has been known, and is the evidence that God loves and has loved those whom He has drawn from *the world*. As I said, in the foreseeable future many who have previously been under the codified delusion sent to those who were perishing because of their lawlessness (absence of law as opposed to lawbreaking) will realize that the Father has loved a small, ineffective fellowship that has kept His words. This fellowship isn't able to open doors, but has a door opened for it at the time of the end. And it is through this fellowship that the primitive faith is reinserted into the social constructs constituting greater Christianity. You are, at the moment, reading about that reinsertion of faith, which will require Christian teachers and ministers to stand before their congregations and admit that they have been wrong, a humbling experience to be sure, but less so than death on the cross.

Because of what is being offered to saints—sonship in the family of God—if a person is not willing to humble him or herself, the person is not worthy of the promises of the new covenant, regardless of what the person now believes about salvation and Christ having finished His work. Christ's work is finished. He put the last piece in place at Calvary. But your work isn't. And Christ works today as your and as my high priest to get us ready for adoption.

The more visible the person who has taught error has been within Christianity, the greater the person's humbling, unfortunately, and the greater the reward will be for what the person will do in the future. Ego belongs to Satan; it doesn't belong in the family of God. And while many who read my words will humble themselves, more won't. Instead, they will react as the scribes and the Pharisees did to Jesus, who asked of them only that they humble themselves and do that which is right. That is what the Father now asks of all who are or would be saints. But you know your heart, your sense of self, and whether there is anything to you besides vanity. You know whether you can openly admit that you have wrongly taught the doctrine of Jesus, or if you are all image. You know such an admission of wrong teaching will destroy your reputation in *the world*, and among your peers, but what are your values? Are they to obey Christ at all costs, or were those merely words you spoke to impress some person, yourself perhaps? Are you willing to publically martyr your ego? A hard thing is being asked of you, but asked out of love. This hard thing is likely to devastate you financially. Make no mistake about what will happen: everything that previously came easy will now be difficult. You will be bucking *the world*, but you will also have a part in the first resurrection. What is that worth to you, assuming that you have been drawn by the Father? Is it worth crucifying "self"? If it isn't, you don't belong in the family of God. My love for you, even without knowing you, would have you admit that you have been wrong.

The irony is that some of you who now read my words are hearing Christ's voice, and perhaps not for the first time. Many will know Greek and Hebrew far better than I do. Some are more familiar with the English translations than I am. So my words coming to you are typical of Christ's *m.o.*, which is to bring what a person needs to hear from the least likely source as a test of the person's humility. Will the person listen to the message or to the messenger? Aristotelian logos versus ethos. With God, it is always the message that is important. The messenger can only get in or out of the way of the message. Inflated

messengers are always in the way, and I became conscious of this *m.o.* when a customer who owed me a relatively large amount of money and was delinquent in repaying the debt came to me and said that I hadn't treated an unBeliever properly in a business deal. The customer was correct, I hadn't. I asked my customer for how I could rectify my wrong. My customer didn't know. I didn't either, and to this day, I have been unable to rectify that wrong I did. I caused God's name to be blasphemed for a rather meaningless business deal, and that should never have happened. Yet it did.

I was fishing a small boat out of Dutch Harbor, and got caught in Akutan Pass. I had to turn my stern to the seas and run with them to keep from getting rolled over—and a larger vessel stood off about a mile and seemed to watch the trouble I was in, which didn't seem all that bad considering that I was fishing a canoe-sterned Bartender that didn't pack much weight but handled rough seas very well. But that night in UniSea's restaurant a man approached my table and began to chew me out for endangering everyone. At first I had no idea what he was talking about. The developing incident made no sense, but as my mind sought to contextualize what was happening, I realized the fellow was from the larger vessel that watched me being sucked into the Pass. I said nothing although I was being reamed. Finally the fellow paused, looked at me, ordered another pot of coffee and sat down beside me and proceeded to explain how north Pacific and Bering Sea tides worked. For the next three hours, I received the benefit of this man's 25 years of experience in the Bering Sea. Later, I learned that his ability to survive rough water was legendary. By keeping my mouth shut, by not taking offence, I received what would have taken me years to acquire, and what might have saved my life as I continued to fish a guppy sized vessel in some of the world's roughest waters. The man was Arnie of the *Silver Wave*.

I don't have the stature of the early Church fathers; yet I write truth about the nature of the Godhead. You really don't assign personhood to your own breath, so why do you persist in assigning personhood to

the Breath of the Father, which is a metaphor for His creative power, but a metaphor Jesus supported. When Nicodemus asked Jesus about being born a second time, Jesus said, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and [*Pneuma*]” (John 3:5). Since the subject is birth, and since Jesus told the thief on the cross that the thief would be in Paradise without being baptized, the water Jesus references isn’t baptism, but the water of pregnancy (“What is born of flesh is flesh” [verse 6]). Therefore, while baptism and receiving the Holy *Pneuma* are analogous to the death of the old man and the creation of the new, the being born of *pneuma* Jesus references is the resurrection of the saint into a glorified body. Jesus then said, “The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (verse 8). Spirit or *Pneuma* equates to wind. Truly, it is the Breath of God. Jesus confirms this analogy. What greater authority do we need? And today, we know where the wind goes and where it comes from. Likewise, in the Church of God, we know the Holy *Pneuma* is a metaphor for the creative power of God, which is like the wind in that it goes and does what God desires. It needs no high pressure cells, nor low pressure cells. We see some of what it does, and stand on the brink of knowing how it works, but to describe it or name it, we must still resort to using metaphor. From inside the creation, we can not know anything of what’s outside the creation except through divine revelation. Only when a person is like the wind can the person be said to “be born from above” (verse 7). Just as Special Relativity uses the metaphor *fabric* to refer to the substance of space-time, so must we use *breath* or *wind* to refer to spirit. Our conception of thought, let alone the thoughts themselves, aren’t able to better name the means of how God works within His creation, built of furled and unfurled ringlets of what forms my thoughts.

You as a minister (or lay member) know the biblical passages about adoption. Why would you believe a demon or a delusion over the text? Why not accept the text as you find it written today? The destiny of

humanity is to be adopted into the family of God as younger siblings to Christ. This is not a New Age reading, or cultic fringe's reading. This is your reading that you want to explain away, because you don't want the responsibility that you know will come with being a younger sibling. You know you can't ignore the law of God and still be a true sibling of Christ's. Your sense of justice, which isn't a reliable guide in questions of spirituality, will insist that you at least try to live like Christ did if you are to be a younger sibling, and you can't do that by worshiping on the 8th day or by eating piggy, and you know these things aren't important when it comes to salvation (and they aren't, but your attitude about doing them is when you know the will of God), so everything can be explained away, even your making no effort to keep the law of God that has been written on your heart. All you have to do is sear your conscience. Then all of what you have been teaching will be true. Fellow ministers will respect you for not succumbing to that wacko creative writer. And you will know you have lost your chance to be part of the first resurrection. You will feel that loss inside you as the spirit of God departs. You will try to clutch it, and you will get ahold of something that makes you certain you are right. But you will always wonder if maybe you made a mistake. You won't know until you are resurrected.

While converted Pharisees didn't perfectly understand the destiny of humanity, nor did their converts, the Disciples who were with Christ did, as did Paul. The evidence that they did is in the passages about adoption. But this destiny for humanity was as impossible for the social constructs of the 1st-Century to accept as was an invisible god for the Israelites that left Egypt to accept. Allow me to repeat this: to a culture weaned on "one God" and rigid monotheism, the message Jesus brought about the existence of the Father got Him killed; Jesus' claims about being the Son of God were, to both Pharisees and Sadducees, blasphemous. And the cultural mindset that caused the Crucifixion, that could accept a murderer over Jesus' valid claim of being the Son of God didn't go away with believing that Christ was raised from the

dead and was, indeed, God. Instead, the cultural paradigm of the 1st-Century could accept Jesus as God only by combining the Father with Jesus into one entity. That left the cultural paradigm with the further need to make the Godhead's creative power a part of that same entity. The Trinity doesn't exist as a doctrine because Satan is one of three archangels, but because there wasn't a fourth manifestation of God that must be incorporated into a single entity, all that social constructs of 1st-Century Jews could conceive. The concept of monotheism had become the defining cultural idol. This concept separated Jews from Greeks, from Chaldeans, from everyone else in the world. God Himself would be rejected so that this idol could be worshiped in purity and truth.

The polytheism of Greek social constructs caused the debates that form the history of Logos Christology. As the mental paradigms of Greek converts threatened the mental paradigms of Jewish converts, war was waged, with the Jewish converts clinging to their idol of monotheism. In a generic sense, the gospel of Constantine is a compromise: under him, Christianity could keep the Jewish idol of rigid monotheism, but had to give up the Jewish idol of strict sabbathkeeping.

When the remnant under Ezra returned from Babylon, that remnant knew Israel had been sent into captivity for breaking the law of God, so this remnant determined that never again would Israel break the law. Instead of turning to God to receive circumcised hearts, this remnant planted a hedge of traditions around the law, which treated the law as if it were God, thereby turning the law into an idol. Jesus ignored this hedge, and was challenged about why His disciples didn't wash as tradition demanded. Jesus retrieved the law, read it as it should have been read from the beginning, then give it to his disciples as a living document. But the mindset of 1st-Century Judea could not comprehend the law as a living document.

Unfortunately, the social constructs from which disciples have been drawn for the past twenty centuries prohibit perceiving the law of God

as a living document. Greater Christianity first turned Jesus into plaster statues that were as dead as any statue ever cast or carved of Zeus, and of even less worth. The inscribed Word was hidden from the laity until Reformers published the linguistic icons that comprise the record of the Word's dealings with humanity. And with publication, the leather-bound inscribed text replaced the statuary as the idol through which these social constructs would worship their Creator. Meaning was assigned to the inscribed text, and wars have been fought over whose assignment of meaning was most correct. Instead of the law of God being surrounded by a hedge, the construction and maintenance of which being the primary duty of the priesthood, the law of God has been bound in a leather straitjacket and made to sit very still while Evangelical Christianity continues, to this day, trying to root out that Pharisaic hedge. Various splinters of the Church of God have collected what has been uprooted, and have replanted these bushes in, among other places, Edmond, Oklahoma.

Yes, the Pharisee would have said that he worshiped God through the law, but that he didn't worship the law. His actions, though, belied his words. Worship of God requires the exercise of, and extension of love, since God is love. It isn't enough to praise God for being all-mighty if no love is practiced; even praise songs sung in key are meaningless without love. Such a person's worship is vain and in vain. To worship God is to become more God-like, or to love more. So all denials otherwise, the Pharisee's worship stops at the law if there is no love in that worship. Likewise, the Universal Christian prays to a board or a rock if all the Christian has is airy love, for keeping the commandments of God is the application of His love. His or her worship doesn't pass through that statuary. True worship of God is given when a person applies the commandments of God with love, while giving praise to God for the opportunities He provides to serve neighbors. True worship is striving for God-like character with humility. True worship is loving God enough to obey Him.

In the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11–27), ten servants were given a pound each to invest while the nobleman went to get royal power. However, as soon as the nobleman left, a delegation was sent after him with the message that the citizens of the country would not have the nobleman rule over them; seven of the nobleman’s servants joined that citizen delegation. These seven servants were of the nobleman’s household—they were “Christians” who would not have Christ rule over them. Seven of ten. Is that the percentage of greater Christianity that rejects Christ’s rule? Apparently, considering that two-thirds of the holy ones perish when the shepherd [Christ] turns his hand against them (Zech 13:7–8). In the parable of the pounds, when the nobleman returns, he says, “But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and slaughter them in my presence” (verse 27). Slaughter is certainly turning one’s hand against a person. So the textual assumption is that 70% of Christianity isn’t genuine, but in rebellion against Christ, hard as that is to believe.

Again, ego has no place in the first resurrection. If a person genuinely desires to obey God, to serve God and by extension humanity, the person will understand that ego is part of the flesh with which Paul warred without understanding why. Ego is a resistance which exists to strengthen spiritual character. A person must continually push against his or her ego as if ego were the barbell a weightlifter thrusts away from him or herself. Don’t you be part of that 70% who won’t be ruled by Christ. Humble yourself, even to admitting that you have taugth a lie if that has been the case. Christ doesn’t want any to perish. You don’t have to. But glorified saints don’t carry their human egos in backpacks.

Thirty percent of greater Christianity is still a lot of saints, so you won’t be lonely as you are being refined as silver is and tested as gold is (Zech 13:8–9). Silver is refined by smelting: by heating until melted, then having its impurities drawn off. Gold is tested with a touchstone (under pressure). So don’t think life is easy as one of the Elect. But unless you are one of the Elect, you have no promise of eternal life.

3.

Because ancient Israel couldn't keep the terms of the first covenant, Israel was temporarily rejected. As a covenanting party with Elohim, she needed spiritual modification, which she was unwilling to submit to; thus, salvation was offered to Gentiles. But it was offered only to individuals who had been drawn by the Father and spiritually modified by having the law of God written in their minds and on their hearts, thereby affecting the way they think and love.

Before the universe came into existence, Elohim formulated a plan which would allow humanity to be adopted as children of God through Christ (Eph 1:3–14). Apparently the plan called for the Logos, as the creator of the universe, to become the sin offering for humanity. It was reasonable to conclude that a sin offering would be needed considering the dynamics of the situation: Satan had just led a rebellion of a third of the angels against Elohim. War had been waged, and Satan was defeated so thoroughly that God didn't then need to destroy him. Rather, Elohim needed to destroy the seeds of rebellion that Satan had broadcast to the remaining two-thirds of the angels. As we know from the record of humanity, ideas have lives of their own. They can't be suppressed by force. Rather, like weeds, they must be pulled up by their roots. While Elohim had sufficient force to squash Satan, the ideas Satan had used to convince a third of the angels to join him in rebellion were like weed seeds, drifting through heaven. The only means of eradicating these ideas was to demonstrate that they wouldn't work as schemes for organizing the activities of angels, or as patterns for governance. The angels who hadn't rebelled needed to see that Satan's schemes would all lead to death, that only one way leads to life, and that is a way of love, of outgoing concern for others equal to or greater than concern for self. Demonstration projects were needed.

From what little knowledge is revealed in Scripture, it seems that all of the angels under Satan's command joined him in his rebellion. The remaining angels didn't need to choose to rebel or not to rebel. Obedience was for them as breathing is for us: obedience was not a conscious

thought. However, if a person has emphysema, then breathing becomes part of the person's conscious thoughts. The person thinks about breathing, has to work at breathing, has to remember to breathe. The disease makes what seemed natural into labor. Likewise, Satan's broadcast of rebellion makes obedience to God into hard labor. The angels under Satan had to think about obeying God, just as we have to today. They had to choose to obey...one of the things I learned about Arnie of the *Silver Wave* was that he had been caught in a blow on the Slime Banks off Unimak Island with three 124 foot Russian trawlers. Big storm. The four vessels were near each other, each bucking into 100+ foot smoking seas. Arnie's vessel was a 79 footer. Each vessel had to power up to climb the sea, then cut power to keep from sticking its bow in the trough, giving its bow time to lift without the vessel broaching. A miscalculation would result in the approaching sea swamping the vessel, or worse, tearing it apart. Arnie and his crew could hear the radio chatter between the Russian trawlers, first between all three vessels, then between two, then silence. All night long, Arnie timed those seas; he never gave the wheel to anyone else. When morning came, the storm had blown itself out, and there was no other vessel anywhere to be seen on either their radar or visually. All three Russian trawlers had miss-timed one sea, and only one was needed to send the vessel to the bottom, drowning all on board. Only believing Satan once was enough to forever separate an angel from God.

Those angels under Satan had to choose to resist Satan's broadcast. Each angel had to choose to resist that day, and to again resist that day, and again, and again. Soon, no angel was any longer resisting. All had broached. All had miss-timed their rejection of Satan's will. So Elohim knew that Adam would also miss-time his rejection of Satan's broadcast of rebellion. The question was only of how long into the night before Adam broached...Adam didn't last enough for night to even arrive.

Since humanity was placed under Satan's rule, we experience his broadcast of rebellion just as the angels under him did. Our "instincts"

aren't to obey, but to rebel. For us, obedience to God becomes like breathing for a person with emphysema: we have to think about obeying; we have to work at obeying; we have to remember to obey. Apparently, the angels under Satan suffocated spiritually. And the angels who weren't under Satan's rule have never experienced what we do living with Satan as the ruler of this world.

God loves us enough that He sent His only Son to die for us. How much more does God love the angels He created, one at a time? You know that He does have love for them, for God is Love. And if Jesus would weep for Jerusalem, would God weep for the third of His creation that rebelled? And how far will God go to make sure the other two-thirds don't rebel? Community-tested truth cannot tell us, since the community is of *the world*, and as such, of Satan, who isn't about to admit he is wrong, or was ever wrong. His ego won't let him, which is a reason why you will have to admit you were wrong if you want to be part of the first resurrection. The Godhead created Satan perfect, and the reward They received was an infection of rebellion that spiritually killed one of every three angels they had created. Some of these angels were extremely capable, such as the demons who are the kings of the North and the South. But they now will not be ruled by God, or by anyone else. They want to drive; they want control of the wheel. They are the product of Satan's broadcast of rebellion, and they will prove his undoing.

The biblical text suggests that Satan will die, that God will bring fire out from inside him that will consume him (Ezek 28:18–19). Satan won't be cast into outer darkness. He and the other two prime demonic players in the antiChrist scenarios (the beast and the false prophet) will be rewarded with destruction. So community tested knowledge about an everburning hell has a problem if Satan is utterly destroyed at the end of Christ's Millennium reign.

Only by revelation can any of the spiritual interplay that has occurred and that will occur be known to humanity. Peter cites Joel about sons and daughters prophesying in the last days. Not one or two,

but many. Not a Joseph Smith or a Raul, but young men and old, servants, men and women. God will again work as He hasn't for most of two millennia. We can expect to know much more about the spiritual world than we do as saints engage demons in spiritual combat. But saints have no rifle nor bomb that will kill a demon: war will be fought over whom one worships. Saints fight by not worshiping Satan, by rejecting what his *ministers of righteousness* (2 Corth 11:15) teach, by being willing to die for what is right.

The world worships demons now, and will continue to do so through the Tribulation (Rev 9:20); they will curse God (Rev 16:8), for they worship the dragon and the beast (Rev 13:4). These are not stupid people. These are your friends and neighbors who have survived the seven trumpets plagues. They haven't been raptured away (that is a doctrine of demons). Rather, these people who worship demons, who worship the dragon and the beast are also the same people who pray to Allah, or to Christ, and look to go to heaven today. Some of them will stand beside you this coming Sunday and sing praise songs to the Holy Spirit. As world conditions worsen, they will draw closer to the Christ they know. They look for His return. They expect His return when the armies that surround Jerusalem are destroyed. And when those armies are destroyed, they will embrace the spirit being who claims to be the Messiah, who seems to have the power of the Messiah, who looks like Jesus, who requires them to accept the tattoo of the Cross. And they will not understand why God still curses them with painful sores, and by the sea turning to blood, and by all freshwater becoming blood, and by the sun scorching them. Yet, still these friends and neighbors of yours will not repent of worshiping demons. They will insist that they're not worshiping demons, that I teach heresy. They'll show you their tattoo of the Cross to prove that they worship *christ*, and they will plead with *christ*, will promise him everything, and will curse God when the world is plunged into darkness. They curse Him as they have never cursed anyone or thing.

It's all there in Revelation, revealed ahead of time so the saints can recognize the players. The saints needed a program to identify the players, and a sealed program was given to them by Christ nearly two millennia ago. The Lamb of God is only now, though, in the day of the Lord, opening those seals so that the saints will know "what must soon take place" (Rev 1:1). Finally, "the time is near" (22:10). Meaning can finally be assigned to the program that identifies all of the players.

When did your friends and neighbors start worshiping demons? Surely not during the Tribulation. They, like you, have confessed with their mouth that Jesus is Lord, that He died and was resurrected on the third day, that they believe on Him. They, like you, invited Jesus into their heart. They, like you, attend Easter sunrise services to celebrate the Resurrection. They, like you, annually remember His birth in a manger. They, like you, have been in church every Sunday. They, like you, haven't been out golfing, or fishing. They, like you, have shunned legalism and legalists...and you're not worshiping demons? You know that Jesus said, "Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:19). I didn't write that in your Bible last night—and make no mistake, I teach keeping the commandments as part of doing what is right; more is required than merely keeping the commandments. So who, since Jesus hasn't, taught you that you don't have to keep the commandments? A demon? It certainly wasn't a saint, or a true disciple of Christ's.

Angels have life eternal, the reason why the rebels are cast into outer darkness until the last of their weed seeds fail to produce peace. The fact that angels have life eternal creates two problems, neither of which are satisfactorily solved by exile. The first is what to do with them, because they cannot be left in contact with the angels who didn't rebel. Exile to outer darkness sort of solves that problem, but the only truly satisfactory solution is for them to surrender the life God gave them

and for them to cease to exist, which is what will happen to Satan when the Father brings fire out from within him to consume him and turn him to ashes. The second is that Elohim is aware of the misery these angels will experience exiled to outer darkness. Does a human parent worry about a child that has gone astray? How much pain does a mother or father feel knowing that a son or daughter lives on the street, or is a crack-addict, or is involved in prostitution? Will the Father feel any less pain knowing that a third of the angels He and the Logos created are suffering in exile? Or will He, as love, just not think about them? You know He will remember them.

For the purpose of demonstrating that none of Satan's schemes will work, Elohim needed a creature that would be enough like Them and the angels that the demonstrations had validity. But the creature must have limited life, so that if the creature would not obey, its life would end. It would be as if the creature never lived.

But additional requirements for this lab mouse were also necessary: since Satan was the sum of knowledge and beauty and created perfect in every way (Ezek 28:12–19), and since Satan had rebelled, Elohim concluded that only beings like Themselves could be counted on not to rebel. Elohim set about to reproduce Themselves. And for this purpose, the creation was needed—and we arrive at Genesis 1:1.

Elohim knew that Adam would succumb to Satan's broadcast of rebellion. They might not have known how quickly Adam would succumb, but because the fall of Adam was certain, a sacrifice for sin was planned before the strings began to unwind. The life of the Logos would be that sacrifice: the Logos agreed to come and defeat Satan on Satan's turf, something none of the angels had been able to do. So, in allowing Satan to demonstrate that his ways won't work Elohim began a high stakes plan of reproduction, since humanity with its mutable nature, limited life, and imprisoning structure had the capability to always choose to do that which is right, thereby producing in its character the ability to resist Satan's broadcast of rebellion. Six thousand years would be allocated to Satan's schemes of governance, and a thou-

sand years would be allocated to Elohim to show how governance should be administered. After seven thousand years, the remaining two-thirds of the angels could choose whom to believe. Likewise, after seven thousand years, all of humanity would be resurrected and allowed to choose Satan's way or Elohim's, with those who vote for Satan left as physical beings when the earth is renewed by fire that actually changes the earth from matter to energy. Those who choose Elohim's way would receive glorious bodies upon which fire has no effect. And Satan's rebellion will finally be over, the last weed seed nuked with love.

The plan didn't quite go as designed. We don't know much about what happened prior to the Flood. Apparently, the long life spans allowed humans to be molded by Satan's attitudes of rebellion to the point where repentance wasn't possible. The whole world was filled with violence, and Elohim started over again with Noah. Same plan for reproduction of self. Modified, though. What we can determine is that the Logos was so angry with humanity, He not only wiped out all but eight individuals, but wiped out all evidence of human civilization and knowledge. Satan apparently had more success with humanity than the Logos had anticipated.

After the Flood, the Logos again modified His plan by dividing the earth during the days of Peleg (Gen 10:25). While that division is usually thought of as a separation of people into tribes, the geological record is that the earth expanded ten percent in diameter, which caused Pangea to be broken apart, allowing the earth's rotational torque to cause continental drift, which, literally, separated the land mass. The increased diameter lowered atmospheric pressure, thereby causing the death of the larger members of every animal species and eliminating some species all together. But the principle thing expansion did was destroy all evidence of pre-Flood culture: the Logos really didn't want their knowledge coming forward through time.

Expansion shortened human life spans. Instead of living most of a millennium, we now live most of a century.

The usual scientific dating for the creation of the universe and for when Pangea broke apart is based upon photon (or light mass particle) travel. As quantum mechanics reveal, light mass particles take all possible paths, which gives exceedingly great age to the creation, whereas dating with heavy mass particles (something still on the scientific horizon) will give an age that agrees with the biblical narrative. One of the causes for world-wide revival in the future will be science confirming the biblical narrative, thereby establishing as community-tested truth the age of the creation being approximately six thousand years.

After the Flood and the division of the earth during Peleg's days, Elohim began looking for one group of people who had the genetic characteristics necessary to spiritually do that which was right. He found Abraham, and eventually concluded that the tribes of Israel had been sufficiently humbled by slavery in Egypt that as a people they would obey God, and would become a model nation, appreciative of their deliverance from slavery.

The Logos overestimated Israel's ability to obey. The golden calf just sort of cast itself, or so Aaron told Moses—if the Logos hadn't already entered into a covenant agreement with Israel, the situation wouldn't have been as bad, since He could have walked away and looked for another people to use for His model nation. Another generation of Abraham's seed might have done better...

No, another generation of Israelites wouldn't have performed better than the generation Moses brought out of Egypt. The problem was that Satan's broadcast of rebellion, necessarily allowed to produce choice, yielded the same harvest in humans that it had in the angels under Satan. In his perversion of perfection, Satan had become very good at sowing rebellion and disbelief. He now appears as a minister of light, with bebies of accomplices making themselves into ministers of righteousness. He deceives the whole world, and with the exception of drawn saints, the whole world worships him. The problem was with all people, and the problem wasn't really understandable by humanity until recently. Oh, every generation since Jeremiah could tell you that

the problem was with the people, but even partial understanding of how the human mind works was lacking. Modern psychology allows us to better explain what before could only be observed.

Why couldn't Israel obey? why wouldn't they believe God? The answer is they couldn't conceive a God without form, couldn't comprehend the concept, couldn't even create the concept in their minds. Even Moses wanted to see the form of God. And the reality these Israelites constructed through their use of language, or revealed by their use of language more strongly molded their defining characteristics than apparently God anticipated. For His purposes, God needed firmness of character to be exhibited by humanity, so that once a person's character was aligned with His, the person wouldn't be blown about by every wind. But the mental processes by which a person's defining characteristics can be aligned with God's also limit change: reality becomes a social construct whose core is artificial.

One of the academic buzz phrases Feminist theoreticians introduced is *social constructs*, a *construct* being the collection of mental paradigms that limit or define or determine social activities for a particular segment of humanity. They are the "natural laws" that this segment of humanity regards as *natural*. They are the organizing principles upon which this segment's concept of *community* is based. They "correct" individual behavior, and establish norms and mores. And these collections of paradigms have linguistic sameness.

The core of every social construct is artificial, in that it is not based on eternal truth, which is just another social construct. These cores are based upon faith. But faith in what? Faith that their mental paradigms are valid. And herein lies the problem: Satan as the god of this world is the recipient of the faith that schema he instituted have validity. This is a convoluted way of saying that the world worships Satan regardless of what the world believes.

The above might best be illustrated by what Americans think about competition. First, can you envision a society without competition? Most likely you cannot. Through competition in the market place,

goods and services are delivered cheaply and in abundance. Through academic competition, ideas are advanced and honed and understanding produced. Through athletic competition, humanity runs faster and farther, throws harder, jumps higher—the list goes on. In every aspect of our lives, we embrace competition, seeing mostly good coming from it although knowing that it has a down side.

Competition is a governing mental paradigm in our social construct. It is a natural law that is unassailable based upon its demonstrable superiority over other ways to organize society. Yet it will not be a part of Christ's Millennium reign.

We cannot imagine Christ not using competition in “a right way” in His kingdom. Nor could a 1st-Century Hellenist imagine not having an immortal soul. Nor could an Israelite exiting Egypt imagine God not having a form. All three concepts are manifestations of social constructs that determine absolute truth for the societies involved. God has a form because you require that He has a form. You have an immortal soul because you require that you have an immortal soul. Competition is good because you require that it be good. None of these are true. Yet they all define truth for the societies involved.

Christ's Millennium reign will be based upon love. Its core won't have a person competing with another to produce the best product, but will have the person helping another to produce the best product. In a sense, its defining paradigm is also artificial. What we will get to see is just how well it works, and it will blow its competition out of the water, a trite expression that reveals how I am really unable to even construct an idea that doesn't reflect the mental paradigms of the social construct that shaped my sense of “truth.”

To criticize (or explain) a social construct is also an artificial activity that is a product of the construct of which we are a part. Can I put that in plain language? We wouldn't even know to talk about mental paradigms and social constructs if ours didn't require that we examine why we think as we do. Look at Augustine's discussion of signs in *On Christian Doctrine*. The paradigms of his construct perceived language dif-

ferently than ours do: Augustine's discussion of signs is inane babel by our standards. Yet our standards are themselves a product of our need for explanations, which is a defining paradigm of our social construct.

All of this becomes somewhat circular until we return to theology: social constructs determine what individuals within the community will believe and can believe; they govern activities. And we interrelate with the 1st-century through the Disciples' manifested paradigms that limited how they could think, inspired or not. If I haven't trod on toes before, I will shortly. The social construct that shaped Peter's reality called for him not to eat with Gentiles. He didn't prior to his vision. And he didn't after his vision when other Jews were present. He really couldn't imagine not separating himself from Gentiles, the reason why Paul rebuked him. It wasn't that he was weak, or consciously a hypocrite. Rather, the thought would not have occurred to him not to separate himself. To separate himself was the natural thing to do, just as it's natural that a woman be subject to a man in marriage, or that a woman not speak in religious services. Isn't it "natural" that a Jew separate himself, or a woman remain silent? No. Everything we accept as natural or true is, in itself, an artificial construct based upon faith.

The concept of male social dominance is the production of a construct that values aggression, or war. Am I advocating that males not be socially dominate? No, I'm not a social liberal. But I know that my construction of reality perceives strife as necessary, as drawn disciples are in a struggle to overcome Satan, an uncircumcised Philistine who doesn't stay down when hit with a rock.

The cores of all social constructs but one at this time imitate Satan's patterns for governance. Returning to the paradigm of competition, if doing whatever you do with all your might is good (Eccl 9:10), then competition must be better, for that is everyone doing with their might, with the mightiest rising to the top as cream does on milk. In our social construct, we know that competition is good; radio talk show hosts tell us it is. And it has allowed the United States to have goods and services at relatively cheap prices. It has also caused a whole

mountain range to be logged as if sent to a barbershop for a butch cut. It gives us planned obsolescence: blue jeans that wear out in three months instead of two years, light bulbs that hardly last long enough to bother changing them, beans in a tin can, and bottled water with a shelf life of weeks. In the 1940s, Jacobs built wind generators that lasted for twenty years of continual use. The electric motors on my Chinese made power tools last a year or two with occasional use.

There is a better way to organize society than on the principles of competition, but our American social construct that has competition as its core isn't capable of conceiving a better way. Ours is such a good way that we want to export it to the rest of the world. But think about a factory loom making a fabric that will not wear out in a person's life. That is possible. How would that effect society? Clothing would last and wouldn't be a continual expenditure, thereby requiring styles and patterns to have longterm aesthetic appeal. An entirely different mind-set would be required than what we now have as a culture. Our values would be different. We wouldn't be who we presently are; for who we are is the product of a social construct based upon nearly unrestricted competition.

Apply how firmly you believe in competition to belief in a visible god, and you can begin to understand why the Israelites who left Egypt were unable to live without their idols. You can sort of conceive of a utopian world without competition, but you cannot stay with the thought long before you begin to think how much better that utopian world would be with a little competition. Just a little, mind you. And you have brought your idol into the promised land.

As I said, the social construct of Christ's Millennium reign will have at its core love. The manifestation of that core will have every person voluntarily doing what is right in every situation. Human nature, which is our repository for years of Satan's broadcasting, will become a force for individual good with the silencing of Satan's *Voice of Rebellion* transmissions. Sin will virtually cease, if not actually cease. Coveting and hate won't have the fertile soil they presently have to root, grow

and go to seed. The desire to lie won't exist in a population that has the law of God written on its hearts and in its minds. Theft won't exist. Locksmiths will be out of business. You won't need car keys, or house keys.

The essence of spiritual development today is choosing to do what is right, failing to deliver, then again choosing to do what is right, and again choosing righteousness, and again, and again, and again, too often failing because the flesh is weak, because a war rages between the flesh and the mind, but always choosing to do what is right, which over time sets our character until our choice of righteousness is subconscious. We will choose righteousness without conscious thought, just as we breath without conscious thought. But we will have failed so many times along the way that we will question whether we will ever make it. Then on top of our failures, we will receive counseling about repentance, real repentance, heart-felt repentance, about turning around and going the other way, all of which we know to do, and should do, and are unable to continue doing because we don't understand the mystery of God, nor do our counselors. It is our honest, deeply felt decision to do what is right that is of importance to God. It is our return to this decision time after time that determines our character, and produces in us what couldn't be produced in angels, or by the Logos outside of Himself. Our failures aren't what matter most; they are covered by Christ's shed blood and resurrection. Our determination to succeed is. And unless we are committed to that determination to always do what is right, we are unprofitable servants. We have buried our talent, or pound, and we await our resurrection with no interest having accrued on the Father's investment of His spirit in us.

How the social construct of the Millennium will achieve these same results I don't know. We know that when someone wanders from the path of righteousness, a voice will say, *Walk this way*. We know that there will again be animal sacrifices, since once Yom Kipporim becomes a reality, Christ will return the sins He now bears to Satan who is their rightful owner. Christ will then no longer bear the sins of

humanity. A sin offering will again be symbolically needed. But just as the Israelites who left Egypt couldn't conceive of a social construct without a visible deity, we cannot conceive of a construct without sin or rebellion. We can know that it will form; we can appreciate the reality of its existence; but we cannot put ourselves in its mental paradigms. They are for the future.

Where the social construct that is the Church of God doesn't overlap the constructs of *the world*, a crescent of wilderness forms that transcends other manifestations of culture. The boundaries of this wilderness crescent are marked by linguistic usage: to today teach that all a Christian disciple must do is *believe* results in assigning an alien object to the linguistic icon, *believe*. Believing God is entering the promised land when told to, not a day later. It is obeying "the Lord your God by observing his commandments and decrees that are written in this book of the law [Deuteronomy], because you turn to the Lord your God with all your hearts and with all your soul" (Deu 30:10)—this is what Paul references when he writes, "because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom 10:9). Believing God is keeping His law and having love for even one's enemies. It isn't merely saying, *I believe Jesus died for me*. Of course He died for you, but why did He have to die? Because you were refusing to believe God about how to live. If you had believed God, you would not have sinned, and would not need a sin offering. Christ is our sin offering because we haven't believed God, either individually or collectively. We believe Satan, or his feigning ministers of righteous, one of whom uses straw men and red herrings to turn drawn disciples away from the truth once delivered about repentance to another gospel of *just believe and all will be well with you*. Believing God means obedience to God because you now choose to obey. Joshua and Caleb as well as Abraham are our examples. The Israelites, except for Joshua and Caleb, didn't enter the promised land because of unbelief (Heb 3:19). Belief requires doing what God says to do, when He says to do it, which is works in

any language. So the boundary markers of the Church of God's wilderness crescent all read *works are required from here on*.

What the angels under Satan didn't do was choose righteousness when presented with alternatives. What the remaining two-thirds of the angels lacked was the necessity to choose between alternatives. Why the destiny of humans is higher than angels is because we have faced alternatives, and by practice, we have set our character to always choose to do that which is right.

The reality is that we don't always do what is right. Israel didn't when Moses was gone for a few days. The first covenant was doomed from its incorporation because of the spiritual weakness of the Israelites, because their social construct didn't allow for an invisible God, no matter how powerful. The Logos really was taken by surprise. So, in order for Elohim's plan to reproduce Themselves to work while Satan was still allowed to broadcast his attitude of rebellion humanity had to be modified. A new covenant had to be made on better promises, and upon selection of individuals from an expanded gene pool. And the spiritual modification of writing laws on hearts and minds forms a previously non-existing social construct within the larger constructions that make up *the world*. We are to be in *the world*, but not part of *the world*, for the Church of God is its own construct, with its own mental paradigms. Just as a man cannot truly enter a woman's crescent of wilderness which includes child birth and mothering, a person in *the world* cannot enter the Church of God's crescent until drawn by the Father. How does a woman explain to me the experience of child birth? I can observe birth. I can hear her explanation of what she experienced, but I can never *know* child birth as she does. Likewise, a person in *the world* can read what I write, can read Scripture for him or herself, but unless drawn by the Father, the person cannot understand Scripture as a saint does. The person can use all of Paul's epistles as arguments against Christ's teachings, but the person will not even realize that he or she has condemned Paul to being called least in the kingdom of God. And that isn't to be.

The reasons why the Father draws a person at this time are known only to Him. He doesn't draw anyone He thinks will fail. Those individuals He draws He believes can, with modification, overcome Satan just as Christ overcame Satan. And a person's only reliable determiner of whether a person has been drawn is the person's attitude towards obeying God. Will you? even to keeping the Sabbath on the seventh day as God originally intended. That really is the test commandment. There really isn't any debate about honoring parents, or murder, adultery, stealing, lying, coveting. There isn't debate about using God's name in vain. That leaves only two: idols, and the nature of one God, neither of which could be called the least of the commandments. So the test commandment is, indeed, the fourth (or the third for those who eliminated idols by removing a commandment). If you refuse to obey God, then why would you want a part in the first resurrection? You won't have a part, but then, you think you'll be in heaven. So does Satan and his demons.

When Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah, Satan will be bound; his broadcast of rebellion shutdown. Obedience to God will then become as natural as breathing. Likewise, during the White Throne Judgment, Satan will have been thrown into the lake of fire. Without his broadcast of rebellion, choosing to do what is right won't be that difficult. The problem for the Logos lay between forty days after making the first covenant and when Christ begins His millennium reign.

Both houses of Israel were given a chance to keep the terms of the Sinai covenant. Both houses were warned by prophets of what would happen if they didn't repent, and both houses were divorced because of their disobedience. Jeremiah writes, "The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah" (31:31). Those days were most of six centuries in the future, but they finally arrived when the Logos was made flesh. So, since those days did arrive we should want to know the terms of this promised new covenant:

[T]his is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more (31:33–34).

The writer of Hebrews reiterates these terms in chapter 8, verses 8–12; and in chapter 10, verses 16–18. And I wonder why Evangelical Christians ask strangers *if they know the Lord*. Under this new covenant, all know the Lord, *from the least of them to the greatest*, so the question is pointless, unless, of course, humanity isn’t yet under this new covenant which doesn’t require anyone to teach one another to, *Know the Lord*.

It has taken awhile to arrive at this second covenant, but the terms are worth the wait: once an individual has been drawn by the Father, the individual has the law of God written on his or her heart and put into the person’s mind. The person internalizes the law of God by becoming the tablet upon which the law is written. As such, the person, like the stone tablets hewn by Moses, belongs in the ark of the covenant, under the mercy seat. The person is no longer under the law, but has become the law. Grace is the gift of God, and as such, it remains outside of the person. So under the second covenant, a person is not under the law, but under grace (Rom 6:14), since it is grace that remains outside the person. And by grace, we have no sin. Not only doesn’t God remember our sin, which is lawlessness or the transgression of the law (1 John 3:4), but sin isn’t even imputed to a person under this second covenant, a concept that hasn’t been well understood by the Church of God.

No sin!

There is a catch: by being drawn by the Father, the person has been made holy, meaning that the person has been set apart for divine use. Being holy is a condition, or a state. It isn’t anything we do. We can’t

make ourselves or anything else holy. We can't make a day of the week holy, a festival holy, a goblet holy, a cross holy. Only Elohim can make a thing or a time or a person holy. And the Father makes saints holy by drawing them from *the world* to do that which is right as they do the work of God (1 Peter 2:9). Works are not only expected, they are required.

The "doing" that's required isn't the saying of prayers, or the dead works of animal sacrifice (Paul loved that pun), or the diligent keeping of the Sabbath and the High Days. Rather, the works required are choosing to **do** what is right in every situation encountered. We know what is right, because the law of God is written in our hearts and minds. Observing the Sabbath is the right thing to do. Conducting one's business on the Sabbath is the wrong thing to do. The saint knows this, because the internalized law of God pricks his or her conscience with hatpins if one buys and sells beyond what is necessary to worship God on the Sabbath. Likewise, a saint doesn't steal, because the saint doesn't want to steal. A saint doesn't commit murder, or adultery, because the saint doesn't want to. The saint will eventually rule his or her body with considerable success, which wouldn't be possible if not for the spiritual modification made by writing the law of God on the saint's heart.

The angel who was with John at the end of his vision said, concerning the time of the end, "Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy" (Rev 22:11), thereby establishing the spiritual juxtaposition of action as a result of condition. The filthy or unclean (that which is common or not of God) are to remain unclean. That is a state or condition, and they are spiritual evildoers who will continue to do evil. So the condition of being common or unclean causes a person to be an evildoer who does that which is evil. And this person will continue in this state, and in this course of action right up until Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah. This is another version of Christ saying, "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giv-

ing in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man” (Matt 24:38–39).

By *the world's* standards, the person whom God labels as an evildoer can be noble and upright and a deacon in that Baptist church two blocks away. The person isn't necessarily a drug dealer, or a murderer. The person is merely someone whose sins are visible in the spiritual realm. Jesus attached the identifier *evildoer* to those who profess His name but don't do the will of the Father: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven...I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers’” (Matt 7:21, 23). So it does the person who is unclean or common (used in the sense of some vessels are created for special use and some for common or ordinary use) no good to profess Christ's name, or prophesy in His name, or cast out demons in His name, or do other mighty works in His name if the person doesn't do the will of the Father, which isn't doable without the Father having drawn the person and having made spiritual modifications to the person. Again, the will of the Father is to have you believe Him, which can't truly be done until He draws you from *the world* and spiritually modifies you. Only then is grace extended to you, and only you know how badly you desire to obey God, not just praise Him. The desire to obey comes with being drawn, and if you have that desire, you will obey all that is the Father's will. It's all just as simple as that.

Returning to Revelation, the holy (or set apart by God) will continue to be holy. Their state is that of having been made holy by the Father. They are truly bondservants to the Father; they aren't their own although Christ gives to each considerable latitude to do what the person wants. They have been made part of the Elect. They initiated nothing, but they were made righteous, and they will continue doing that which is right, or they will assign to themselves reservations in the lake of fire.

Again, those who have been made holy will remain holy until Christ returns, and those who are holy will be righteous—and the righteous will continue doing what is right. Emphasis needs to be placed on *doing right*, which is works by any definition. So all who teach “no works” deny Christ and His doctrine. We are justified by faith. We are saved by grace. And we are expected, or better, required to do that which is right, which begins with keeping the law and proceeds to having love even for one’s enemies and continues on to choosing to do the right thing in every situation encountered, to passing tests of faith and doing the work of God in spreading the gospel of Christ’s soon coming return as the all powerful Messiah. Only then are we living in light. Only then are we not unprofitable servants, who have buried our talents. Only then are we rightly dividing the word of God, ready for spiritual meat and not the milk of repentance. The foundational teachings about Christ are “repentance from dead works and faith toward God, instruction about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment” (Heb 6:1–2). The holy should have all long ago grown past the age when we need to suckle the teats of the Church. But conflicts over the calendar, over how much a disciple should know before being invited to services (if it takes two years of listening to tapes and jumping through hoops to get a drawn disciple into church services, the organization should die for its lack of godly love), over a host of other trivial matters are unworthy of saints, and are an indication the saints have never been weaned.

If I couldn’t teach a drawn disciple the foundational doctrines of the Church of God in a few hours, then I have no gift of being a teacher—and that is what I am, a teacher of the doctrines of Christ, being myself taught by the one true Teacher, Christ. I do not know all there is to know, nor will I ever pretend to. But I have been brought in as a relief pitcher when those who started this endtime work of God failed to keep their doctrines inside the ballpark. And what I lack in ability, Christ supplies in determination.

Dostoyevsky became the great novelist that he was after he faced the firing squad. His values were modified as he looked at his wouldbe executioners, their rifles in their hands. My values were modified when I was drawn by the Father; they were further modified by falling tall timber six feet on the stump, and by bouncing around in the North Pacific and in the Bering Sea. I was born a stiff-necked Israelite, who knew my ancestry only back to the preacher who delivered the funeral sermon for Mary, Queen of Scots. I became a hard headed spiritual Israelite, who knows that I have to tackle the community-tested truths of Christianity, rebut them, and trample them as Christ reinserts the primitive faith into visible Christianity. The extent to which I succeed is up to Christ. However, if He drafted me for this job, then He thinks I can do it. He has given me the same type of opportunity that Dostoyevsky had to mentally toughen.

The core of the plan of God is placing drawn and modified disciples into situations where the disciple has to choose to do what is right, regardless of how difficult the decision is. By the work of doing that which is right in every situation and on every occasion, a drawn saint will make choosing rightly a habit that will determine the disciple's character. Only then will the disciple have his or her part in the first resurrection: Jesus said, "Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his [the Son of Man's] voice and will come out—those *who have done good*, to the resurrection of life, and those *who have done evil*, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28–29 emphasis mine). If a saint does not do good, then the saint does evil. The works required of all saints is to have *done good*. "Doing" is works. Make no mistake about this, works are mandated under the second covenant. To teach otherwise marks oneself as being a minister of Satan, a spiritually uncircumcised Philistine who is no different than a bear or a lion. The cover photo of my book of poetry is of me with a bear I killed. The rifle is one I built, and the baby is my youngest daughter. The photo was taken before I was

drafted by God, and I was not then truly hard headed, only angry at *the world*.

Again, I will let Jesus say to all saints and wouldbe saints,

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:17–19).

For the umpteenth time and so there can never be a mistake, I teach them...when Paul wrote that Christ “abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances” (Eph 2:15), he metonymically identified the Sinai covenant with his icon phrase *the law*. This is not the same referent that Christ assigns to *the law* in the above citation. *The law* for Christ is the codified ten commandments as magnified, or as they should have been applied from their utterance from atop Mt. Sinai. Christ came to establish what the prophets had spoken about the Messiah, and He came to fulfill the doing of the ten commandments. He clearly warns against breaking, or teaching others to break even the least of the commandments, which is, again, for us today the fourth commandment.

But a person doesn’t have to believe Christ said to keep the commandments. No, a person doesn’t have to believe anything, certainly not God. Remember, since Calvary there has been a division of humanity, with *the world* on one side of the division, and drawn-by-the-Father disciples on the other side. Unless a person has been drawn by the Father and enlightened by Christ, then has chosen to reject the law of God through either clever arguments or spiritual neglect—this person will be in the resurrection to condemnation—the person is under no obligation to keep the terms of the second covenant, which

begins with keeping the commandments, all ten of them, then extends to everything written in the book of Deuteronomy. This person can chant repetitious phrases, can rub the bellies of idols, can eat *the other white meat*, can bow before the rising sun, can believe he will lie with seventy virgins in heaven, can curse God, but this person will not be part of the first resurrection. And you as a pastor or journeyman laymember know that this person has no part in the first resurrection, and you sort of sense that greater Christianity teaches a doctrine of no law, making those who teach this doctrine the same as those who bow to Allah. You feel God working in you to get you to keep the Sabbath, but you have felt this feeling for so long that you can ignore its pricks, if it weren't for me standing here before you as Arnie once did me. Arnie tore into me because he had love for someone he had never met, and who certainly wasn't his peer. And I'm doing the same to you, perhaps with a speck of greater gentleness than Arnie did me. The sea toughens all parts of you.

Visible Christianity teaches their believers to break the fourth commandment, either by the authority invested in the Orthodox and Universal Churches, or on the illogical grounds that Paul broke bread on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), or that a special offering was to be assembled on the first day of the week (1 Corth 16:2), ignoring that Paul preached to Gentiles on the Sabbath (Acts 14:40–44 & 16:13), and that at the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15), James' decision was a determination of how much Gentile believers had to do before they were admitted into synagogues where they would learn what else they needed to know by hearing Moses read every Sabbath. Weekly spiritual instruction in the 1st-Century was on the Sabbath, not on the 8th day. The silence of no dispute about the Sabbath argues for the validity of the fourth commandment as given. Christ used original intent of two becoming one as the basis for His teaching about marriage—by extension, original intent can be used to support the Sabbath: God rested on the 7th day. Thus, by the admission of the Orthodox Church that it changed weekly worship from the 7th day to the 8th, and in light of

Scripture's silence about any controversy concerning the Sabbath, to continue to teach believers to observe the 8th day is to condemn oneself into being called least in the kingdom of heaven, assuming the person has part in either the first resurrection or the great White Throne Judgment and hasn't been judged and found worthy of resurrection into the lake of fire. The person who teaches the 8th day might be sincere, might want nothing more than to worship Jesus, but this person worships demons if this person persists in breaking the fourth commandment. Repent. Humble yourself. Admit you have been wrong in ignorance. Know that Christ will forgive you, so forgive yourself, and go on to do the work of harvesting the fields ripe with wouldbe disciples. Don't allow your ego to steal your chance to be part of the first resurrection. It stole Satan's chance to be with God forever.

James says, "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it" (2:10), and "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you?...So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (verses 14 & 17). Again, under the second covenant the works of doing that which is right is required, and this begins with keeping all of the law of God, which is one law with ten facets. A person cannot keep eight or nine facets, and then say, *That is good enough; God will have to accept me as I am*. No, God doesn't have to accept you. "Even the demons believe—and shudder" (verse 19) that God is one, but demons aren't saved. Again, Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Matt 7:21). Saying, *Lord, Lord*, is certainly confessing Christ with one's lips, but that is not enough: a believer must also *do the will of the Father. A believer must be a doer*. James says,

But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were

like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing (1:22–25).

Disciples are doers, and they will be blessed for their doing of works worthy of repentance. Christ says to the Church at Sardis, “I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God.... Yet you still have a few persons in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes; they will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy” (Rev 3:2 & 4). As disciples, we must do the will of the Father, whom Christ calls, *my God*. There is no getting around the fact that works are necessary, and those works should be perfect before the Father. And they can be because of grace. But if there have been no works, then how can grace be given as the gift of God? A person either does that which is right, or that which is evil. Any form of not doing that which is right is doing evil, even if the person buries his or her talent.

The whole duty of humanity is to fear God, and keep His commandments (Eccl 12:14) as magnified by Christ. Paul will not be called least in the kingdom of heaven, so Paul didn’t teach disciples to break the least of the commandments. If a person thinks Paul did, the person seriously misreads the writings of Paul.

Perhaps the reason Christ called me from the theological bullpen was for me to teach how language works; for obviously, many biblical scholars didn’t know they were assigning their traditions to the linguistic icons that constitute the Word of God. Words of themselves have no meaning. As readers of texts, we supply meaning. And I have, to the best of my ability and within the shared values of overlapping reader communities, just taught you what the primitive faith taught about works. I don’t believe I just taught a strawy epistle.

4.

The Apostle Paul writes about a war occurring within him: “I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the

very thing I hate” (Rom 7:15). I don’t know if Paul ever understood the overall purpose for what he observed about himself, but that purpose is the reason why angels are ministering spirits, and have not been offered sonship in the family of God. And that purpose, known to Satan, is why his disguised *ministers of righteousness* (2 Corth 11:15) teach a closed Godhead, will label as heresy any teaching about disciples being co-equal heirs with Christ, and will actually persecute and kill the person who teaches that glorified humanity will be one with the Father as Christ is one with Him. Your human potential is to be one with the Father in exactly the same relationship as Christ is one with the Father, realizing, of course, that Christ will always be the eldest Son and you might be the fifty billionth son. Someone will be the fifty-fifth billion son, assuming that the majority of humanity will choose God’s way of living over any of Satan’s many schemes, all of which lead to death.

The plan God developed to root out the seeds of rebellion Satan sowed calls for the creation of a higher order of beings than are the angels. Satan was “the signet of perfection, / full of wisdom and perfect in beauty” (Ezek 28:12), and he was “blameless in [his] ways / from the day that [he was] created, / until iniquity was found in [him]” (verse 15). He fell from perfection because his “heart was proud because of [his] beauty; [he] corrupted [his] wisdom for the sake of [his] splendor” (verse 17). Then, if Satan as the apex of created beings cannot be trusted to remain loyal, and if Satan’s beauty and perfection were the cause for his corruption, then the logical solution is the creation of flawed beings. However, the creation of flawed angels merely produces flawed angels, not something an all knowing, all wise deity would seriously consider.

To digress for a moment: the most compelling evidence of a young earth and the refutation of the gap theory is the creation of humanity. We were known to God from before the foundations of the creation were laid (*known* used with restricted assignment of object to icon). Elohim didn’t create humanity because They were suddenly lonely; He

created humanity as a solution to a problem. And as with humans, the solution to one problem opens whole frontiers of opportunities (with humans, it also produces new problems that have to be solved). The opportunity Satan's rebellion caused was the reproduction of Themselves. If Satan had never rebelled, there would never have been the need to produce beings like Themselves, since in Their creation of Satan They had produced perfection in wisdom and beauty. If They had needed additional perfect beings, They could have created another Lucifer-like being, and another, and another.

Humans are flawed from birth: we come in a fleshly container that has demands of its own. If I don't eat, every cell in my body goes in search of something it can turn into fuel and burn. There's a country music song that actually addresses a male biological phenomenon: *the girls all get prettier at closing time*. Why do men roll over and go to sleep after having intercourse? Why can't I turn down the offer of a jelly donut? They are not all that tasty. They are sweet. And after having been bottle fed on half *Karo* syrup, I have a horrible sweet tooth.

Paul recognized the problem of biological need, but didn't come up with a solution: "I can will what is right, but I cannot do it" (Rom 7:18), and "I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members" (verses 22–23). I can determine not to buy any pastries when I enter a grocery store, and I can not buy any most of the time but not all the time. Why I buy any is because I want to buy them. That innermost self of mine knows I don't need them, knows that they are empty calories that contribute to additional tooth decay and an already too large waistline, but that part of me which is flesh knows they taste good.

God is not surprised by our war between mind and flesh. He actually designed it for the purpose of creating perfection: if God could not create the continuance of perfection in His production of Lucifer, then the type of perfection that He is and that He has cannot be replicated by Him. In other words, He needs help in reproducing Himself. Just as

no human is able to reproduce him or herself at this time (cloning is problematic for this reason), the Godhead cannot reproduce Themselves without help. Just as our power to create is limited to creating things that are inferior to ourselves, the Godhead's power to create is limited to creating beings inferior to Themselves.

What the Godhead needs to reproduce Themselves is a "will" that has been predetermined never to do what is wrong, never to sin, never to be puffed up with vanity. The Godhead cannot create these "wills" while still offering free moral agency to the beings They create. They can, of course, create a being that will never sin by never giving the being the opportunity to sin. Robots won't sin. Robots are useful, but they aren't family members. They are really not all that interesting, even in a movie. Their lack of free will makes them into tools; they aren't even good pets. So the Godhead gave to ministering spirits free will. And with free will comes the possibility of disobedience, rebellion, and the sowing of discord throughout heaven, exactly what happened.

Adam knew God, was with God, talked to God. By his naming of the animals, Adam entertained the member of Elohim called the Logos, or Spokesman, whose name gets translated into English as *the Lord*. But Adam didn't believe God about the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. After all, Adam could see with his own eyes that Eve had eaten and hadn't died, not that he knew or really understood what death was. Until he had that first bite in his mouth, the word *death* was a linguistic icon without an assignable object, meaning the word had no meaning. Adam probably never even thought about his decision to eat until after he had taken a bite. Then he knew the difference between doing what is right and what is wrong. But he couldn't take back his bite. The knowledge that came with it changed him. He knew he had disobeyed, which caused him to separate himself from God.

Our separation of ourselves from God continued, leaving humanity with an inner void that needed filled. Satan was happy to oblige. If we,

like the third of the angels that rebelled, would worship him, he would, in turn, give us our physical desires and his nature.

Moses recorded, “The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth” (Gen 6:5–6). God felt He had made a mistake. Elohim’s plan to reproduce Themselves was off to a bad start. It didn’t look like the plan would produce that which the Godhead needed to create beings like Themselves who will always, in every circumstance, do what is right. That is the distinguishing characteristic of Themselves: righteousness, the doing of what is right regardless of situation or mediating criteria. So you are lucky, I am lucky that “Noah found favor in the sight of the Lord” (verse 8).

I don’t know all of what occurred preFlood. Evidently, I’m not to know. The water washed away most of the evidence (the Flood was not a local happening), and what wasn’t washed away was destroyed when the earth expanded in diameter during the days of Peleg. A probable preFlood artifact was found by Max Han near London, Texas. The octagonally forged, iron hammer Mr. Han found was encased in rock, with a portion of its handle protruding from the stone. A photograph of the hammer appears in Dr. Carl E. Baugh’s book, *Against All Odds*, and Dr. Baugh reports that Battelle Laboratory determined the hammer head’s metallurgy was 96.6% iron, 2.6% chlorine, and .74% sulfur. The hammer head is a forged metal-gas alloy, which is at today’s leading edge of metallurgy. It is possible that head was forged from a sedimentary deposit of iron that precipitated out of salt water, but the head is coated by FeO, an oxide that doesn’t form under present atmospheric conditions, an oxide that gives to the iron-gas alloy stainless steel qualities without the addition of chrome or nickel. So, apparently the technology of the preFlood world was reasonably advanced. Certainly the building of Noah’s ark took construction techniques that were “modern” in concept.

God made an adjustment in His plan to reproduce Himself (the singular *God* is used for the plural *Elohim* for convenience—it hasn't been revealed how much of the plan was the Father's doing, how much was joint effort, or how much was of the Logos). He decided humanity, one, needed to live for fewer years, that Satan's broadcast/sowing of rebellion was too difficult to overcome for an extended length of time (as far as we know, Satan deceived all of the angels under him), that righteousness didn't take most of a millennium to develop, that knowledge needed to be limited and since knowledge is cumulative, longer life meant greater societal mischief.

The second adjustment to God's plan to reproduce Himself He apparently felt necessary was to give humanity an example of how to live. He found in Abram a man who believed Him.

Again, God didn't initiate His separation from us; rather, we initiated separation through disbelief (i.e., Eve believed the serpent instead of her husband, and Adam believed his eyes instead of God), and we have continued that separation through disbelief or unbelief. With the exception of Joshua and Caleb, the generation of Israelites that left Egypt were unable to enter the promised land "because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:19). The writer of Hebrews in the 4th chapter changes *unbelief* into "disobedience" (verses 6 & 11). The Greek word translated as unbelief in 3:19 is *apeitheia*, from *apeithes*, which suggests that a person is unpersuadable and rebellious. The word translated as disobedience in 4:6 & 11 is *apisteo*, from *apistos*, which suggests that a person is without faith, an unbeliever, and disobedient through disbelief. Thus, the linguistic connection between unbelief and a lack of faith seems solid. Unbelief or disbelief results in a lack of faith which bars a person from entering into or remaining in the presence of God. This disbelief is never initiated by God, an almost meaningless statement if it weren't for the ramifications of disbelief.

Although Abram believed God, which was accounted to him as having faith in God, belief was not genetically inheritable. His descendants were like crossbred range cattle that can scent water a county away; no

fence would hold them in their covenant relationship with God. But God says of them in the Moab covenant that He hadn't given them a mind to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear (Deu 29:4). Jesus, when asked why He taught in parables, said to His disciples, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.... The reason I speak to them in parables is that "seeing they not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand." (Matt 13:11, 13). Jesus cites first the Moab covenant before He cites Isaiah's prophecy:

With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says: "You will indeed listen, but never understand, / and you will indeed look, but never perceive. / For this people's heart has grown dull, / and their ears are hard of hearing, / and they have shut their eyes; / so that they might not look with their eyes, / and listen with their ears, / and understand with their heart and turn—/ and I would heal them." (verses 14–15)

Jesus taught in parables so that those individuals who were supposed to understand the secrets of the kingdom of heaven would, and those who were not supposed to understand wouldn't. Apparently, it was never given to the ancient Israelites to understand the mystery of God, which is that He is reproducing Himself.

So God have His commandments, His statutes, and His ordinances to ancient Israel so that they would live by them as an example to all peoples, but He never gave ancient Israel understanding about why they should live by His royal law. We see this in the oft-quoted passage: "[I]f my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14). The passage is from the middle of how God answered Solomon following his prayer for the dedication of the temple, and it solidly links *sin* with *land*, which is the heart of the first covenant. Obedience was for material gain; obedience was the price for national pros-

perity, protection, and health care (Deu 28:all). Failure to pay this premium would cause Israel to be cursed by God until the nation became “an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth” (verse 25). But there was no real understanding of what was at stake. God, by His decision, didn’t reveal His purpose for using ancient Israel to these flawed humans. Even Paul by his own admission didn’t understand all of what was unfolding spiritually by his mind warring with his flesh.

The social constructs and mental paradigms that produce the American culture and our version of community tested truth cause us to reject out-of-hand the idea that God either hides crucial knowledge from us, or that God is not at this time trying to save everyone. This is not how we have constructed God for ourselves. We have become accustomed to thinking of God as Daddy, and so He is. But did your daddy conceal things from you when you were a child? Did you know the state of the family’s finances? Did you know which bills were paid and which weren’t? In some cases, a person will say, yes. But most kids have no idea what is happening beyond the play world of their walls. And it is the same with God as our Daddy. Most of humanity has no idea what God is doing, or how He is accomplishing His purposes. They don’t really care. All they want is someone to be there to pick them up when they skin a knee. And God will answer the prayers of both disciples, and of those who call upon Him without yet having been drawn and called, but He hasn’t contracted Himself to be available to those with whom He is not now working.

In order to truly understand the mystery of God, a person must deconstruct his or her existing mindset, and accept the privilege of receiving revealed knowledge. This will be heresy to many, who believe everything has been revealed. They are not, though, of the household of faith, but of the crowds to whom Jesus spoke in parables to conceal meaning and understanding so those in the crowds wouldn’t turn and be healed. Their influence, however, extends to truly drawn disciples, who hear the voice of Christ, but are fearful of answering because that isn’t what they have been taught. These disciples need to understand

that some of those who fellowship with them aren't genuine (1 Corth 11:19), and that many *ministers of righteousness* are teaching the doctrines of demons (2 Corth 1:14–15). Again, even during a period of tremendous worldwide revival after a third of humanity has been killed, the “rest of humankind...did not repent of the works of their hands or give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood” (Rev 9:20). Again, humanity didn't then suddenly start worshiping demons; it has been all along. When you attend a Sunday service and sing about going to heaven, you worship demons. God is not in that service, no matter how many times you ask Him to be. There will be a spiritual presence there all right, but it is the presence of a demon. What you feel isn't God, but a fallen angel touching you, an angel who does not want you to understand the mystery of God above all else.

How can you tell the presence of a demon from the presence of God? What criteria do you, or will you use? Your heart is deceitful, and isn't to be trusted (Jer 17:9), which is why a person looks into the mirror of the perfect royal law to see what is written on his or her heart (James 1:23–25). Repeating my citation, Jesus said, “Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 5:19). I teach them. Do you? Does your pastor? If not, do you not believe Jesus? Unbelief is lack of faith. Have you no faith? Then whom will you believe? The person who teaches you that Jesus fulfilled the commandments and as such has done away with them? or me, who is teaching you to obey the commandments because that is the right thing to do? You don't keep them as a contract obligation; you keep them because you have become the tablet upon which the Father has written them. They are who you are, or at least, who you should be. And one of the commandments is to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. Do you do that? If not, why not? Don't you believe Jesus's direct statement about breaking even the least of the command-

ments? And keeping the commandments isn't too hard for you to do. Moses didn't think it was too hard for the ancient Israelites to do under the Moab covenant (Exo 30:11). We show Christ that we know Him by obeying His commandments (1 John 2:3–6). So, do you know Christ, or not? Do you believe Christ, or not? Or are you continuing to worship demons either deliberately or unknowingly? If you are, stop immediately! repent, and begin believing both Father and Son.

All of this brings me back to Paul's inner war: the gift of God is eternal life (Rom 6:23). We don't have eternal life until the Father gives it to us when He draws and spiritually modifies us. Satan has tried to block knowledge of the mystery of God by inserting Platonism into the Christianity, but baptized Platonism still stinks of paganism. The doctrine of an immortal soul is repackaged paganism whose sell date expired two millennia ago.

When the Father draws a disciple and sets the disciple apart, He makes the disciple holy, and He gives the disciple the earnest (as in earnest money) of eternal life. The person isn't then glorified. But just as I gave earnest money down on the piece of property where I live to demonstrate the seriousness of my intention to buy before the transaction was completed, so too does the Father give the earnest of eternal life to a newly drawn disciple. The analogy isn't perfect, but as earnest money is real money, the earnest of eternal life is eternal life. A person either has eternal life, or doesn't, analogous to a woman either is pregnant or isn't. There aren't any halfway pregnant women; there aren't any disciples with half an eternal life.

What God needs to reproduce offspring is the "will" to always do right. Disciples are placed in charge of developing that *will* in the earnest of eternal life which they have been given. By the disciple choosing to do what is right when even his or her flesh resists, the disciple begins sculpting the earnest of life within him or her, that earnest being in another dimension and as such isn't perceivable to our means of imputing knowledge. We can't see it, hear it, taste it, touch it, measure

it, photograph it, but on occasion I have seen dogs recognize its presence.

The more times a disciple chooses to do what is right, the more developed is this earnest of life. It actually grows with each decision to do what is right. Eventually, with enough decisions made often enough, this earnest of life will take over the host person's character: the person will choose to do what is right without any apparent conscious decision to do so. And all of this is under Satan's reign, so we need the resistance Satan affords us to make right decisions. If Satan weren't opposing disciples, then the need for a disciple to make the decision to do what is right would be infrequent at best, the situation with angels not under Satan's reign.

What Paul experienced was God's design to compel disciples to choose righteousness, to make right decisions, to choose to do what is right in every situation. John assures us that we will fail. Likewise, Paul said he failed. I fail. And grace exists outside of us as a gift from God to blot out our failings. Not just blot them out, but to make them seem as if they never happened. God isn't interested in our failings. He has a large number of angels that failed to choose righteousness. What He needs is our *will* to become set to do that which is right in every situation we encounter. As such, He is interested in giving us as many situations as possible. He tests us by forcing us to make decisions.

God isn't trying to save our flesh, but is trying to develop our *will* to be like His, and we will be like Him when we never fail to do what is right, regardless of situation or circumstances. That, however, won't happen while we are still flesh, or in corruptible bodies. More development should, can, and will occur the longer the earnest of eternal life remains locked in flesh. We will continually have to choose to do what is right. Satan won't quit; he isn't that perceptive. His nature is to keep accusing us of what we are guilty of doing. He cannot understand the mystery of God, nor can his *ministers of righteousness*. They don't understand how choosing to do what is right, failing, then choosing righteousness again, failing, then choosing again, again, again can be

pleasing to God. They failed once, and God condemned them to outer darkness. They don't understand mutability, and the construction of habits. What God desires from us is the construction of the habit of always doing what is right. We will then do, because of our habit, what is right when facing new situations. The mystery of God is, indeed, as simple as that.

We know what is right because our consciences are reprogrammed when the Father draws us from the world. That reprogramming is further developed through Bible study, prayer, and being in services each Sabbath to hear the Word of God expounded. But we can unprogram our consciences through clever arguments, neglect, and letting the cares of this world overwhelm us. Plus, a little bitterness is a poison pill that kills all spiritual development.

As Moses told the assembled Israelites at Moab, believing God and doing what is right doesn't sound difficult, especially when failing to deliver is buried by Christ's shed blood. Why is everyone so fearful of legalism, which is part of doing what's right? What don't you understand about letting a habit of doing what's right become your character? Where is the argument? You want the gift without giving back, is that it? No!? Then you will be in services this next Sabbath, which isn't the 8th day.

I have addressed Scripture passages used by disguised *ministers of righteousness* to make the Word of God say what it doesn't in other writings. So I really want to leave with one question, Whom will you believe? Jesus? Paul? Peter? James? John? If Paul seems to say something that Jesus contradicts, whom will you believe? Paul? I hope not. Paul, like David, is dead and buried and awaits his change in the grave. It is Jesus' voice as the good shepherd that disciples hear.

Disciples hear Jesus through Paul, or Peter, or John, or me, or these disciples aren't genuine.

The evidence that God loves the Church at Philadelphia is that to this Church God has given understanding of His mystery, which the prophets of old never fully understood.

PART II

survivalists, 1998—

the Y2K problem seems far away
but we've heard it's far worse
than the government is saying
some fellas are now beginning
to stockpile food
they have their rifles
their ammo
their dried bananas
& sacks of wheat
they'll be prepared
for if the computers don't go down
then there are the globalists
who want forty percent of us
killed off, a first strike
in 2002 or 2004
I never can keep it straight
they want to make sure
if ten thousand fall
at their right hands
& ten thousand at their left
that the ten thousand & first person
doesn't get anything of theirs
not realizing
they will be the ones
wishing themselves dead
if they trust only in themselves

Prophecy and the Second Covenant

1.

For more than forty years, radio listeners heard an energized voice proclaim the “good news of the coming kingdom of God” across the North American continent. Part of that *good news* was the not so good news that unless the English speaking nations repented of their national sins and turned toward God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would send these nations into captivity. This message is still being proclaimed by at least two limited market telecasts, several slick magazines, and a host of splinter churches straining to be heard above the praise music of Christian theatre. The message is, actually, a fear based pathos claim of the same type that the Evangelical Church delivers about an everburning hell. It should never have entered the Church of God’s theological repertoire. It is intellectually dishonest. It reveals a fundamental lack of understanding about the new covenant, and it assigns to the Godhead the catastrophe Satan will bring upon, probably, the house of Israel. I suspect Satan has been chuckling for three quarters of a century. Not only will he mimic Christ’s return, but he’ll give Christ the blame for the utter destruction he, Satan, brings onto three nations that he singles out for special reprisals.

Preaching hell has been standard fare for greater Christianity since the 2nd-Century, but not for the Church of God which never accepted the theological terrorism of baptized Platonism. A loving God won’t have souls living forever in Satan’s barbecue grill; in fact Satan doesn’t live forever, but has fire brought out from within him to utterly consume him after he is released for a short while at the conclusion of the

Millennium. But the doctrinal separation between greater Christianity and the Church of God blurs when the Church attempts to coerce repentance with threats of national captivity. God tried that in the 7th, 8th and 9th Centuries B.C.E. It didn't work. The problem was with the people, so God instituted a new covenant based upon better promises, one of which is spiritual modification of the covenantee. God will not return to what didn't work. Nor will God be pleased by the Body of Christ teaching any form of emotional terrorism. He, personally, will deal with all who preach hell. He has already sent a delusion over them so they cannot repent, so they will accept the mark of the Beast, so they will feel the full fury of His wrath.

Even the various splinters of the Body of Christ were sent a delusion that prevented prophetic understanding. When the then most visible administration of the Church of God had a chance to eliminate prophetic error in 1962, scholarship was spurned. Social and economic intimidation prevented dissent. The peculiar orthodoxy of the administration's prophetic understanding was confirmed by the lack of disagreement. Senior men sat on both their hands and their courage. Previously concealed unbelief was exposed, and as with the Israelites who left Egypt, God waited for another generation to mature before proceeding with the plan which could have been completed a decade ago; the delusion was of forty years duration, a unit of time God had previously used because of widespread unbelief.

The *watchman* message the various splinters of the Church of God today deliver originated in the misunderstandings of the previously most visible administration of the Church. The message is based upon the identity of the English speaking nations being the modern descendants of the ancient house of Israel. These "lost" ten tribes were never really lost. Their movement through history can actually be traced by their use of language, and by their practice of sacrificing their first born, that practice still encapsulated in the lyrics of "Rock-a-bye baby in a treetop," and in the practice of hanging orbs on tree boughs to commemorate a baby left hanging in a cradleboard. The close connection

between sacrificial babies and decorating tree boughs is continued through the Germanic traditions for the celebration of Christ's birth. These Germanic traditions of Christmas observance, which have become part of the American culture, evolved as these people migrated into Western Europe. With a few gaps that are narrowing as Russia releases more information, these people and customs go all the way back to the exodus from Samaria.

Yes, with the Iron Curtain having rusted away, additional evidence emerges yearly from Russia to solidify speculation that the Scythian and Germanic tribes which migrated out of the steppes and into northern Europe were primarily the descendants of the northern house of Israel. These Israelites either fled the drought of Ahab, or were taken captive in the Assyrian invasions of 734 and 721 B.C.E. Within the Churches of God, the recent work of Steven M. Collins has filled many of the historical gaps left by pre-World War II academia, gaps continued by American scholars' bias against dispersal theories that have transoceanic passages being made prior to Columbus. Collins' work essentially confirms the British-Israelism of the 18th and 19th Centuries that was part of the Church of God's message for all of the 20th-Century. But my use of "speculation" is academically correct. Part of the Church's identification of peoples is still based upon assumption.

Within Evangelical and Universal Christianity, community tested knowledge asserts that the peoples of northern Europe are Gentiles, with no ethnic connection to the Semitic peoples of the Middle East. These assertions are based upon modern language usage, and lack of records, and very little else. Hittite was an Indo-European language, and a recorded example of a people giving up a functioning language for another occurred with the Danish settlers in Normandy. Within thirty years they had to send their children back to Denmark to learn to read Norse, such was their conversion to French. So the language use argument is without intellectual standing. The lack of records is now turning into not such a lack, and their little else is even smaller than before. So little could be farther from the truth. Northern Euro-

peans are primarily the descendants of the house of Joseph, with a liberal peppering of descendants of the house of Judah sprinkled among them.

While the evidence isn't overwhelming, enough evidence exists to support the United States and Britain being the primary nations of the modern house of Joseph. Someone wanting to know more about the ethnicity of Yankees should consider reading, *The "Lost" Ten Tribes of Israel... Found!*, and the works referenced in its biography. Mr. Collins will shortly publish a four volume set of works that expands upon his historical premises—as I write in July 2002, the set hasn't been released.

My purpose is to neither confirm nor refute the claim that the United States is the modern nation of Manassah, which I believe it to be. Rather, my purpose is to refute the prophetic basis for splinter organizations within the Church of God to set themselves up as *watchmen*. So for my purpose, I will argumentatively accept the claim that the United States is Manassah as fact, knowing all the while that the claim remains unproved, and possibly, unprovable. But the truth of the claim doesn't effect how prophetic warnings about Israel again going into national captivity have been and are being preached weekly. It is this misuse of prophecy that I want to erase.

For the non-biblical student, I should supply some historical background for what I will write: after God appeared in vision twice to Solomon and commanded that he, Solomon, shouldn't go after the gods of his many wives (1 Kings 11:9–10), Solomon still went after these gods. The Logos decided to take Israel away from Solomon at his death, but for David's sake, He would leave Solomon's son one tribe so that David would always have someone to sit on his throne. Thus, after Solomon died a mostly bloodless civil war occurred, with Jeroboam, an exiled steward of the king, taking ten tribes north, leaving Solomon's son Rehoboam with, actually, two and a half tribes. (Remember, at this time there were thirteen tribes. Both sons of Joseph had full tribe status.)

Since the name *Israel* belonged to the two sons of Joseph, the northern tribes, living in Samaria, became known as the house of Israel, and the southern tribes, living in Judea, as the house of Judah. The first time Jews are mentioned in the Authorized Version of the Bible, they are at war with the house of Israel.

The use of the identifying names “house of Israel,” “Joseph,” or “Jacob” are correctly applied only to the northern kingdom of Samaria from the reign of Jeroboam until 721 B.C.E. But just as the United States of America is commonly identified as America whereas both Canada and Mexico are also part of America (as is every country south of Mexico), national names have a way of being used without a great deal of precision. The Soviet Union was regularly called Russia, and the list stretches through Germany, China, England and on to a host of lesser countries for which I would need a reference work to give their correct names.

The problem of imprecise naming exists biblically: the prophets weren’t always careful not to call the house of Judah *the house of Israel*, especially after Israel went into captivity. In fact, God identifies the *polis* Jerusalem with the icon phrase *the house of Israel*, since that was all that remained of the once great nation after He sent both the house of Joseph and the house of Judah into national captivity. So a reader **cannot** assume that every time the icon phrase *the house of Israel* is encountered the referent for the phrase is the northern tribes. I understand that life would be easier if that were the case, but it isn’t—and it is spiritually naive to assume that it is.

The first prophetic mistake Church of God *watchmen* make is to assume that Ezekiel uses the identifying phrase *house of Israel* for only the northern kingdom of Samaria. That is simply not the case.

Ezekiel records, “The word of the Lord came to me: Mortal, the house of Israel is saying, ‘The vision that he [Ezekiel] sees is for many years ahead; he prophesies for distant times.’ Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord God: None of my words will be delayed any longer, but the word that I speak will be fulfilled, says the Lord God” (12:26–

28), and it was, at Jerusalem. A careful reading of the context reveals that the prophets in Jerusalem were saying that Ezekiel's prophecies were for the far future. God says, No, the prophecies are for right then. God identifies the *polis* Jerusalem as *the house of Israel*. God brought about the fulfillment of the prophecies, and for the *watchmen* who would argue for a later fulfillment (type and antitype), God labels those who say the prophecies are for later as false prophets.

Consider also, "In the morning the word of the Lord came to me: Mortal, has not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said to you, 'What are you doing? Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: This oracle concerns the prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel in it'" (Ezek 12:8–10). First, God identifies the house of Judah as *the house of Israel*, because it isn't Jerusalem that speaks to Ezekiel, but those captives of Judah who were with him. Then again, we see God connecting Jerusalem with the phrase *the house of Israel*. Jerusalem is, at this time, a city-state of greater pretensions than resources. Its king had sworn allegiance to Babylon, but was looking to make an alliance with Egypt in an attempt to regain its independence. God calls the king a covenant breaker. Since He had brought about the house of Judah's captivity, He had no intention of letting Jerusalem become a sovereign nation. Many of the prophecies of Ezekiel are directed at the *polis*, which God identifies as *the house of Israel*. To assign these prophecies to a different referent is to place oneself at odds with God, not a small thing.

If God doesn't use the identifying phrase *house of Israel* with technical precision, then the Church of God errors in constructing a theology around prophetic messages to *the house of Israel* being messages to American and British peoples. But this is exactly what Mr. Herbert Armstrong did, and what the *watchmen* today are doing. This is presumptive on their part, as well as being theologically foolish.

Our American Indian wars were about as long ago as the northern kingdom's captivity was when Ezekiel writes. Enough time had passed since *the house of Israel's* captivity that in common usage, the house of Judah was being identified by the more inclusive term, Israel, just as

the modern nation of Israel today uses that identifying term. There was no other house of Israel anywhere. By default, the house of Judah acquired rights to the identifying phrase, which in turn went to Jerusalem when the house of Judah first went into captivity.

Ezekiel elsewhere does identify the descendants of the northern kingdom by the phrase *the house of Israel*, especially when the house of Judah is also mentioned. So the context of each usage of the identifying phrase must be carefully examined to see whom the intended referent is. A discussion of referents will occur in the section in which I explicate the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel.

All of this doesn't have too much significance outside the Church of God, but within the Church, a problem exists: in the second volume of his autobiography, Herbert Armstrong writes,

I had seen that Ezekiel was a *prophet* with a message for the FUTURE. He himself was in the captivity of the House of JUDAH—the Jews. But he was *not* set a prophet with a message to these people. (p.36—emphasis his) Ezekiel was made a prophet to *this* nation [the house of Israel]—not the nation of Judah among whose captives he lived. His message was a warning of INVASION and TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF THE NATION'S CITIES. That invasion was for the far future. The prophecy came more than 120 years *after* Israel already *had* been invaded and conquered. (p.37—again, all emphasis his)

Well, Mr. Armstrong did exactly what the false prophets in Jerusalem had done with Ezekiel's words: he said they were for the far future, whereas God says they would be fulfilled right away. As a Church, we need to believe God rather than a minister, man or angel. We didn't, and we got intellectual egg on our faces as was appropriate.

We cannot cry, WOLF! forever and remain credible. At least one of those limited market telecasts specializes in crying, Wolf, Wolf, thereby actively continuing the prophetic delusion sent forty years ago. This telecast might be doing more harm weekly to the Body of Christ with its lack of prophetic understanding than the Roman Church has done

in the past five centuries. This telecast is backed by a few thousand saints who sincerely believe that a resurrected Germany will again wage war on the United States and Britain. That will simply not be the case. Most likely the United States will be part of the ten nation coalition that lends its military forces to the king of the North; we will probably be the iron part of one of the five toes. And if the prophecy hasn't been abolished, while Satan reigns as the antiChrist (during the last three and half years of the Tribulation), God will bring Russia and its allies over the Pole in an attack on the United States. There is, however, nothing in prophecy about another war between the United States and Germany. It's not there, and the *watchmen* need to quit crying, Wolf, Wolf.

Any honest examination of referents for Ezekiel's use of the icon phrase *the house of Israel* should have revealed that the prophet used the phrase for the remnant of the formerly great nation that remained in Jerusalem after the initial capture of Judah by Babylon. The phrase kept alive the hope of return. Ezekiel's oracles concerned *the prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel in the city*. To teach otherwise was to teach an errant doctrine.

But once a person makes a theological mistake, retracting that mistake becomes as difficult as surgically extracting a man's ego. In Mr. Armstrong's case, a second element was in play: he writes in the same section from which the previous citations were taken that,

About this time God impressed on my mind His real meaning of the prophecies in Ezekiel 33:1–19, and 3:17–21. The true significance of the entire book of Ezekiel had been revealed for some time. But now [spring 1941], suddenly, it took on *immediate* and *specific* and *personal* significance. (p.36—emphasis his)

So now I saw Ezekiel was set a WATCHMAN—to *watch* international conditions as well as God's prophecies—and *when* this invasion is preparing, and near, shortly prior to Christ's coming to RULE THE WORLD, the watchman is to WARN the people who had migrated, in Ezekiel's day, to northwestern Europe and the British Isles! But Ezekiel *never carried that warning!* It was not for

HIS TIME! He was used *merely to write it!* It now became plain to me that God was to use a modern 20th-Century “Ezekiel” to shout this WARNING. (p.37–38—again, emphasis his)

Well, the true significance of Ezekiel’s prophecies weren’t known to Mr. Armstrong, who, indeed, saw the war that was then about to entangle America as the preliminary battles of what would culminate in Armageddon and Christ’s return. But Christ didn’t then return. Armageddon remains in the future, and his prophetic understanding wasn’t very good although many people still insist that he had the gift of prophecy. He didn’t. He neither understood Ezekiel’s prophecies, nor could he understand Daniel and Revelation, Daniel’s prophecies being sealed and secret until the time of the end, and Revelation written with a literary trope that precludes understanding until the day of the Lord. So he cannot really be faulted for his failure to understand biblical prophecy. I would, though, go to war with his writing style in any class I have taught.

Am I letting Mr. Armstrong off the hook too easily by saying that endtime prophetic understanding wasn’t possible in 1927 or in 1941. After all, he claimed understanding, and built his career on having that understanding...he will feel properly chagrined when he is resurrected with all of the other firstfruits. Plus, the problem really isn’t what he taught, but the deification of both him and his teachings by well-intentioned but prophetically ignorant men two decades after his death. He was a man who made mistakes and mistakenly understood prophecy. He also worked very hard at recovering the basic tenets of the Church of God, which were gullied by erosion during the reigns of Universal kings the previous millennium. For that work, he will be well rewarded. And as with poets, he should be remembered for his best work, not his mistakes.

What Mr. Armstrong did, and what others since have done and are still doing is to take the curses of the old covenant and apply them to the endtime houses of Israel. He did this because he failed to realize that two covenants cannot exist at the same time, one for *the circum-*

cised (Israel), and one for drawn disciples (spiritual Israel). The first was abolished so the second could be established—and under the second, God’s focus is individuals, specifically, those individuals whom he has drawn from *the world* and given to Christ. Certainly, He knows what each nation is doing, and which peoples are in what nations. But He is creating “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people” (1 Peter 2:9) from individuals of all ethnicities. He is more concerned about the potential quality of the person than the person’s heritage. He is actually selecting individuals who cannot say, *Look, See what I did on my own*. He selects individuals with potential, but who couldn’t get out of their own way for whatever reason[s]. Mr. Armstrong was one of those individuals, as I am. We will both take our places in a long line of individuals who have made mistakes, but whom God has used to do mighty works.

However, we, as the Church of God, need to bury Mr. Armstrong’s prophetic writings in a casket of our own making.

With fresh eyes, the Church of God needs to reread endtime prophecies, which I began to do in January. My understanding is that Mr. Collins will also come out with a work on prophecy after he brings his present project to fruition. The ministry of the various splinters of the Church are, however, almost without exception locked into the orthodoxy taught by Mr. Armstrong at Ambassador College. And just as language resists change the farther it is spoken away from its center, ministerial prophetic understanding will resist change the farther the minister is away from the center of the Church of God, which, at the moment, is unorganized, unincorporated, and unrecognizable, but exists as a vapor spreading across splinters and fellowships and denominations as the Bride of Christ prepares herself for the wedding. So, I don’t expect wholesale abandonment of the prophetic understanding taught in Bible classes at A.C. by the ministry of the splinters. Rather, I expect a reorganization of splinters and fellowships to develop as many ministers who are now not a part of the Church of God bring their congregations into the light that didn’t get snuffed in the 2nd-Century

when God sent a delusion over those who were perishing, that delusion codified by the Council at Nicea in the 4th Century and kept alive to this day by historical exegesis. Again, if a person's ego prevents the person from admitting that he or she has been wrong, the person will not have a part in the first resurrection, regardless of whether the person is in the Evangelical Church, the Universal or Orthodox Church, or the Church of God.

What a person finds concerning the endtime descendants of the house of Israel is them returning from national captivity after Christ returns: "On that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that is left of his people" (Isa 11:11), and "He...will assemble the outcasts of Israel, / and gather the dispersed of Judah / from the four corners of the earth" (verse 12), and "so there shall be a highway from Assyria / for the remnant that is left of his people / as there was for Israel / when they came up from the land of Egypt" (verse 16). When was the first time God set about to recover the remnant of His people? The exodus from Egypt was hardly a gathering of a remnant, but the gathering of the entire people, with assorted stragglers. And the remnant Ezra brought back from Babylon was of Judah, not Joseph. Both houses are mentioned in verse 12, so evidently both house have been recovered once. Thus, the textual suggestion is that a gathering has occurred sometime prior to Christ's return, that a rescattering will occur that sends Israel to the corners of the earth, and that Christ's recovery, as the all powerful Messiah, of the remnant of Israel will be the remembered event in the Millennium, not Israel's exodus from Egypt.

The above passage certainly seems to support Mr. Armstrong's understanding that God would again bring the modern descendants of the Assyrians against the modern descendants of the house of Israel. He identified the Assyrians as the German people, which, at best, is only partially correct since the tribes of Israel have been among the Assyrians from the 8th-Century B.C.E. on. Modern Germany isn't as ethnically pure as Hitler would have liked. Although it isn't a genetic melting pot

as Carthage, Parthia and the United States were and are, racial diversity does exist east to west, and somewhat north to south. This year, though, the U.S. supplemental budget for our Defense Department is larger than Germany's entire military budget. Germany couldn't win either of two wars it started in the 20th-Century, and it couldn't win one now against either the U.S. or Russia. Only a nation of similar geographic size and industrial strength can even challenge the U.S. A German-lead European Union could, but why? At the beginning of WWII, Germany needed land and was looking eastward at Ukraine and Belarus, the possession of both being the ultimate goal of Hitler's aggression. Chamberlain's naivete just got in the way. But today, Europe doesn't need our land, our goods, nor our services. Their foreign ministers can think we are cowboys, diplomatically inept, but that doesn't lead to war. Religion, today, is not a strong force in Europe (as liberal as the U.S. has become, we are still regarded as Puritans by Europeans). So there is no reason for Europe to make war against the United States at this time. A trade war won't even have staying power, since Europe needs access to our markets. We are where the money is, and a war will end that for the world. So our involvement in a modern war will only be for ideological reasons. As such, the threat to world peace that is real and that will not go away is radical Islam. The end-time struggle which will cause Jerusalem to be surrounded by armies is the conflict between the demonic kings of the North and of the South as manifest through the theological struggle of greater Christianity against Islam. The endtime warring won't be Germany against English-speaking nations, but will be another crusade. Thus, Mr. Armstrong's teaching that Germany, as the endtime Roman Empire, will be God's instrument in bringing national captivity on the English-speaking peoples was an act of creative writing and speaking, especially so when one realizes that the old covenant ended at Calvary.

The second covenant, though, doesn't erase Isaiah's words about Christ again gathering the remnant of Israel and Judah at His return. The promise of the Moab covenant was the gathering again of Israel, so

promises to gather are technically part of the second covenant. But to gather a second time suggests that the terms of the Moab covenant have been fulfilled in the return of the exiles from Babylon under Ezra, and at another time for the house of Joseph. So, in rereading prophecy we need to look for Israel and Judah, and determine what we can about their sovereign status prior to Christ's return. My contention is that the time of the end began in January 2002, and that the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation are now understandable.

But before we go to Daniel, let's look at Ezekiel:

Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came....I will take you from the nations and gather you from all countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you...I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God...and I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you. I will make the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field abundant, so that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations. (36:22-30)

God, for His name's sake, said He would gather Israel under the terms of the second covenant (Israel's spiritual modification of receiving *a new heart* and *a new spirit*, His spirit), and the house of Israel shall live in the land He gave Israel's ancestors. A complex argument can be made that this gathering has been at least partially fulfilled, since the majority of the northern kingdom left Samaria during the drought of Ahab (1 Kings 17:1 on). I actually believe it has been fulfilled, that the religious migration to this country by Puritans and other devout Believers in the 17th-Century was this gathering. And just as Jews

drifted away for religious purity between the time of Ezra and Jesus, so too have we drifted away from what purity we had and our desire for purity prior to our independence. A Supreme Court ruling that virtual kiddie porn is really not pornography is certainly as far off target as was the Pharisees' construction of *Corban*.

Complex arguments tend to confuse even the person who constructs the argument, so an overview seems appropriate before the waters are so muddied that even a catfish couldn't find its way to Israel. If the United States appears in endtime prophecies, it appears not in prophecies about the house of Israel other than in the above cited prophecy, and in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. It appears as one of the horns of the fourth beast of Daniel 7 that is uprooted by the little horn; it can appear nowhere else. So if Americans as endtime descendants of Joseph are to return from national captivity, they/we will only go into captivity because of the little horn. We will go into captivity about three and a half years before Christ returns, and we go because we will not honor the antitype antiChrist as the Messiah. Our identity as one of the three uprooted horns isn't certain, but the prophecies themselves are sure. Three nations in an endtime coalition of ten nations will be overturned for religious reasons. This ten nation coalition will probably feature five strong nations, and five wannabe military powers. The coalition comes together to fight radical Islam, which has previously attacked the greatly weakened industrial powers of the West. Russia will probably be the strongest remaining power, and as such, the leading nation in the coalition, which will use Christianity as its rallying focus to suppress Islam. The war will be between the demonic kings of the North and the South, with the individual possessed by the king of the North declaring himself the Messiah when his armies finally surround Jerusalem after a third of humanity has been killed in this war. I believe the United States will have borne the brunt of the fighting, and will not have the strength to resist further aggression. As a result, we as endtime descendants of Joseph will experience loss of national sovereignty, not because we are cursed by God but because not enough of us believed

God to have His protection of individuals extend over the nation. If enough of us were to repent, were to begin keeping the law of God and do what is right to the best of our abilities, regardless of whether we have been drawn by the Father, then we might escape nationally the tribulation that will bring death on a scale never before conceived. This is the message of the self-appointed *watchmen*, but it is a message that is true. However, these *watchmen* don't have the storyline correct, don't have the responsible party correct, or even the length of the Tribulation correct. They are setting their converts up to worship Satan when he proclaims himself the Messiah after three and a half years of troubles the likes of which the world has never previously known. They are, frankly, false prophets.

Presently, the social constructs forming America are probably not capable of repenting since we have a national self-righteous complex. We do not see ourselves as God does; we would never identify ourselves as evildoers. But God does. We see how good we are, and we have some good. We do good works. We care about people worldwide, and we put out some of the raunchiest filth ever projected onto movie screens. We build houses for the homeless, and we sexually molest children on an unimagined scale. We send rescue teams to earthquake sites everywhere, and we murder babies in abortion clinics in every city. Our food feeds the world, and our corporate executives defraud their stockholders. We give to every cause, and we steal just a little whenever we can. We really are evildoers, despite the good that we do. And God sees us for who we are, not who we think we are.

To understand who we are prophetically, we need to see what happened to the house of Israel. King Hiram of Tyre "had always been a friend to David" (1 Kings 5:1). No only was he a friend, but he was a trading partner. An ally, in every sense of the word. And this relationship between Israel and Tyre continued into Solomon's reign: "King Solomon gave to Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. But when Hiram came from Tyre to see the cities that Solomon had given him,

they did not please him. Therefore he said, ‘What kind of cities are these that you have given me, my brother?’” (9:11–13).

Tyre was, as secular history records, the principle city of the Eastern Phoenicians, whose sailing fleets circumnavigated Africa, sailed to Britain, and on to North America, as a parchment Plutarch recovered from the ruins of Old Carthage reveals—Plutarch translated the parchment himself, didn’t understand the expression “sea of ice” [for Davis Straits], but believed that Carthage had been to the New World. Plutarch’s translation is available in English in Dr. Barry Fell’s *Saga America*.

Solomon might have bargained sharply with Hiram, but the relationship between the house of Israel and the Phoenicians remained strong for generations. Ahab, son of Omri, began to reign over the house of Israel in the 38th year of King Asa of Judah: Ahab married Jezebel, daughter of King Ethbaal of Sidon (1 Kings 16:29, 31). So the house of Israel was, under Ahab, not only allied with the Phoenicians economically and militarily, but also by royal marriage, and by, unfortunately, religious practices.

It is a mistake to think that either the house of Israel or the house of Judah practiced the religious precepts of the Bible after their liberation from slavery. God said,

Moreover I swore to them [Israel under Moses] in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries, because they had not executed my ordinances, but had rejected my statutes and profaned my sabbaths, and their eyes were set on their ancestors’ idols. Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not live. I defiled them through their very gifts, in their offering up all their firstborn, in order that I might horrify them, so that they might know that I am the Lord. (Ezek 20:23–26)

Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: Will you defile yourselves in the manner of your ancestors and go astray after their detestable things? When you offer your gifts and make

your children pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols to this day. (verses 30–31)

What is in your mind shall never happen—the thought, “Let us be like the nations, like the tribes of the countries, and worship wood and stone.” (verse 32)

As I live, says the Lord God...I will be king over you. I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered...I will enter into judgment with you face to face...I will make you pass under the staff, and will bring you within the bond of the covenant...Then you shall know that I am the Lord. (verses 33–38)

As for you, O house of Israel, thus says the Lord God: Go serve your idols, everyone of you now and hereafter, if you will not listen to me; but my holy name you shall no more profane with your gifts and your idols. (verse 40)

This cite is needfully long. It conveys the essence of God’s relationship with Israel. First, beginning with the golden calf incident, Israel failed to keep her end of the first covenant. The tribes brought their idols from Egypt into Canaan, where they quickly adopted the practices of the people they were supposed to destroy. They could not expand their mindset far enough to accept an invisible God, something even the Roman general Pompey in the 1st-Century B.C.E. had a difficult time conceiving. Their social constructs prohibited worshiping *nothing*, an aspect of the period that we cannot fully appreciate—and apparently, neither could Elohim. Another analogous example today (in addition to my earlier one of competition) is our social constructs since Kant prohibit us from accepting the validity of paradoxes, where two or more things occupy the same time and space. You will be quick to say that *two things cannot occupy the same time and space. That’s obviously to everyone.* Well, why is it obvious to everyone? It wasn’t obvious to the artist Bev Doolittle. It wasn’t obvious to Puritans who perceived Jesus as man and God, both occupying the same time and space. Only our sense of rationalism prohibits us from accepting paradoxes. Likewise, in the first millennium after the Flood, the community tested

truth of the day said that gods had to possess physical form; they had to look like something. And as paganism developed, idols created by human hands acquired the powers of coincidence (where things just happen; e.g., a person loses his or her tax money, then prays to the household idol to find the coins, then finds the coins where they fell in the flower bed—the idol receives credit for the coincidence of finding the coins. For too many people today, Christ is their household idol in that they pray to Him to find a lost wallet, then find their lost wallet, then give all glory to Christ for leading them to that which they lost and then found.)

Modern mindsets cannot accept two things occupying the same time and space. Science doesn't allow us to even consider the possibility that the apple you hold is also a tree. You might say that the seeds in the apple could in the future become a tree, but you don't see a tree in your hand. You see an apple, and you believe your eyes. Ultimately, you are only able to believe what you see, such is the mental paradigms under which we make sense of the world. And it was the same for the ancient Israelites: they couldn't believe in a deity they couldn't see. A golden calf was familiar, comprehensible, part of the natural order of the world. An invisible God wasn't. So they called their calf by the name of the Creator, and they rose up to play.

Israel needed to be modified spiritually from the beginning. The intellectual paradigm (I again apologize for using academic buzz words and phrases such as *paradigms* and *social constructs*, but I know of no other way to express the concepts since they remain on the frontier of thought) of the Israelites precluded them from worshiping God without directing their worship through an object, the situation that still occurs.

The statuary of the Orthodox and Universal Churches aren't worshiped, but are used to focus the worshipers' attention on God—this is the argument used to justify what seems clearly prohibited by the law of God. But the 1st-Century social constructs of Gentiles prohibited these peoples from worshiping an unseen God as much as had the con-

structs of the Israelites who left Egypt. Conversion didn't erase the constructs with which the newly drawn disciple interacted. Rather, conversion placed the disciple into another construct that shared the same geographical territory as the disciple's previous construct. It was sometimes too easy not to make the changes that were spiritually required by having the law written on hearts and minds. Compromise didn't seem all that bad. After all, God looks at the heart. The disciple really isn't worshipping that statue of Christ on the Cross, but only using the statue to remind him of the Lord's sacrifice at Calvary. That is a valid justification, isn't it? Sure it is. And these gentile converts could keep their idols by baptizing them as saints.

After a millennium and a half of idol worship, Reformers cast the statuary into the streets, except for the Cross itself. That has remained on steeples, in front and behind pulpits, around necks, and in ears. But the social constructs of these Reformers were still unable to conceive of a truly invisible God, so a new form of an idol through which worship could be focused was needed. Reformers seized the Word of God from the archives of the Universal Church, printed it large type, placed it upon pedestals, and began to worship God in truth and purity through the leather-bound Word. These Reformers couldn't read the Word with much understanding since they were still under the delusion sent to those who were perishing, but their zeal for God was admirable. They couldn't agree upon just one reading of the Word, and they squabbled some over whose reading was best, but they concurred that the Bible was the infallible Word of God in its original tongues. As such, it was their idol.

The Evangelical Church and the Church of God have, so-far, only been partially successful in breaking the paradigm of needing to worship God through an object. A person makes an idol of the Word of God when the person says it is infallible in its original language: how does Greek differ from English? Readers still assign meaning to linguistic icons. A Greek word no more carries around its meaning than does an English word. Translation is only an additional problem. The tower

of Babel is the problem. Any human language is a created thought pattern that determines or reflects the reality of the language user. There are no precise meanings for words, since realities change with language changes. Only when a language is *dead*, and is no longer any user's first language does the language behave itself by retaining the assignment of an object to an icon for more than a generation.

How all of this relates to prophecy is that the social constructs of the Apostles had Christ returning in their lifetimes. Just as ancient Israel couldn't grasp the concept of a truly invisible God, the Apostles couldn't grasp the idea of Christ not returning any moment. Their use of language reflected this reality. Their assignment of linguistic objects to their icons had Christ coming right away. There is no way around this reality of theirs. The Bible is inspired, every word of it, but it cannot be infallible because it is written in a language that has come to us since Babel. The New Testament was written by men who truly expected Christ to return today, tomorrow at the latest. Their expectations were real. Inspiration didn't change these expectations. Rather, these expectations shaped inspiration.

One more time: all language and language use is fallible. To say that the Bible is infallible in its original language is to reveal a person's ignorance—and all of us are ignorant about some subjects. For example, what does the following sentence mean: *He could tell a dog from a pink at a glance*. Tell me if you can, and you might be right if your postal code begins with 99. The sentence has a precise meaning, but only in the reading community that uses the sentence. The same for Scripture. Unless you are a drawn disciple, you cannot understand the text as God intended it to be understood. Even then you will most likely need a teacher, someone experienced in reading the text as God intended it to be read. Everyone else can read the text, assign whatever meaning they want to the words, and have no clue as to what God intended. The nature of how language works makes possible the ultimate purloined letter. A message to the Elect can be hidden in plain sight of everyone.

I don't know who is part of the Elect, but that is to whom I write, especially those Elect who have become ensnared by greater Christianity's *just believe* message. Since demons can also appear as ministers of righteousness, the message, not the messenger is important. And your being a language user doesn't make you a language expert, not even something I claim. But I know enough to correct those who would make the Bible an idol by claiming infallibility for it. God is infallible. Your use of your language isn't. And neither was Paul's use of Greek, even under inspiration. Sorry. Can you say with internal textual certainty what referent should be assigned to the icon *pneuma* every time it appears in the original text? You cannot. You will take your tradition, and assign referents based upon that tradition. Thus, tradition becomes the final arbiter of what is the text. For greater Christianity, that tradition comes down as historical exegesis, which is the bane of good scholarship not the basis for it.

Because Israel adopted the Canaanite practice of sacrificing their firstborns to Molech, God actually gave Israel ordinances to kill their firstborns so their religious practices might horrify them (Ezek 20:26). The ordinances by which they couldn't live were not animal sacrifices, which will be resumed in the Millennium. They were, rather, ordinances to sacrifice Israel's firstborns, as hard as that is for our mindset to conceive. And again, we can only conceive what our social construct allows. As a culture, we accept abortion, but we wouldn't accept burning firstborns. What is the difference, really?

When we turn to secular history, we find in Carthage the practice of offering firstborns to their god, a practice that truly horrified Greeks and Romans but never horrified Carthaginians. In fact, if a firstborn somehow escaped death as a new born, whenever the firstborn was identified, it was killed, regardless of age. And whenever events went against Carthage, the polis returned to sacrificing firstborns with zeal, for to do so was the commandment of their god.

At the beginning of the drought of Ahab, the house of Israel had enough power and prestige that King Ahab sought Elijah throughout

the world: Obadiah said, “As the Lord your [Elijah’s] God lives, there is no nation to which my lord [Ahab] has not sent to seek you; and when they would say, ‘He is not here,’ he would require an oath of the kingdom or nation, that they had not found you” (1 Kings 18:10). These nations that swore an oath to Ahab weren’t squatters living in the region. They were all of the nations. By being allied with Phoenicians, Ahab commanded world attention. He could field an army of nearly a million men, and when allied with Judah, could put a million and a half armed men in the field, numbers that many scholars have a difficult time accepting.

But the drought of Ahab was so severe that what we find in secular history is a huge influx of immigrants swelling every Phoenician colony in the 8th-Century B.C.E.—these immigrants were Hebrew speakers. They were the exiting house of Israel, fleeing the famine. Elijah holed up with the widow at Zarephath, on the Mediterranean seacoast between Tyre and Sidon, and when he arrived, she was ready to die because of the famine.

The exodus from Samaria was so devastating that after the drought when King Ben-hadad of Aram laid siege to Samaria, Ahab complied with Ben-hadad’s demands and sent to the king his silver and gold, fairest wives and children. Ahab didn’t then have the means to resist. However, Ben-hadad hadn’t really wanted Ahab’s wives and wealth, but the occasion to wipe out Samaria. So Ben-hadad upped his demands until war was inevitable. Then Ahab “mustered the young men who served the district governors, two hundred thirty-two; after them he mustered all the people of Israel, seven thousand” (1 Kings 20:15). Whereas a generation earlier, Israel could field an army of nearly a million and command the oath of any nation, it could after years of drought only muster a few thousand to fight an army of 32 kings, plus Ben-hadad. Nevertheless, God gave Samaria the victory over the drunken kings.

Carthage became largely an Israelite city in the 8th-Century B.C.E. It was, as the United States is today, a melting pot of peoples. How-

ever, by the city's practice of sacrificing firstborns, by the city's linguistic structure, and by the city's history as recorded by Greeks, we can say with a high degree of certainty that hundreds of thousands of Israelites migrated to Carthage during the drought of Ahab (again, the work of Mr. Collins addresses this situation).

From Carthage, Israelites sailed to North America. Carthaginian coins, artifacts, and inscriptions have been found in Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Kansas, Nevada, New York, and Oklahoma. So, for the sake of my convoluted argument, I will assert that the house of Israel occupied the territory of the United States in the first millennium B.C.E. The question then becomes, did God give this land to the house of Israel? Samaria wasn't all that big. It cannot support a population of a hundred million, let alone two, three or four hundred million. How large will be the remnant of the house of Israel that God brings to the land He gave them at Christ's return? If only one-thirtieth of this nation survives the Tribulation, we're still looking at nearly ten million people. Now what about Canada, Britain, France, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, some of the other nations that the modern descendants of the house of Israel occupy? Even a remnant population of these peoples will have neighbor sitting upon his neighbor's lap if they all return to Samaria, or so our social constructions of "self" would conceive of so many people being in that small of an area. (I have lived a portion of my adult life in Alaska, and I still think in terms of moose pruning yard shrubbery.)

Jumping ahead of myself, Judea is small enough that I cannot imagine it taking seven months to find and bury all of the dead (Ezek 39:12–16), nor blood running for two hundred miles (Rev 14:20). Modern armies need large areas in which to maneuver. They won't trap themselves in confined areas. The number of men needed for blood to be as deep as a horse's bridle and to extend two hundred miles won't enter Judea. While a large army will surround Jerusalem, the earth swallows this army. There won't be any bones to bury. So even a cursory application of wisdom says that the modern nation of Israel

isn't the referent for these prophecies of mass death. But the United States could be as the modern descendants of the house of Israel.

Revisiting now the citation from Ezekiel 36: for God's name sake, He will gather the scattered house of Israel and He *will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon Israel. He will make the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field abundant, so that Israel may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.* When He gathers Israel, He *will sprinkle clean water upon Israel and Israel shall be clean from all its uncleanness, and from all its idols God will cleanse Israel. A new heart God will give Israel, and a new spirit God will put within Israel. God will put His spirit within Israel and make Israel follow His statutes and be careful to observe His ordinances.*

The British colonists who came to America in the 17th-Century came to practice keeping the second covenant. They were largely Puritans, all deeply devout, all looking for religious freedom. They were my ancestors. And they came to a good land where there was no famine, where there was abundant fruit and grain, and they suffered no disgrace as they worshiped God with new hearts and in the best way they knew how. If their worship of God wasn't perfect, it wasn't for want of seeking perfection.

My contention is that this is the land of the house of Israel, that it has been from the time of Carthage, that because of the abominable religious practices of the house of Israel, the nation was scattered and destroyed before 1400 A.D., and the land returned to being waste until remnants of the house of Israel were again gathered under the second covenant to come here, not for the Israelites' sake, but so that God's name would no longer be profaned because of the descendants of the house of Israel suffering famine. Bill Federer has written extensively about just how strong an influence the second covenant was upon all of this nation's founding fathers. By the determination of our Supreme Court, we were a Christian nation. However, the Court has since reversed itself, so our future is less certain than our past, as we try to

erase God's law not only from our buildings, but from the churches that profess worship to Him.

(My claims are not the claims made by the Book of Mormon. I do not regard that book as another testament of Christ, but as a spurious document of the same order as the Book of Enoch.)

As a nation, we don't need to erase God as if He were a doodle upon the collective conscience of greater Christianity; we need to reinsert original intent into our practices of belief. God isn't the problem, sin is.

My argument for this land being Israel is not overwhelming, and is based upon an unproved premise. But my purpose here isn't to prove my argument, but to lay it out in synopsis form so that prophecies concerning Israel being gathered at Christ's return can be better contextualized. So I will assert that the house of Israel (not Judah) has been gathered under the second covenant. What Isaiah writes about a second gathering of Israel will require a scattering to occur between now and Christ's return as the all powerful Messiah. So either Isaiah prophesies about the completion of the gathering of both houses of Israel that began with the Puritans, or the house of Israel and the house of Judah again go into captivity.

Prophetically, a scenario exists which could see both the modern nation of Israel and the United States return to being captive peoples. Except for chapters 38 and 39 of Ezekiel, neither nation is named prophetically, so no one to one correspondence exists, but the application of wisdom to the prophesies of Daniel says that the probability is high that we lose the mastery of our destiny about half way through the Tribulation, especially if not enough individuals are in a second covenant relationship with God to materially influence national destiny.

Nebuchadnezzar couldn't remember a dream that troubled him. Eventually, the lad Daniel, a Jewish captive, interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream:

You, O king, king of kings...are the head of gold. After you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours, and yet a third kingdom of

bronze, which shall rule over the whole earth. And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron; just as iron crushes and smashes everything, it shall crush and shatter all these. As you saw the feet and toes partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but some of the strength of iron shall in it, as you saw the iron mixed with the clay...As you saw the iron mixed with clay, so will they mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. (Dan 2:36–43)

Treating Daniel's interpretation as a math problem, our givens are that there will be four kingdoms between the time of the vision and the time of Christ's return. The scope of the kingdoms is world or known-world rule (verses 38–39). The first kingdom is Nebuchadnezzar's, since he is the head of gold. That leaves only three kingdoms to be identified. We know that third kingdom shall rule the world, but shall split into two parallel lines ("its middle and thighs of bronze" [verse 32]); the division that will occur isn't of the fourth kingdom, but of the third. We know the second kingdom has two arms. And we know the fourth kingdom is never united, but each division has similarities, even to both having five toes of mixed strength and weakness.

A valid interpretation of prophecy either requires the interpreter to have a vision, or to stay inside the biblical text. Since I claim no vision, I will stay within the text, if possible.

Daniel tells us that the night Babylon fell, "Darius the Mede received the kingdom" (5:31), so with certainty, we can say that the kingdom that arose after Nebuchadnezzar was the Medes and Persians. Of course, secular history confirms this, but I wish to leave the biblical text as little as possible although only from secular history can we know that the Medo-Persian Empire was qualitatively inferior to Babylon.

In Daniel 8, we find the Medo-Persian Empire: "In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me...I looked up and saw a ram standing beside the river. It had two horns. Both horns were long, but one was longer than the other, and the longer came up second" (verses 1–3). The archangel Gabriel interprets the image for

Daniel: “As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia” (verse 20). Because of who makes this identification, the identification is certain and can be added to our givens. We don’t have to wonder about who is represented by the silver chest and arms of Nebuchadnezzar’s image.

Next on Nebuchadnezzar’s image were the “middle and thighs of bronze” (Dan 2:32), and before we go on, again note that the thighs were bronze. The kingdom was divided here. The fourth kingdom that is to come is never united, but exists as two legs. It doesn’t ever have one capital, a fact which will cause problems for biblical commentators.

In Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, we learn that this third kingdom *shall rule over the whole earth*, and in Daniel’s vision of the ram that is Media and Persia, he sees, “As I was watching, a male goat appeared from the west, coming across the face of the whole earth without touching the ground. The goat had a horn between its eyes. It came toward the ram with two horns...and it ran at it with savage force. I saw it approaching the ram. It was enraged against it and struck the ram, breaking its two horns” (Dan 8:5–7). Again the archangel Gabriel interprets: “The male goat is the king of Greece, and the great horn between its eyes is the first king” (verse 21). Note, the goat itself is the king of Greece, and the horn between its eyes is the first king, implying that there will be more than one king, that the king of Greece outlasts its horns. The ram is trampled, and “no one could rescue the ram from [the he-goat’s] power” (verse 7), so the ram ceases to exist as an entity. Not so with the he-goat after his great horn is broken.

Returning to Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, we see that *there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron; just as iron crushes and smashes everything, it shall crush and shatter all these*. For centuries biblical scholars have identified this fourth kingdom as Rome. Certainly, Rome defeated Greece militarily, then borrowed most of Greece’s culture. But how many capitals did Rome have when it defeated Greece? Remember, as the bronze belly and thighs, Greece

is divided prior to when the fourth kingdom appears on Nebuchadnezzar's statue. The fourth kingdom appears on the historical stage already divided.

In Daniel's vision of the he-goat trampling the ram, "[A]t the height of its power, the great horn was broken, and in its place there came up four prominent horns towards the four winds of heaven" (8:7). These four horns continue until the little horn that springs out of one of them (verse 9) "shall even rise against the Prince of princes. / But he shall be broken, and not by human hands" (verse 27). The time frame is Christ's return, and "in the days of those kings [the ten toes of iron and clay] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed...just as [Nebuchadnezzar] saw that a stone was cut from the mountain not by hands, and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold" (2:44–45). And note that the essence of all four kingdoms (the iron, bronze, clay, silver, gold) are present together when smashed by a cut stone.

Pausing to add to our givens, again because of who makes the identification, we can say with certainty that the belly and thighs of bronze of Nebuchadnezzar's image are Greece. But Gabriel doesn't reveal another kingdom replacing Greece. Rather, from the king of Greece arises four horns, or kings, one of which will give rise to a little horn that makes war with Christ at his return.

An angel brings another vision to Daniel that pertains to Persia and Greece:

Three more kings shall arise in Persia. The fourth...shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece. Then a warrior king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and take action as he pleases. And while still rising in power, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted and go to others besides these. (11:2–4)

We see the great horn of the he-goat broken, and Greek kingdom divided and uprooted, this uprooting creating the fourth kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar's image. So, we can say with certainty since we have Gabriel's interpretation that the fourth kingdom is the reign of the four horns that appear on the head of the he-goat after the first horn is broken. This is confirmed by the angel who brings Daniel the vision of what will happen in the latter days. Thus, the fourth kingdom is not Rome and never was Rome. To try to make the fourth kingdom Rome is to force onto the prophecy what isn't in the text.

Admittedly, the vision of Daniel 11 was sealed and secret until the time of the end (Dan 12:4, 9). It really couldn't have been used by earlier biblical commentators to explicate Nebuchadnezzar's image. But the kings of the North and the South, emerging from the four-part division of the Greek Empire following Alexander's death, are, unarguably, the two legs of iron. Biblical scholars are ahead of me: the division of Greece into four parts following Alexander's death (Asia Minor, Egypt, the Near East and Greece) didn't last long. Soon, the Ptolemaic and Seleucid Empires had consolidated power and were at war. And from Greece comes two powers that span from the 4th-Century B.C.E. to the time of Christ's return. They are the king of the North, and the king of the South. The two legs of iron of Nebuchadnezzar's image are these two kings, who will be seen to be demons, just as the king of Greece (the body of the he-goat) is a demon.

Reviewing what we know so far, the course of empires since Nebuchadnezzar is Babylon, Media Persia, Greece, the reigns of the king of the North and the king of the South, then Christ's millennium reign. Christ's reign is a theocracy. Actually, so are all of the others although current Western social constructs tend not to think of the religious aspect of Babylon even though the story of Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego is common children's literature. Alexander was identified as the son of god. So for the reigns of the king of the North and the king of the South, we should look for theocratic reigns. And what we find is the Orthodox and Universal Churches claiming authority over secular

kings and princes—and we find caliphs ruling as the secular and religious heads of state. Although the assignment of identify isn't quite as simple as I here make it, we find the king of the North as the ruler of Christianity, and the king of the South as the ruler of Islam. The king of the North is the spiritual power behind the Vatican, and behind the Orthodox patriarchs, not exactly something they want to be told. Nevertheless, as we shall see, the conclusion is inescapable. And I left the biblical text to arrive at these conclusions.

Returning to Daniel 8, Gabriel tells Daniel, “Understand, O Mortal, that the vision is for the time of the end” (verse 17). The first king of Greece doesn't reign at the time of the end, so the sense of what Gabriel tells Daniel is the vision of ram and he-goat was to be understood at the end of the age, implying that it couldn't be understood earlier.

But Gabriel's dating of the vision is more precise than a general statement about being for the time of the end: “Listen, and I will tell you what will take place later in the period of wrath; for it refers to the appointed time of the end” (verse 19). The period of wrath is the Tribulation in usual biblical parlance. *Later in the period of wrath* suggests the vision is for the second half of seven years of Tribulation. This actually fits with the vision of Daniel 7 being for the first half.

Linguistically, the identity of the “king of bold countenance” (Dan 8:23) is a little vague. The common mistake that even I have made is to identify this king as the little horn that Daniel sees arise from one of the four horns. We want this king to be the little horn, for he shall destroy “the people of the holy ones” (verse 24). He “took the regular burnt offering away” (verse 11 also 12–14). But he is the king of the North, himself.

We know who takes the regular burnt offering away and when: “From the time the regular burnt offering is taken away...there shall be one thousand two hundred ninety days” (Dan 12:11), and “Forces sent by him [the king of the North] shall occupy and profane the temple and fortress. They shall abolish the regular burnt offering” (11:31).

The king of the North, then, takes away the regular burnt offering 1290 days before Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah. The little horn has not, as will be seen, yet arrived in prophecy.

Paul tells us that “the day of the Lord” won’t come until “the lawless one is revealed,” the one who “takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God” (2 Thess 2:2–4). At the end of the rule of the four kingdoms that shall arise from Greece [the four horns], “a king of bold countenance shall arise, / skilled in intrigue” (Dan 8:23), and the king of the North “shall seduce with intrigue those who violate the covenant” (11:32). So without twisting the text into contortions, we can say that Paul’s man of perdition or lawless one is the king of the North, who sets up the abomination that desolates, which is him declaring himself God, or rather, the Messiah, when he takes away the regular offering 1290 days before Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah. He is the antetype antiChrist.

Now jumping ahead, when the king of the North is destroyed, he will receive figuratively mouth-to-mouth resuscitation from the little horn, who “threw down to earth some of the host and some of the stars, and trampled on them” (8:10). We find that the tail of the great red dragon “swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth” (Rev 12:4). This dragon is the devil. And this “great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him” (verse 9). This happens 1260 days before Christ returns, and this day is probably the most important one in the entire endtime scenario, for on this day, the 144,000 saints are also taken to a place prepared for them. The flood/armies the dragon sends after them is swallowed by the earth, and the destruction of these armies which had been surrounding Jerusalem is the mortal wound delivered to the king of the North. The Mount of Olives splits as a stone cut without hands (this is the stone Nebuchadnezzar saw). A wide valley forms, and the saints flee through this valley. The valley then closes and literally swallows the pursuing armies, this

event prophesied in the Song of Moses, by Zechariah, and in Revelation. Christ fights as on *a* day of battle. This is not Armageddon, *the* day of battle. There are still 1260 days remaining before Christ returns, but the messages being taught by the *watchmen* would have Christ returning this day. But it won't be Christ who declares himself the messiah on this day; rather, Satan will, and he will require all to accept the mark of the beast, which is a tattoo of the Cross (*Chi xi stigma*, or Xx tattoo, since *stigma* is a numerical fraction). It is Satan on day 1260 who gives his great power and authority to the first beast of Revelation 13, that first beast having just received its mortal wound. It is Satan as the second beast of Revelation 13 who acts as the conservator for the first beast. Satan is the little horn, and Satan will uproot three of the nations that had comprised the king of the North's coalition when he arrives as a roaring lion, seeking to devour whom he can. And as of today, no coalition for peace will be formed without the United States being part of that coalition. The United States will, probably, be part of the king of the North's coalition. If we are, then we can expect to be uprooted when Satan arrives full of fury. Our isolationist tendencies would keep us out of this coalition, but the likelihood of us listening to our hearts and to George Washington (about entangling foreign alliances) is slim. Most likely, multinational interests will compel our involvement.

There, that should settle the mud all the way to Christ's return, so let's see this scenario in Scripture...I'm not a watchman, but a disciple who reads and writes texts, and I've been drafted to do the job of telling you just what I have.

The little horn of Daniel 8 does what Satan is said to have done in casting down stars, a metaphoric expression usually identifying angels. At this point is it safe to say that the little horn is directly related to Satan, and is either Satan or his manifest representative.

We have another little horn existing at the same time and doing the same sort of things. During the first year of King Belshazzar (roughly

two years before the vision of the he-goat), Daniel saw a vision that greatly troubled him:

I, Daniel, saw in my vision...four great beasts [come] up out of the sea, different from one another. The first was like a lion and had eagles' wings....Another beast appeared...that looked like a bear...After this...another appeared, like a leopard....After this...a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth and was devouring, breaking in pieces, and stamping what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that preceded it, and it had ten horns. I was considering the horns, when another horn appeared, a little one coming up among them; to make room for it, three of the earlier horns were plucked up by the roots. (7:2–8)

Before explicating this vision, I should say that the usual assignment of meaning to these four beasts is the same as is usually assigned to the four kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's image: Babylon, Media Persia, Greece, and Rome. But as we have seen, Rome doesn't appear in the divine explanation of these prophecies. When Daniel asked one of the angelic attendants to the throne of the Most High God about the beasts, the angel said, "As for these four great beasts, four kings shall arise out of the earth. But the holy ones of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever" (verses 17–18). So the four beasts are four kings, but they are not human kings. The first had its wings plucked off and "was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a human being; and a human mind was given to it" (verse 4). Human kings and kingdoms don't need to be given human minds. Demons, though, do. So what we see are four demons, with one of the demons having ten horns, plus a little horn.

This first little horn shall "speak words against the Most High, / shall wear out the holy ones of the Most High, / and shall attempt to change the sacred seasons and the law; / and they [the holy ones] shall be given into his power / for a time, two times, and half a time" (Dan 7:25). This little horn remains in power until "The kingship...of the

kingdoms under the whole heaven / shall be given to the people of the holy ones of the Most High” (verse 27). This is when Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah. So the little horn’s dominion over the saints is for the last 42 months before Christ returns.

In Daniel’s second vision, Gabriel says of the little horn, “He shall destroy the powerful / and the people of the holy ones....Without warning he shall destroy many / and shall even rise up against the Prince of princes” (8:24–25).

Again, we know exactly when *the regular burnt offering* will be taken away: 1290 days before Christ returns. Christ said, “And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come. [paragraph break] So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by Daniel...then those in Judea must flee to the mountains” (Matt 24:14–15). So the abomination that desolates will be set up at the time of the end, precisely when armies begin to surround Jerusalem, the reason for fleeing to the mountains. The 1290 days are literal days, not years or some other unit of time. So the king of the North takes away the regular burnt offering (which will, probably, be restored, but doesn’t have to be since the word means *regular*; thus any activity done on a regular basis such as walking to the wailing wall will satisfy the prophecy) 1290 days before Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah.

For thirty days, the man of perdition sits in the temple of God, declaring himself God. Exactly what occurs on a day-by-day basis is only generalized, with Luke’s account of Jesus’ Olivet discourse perhaps having the most information. Evidently, saints are arrested, imprisoned, and appear before authorities. They might well be transported to Jerusalem to stand trial, the suggestion of which is in “the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle” (Rev 12:14). But whatever occurs, on day 1260, a “war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angel fought back, but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place

for them in heaven. The great dragon...was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him” (verses 7–9), and “when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman” (verse 13), who flew “to her place where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time” (verse 14). It doesn’t take the dragon long to realize that he has been cast down to earth; this is a same day event. And since there is no reason to nourish the saints for longer in the wilderness than the day of Christ’s return as the all powerful Messiah, we can date this event to day 1260 (also see verse 6).

The little horn of Daniel 7 makes war against the holy ones for the last 1260 days before Christ returns:

As for the ten horns, / out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, / and another shall arise after them. / This one shall be different from the former ones, / and shall put down three kings. / He shall speak words against the Most High, shall wear out the holy ones of the Most High, / and shall attempt to change the sacred seasons and laws; / and they shall be given into his power / for a time, two times, and half a time. / Then the court shall sit in judgment, / and his dominion shall be taken away, / to be consumed and totally destroyed. (7:24–26)

This is exactly the same period as when the dragon “went off to make war on the rest of her [the Church] children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus” (Rev 12:17).

So the little horn of the fourth beast of Daniel 7 makes war against the saints for exactly the same period that Satan does. The little horn of Daniel 8 casts stars down exactly as Satan does. The little horns of both Daniel 7 and 8 come to an end when Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah, as does Satan. And while the evidence might not be overwhelming enough to convict Satan in a court of law of being the little horn, it is strong enough to support my contention that he is.

It is important to note that 144,000 saints were taken to a place prepared for them, but enough saints weren’t a part of the 144,000 that Satan bothers to go after them. Joel says, referring to the day of the

Lord, “[I]n Mount Zion and Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls” (2:32). So the textual suggestion is that even in Jerusalem there will be saints who aren’t part of the 144,000 who survive the last 1260 days. Worldwide, I suspect there are many, many saints who are supernaturally protected in place, but also, many who will be killed.

Commentaries which say the two little horns of Daniel 7 and 8 aren’t the same err. These commentators inevitably miss-identify the fourth beast of Daniel 7 as the Roman Empire, whereas Rome isn’t referenced prophetically except as part of a religious ideology.

By overlapping the two little horns, we see that the fourth beast of Daniel 7 is one of the four horns of Daniel 8, the one that becomes the king of the North, for it is he who takes away the daily sacrifice (Dan 11:31). The angelic attendant says of this king and kingdom, “As for the fourth beast, / there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth / that shall be different from all the other kingdoms; / it shall devour the whole earth, / and trample it down, and break it to pieces” (7:23). So the king of the North’s kingdom will be worldwide, and will be of a different sort than any previous kingdom. It will be a theocracy of a type unlike any other, in that (now using history as a guide) it will be composed of international coalitions operating under the guidance of a spiritual power; it will be modern Crusaders fighting radical Islam under the banner of the Cross.

We should prophetically see the destruction of this fourth beast in Revelation: we do, but some wisdom is required. Satan arrives as the little horn on day 1260. Since Christ’s revelation to John is presented mostly chronologically, an understanding that has come with the opening of the seals, the 12th and 13th chapters focus on the events of that day. But so do latter verses of the 11th chapter: the twenty-four elders sing, “We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty, / who are and who were, / for you have taken your great power / and began to reign” (verse 17), and “Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of

lightening, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail” (verse 19). The parallel to this scene in Daniel 7 isn’t exact:

As I watched, / thrones were set in place, / and an Ancient One took his throne, . . . his throne was fiery flames, / and its wheels were burning fire. / A stream of fire issued / and flowed out from his presence . . . The court sat in judgment, / and the books were opened. / I watched then because of the noise of the arrogant words that the horn was speaking. And as I watched, the beast was put to death, and its body destroyed, and given over to be burned with fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time (verse 9–12).

But the structural elements are the same: the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of Christ (Rev 11:15 and Dan 7:14), whereas Satan had been the ruler of the world. The judgment of the earth has begun (Rev 14:7 and Dan 7:10), as has the pouring out of God’s wrath (Rev 14:10 and Dan 8:19). The Ancient of Days, or the Most High God, or the Father—all the same member of Elohim—has begun to exercise his reign (Dan 7:9 and Rev 11:16) by taking His throne.

Except for its iron teeth and bronze claws, no description is given of the fourth beast of Daniel 7. Not much is intended to be known about it until Daniel’s vision and the book of Revelation are unsealed. Then no additional textual description will be given. Rather, the person with wisdom can look outside the text for its description, for its identity will then be known. We need to follow the power of the Seleucid throne as it passes through Roman hands and alights in Constantine’s Christianity. This power doesn’t reside just in the Vatican. Rather, it resides equally in the Orthodox Church, in the Evangelical Church, in the Coptic Church. Constantine consolidated his secular power with a few battlefield victories, then embraced Christianity to cement that power to an intangible, ideological construct that was humanly undefeatable. The power of the king of the North resides in the Cross. No description is possible for the alignment of peoples and powers that are and

that have been ruled by the Cross. The Cross has devoured and trampled and broken men and nations. And because the power of the Cross cannot be described in terms of ethnicity, or geography, or national sovereignty, no prophetic description is given, beyond stating that wisdom is required to understand any of this.

Meaning is assigned to words, and by extension to sentences, paragraphs and entire texts. It is very likely the person who wears a Cross will be unable to assign the same meaning that I have to these spare, prophetic passages. However, the person who has been drawn, and who is listening for Christ's voice will hear His voice in mine if it is there. I believe it is. But I cannot decide that for you. My words will have about them the ring of truth if you are a sheep, and Christ is speaking through me. You won't know why I'm right; you will just know that I am. You will wonder how did I get all of that out of so little. I didn't until the delusion was lifted in January of this year. Then it has come by just "knowing" it. The knowledge is a gift which I did nothing to obtain, except, perhaps, to thirty years ago have daily prayed for wisdom. And there's more—

I need to address the trope used by Christ in the Book of Revelation: when John heard and saw the things (Rev 22:8) he records, the angel who showed them to him said, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near" (verse 10). John tells us when he *heard and saw these things*: "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day" (1:9). John didn't see *these things* from the perspective of being in the 1st-Century and looking forward. Rather, he saw them from the perspective of "what soon must take place" (verse 1). In other words, John is in that period of history known as the day of the Lord when he sees *these things* that he records. So when biblical scholars who haven't yet lived into that time known as the day of the Lord read Revelation, they are reading that which hasn't occurred: even John's vision doesn't occur until the day of the Lord. They aren't reading tomorrow's news today, but they are attempting to read a scroll that hasn't had its seals broken. Those seals aren't broken until the day of the Lord, at which

time John sees the Lamb break them. So the Book of Revelation has been as sealed as has been Daniel's prophecies. Daniel received the visions of the future, and was given explanations of the visions, and when he tried to understand how the future would unfold, he was told by the angel that the visions are secret and sealed until the time of the end. Likewise, John receives Christ's revelation of what will happen at the end of the age, but by the internal evidence within the vision, what happens is sealed until *the time is near*. So Revelation, like Daniel, could not be understood by any generation except that one living in the day of the Lord, or at the time of the end. And realizing that they couldn't be understood by previous generations is part of them becoming understandable at the time of the end. If the word of God is true, then it was impossible for Mr. Armstrong or Ellen G. White or anyone else living prior to the day of the Lord to understand prophecy. If we are not yet in the day of the Lord, then I don't understand prophecy either.

The four beasts of Daniel 7 are the endtime manifestation of the four horns of the he-goat (the king of Greece) that are going to become the two theocracies of the kings of the North and of the South. Because of the little horn appearing in the fourth beast, we can identify this beast as the king of the North. Therefore, we can expect one of the other three beasts of Daniel 7 to be the king of the South. Also, since the four horns of Daniel 8 become two theocracies in Daniel 11, two of the horns are absorbed into the other two as the historical record of what happened to the Ptolemaic and Seleucid Empires reveal. But these horns are the spiritual powers behind their human manifestations (which opens the question of whether human action dictates spiritual action, or if it's the other way around—the Greek Pantheon was manipulated by humans, but that isn't the case with God; with demons, I don't know). These four horns represent demons, and as such, they don't disappear. They transcend the intrigues of their human counterparts, and they appear one after the other during the Tribulation. I will jump forward and say that one of these demons was

bound in the bottomless pit, and one at the river Euphrates, leaving only two to wander through history, one of whom is the king of the North. What the other demon, since losing power to the fourth beast, has been doing for all of these years remains speculative as of Summer 2002.

The prelude to the events of the Tribulation will culminate with the supernatural destruction of a third of all vegetative matter. Then a meteor-like stone of many kilometers diameter is hurled into the sea, sending a tsunami ring inland that destroys more than we presently expect. Right after this, a third of all freshwater turns bitter and unusable. The skies darken, and humanity thinks the end of the age is upon it. These are the first four trumpet plagues, and are the heavenly signs about which Joel prophesied.

For a moment, I want to skip the fifth trumpet and go to the sixth: “Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice...saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, ‘Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.’ So the four angels were released, who had been held ready for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, to kill a third of humankind” (Rev 9:13–15). Now, remember that this occurs before the Lord God Almighty has begun to reign (11:16), and before the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Father and the Son (verse 15). So these four angels who are released to kill a third of humanity aren’t part of God’s wrath. They have been bound because they are dangerous demons. And bound, their influence has been limited to the area around the Euphrates.

I suspect readers are ahead of me: one of the three horns of the he-goat which do not sprout the little horn is the king of the South. By application, one of the first three beasts of Daniel 7 is the king of the South, and the third beast has four heads.

The king of the South has warred with the king of the North from the time of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires, but since the Muslim push into Europe and China in the 8th-Century, Christian knights had to take their fight to Muslim lands. Even today, we have to take

our fight with Islam radicals to Afghanistan, and possibly, Iraq. And for all of our diplomacy to prove otherwise, we are a Christian nation fighting Muslim forces. Our war on terrorism is, indeed, a religious war, and not fundamentalist against liberal, but the Athenian Greek values of liberty and democracy against the Spartan values of a warrior cult—the war between the king of the North and the king of the South goes back at least as far as the Athens-Sparta warrings. The Cross theology of the king of the North is found in the values of Athens. Likewise, the *Jehad* mentality of radical Islam can be traced back to Sparta, and it forms the theology of the king of the South. And because of how virtually unstoppable this *Jehad* mentality is, God, I believe, bound the four demon heads of the leopard at the river Euphrates to limit the expansion of Islam. I believe these demons were bound after the Book of Revelation was written, but obviously before it could be understood. I have nothing other than history as a guide for when these demons were bound. I would welcome scholarly discussion of the subject.

Not enough evidence is given to convincingly establish the connection between the four angels of Revelation 9:13–19 and the third beast of Daniel 7 in the mind of unBelievers. Rather than stacking up additional straws, my purposes are better served by merely asserting that the four demons bound at the great river Euphrates are the four heads of the leopard, that this beast is the king of the South, that when he is loosed, he will attack the king of the North with nuclear and chemical weaponry; he will kill a third of humanity. But he will have underestimated the ferocity with which the king of the North, rallying the world as he does around the Cross of Calvary, will fight back.

In that thirty day period between when the king of the North declares himself God, and when Christ takes him out on day 1260, the king of the North shall do the events that are recorded in verses 40–45 of Daniel 11. It is on day 1260 when “he shall come to his end, with no one to help him” (verse 45), for it is on this day when Michael “shall arise” (12:1) and make war on Satan (Rev 12:7). The news from the east and the north that troubles the king of the North isn’t the river

Euphrates drying “up to prepare the way for the kings from the east” (Rev 16:12), but the “flashes of lightening, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail” of when “God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple” (Rev 11:19). The demon knows judgment has come upon him.

The brevity of the language used tends to push events together that are actually separated by days and years. For example, in the seventy week prophecy, we read:

After the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing, and the troops of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. [His—alternate reading] end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. He shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall make sacrifice and offering cease; and in their place shall be an abomination that desolates, until the decreed end is poured out upon the desolator. (Dan 9:26–27)

Whose end comes with the earth swallowing a flood? the king of the North’s. We again see his troops’ destroying the city and the sanctuary, that destruction occurring prior to day 1260, but after day 1290. He shall make the daily sacrifice cease and declare himself God on day 1290, which is in the middle of a prophetic seven year week, or pretty close. So the language of the prophecy is too spare to see the thirty day month during which the king of the North wreaks havoc in Jerusalem. Yet for the language’s spareness, we learn that the king of the North (not Christ) will make a strong covenant with many for one week, and from this we can contextualize who the first horseman of the Apocalypse is, and what he does (Rev 6:1–2). From day 2520 until receiving his mortal wound, the king of the North was conquering by imitating Christ. Then, from when the king of the North is mortally wounded until Christ arrives, Satan as the second beast of Revelation 13 makes people “worship the first beast, whose mortal wound had been healed” (13:12).

Returning to the king of the South, we are not yet half way through seven years of Tribulation when the four demons bound at the great river Euphrates are released to kill a third of humanity. (Those *watchmen* who teach a 42 month long Tribulation err grievously as they have set themselves up to worship Satan, and the king of the North.)

About the third beast of his first vision, Daniel says, “After this, as I watched, another appeared, like a leopard. The beast had four wings of a bird on its back and four heads; and dominion was given to it” (7:6). We, in the western world, should expect this beast with his army of two myriads of myriads to attack as if it had wings. The people of his horde will believe that they see the chance to avenge centuries of wrongs, and to rid the world of the Great Satan.

The mindset of this period in the Tribulation will be one of revival. Enough has happened that people everywhere are turning to their god, and trying to get right with him. They have just experienced five months of stings. Tidal waves have washed away low-lying coastal cities. There is a shortage of freshwater and food. Nobody will be feeling very cocky. Survival will, indeed, be in question. And someone is to blame.

If it isn't the pornography of western culture, then why else would Allah be doing this to us? We have not conquered the world for Allah as we were commissioned to do, so is that the reason? And even the most moderate Muslim becomes willing to shoulder a rifle. With more than a billion believers, fielding an army of 200,000,000 isn't that difficult, and their first target is the industrialized nations of the West, where woman tempt men by daring to go around undressed.

Revival for the nation of Israel will be returning to the animal sacrifices. Revival for Islam will be *Jihad*. Revival for the United States will be returning to blue laws, and Cotton Mather's theology, while revival for Europe, especially the Balkans and Russia, will be the chanting of rituals until in trance-like compliance to whatever the demon directs.

Revivals feed off themselves, grow and divide like cancerous tumors, until the entire culture is infected. So will it be worldwide a year or two

into the Tribulation. And the worst of the troubles are still ahead; thus, revival doesn't stop, but only builds as situations worsen.

Am I doing that for which I condemned the *watchmen*? I'm not offering easy outs by *just believing*, or by even keeping the law of God. And the pre-Trib rapture is a doctrine of demons. It won't happen. You will be here in the Tribulation regardless of being either saint or sinner, unless you die first.

Jesus identified Himself as the shepherd in the following prophecy: "Strike the shepherd, that the sheep may be scattered; / I [the Lord of Hosts] will turn my hand against the little ones. / In the whole land, says the Lord, / two-thirds which shall be cut off and perish, and one-third shall be left alive" (Zech 13:7-8), and this one-third "will call on my name, / and I will answer them. / I will say, 'They are my people'; / and they will say, 'The Lord is our God'" (verse 9).

The textual suggestion is that all of the little ones are the sheep that were scattered when Christ was crucified. Two-thirds of the little ones will perish. Numerically, your odds of surviving aren't any better as a saint than as an evildoer. So being a Christian in name only will do you no good. Same for being lukewarm. Or a Nicolaitan. Or spiritually asleep. Saying, Lord, Lord, won't improve your odds of surviving. Only by doing the will of God with zeal will you become part of the third that will go through trials, more than anyone will want.

And if you haven't been drawn by the Father, this is all so much nonsense. Just refuse that tattoo of the Cross. You really don't want it.

So unlike the gloomy *watchman* who promises safety for obedience to the law, or the buoyant Charismatic who promises prosperity for sowing a large enough seed, I promise nothing, other than I will tell you the truth to the best of my knowledge. Not the community-tested truth of you cluttering up heaven until you return to earth to get your glorified body (that's a doctrine that really makes no sense). But the truth that if you have been drawn by the Father and are being called by Christ, you need to run as fast as you can towards the Body of Christ, be baptized, and become diligent in doing what is right in every situa-

tion, beginning with keeping the law of God and having love for even your enemies—and you will have enemies, some of them being within your own household.

If the sixth trumpet plague is the arrival of the third beast of Daniel 7, and if the seventh trumpet heralds the arrival of the fourth beast and the judgement of God, then my logic would have the fifth trumpet plague be the release of the second beast, who is told, “Arise, devour many bodies” (verse 5). But the beast doesn’t entirely devour its prey since it still has three ribs in its mouth.

In the fifth trumpet plague, the locust have a king over them, a demon whose “name in Hebrew is Abaddon” (Rev 9:11). The locust will sting all of humanity who don’t have the seal of God, but they aren’t to kill anyone. People will seek death because of the stinging pain, but they won’t die. It will seem like they are being devoured by the locust, but they won’t be. They will only be tortured. And the pain will be horrific.

I don’t know if Abaddon looks like a bear, but the demon’s name suggests he is a destroyer, a devourer.

With more text, a more decisive case could be made, pro or con. And here I must resort to that sense of wisdom that would be credited to the muse if I were a Greek. Instead, I claim inspiration. And you will have to judge the validity of my claim.

Only the first of the four beasts now remains without an identity: he is the false prophet that will be cast into the lake of fire along with the beast, and, later, Satan. And again, I claim inspiration.

There is an internal logic which augments the inspiration: “I saw a beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads...the beast...was like a leopard, its feet like a bear’s, and its mouth was like a lion’s mouth” (Rev 13:1–2). The four beasts of Daniel 7 have seven heads, and ten horns (the little horn would only have appeared after the beast rose out of the sea). The bodily characteristics of this emerging beast are the same as the first three beasts of Daniel 7. Remember,

concerning the fourth beast, Daniel says, “[A]s I watched, the [fourth] beast was put to death, and its body destroyed...As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time” (verses 11–12). So the fourth beast has no bodily characteristics to contribute. All it has is a head that has been mortally wounded: “One of its [the first beast of Revelation 13’s] heads seemed to have received a death-blow, but its mortal wound had been healed” (Rev 13:3).

Backing up to Nebuchadnezzar’s vision, the stone cut without hands crushes “the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold” (Dan 2:45). Since the third kingdom of bronze “shall rule over the whole earth” (verse 39), we should expect to see the body of the first beast of Revelation 13 appearing like a leopard if the bronze in Daniel 2 corresponds to the leopard in Daniel 7. Also, we should expect to find its mouth corresponding to the winged griffin who was given the mind of a man so he could speak like a man, just as Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold and would speak for the image he saw (we hear him speaking in Daniel 4:34–36). This demon is the false prophet that says what Nebuchadnezzar did, but about the antiChrists instead of the true God.

The dominion or rulership of the four beasts of Daniel 7 had been taken away, but Satan gives to the first beast of Revelation 13 “his power, and his throne and great authority” (verse 2). In fact, the second beast of Revelation 13 “exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf” (verse 12); so not only doesn’t this first beast have any authority of its own, but it can’t even exercise what authority it receives from Satan. Thus, as far as authority or dominion goes, it has none of its own, and can’t exercise what it borrows from Satan. It is powerless, completely. All it can do is bellow obscenities. As such, it matches perfectly the four beasts of Daniel 7, considering that these beasts are the four horns rising from the head of the he-goat that is the king of Greece.

The lives of the first three beasts of Daniel 7 were spared for a season and a time. Prophetically, *a time* is a year. I don't know how long a season is, but in Revelation 17, we find a red beast with seven heads and ten horns, which I will state emphatically are not the same horns as were on the head of the fourth beast of Daniel 7. This red beast is like the red dragon of Revelation 12:3, but they are not the same demonic alliance. The dragon is Satan. The beast, the angel says, "are seven kings, of whom five have fallen, one is living, and the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain only a little while. As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction" (Rev 17:9–11).

Seven heads, seven kings, five of whom have fallen. The five are the four heads of the leopard, plus the bear. The one that is the false prophet, and the one to come seems to be the little horn of the fourth beast of Daniel 7. Satan will head his army in this fight with Christ when He comes as the all powerful Messiah. He has fresh troops from the kings of the east, ten of them, and he makes his stand at Armageddon. And the king of the North is the beast that was and is not. This is the demon who will be cast into the lake of fire for his antetype anti-Christ role.

Satan is an active fellow. Daniel says, "I watched then the noise of the arrogant words that the horn was speaking" (7:11), so Satan served as the king of the North's defense counsel. He fights with Michael, loses, goes after the saints in Jerusalem, has his borrowed army swallowed by the Mount of Olives, then says, *I caused it, I'm Christ*, as he makes fire come down from heaven.

The second beast of Revelation 13 "had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon" (verse 11). We have seen that horns are usually connected prophetically with kings, or rulership. And the word for *lamb* is the diminutive form, suggesting despite having horns, this beast isn't like the real Lamb of God. Of course, it isn't, because it speaks like a dragon, like Satan. So, two horns can be two antiChrists, two imitations of the real Lamb, both of the dragon. The first was the

king of the North. The second is Satan, as himself, insomuch as his is the long-haired, suffering face in the picture the world accepts as Jesus. And as the antitype antiChrist, Satan will be Allah to the Muslim, Jesus to the Christian, the Messiah to the Jew, and God to the rest of the world. Only the Body of Christ will reject him as God, thereby setting the stage for disciples to fight him just as Christ did.

However, the true Lamb of God has “seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth” (Rev 5:6). These seven horns are, probably, the seven stars who “are the angels of the seven churches” (1:20); He “holds the seven stars in his right hand” (2:1). By application, now, the two horns of the false lamb can also be two fallen angels, one of whom I have identified as the king of the North. The textual suggestion would have the other horn being the king of the South, but since three entities (the beast, the false prophet, and Satan) are thrown into the lake of fire, I believe the other horn is the false prophet, the plucked griffin.

When I first began looking at this antiChrist scenario in January 2002, my understanding of Revelation was what had been traditionally taught by the Worldwide Church of God. I found that reading unsupported by the text, and actually at odds with the text. I put what I found in print, and asked a senior pastor within the Church of God to look at what I had written. He cautioned me to be very sure about overturning the prevailing understanding. I was, but I revisited the passages. I found additional supporting details which seemed to confirm my rereading, and that has been the story ever since. Each time I revisit the scenario, I find that more has been revealed. I don't expect that to change. Thus, what I write now is a better understanding than I had when *Rereading Prophecy* went to its publisher in April. Until an hour ago, I didn't know that the words which the false prophet will speak have already been recorded in Nebuchadnezzar's speech.

When the fourth beast of Daniel 7 is put to death, the little horn isn't, and the first three beasts are still around although dominion has been taken from them. Commentators have assigned the identities of

Babylon, Media-Persia, and Greece to these three beasts that outlive Rome—that didn't happen. The entire teaching is errant, and needs to be jettisoned.

Getting back to prophecy and the new covenant, the ten horns of the fourth beast of Daniel 7 are still in tact when the first beast of Revelation 13 emerges. The little horn hasn't yet uprooted the three horns, for these ten horns have ten crowns, or diadems, so these ten kingdoms still have power even after the head of the fourth beast received its mortal wound. However, the little horn of Daniel 7 will appear right about the time the dragon gives its throne to this first beast, and it will uproot three of those ten kingdoms.

Satan, after being cast to earth, “went off to make war on the rest of [the woman's] children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus” (Rev 12:17). That means exactly how it reads. Satan is the little horn that uproots three kingdoms, or in the case of the king of the North, three liberal democracies. He is especially interested in making war on those who are saints, and where will the most saints be? The United States? a good guess.

The *watchmen* who would have us turn to God (very good advice) don't say anything about the more saints there are in this country, the more interest Satan will display in this country. And if God is going to turn his hand against the little ones and let two-thirds perish, then there won't be much divine protection for this nation unless everyone's faith catches fire.

What about that? Prophecies can be abolished. Are you willing to become on fire for God, believing Him, obeying Him, keeping His commandments, having love for one another, always striving to do that which is right? I am. I'm willing to work as hard as I can to teach you the rudiments of the true Body of Christ. I'm part of that Church which the heading in the New King James Version lists as *the ineffective church*. Well, how effective am I? Will more words help? Stronger words? I don't want to see this nation overturned by anybody. But we are battling spirits. To win, we must have the stronger spirits on our

side—and They won't be if They think we would benefit from national captivity. We can't be the *Great Satan* and please God. A little porn won't make it. Nor will a little prostitution. A little embezzling. A little philandering. A little lying. A little drug use (but only on the weekends). A little sin.

My words today will convict you of breaking the commandments if you are, and profaning the Sabbath is breaking the commandments. You know the 7th day is the Sabbath, the 8th is not. But it isn't all that important, is it? After all, the Sabbath is the least of the commandments. And isn't choosing to do right what is truly important? Isn't feeding my family more important? Paying bills? Being a good steward of what God has given me? God will understand, He has to.

Why do you not believe God?

Go ahead, praise God for your deliverance. Ignore the *watchmen*, who really don't understand prophecy, but understand getting right with God. Say, Lord, Lord. Sow your seed in a ministry that is feeding the homeless and breaking addictions. Maybe your seed will keep you alive long enough that you will return to these words, realize that you have been drawn by the Father all along, and begin to obey God. I wouldn't be wasting my time writing if I didn't hope so; I'd be out fishing right now.

That's not true. I wouldn't be out fishing, because I've been given a job to do regardless of whether anyone listens. And for doing this job, there will be a reward: nothing more will be laid upon me. That is truly good news. And that is the only valid promise I find in prophecy about escaping the things to come. That also means we will have to butt heads if you don't repent, and you just think Ezekiel's head was hard.

Before quitting this subject, I want to spend additional time with Zechariah: on day 1260, Satan "poured water like a river after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood" (Rev 12:15), and the earth "swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth" (verse 16). Zechariah writes, referring to the holy ones, "They will call on my name...I [God] will say, 'They are my people'; / and they will

say, ‘The Lord is our God.’ [paragraph break] See, a day is coming when the plunder taken from you will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle....Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle” (13:9–14:3). Again, note that Christ fights as on *a* day of battle, not *the* day of battle: the indefinite article is used. Nations, and by extension, the armies of those nations will be gathered against Jerusalem. A United Nations army would be armies of all nations, and these armies will surround Jerusalem. And the referent for the pronoun *you* and *your* of 14:1 is the holy ones of 13:9. No additional subject has been introduced. So Jerusalem isn’t the referent for the pronoun, but the holy ones in Jerusalem are. So Christ’s warning His disciples to flee Jerusalem when the abomination that makes desolate (Matt 24:15) is set up can be contextualized.

Usually, armies surrounding Jerusalem is taught as a sign of Christ’s return, since Christ will fight against these armies. But the prophecy continues: “On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives...and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley....And you shall flee by the valley of the Lord’s mountain...and you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake” (verses 4–5). Physical people, not glorified saints, flee as they fled centuries earlier. Again, the referent for the pronoun *you* is the holy ones who have been refined as silver is and tested as gold is (13:8–9). These are saints who have been found worthy, but who are still physical. They constitute *the woman [who] fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, so that there she can be nourished for one thousand two hundred sixty days*. And we see this in the Song of Moses: “The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, / I will divide the spoil’...You [God] stretched out your right hand, / the earth swallowed them....You brought them [the people God redeemed—from verse 13] in and planted them on the mountain of your own possession, / the place, O Lord, that you made your abode, / the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hands have established” (Exo 15:9, 12, 17). Moses goes

from recounting what happened to Pharaoh's army to prophesying about what will happen in the future, when the earth swallows the armies pursuing the holy ones. The armies surrounding Jerusalem were intending to divide the spoil when they are swallowed up, not by the Red Sea, but by the rock cut without hands of Nebuchadnezzar's visions. The Mount of Olives is that rock cut without hands. It is split and the saints flee through the wide valley formed by the split. But when the armies surrounding Jerusalem pursue the saints into that wide valley, *the earth swallows the river that the dragon pours from his mouth*. There is a time gap of 1260 days between when the saints flee and "[t]hen the Lord my God will come, and all the holy ones with him" (Zech 14:5). The saints for these 1260 days are planted in the sanctuary Christ has prepared with his own hands for them.

Reviewing briefly: on day 1290, the man of perdition reveals himself by taking away the regular daily sacrifice and declaring himself the Messiah. Those saints in Jerusalem are warned to immediately flee to the mountains (Matt 24:15), as the armies of this man of perdition surround Jerusalem and begin to spoil the city, looting houses and raping women. Then on day 1260, one month later, Satan is cast down (again) and goes to kill the saints who have been gathered in Jerusalem, but Christ comes to fight as on a day of battle. He splits the Mount of Olives in two, and the 144,000 saints flee through this wide fissure, which closes up on the armies pursuing them, leaving the saints in the sanctuary (or place of safety) Christ has prepared for them. The loss of these armies becomes the death blow dealt to this man of perdition. The king of the North is as good as dead, and Satan has to give the beasts/demons who have had dominion his great power and authority to keep chaos from erupting worldwide. He acts as their conservator.

When the Mount of Olives swallows the king of the North's army, the power of the king will be broken. But the nations from which this army came will still be viable governments. The ten horns will still be in place, as this worldwide army will primarily be the forces of a ten nation coalition, headed by Russia, since Russia is the industrialized

power least affected by tidal waves, by loss of fresh water and agriculture. And we come to the prophecies of Ezekiel 38 and 39, only a portion of which pertain to this scenario.

As I have written, my contention is that if the modern descendants of the house of Israel go into national captivity, it is right here, at the 1260 day mark, when the little horn uproots three of the ten horns of the king of the North.

In the United States, some of the Evangelical Church and all of the Church of God will recognize this man of perdition for who he is. And some will not accept any mark from anyone, even from Christ. Only a loss of national sovereignty would cause this nation to go along with an antiChrist declaring himself God. We are too used to theatre to be impressed by his miracles. But, I suspect the U.S. military will have born the brunt of the fight against the king of the South's armies—there isn't a coalition in the world that we won't join if peace is promised as the outcome of joining—and as such, with the loss of the army at Jerusalem, we won't be able to resist the Sioux if they resume hostilities.

We have to be uprooted for any sort of world peace scheme based upon false religion to have a chance, and I suspect we will be. God won't have brought it upon us. We will have brought it upon ourselves because not enough of the nation is party to the second covenant. Our escape is to turn as a nation and begin to do that which is right in all of our dealings. Calling on Christ isn't enough. And we might repent, but we probably won't. We will, as a people, probably worship demons just like the rest of the world.

I don't know that any of the horns are the United States, but I see nowhere else that a prophesied captivity of the modern descendants of the house of Israel can occur.

One additional thought: evidence that God gave understanding of the prophecies has to exist into the Millennium. These words might be part of that evidence, which puts the onus upon me to get all this right.

2.

The prophecies of Ezekiel 38 and 39 have been traditionally taught by the Church of God to occur at the end of Christ's Millennium reign, that teaching based on Revelation 20:8, which also mentions Gog and Magog. But there is a fundamental problem with that teaching: God says, "So I will display my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I am the Lord" (38:23); and "My holy name I will make known among my people Israel; and I will not let my holy name be profaned any more" (39:7); and "Then they shall know that I am the Lord their God because I sent them into exile among the nations, and then gathered them into their own land....I will never again hide my face from them, when I pour out my spirit upon the house of Israel" (39:28–29). If Christ has been reigning for a thousand years as the all powerful Messiah, and if His reign has been under the terms of the new covenant where all know the Lord and have His spirit poured upon them for the asking, then the above lines can only occur prior to Christ's reign. They make no sense otherwise. The rebellion mentioned in Revelation is another incident, and is unrelated to the prophecies of Ezekiel.

The modern nation of Israel does not live in peace, nor in unwallled cities (Ezek 38:8, 11, 14). I have previously given a synopsis of the argument for the United States being the modern descendants of the house of Israel into which God gathered the northern tribes for His name's sake, according to the prophecy of Ezekiel chapter 36. If the referent for "my people Israel" (38:14, 15 and elsewhere) is the modern descendants of the northern tribes as seems to be the case, then Gog and his company of nations comes against the United States and/or Northern Europe (Britain, France, Norway, Sweden, Danmark and the Low Countries), with the U.S. better fitting the description than Europe.

The attack of Gog and company occurs after God puts hooks in their mouths to draw them into the attack. In other words, Gog really wouldn't attack Israel if God didn't put the thought into his mind, so

there is no compelling national reason for the attack. It is as if the nations are, or have been allies.

Allow me to pause here: I have just argued that God will not again bring national captivity upon the house of Israel, yet that is exactly how Ezekiel 38 and 39 have been traditionally taught, if addressed at all within the Church of God. The question must be asked, how successful will be Gog's attack? Not particularly successful. The attack seems to be the means by which God exercises His wrath on Gog, while showing how He will protect Israel.

The indication is that God primarily causes Gog to attack so that He can wipe out Gog's armies as a display of His might. The attack gives Him the opportunity to make Himself known to His people Israel. As such, this could be a prophecy that is abolished, since under the new covenant, all will know Him as the result of Him writing His law on the hearts and minds. No longer will He need to wipe out another Pharaoh to impress Israel.

However, I know of several gay rights groups that right now aren't interested in knowing God, or having His law written on their hearts. They might change their minds after seeing blood run for 200 miles or taking seven months to bury the dead. And Christ has just as much love for every person in those groups as He has for me. So, since they are among the ones who have separated themselves from Christ, what it will take to cause them to end that separation is, probably, only known to Christ.

Of course, between now and three and a half years into the Tribulation, much will happen to cause people to become more spiritual. Unfortunately, the world will worship demons. That includes all of Israel not under the terms of the new covenant. So it is only a guess at this time as to whether Gog must come against Israel by God drawing him forward with hooks. I can certainly conceive of Satan using Gog to attack the house of Israel, especially the United States, since a wide polar attack would be the only effective means of occupying this nation. If an army attacked either shore, or both (actually all three)

shores at the same time, the geography of the country would effectively hinder advancement to the extent that effective resistance could be mounted. However, a wide attack from the north would give the attacking forces access to geographic corridors. Distances would be shorter. River drainages wouldn't hinder advances. And two hundred miles of blood is conceivable, barely. Certainly it could take seven months to bury the dead if an attack occurred in the Pacific Northwest, down both sides of the Mississippi, and down the Hudson at the same time. We would have to work hard to have buried all of the dead in seven months.

The modern nation of Israel will not live safely in unwallled cities prior to the return of Christ as the all powerful Messiah, especially considering that armies will surround Jerusalem half way through the Tribulation, and that the upcoming fight will be between the kings of the North and of the South. So the people of Israel Ezekiel references in the Gog-Magog prophecies cannot be living in Judah. They can be living in Northern Europe, or in North America. The text gives no decisive indication of where Gog will attack, other than in the list of allies accompanying it in its attack. It is, I suspect, unlikely that Persia (Iran) would contribute forces in an over-the-pole attack on the United States. Iranians living in the U.S. might join the forces of Gog, but that scenario doesn't really fit the prophecy. Thus, based on the list of allies, and upon Isaiah's prophecies about a highway (11th chapter) extending from Europe to Samaria, I believe the attack is against Northern Europe. I believe if the United States goes into national captivity it will be caused by Satan as the little horn overturning us. Then, I suspect that we won't leave the continent unless a nuclear or biological attack so poisons the land that it cannot be occupied, a prophetic possibility.

Old testament prophecies are, usually, rather vague. Jesus had to point out where and when He fulfilled some of these prophecies; their fulfillment wasn't self-evident. The most certain aspect of all prophecies is that a person who believes God enough to obey Him will live,

while the person who doesn't believe God will die. Therein lies the reason for prophecy.

3.

On television last night, a prominent west coast evangelist paraded around in fatigues with a mock-up of a helicopter on stage behind him as he preached about "admittance," about letting Jesus into your heart. His O.D. T-shirt became wet with sweat as he worked the colosseum audience into a revival frenzy. I didn't watch for long enough to see if there would be a fireworks display, or a light show. The evangelist was part of Christian theatre that is sweeping away the image of a fundamentalist Christian being uptight and staid. The evangelist's audience was large, noisy, emotional, and would be no closer to pleasing God at the end of the evening than at the beginning although, I suspect, they would feel better about their relationship with the Lord. The message the evangelist delivered for the ten minutes or so that I watched was off-target. He misapplied Scriptures, taking a line from here and a line from there as if he were salting his message with biblical sounding phrases to enhance its flavor, the message itself bland as boiled noodles and of even less nutritional value spiritually.

What the televangelist represents is the antithesis of the faith once delivered. It is paganism in camouflage...Dad drove truck all during WWII. When they stopped, they had to cover their trucks with camouflage netting. He once asked a pilot what the camouflage looked like from the air. *Camouflage*, the pilot said. The same for Christian theatre. It looks like baptized paganism, sounds like Plato himself delivering their message, and leaves a bad taste in the mouths of mature disciples. But the problem isn't with mature saints, but with newly drawn disciples who truly desire a relationship with the Father and the Son. Endtime prophecies are given so the saints can tell the players apart, but the program must be put in their hands. "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness" (2 Corth 11:14-15),

one of whom marched in front of a grounded Huey, his small head mike hardly noticeable as his words were electronically magnified and sent around the world with barely a blip. His words were heard in heaven, and he will be judged by them.

The televangelist didn't teach to keep the commandments, or to do right, but rather, to let Jesus, whose work is finished, into your heart so your work will also be finished, or at least I think that was his point. He was long getting to wherever he was going. The trip was loud, and even if bags of peanuts were distributed, it wasn't worth the price of its free ticket. It was Greek theatre, the drama an emotional struggle between a satyr and your inner man, with the winner to get your heavenly name. Seventy virgins might have been the better prize. The structure of the performance was a lie, the message false, the messenger fake, the helicopter shot down.

When delivering God's terms for the Moab covenant, Moses said, "But to this day the Lord has not given you [Israel] a mind to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear" (Deu 29:4) the things of God. He still hasn't given the mass of humanity minds to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear. The lab mice aren't to know they are mice. That knowledge would skew demonstration results. But if you are reading my words, then in all likeliness, you have been given a mind to understand. You have been drawn for the purpose of proclaiming Christ's mighty deeds, and one of those deeds is arming the saints to fight a real battle with Satan during the Tribulation, especially the last 1260 days. Endtime prophecy is given so the saints will recognize the demons, who aren't in our reality, who we cannot see or measure, but who are more real than our thoughts.

Dressed in camo fatigues, the televangelist looked like he was ready to go to war, but for the enemy. As if he were an American Taliban commander, he shills for Satan. His message wasn't what Jesus taught, nor what Paul taught. In fact, his message couldn't have been found even in a misreading of Scripture. But by the demonic authority he has

been given, his message was well received spiritually, just as would have been a message about eternal virgins.

After the golden calf incident at the base of Mt. Sinai, God realized that Israel could not obey the terms of the covenant to which they had agreed only forty days earlier. They needed spiritually modified. So God made obedience easier. We can see how easy by repeating my citation of the heart of the Moab covenant:

Moreover, the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your [mind—*naphesh*], in order that you may live... Then you shall again obey the Lord, obeying all his commandments that I am commanding you today, and the Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all your undertakings... the Lord will again take delight in prospering you, just as he delighted in prospering your ancestors, when you obey the Lord your God by observing his commandments and decrees that are written in this book of the law, because you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your [mind]. (Deu 30:6, 8–10)

God changes naught, but His covenant with His chosen people does. As I have written previously, the above passage is from the covenant Paul cites as being based upon faith (Rom 10:5–13). Under the Moab covenant, when God gathers Israel after scattering them for breaking the Sinai covenant, He will give them a new heart and mind, the foundation of the second covenant. He didn't offer to give them eternal life, the reason why the rich young ruler and the lawyer came to Jesus to ask what they must do to receive eternal life (Luke 18:18–25 and 10:25–28). Rather, He offered, on condition of obedience, the prosperity that the Evangelical and Charismatic churches find in the old covenant and drag into the new covenant as if that prosperity were a roadkilled buck with a trophy rack.

If the rich young ruler had, under the Moab covenant, been given a new heart and mind, then all the young ruler would further need to do

is “confess with [his] lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in [his] heart that God raised [Christ] from the dead, [and he would] be saved” (Rom 10:9), but Jesus didn’t find that the young ruler truly had a new heart, so He told the young ruler to sell all he had and give it to the poor. This young rich man couldn’t do that. His heart was on his wealth, the problem Jesus recognized.

The perversion of prophecy taught by most televangelists is exactly the same type of misreading that they give to Romans 10:9. They haven’t been given the biblical understanding necessary to differentiate between the Sinai and the Moab covenant, so they cannot understand Paul’s simple teaching about the righteousness that comes from each covenant. Whereas under the Sinai covenant righteousness was the product of keeping the covenant’s terms, under the Moab covenant righteousness came by faith, or better, belief. The sequence of conditions are: Israel in foreign lands believes God and turns back to Him. God gathers them and circumcises their hearts. Then because they have been given new hearts, Israel obeys God, keeping all His commandments. God prospers Israel. This prosperity is conditional: Israel must continue observing the commandments and everything written in the Law. The rich young ruler told Jesus that, yes, he has kept all of the commandments since his youth. The young ruler claimed the conditions necessary for prosperity, and apparently believed that because of his prosperity, he had, indeed, fulfilled all that was required of him. But *love* is written in the Book of the Law. The Pharisees had glued those pages together (in Alaska, Russian Old Believer priests literally glued pages of school textbooks together if they didn’t like the subject being covered). The rich young ruler didn’t know he was supposed to love the poor. He hadn’t read that part of the Book of the Law. As a result, Jesus gave him a task that would fully form in him a new heart and mind. But the task was too much for the rich young man. And some televangelist will, today, tell that rich young ruler that he doesn’t need to do that task Jesus assigned him, all he needs to do is confess

with his mouth and believe with his heart and he will be saved. Either Jesus or the televangelist lies.

The Moab covenant expresses the will of God; it is actually the second covenant, where minds become capable of understanding God and His will. Under the modifications made to the second covenant by Jesus' death, we don't have to obey first before God writes His law on our hearts and on our minds. Rather, the Father drafts us by beginning to write on our hearts without our permission. This is what that camo clad televangelist doesn't understand and cannot understand, for he hasn't been sent by God to teach. If he has been, he has consigned himself to the lake of fire—I can judge his message, not his heart. His message is of Satan. Only he and God know whether he deliberately misleads, or does so because he hasn't been sent. My desire is that he repents, gets into the Bible, learns what God says, admits his error, then gets back to work bringing in the harvest with a message that is of God. The likelihood of that happening is slim, at best.

Paul separates the Sinai covenant from the Moab covenant when he writes his oft-cited *just believe* passage. He begins by paraphrasing Moses: "Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law that 'the person who does these things will live by them'" (Rom 10:5), which, when received in English, is Leviticus 18:5 ("You shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; by doing so one shall live") with a twist. For someone whose first language is English—again, our use of language, and our first language determines our reality—the Leviticus cite says, *Because a person keeps God's statutes, the person will live*, therefore making keeping the law of God the cause for a person living. However, Paul's paraphrase, as received in English, emphasizes the obligatory nature of keeping the law, making keeping the law a kind of prison which locks a person into law keeping. And even when an English speaker examines Paul's and Moses' words in the original texts, these different emphases exist, so the problem doesn't seem one of translation but perspective, especially considering what Nehemiah

wrote: “And you [God] warned them in order to turn them back to your law. Yet they acted presumptuously and did not obey your commandments, but sinned against your ordinances, by the observance of which a person shall live” [again, the *cause* for life] (29:9). Also consider what Ezekiel wrote: “But the house of Israel...did not observe my statutes, but rejected my ordinances, by whose observance everyone shall live” [a universal obligation, or expectation] (20:13). So from the 21st-Century perspective of the Church of God, law-keeping is the cause for life, a universal obligation, and not a prison. Therefore, the point Paul makes about righteousness isn't contained in his paraphrase of Moses, but in his reference to the Moab covenant, which follows.

Leaving behind the righteousness of the Sinai covenant, Paul quotes and expounds portions of the Moab covenant. Paul in Romans 10:6–8 cites Exodus 30:12–14, and his citation of this portion of the Moab covenant sets up the *just believe* passage; so let's look at how Moses set up Paul's cite: God through Moses says, “Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away” (Exo 30:11). And since Paul put these two passages together, let me paraphrase both: *The righteousness God expects comes from just believing Him, which isn't too difficult for you to do since His words—His commandments, His statutes, His ordinances—are with you. You don't have to go anywhere to get them now that Christ has made an end to the covenant under which you were condemned.* It is the Father's words that are written on hearts and minds under the second covenant. All we have to do is believe those words, and we will be saved. But those words are only written on the hearts and minds of drawn disciples. They aren't understandable by *the world*, just as no son or daughter of the Israelites that left Egypt had been given “a mind to understand, or eyes to see, or ears to hear” (Exo 29:4) the things of God. Apparently, they hadn't noticed that in forty years, neither their clothes nor their sandals had worn out (verse 5). But they wouldn't have noticed if they didn't know that things were supposed to wear out. And this addresses the core of the problem *the world* has: *the world* hasn't yet been given a

mind to understand the things of God. They don't know what it is like to have the law written on one's heart and mind. They cannot even conceive what it's like. They are blind, and deaf to the things of God. And if you aren't, then you have been drawn—and you need to listen to the Father's words, His commandments, His statutes, His ordinances, do them, and know that by faith, by belief, you are righteous before God. But you do not believe Him when you ignore His words.

What Paul taught about *just believe* is correct for the person drawn by the Father. Eventually that will be everyone. But Paul thought he was living in the time of the end when the Father draws everyone. He didn't comprehend how far away Christ's return was; he couldn't. We can, and we probably are living in the time of the end. But the Bride of Christ cannot make herself ready if She will not believe the Father's words that He has placed in her mind and heart. Christ won't marry disciples, and doesn't even know disciples who have been called but who refuse (either by ignoring or by rejecting) to believe the Father's words that were written on their hearts and minds. The oil in the parable of the ten bridesmaids is figuratively the Holy *Pneuma*, which can be quenched, or be in short supply by refusing to believe. And invitations to the wedding banquet go first to the household of faith, who might be too busy mulling over calendar questions to attend. Or worse, the question of how God's name should be pronounced, as if God doesn't know to whom you pray if you mispronounce it. My kids knew whom I addressed regardless of which name I used. So do yours. And you think they are more perceptive than God? After all, you aren't praying to Baal, or Molech, or Ishtar, or Zeus. You know you are praying to the Creating Godhead, comprised of the Father and the Son. They also know that you are. So, do you think They will be impressed by your refusal to attend the wedding because you are busy correcting how your neighbors pronounce Their names? Or maybe you didn't receive an invitation because God knew you would be too busy to attend, for there are an awful lot of people who just don't understand how important His name is. Get real.

So there is no mistake, believing the Father's words means applying them to a person's life, means doing that which is right, which is keeping the law of God, and having love even for your enemies. Moses didn't think, under the Moab covenant, that this was too hard for Israelites to do once they had circumcised hearts; this certainly isn't too hard for a drawn disciple today, when the disciples failings aren't even counted as sin as long as the disciple believes by faith. The disciple, though, tells the Father that he or she doesn't believe by refusing to keep His law and/or by not having love for all of humanity. *Just believing* requires doing, which is work.

4.

Returning to the Moab covenant and prophecy, the prosperity promised under the covenant, and the prosperity earlier and later prophets reference comes from returning to God. It is the carrot God held in front of both houses of Israel to entice obedience, and it didn't work. Under the covenant, God through Moses says, "[T]he Lord your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all your undertakings, in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your soil. For the Lord will again take delight in prospering you, just as he delighted in prospering your ancestors, when you obey the Lord your God by observing his commandments and decrees" (Exo 30:9–10). So the prosperity promised has a caveat, obedience to the law. And it is the promises made under these terms that so much of greater Christianity's ministry borrow to show what God's will is for Believers.

A minister who incorporates these blessings into his sermons about the second covenant told me that I have to understand that there are type and antitype fulfillments, that the antitype of these blessings are for now. He also insisted that the old covenant was still in effect because Jews were keeping it, and would be keeping it until Christ returns. There was nothing more I could say: there is no argument against someone ignoring what the text says because that isn't what the person has been taught.

Where I grew up on the Oregon Coast, gypo loggers had the bad habit of falling any tree that would reach the sale boundary line as if the tree were part of the timber sale. The gypo took a contract to log a specific area of land—all that was incorporated within the boundaries of the timber sale. The boundaries would be flagged, or earlier, blazed. Fallers knew where these boundaries were. But fallers were busheling, meaning that they were getting paid by the scale of the timber they fell. So if a particularly nice tree was a little outside the boundaries, most of them didn't consider it stealing if they fell the tree toward the sale's boundary line. As long as the top of the tree would reach the line, no theft had occurred.

We decide for ourselves what is right or wrong. All of us do although some of us decide to accept God's definition of right and wrong. Even when the law of God is written on our hearts and minds, we still have the choice of complying with what is written inside us. God tried, especially in earlier times, to encourage our decision to do what is right by offering us prosperity for doing so. If we did not steal that tree which is a little outside of our sale's boundaries, He, God, would assure us of more timber to log, and bigger logs, and taller trees. As it turned out, loggers denuded most of an entire mountain range. I remember gypos complaining about the decision of sawmills to begin buying smaller logs. One older fellow complained to my stepfather about Longbell's decision to go from 24 inches to 16 inches. His words were, "A fella can't make no money handling them size peckerpoles." Today, mills buy four inch tops. (Scale is based upon the largest square that can be made from the small end of the log—I no longer have a scale book, but I remember the dilemma I faced in Alaska: a 12 foot long log with a 12 inch top had 210 boardfeet of scale, while a 34 foot long log with an 8 inch top had 130 feet of scale, the two bucks I could make from the same tree; I could make more money by bucking off the bottom 12 feet and throwing the rest of the tree away than I could by bucking to the length the buyers wanted.)

What happened to gypo loggers is a good example of ignoring God's carrot of law-keeping: instead of being blessed in the logs we have to cut, we are cursed with having to log saplings. And we cannot conceive of it being any other way. It will be two or three generations before there is again any quantity of mature timber to cut. But we won't wait that long to harvest the trees we have. We will continue to cut saplings because that's all there is to cut. So the curse will continue generation to generation. God doesn't look down from heaven and utter a curse; He doesn't have to. His law is the way of life: the carrot is automatic when there is obedience. And the cursing is also automatic. A person flying over western Oregon and Washington can see how much timber was cut, and how much there is left to log. Everybody stole just a little. Nobody had any intention of harming anyone. Gypos were just trying to feed their families and make their payroll. But the end result of a culture of lawlessness is that most of the gypos have parked or lost their equipment and are retraining as fast food managers and short-order cooks. (I heard of one returning to school to be a nurse.)

Now, when an Evangelical minister finds a promise of prosperity in the law of Moses, or a promise being offered by a prophet to encourage Israel to return to God, and when this minister shoplifts this promise and tells his or her parishioners that the promise is the will of God for their lives, the minister doesn't lie, but doesn't tell the truth either. God's desire is to prosper all who obey Him. But He is no longer under any obligation to prosper according to one's obedience to either the Sinai or the Moab covenant. His promise under the second covenant is trials, persecution, and to be hated by all *the world*.

Again, God's desire is that we prosper. But He will not allow prosperity to occur if it will in any way interfere with the development of righteousness. He will not cause trees to grow faster in Oregon because Oregon is more obedient than Washington. He will not send rain to drought stricken wheat farmers in Idaho because they are more obedient than drought stricken farmers in Montana. Under the second covenant, prosperity is subject to time and chance and the economic

conditions under which the disciple lives. Wise decisions by a disciple will cause the disciple to prosper more than poor decisions will, but the disciple's righteousness is not reflected in his or her prosperity. The prosperity promised under both the Sinai and the Moab covenants was national in scope: *a rising tide raises all ships*. Under the second covenant, there is no one-to-one correspondence between righteousness and prosperity. The promise is eternal life, not money in your pocket.

But retrieving the example I use pertaining to the gypo logging culture, there remains a connection between national prosperity and obedience to the laws of God: the AIDS epidemic that is devastating Africa wouldn't have occurred if lifetime monogamy would've been national cultural practices. If these nations had been obeying the law of God prior to when the epidemic began, the epidemic would never have happened. The people who have died would have lived because of their obedience to God, just what He promises all who will believe His words.

Allow me to begin again as I want to minimize the chance of me being misquoted: fulfillment of prophecy lies behind us as well as ahead of us. While the Church of God taught a misunderstanding of what would happen in the future, the Evangelical Church teaches the misapplication of what happened in the past. Linguistic verb tenses get twisted as biblical commentators "find" a Scripture that the Lord has given them, then proceed to display their lack of spiritual understanding. A person can teach that which the person doesn't understand and still sound intelligent to those who know even less. Standing in front of a classroom or at a pulpit conveys to the person doing the teaching authority and wisdom and the perception of knowledge which the person often doesn't possess.

When I first opened my gunshop at age 20, I had been in the Oregon Tech gunsmithing program for long enough to know the answers to basic questions, plus a little more. Customers would come by and ask me a question. I would give them the answer. They would look sus-

picious, then go ask an old man who had a shop in Toledo if what I said were true. The old man, a retired foreman at the plywood mill, would shrug his shoulders and say, *I suppose*. Then what I said was true; not until then, though. And that used to bother me: his age carried more authority than my schooling. (He was a poor gunsmith; he once ground a taper along the length of the bottom of a barrel's chamber to get cartridges to feed better.)

The only authority I possess now is that which comes from words appearing in print. My voice is one of millions trying to be heard: I had one book last year go from 1.7 millionth on the best seller list to 400,000th. That was a 1.3 million place rise, and still miles away from the top ten best sellers.

No amount of schooling is helpful, great age isn't beneficial if Christ's voice isn't being heard through my words. The authority I now possess is from Christ, and not from any corporate organization. Nor from name recognition, nor social stature, nor financial wealth. I write because this is the work I have been given to do. At times I write with anger at what I see within greater Christianity. I see more theatre than teaching. I see men (and a few women) hawking the gospel as if it were egg salad about to go bad if not eaten quickly. I see a *just believe* message taught as if that's all there is to being a disciple. I see the promises of physical blessings made under the first covenant being promised to *just believe* disciples. And by all of the authority that my words can convey, I will rebuke those who teach a gospel different than the one delivered by the primitive church. A PERSON CANNOT HAVE THE PROMISES MADE UNDER THE FIRST COVENANT UNLESS THE PERSON KEEPS ALL OF THE FIRST COVENANT! and then it does the person no good, for Christ is no longer bound by that covenant.

The promises made under the first covenant were national in scope, and were based on the collective obedience of the nation. If we want America to prosper, then as a nation we must be obedient to commandments that are, in actuality, social laws, just as gravity is a *law*.

We cannot covet every man his neighbor's wife and have strong families, or a strong social framework. We don't want to be dying from AIDS. But we don't need AIDS to compel good behavior; AIDS can be replaced by any of a thousand other curses. We obey the law of God so we will live as a nation. We don't need to find out what those other curses are, nor divert national resources into finding stop-gap solutions to those curses.

Everyone in this nation will prosper to the extent that everyone obeys the laws of God. A little corporate cheating effects how many 401K retirement plans? Yours, perhaps? Even if a person is not drawn by the Father at this time, the person will benefit from obedience to the law of God. Society will benefit. Prosperity, then, just seems to happen, which is as it always will be with obedience on a national scale. And this is the promise God made to ancient Israel; this is what He wanted them to demonstrate to *the world*. But they failed to understand what was at stake. Their mental paradigms needed scrapped and new ones formed. National captivity didn't work. The paradigm they needed was the understanding that the decisions of every single person are reflected in the economic health of a nation. I improve America's prosperity by choosing to do that which is right in everything I do. And you can undo all that I do for this nation by choosing to be lawless.

The promises of prosperity that Evangelical ministers find need to be presented honestly: these ministers need to tell their parishioners that the promises are coupled to national obedience, which begins with each of them. Works are as commanded today as they were for ancient Israel—not the dead works of the law, but the doing of that which is right, which is keeping the law of God and having love for each other.

There is no specific prophecy that says the house of Israel will again experience national captivity; there is one that says we will be attacked (Ezek 38 & 39). If each person in this nation chose to obey God, regardless of whether the person were a disciple, then the law of God would work in such a way that the prosperity of this nation would pre-

clude us being overturned by Satan, or anyone else. Unfortunately, I'm not optimistic that every person will obey God. I'm actually confident that most won't. So what percentage of obedience will it take before God, through His law, causes freedom and liberty to continue? I don't know. Abraham argued God down to a few.

In the parable of the wedding banquet, the king told his servants, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find.'... Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad" (Matt 22:8–10). Being found worthy is coming when you're called, is believing God to the point where you act on what you believe. It isn't going about your business because you confessed with your mouth and believed in your heart and are now saved. Does that give you an invitation? Let's say yes. You now have to respond, and get into a wedding garment, which isn't the righteousness of your street clothes. In the parable, the king doesn't get much response, the invited guests being probably allegorized Jews, but can equally well be saints in the Church of God, or born-again Evangelicals. Thus, this lack of response caused the king to invite guests from the main street, not from the back alleys or sewers. And on the main street, there were good and bad individuals who only had to don a wedding garment to be accepted, that garment being, probably, the acceptance of Christ's sacrifice for you. But a man came "who was not wearing a wedding robe" (verse 11). The king had the man bound and thrown into outer darkness. And Jesus finished the parable with "many are called, but few are chosen" (verse 14).

The many who have been called includes the returned remnant of Israel under the Moab covenant, includes the saints of twenty centuries, includes a great multitude who will be invited in the Tribulation. But most of the returned remnant of Israel spurned their invitations. A significant percent of the saints have said their invitations were really a return to bondage. And a few of those who are gathered at the last minute don't take their invitations seriously. My argument is that none

of these spiritual washouts understood the purpose of their calling, which is, simply, to develop the habit of choosing rightly until that habit determines their character. True Christianity is, indeed, that simple. You do what you know to do. Your teachers will be held accountable for teaching you what is right. If you have been poorly taught, yet absolutely faithful, you will be at that wedding supper. Likewise, a person who knows much, and does what he or she knows, and teaches rightly what he or she knows about God will be there with even greater honor. So knowledge is of some benefit. But faithfulness is the must do. Saying, Lord, Lord, without the belief to cause you to obey God by doing what is right is a waste of your breath. And it is always right to keep the commandments and have love for even your enemy, which you now know to do.

5.

Mom was proud of a walnut whatnot shelf Dad built from a black walnut board salvaged from an old chickenhouse torn down on the farm where I was born. It was, perhaps, her most treasured possession. But as a high school woodworker, I thought the shelf was crudely built. The original board had been handplaned to a thickness of about half an inch: the planing wasn't nearly as uniform as if the board had been put through a joiner. The curves had been cut with a drawknife and had many flat spots in their runs. I would've (using the high school's machinery) bandsawn those curves, then sanded them with a drillpress mounted drum sander. So in my ignorance, I dismissed the importance of that whatnot shelf. It's dollar value was less than the value of the lumber. I could, when twelve and thirteen, have made a more professional appearing piece of cabinetry. What I couldn't then understand was the sentimental value of the shelf. Mom and Dad were newly married when he built the shelf. They had few resources. Its importance wasn't in its quality, but in its production, in its existence.

When my grandfather (either side)—or his father, all the way back to when the Dirck Keyser or John Howland came to America in the

17th-Century—sat down to read the Bible, he read the text as crudely as Dad had planed those boards for that whatnot shelf. He got the job done. He produced a functioning narrative that had Jesus the Christ dying for his sins. He understood he had the moral obligation to treat his neighbor as he wanted to be treated. He knew he had the obligation to worship God with all of his heart and with all of his mind. And both grandfathers did as far as I know. I imagine the Father and the Son received their worship as Mom received that roughly constructed what-not shelf.

The Church of God has, for the decades since I was baptized and for a good while before, been like the teenager I was when I became enough aware of that whatnot shelf to examine it closely: the Church examined the crudely read biblical narrative that came from 17th-Century scholars, saw the flat spots, the unevenness, the poor fit between the corners, and dismissed the reading as having less value than the paper on which it was written. It didn't fully appreciate the power machinery God had given the Church as it measured itself against the Christianity of historical exegesis. It didn't know as it smiled at, or outright mocked the amateurish Evangelical readings of text that its own reading was also pretty amateurish—the gun racks and coffee table I built in the three years of high school woodshop I took have long ago disappeared as my skills improved. Every once in a while I'll encounter a rifle I built in the late 1960s, and I wince at how crude the woodwork is. So we, who now have both professional tools and skills, should really thank God for His power to read the biblical narrative, understanding all the while that our reading will improve as we learn to better use the power He has given us.

A reading of the biblical text is for most Christians as personal as that whatnot shelf was for Mom. I haven't always been appreciative of that attachment to a reading which comes down through family histories as a piece of cabinetry might. When I first became aware of the Bible as something other than a book setting on the coffee table, I had

been given the power to produce a fairly accomplished reading, even if by my standards now those early readings were themselves amateurish.

Too often as a reader's skills improve, doubt enters into the reader. First thing the reader knows is that he or she considers Christ a teacher of morals, not the Son of God, and a little education has killed faith. And I have circled back around to my friends, and future friends in academia. *Christ was a good person*. No, He was the Logos of the old covenant, and now is the Son of God. He is the living Word of God (which precludes the Bible from being anything other than a living document), and He is your and my high priest.

I've previously written about history having been poorly taught to me even though I was a good student. I began this book with the concept of community tested truth. I couldn't today, get an article published in a scholarly religious journal because of peer review—the educational establishment of Western culture is a production of *the world*, the antithesis of the household of faith. For too long a young wouldbe reader of biblical text thought he or she had to go to divinity schools to obtain the high power machinery to shape and surface the Bible into a refined cabinet in which good deeds could be held until judgment. Paul, as a former Pharisee, thought of the law as a prison, with grace as the means for the ultimate jailbreak. He never realized how he had been sculpted by the mental paradigms of 1st-Century Judaism, about which Jesus said that none kept the law. None did, for none had love. All saw the law as bars which kept Gentiles out and themselves in. They had become masochistic in their law-keeping. And it is from this perspective that Paul writes.

As my woodworking skills became better, I took the precision offered by power machinery and added to that precision hand sculpting and carving, inlays and wire work, and I have artwork in galleries that sell for a few thousands of dollars rather than a few hundred. Even when I first began as a gunmaker, my work was worth far more than the price of the wood with which I worked; yet, I regularly see firearms that have been built by amateurs that are worth less than the price of

their component parts. What the difference is between what I do and what others attempt I cannot fully explain. I'm not alone. Some workers of wood are far better than I am. Their work sells for many thousands of dollars, not a few.

Pertaining to reading, I recently encountered an example that is worth less than the paper on which it is printed. Because I will quote a passage directly from the man's book, I feel ethically obligated to name him and the book although in love I shouldn't. The law versus love. This time, civil law will win: in *"Difficult Scriptures"* (Tyler House 1997), Dr. David Albert writes concerning Colossians 2:16–17, "In verse 17, we have God's New Testament teaching on these days. The writer is, of course, the Apostle Paul, and virtually all Christians believe he was writing under divine inspiration. So this is not Paul's commentary on these days, but *God's* commentary through Paul" (p. 120 emphasis his).

A very large assumption has been made by Albert, that divine inspiration corresponds directly to divine speech. Before proceeding to the crux of Albert's reading, the question of whether his assumption can be supported by the biblical text must be resolved. In old covenant prophecies, the most common structure is, *Thus saith the Lord*, and inspiration through, usually, visions is directly stated. We have in the gospel accounts direct speech attributed to Jesus the Christ. But what evidence exists for the epistles of any of the Apostles to be considered direct speech by either the Father, or the Son? Tradition? There isn't any other, is there?

Consider for a moment what Paul says about his teaching on marriage:

Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. I think that, in view of the impending crisis, it is well for you to remain as you are. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. (1 Corth 7:25–27)

Someone will immediately object, saying that this is Paul's opinion, not God's, and Paul has labeled it as such. Yes, that's correct. But Paul says, "All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16–17). So the question becomes, does Paul regard his opinion as Scripture? If Paul must label his opinion as opinion in his epistles, then logic would have Paul not considering his opinion on par with Scripture. By extension, if Paul believed his opinion were Scripture, then there would have been no need to label it as opinion, trustworthy or otherwise. His opinion would have been on par with Christ's. He would not have written: "To the married I give this command—not I but the Lord" (1 Corth 7:10). So any honest reading of Paul's epistles has Paul deferring to Christ on questions of doctrine. Paul never considered his opinion equal to Christ's; he wasn't and wouldn't have been that presumptive. He never labels his opinions Scripture. If you think he does, where does he claim his opinion has the weight of Scripture? He certainly didn't at the Jerusalem conference. His understanding was inspired, but it didn't carry the authority of Scripture. And if he doesn't label his own opinion Scripture, and if he regards his epistles as secondary texts that expound upon Scripture, which is how he regarded his writing, then why would we place Paul's epistles on par with Christ's recorded words? Tradition? Ah, yes, tradition.

By application of Dr. Albert's logic, Paul's opinion is, indeed, Scripture. However, it appears from the two cited passages that Paul didn't consider his own letters as Scripture. We know that questions of what was Scripture weren't fully settled as late as 396 A.D., when Augustine writes *On Christian Doctrine*: Augustine gives his basis for determining what is canonical, the process democratic and no more divinely inspired than Paul's opinion about virgins, or about women speaking in services, or about him remaining alive until Christ comes. Paul isn't

alive today, and Christ hasn't yet come; so Paul's epistles are inspired but they are not God's words to us. Rather they are Paul's words.

Albert's overall premise is the law of Moses has been done away with; thus, everything incorporated in the law of Moses doesn't pertain to New Testament Christians. His purpose is to refute the teachings of Herbert Armstrong concerning, primarily, food laws and the observance of sabbaths. But he reads as one who has just been given access to the power machinery of a high school woodshop.

Is Paul's teaching on the holy days, which Albert reads no better than he does anything else, really God's?

If Paul thought what was Scripture were the commands of the Lord Jesus the Christ, as the juxtaposition of the two cited passages suggest, and with Paul's deference to the teaching of Jesus in verse 10 of the same passage, then a reader should not turn to Paul's epistles to find God's commentary on any subject, except as Paul specifically cites the Lord. Everything else is Paul's opinion, which certainly can be inspired, but can also be wrong (he didn't live to see Christ's return). Paul's epistles, like John's, are secondary texts that help explain the primary text, the words of the Son of Man.

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul doesn't claim to speak for the Lord. Rather, he defers to Christ:

As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him...See to it no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. (2:6, 8 emphasis mine)

The philosophy of Apostles was **to do** and teach **what Christ taught**, that philosophy stated in Jesus's instructions to go into all the world (Matt 28:19–20).

When Paul wrote his epistles, he didn't think he was writing Scripture. He wrote without imagining that someone would take his words and use them as the basis for overturning what Jesus taught on this

point or on that point. He never imagined that his words would become little idols that Christians would pick through, selecting this one and rejecting that one as if all were part of a yearend white sale.

The only really reasonable conclusion at which a careful reader can arrive is that in Colossians 2:17, we do not have God's New Testament teaching on the annual sabbaths, but rather, we have Paul encouraging Gentile converts to buck up to the flack they were taking. These Gentile converts had to be taking an almost unbearable amount of criticism and mocking about suddenly attending the synagogue on the sabbath days. To say that, as Albert does, *So this is not Paul's commentary on these days, but God's commentary through Paul*, marks one as being an immature and somewhat careless reader.

Albert shows just how sloppy a reader he is when he writes (in an earlier passage about the Jerusalem conference):

The "Law of *God*" fit our paradigm, the "law of Moses" did not. Thus, we couldn't see in Act [sic] 15 what we didn't want to see, namely, that within two decades after the founding of the New Testament church, God inspired the apostles at the Jerusalem Council to declare that obedience to the law of Moses was NOT required for new believers and thus was NOT a requirement for salvation, church membership or fellowship. (p.39 all emphasis his)

Albert makes the issue of the Jerusalem conference the law of Moses, but is that really the case? Most everyone knows it isn't. The issue was circumcision. A side issue was keeping all of the law of Moses, which never gets debated, it was such a side issue.

What were the issues of the Jerusalem conference? The problem is stated: "Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved'" (Acts 15:1). Paul and Barnabas debated with these teachers. Why? Is there not an unambiguous command to circumcise that goes back to Abraham? Sure there is.

Were Paul and Barnabas teaching that converts didn't have to obey what was written in Scripture? These former Pharisees thought so.

Albert doesn't recognize the central issue of the conference, which isn't whether obedience to the law of Moses was required. Circumcision was "a sign of the covenant made between me [God] and you [Abram]" (Gen 17:11). What was at issue wasn't the law of Moses, which is a metonymic expression for the Sinai and the Moab covenants together, but whether Abram "shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations" (*v.* 4). Remember, Peter writes to drawn disciples that "you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Pet 2:9). Paul writes that two peoples have become one through the cross.

The full terms of the Abramic covenant has Abram's name being changed to Abraham,

for I [God Almighty] have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between you and me, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding, and I will be their God. (Gen 17:5–8) [this is what God will do]

God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised." (*v.* 9–10)

The covenant is conditional although it's usually not recognized as such. The condition for Abraham and his seed is circumcision.

Converted Pharisees stood up at the conference and said, "It is necessary for them [Gentile disciples] to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses" (Acts 15:5). These Pharisees were teachers of

the law, and they recognized what was at stake. To not circumcise would be to break an eternal covenant made with Abram, upon which all of both houses of Israel's relationship with God was based. The law of Moses was a derivative of this Abramic covenant. They believed a Gentile had to become a physical Israelite, or more broadly, be from one of the nations that descended from Abraham to have a relationship with God. An Ishmaelite could become a disciple by coming under the law of Moses, but a Greek had to first enter the Abramic covenant before the Greek could even hear the law of Moses "read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues" (v. 21).

The mindset of the Pharisees had an eternal covenant being eternal. That same mindset spasmodically grips all of Christianity, especially when the terms of the covenant pertain to prosperity, or national captivity. These Pharisees couldn't imagine an unambiguous command to circumcise being abrogated. Such an abrogation meant the nation of Israel had no special status with God, nor did any other descendant of Abram's. Race and ethnicity were no longer the prison bars that held Israel close to God.

Repeating myself, the converted Pharisees couldn't imagine the law of Moses being obsolete and abolished. They couldn't imagine their lineage of being Abraham's seed carrying no special privileges. After all, they had inspired Scripture on their side. **THEY HAD THE VERY WORDS OF GOD TO BACK THEIR CLAIMS OF RIGHTNESS.**

But Peter had a vision on his side, and Paul had a close encounter with spiritual blindness—

What did Jesus say about circumcision:

Moses gave you [the crowd] circumcision (it is, of course, not from Moses, but from the patriarchs), and you circumcise a man on the sabbath. If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man's whole body on the sabbath? Do not judge by appearance, but judge with right judgment. (John 7:22–24)

First, we see that the phrase the law of Moses is imprecise at best, as addressed by Jesus. We also see that the eternal Abramic covenant supersedes the law of Moses, so the entire discussion of the law of Moses is secondary to the issue at hand in the Jerusalem conference, that issue being an application of what Jesus says in the above cite. Again, the Abramic covenant contains a promise which some in the Church of God have claimed was unconditional. Not so. The promise of Abraham fathering many nations was conditioned upon circumcision, which is why the issue loomed so large over the early church. Jesus will heal the whole body of humanity on the sabbath, the shadow of which is the feast portrayed in the cite, that shadow being of Christ's Millennium reign over humanity. But this healing began with drawn disciples (John 6:44 & 65) when the Holy *Pneuma* was given on Pentecost, the shadow of which having been the Feast of Weeks, with the annual sabbath now the anniversary of the event which had been shadowed.

Right judgment was the issue being decided by the Jerusalem conference. Since circumcision of the heart was the promise of the law of Moses (Deu 30:6)—yes, it was—for obedience, then the decision that must be made was whether circumcision of the heart could truly precede circumcision of the foreskin. Both Jeremiah and the writer of Hebrews say that the terms of the new covenant will have the law of God written on the hearts and minds of the newly drawn disciple. What law is this? The law of Moses tells us which law in the details of the terms of the Moab covenant: “Moreover, the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants...when you obey the Lord your God by observing his commandments and decrees that are written in this book of the law” (Deu 30:6, 10). Is there any other law that will be written on hearts under the new covenant? Paul cites this law and Moab covenant as the basis for saying that one must only profess with the mouth and believe with the heart to be saved (Rom 10:5–12). Jesus would have disciples keep the commandments (Matt 5:19). John would do the same (1 John 5:2–3), as would James

(2nd chapter in particular). Right judgment **has** to conclude that with the circumcision of the heart comes the writing of the law of God on a newly drawn disciple's heart, which can be erased by "the ignorant and unstable" who twist those things in Paul's letters that are "hard to understand" "to their own destruction" (2 Pet 3:15–16). Certainly, the minimum obligation for believing God begins with obeying the commandments, all of them. And to them, Jesus added a new commandment to love all.

For the converted Pharisees, a spiritual Israelite had to be of the seed of Abraham. No one other than Abraham's seed through Moses could have a relationship with God. Peter said, *No, God was working with Gentiles, God was creating a new nation, a holy nation, God's own people.* Paul said, *No, my entire ministry is to Gentiles.* Jesus said, *No one can come to Me unless it is granted by the Father* (John 6:65). No longer could Abraham's seed come to God because of Abraham's eternal covenant. Now, "no one can come to [Jesus] unless drawn by the Father" (6:44). Israelites no longer had automatic access through sacrifice and the holy of holies. Gentiles were no longer automatically excluded because of their lack of circumcision. All that was needed was to be drawn by the Father, and if a person—any person, Jew or Gentile, Scythian or barbarian, free or slave—were drawn by the Father, that person need only to do those four things before the person was recognized as a spiritual Israelite, thereby affording the person the rights of discipleship, including entrance into synagogues to hear Moses read.

Today, meat offered to idols isn't too much of a problem. My grandfathers liked their blood sausage, but eating blood isn't a common practice today. Humane Societies don't allow us to strangle our livestock. So fornication is the issue that will prevent a person from becoming part of spiritual Israel: this includes, in the vernacular, shacking up prior to marriage. A great many basically good people believe they can play games with God and sort of trick Him into letting them in the household of faith. After all, they are in a committed

relationship. True. But they have no relationship with Christ or the Father.

At the Jerusalem conference, obedience to the law of God that was written on hearts was assumed. It was never at issue. Circumcision of the heart, part of the law of Moses, wasn't at issue. Animal sacrifice, part of the law of Moses, wasn't at issue. The continuance of the Levitical priesthood, part of the law of Moses, wasn't at issue. Believing God by faith, part of the law of Moses, wasn't at issue (Rom 10:6–10). Clean and unclean meats, part of the law of Moses, wasn't at issue. The annual sabbaths, part of the law of Moses, wasn't at issue. What was at issue was who could have a relationship with God.

The prospect of no longer having a guaranteed birthright relationship with God had to be terrifying for these Pharisees. What if the Father didn't draw their sons? Then their sons could not be part of spiritual Israel. No, this wasn't acceptable. The point had to be contested, and those Pharisees who hadn't converted had even more reason for shunning Christian disciples.

Albert, even though he has a graduate degree, reads like a teenager, in that he finds in one expression and in one conference held nearly twenty years after the new covenant took effect all the reason he needs to erase the law of God from his heart, assuming it had once been written there. He makes Paul's opinions, which Paul didn't consider Scripture, the basis for negating what Jesus taught His disciples. And he is not alone: he has joined himself to Evangelical Christianity, a community of mostly sincere readers who don't understand how crudely they handle the living Word of God. But, can they ever sing praises to the Most High.

Peter's vision should have settled for all time the question at issue in the Jerusalem conference. He tells Cornelius, "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and *does what is right* is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34 emphasis mine). The first covenant has passed away, with its racial preference. And under the second covenant, two conditions exist: Fear God and do

what is right. The law is near to all whom the Father draws, so near that it is inside the person, on his or her heart and in his or her mind. Doing what is right is not keeping the provisions of the law of Moses, but going beyond those provisions. To fear God is to believe Him enough to want to keep the law now written on one's heart and mind. It isn't wrangling over words, over whether a shadow is a negative shadow, or a foreshadowing. It isn't trying to get out from under reasonable clear instructions to keep the commandments, especially the fourth one. It isn't purifying and sanctifying oneself so that any flesh becomes fit food. It isn't so narrow as food or drink or sabbaths although it includes them. It is embracing what is clearly the will of God, and rejoicing in being part of one new people, holy and righteous, the people of God.

Two people have become one, now separated for a season—until the fullness of the Gentiles is grafted to the Tree. The spiritual whoring of both houses of Israel caused an eternal covenant made with Abram to end. He may eventually sit at the left hand of God, but the many nations that were to come from him became one at Calvary as prophecies were abolished. They will remain one nation, divided or united or at war until the last seed of Satan's rebellion fails to sprout. Then the City of Peace will be here, on a new earth, at the beginning of a new endeavor, the likes of which isn't even now imaginable.

My offer, made in love, is to help any who struggle to read.

6.

Will the Apostle Paul be counted as the least in the kingdom of heaven? For all of their adoration of Paul, this present generation of Christians would have him as least, if they would have him there at all.

How, you ask, can I write such a statement? Don't I know that Paul is this generation's hero. He is the great rebel, the great antiestablishment theologian, the great antilegalitarian. He defines the mature values of the generation that wouldn't trust anyone over thirty, that sang along to "Yellow Submarine," that bombed an aspirin factory to divert

political heat. In fact, this generation of Christians has Paul as the founder of the faith, not Christ; has Paul negating most of what Jesus taught; has Paul as the very embodiment of the Holy Spirit. They worship a *Paul* they have created in their own image. Their *Paul* is certainly not the Paul of John Calvin, or the one who died in Rome. He isn't a man at all.

I have no fight with Paul; I actually understand him. My fight is with my own generation, and with our social constructs that define faith and belief as superficial concepts that can be spray painted onto a rotten apple, thereby making spoiled fruit pleasing to God, as if a few microns of gold paint equates to having the Midas touch. God doesn't need more gold. He doesn't need our good deeds even when they are genuine. And with Christ's shed blood, God is purchasing individuals to become His people, a royal priesthood, a holy people. He is figuratively buying people of quality who have problems, who aren't perfect, who haven't been able to utilize their innate abilities on their own, who need to take the Passover each year. He **will not** purchase deceit. He can peel some layers of rot away, but if the fruit is rotten to its core, it is only fit for the lake of fire. A harsh statement? Certainly. But none of us, any longer, have time to play games with God. At some point, personal repentance won't be possible. Consciences will have been seared and the delusion will become too powerful to escape.

It is my desire to renew to Christ all who have once been in the household of faith, all who for any number of reasons have let doubt separate them from their zeal for God, all who have become casualties in a spiritual war that is as real as our existence in time and space. In addition, I desire to bring into the household of faith those individuals—and there are millions—who think they presently have a relationship with God, but in reality, worship demons, particularly the king of the North, the spirit entity that empowers greater Christianity.

After encountering an inspired reading of prophecy, do you still doubt that greater Christianity mistakenly worships the demonic king of the North instead of the Most High God? What more will it take to

convince you? Or can you be convinced? Are you so caught by the great delusion formalized by the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. that you will maintain your position as an enemy of God, that you will proudly wear the mark of the beast, that you will curse God? No? You'll be raptured away at the beginning of the Tribulation, because Jesus won't make true Christians go through the hell on earth that will be here? You are deluded: first, you have no immortal soul. Flesh never goes to a spiritual heaven, and the Rapture is a doctrine of demons, advanced by the king of the North to keep you from fearing God and His wrath until it is too late to refuse the demon's mark. And if you believe you will be raptured into heaven, you are not my audience. You will die here on earth, angry at God and not understanding why the christ you worship cannot save you. When you are resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment, remember what you have read in this book. The truth was available, but you wouldn't believe it. You are now reading the witness against you. How will you then plead? Will you try to lie to Christ? Don't. If you do, you will go into the lake of fire, for no additional sacrifice remains for you. There isn't a resurrection scheduled after the second death.

I don't deny that a spiritual presence exists in the worship of greater Christianity. Certainly demons are cast out in the name of Jesus. The sick are healed in the name of Jesus. And the law of God is ignored in the name of Paul. The problem is the spirit being who reigns over a third of humanity through the power of the Cross is the king of the North, not Jesus the Christ. Does anyone seriously believe that Christ couldn't better reign over the world if that were His position at this time than is being done by the United Nations, or by our divided human governments, or by the Illuminati, or by mythical Jews operating under the 24 Protocols? The present ruler of this world does a horrible job of providing even the basic necessities for life to far too many people.

Authority over all of humanity was given to Christ prior to His crucifixion (John 17:2), but we don't see rulership being given to Him

until halfway through seven years of Tribulation: “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah” (Rev 11:15). Note the singular *kingdom of the world*—one kingdom—becomes the kingdom of the Father, the Lord of the 24 Elders, and of the Son, who is the Father’s and humanity’s Messiah. The world isn’t now their kingdom. If it were, it wouldn’t “become” their kingdom after more than a third of humanity has been killed.

The ruler of the kingdom of the world today is Satan, as the king of Babylon. And under Satan are two powerful demons, the kings of the North and of the South. There are at least two other demons who will play significant roles in endtime events. One formerly east of Jerusalem, and one west, one of whom is presently bound in the bottomless pit. But from the perspective of Jerusalem and Christ, two demons reign over the kingdom of the world, and have reigned since the 2nd-Century B.C. There is a spiritual trinity of sorts: Satan as King of Babylon, then under him is the king of the North as the ruler over Christianity, and the king of the South as the ruler over Islam. Yes, there are nearly as many Buddhists as there are Muslims, but there are also other powerful demons, one of whom could certainly be empowering Buddhism, since Gautama Siddhartha, who took the title Buddha, began to teach after power was transferred from the houses of Israel to the king of Babylon, “to whom [ignoring verb tenses] the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the might, and the glory, into whose hand he has given human beings, wherever they live, the wild animals of the field, and the birds of the air, and whom he has established as ruler over them all” (Dan 2:37–38). It is unlikely that so large a block of humanity as Asia represents would be ignored by Satan, who is identified by Isaiah (14th chapter) as the true king of Babylon. The king of the South certainly didn’t ignore Asia in the wars of Islamic conquest prior to when this four headed demon was bound at the river Euphrates. Therefore, while I can say with certainty that Satan reigns over the demonic prince[s] that empower all Eastern religions, I cannot, for lack of Scriptural support, identify that demon or

those demons. Yes, Satan reigns throughout Asia, but we either aren't told who his underlings are, or the king of the North will extend his reign over these peoples prior to his defeat by Christ. Considering the missionary effort presently being directed at Asia, with satellite television beaming Christian theatre into remote Asian villages, it is certainly possible that the king of the North extends his rule to these peoples. He made considerable headway during the latter half of the 19th-Century. He has since perfected his efforts.

The statue of Nebuchadnezzar's vision represents the reign of Satan, known as the time of the Gentiles. Power isn't given to Babylon until after the houses of Israel have so thoroughly trampled on the law of God that they have been divinely driven into captivity. Except for a remnant of Judah needed to fulfill prophecies about the Messiah, the houses of Israel remain removed from God's presence until after the reign of the Gentiles, which ends 1260 days before Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah.

Nebuchadnezzar's seven years of living as a beast, then rising as a man to speak praises to God, symbolically identifies the first beast of Daniel 7 as the false prophet, but also represents how the Most High God can give rulership of humanity to Satan and his demonic beasts, with stewardship remaining with Israelite descendants. The time of the Gentiles didn't end in 1804, as has sometimes been taught in the Church of God, that teaching based on Nebuchadnezzar's seven years becoming 2520 years, using the day for a year principle. What happened in America in the 17th, 18th and at the beginning of the 19th centuries was the gathering of the house of Israel about which Ezekiel prophesied in chapter 36; this gathering was done under the terms of the second covenant, at a time when nearly everyone who emigrated from Europe came because of religious belief.

Unfortunately, the modern descendants of the house of Israel haven't remained in any covenant relationship with their Creator. Which of our founding fathers would tell you that you can ignore the Ten Commandments because keeping them is legalism? None would,

and all of Evangelical Christianity knows as much. Instead of continuing in the limited spiritual truth that our founders possessed, as a nation we have turned to another gospel, one of lawlessness. America's spiritual leaders today are the lawless ignorant about whom the apostle Peter said that they twist the epistles of Paul to their own destruction. Amen.

Christians have been purchased by the blood of Christ, not by the blood of Paul. Yet there is, among scholars of my generation, the tendency to find in Paul's epistles the negation of what Jesus taught. Some variation of what Dr. Albert wrote about God speaking directly through Paul has Law as *law*, has the Law of God equating to the law of Moses, thereby assigning to the linguistic icon *l-a-w* only one meaning, its object negative and oppressive, the opposite of the free spirit of love that flowed from VolksWagon vans with *Jesus Saves* painted in psychedelic colors along their lengths. Law for all Dr. Alberts is Southern redneck sheriffs opposing civil rights marchers. Law is the Vietnam War, and spraying Agent Orange on little kids. Law is the uptight morality of Victorian college presidents. Law is clearcutting forests, killing dolphins, bludgeoning baby seals, giving third-world mothers a can of infant formula. Law is polluting cars from Detroit, oil spills, and rivers that catch fire. Law represents every evil of the establishment my generation rejected, or hated itself for accepting.

I have previously written about levels of linguistic representation (in the "Introduction" of *Rereading Prophecy*), about mimetic, metaphoric, and metonymic word usage. As a late middle-aged gunmaker, logger, commercial fisherman turned writer, I am embarrassed by how poorly my generation reads. Having a mild form of dyslexia, I always felt I had an excuse. Given a few minutes, maybe I can find one for Dr. Albert, who, through metonymy, represents an entire generation of scholars, and who should by education and experience be a teacher of righteousness instead of another little antichrist, like the ones the Apostle John saw in his lifetime (1 John 2:18–19), each teaching a gospel of lawlessness.

The prevailing social construct of my generation has law-keeping or legalism as the ultimate betrayal of freedom. *Who are you to tell me to keep my pants zipped up? Love is freedom!* And sex is love, is that it? What was the determination of the Jerusalem conference: fellowship was extended to newly drawn disciples only when they abstained “from fornication” (Acts 15:20). So is James speaking for Christ? Is it Christ as the living Word of God who says to keep pants zipped until marriage? Or is it the law of God, which says to keep pants zipped? Or is it the law of Moses? That’s it! it’s the law of Moses; it’s part of the Ten Commandments (Exo 20:14 & Deu 5:18). And since it is in the law of Moses, which we know has been rescinded, then we can ignore any prohibition against fornication. We can love as Adam and Eve did; we can love in every Eden between here and Grants Pass, where we’ll have to stop for gas.

Does this reasoning seem alien to you? It shouldn’t although I suspect it does because of the many places where Paul condemns adultery and fornication, both specifically prohibited by the law of Moses, not by the covenant of faith ratified by Abram’s circumcision. So is Paul saying to keep part of the law of Moses, but not the law? That would be confusing. Paul writes, “Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian” (Gal 3:24–25). King James translators used schoolmaster for disciplinarian. The meaning is similar enough: Christians are no longer under the law. And a reading problem becomes evident. If Christians aren’t under the law, then what is wrong with adultery? Why shouldn’t every man lust for his neighbor’s wife, and daughter, and sister, and mother-in-law. As soon as you say that adultery isn’t the will of God, you have reinserted the law of Moses into Christianity. *NO! No!* you insist. The law of Moses has been done away. Christians are under grace, not law.

Can you see how silly this line of reasoning is? Without law, a Christian morally hamstringing him or herself. Nothing can be said to be evil except not having *love*, that icon existing without any linguistic

object that can be assigned to it that isn't addressed in the law of Moses. *Love* has become meaningless, for if *love*, without being limited by law, can include fornication (mutually agreeable sex is a sincere expression of affection), then even the low bar for discipleship established by the Jerusalem conference has been plowed under. Idols are acceptable, for their prohibition is by the law of Moses. If a person truly *loves* his or her idols, then the person expresses great *love* for god, because without meaning, *love* can be expressed by Christians as it never has been before. Praises can be sung, glory given, and grace preached as faith is manifested by having this deep *love* for Jesus and for one's idols and for one's neighbor's spouse. This great *love* causes you to believe that Jesus died for you. You confess your *love* for Him with your mouth, and you don't obey anything Jesus said while here on earth because all of that is part of the law of Moses. Does this make sense to you? If it does, you have been deceived.

Freedom has restrictions. Freedom is not "an opportunity for self-indulgence" (Gal 5:13). Yet isn't self-indulgence the core of the prevailing social construct from which today's Evangelical scholars come? You know it is. And yes, these scholars have honestly tried to read the biblical text from an "enlightened perspective" as they seek to eliminate the errors of the past, while being as honest with the text as possible. The problem is they read the text through the filter of their own mental paradigms, an unavoidable problem but one which causes them to celebrate rebellion and anti-establishment values.

Previous generations of Evangelicals have been legalistic, in that their scholars found the necessity of Christians to keep the Ten Commandments while having love for one another. Often they were a little short on love for their enemies, but they had a zeal for legalistically keeping the commandments. As my wife recovers from her surgery, she found an example of commandment-keeping that deserves to be cited: in *History of Food* by Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, translated by Anthea Bell (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), the author, writing about the 11th-Century road tolls, says,

Throughout France, even the keenest toll collectors did not insist on seeing the merchandise unpacked; they were satisfied with the merchant's declaration on oath of the amount and value of his goods. Such was the respect for a sworn oath, even among humble folks and pedlars, that lies were never told. (450–51)

The 11th-Century is, by Evangelicals, considered a period of dead faith, as Christianity was controlled by the Roman Church, with all of its then-apparent corruption. Yet which is more pleasing to God, lies never being told, or up-tempo praise music? I know the comparison isn't fair. But how many Christians, born again or otherwise, fudge just a little bit on their taxes? How many have taken advantage of a legalistic interpretation of civil law and have not finished a garage wall so their home remains under construction for years so as to obtain lower property taxes? How many have overvalued their contributions to Good Will or Deseret Industries or St. Vincent de Paul? How many have used their home computer, deducted as a business expense, for non-business purposes? The questioning can be endless. Eventually, most Christians will admit they have cheated the taxman. Maybe not in spirit, but in actual dollars. When they signed their return, their oath was not absolutely reliable. And our cultural response is something like, *Well, I don't believe they never lied in the 11th-Century to tax collectors.*

We won't believe pedlars never lied in the 11th-Century because our prevailing social constructs—all of them—tolerate a little lying, just as these constructs celebrate a little rebellion and a little adultery and a little greed, which is good for competition. We truly cannot imagine that which our social constructs prohibit. Thus, we look for and expect to find people in the 11th-Century, or in the 1st-Century to be like people are now. We cannot imagine them not being like us, for we don't know anyone not like us. We inevitably validate Thoreau's statement about having traveled widely in Concord, not realizing that we haven't traveled at all.

I cannot state this too strongly: a phenomenon is not universally experienced by humanity. The observation or experience of a phenomenon is dependant upon the informing social construct to which the individual belongs.

What academia hasn't appreciated is that the social constructs of the 1st-Century, or the differing constructs of the 11th-Century were both created to enable demonstrations conducted by Satan, or by another principle demon such as the king of the North, to convince angels and humanity that he (or *they* as the case warrants) has the right answer for every situation, that he is the man for all seasons, especially for the time of the end. Academia dismisses the existence of spiritual powers out of hand, for their very nature precludes scientific inquiry. Thus, academia doesn't appreciate the extent to which it has been spiritually manipulated to believe what it does about every subject, from species evolution to the epistles of Paul. We cannot turn to academia for help in either determining the origins of life, or in reading the Sacred texts. At best, academia parrots reasoning developed from the underlying paradigms upon which its social constructs have been built.

If the Bible were the infallible Word of God, not just the inspired word, then the way John Calvin read text would have determined for all time how the biblical text was to have been read. Was he not a careful reader? How could he have erred reading the infallible Word? The problem is that the document changed meaning since Calvin read the Word. The text came alive, and wiggled out from under Calvin's concept of predestination, let alone what he taught about law-keeping. And it is this sense of the biblical text being the living word of God that I want to explore for a sentence or two.

The linguistic icons on each page of the Bible are the same icons that have been there since the page was created. The icons Daniel wrote are the icons of the Book of Daniel today in their original language. The meanings (or linguistic objects) that God intended for those icons to have weren't given to Daniel. Rather, Daniel was told that the words of the prophecy were sealed and secret until the time of

the end. In layman's language, this means the text would acquire meaning only when the prophecies were supernaturally unsealed.

Let's stay with this idea for a few moments, because understanding it illustrates why I am writing this book that you hold in your hands. If the Apostle Paul read the prophecies of Daniel, would those prophecies have made sense to him? The textual evidence is that they would not. How about Augustine? Could he understand the prophecies of Daniel? Again, the textual evidence is that he could not. How about John Calvin? Again, no. How about Ellen G. White? Again, no. How about Herbert Armstrong? Again, no. The time of the end didn't begin in 397, or in 1557, or in 1867, or in 1927, or in 1937, or in 1987. But how could anyone reading Daniel's prophecies know that the time of the end hadn't begun? Paul, Peter, James, and John—all thought they were living in the time of the end. Each reader encountered those sealed prophecies, read them, then concluded that he or she understood them; each concluded that he or she was living in the time of the end. In all of the latter dates, readers assigned Rome to the kingdom of the two legs of iron of Nebuchadnezzar's statue. History tells each reader that Rome conquered Greece, and reigned with iron-like power; thus, every commentary will identify the fourth kingdom as Rome. Perry Stone will explain how Rome is this fourth kingdom. The United Church of God's booklet explaining endtime prophecy will identify this fourth kingdom as Rome. The whole world identifies this kingdom as Rome, which proves that the Most High God can seal a prophecy as well as reveal future events.

The time of the end begins when the Father unseals the prophecies of Daniel. I have read those icons for the first time in history, *read* used in the sense of having assigned a divine object to each icon, thereby producing from the stream of icons the meaning that God intended the text to convey. The world is free to accept or reject the reading I here present. But if the world adds an uninspired history textbook to the visions of Daniel, the world is guilty before God of adding to the prophecies. Now, read Daniel and see if you find Rome mentioned

anywhere. You cannot. Nor can even Perry Stone find Rome mentioned by Daniel without adding to the text.

Because I read Daniel's prophecies without finding Rome anywhere in them, I read a different text than the one that Daniel wrote, or the one read by every reader between Daniel and myself, Perry Stone and Herbert Armstrong included. Daniel recorded his visions without understanding them. He recorded Nebuchadnezzar's vision and words without understanding how both fit with the visions he had. He sought understanding, but was told that he was greatly loved and to go his way, the visions were for the time of the end. His words would acquire meaning when the prophecies were unsealed. Therefore, the text read by everyone between Daniel and the time of the end would change meaning when that magic time marker was reached. Thus, the Bible cannot be infallible until the time of the end, if the text will change when the prophecies are unsealed. Yes, meaning had been previously assigned to those prophecies by a host of readers, but those assignments weren't of God. The Bible Herbert Armstrong read changed meaning (or will change meaning) when the seals were (are) broken; thus, the book he read was fallible. Same for the Bible Calvin read, or the Scriptures that Paul read. Until divinely inspired objects are assigned to each icon composing the entire Bible, the Bible remains inspired but fallible, the problem Dr. Albert was unable to comprehend due to his limited education and the prevailing social construct to which he belongs.

My case isn't solid? Or is it that you cannot handle me tipping over your idol as if it were an outhouse? Dr. Albert realized he had idolized a man, so he threw out everything the man taught as if those teachings belonged in an outhouse. He, then, proceeded to throw the law of God in the same hole as he smugly genuflected to the king of the North.

Again, I'm using Dr. Albert as a metonymic expression for all of Evangelical academia, since his degree is from a recognized secular school (University of Oregon). He has a real doctorate, not a degree from a *Bible College* in name or in academic excellence. Nevertheless,

Dr. Albert completed his formal education without acquiring an understanding of how thought works, or of how artificial is knowledge. His level of self-awareness is too superficial for him to understand how much of a product he is of the mental paradigms of the social construct to which he belongs.

Can I write the above sentence more clearly: neither Dr. Albert, nor John Hagee, nor Billy Graham is able to comprehend how his perception of truth and of what the Bible says comes from the mental paradigms that inform the culture in which he lives and was educated. With the Breath of God in one's mind comes self-awareness of a high or very high order. Jesus, having a full measure of the Breath of God, was so completely self-aware that He recognized Himself as the Son of Man. The debates over when or whether He knew He was the Logos are by people who do not have this level of self-awareness.

The difficulty I face in both explicating prophecy or in writing about what the Breath of God produces in a disciple's mind is conveying to a reader a level of self-awareness that the reader cannot experience under any condition other than being drawn by the Father, and having the law of God written on his or her mind and heart. This is a problem that can be avoided by me not mentioning it, but as humanity enters that historic period identified as the time of the end, all things will be restored. While some *watchmen* believe such restoring has already occurred, it hasn't. And one of those things that need to be restored is describing just exactly what it feels like to have the Breath of God in oneself. I have previous written that a person's attitude towards keeping the law of God is a reasonably reliable indicator of whether the person has been drawn by the Father, for the carnal or natural mind is hostile to God. I here say that as the earnest of eternal life develops within a person, the person becomes increasingly self-aware of not merely his or her existence within the person's surroundings, but also of the future positioning of the person within those surroundings. Even as a fiction writer with some experience in describing the imaginary, I feel the limitations of language in expressing the expanded

awareness that comes with the indwelling of the Holy Pneuma as it develops within my mind. With this expanded awareness comes an almost overpowering desire to obey God, even to the exclusion of what previously had been the pleasures of the flesh.

None of us, myself included, can fully appreciate how our sense of reality is determined by both genetics and culture. For most of my life I have encountered the past as a historic craftsman, a gunmaker of muzzleloading firearms. For the last decade and a half, I have produced work and taught in the Alaskan Native culture. I have encountered both directly and indirectly differing social constructs, equally valid, to the ones that shaped my youth. In addition, I did 6th, 7th & 8th grades in one year, so as a postwar baby, I graduated from high school and started college with the last of the war babies. There is a difference in the mental paradigms between the two groups even within the overall culture of the United States.

With the above paragraph as background, it isn't my reading skills that allow me to read the text, to piece Daniel into one seamless narrative; rather, by revelation, meaning has come. And why me? Ask God. I don't know, other than I am naive enough to believe I can slay an uncircumcised Philistine, regardless of denominational affiliation. I have already killed a couple of bears.

On a more serious note, the social constructs into which I was born have been disrupted by circumstances that seem supernatural—additional discussion of this subject properly belongs in a different forum. It's enough to assert that I have been drafted to do a job, this job of reinserting the primitive faith back into greater Christianity. I will only be partially successful (20–35%), and then it won't be me, but Christ inspiring me and opening the doors. Christ gets the glory; He genuinely deserves it. (If you think 20% is failing to get the job done, then roll up your sleeves and pitch in. Help is needed. Time is now against us.)

My generation is like Paul's: the prevailing social construct of 1st-Century Pharisees highlighted rebellion. For Pharisees, including Paul,

the law was a prison. Paul saw faith as the way to break out of jail. For them, Christianity represented the ultimate jailbreak. Paul writes, “Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law” (Gal 3:23).

For Dr. Albert, who I use, repeating myself, to metonymically stand for an entire generation of biblical scholarship, the law of God portrays the same imprisoning that the law of Moses (which included circumcision) represented to Paul. Dr. Albert is now unable to read Paul’s epistles without seeing in Sabbath keeping and clean meats the spiritual mutilation that Paul saw in circumcision. If either issue (the Sabbath or clean meats) would have been changed by Jesus from what was the prevailing paradigms of Judaism, the New Testament would be too heavy to carry, such would have been the pages written to prove or refute errors. Paul preaches or teaches on the Sabbath. James says new disciples will hear of the Law of Moses read on the Sabbath. And Peter hadn’t eaten anything unclean for a decade after Christ was crucified. So these were non-issues, in that nothing had been changed, just as adultery and fornication were still sin, and remain sin even though both are a part of the law of Moses. The dead works of the law are animal sacrifices (Paul loved this pun, which really is clever, perhaps too much so for some inexperienced readers). And the works of the law that makes Paul so angry in his letter to the Galatians is circumcision: the Galatians had succumbed to the error of the converted Pharisees that was addressed at the Jerusalem conference.

Does anyone seriously believe Paul is worried about someone having bewitched the foolish Galatians (3:1) to cause them to stop fornicating? Now I’m being foolish. It is idiocy to believe that any subject is at issue in Paul’s epistle to the Galatians other than circumcision versus faith. Paul writes, “[Y]ou were called to freedom...through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another” (5:13–15). Paul’s single commandment is

part of the law of Moses (Lev 19:18), so Paul commanded the Galatians to keep part of the law of Moses. How can this be? How can one know if he is devouring a brother except by the law, which in every case turns out to be the law of Moses. Freedom is having love for one another, love that conforms to the keeping of the commandments.

Pharisees and scribes or lawyers, of whom Paul was one, read the law of God as being composed of two parts, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your *psuche* [breath], and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27). Jesus agreed with this bi-part reading of the law: “You have given the right answer; do this and you will live” (verse 28). Under discussion was what must be done to inherit eternal life (verse 25). Thus, according to Christ, the answer is simple: Love God with all of oneself, and one’s neighbor as oneself. Paul would’ve answered Jesus exactly as the lawyer answered Jesus’s question: “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” (verse 26). We know this is so when Paul writes to the Galatians, *For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’* Paul doesn’t need to reference the first part of this bi-part summarization of the law of God, for loving God wasn’t at issue. The Galatians were so willing to place God first in their lives that they were letting themselves “be circumcised” (Gal 5:2).

Well, you say, *Maybe it’s all right to keep the commandments, but not days, or weeks, or meats.* Is this more like what you now want to say? Well, the Sabbath is the primary day at issue, and observing it is part of the commandments; so really, what’s at issue is you wanting to pick and choose which commandments to keep, and which to reject? You, not God, will determine for yourself whether a commandment is important enough to be kept, is that it? No? Then you will be in church somewhere this coming Sabbath, which isn’t Sunday. No? really? Because God doesn’t expect that of you? You’re pretty sure about what God wants, aren’t you? Sure enough to bet your life? That is the bet you are **now** making. That might not have been the bet you

made last week, but you now know the seventh day is the Sabbath. You no longer have an excuse for breaking the commandment, other than you didn't feel like keeping it.

Doing what is right changes with the amount of knowledge you have. The decision that was right yesterday won't necessarily be made the same tomorrow as you learn more of God's will.

Again, if you are a drawn disciple, you can erase the law of God from your mind through clever arguments. Why take the chance? You won't have another if you have been chosen. And don't think your decision to obey God will be easier in the great White Throne Judgment, your reasoning being that without Satan around, choosing to obey God will be easy. I say to you right now, Christ will return the sins He bears to their rightful owner, Satan, when *Yom Kipporim* becomes a reality prior to the beginning of His Millennium reign; Christ will not be bearing the sins of the world while He is King of kings, the reason why animal sacrifices will be reinstated in the Millennium. So in the White Throne Judgment, Christ won't bear your sins. Your death paid the price for your sins in this life, but no additional sacrifice remains for you. If you sin, which is the transgression of the law of God, after you are resurrected as physical flesh in the White Throne Judgment, you will experience the second death as the penalty for that sin. The easier time to obtain eternal life might actually be now, so I wouldn't gamble with salvation. But maybe you feel lucky.

PART III

the Demonstration—

too much has been written about when
bad things happen to good people
without me adding to the confusion

when rebellion rattled foundations
a third believed
but others were unsure

for them a proof was designed
lab animals were needed
to show lives of competition
will prove no life at all

but noone wants manipulated—
the mice were left unfettered
in their round cage

rebels were released to plead their case
for six days, but the sabbath belongs to
the designer to show all what love will do

my tongue is bound
by decisions made years ago—
I understand better the dilemma
of a designer who has given freedom
till we know
without his love
none of us would live

Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

1.

Is there any indication in Paul's epistle to the Galatians that the subject under discussion is clean meats? How about in the passage about where Paul withstood Peter? Remember Peter hadn't eaten any unclean meats through the time of his vision. Was he eating them when "he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction" (2:12)? No, he wasn't. The subject is his fear of *the circumcision faction*. In the original Greek, what Paul said to Peter packs a little more punch: "If you a Jew being, a Gentile live, and not [like the] Jews, why the Gentiles you compel to judaize" (2:14).

We shouldn't hastily passby what Paul tells Peter: there are few places in Acts or in the epistles where we have described the gospel being taught to new converts by the Apostles. But here, in what Paul tells Peter we see exactly what Peter taught new Gentile converts.

Paul's epistles aren't to unconverted Gentiles, but to fellowships which would have received their basic instruction directly from Paul or from one of the other Apostles, so most of his epistles are either corrective or encouraging letters to established fellowships. Other than his pastoral letters, which aren't? Certainly, Paul's epistle to the Galatians is to an established fellowship that had begun to believe a gospel differing from the one Paul taught. So before proceeding, we need to consider what gospel had initially been taught to these Galatians.

Until otherwise demonstrated, we have to assume that all of the Apostles taught the same gospel. Thus, Paul taught the same gospel that Peter taught, and Peter taught the gospel that Jesus taught. Therefore, Paul would have taught that to break the least of God's com-

mandments and to teach others to break this commandment would cause the person to be called least in the kingdom of heaven. He would not have taught *a dispensation of grace* as opposed to Jesus having taught *a dispensation of law*. This is a nonsensical opposition that doesn't exist. That portion of Israel which returned from Babylon should have had its heart circumcised, in accordance with the terms of the Moab covenant. What we find, instead, is that none of the Pharisees were keeping the law of God, or so said Jesus. Circumcision of the heart is writing the laws of God on the heart; so what was offered to Israel when it returned from captivity is directly analogous (without eternal life being involved) to what has been offered to spiritual Israel under the new covenant. Both then and now, disciples are to keep the law because it has been internalized by them. This is why those Israelites who'd had their hearts circumcised only had to confess Christ with their lips and believe with their hearts to be saved (Rom 10:9). They were already keeping the law of God and all of His statutes and ordinances because they wanted to by their faith in God. This is also why there was no fault found with the first covenant, for the additional Moab covenant was made by faith (Rom 10:6–8). The fault was with the people (Heb 8:8).

Paul's criticism of Peter isn't intended to be a critique of the gospel Peter taught, but a rebuke of Peter for separating himself from Gentile converts when *the circumcision faction* arrived in town. However, as a critique of what Peter taught, we find that Peter was compelling the Gentiles to judaize, or live like Jews, in that they were keeping those things that are associated with living as Jews, which would certainly include eating clean meats, and observing the Sabbath and the High Days.

Paul faulted Peter for not having the courage of his convictions. Peter let the opinions of men determine his actions. And the subject of fearing men or pleasing men was certainly on Paul's mind when he wrote, "Am I now seeking human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people" (1:10). In separating himself from Gentile

converts when *the circumcision faction* was present, Peter was trying to please people; he was trying to keep the peace as best as he could. But Christ didn't come to bring peace, but a sword. And Peter needed to wield one against *that circumcision faction*.

Returning to a subject in the previous section, my generation doesn't actually deserve credit for its antilegalistic mindset. It picked up Satan's broadcast of rebellion, didn't recognize the tune, so listened until it was steeped in rebellion, rebelling even against rebellion, while calling their rebellion liberty. And in the writings of the Apostle Paul, my generation built upon the liberty they found as they did exactly what the Apostle Peter said the lawless ignorant were doing with Paul's writing even while he lived. They twisted them to their own destruction, not realizing that they were following in Satan's footsteps, whose steps previous Evangelical scholars had skirted. Can anyone imagine Jonathon Edwards, or Edward Taylor finding a no-law doctrine in the writings of Paul? Or John Knox, Martin Luther, Cotton Mather finding such a doctrine? And I don't necessarily agree with any of the men I mentioned. I use them to show how inconceivable it was for earlier generations of Christians to twist Paul's writings as my generation has.

Peter, as a fisherman, wouldn't have used the technical, literary terms I use to explain how my generation of scholars has read another gospel into Paul's epistle to the Galatians. Like most fishermen I know, Peter was straightforward in his use of language. Those who twist Paul's epistles are ignorant, unstable, and teach lawlessness. Peter's words. And that is plain speech in every language. If you find in Paul's epistles a doctrine of lawlessness, you have twisted Paul's epistles to your destruction, according to Peter.

Teaching a doctrine of lawlessness isn't necessarily teaching law breaking but that the law doesn't apply to Christians. Teaching such a doctrine is easy: it takes no education and little faith to teach that all a person has to do to be saved is confess with his or her lips that Jesus died for the person's sins, and believe the same in his or her heart. As a

result, the person becomes exempted from having to endure in the faith to the end.

Such an easy gospel to teach doesn't require of the teacher academic excellence, or of the student belief in God unto obedience. One generation of ignorant pastors teaches another generation of equally ignorant, wouldbe pastors that Christ fulfilled the law, and Paul condemns lawkeeping, neither generation realizing that it teaches an accursed gospel, which will have saints worshipping Satan and accepting the mark of the beast with all eagerness. These pseudo scholars fail to understand that they assign meaning to words. Of themselves, the letter combinations that constitute words have no meaning. **All** meaning is assigned to these combinations (or linguistic icons) by readers.

Those who teach and have taught the gospel of Christ to my generation have been suckled on teats of rebellion. Their hearts are filled with good intentions, and their lungs are filled with pot smoke. When they encountered the epistles of Paul, they boldly went where no man had gone before: they went to hell to retrieve the lawless theology of the Pit, thrown there when Christ cast Satan down the first time.

With this as background, I feel obligated to read Paul's epistle to the Galatians for my generation. If I don't, someone will say that I ducked the one book that negates all I have written. The person who will utter such nonsense, truthfully, consigns Paul to being called least in the kingdom of heaven. That won't happen. I wish to prevent the person from so badly embarrassing him or herself. An entire generation of scholars needs to quit misreading Paul. Otherwise, it might well be Paul who throws them into the lake of fire.

Truly, I never thought I would have to do this; I thought the biblical scholars could take care of the Bible while I read Melville and Milton. But that hasn't proven to be the case. Rather, what I find both in the Church of God and in Evangelical scholarship is simplistic reading strategies not worthy of academic dignification. What I find is fear to engage the text, for the words on each page have become so-many little idols, as wannabe disciples *speak the Word*, uttering sound in paganistic

ritual, humbling themselves before linguistic icons rather than before the living *Logos*, now the glorified Christ. Scholars who will engage the text have lost their faith in an invisible God; those who won't engage the text refuse to grow in knowledge. The state of doctrinal Christianity is so abysmal that televangelists have begun stressing emotional relationships with the demonic king of the North, whom they mistakenly identify as Christ because of their lack of doctrinal understanding. "Religion" has suddenly become the problem—it's been the problem for seventeen hundred years, for it is through the inherent power of Christ's name that the king of the North has reigned. Because Daniel's prophecies were sealed to both men and angels, this powerful demon didn't know that both the demise of his reign, and the means of that demise were recorded shortly after Satan became the king of Babylon.

Let me gather together a little of what I have written throughout this book and in others to help clarify some whys: the earlier prophets wrote to Israel to warn God's firstborn son (firstborn among nations) that their refusal to live by the law of God and by the ordinances and statutes of God would force God to send them into national captivity. But Israel feared neither God, nor the prophets of God. God divided the nation, but neither house of Israel obeyed the commandments, statutes and ordinances of God for more than a generation. Another generation of prophets warned both houses that God was about to sever His relationship with them. Still, neither house obeyed for more than a generation. So the northern house of Israel was driven into distant lands by drought, and by captivity. They have never returned to Samaria, but for God's name's sake, God gathered the remnants together and placed them in a land where they would never again experience famine, according to His prophecy recorded in the 36th chapter of Ezekiel, and according to the terms of the new covenant. They were gathered here in North America, and for three or four generations, we stayed within the new covenant relationship. We have since bolted from that relationship under the guise of a wall of separation between Church and State. God has been faithful; we have been faithless.

The southern house of Judah proved even more faithless than the northern house of Israel, so God sent Judah to Babylon, leaving behind a remnant population of Israel in Jerusalem—the remnant was needed to fulfilled prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. But this remnant sought to make a treaty with Egypt, thereby breaking the treaty it made with Babylon. This remnant population sought to rebuild itself into the glorious nation Israel had been, not understanding that God had reduced Israel to a polis: Jerusalem. From His firstborn national son, God took the son's birthright, giving to Babylon the position of preeminence among nations. Thus began the time of the Gentiles. The image Nebuchadnezzar saw was the fullness of the time of the Gentiles. And at the time when national preeminence was transferred to the Gentiles, God through Daniel recorded a set of sealed and secret prophecies, which would reveal exactly the course of events that overtakes the demons who rule with Satan. As the king of Babylon, Satan reigns as king of kings today and has reigned since the time of Nebuchadnezzar on the throne of the kingdom of the world.

Because of the rebellion of the polis of Jerusalem, the Chaldeans sacked the city-state a second time, and the city was deserted for seventy years, after which another remnant population of Israel returned with Ezra so that the prophecies concerning the Messiah could be fulfilled. The position of national preeminence remains under the reign of the king of Babylon, who, for the past 23 centuries, has ruled through the joint reigns of the kings of the North and of the South.

As the descendants of the northern house of Israel, gathered by God under the terms of the new covenant, drifted away from their faith and away from relationships with the Father, these descendants gained international preeminence. They proudly declared themselves to be Gentiles, and finally became "Gentile" enough in their beliefs that the king of the North could use these gathered Israelite descendants as the prevailing human nation by which he has maintained his reign through the power of the Cross. Yes, I just implied that the Cross, as received from historic exegesis, is contrary to the terms of the new covenant.

The theology of the Cross as received by historical exegesis has a triune godhead, humanity with an immortal soul, and a doctrine of lawlessness; its theology is baptized paganism, and you can experience it on every “Christian” television station, as the king of the North takes it to the world.

Today, the United States speaks of going it alone against Iraq; we have just defeated an Arab invasion of Afghanistan. We are the power fronting for the demonic king of the North as he continues his long bickering with the four-headed king of the South. Halfway through the Tribulation, Russia will be the power heading a ten-nation coalition that fronts for the king of the North.

Since the demonic king of the North reigns through the power of the Cross, no other description for the body of this demon's reign is possible other than that of the Cross, as the nation (or nations) that fronts for him changes. He exhausts the national resources of his fronting nation, then shifts power to another fronting nation, all the while continuing to reign through the theology of the Cross, which uses Christ's name, but isn't Christian. It is truly baptized paganism, in which are trapped genuine disciples. Christ has begun to rescue these disciples as He makes His Bride ready for Her wedding. My task is to confront both the demon, who didn't know that his demise was recorded in the very Book he has used to support his reign, and the trapped but genuine disciples.

The mismatch between what I write and the theology of the Cross is so great, I suspect even Christ is amused. David's Goliath was tiny by comparison, but then, David was still a youth when he slew his giant. At my age, David would have fought this demonic king of the North, confident that God would give him the victory. I have that confidence although from prophecy, I know that Christ will have to rescue those saints who engage this demon—how this fight ends has already been recorded. What happens next I don't know other than that I need to engage Paul's epistle to the Galatians. The demon's ministers of righteousness will use this particular epistle against the budding faith of

escaping disciples. They have turned lawlessness into Laertes' poisoned sword: they need only to nick the flesh of an escaping disciple to slay the disciple. A nick to a foreskin is as good as a stab through a heart.

Galatians 1:1–2—

Paul an apostle—sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—and all the members of God's family who are with me, To the churches of Galatia:

Paul claims the same authority that the original disciples have, meaning that the great commission applies equally to him, that he was equally charged to, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, . . . teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19–20). If Paul would've been equally charged to teach new disciples *to obey everything that* Jesus had commanded, then Paul taught new disciples to keep the law of God (Matt 5:17–19). Again, Paul's epistles are to established churches, not to establish churches of newly drawn disciples. We see this in, “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel” (Gal 1:6). These Galatians would've been established in keeping the law as written on their hearts and minds, but they apparently wanted an outward sign that they were law-keepers. They wanted to be circumcised, an unneeded ritual once a person's heart has been circumcised by having the law written on it.

In prophecy, a circumcised heart is also identified as a heart of flesh as opposed to a heart of stone. The two analogies work somewhat differently, though. When the law of God is written on a stony heart, the heart turns to flesh. However, the law written on a disciple's heart is symbolically portrayed by the *Logos* having written the law of God on two stone tablets, one representing the heart and one the mind, both tablets housed in the Ark of the Covenant, itself under the Mercy Seat—the Ark of the Covenant symbolizes the fleshy body of a disciple

under grace. The pattern of the temple is the path of the Christian walk, with each station representing actual things a disciple does or becomes. Thus, the disciple becomes the literal temple of God, the linguistic icon perhaps doing double duty, with its primary assignment being the pattern of the temple.

I will repeatedly return to the concept of the Christian walk being revealed in the pattern of the temple. At the beginning of the 21st-Century, we are noticeably less familiar with the temple than were 1st-Century disciples and Apostles. For most Christians, no clear visual image comes to mind when the icon is encountered; the temple isn't real for us. As a result, we tend to gloss over the powerful imagery of the gates, the altars, the offerings. However, the writer of Hebrews says, concerning the tabernacle in the wilderness, "Of these things we cannot speak now in detail" (9:5), for the elaborateness of Herod's temple had erased the simplicity of the tent Moses had made from the collective memories of the Jews. And it is the simplistic design of that tent which is the Christian walk with God. Thus, many subtleties and nuances will be overlooked; I can only hit the high points today.

Notice in the above citation that Paul was *sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities*. Paul scuttles the justification of scholars finding that the true Church consists of only one organization, or one organization at a time. Paul's work existed mostly independent of the work done by Peter, as evidenced by, "I did not confer with any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me" (1:16–17), and "Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days; but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother" (verse 18), and "Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem" (2:1). Communication in the 1st-Century wasn't what it is today. The headquarters church at Jerusalem knew only, "The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy" (1:23).

With today's denominationalism, the idea of someone not being sent by an organization or by some human authority is difficult to conceive. We have seen and culturally rejected a few examples, Sun Yung Moon being the most prominent. Within the Church of God, the fractured ministerial corp scattered like kittens when the king of the North barked at them. These kittens reorganized themselves: each organization now tries to steal disciples from another as if disciples were fluttering moths. But the moths recognize the kittens as having been formerly sent by the previous administration. And this pattern is similar to how most denominations began.

The level of autonomy that existed between Paul's ministry and Peter's existed at the middle of the 20th-Century when the Worldwide Church of God, headquartered in Pasadena, California, first became acquainted with groups having similar beliefs in TransCarpathia, in Argentina, and in the Cush Mountains. All of these groups of related Believers had a different history, but by their beliefs, all of these groups were of the same Body, with the groups in TransCarpathia being more of a Pentecostal flavor than the others. Thus, to say that a particular organization, with or without a charismatic leader, is the only organization that represents the true Church is arrogant, and ignorant. God can work with, or through whomever He wants. And this statement could be considered self-serving since I haven't been sent by any human authority or organization; rather, I come to you as one who fellowshipped with a denomination for thirty years while being asked by that organization not to serve in it. I was mostly content to continue in this *pray and pay* paradigm. Only on occasion would I wonder why I was drafted. The organization certainly didn't need more credentialed ministers. It had as much money as it could spend efficiently. It was short on love, but the structure of the organization prohibited individual initiative. It was short on scholarship, but it was intellectually feeding itself from three colleges that became accredited. It was short on doing good works, but it was continually accused of teaching a gospel of works and had become defensive about doing works. It didn't under-

stand prophecy, but taught its skewed prophetic understanding as the basis for comprehending what God was accomplishing on earth. As such, it saw itself as unique, whereas it was only one of many organizations with which God was working, and had been working.

I come now as one *sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities*. My authority solely rests in Christ speaking through me, and His sheep will hear His voice in mine. What I write isn't for everyone, but only for drawn disciples who have love for even their enemies. I wish it were for everyone. I don't want to see people die because they worship demons, but that will be the case. And unlike Paul, I'm not starting an era, but finishing one. My perspective is almost the inverse of his. As he was attempting to get as many into fellowship as possible, I'm trying to purify that fellowship as much as possible. I am, truly, a Puritan, of Puritan ancestry, with even more success assured for diligence than my forefathers witnessed. They will be envious (properly so) when they are resurrected and see the opportunities afforded me for completing the work that they started. They will wonder why even more wasn't accomplished than will be. And how will I answer them? shall I blame you for being dull of hearing, or shall I claim a weakness in my writing? The truth is, Christ will put into the Body whom He wants there, not one person more and not one person less. I will be judged on how faithfully I have obeyed, for to whom much is given, much is expected. I have been given much, and my prayers are for more.

Returning now to the first verse of Paul's epistle: note also that in this verse, as elsewhere in Paul's epistles, he addresses two members of Elohim, *Jesus Christ* and *God the Father*. Paul doesn't assign to the Holy *Pneuma* the same sense of personhood, and as I have previously stated, we don't regularly assign personhood to our breath. Paul doesn't assign personhood to the Breath of God, either. It is God the Father who raised Christ, and who will raise the saints in the resurrection of firstfruits when Christ returns. It is God the Father who will take command of the earth half way through seven years of Tribula-

tion. It will be God the Father's wrath that is poured out on all who have the mark of the beast. If you are presently wearing a Cross, I suggest you get rid of it while you still have time. Same for having a Cross on your church. This un-triune deity known as God the Father has a bone to pick with all who celebrate killing His Son. That bone belongs inside of you somewhere, but God the Father is preparing to have Christ feed it to birds (Rev 19:17–18).

In the second verse (*and all the members of God's family who are with me*), Paul casually encapsules the plan of God. Drawn disciples are to become members of God's family, of which Christ is the eldest Son, and the God the Father is head of the household. Those with Paul were physical, in that they weren't glorified saints. Yet Paul identifies them as already being members of the family of God. This is the adoption as heirs, as sons and daughters that we see elsewhere in Paul's writings, and what we see in Christ's prayer to the Father that last Passover night.

Galatians 1:3–5—

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Again Paul identifies only two members of Elohim, *God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*. As far as Scripture reveals, there are only two members, with the Holy *Pneuma* being the Breath of God, which is the creative power through which and by which Both work. Jesus describes the *Pneuma* as wind (John 3:8), which is an apt description of breath. So for the second time Paul affirms the existence of two and only two members of Elohim, the name itself a plural noun.

Paul writes with the authority of coming *from* the Father and the Son. Paul's linguistic construction here excludes the possibility of an intermediary standing between Paul and the Father. Thus, there is no

church official, no pope, no saint, no idol between Paul and God. Paul either takes upon himself or has been conferred with the authority to speak for the Father. Yet Paul doesn't consider his own writings as Scripture: "But as for you [Timothy], continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing...how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God" (2 Tim 3:14–16). For Paul, the sacred writings of Timothy's youth are Scripture. It is Peter who first advances the idea that Paul's writings might be Scripture, able to be twisted by the ignorant "to their own destruction, as they do other scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16). Peter then goes on to say, "You therefore [the pronoun's antecedent is "those who have received a faith as precious as ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ" (1:1)], beloved, since you are forewarned, beware that you are not carried away with the error of the lawless and lose your own stability" (verse 17). Thus, Peter identifies *the ignorant* who twist Paul's epistles and other Scriptures as *the lawless*. This identification is important, for Peter was commanding Gentiles to judaize (Gal 2:14). Whereas Paul doesn't identify his epistles as Scripture, Peter introduces that prospect. Therefore, if Peter thought that Paul taught a doctrine contrary to Christ's, who taught disciples to keep the law (Matt 5:19), or contrary to the doctrine he taught, which was also a doctrine of law-keeping, Peter would not have considered Paul's epistles as Scripture. Thus, we can, from Scripture, conclude that Paul's epistles should properly be read as compliments to what Jesus taught about law-keeping. After all, in his definition of freedom Paul favorably and directly cites the bi-part identifier Pharisees used for the law of God. He exhorts the Galatians to "not grow weary in doing what is right" (6:9). John defines what is right: "Now by this we may be sure we know him [Christ], if we obey his commandments. Whoever says, 'I have come to know him,' but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist" (1 John 2:3–4). The message is consistent between Christ and the Apostles: the law of God

is to be kept. With belief comes obedience (Rom 10:5–13, in which Paul references Deu 30:11–16), which causes the drawn disciple to keep the commandments of God.

Paul says that *Christ gave Himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age*. At His last Passover, Jesus said, when He passed the cup, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt 26:27–28). So the covenant Christ makes with drawn disciples is what actually sets these disciples *free from the present evil age*. This covenant was ratified by His blood, and it addresses forgiveness of sin. It is, obviously, the new covenant, the terms of which have the law of God written on hearts and minds of drawn disciples (Jer 31:33 & Heb 8:10, 10:16), thereby symbolically making of disciples many arks of the covenant, with all that endure to the end resting under the Mercy Seat, which symbolically represents grace. Under the new covenant, disciples aren’t under the Law, but are under Grace, since the disciples’ hearts and minds have become the tablets upon which the law of God has been written. It is illogical to think that a person who has the law of God written on his or her heart and mind would not now diligently keep the law of God. Therefore, as we proceed through Paul’s epistle to the Galatians, we need to understand that Paul is aware of the terms of the new covenant, so faith is never the negation of what has been written on one’s heart and mind. Faith is belief: “And we have come to belief in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ” (Gal 2:16). Faith, and by extension, belief establishes the law that has been written on hearts and minds. Only Peter’s ignorant and lawless reader will twist Paul’s words to say otherwise.

Have I, by calling those who teach lawlessness ignorant, been needlessly harsh on those scholars who will disagree with me? Peter, as a plain speaking fisherman, used that imagery to describe them. I, too, fished commercially before I entered graduate school at midlife. I fell tall timber. I worked for a while in a pulpmill. I built rifles. I have never felt the need to be politically correct. In fact, the cover photo on

my collection of poems is of me, and is the most politically incorrect photo I could find. Most of the iconography of High Romanticism in found in the photo, all inverted. So I claim the same right to bluntly describe these ignorant scholars that Peter claimed, condemning what they teach rather than their character. They might be enjoyable dinner company, but it is unlikely they would ever have me as their guest, and equally unlikely that they would accept an invitation from me. I am, after all, only marginally civilized.

Galatians 1:6–9—

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that is another gospel, but there are some who are confusing you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed! As we have said before, so now I repeat, if anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed!

This is the passage the Dr. Alberts of the world should fear, for any gospel contrary to what Jesus taught is an accursed gospel. But Evangelical scholars have so little reading skill that they sincerely believe Paul initially proclaimed a different gospel to these Galatians than the one Jesus the Christ instructed His disciples to teach.

Actually, Evangelical reading skills weren't the problem. The delusion sent upon those who were perishing is the problem. That delusion precluded these scholars from being able to read Scripture as God intended it to be read.

First, who called these Galatians to the grace of Christ? Didn't Christ? The Father draws and Christ calls. Didn't then the apostle (Paul) who established this fellowship teach these Galatians what Jesus taught His disciples? Paul says he wasn't sent by any human organization, but by the Father and Christ; so a logical disconnect would have

to occur for someone to think that Paul initially taught these Galatians anything other than what Christ taught the other Apostles. Since the lawless ignorant twist all Scripture to their own destruction, and *since we are forewarned*, and wary *that we are not carried away with the error of the lawless and lose our own stability* (2 Peter 3:17), we will conclude that Paul initially taught these Galatians to keep the commandments of God (Matt 5:19) and to have love for one another (John 15:10–12). If Paul had initially taught any other doctrine to these Galatians, he would have falsely taught them. Paul isn't at liberty to teach anything he wants, or what will please men (Gal 1:10), or what "the circumcision faction" (2:12) wants. Rather, he teaches as Jesus taught because Paul was *an apostle—sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father*.

I don't know how to write this more forcefully: Paul initially taught these Galatians the same doctrine Jesus taught His disciples. To think otherwise is twisting the Scripture to your own destruction. Is that plain enough? Paul doesn't teach a doctrine contrary to what Jesus taught. For you to say otherwise causes you to condemn Paul to being the least in the king of heaven, while you reveal your ignorance.

Does Paul condemn Peter for teaching Gentile to judaize? No. He upbraids Peter for being a hypocrite, for fearing *the circumcision faction* more than fearing God, for not having enough love for the Gentile converts to cause him to take the ridicule *the circumcision faction* would be sure to give. All Paul says about Peter teaching Gentiles to judaize is that Peter lacks the courage to live consistently by his convictions. Paul doesn't chide Peter for teaching Gentiles to judaize.

Paul's "another gospel," the perverted gospel that is accursed, isn't, then, the gospel taught by Jesus. To even suggest it is causes the person to become accursed, for Paul as an apostle of Christ would have taught what Jesus taught. It is the ignorant teaching the error of the lawless who would have Paul teaching a gospel contrary to what Jesus taught His disciples; so from this point forward, we can say with absolute cer-

tainty that what is at issue isn't the gospel Jesus taught, which will have disciples keeping the commandments and having love for one another.

A point needs repeated: the Apostles, Paul included, didn't teach thirteen different gospels, or even two contrary gospels. Rather, they taught the same gospel, which was teaching disciples to obey what Jesus had commanded them (Matt 28:20). To teach otherwise would've been to teach a false gospel. A person makes an Apostle a false teacher to even suggest otherwise. Therefore, when a drawn disciple approaches any epistle, one of Paul's or James' or one of Peter's or one of John's or Jude's, the drawn disciple needs to understand that the epistle was written for a reason to a fellowship, or fellowships established on what Jesus taught. Either the fellowship had figuratively jumped the tracks as in the case of the Galatians; or, as in the case of Paul's epistle to the Romans, the letter-writer wished to share some of his wisdom and knowledge with the fellowship, as in what I am doing with you. By my writing experience and literary training, I have a little knowledge, which, when coupled to having the Holy Spirit for thirty years, gives me basic, practical advice about how to read text that I offer you from love for you even though it is unlikely that I will ever meet you in this life.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that Paul taught an evolving doctrine that differed from what Jesus taught. That is twisting his epistles to your destruction: you become Peter's ignorant reader who has been trapped in the error of the lawlessness. Rather, Paul's epistles address problems that the particular converted Gentile fellowship faced, such as not keeping the Passover with respect for Christ but as an occasion for debauchery. Paul doesn't tell the Corinthians not to keep the Passover, which this Gentile fellowship was taught to keep when the fellowship was established, but to keep the Passover in the same way that Paul had received it from Jesus and had taught them initially (1 Corth 11:17–34).

Can you begin to see the problems with how Paul's epistles have been read? When the demonic king of the North supernaturally took

control of Christianity to use it as the unifying force for his reign through history, he needed to find Scriptural support for his Platonic philosophy, the Lazarus-Dives story being the primary place. Only in a few other places could he twist Christ's words to his advantage. But Paul's epistles were another story. First, Paul didn't consider his epistles on par with the sacred writings, or Scripture, so Paul wasn't as careful to eliminate ambiguity as God was in a, *Thus saith the Lord*. Second, Paul was writing his epistles to largely Hellenistic social constructs that were already under the reign of the king of the North, so the problems Paul addresses were the values of this demonic king. End-time prophecies were sealed and the Book of Revelation hadn't been written; thus, Paul couldn't know what I do about the spiritual nature of what he was combating. He knew enough to credit Satan with having deceitful ministers of righteousness, but he couldn't understand that the demonic king of the North recognized in Christianity the solution to his problem of humanity fearing death. Plato's solution lacked credibility as long as salvation was dependant upon what a person did in his or her life. Christ's sacrifice was his solution. Whereas Christ's bears only the sins of the disciples the Father draws from the world, the king of the North twisted that limited offer of grace to those disciples whose hearts have been circumcised into an open alter call, with a just-believe gospel of lawlessness. By twisting Christ's sacrifice, he obtained a promise of heaven to all who do his bidding, with the assurance of eternal life in an everburning hell for all who refused to obey him. Clever, huh? But not as clever as the king of the South, who twisted Plato's heaven and hell into a sensual paradise for all who die fighting a holy war, with no other assurance of reaching heaven. In the king of the South's scheme, without a savior a believer will never know if he or she has done enough good deeds to enter heaven, so *jehad* becomes the same sort of solution that Christ's sacrifice was for the king of the North. Both demons have reigned through fear of burning forever in a hellfire. The only problem is—are you listening John Hagee—the lake of fire exists for a limited period of time, and other

than in the lake of fire, there will be no burning of flesh. People do not have immortal souls, so if a person is tossed into the lake of fire, the person will last about as long as he or she will in any inferno. Seconds before life ceases; minutes before the body is rendered into ashes. To end in the lake of fire is inexcusable, but some humans will, indeed, be reduced to ashes. No one—I tell you this by the authority of Christ—will be tortured forever in a hellfire. This is a demonic teaching. It is the opposite of Love. It is a hideous lie. And from when you read this forward, may you be accursed forever if you teach this lie. Further, I warn readers to be very, very careful about dismissing what I write. Christ will not have you teaching that sinners have eternal life: the wage of sin is death. These words mean exactly what they seem to mean. They don't mean eternal life in a rotisserie, or eternal life separated from God. They mean death. Permanent death. Death from which there is no resurrection. And for you to mock Christ by teaching they really mean eternal life, you take onto yourself His wrath, and the Father's wrath. You will be accursed forever, if any memory of you is retained.

Paul couldn't know what I do about the reign of the kings of the North and of the South. These prophecies were secret and sealed until the time of the end. Now is that time—1927 wasn't the time of the end, nor was 1947. Revelation about the reign of the kings of the North and of the South would come at the end of the age since end-time saints will have to defeat these demonic kings by not worshiping them. And saints can defeat them: Christ has and will continue to arm saints to defeat them. These demons are kingsize versions of uncircumcised Philistines, the new and improved models that American merchants yearly hawk; but Christ and Michael fight for us, and the Father will bring fire out from the belly of Satan, out from the belly of the king of the North, and out from the false prophet, such is His anger at them (Ezek 28:18–19 & Dan 7:11 & Rev 19:20, 20:10). They will be utterly destroyed. The saints will prevail, but not without many difficulties.

The person who will dispute that Paul taught the same gospel that Jesus did and that the other Apostles did doesn't understand how language works, how a linguistic icon compares to a pronoun, in that both represent an antecedent, but aren't the antecedent. To say that the pronoun "them" represents Galatians every time the pronoun "them" is encountered is asinine, since the referent or antecedent will vary as thought is conveyed to the reader. The same relationship exists between a linguistic icon and what it represents as exists between a pronoun and its antecedent. The referent for the icon "law" must be identified from the context every time the icon "law" is encountered just as the antecedent for the pronoun "them" must be identified from the context. The icon "law" can be used mimetically, in that it has been used to mimic a thing; or it can be used metaphorically in that it stands as a substitute for a thing; or it can be used metonymically in that as a part of thing it represents the whole of the thing. When the icon is used metonymically, its usage is similar to how we use a pronoun. It becomes a generic identifier for its antecedent that will vary from sentence to sentence, and occasionally, within the same sentence. Thus, the icon "the law" is as inherently ambiguous as is the pronoun "them."

The reason both preceding discussions are necessary stems from the errors which the lawless ignorant have historically read into Paul's epistle to the Galatians. The lawless ignorant as the human extensions of the king of the North sought any inspired text that might be twisted to support their lawless theology. Paul wrote his epistle to the Galatians himself (6:11), and he was angry when he wrote. These Galatians knew what was at issue (circumcision); they knew what they had been taught. If, say, unclean meats were the subject of the epistle, we would find this subject foregrounded at an apostolic conference, and many direct references would be made to the subject by every writer, such would be the dispute. Same for observing the high days, or the Sabbath. In fact, if the Sabbath had been changed, we wouldn't be able to

carry a Bible, because of how much debate would be recorded on reams of paper.

The entire issue of Paul's epistle to the Galatians centers around circumcision, not the commandments of God, nor law itself. What is at issue is the insufficiency of the flesh to save itself, which we will see as we progress through the epistle. Therefore, the different gospel brought to these Galatians wasn't the gospel taught by Christ, but the one brought by *the circumcision faction*. It is twisting this epistle of Paul's to one's destruction to teach otherwise.

The primitive fellowships were plagued by the introduction of two theological errors. The first was what Paul apparently fought throughout his ministry: the requirement that Gentile converts become physical Israelites before they could become spiritual Israelites. Those who taught this error had Scriptural grounds for doing so. The sign of the covenant made by faith with Abraham was circumcision of the flesh, required throughout all generations (Gen 17:9–14), including into the reign of the Messiah (Ezek 44:6–9). So what Paul fought was a reasonable reading of the sacred writings. Paul's position was that his revelation from God superseded what was written in the Law and the Prophets—and we, in the 21st-Century, might not well understand Paul's position, which may have only pertained to males older than eight days, considering that according to Ezekiel's vision priests in the Millennium will be circumcised both in their flesh and in the hearts. Paul's revelation, then, would have been a matter of ministry, since adult circumcision would always be a practical barrier to fellowship, and was strictly a matter of the flesh.

Paul doesn't give many details about how his revelation came. Was his revelation like John's? There is a non-canonical treatise that purports to be the Revelation of Paul, but both its appearance and text suggest it's spurious. Or was his revelation in the form of supernatural understanding of Scripture? For reasons of modesty, apparently, Paul doesn't elaborate about what happened in Arabia. What happened along the road to Damascus is recorded, and would be considered a

revelation. Thus, we know little beyond what is in the text: by revelation, and by consensus of the Jerusalem conference, lack of circumcision is not a barrier to fellowship. The Jerusalem conference doesn't discharge Gentile converts from observing the law of Moses, as is often taught; rather, the conference set the entry requirements for becoming a part of a Christian fellowship. A person practicing fornication, which many Americans and Europeans do by playing house as unwed individuals, wasn't allowed in a fellowship. So today, a conference similar to the one held at Jerusalem might decide whether unwed individuals in committed relationships can enter fellowships as a matter of practical ministry. Jesus said that Moses allowed divorce because of the hardness of Israelite hearts, which would seem to make Moses' bills of divorce a matter of practical ministry. Therefore, without knowing more about Paul's revelation, what can be concluded is what the Jerusalem conference decided: lack of circumcision is not, nor should ever be a barrier to fellowship. However, since Peter taught converts to judaize, those converts might well have circumcised their infant males on the eighth day. The text is really silent about whether the child of a Gentile convert should be circumcised, other than to confirm that both the heart and the flesh must be circumcised in the future Millennium reign of Christ, at which time animal sacrifices will be resumed as sin offerings. The necessity for animal sacrifices comes from the fulfillment of Yom Kipporim, when the resurrected Christ as the goat over which the sins of Israel were pronounced returns those sins to their rightful owner, Satan. This event sequentially occurs as portrayed by the holy days: Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah, then Satan is captured and bound, and in a formal ceremony, Christ returns the sins He has borne since Pentecost became a reality in 31 A.D. Following this fulfillment of Yom Kipporim, Christ's Millennium reign as King of kings begins. Since Christ while King of kings will no longer be bearing the sins of humanity, animal sacrifices resume. So, too, apparently does circumcision of the flesh. By their juxtaposition, there seems a connection between circumcision, animal sacrifices, and sin offerings, but that

connection is not appreciated today. Knowledge has been lost. If all things are to be restored, then this connection will again be understood.

The Church of God has encouraged parents to have infants circumcised on the eighth day by the same logic that the Church celebrates the Feast of Tabernacles: if the Feast was celebrated before Christ, and will be celebrated following the return of Christ (Zech 14:16–19), then drawn disciples should celebrate it now, especially when it portrays the future reign of Christ.

Clearly, the circumcision of adult males is not required, and has no significance in a person's relationship with the Father and the Son. Parents do not know whether the Father will draw and call their son[s] in this age. Many sons of saints follow in the faith, apparently having been drawn by the Father. Even more sons do not. Therefore, to have a son circumcised on the eighth day is an individual decision which will not influence the Father in His decision of whether to draw the son from the world. Since the lack of circumcision is not a future hindrance to fellowship in the Body of Christ, parents must decide whether to circumcise an infant for other reasons than fellowship.

The history of Sabbath-observing fellowships isn't easily traced between the 4th-Century and the 16th-Century. Christian Sabbatarian scholars insist that a continuous record of 7th-day fellowships exists through these dark centuries, but their evidence doesn't withstand critical scrutiny, which isn't to say that those fellowships didn't exist. Rather, what we see is God moving to purify the doctrines of the greater Christian Church at the end of the 14th-Century, with the reinstating of Sabbath observance a century later, this purifying doctrine emerging as part of a widespread purification movement. Sabbatarians, like other puritans, tend to become elitists, believing that no one other than a Sabbatarian can be part of the true Church of God. This will be true when the Bride has made Herself ready for the wedding feast; this isn't true now, nor in the past. However, genuine disciples will hear Christ's voice in purifying doctrines, and will gravitate

towards those doctrines. Unfortunately, the Church of God squeaked out its message until the 20th-Century, at which time it marginalized itself by advertising itself as the “*uncola*.” In order to achieve separation from greater Christianity so its message could be heard, 7th-Day Christianity put God in a box of legalism. Its message was certainly heard. There are, at the beginning of the 21st-Century, if the numbers I have seen are correct, more than ten million Christian Sabbatharians worldwide.

If God could tolerate, without approving, Moses writing bills of divorce, then God could tolerate, again, without approving, Christians worshipping on the 8th-day. Christ reinstated original intent in the marriage relationship, then Paul had to modify that original intent as a matter of practical ministry.

The situation with the Christian Sabbath seems analogous to Moses’ bills of divorce: when the *Logos* came as the man Jesus, He reinstated original intent although bills of divorce were still written by Jews. Once the marriage status of a Gentile convert was determined by whether the unconverted mate wished to stay in the union, the marriage was bound if it were continued; it could be terminated only by death. Likewise, once Christ as high priest reinstated the Sabbath in Christian practice, and a drawn disciple becomes aware that the Sabbath is the 7th-day, the disciple is not free to return to observing the Sabbath on the 8th-day; genuine Sabbath-observance is bound. So, too, seems to be the issue of circumcision. As a matter of practical ministry, Moses granted bills of divorce, and true Christians worshiped on the 8th-day, and circumcision of adult males is not required. Jesus reinstated original intent in the marriage relationship after fourteen centuries, and He reinstated original intent in the Sabbath relationship with the Father after fourteen centuries (I do not place significance on the number of years). From Ezekiel’s prophecies, it seems as if circumcision was His original intent. It remains to be seen if He will actually reinstate the practice after He returns. It seems that he will.

The second theological problem faced by the primitive church is the primary one with us today: lawlessness. Compressing two millennia into a lifetime, we see the Body of Christ deserting wholesale the gospel initially taught to it by the Apostles, and we see an accursed gospel of lawlessness preached in pulpits throughout greater Christianity. The Church of God has reacted to this accursed gospel by emphasizing keeping the law of God to the exclusion of teaching and practicing love. Balance is being returned in some fellowships of the Church of God, but “balance” itself is balancing between holding fast to what was once delivered sixty years ago, not even six centuries ago, and rereading the text to find the love and the foregrounded liberty which greater Christianity turned into lawlessness within these same sixty years. Today, every televangelist advocating 8th-day observance is preaching an accursed gospel. All are teaching lawlessness. None are teaching the gospel Paul initially taught the Galatians.

I need to repeat the last sentence: every single televangelist teaching the rapture, or the immortality of the soul, or that heaven is the home of the saved teaches an accursed gospel. No exceptions! Their sincerity doesn't matter. Their casting out demons and healing the infirm in the name of Jesus doesn't matter. The size of their television networks doesn't matter. Their mighty works don't matter. Their gospel is accursed. It might be about Christ, but it isn't of Christ. These televangelists are the minions of the king of the North. Yes, they appear as ministers of righteousness, but the gospel they teach is accursed. Their works are prophetically condemned, and they will consider themselves fortunate if they are counted as least in the kingdom of heaven. If they have ever been genuine, they have reservations in the lake of fire—and I write this by the authority of Jesus the Christ. Their judgment is upon them. Their only hope is to repent while there is still time.

Galatians 1:10–12—

Am I now seeking human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not

be a servant of Christ. For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Apparently Paul, then Saul, had been seeking peer approval when he consented to the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:54–8:1), and when he persecuted the early church. So the people who could give human approval by this reasoning would be the Jews, the religious leaders within each city. These Jews opposed God, thereby establishing the juxtaposition of *human approval* versus *God's approval*. In Jesus' parable of the wedding supper, they were the invited guests who ignored their invitations, or stoned the messengers. They killed Christ because of His threat to their idol of monotheism; they refused to accept Jesus' claim of being the Son of Man. To them, there could be only one God, and Jesus wasn't Him. So when some of them converted and became disciples of Christ, they clung even harder to their idol of circumcision. Paul, however, was still in the business of destroying idols.

The connection between *human approval* and the Jews needs remembered; for, as will be seen, it is a former priest who has been teaching these Galatians that they need to be circumcised. The accursed gospel comes from *the circumcision faction*, and apparently from someone well respected within that faction.

Paul makes the point of being unimpressed by the man's reputation by downplaying his own reputation. Paul says by extension that servants of Christ cannot please people, or in this case, the Jewish religious leaders, people used as a metaphoric expression for the religious establishment. Paul's use of "people" isn't, though, restricted to the religious establishment outside the Church of God, for Paul is angry at the error which had entered the Church at Galatia. He will write this corrective epistle regardless of what they think.

Since the issue that had perverted the Galatians' understanding of the gospel of Christ was circumcision, and since circumcision was clearly commanded in Scripture (Gen 17:1–14), Paul cannot use

Scripture to argue against the doctrine. Yes, God desired that the foreskins of hearts be cut rather than of penises, but there is no command not to cut the male foreskin, while there is an unambiguous command to cut. Therefore, Paul cannot use the authority of Scripture to support his position that Gentiles didn't need to become physical Israelites before they can become spiritual Israelites. His claim for authority in this matter, then, can only come directly from God, as opposed to *the circumcision faction's* claim of authority coming from Scripture. And to support his claim of divine authority, Paul lays out his spiritual history.

Paul will make an Aristotelian argument in the classical Greek sense, since these Galatians are Hellenists. He will begin with a *pathos* appeal, then follow with his *ethos* claims, then follow with his *logos* claims. He will, under each division, present his strongest evidence first. And someone better schooled in Classical Rhetoric than I am can better appreciate than I do the structure of his summation. To me, it appears that in his summation, he tosses everything he can at a figurative wall in hopes that some of it will stick. I find him guilty of committing numerous *logos* faults as he desperately writes his summation. He seems to depart from the Classical structure in making one last attempt to persuade his audience that their lives are at stake, not caring that his logic becomes skewed, as he uses *logos* claims as *pathos* appeals. These latter *logos* claims as *logos* claims will not pass a truth-test; as *pathos* appeals, though, they are genuine. No truth test exists for *pathos* appeals. All that matters is whether the emotions evoked exceed the urgency of the textual situation, and they do not, for what is a saint's eternal life worth? Thus, by his own hand, Paul writes a Classical argument, similar in structure and content to what I teach my students to write. To my amusement, I find I do not write in a Classical form, but in the organic form of high Romanticism.

Since Scripture better supports the *logos* claims of *the circumcision faction*, Paul places his *logos* claims last. His argument really rests on his *ethos* claims. The validity of his revelation can only be supported

by his credibility as an Apostle called out of season. If he isn't believed, then his revelation is without authority to command action.

Galatians 1:13–17—

You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once to Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus.

By his claim, Paul was ordained before his birth to do the job of being an Apostle. His education was in Judaism, about which Jesus said none kept the law of God (John 7:19 & Mark 7:5–13). As a Pharisee, his education was spiritually perverted: Jesus said that the father of Pharisees was Satan (John 8:44), an important point to remember when Paul's attitude towards the law enters his epistle.

Stop for a moment: the Jews of 1st-Century Judea are ruled by the demonic kings of the North, who came to power shortly after Alexander's Greek realm was divided to the four winds. These Jews had the opportunity to have their hearts circumcised, and some, indeed, did have their hearts so circumcised. But the political powers of the region were necessarily agents of one or the other of those two powerful demons. Jesus said of the Pharisees who wanted to kill Him that their father was Satan. Literally, that would be true, for those politically powerful Pharisees were agents of demons. So the only education as a Pharisee that Paul could have received would have been spiritually perverted. Paul, like all of humanity, was trapped in the reign of Satan as the king of Babylon. He was living in the time of the Gentiles, just as I still am. Until removed from Satan's reign by being drawn by the

Father, he would've continued to wallow in a pool of spiritual perversion, not something that has probably ever been said of Paul before, but the only conclusion that can be drawn from what Christ said about Pharisees and lawyers. If Paul were within the mainstream of Judaism as he apparently was, Paul didn't keep nor understand the law of God prior to being called by Christ. Yes, he was observing the sabbaths, but he was doing so without love. He would have been needlessly washing hands, ever careful to keep his outside clean, while inwardly having murder in his heart. He wasn't keeping the law of God, nor did he know how to keep the law. He had no love for his enemies.

I want to continue the break in my narrative for another moment so that you can continue to ponder the idea of Paul having received a spiritually perverted education. For my many years of listening to sermons, I have only heard how Paul was this pillar of educated wisdom, but that isn't what the text says. Certainly Paul had zeal for God, but prior to Christ getting his attention, Paul was a pillar of perverted zeal. His education stank. To him, the law of God was a prison, and Christianity was the ultimate jailbreak—and Paul never fully recovers from his perverted education, just as drawn saints today spend their lifetimes wrestling with the problems they bore when called. Yes, progress is made against these problems, but major problems don't usually go entirely away. Rather, they are the foil Christ uses to develop character within us. They are mental thorns.

Now returning to my previous narrative: note that Paul says that he was called by God. This is consistent with what Jesus taught that no one can come to Jesus unless drawn by the Father (John 6:44, 65). Paul says the reason for him having been called was to proclaim Christ among the Gentiles, which is consistent with what Peter writes about saints being “a chosen race...[to] proclaim the mighty acts of [Jesus]” (1 Peter 2:9); thus again, we see that a calling is extended in order that a person can do a work for the Father and the Son. Paul was called to do a work, as I have been called to do a work; and if you are being called, you are being called to do a work, that work being the proclaim-

ing of the mighty acts of Christ. Paul's work was to Gentiles; mine is to saints who have already been called, but need purified.

We see from Paul's claims about both what he did before Christ got his attention and about how he was educated that Judaism was an enemy of Christ and of His teaching. Rabbis had Christ killed. But sometimes the extent of this animosity is forgotten, considering that the early Church had to go into synagogues to hear Moses read (Acts 15:21), the expectation for how drawn Gentile and Israelite disciples would grow spiritually. Likewise, the extent of this animosity isn't adequately revealed in the text when *the circumcision faction* is referenced. These were former rabbis that hated Christ by education and culture. Certainly, God had changed their hearts, but God hadn't removed them from the culture or the institutions which still hated Christ. They were still in a synagogue somewhere every Sabbath. They were still breathing in oxygen molecules contaminated by hatred of Christ, if that were possible. Their unconverted peers still hated Christ.

The influence of *the circumcision faction* was strong enough to even effect Peter, but God had somewhat removed Paul from their influence by taking him to Arabia, then Damascus. And because of this separation, Paul could view circumcision differently than could any of those converted rabbis who had remained in the poisoned atmosphere of Judaism.

Let's see this separation as Paul continues to establish his claim of divine authority in negating inscribed Scripture; for unless Paul can convince these Galatians that he speaks for God, not for the headquarters church or some other organization, all he can do is bicker with *the circumcision faction*, with that faction being supported by Moses and the covenant God made with Abraham. Paul's problem is directly analogous to mine: unless I can convince you that it is Christ's voice that is heard through mine, all I can do is bicker with historical exegesis. To conduct an argument, there must be shared assumptions. In Paul's case, the assumption that these Galatians must share with him is that he best speaks for God. When they accept that assumption, then Paul

can begin to construct his argument for why circumcision, or any other *work* of the law is contrary to faith; it isn't the law that is contrary, but the *work*. In my case, the assumption must be that only God can unseal prophecy, and if my reading of prophecy is of God, then so too is this reading of Paul's epistle to the Galatians. In both cases, trust is placed in drawn disciples to hear the voice of Christ when spoken through a human.

Galatians 1:18–24—

Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days; but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother. In what I am writing you, before God, I do not lie! Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, and I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea that are in Christ; they only heard it said, "The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy." And they glorified God because of me.

The first point Paul wants to drive home is that he didn't get his doctrine from the other Apostles. He wasn't a disciple of any other Apostle; fifteen days isn't long enough to learn much doctrine.

Paul stayed with Peter because there was then no Motel 6 in Jerusalem. He had to stay with someone. In this case it was Peter, which might be why Peter is willing to declare Paul's epistles equal to other Scripture. Peter got to know Paul well enough that he knew where Paul's heart was and what his teachings were, even if Paul's writings were difficult to understand, especially for ignorant readers with their error of lawlessness.

Again, lawlessness is sin (1 John 3:4). It comes from the broadcast of Satan, as focused through the demonic king of the North. It is an attitude of rebellion, fostered by the rebels who fought against God and lost. For us it usually comes coupled to democracy. It always represents the overturning of the status quo, regardless of whether an overturning

improves the received situation. It is, in short, rebellion for rebellion's sake.

For the purpose of Paul's argument, it is imperative that he be believed; thus, he writes, *In what I am writing you, before God, I do not lie!* I understand the reason for writing such a line—remember, Paul doesn't think he's writing Scripture at this time, so he overstates his claim—and I have on occasion written such a line, but afterwards, I edit them out, or wish that I had. No affirmation before God will convince an audience of the truth you possess if that audience isn't already convinced by the flow of the narrative. As a writing teacher I understand this; as a human, I still want to be doubly sure I will be believed. So as a human I write lines I don't need, because of how difficult it is to fully trust one's audience. The human tendency is to hit a point one more time just in case the audience didn't get it the first, or third, or fifth time. That tendency produces stylistically poor prose, and is often counterproductive. So forgive me when I succumb to this tendency; I really know better. But I am, on my books, my own editor.

Part of Paul's claim for divine authority rests on the churches in Judea glorifying God because of Paul's conversion from persecutor to proclaimer. If these churches from which *the circumcision faction* comes can glorify God for Paul's conversion, then surely his conversion is genuine; his doctrine is of God; and he can be trusted to reveal God's will to these Galatians.

An ethos claim is based upon the credibility of the argument's author. Since, as I previously mentioned, Paul will have problems with his logos claims—there is unambiguous language stating that the covenant descendants of Abraham are to be circumcised—Paul's strongest claims are ethos based, with his acceptance by the churches in Judea as one who proclaims the faith underpinning his credibility. Without acceptance except in fringe churches, Paul is merely another minister. He needs recognition of his divine ordination from the older, larger, stronger churches in Judea before he can establish that he speaks for Christ.

Galatians 2:1–2—

Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. I went up in response to a revelation. Then I laid before them (though only in a private meeting with the acknowledged leaders) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure that I was not running, or had run, in vain.

We again see that Paul's teachings are consistent with Christ's and the other Apostles—Paul stood for examination as a doctoral candidate might, even though Paul knew his gospel was from Christ directly. So his examination wasn't to demonstrate what he had learned, but to show the consistency of his message to what Jesus had personally taught the others. And his gospel was consistent, so we can go to Christ's teaching to see exactly what Paul taught about a particular subject.

In addition to what Christ taught while on earth, Paul had a revelation. Our assumption is needfully that Paul had a vision like Peter's, or like John's. Paul's vision related to the reason for the Jerusalem conference being called (Acts 15). While converted Pharisees, educated in a tradition of not-keeping the law of God (again, John 7:19 & Mark 7:5–13), and of their spiritual father being Satan (John 8:44), wanted to open up the Jerusalem conference to being a referendum on keeping all of "the law of Moses" (Acts 15:5), the issue at hand was circumcision and whether Gentile disciples had to become physical Israelites before they could become spiritual Israelites. Peter says his vision didn't require that necessity. Apparently, Paul's didn't either. The testimony of Barnabas and Paul seems to have been that Gentile converts were having the law of God written on their hearts, according to the terms of the new covenant. If that were the case, then what advantage was circumcision? It was of no value, unless one felt the need to maim men. The many nations to have come from Abraham were now one

new nation under Christ (Eph 2:15); the Abramic covenant which circumcision was a sign had been abolished.

But when James renders the decision of the Church, he doesn't go that far. Rather, his decision is limited to only what was required of Gentile converts before these converts can enter into fellowship, or more appropriately, what was required of these converts before they could enter synagogues to hear Moses read: they didn't need to keep all of the law of Moses, which included the circumcision that had come forward from Abraham; they only needed to eliminate their practices that were most offensive to Judaism. As such, circumcision was left intact for young Jewish infants, who might or might not become Christians. The issue was decided about as well as slavery was by the Continental Congress, where the compromise was that black males were counted as six-tenths of a person for purposes of representational appropriation.

Because Paul had a revelation about circumcision, he was more willing to pursue the subject than were the Apostles sent to the lost tribes of Israel. Literally, what was at stake was whether a portion of the sacred writings could be annulled. They had to be annulled before the new covenant could be fully implemented, for Abraham's descendants no longer had a birthright to a relationship with God. In other words, James left the problem of circumcision open far enough that another generation would have to finish arguing Paul's case made to the conference, just as our founding fathers left Lincoln and the Reconstructionists to integrate slaves and former slaves into American law and culture. These Reconstructionists weren't particularly successful, as this nation's history of Civil Rights will attest. Likewise, the genuine Christians of succeeding generations became so busy fighting lawlessness, which enters through demonic Hellenism, that they don't revisit the decision of the Jerusalem conference, which technically eliminates the privileged status of all Israelites: "God...has made no distinction between them [Gentiles] and us [Israelites by birth]" (Acts 15:8). This is Peter making Paul's statement of God creating one new humanity in

place of two, the circumcised and the uncircumcised (Eph 2:15–16) in his own words.

The *circumcision faction* was apparently strong enough that James doesn't take his decision to its logical conclusion that the Abrahamic covenant was abolished by Christ's death. Rather, he makes that the reality without issuing a clear statement to that effect. After all, this *circumcision faction* was influential enough that Peter deferred to them, for which Paul properly chides Peter. Very likely, an unambiguous statement by James would have split the Church, just as no union would have formed in this country if our foundering fathers would have properly addressed the slavery issue.

In theological importance, the Jerusalem conference seems to advance or recede as a glacier does, depending upon whether a fellowship wants to change or maintain the doctrinal status quo. The conference ducked the philosophically larger issue of whether the law of Moses must still be kept by converted Jews, and decided only the issue of immediate concern: what must a Gentile convert do before being admitted into fellowship in the Body of Christ. It seems the Apostles at the conference didn't believe they had the authority to alter Scripture beyond the already apparent alteration made by Christ in calling adult Gentile converts into fellowship. The necessity of keeping of the law of Moses remained as it was before, except on the narrow issue of what must a Gentile convert do. Therefore, to use the Jerusalem conference as Scriptural support for deciding issues such as Sabbath or Passover observance is presumptive at best. Unless Christ changes, a person is under obligation to keep the law of God, all of it, including the fourth commandment. If the person wants to practice lawlessness, then let the person go his or her way. The person is not of the household of God, probably hasn't been drawn and called, and will only frustrate him or herself by trying to keep what isn't written on his or her heart. The person's time isn't now. The person isn't doomed to hell (the error of John Calvin); the person isn't lost. Rather, the person remains part of Satan's demonstrations, with his or her opportunity for salvation

becoming available to the person later in this life, or in the great White Throne Judgment.

Because the Apostles at the Jerusalem conference didn't address the question of Israelite circumcision, Paul's revelation was probably a tool needed for practical ministry, and a tool still needed for such ministry. I would be wary of using this tool outside of its context, for Ezekiel's prophecies are more understandable today than ever before. If circumcision is to return, then we haven't understood the purpose for circumcision. Until recently, we didn't understand why animal sacrifices would be reinstated, but we now know. The same thing probably applies to circumcision—the fault is with us and our ignorance.

We can read in Paul's epistle to the Galatians his frustration with the *circumcision faction*, even to the point of calling their gospel accursed. He has had it with this faction of the Church, just as I have had with the *watchmen*, who teach false understandings of prophecy. They make my task more difficult as they actually harm disciples. Same for Paul: the *circumcision faction* was cutting away faith as if faith were the foreskin to be discarded, leaving the dead works of the law to protrude as the head of an erect penis, a pole of naked shame before God.

Do I contradict myself? No. To resume animal sacrifices today would be blatantly wrong, but after Christ returns and gives the sins He presently bears to Satan, animal sacrifices will resume, as will circumcision. Therefore, until Christ does the reinstating, neither should be practiced for spiritual reasons. Knowledge is revealed over time. I suspect I will understand why circumcision will be resumed, and why Israelite circumcision wasn't addressed by the Jerusalem conference, but I don't today, late summer 2002. Only since spring have I understood why animal sacrifices will be resumed in the Millennium.

Galatians 2:3—

But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

Although Paul has alluded to the reason for this epistle to these Galatians in his phrase, *another gospel*, for which his intended audience would have been able to supply the proper referent, it is here that the larger audience can begin to see what is under discussion. We see this issue clearly stated in, “It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised” (6:12). So the *different gospel*, or the referent for *another gospel* is compelling these Galatians to be circumcised, something that no one at headquarters in Jerusalem even suggested when Titus went there with Paul and Barnabas.

In Paul's argument against circumcision, Paul wants the inaction of those at Jerusalem concerning the question of Titus' lack of circumcision to testify against the *circumcision faction*, who were teaching that the Galatians needed to be circumcised.

Paul's ethos claims hinge on how the headquarters fellowship in Jerusalem treated him, and those with him. By approving his gospel and by not requiring Titus to be circumcised, the earlier Apostles acknowledge that Paul has indeed been called by God to do a great work among the Gentiles.

At this point in his argument, Paul has made his strongest claim. He has introduced the idea that his ministry is directed by Christ, that he has had a revelation about Gentile circumcision, that the senior Apostles teach and practice the same things that he does and has. In a Classical presentation, we have Paul's argument. The remainder of his epistle will introduce minor claims, and his rebuttal of *the circumcision faction's* claims.

Galatians 2:4–6—

But because of false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us—we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you. And from those who were supposed to be acknowledged leaders (what they

actually were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)—those leaders contributed nothing to me.

First thing to note is that Paul identifies some believers as false. He does this in, “[T]here have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine” (1 Corth 11:19). Factions exist to separate sheep from goats, and Christianity assumes an adversarial role against itself.

The above passage actually rebuts any ethos claim of authority that *the circumcision faction* might bring. Paul’s rebuttal is, simply put, God doesn’t recognize these apparent leaders, who are actually false brethren.

My writings place me in an adversarial position to the faith derived from historical exegesis. But my argument is, if I haven’t previously made it clear, the doctrines derived from historical exegesis are the principle assumptions of the demonic king of the North, who reigns and has reigned for centuries through the inherent power of the Cross. The doctrines of the primitive faith never entirely disappeared, but at times, they haven’t been widely known or taught, and they have been dispersed through several fellowships. For the purposes of the Father’s plan for humanity, Christians haven’t needed to know all of the doctrines of the primitive faith; all they have needed to do was that which was right to the best of their knowledge. So even though the demonic king of the North hijacked the Christian faith, that demon king has been unable to stymie God’s plan, such is the nature of grace. However, as the end of the age approaches, the doctrines of the primitive faith will again be inserted within greater Christianity, for drawn disciples will engage demons in one-on-one confrontations similar to what Christ did at the start of His ministry. Christ will have armed these saints with the knowledge and the self-awareness they need to combat these demons, including Satan himself. And by defeating these demons, saints will establish a qualitative difference between humanity and angels. As far as we know, no angel under Satan was able to resist his broadcast of rebellion. All rebelled. All sinned. But Jesus refused to

worship Satan and thereby defeated him. This is what genuine saints will have to do when Satan is cast to the earth. Even now, we must resist Satan, but we don't experience Satan's full attention and fury. We are able to sin without his direct help; his broadcast of rebellion is enough to cause us to reject and break the law of God. However, in the latter portion of the Tribulation, Satan will be here as the true anti-Christ. Saints not in the sanctuary, or not completely protected *in situ* will have to deal with him, and will have to defeat him. And they will. My writings are part of Christ arming them for this conflict.

As an adversary of historical exegesis, I didn't suspect that I would also become an adversary to the orthodoxy taught within the Church of God: contrary to the storyline presented by Dugger and Dodd in their book about the history of the true Church—their storyline is used to support the concept that the seven Churches in Revelation are eras of a single Church rather than seven endtime fellowships—history is mostly silent about Sabbath-keeping congregations between the 4th-Century A.D. and the 16th, when Christ apparently began to doctrinally purify His Body. Debate over whether Albigensians were Sabbath-keepers will end up leaving scholars with egg on their faces. Same for debate over earlier Dissenter groups both in England and on the Continent. Certainly some might have been imperfectly keeping the sabbaths, but as the beliefs of each Dissenter group are pursued, doctrinal errors are encountered which are of such significance that identifying the group as the primitive Church becomes problematic at best. What we see in English history is antiTrinitarians leaving 8th-Day worship to embrace Sabbath-keeping as part of Dissenter fellowships within a larger Baptist community organized under the guise of purifying the Christian Church in the 16th & 17th-Centuries. We can, today, recognize these antiTrinitarians as true Believers, and in history we see them leave 8th-Day observance behind, which suggests that for some previous period of time they were hidden within greater Christianity. Therefore, to conclude anything other than that true Believers still exist today within 8th-Day denominations will cause us consider-

able embarrassment when glorified. Our task as latter day Puritans is to better teach the primitive faith than it was taught to us, as Christ and the Father work to make the Bride ready for the wedding when Christ returns. We can neither convert those who haven't been truly drawn, nor can we ignore disciples within greater Christianity who today imperfectly understand the Word of God. So we work against ourselves, with genuine disciples wary of embracing anything different, even when they know the doctrine is of God. A person cannot both hang onto the faith once delivered and accept change. To convince a genuine disciple to turn loose of a doctrine is a task only Christ can accomplish—and even then, it appears to be a difficult task for Him.

In the fellowship at Galatia, the false believers who crept in unawares came to, according to Paul, enslave disciples. They came among the Galatians with promises of greater benefits to these Galatians if these Galatians became physical Israelites. After all, didn't Scripture support their argument for circumcision? Of course it did. Just read Genesis 17. So with the cutting of a little flesh, according to these false believers, the freedom of these Galatians could be magnified into universal acceptance among all Israelites. And a little cutting of the flesh was no big concern.

The false believers clubbed these Galatians with questions of whether the newly drawn saints were truly genuine if they didn't submit to circumcision. These false believers used freedom as the bait to trap disciples into jettisoning faith, a situation analogous to greater Christianity today promising heaven as the reward of all who just believe, while threatening believers with hell if these believers dare to keep the law of God. These dishonest arguments are clever, but they are structurally unsound and the production of liars (Rev 3:9).

But Paul won't have any part of these arguments, not even for a moment. Just because the person making the argument seems to be a leader in the faith doesn't matter to Paul. The argument is dishonest; hence, it must be resisted.

As far as Paul was concerned, he had nothing to learn from apparent leaders in the Church. He had received his knowledge by revelation from God. The leaders were all men.

Galatians 2:7–10—

On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles), and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.

In Acts, we see that Paul couldn't go to certain places even though he desired to do so. These places seem to correspond to regions where there were large numbers of Israelites descended from the northern kingdom that is generally believed to have disappeared into history. These "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10:6) were to whom Jesus had previously sent his disciples. Apparently the original disciples returned to these areas: we can now better trace the migrations of these descendants of the northern kingdom through their practice of burning their firstborns, and through their use of Isaac as their identifying name. Their whereabouts were apparently known to Jesus, but became lost as the Dark Ages settled over Europe. With the Iron Curtain having rusted away, works in previously barred archives have become available to 21st-Century scholars. We better see than could Herman L. Hoeh when he wrote, "Where Did the TWELVE APOSTLES Go?" (*Plain Truth* magazine, May 1964) where the tribes of the northern kingdom went. And what we see is that Paul didn't go into areas where another Apostle had established fellowships. Nor did Paul go to the circumcised who were culturally identified as Jews. Nor did he go to areas

where Israelites didn't culturally identify themselves as Jews, but as Gentiles, such as Parthia, North Galatia, and Asia (Acts 16:6). So the reality of the early Church was that Paul worked in areas where the population was mostly Gentile, as described in the above passage.

Paul and Barnabas were extended the same fellowship as existed among the original Apostles when they came to Jerusalem, and Paul demonstrated that he taught the same gospel as they taught. All that the original Apostles asked of Paul was that he remember the poor.

A fault of many Church of God fellowships that concentrate on doctrinal purity is the absence of love towards those individuals who are unable to benefit those fellowships. True Christianity always contains love for all of humanity. Paul's inclination was to remember the poor just as it was the inclination of the original Apostles. They were, in every way discernible, one in mind and faith, all teaching what Christ taught.

Galatians 2:11–13—

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

Although the incident occurs at Antioch, the problem is the one central to the reason Paul writes to the Galatians: from Jerusalem and the headquarters Church were coming *the circumcision faction*, about whom the Apostles at the Jerusalem conference said, "Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us" (Acts 15:24). Neither James, nor the Jerusalem church had sent forth this *circumcision faction*. Rather, these converted Pharisees were preaching and teaching by their own authority. To an outside observer, they were doing exactly what Paul was doing, which

makes Paul's argument a difficult presentation. Paul has to somehow show that his gospel is of God while theirs isn't.

From this passage and from the decision made at the Jerusalem conference, we see a different Christian Church than the one represented by Catholicism. For fourteen years, Paul taught as one who had not been sent forth by James and the headquarters church. Likewise, others taught without being sent forth. Some of these others taught a different gospel than the gospel Jesus taught. Exactly what these differences were comes to us through the arguments used against these teachers. As a result, understanding Paul's argument at something other than at a superficial level becomes critical: Paul's primary claim is that he wasn't subject to Peter or James in authority. His secondary claim is that the gospel taught by *the circumcision faction* was necessarily errant because of the resulting behavior it caused. Paul argues this point by referencing the hypocrisy caused when *the circumcision faction* came among saints.

Paul's argument is that his gospel is of God, through revelation; that his authority to preach his gospel comes directly from Christ; that his presentation of the gospel is consistent with what other Apostles teach as demonstrated by him preaching it to a closed meeting of Apostles; that the gospel taught by *the circumcision faction* is erroneous due to the fruit it produces even in someone as mature as Peter. I believe this is a fair summary so far of Paul's argument, which must be creditable enough to overturn what is written in the sacred writings about circumcision (Gen 17:all). Paul, as a former Pharisee, understands the argumentative problem before him. He understands, at least on an intuited level, the communication triangle of Aristotelian argumentation. He has made his strongest ethos claim, but before beginning his logos claims, he wants to make sure *the circumcision faction* cannot overturn his logos claims by attacking him with an ethos-based assault, which would amount to challenging his right to even address the sacred writings.

If *the circumcision faction* can successfully argue textual infallibility, Paul has no argument. He is worthy of being stoned, for he will argue that the ratifying clauses of the Abramic covenant by which Abram's name is changed to Abraham have been nullified by his revelation. He will be merely a dreamer of dreams, which is a problem I recognize and face, in that I argue through Semantics that Scripture is inspired but not infallible. Again, if it were infallible, Paul has no case. Anything contrary to what Moses wrote would be false teaching, regardless of who was doing the teaching. This is, really, the problem Jesus faced when dealing with the Pharisees and lawyers. In the case of marriage, Jesus reinstated original intent, the basis for the argument today about greater Christianity returning to keeping the Sabbath. But in most confrontations with the Pharisees, Jesus used an ethos argument against these religious leaders, who saddled lay people with burdens they were unwilling to bear themselves. No logos argument can be won when the entire social construct misreads the text.

The pressure brought to bear on converts by *the circumcision faction* was tremendous. That pressure was so great that even Peter didn't resist them until after Paul upbraided him. Thus, it becomes understandable why these Galatian converts had turned to another gospel. After all, their desire would've been to obey what was written in the sacred writings.

The *circumcision faction's* authority didn't derive from Christ, but from Scripture—from passages that are neither ambiguous, nor obscure. They are foundational passages about Abraham, and the promises that will come through Isaac, rather than through Ishmael. These passages form the covenant ratified by circumcision that gave Israel the right to possession of "Canaan, for a perpetual holding" (Gen 17:8). And televangelists today use this covenant to the basis of their support for the modern nation of Israel's occupation of Jerusalem and Judea. From the perspective of argument, these televangelists bring an accursed gospel, in that they continue to make the foundational claims of *the circumcision faction*, sans circumcision.

Galatians 2:14—

But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews.”

We see both by this English translation and by a closer look at the original text that Peter taught or compelled Gentile converts *to live like Jews*. This is actually an important part of Paul's logos argument: Paul does not condemn Peter for teaching Gentile converts to live like Jews (there is no escaping what Peter taught Gentiles; he taught them to live like Jews, or to judaize). Rather, Paul asks how can he, Peter, continue to teach what he has been if he isn't willing to identify with these converts he has been teaching to live like Jews.

Someone will be quick to say that's not what Paul was saying. But that is what Paul said. Both Paul and Peter would have taught new disciples to obey what Jesus had taught them, that teaching coming in Paul's case through revelation, and in Peter's case by having been with Jesus for three and a half years. We are assured their doctrines were the same, for we have Paul's word that they were by Paul telling us of him figuratively standing for examination by the elder Apostles at Jerusalem to make sure he hadn't been running in vain (Gal 2:2). So both Paul and Peter would teach new converts the same doctrine—and about this doctrine, Paul says that Peter taught Gentile converts to live like Jews. Thus, how Paul's epistle to these Galatians has traditionally been read by Evangelical scholars contradicts what Peter, and by extension, what Paul would have taught these Galatians when they first came into the faith.

Paul's epistle to these Galatians has supported more sloppy scholarship than, perhaps, the remaining entirety of the Bible; for in Paul's chiding of Peter, which Paul chooses to record, we see what Paul addresses in, “one new humanity in place of two, thus making peace”

(Eph 2:15) between circumcised and uncircumcised. We see a new humanity that is neither Jew, nor Gentile, but lives like Jews without assumptions of racial superiority. They are all one before God, with no distinction made between Jew and Gentile. Peter taught this, as did Paul, but when it came time to live what he taught, Peter couldn't do it when *the circumcision faction* was present. He was a hypocrite. He feared these men more than he feared God, and Paul called him on his fault.

Again, what Paul told Peter is difficult to twist to one's destruction: Paul says Peter taught Gentile converts to live like Jews. There aren't many passages in Scripture where basic instruction to new converts is as succinctly expressed: Gentile convert were to live like Jews. Keeping the law of Moses isn't at issue here. The passage is about Peter's hypocrisy.

Some fundamental questions must be asked: did Jesus teach to keep the law of God? I believe everyone would answer yes, but Evangelical scholars would say that was because Jesus taught under the dispensation of Law, not under the dispensation of Grace, as if Jesus somehow opposes Jesus. Peter, however, is clearly under the dispensation of Grace; yet Peter taught Gentile converts to live like Jews, to *Ioudaizo* [to become a Judean] from *Ioudaios* [belonging to Judea] from *Iouda* [Judah]. There is no question that Paul says Peter taught converts to judaize. The only question can be about Paul's position concerning what Peter taught, and remember, it is Peter only who identifies Paul's epistles as Scripture. Paul doesn't. So when Peter writes his second epistle, he doesn't take Paul to task about anything except Paul's writing style; he says Paul's epistles are hard to read, and easily twisted by the lawless ignorant.

Peter taught the same gospel that Jesus did, which is the same gospel that Paul really taught. Too many scholars condemn Paul to being called least in the kingdom of Heaven by contending that Paul taught a gospel of lawlessness. But when he had the occasion to upbraid Peter about what he, Peter, taught Gentile converts, Paul instead chides

Peter for abandoning these disciples to save face with *the circumcision faction*.

So, do you really think Peter would have been teaching Gentile converts to live like Jews if Jesus hadn't commanded Peter and the other Apostles to teach disciples "to obey everything that I [Jesus] have commanded you" (Matt 28:20). Paul tells us how Peter applied Christ's instruction to teach newly drawn disciples to obey what Christ commanded. Unless there is a command from Christ to teach a contrary, or a different gospel, one that is now accursed because it differs from what Paul initially taught these Galatians, then we ought to be teaching disciples to judaize. And the Church of God stands accused of doing just that, which is to our credit.

It is actually pleasant to be accused and convicted by one's critics of doing what one should; makes me feel good all over. The only problem is that I know I can do better than I have in the past, so enjoyment of the kudos doesn't last long.

The separation Jews had maintained from Gentiles ended with the Cross, but Gentile converts were compelled to live like Jews, in that they kept the law of God with its associated ordinances. We need not dispute about keeping annual sabbaths, or clean meats, or the law of God. We have Paul's testimony that Peter taught them, and John stresses keeping the law as part of being in the light. James shows you his faith by his works, as he keeps and teaches to keep the law of God. Is it reasonable to assume that Paul, who stood for examination by the elder Apostles, for some reason teaches a different gospel? Or is it more reasonable to conclude that Paul has been misread by the lawless ignorant, many of whom have graduate degrees from divinity schools that specialized in candy-making. The gospel the graduates from these schools teach might be extremely palatable, but it is all sugar and egg whites. The life is in the yolks—if you're one of these graduates, repent while you still have time.

The temple and animal sacrifices were the shadow of Christ's sacrifice: under the new covenant, the law of God is written on hearts and

minds, making the outer body of the saint the ark of the covenant, over which is the mercy seat, or grace. Anyone who would erase the law from the heart of a newly drawn disciple stands accursed. Like Paul, I will repeat that: if through your clever argument you have caused a little one to abandon keeping the law of God, you stand accursed.

Save your additional clever arguments for when you stand before Christ to be examined by Him. Try to explain away Matthew 5:19. Tell Christ He really didn't mean what He said. Go ahead. You will get that chance. It might be your only chance for salvation, so make your argument sing. Remember, your argument will have to be stronger than the king of the North's, the demon you have been worshiping. You can read about his judgment in Daniel 7:11–12, so you can see that the Father didn't buy his argument. But you think your fate will be better, right? even though you will be using his argument. Is that really smart of you? Oh, I forgot, you have an immortal soul and will already be with God—I mock you to save your life. Christ will take no pleasure in seeing you perish, but He will slay you if you will not be ruled by Him (Luke 19:27). You have no eternal life except in Him, which is His gift to all those who have the law of God written on their hearts and minds.

Galatians 2:15–16—

We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law.

Is monogamy a work of the law? How about honoring parents—is that a work of the law? How about having no other God—is that a work of the law? How about not stealing—is that a work of the law? I think you can begin to see the problem: is Paul telling these Galatians

that justification by faith makes adultery acceptable? Well, no, you say; adultery isn't love. It isn't? Wasn't there a song with the lyrics, *if you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with*. Seems to me I can still hear that tune rattling around in my memories, such is the power of Satan's broadcast. No, you say. So "love" can have different meanings? Of course, it can, the point I expound in the very dense "Introduction" to *Rereading Prophecy*.

Before we proceed, we need to grasp what Paul means by his icon phrase "the works of the law" (*ek ergon nomos*). Paul wrote, "It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised...Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh" (Gal 6:12–13). And we see within the same letter a different icon phrase that pertains to the law: *obey the law*. The works of the law are linguistically different from obeying the law. Actually, in the above citation, we see circumcision, which is a fleshy work of the law, in opposition to obeying the law, which the circumcised were not doing. Thus, obedience to the law is not, in Paul's argument, a work of the law. The two icon phrases exist in opposition to each other.

This is almost too easy: to *obey the law* stands solidly in opposition to circumcision, a work of the law. You as a 21st-Century disciple will either *obey the law*, or you will practice lawlessness, which is sin. Thus, to *obey the law* stands between lawlessness, and the works of the law, both extremes condemned by Apostles. Your choices are to *obey the law* and do what Christ taught, or to stand condemned. And you might as well smile. You are being watched by Christ.

Paul also writes, "If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So *let us not grow weary in doing what is right*, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, *let us work for the good of all*" (Gal 6:8–10 emphasis mine). Is working for the good of all works? Can it be anything but works? And Paul commands doing what is right, which is works. So

Paul really isn't against works, is he? His icon phrase *the works of the law* wouldn't seem to mean doing what is right, would it? And as I said, this is almost too easy.

If we were to establish a couple of does-not-equal equations, we could say that obeying the law doesn't equate with the works of the law. Also, we could say that doing what is right doesn't equate with the works of the law. So while Paul doesn't use a different word for law whenever he changes meanings, he establishes an opposition between *works* and obedience, and between *works* and doing what is right.

In the song lyrics, *if you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with*, the linguistic objects for the icon "love" differ with each usage. In the first usage, the object conveys a longterm relationship, while in the second usage, the object is physical intercourse—or have I misunderstood the song all these years? I don't think so. Thus, armed with this understanding of how objects are assigned to icons, *ek ergon nomos* relates to law and flesh, as in circumcision, not law and Spirit, as in belief unto obedience, which the writer of Hebrews correlates as faith (Heb 3:19–4:11), and which Paul labels as faith in Romans 10:6–14, when he cites Deuteronomy 30:11–14. In each case, the opposition to belief is disobedience, as it is with *the circumcision faction* that doesn't obey the law.

Justification cannot come through the flesh, with or without a snipped foreskin. The works of the law can only be of the flesh, again with or without a snipped foreskin. All of the production of our hands is physical. Every deed, good or bad, that we do is physical. Paul found himself trapped in flesh (Rom 7:14–24). Likewise, all of us who have been begotten from above remain trapped in flesh. And since all of humanity has sinned, apart from Christ's sacrifice, all of humanity will die in its sins and from its sins. Humanity is only flesh until the Father draws an individual from the world, spiritually modifies the person, and gives the person the earnest of eternal life. Therefore, no work of humanity, regardless of how good, can justify (or make right with

God) that which is only flesh. But justification doesn't anymore address obedience than does *loving the one you're with*.

Paul has a scripturally difficult case to make, so he begins his logos claims by elevating his argument. If he can establish that all of the law pertains to the flesh, and that justification is never of the flesh, then it doesn't matter what the law says, or how it is read. His initial logos claim, then, cracks open the door the lawless ignorant need to make their case. He tries to close this door with his discussion of the works of the flesh versus the fruit of the Spirit, but he is ultimately unsuccessful. The king of the North needed a very small opening for him to insert Platonism into social constructs which were already Platonic. Hellenist converts stood little chance against this powerful demon. Even Jude tacitly accepted the Platonism of the Book of Enoch as factual, so once Paul cracked this door, it cannot be latched until Christ returns.

The law of God is about godly love. It isn't about anything else. Paul's spiritually perverted education doesn't allow him to see this. To Paul and to the other Pharisees, the law is a prison. To someone such as myself who left lawlessness mostly behind, the law of God is the cause of meaningful life.

Galatians 2:17–18—

But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor.

Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4); thus, when Paul writes, paraphrased, *If we have been found to be lawless in our efforts to be justified*, we better see how lawlessness cannot be the linguistic object for justification. Christ is not a servant of lawlessness nor of the lawless; He does not bear the sins of the lawless. By the linguistic opposition contained in the first sentence of this passage, justification can not be extended to the lawless, but only to the faithful believer.

What Paul once tried to tear down was the faith of Jesus, “faith” used primarily in the sense of the fellowship of Believers and also used in the sense of the belief itself. He is now building up the actual object he had tried to tear down, that object being the faith of Jesus; so Paul isn’t, in this passage, using faith in a single, simple straightforward way. Rather, by referencing his ethos claim—or rather, by continuing his ethos claim—he uses faith as an all-encompassing icon that is and will be his linguistic foil to “law.” Thus, his use of faith isn’t restricted to belief, or an individual’s relationship to Christ, but includes flesh and blood people. So we can expect Paul’s use of law to be just as encompassing, which makes his intended linguistic object to his icon not the law of God, or even the law of Moses, but all inscribed regulation, which includes the covenants made with Abram/Abraham. Remember, the argument Paul has to make is that a portion of the sacred writings are no longer binding upon Believers.

I should note a situational difference between Paul’s intended audience and a modern reader of his epistle: Paul lived in a much quieter world. There were fewer distractions, little background noise, less entertainment, and culturally greater attention spans. Shakespeare’s actors could keep ten plays in their heads, each ready to be performed upon demand, and his audiences could hear and appreciate the word play within his plays. Modern audience, both Asian and American, seem fascinated by cars and buildings being blown up, actors fighting unequal opponents, and lots of blank rounds fired—we like circuses to the point of our lives becoming virtual circuses. But the Galatians to whom Paul wrote lived in their minds. They could see, appreciate, and stay with Paul’s argument. They would know that Paul’s recounting of his history in the faith was for a reason apart from a reintroduction of Paul. If they didn’t fully understand the reason in the first reading of his epistle, they would have reread his epistle until they did understand. They could, unlike many modern readers of this epistle, keep the entire epistle foregrounded in their minds. They wouldn’t have conceived of it in chapters and verses, but as a unified presentation of a

position. In our use of language, we say that they would have had a global perspective. Once Paul establishes faith as justification, then uses faith to include fellowships such as themselves, then says that in trying to tear down such fellowships, he was a transgressor, Paul has established the argumentative base for labeling *the circumcision faction* as transgressors, for they, like he formerly was doing, are tearing down fellowships of faith.

A characteristic of the human mind is its tendency to think in units, such as in words. When a speaker utters sound, that sound is usually emitted as a continuous stream. A non-Spanish speaker can hear this by listening for a few minutes to a radio station broadcasting in Spanish. What is heard is this rapid flow of sound that enters the ear without producing any meaning. But a Spanish speaker hears words. Likewise, a non-English speaker hears my speech as a flow of sound, whereas an English speaker hears individual words, for within the English speaker's mind are templates that have formed into which a certain amount of sound fits to produce a linguistic icon, to which the listener then assigns meaning, all done in microseconds.

Borrowing a line from a literary critic, I teach students that a writer is someone who thinks in sentences. An experienced writer no longer thinks in individual words, but in units of words that constitute sentences. At a writers' conference I attended two decades ago, a short-story writer was asked about how to write a novel; she had just published one. The short-story writer said she didn't know since she still thought in plots of short-story length, so she had strung twelve such plot units together for her novel. The same can be said for writers who specialize in novellas: when their story approaches thirty thousand words, the story closes itself. These writers' minds close their stories, for the templates in their minds that establish how long stories should be have been filled. And how this discussion relates to the subject at hand is that readers form the same sort of templates: because the Bible is now divided into chapters and verses, modern readers think in verse-length units of narrative. They don't think even in chapter long units,

let alone in epistle long units as Paul's intended audience would have, or as Paul did.

The primary principle for proper biblical exegesis is found in Isaiah 28: "For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, / line upon line, line upon line, / here a little, there a little" (verse 10 & 13). By this principle, meaning is established, but this principle also conceals meaning; for the text can be assembled in many differing arrangements, each producing differing meaning, with only one arrangement of God. Scholars a millennium ago aided the production of errant readings by breaking the biblical text in verses, which caused readers to begin thinking in single word-length units, not precept-length units. Since readers assign meaning to words, a subject to which I repeatedly return because I regularly hear Peter's ignorant readers who twist Paul's epistles with their assignments of linguistic objects to icons, debate about word meaning. They don't think in sentences, or in precepts or in entire arguments. In other words, if a better way could be designed to conceal meaning from readers than to have broken the Sacred Text into verses, I don't know what that means could be. Those helpful verses actually prevent humans minds from conceiving precepts, and when these verses are coupled with the arbitrary assignment of objects to icons, everyone can read the Bible and no one can understand it until the Father draws the person from the world and spiritually modifies the person's heart and mind.

I heard a minister in the Church of God say that this modification occurs slowly over time. That is not true. If it were true, then a woman could be just a little bit pregnant. A woman is either pregnant, or she isn't. She either has life developing within her, or she doesn't. A person either has the Holy Breath within him or her, or the person doesn't. The person either has the earnest of eternal life, or the person doesn't ("earnest" money is real money, not some form of almost money). So the modification is either made all at once, or it isn't made. What this minister has observed and has mistaken for conversion is the development of the earnest of eternal life, which arrives as small as a human

being starts in a womb. It grows with each decision to do that which is right. Eventually, it will take over the person's carnal mind, and real war will occur between the flesh and the mind, which is not figuratively Jesus imprisoned in our flesh but truly a spiritual creature in a human body that when born with a glorified body will be adopted into the family of God as a younger sibling to Christ. This warring between the mind and the flesh is what continues to nourish this spiritual creature. So, until this spiritual creature develops enough to make its presence known, it will seem like conversion is a process; it will seem like the writing of the law on the heart and on the mind is a process but the writing was done with the drawing. It just takes awhile before the spiritual creation within a drawn disciple develops sufficiently to make its presence known to the flesh in which it is imprisoned. Eventually, though, open war will occur, with the mind becoming increasingly self-aware of who it is, something that cannot be adequately communicated to a person who hasn't been drawn by the Father.

Therefore, since the human mind by design habitually thinks in units of a certain length, that length variable and dependent upon the acquired habit; and since the division of the Bible into verses has created within readers the habit of thinking about the biblical text in less than precept long units; and since only spiritually modified disciples can assign inspired objects to linguistic icons, two problems exist for readers: spiritually modified readers have to break the habit of reading in sentences, or in clause length units, and begin to read in precept long units; and second, spiritually modified readers cannot go to uninspired scholars for assignment of objects to icons. They cannot rely upon historical exegesis for anything more than getting the "meaning" wrong, since the king of the North has supernaturally controlled Christianity since the 4th-Century. Spiritually modified disciples are Christ's sheep, who will hear Christ's voice if they listen carefully. Their responsibility is to act upon what they hear. In doing so, their hearing will improve: Christ's voice will seem louder although, in actuality, it isn't. As long as the drawn disciple does what the disciple

knows is right, the earnest of eternal life within the disciple develops. The disciple must only endure to his or her end. If the disciple never hears some of what Christ says but has been growing all along because of the disciple choosing to do what the disciple knows is right, then the disciple will be born with a glorified body at Christ's return. By this means, Christ and the Father have developed disciples despite the king of the North's hijacking of Christianity.

Satan and his demon lieutenants cannot stop Elohim's plan of reproduction even by stealing the plan. Reproduction has continued all along, not something the Church of God has historically taught, because the Church of God itself has unknowingly always been a part of hijacked Christianity. It has tended to perceive itself as the alternative to the great delusion/deception, not realizing that it hasn't escape being deceived. The true Body of Christ transcends denominations and fellowships. While some denominations retain more of the primitive faith than others, drawn disciples have turned up in most all of the denominations; I don't know of an exception. However, as the Bride of Christ begins to ready Herself for the wedding feast, doctrinal error will be removed from fellowships strong on love, and love will be inserted into fellowships strong on doctrine. I wish I could say that all fellowships will hold only the doctrine of Jesus when He returns, but the seven letters to the endtime Churches indicates that six of them don't perfectly hold the faith once delivered. Only one does, and that one is presently concealed within various splinters of the Church of God, so the one Church with both love and the primitive doctrine cannot now effectively do any work. It truly has little strength, but you are presently reading some of its work. Christ opens the door. This sixth of seven churches will do a work as great as David's killing of Goliath, so this is not a fellowship for the fainthearted. The Goliath to be slain is the king of the North, the demon behind Cross-theology. We'll pick the fight, start battling, but Christ as our older brother will have to finish the war. And He will. He has promised us as much since Nebuchadnezzar had his vision.

Why pick a fight you know you cannot win and from which Christ will need to bail you out?

The seal of God isn't the sign of the Sabbath, but sighing and crying about the abominations committed by the world to its citizenry. Saul's army could sigh and cry about Goliath for weeks and had. They were figuratively sealed by God, but Goliath was still out there until David arrived and trusted God enough to go kill him. I trust God enough to take a run at the king of the North, knowing that I will need help to finish him off, and knowing that because of the fight hundreds of thousands, possibly millions of saints will be in the first resurrection who wouldn't be there otherwise—and if I don't do this job, somebody else will, for Christ intends that it gets done, that these saints be firstfruits. So the question properly asked is, Why doesn't visible Christianity rollover and play dead? It will lose eventually. But then, you wouldn't have expected Goliath to play dead.

If you are in visible Christianity, understand that the end has already been written: the Sabbath-keeping saints win. Peace will come to a tormented world, so this fight with the king of the North might be my last opportunity to do battle. It's certainly the first occasion when I've engaged an enemy in global warfare. Instead of being defensive and just taking whatever the demons send my way, I'm on the offense, where the whole armor of God protects my front side. I intend to take advantage of this opportunity to fight, especially if it might also be my last chance. Christ's Millennium reign won't be organized on paradigms of competition, if you can imagine that. There won't be any war until Satan is released at the end of the thousand years.

Returning to Galatians and an interrupted thought (as a novelist, I tend to think in larger units of words; I'm not a minimalist, nor do I desire to practice minimalism): justification is, then, not lawlessness or sin. Nor is obedience to the law of God being argued. In Paul's epistle to these Galatians, obedience isn't at issue. Trusting in the flesh to make one right with God is the issue—justification is only by faith. Therefore, faith cannot be lawlessness or sin by the linguistic structure

of the question. Paul wouldn't have these Galatians stop keeping the law. Rather, his argument is a global presentation of the inadequacy of the flesh to save ourselves. Regardless of how much someone wants to assign law-keeping as the linguistic object to the icon phrase *the works of the law*, that assignment cannot be supported from these passages. *The works of the law* are what has been produced by the law in question. As such, *a work of the law* could be doing what is right, which Paul commands (6:9). But even in doing what is right, the production of that righteousness doesn't justify us. Only by belief in Christ, belief unto obedience which is faith by Paul's own reasoning in his epistle to the Romans, can anyone be justified. Unless God the Father chooses to give us eternal life, we will die like our dogs, with the only difference being that our deaths pay the penalty for our sins. Dogs are without law; therefore, dogs don't sin, and don't need to be resurrected to be judged. Once a beast dies, it ceases to exist forever. Because humanity has been created in God's image (and for different reasons than were beasts), humanity will be resurrected to stand judgment for the deeds done by each individual, the exception being that Jesus paid the death penalty for all those who have been drawn by the Father and called by Christ to be disciples. To this category of individuals, grace covers their sins when they endure to their end. Judgment is presently upon them [us].

I will spend considerable time with the symbolism of Yom Kipporim later in this explication, but I want to preview what I will write: on this high sabbath, two goats are taken for Israel's sin offering. Both goats are sin offerings; both goats symbolize Christ. One is sacrificed—this goat represents Christ's death at Calvary, which covers our sins so that we can be reconciled to the Father. Over the second goat are pronounced the sins of Israel before the goat is led off to a far wilderness—this goat represents the resurrected Christ bearing our sins on an ongoing basis so that we can continue to have a relationship with the Father. These sins properly belong to Satan, and when Yom Kipporim becomes a reality after Christ's return and before the beginning

of His Millennium reign, Christ will return these sins to Satan. But, if a drawn disciple leaves the covenant relationship with the Father, Christ returns these sins to the wayward disciple. Unless the disciple repents prior to death, the disciple will go into the lake of fire because of these sins. So once saved, always saved is a doctrine of demons. The drawn disciple must endure to the end in a covenant relationship with the Father, or the disciple will experience the second death. His or her first death and resurrection was at baptism. The disciple's physical death can pay for no additional sin, not even one. Thus, the disciple is dependent upon Christ bearing his or her sins, then giving those sins to Satan when Yom Kipporim becomes a reality.

For the drawn disciple, no further judgment awaits him or her beyond death, if the disciple has endured to the end, whether that end is physical death or is glorification when Christ returns. While alive, we will have determined whether we will be ruled by Christ. Those disciples who in this life practice lawlessness will be resurrected into the lake of fire; by their works, they have demonstrated that they will not be ruled by Christ. Those disciples who will be ruled by Christ will be given glorious bodies upon His return. Therefore, lawlessness stands opposed to faith; stands opposed to justification; stands opposed to belief; stands opposed to Christ. Remember it is Peter's lawless ignorant who twist Paul's epistles to their own destruction; so we shouldn't be surprised to find the modern descendants of these same readers twisting Paul's use of the icon phrase *the works of the law* into a doctrine of lawlessness. Such a reading of Paul's epistles isn't of the household of faith.

Galatians 2:19–20—

For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Paul is, in his words, expressing the same concept that I have expressed when addressing the earnest of eternal life developing within the drawn disciple. Looking at Paul's statement at a clause level, which I just addressed and said we shouldn't do, how does death come through the law? By judgment, right? Is there any other way? There can't be, can there? With a knife, death comes by blood loss, usually. With a bullet, death comes by shock or by hemorrhaging. By poison, death comes with nerve paralysis. But *through the law*, death can only come by judgment. Thus, by his judgment of himself according to the law, Paul understands that he deserves death. However, in dying to the law (in judging himself), Paul also realizes that the blood of Christ as a sin offering paid his death penalty so that he might now live to God, an awareness he wouldn't have if he had not been spiritually modified by the Father.

Let's pause for a moment, for I write this on the day following Yom Kipporim. I attended, yesterday, a service conducted by a Church of God minister who understood neither the spiritual significance of the Fast, nor the symbolism represented. This minister has parroted the doctrinal position of the evangelist who heads this splinter for perhaps thirty years without ever seeing that both goats of Leviticus 16:5 are for a sin offering. This minister said that one goat represented Christ and one represented Satan, which would make Satan our sin offering, an illogical position that the minister could neither defend, nor build upon, but resorted to saying that's how the passage has always been understood. Not true. That's how the passage has been popularly understood for the past seventy years, but that understanding is faulty and needs to die an unnatural death. The two goats, as I have earlier written, represent Christ, both of them, the one for Christ's shed blood and death at Calvary and the other for the resurrected Christ who has gone into a far country where He now bears our sins. Humor me and allow me to repeat myself: Yom Kipporim commemorates when Christ will return those sins He now bears to Satan, their rightful owner. That event will occur when Satan is bound for a thousand years; it occurs in

the period between when Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah and when His Millennium reign begins. Thus, Christ as King of kings will not be bearing the sins of humanity during His Millennium reign, which is why animal sacrifice will return (Ezek chapters 40–46), but I have written all of this before. So what Yom Kipporim commemorates is the extreme specialness of our relationship with the Father, which we now have due to Christ's blood covering our sins. The Father wanted a relationship with drawn disciples so badly that He had the Logos pay with His life the penalty for the sins that would otherwise separate us from the both of Them.

At the Feast of Tabernacles, Vail, Colorado, 1996, Mr. Jim Turner, a minister formerly assigned to Alaska when I was there, said, "Isn't it nice that we don't have to be special anymore," referring to the Worldwide Church of God's doctrinal changes that has made that fellowship a part of Evangelical Christianity and another minion of the king of the North. Well, Mr. Turner never understood how special drawn disciples are to Christ and the Father. A very high price has been paid by Both so that They can have an ongoing relationship with the disciples the Father has chosen. The Elect isn't only special; the Elect is holy. They have been bought by the blood of the Son of Man. To either say something as blasphemous as drawn disciples aren't special, or that Satan is our sin offering typifies why the Church of God is a deceived part of greater Christianity that also needs purified.

I hope the anger I feel—I spent all night angry at the ignorance which would cause a minister of the Church of God to identify Satan as half of the sin offering for humanity—is the same anger Christ felt when He tipped over the moneychangers' tables. I don't know. What I'm certain about is that for six years I have been unhappy enough with the administrative changes within WCG that would cause a minister to devalue Christ's sacrifice that I have remembered the minister's exact words. Those words have gnawed at my patience as if they were mice attacking old fabric insulated wiring, an electrical fire the certain end result. I suspect they will eventually test my conversion as I someday

take to task the bald-headed pip-squeak who has authored the doctrinal changes within what was the most visible administration of the Church of God. That man presents himself as a scholar when, in reality, he was a scab on the primitive faith that Christ has now picked off. Unfortunately, the pox he spread has spiritually killed ministers such as Mr. Turner.

Paul has no patience for those converted Pharisees who taught newly drawn disciples that they had to be circumcised, even though those converted Pharisees had the sacred writings on their side. I have no patience for either *the watchmen* who teach that Germany will overrun the United States, or for the ministry that minimize the specialness of being drawn by the Father. Too high a price has been paid by Christ to toss off His death as if it were a trivial event, of little consequence. Christ's death pays the price of having a relationship with the Father from when it occurred to when all will know the Lord following His return as the all powerful Messiah. Even at two thousand years, this period isn't overly long. It is important that the Church of God disciples as many drawn saints as have been called. The Church should never dismiss any Evangelical or Universal Christian as not having been drawn. Certainly some haven't been, but no human has the means of identifying who those false converts are before their works reveal them. Therefore, I have the task of discipling and seeking to purify in the primitive faith everyone who self-identifies him or herself as a Christian. The wolves will seek to devour unto themselves the flocks of Christ. Supported by historical exegesis, the wolves prop up the reign of the king of the North. My task is to slaughter as many wolves as possible until the king of the North reels as a drunk man, ready to be toppled by Christ. The irony is, whatever I do is really Christ doing it, so it is Christ who gets all credit for toppling the belief system that bears His name, but retains few of his teachings.

Someone is certain to say that Christ's shed blood is for the sins of all of humanity that has ever lived. It can be, since two goats are the Yom Kipporim sin offering, one of which is sacrificed and one of

which has the sins of Israel pronounced over its head before being taken into the wilderness. However, how many times does the death penalty have to be paid for a person's sins? If a person dies for his or her sin, assuming the person only has one sin, has the penalty for that sin been paid? It has, hasn't it? Was Christ's death needed to reconcile this person to the Father? No. The person's death paid the penalty for sin—the person will have paid the penalty for his or her sins before the person is judged, and the concept of a person receiving stripes during judgment begins to make sense.

After death, after resurrection, and after judgment, a person will either be as innocent as Adam was when he was created, or the person will go into the lake of fire. Because of the person's innocence, the person will be able to have a relationship with God.

The question that needs asked is, will the same death pay the penalty for more than one sin? In our reality, a mass murderer is sentenced to one death penalty, regardless of how many convictions are obtained. Does God differ from this standard? We have no evidence that He does, which isn't proof that He doesn't. But reason would conclude that a person's death pays the penalty for all of the sins a person has committed. Judgment, then, becomes the formal sentencing of the individual to the death experienced during a time when no additional sacrifice for sin is available to the person. So in the great White Throne Judgment, the resurrected person, a physical human being as typified in Ezekiel 37, is in a similar position to an Israelite who had his or her heart circumcised and was keeping the statutes, commandments and ordinances written in the law—this person has only to confess Christ with his or her mouth and believe in his or her heart, and the person will be saved, will have his or her name written in the Book of Life. The resurrected person must choose to be ruled by Christ, who will have reigned a thousand years as King of kings. In both cases, public profession and sincere belief in Christ being the Son of Man will cause the person's name to be written in the Book of Life. However, no sacri-

fice remains for this person if he or she wants to continue life as the person lived it before.

The above is an area of mixed revelation and speculation, with what is absolutely certain being that there will be a resurrection and judgment and no additional sacrifice for sin. Adultery can occur during the great White Throne Judgment, considering that sexual lusting can be adultery and that the person was resurrected as a continuation of life just as being lifted up from the baptismal water is a continuation of life prior to being baptized. In our relationship with the Father following baptism, Christ bears our sins as we live under Satan's administration. These sins rightfully belong to Satan because they originate with his broadcast of rebellion against the Most High. But Satan won't be around during the White Throne Judgment. Resurrected humanity will have no excuse for what we now label as human nature—we are so influenced by Satan's broadcast that we won't recognize ourselves when we come out from under his broadcast. But the memories of how a person was prior to resurrection will still be in the person's mind. If this person acts on those memories while under judgment, the lake of fire awaits. Christ's blood doesn't cover the sin, for the person is already reconciled to the Father. Christ doesn't bear the sin, for the sin doesn't come from Satan so it doesn't need to be returned to Satan. Rather, the sin comes from a memory of rebellion against the Most High, which is the insidious nature of Satan's doctrine of spiritual lawlessness. For the person's lifetime, this person thought that he or she was in a relationship with Christ and the Most High while this person practiced lawlessness, or while disregarding the law of God, *since to keep the law is legalism*. This person, when resurrected, will not take seriously the necessity for keeping the law when no further sacrifice remains for the person. Any violation of the law will send this resurrected person into the lake of fire as a rebel. Satan has set this person up for eternal damnation. He has sought to continue his war against the Most High by leaving within humanity his implantation of rebellion.

The horror of lawlessness needs better understood: for the drawn disciple, consider your baptism. What were your thoughts immediately prior to baptism? How about afterwards? Were you basically the same person? You were, right? The seriousness of the ceremony should have been with you, but you were just as capable afterwards as you were before of beating the dog, to use a trite, figurative example.

For God the Father and for Christ, resurrection of the dead is no more difficult than raising a person from the baptismal water was for the minister performing the ceremony. The two resurrections are not only analogous, but are directly comparable. As far as the Father is concerned, the person literally dies when he or she goes under the water at baptism. The ceremony isn't merely symbolism, but is literal death just as the Passover sacraments are the blood and flesh of Christ. And I realize I just entered a debate over whether a broken piece of unleavened bread actually becomes Christ's flesh or is merely symbolically Christ's flesh—that piece of bread doesn't become animal protein. Chew it for a while, split it out and look at it. It is still undigested wheat flour. The same for baptism. Emersion under water for a few seconds doesn't cause literal death to occur, but in the spiritual realm, physical death is no greater an obstacle to overcome than is lifting a person out of baptismal water for us who are inside the Creation. Therefore, raising a person out of baptismal water and resurrecting a person—both occurring inside the physical Creation—are comparable, making what will occur in the White Throne Judgment more understandable than the spareness of the language would suggest. And by this transference of experience, we really don't need more text written about the great White Throne Judgment.

Allow me to run this by you again: within the Christian community, awareness of a great White Throne Judgment being a spiritual event that will occur after Christ's Millennium reign has been available to all saints since the close of the 1st-Century. Paul, though, didn't have all of this information, so there were concepts concerning justification that Paul knew but couldn't contextualize. But even to saints

who knew what Paul didn't about this great White Throne Judgment, the Book of Revelation has been sealed by a literary trope. Thus, understanding what will happen in this Judgment was as impossible for saints as was understanding the prophecies of Daniel, which were sealed and secret until the time of the end. We have entered that generic period of history. The Father has, through Christ, unsealed the prophecies of Daniel. You have read their unsealed story. By reading this far into this book, you know what even Satan didn't until the Father revealed what He had caused to be secret until this time of the end. And in unsealing prophecy, the Father has also unsealed knowledge about the great White Throne Judgment.

A legitimate question is how can more be known about the great White Throne Judgment than has been recorded in the Book of Revelation. The "more" comes from better understanding the prophecies of Ezekiel, and from finally understanding the symbolism of Yom Kipporim, which the Jews of Christ's time understood so poorly that the fit man who was to take the goat into the wilderness would kill this goat which symbolized the glorified Christ bearing their sins. The irony of the Jews killing Christ and killing this second goat is inescapable, but has been unknown to saints until recently. Don't you suspect that Christ desired to make this irony known to saints before now? I imagine that he did, but until the literary trope used to seal Revelation allowed the Book to be better read at the time of the end, Christ couldn't tell anyone.

We have had the details of what will happen in the great White Throne Judgment all along: they are portrayed in the pattern of the temple, with the altar of sacrifice and the laver representing baptism and resurrection. We have been spiritually blind, which should humble all saints.

Now, returning to the horror of lawlessness: first, the doctrine (it is a doctrine of demons) leaves drawn saints without an offering for the Table of Showbread, so the saint cannot proceed into the holy of holies even through the veil has been rent. The saint who holds this doctrine

will not rest under the Mercy Seat, will not receive Grace. This saint will be resurrected to condemnation, and will enter the lake of fire as a physical being. So the first casualties of the doctrine of lawlessness are drawn saints who prove they are not genuine by bringing no offerings to the Father, who doesn't need the good works of saints any more than the *Logos* needed baked flour and mixed oil and grain.

The greater number of casualties of the doctrine of lawlessness will occur during Judgment: just as the saint was the same person, almost, after baptism as before, humanity will be the same, sans Satan's broadcast of rebellion, as it was before death. The person who sincerely believes that Christ doesn't require him or her to keep the law of God today will believe the same thing when resurrected, but when resurrected, no sacrifice will remain for this person if the person violates the law of God. The doctrine has set the person up to be cast into the lake of fire, for if the person sincerely believes sin isn't a big deal to God because Christ lived a sinfree life, then the person will not believe sin is a big deal when resurrected. This person will sin and will be cast into the lake of fire. (Doesn't the irony of not having to keep the law of God because Christ lived a sinfree life strike a person as odd? That is what the doctrine of lawlessness teaches, and the person who holds this doctrine is a spiritual idiot.)

If a person has been drawn by the Father and is being called by Christ, the person has the better promise, for after baptism, Christ will bear this person's sins as he or she resists Satan's broadcast of rebellion. Resistance, though, is necessary—and this means keeping the law of God to the best of the person's knowledge and ability. That is all Christ and the Father ask of the person, and that is the reasonable duty of every drawn saint.

The professing of Christ in the great White Throne Judgment will be choosing Christ over Satan after seeing the results of both demonstration projects. In this professing, Christ as the resurrected person's sin offering isn't at issue. What is at stake is the determination of whom will the person serve. Although the spareness of the language in

the Book of Revelation doesn't allow us to know exactly how long the person will live as a physical human in the Judgment, most everything else can be extrapolated from the pattern of the temple. The Church of God has traditionally taught that the period of physical life is a hundred years long, based on an errant reading of Isaiah 65:20. It might be that long, but I cannot support that length of time from Isaiah.

What Paul writes in the above citation is his expression of the joy we should feel during the Fast (i.e., Yom Kipporim), knowing what a high price both Father and Son paid so we could have a relationship with Them—Christ lives in us, thank you, Father, in Your Son's name.

Galatians 2:21—

I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

The first covenant was the contractual basis for God choosing Israel over all of the other peoples of the world, but the contract wasn't about justification. Rather, the contract was for national blessings for national obedience as a witness to all other peoples.

Abraham's faith allowed for the making of the covenant, but upon leaving Egypt Israel proved faithless even prior to the golden calf incident. What the first covenant established was that the people couldn't obey with the law outside of them. As such, these physical Israelites could not have a relationship with the Father. Sin always stood between them and the Father. The blood of bulls and goats made them feel better about themselves, but didn't make them any more righteous. All died for their sins, thereby paying the penalty for their transgressions of the law.

The Church of God has traditionally taught that all of humanity, including all of both houses of Israel, will be resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment, and will get their chance to have Christ's blood cover their sins, thereby receiving their chance to be reconciled to God through Christ's shed blood. This teaching contains the essence

of truth, without being harmfully incorrect. It was probably the best understanding of the great White Throne Judgment that was possible prior to the time of the end. But with the literary trope that seals the Book of Revelation allowing for more of the Book to be understood, the Body of Christ has grown more in knowledge. Physical death pays the penalty for physical sin, which is the transgression of the law of God. The blood of bulls and goats cannot make that physical death penalty for the first sin a person commits go away. The blood of livestock will not reconcile a person to the Father, who doesn't tolerate any transgression of His law. However, the blood of livestock did signify to the *Logos* that the person wanted to make amends, and was willing to pay a hefty price to make these amends. As such, the *Logos* remained in the covenant relationship He had made with Israel, with promises of national prosperity to Israel for obedience to the law of God. Never was a relationship with the Father offered to Israel—because of sin, Israel remained separated from the Father, and would remain separated until all of the nation died and was resurrected. The blood of livestock can never satisfy a human death penalty. Paul understands this point, as has the Church of God. What hasn't been understood is that once a person has been condemned to death, and dies, then the curse of the law has been satisfied; the penalty for sin has been paid. This person doesn't need Christ's blood to reconcile him or her to the Father. The person's death has accomplished this reconciliation. However, the person is dead. The person has no consciousness. The person has no immortal soul (the concept of an immortal soul is an ugly lie). The person knows nothing. The person doesn't know that he or she has been reconciled to the Father, and can finally have the relationship with the Father which He has desired from the beginning. The person is, literally, the elements of the earth, nothing more.

Enter, now, physical resurrection, as portrayed in Ezekiel 37: this dead flesh that knows nothing but is finally reconciled to the Father has the breath of life returned to it. It is again a human being, who at the moment of resurrection is absolutely sinfree and no longer under

the curse of the law that still exists outside the person. This person needs to have his or her heart circumcised, which amounts to having the law of God written on his or her heart. Because the person is reconciled to the Father (which is directly analogous to a living saint having been withdrawn from the world by the Father under the shed blood of Christ), the person can have his or her heart circumcised, and be in exactly the same position as Israel under the Moab covenant. The person is contractually obliged to observe everything written in the book of the law: Deuteronomy. The person who holds the doctrine of lawlessness will protest, saying that Christ doesn't expect that from him or her, and the person condemns him or herself to the lake of fire.

The resurrected person who has his or her heart circumcised now has the law of God inside the person. Without being under Satan's broadcast of rebellion, the person has absolutely no excuse for breaking the law of God—and most resurrected individuals won't. Therefore, the person will have his or her name written in the Book of Life. The person will become a glorified member of the family of God.

Christ died so that while we still live, we can go through the death and resurrection process of reconciliation to the Father. What Christ's death actually accomplishes (the specialness of His death has not been well understood by either the Church of God, or greater Christianity, a claim sure to create argument) is that while alive an individual can have an ongoing relationship with the Father: again, after an individual's first violation of the law, the individual is cut off from the Father until the individual's death pays the penalty for that sin. The individual doesn't need "original sin" to do this cutting off. Living as an infant under Satan's broadcast of rebellion causes the natural mind to rebel, just as the angels under Satan rebelled against Elohim; thus, the carnal mind is enmity to God. In modern language usage, we would say that the natural mind is against God. However, Christ's death pays the death penalty for drawn disciples, and the resurrected Christ bears the post-baptism sins of disciples so that on a moment by moment basis, these drawn disciples can interact with the Father, and vice versa.

Therefore, sin cannot ever be imputed to these disciples. They are truly holy. This does not mean, though, that these disciples will not sin; rather, it means that on a continual basis, Christ bears their sins so that repentance remains possible, so that the lines of communication between the Father and the disciple remain open, so that the budding relationship is maintained. After all, these disciples will be adopted by the Father. He wants to get to know them ahead of time. And for this opportunity to have a relationship with future members of His family, the Father was willing to pay the enormously high price of having the *Logos* die. Again, we aren't just a little bit special. There really are no words to describe how special we are to the Father—and as you are aware, I have used many words to arrive at this point. For me, all that's truly possible to express is the type of anger displayed by Christ when He tipped over the moneychangers' tables. I suspect Peter as a blunt speaking fisherman would second my sentiment of wanting to pinch the heads off those who would minimize the price the Father paid so that we could be special to Him, but I should save this sentiment for war with the king of the North. He is the one directly responsible for hijacking Christianity; my fight is with him and with Satan, and I will need Christ to bail me out. A bald-headed pip-squeak won't prove to be much of a foe. He's hardly worth going after. He wouldn't be worth the effort if he hadn't already done so much damage to so many.

One of my observations in Alaska is that when a dog goes out and annoys a grizzly, the bear only takes it so long before it chases the dog home. The dog is real brave until the bear turns on him. This dog might have treed any number of black bears, but inevitably, the first grizzly it encounters sends it scurrying for safety. And pip-squeak dogs run surprisingly fast.

A person will not “naturally” obey God, a case where what is “natural” is learned behavior at a very early age, an awareness developed in the late 20th-Century when theoretical Feminism introduced the concept of “social constructs” into academia. While this concept threatens all established “truth” by identifying *truth* as just another defining

social myth, the concept also allows us to pick *truth* up as if it were a stone and look at it from all sides, allows us to weigh and measure *truth*, allows us to examine the origins of *truth*—and what we find is that *truth* is less often true than it is a myth created for the expressed purpose of maintaining the status quo. The *truth* behind “original sin” contains nothing verifiable from any textual reading of the writings of Moses. Yet Christianity caught the *truth* of “original sin” as if it caught a Greek virus, then developed an immunity to the virus’ deadly effects, and has ever since inoculated converts with a vaccine derived from those early pustules. If a convert merely believes in Jesus, the convert is saved from “original sin,” whereas the person who doesn’t convert and accept this vaccine is doomed to hell, where the person will live forever in a spiritual rotisserie, being grilled first on her left side, then on her right, never quite browning enough to be served to demons, such is the nonsense produced by the virus.

The Most High God will not tolerate violation of His law, whether by angels or by humans. Sin is violation of His law. It isn’t some undefined activity that sort of harms another person. Does having any other god but the Most High harm another person? The answer is actually yes, but that yes isn’t readily discernible; so for the person who doesn’t believe, the answer would seem no. Thus, for this person, who doesn’t believe in the Most High God, making protecting the environment the center of her life and her primary focus in life seems a very good thing. She will give her life to protecting old growth forests, and spotted owls, and microscopic snails, and she won’t realize that her “sin” cuts her off from the Most High. Yes, but, you say, she doesn’t believe in the Most High. Correct. Despite her unbelief, the Most High still exists. Her unbelief doesn’t make Him go away as if He were a nightmare. She will die a good person. She will afterwards be resurrected, and she will have to face judgment, at which time she will be embarrassed by why she didn’t know He existed when she worked so hard to protect what He had created. While she lived, her violation of the law of God cut her off from the Most High. She couldn’t know Him, or know of Him, even

if she wanted. Sin separates us from the Most High, regardless of whether that sin is murder or merely having another god, the second possibly the harder to repent of.

Since sin, or the violation of God's law, separates humanity as well as angels from the Most High; and since all of humanity lives under Satan's broadcast of rebellion, and has succumbed to that broadcast; and since once separated from the Most High humanity cannot know of Him, or even determine His existence because of the presence of demonic spirits that pose as gods; and since the death of bulls and goats cannot pay the death penalty for humans who have sinned, the Logos or Spokesperson for Elohim came as a human being, as the man Jesus the Christ, to reveal the Father to drawn disciples and to die so that these same disciples could have an ongoing relationship with the Father even though they had not paid the penalty for their sins. In fairness to the angels, the Most High always requires that the death penalty for sin be paid. If He had made an exception for Adam, or for Moses, or for David, then He would have played favorites. In fact, the Father had no relationship with Moses or with David; their sins separated them from Him. Both only knew the *Logos*. Likewise, all of ancient Israel only knew the *Logos*. Jesus' problems with the Pharisees stem from His claims of being the Son of God. As far as the Pharisees were concerned, Jesus blasphemed the *Logos*, who they mistakenly assumed was the Most High. They were unable to comprehend that when Elohim said, *Let us make man in our image*, both the *Logos* and the Most High were present. But even in Eden prior to the serpent's entrance, Adam as a man spoke only with the *Logos*. Adam didn't know the Father. Adam's sin caused Adam and Eve to hide themselves from the *Logos*, not from the Father. We can reason together as to why the Father chose not to remain involved, but the Genesis account has only the *Logos* interacting with Adam and Eve. Something might have occurred in the missing portion of time between creation and the forbidden fruit incident that caused the separation, or humanity might have been the *Logos*' idea, and the Father left Him to deal with this

fleshly imitation of Themselves. The whatever isn't important enough that Moses recorded it for us. Instead, what we see is only one entity interacting with ancient Israel. The entity was Christ, who tells us that He came to reveal the Father. If the Father needed to be revealed, then the Father wasn't previously known to either ancient Israel or to the Pharisees. It wasn't the Father to whom Solomon prayed, or to whom Ezra prayed. Nor was it the Father's backside that Moses saw.

Because sin separated humanity from the Father and required the death of the sinner for reconciliation, something not possible without experiencing a resurrection, humanity had no relationship with the Father from Adam until Jesus' shed blood reconciled the disciples to the Father. The shed blood of Jesus as the *Logos* made flesh is more than adequate to pay the death penalty for all of Creation, including for dogs and cats and dinosaurs. But the Father isn't interested in a relationship with your dog, sorry. In fact, He isn't, at this time, interested in having a relationship with all of humanity. He is only interested in having a relationship with those individuals whom He has drawn from the world for whatever reason.

Let's pause for a moment and ponder the enormity of what occurred when the *Logos* was born as Jesus. The model of physical death paying the penalty for the sins of physical human beings allows for a physical resurrection of humanity to a sin free state, at which time these human beings will be like Adam was prior to when Satan entered Eden. In this model, resurrected humanity can have a relationship with the Father and the *Logos* just as Adam had in Eden. Without Satan's broadcast of rebellion to pollute its thought patterns, resurrected humanity would be joyfully obedient, and would consist of created beings of a lower sort than the angels, but in most ways, like the angels. They could renew the face of the earth, and perhaps through vehicular space travel, they could begin to renew the surface of other planets. They would have paid the penalty for their sins, but no further sacrifice would exist for them. And here is where problems enter this model: if resurrected humanity sinned again, it would again have to die. But the effect of

physical death would be different for these once resurrected individuals. No longer would they fear death if they knew they would again be resurrected; thus, if a woman were tempting enough, or if a man viral enough, the person might well decide the sin was worth the gratification. Lawlessness would have no lasting consequences, and God would have created with humanity the type of revolving system we find with American prison populations where recidivism keeps prisons full.

If, on the other hand, there were no additional resurrection possible for reconciled humanity, but the permanent end of self in a lake of fire, then once resurrected, humanity would fear doing anything, for any violation of the law of God would result in non-existence. The possibility of sinning would likely paralyze action. There would be no renewing of even a flowerbox. And the Father and the Logos would have merely transferred the problem Satan created for Them with the angels to a lower order of being. At best, humanity would become pets.

The lie the serpent told Eve was that she wouldn't die, that if she ate she would be like God. We cannot actually know Satan's mind at this point in the Genesis narrative although that hasn't stopped scores of scholars from assigning motives to humanity's adversary. Perhaps, at the time, Satan believed Eve wouldn't die, since no angel, even after rebelling against Elohim and having been defeated, had ever died, as far as we know. The rebelling angels were, rather, cast down into darkness. So death might have come as a surprise to Satan. I doubt that Elohim consulted with Satan prior to Them creating the universe.

I also doubt that Elohim consulted with Satan about which demonstrations he, Satan, would or could conduct on this newly created earth. The beginning of the Book of Job indicates that Satan still speaks with the Most High, but their relationship isn't amicable. God allowed Satan to attack Job, but their disparity in power is striking. In the narrative, Satan seems more like a chained dog than a roaring lion. So it might well be that since death comes with sin to created life (which is a primary argument for a young earth), Satan was ignorant about what would happen when Eve ate her forbidden fruit luncheon.

Certainly the concept of death had no reality that Adam could assign to it. *Death* was a signifier without a signified, for prior to when sin entered the created world, the Creation hadn't experienced death if the biblical text can be read mimetically.

Where the biblical text is silent, understanding what happened can only occur through revelation or speculation. Each reader must decide for him or herself whether what I write is Christ's voice being heard through revelation, or a fiction writer's speculation. No claim of revelation will dispel doubt, and no denial of revelation will dissuade belief. Therefore, I say that Satan needed, for his developing schemes to continue, people to not fear death; for if humanity derived from Adam feared death, then humanity would have sought every way possible to avoid death. Self-preservation would have been humanity's greatest concern, which would, most likely, have caused humanity to turn towards its Creator, and would have caused humanity to believe God unto obedience. Eve rebelled when she didn't fear death. Satan's demonstrations would inevitably have been stopped with widespread fear of death. Certainly, the long lifespans of preFlood humanity didn't tend to cause humans to fear death. Yet both Adam and Eve died as did others, so Satan needed the lie of humanity having an immortal soul to negate the reality of corpses. If humanity believed that death was no more than crossing a river, then death wasn't to be greatly feared, especially by horny young men who thought seventy virgins awaited their arrival in the afterlife.

The idea of virgins awaiting every man's arrival in heaven seems blatantly silly to greater Christianity, but the concept is no more silly than thinking a person has an immortal soul. Evangelical Christianity feels a sort of lofty smugness about its saints being raptured to heaven. Greater Christianity feels this same sort of smugness about itself going to heaven. And all of Christianity feels this smugness as it consigns Muslims to hell. But these same Mohammedans feel equally smug about their entrance into heaven whereas Christians are doomed to hell for having three gods. And Jesus taught that eternal life was only avail-

able as a gift from God, that no man had inherited immortal life in either heaven or hell. Sorry, hell isn't real, except as a hole in the ground (i.e., the grave). The Church of God's teachings have consistently been that humanity has no life other than its breath until given that life by God. For greater Christianity's hell to exist, sinners would need eternal life, a gift of God to those who believe—and what we see is intelligent men, trapped under the delusion Paul said was coming to all those who were perishing. Sinners do not have eternal life. Read the Book.

Satan needed humanity to not fear either death, or God. With one lie, he could accomplish both: if a person doesn't really die but continues to live as a soul in heaven, then the person needs only fear what will keep his or her soul out of heaven. The person has been set up to be intimidated by demons; for to deny the existence of the soul will cause great torment in hell. To resist the demands of the demon will also cause eternal torment. To not go on a Crusade will cause torment. To not pay tithes will cause torment. To listen to any other teaching will cause torment. To do anything but tow the party line (as if trolling for souls) will cause torment that continues forever and forever, such is the nature of this loving god whom the lawless serve. But the flip side is, the person who performs all that the demon demands will be in heaven with the demon; so death need not be feared. The soldier has died for god and country. The mother will see her son in heaven. The brother will worry about whether he can ever measure up. And the child will avenge his father as another generation fights for the king of the North, or for the king of the South, both powerful demons who have reigned through intimidation.

When Adam sinned, the Most High ceased being involved with humanity. Interaction between humanity and its Creator was always with the *Logos*, the entity born as the man Jesus the Christ. Israel knew only the *Logos*. Moses saw the backside of the *Logos*. David's prayers were to the *Logos*. (And I have written all of this before.) But the Father wanted badly enough to have a relationship with humanity that the

Logos gave His life as the sin offering which justifies humanity, or in other words, reconciles humanity to the Father.

Both the Father and the Son paid a very high price so that we, as sinners and repentant sinners, can approach the Father. All can approach the Father after the Father first draws the individual from the world. And I am back to where I began: consider for a moment the specialness of this relationship. We, sinners, through no righteousness of our own, are noticed for whatever reason[s] by the Father (and possibly known from before birth by the Father), and the Father draws us out of the world, modifies us spiritually by writing His law on our hearts and in our minds, then lets His Son's blood cover our sins on an ongoing basis so that we can have communication with Him. And the majority of those individuals He draws turn their backs to Him and refused to be ruled by His Son, seven of ten in the parable of the pounds analogy. "Isn't it nice that we don't have to be special anymore"—those words gall me, for no higher price has ever been paid than what the Father and the Son paid so that we could have a relationship which ought to be denied us because of our sins. Let my words be recorded against this man; yet, let him repent of his ignorance.

While Christ's death is certainly adequate to pay for all of the sins ever committed by humanity, His blood covers only the sins of drawn disciples who accept his sacrifice; He bears only the sins of those who believe unto obedience. His blood doesn't cover the sins of Muslims although it could if they were drawn by the Father. His blood doesn't cover the sins of Buddhists, or Jews. He doesn't bear the sins of Christians who practice lawlessness. Again, His blood and His life cover, on an ongoing basis, only the sins of drawn disciples who believe unto obedience. His blood reconciles a person to the Father, but if that person refuses to be ruled by Christ, then the person comes out from under His shed blood, bears his or her own sins, for which no additional sacrifice remains, since to have been reconciled to God amounts

to the person having died and having been physically resurrected as the person would have been in the great White Throne Judgment.

Have I made my point yet? As drawn disciples, we are exceedingly special to the Father.

Justification is symbolically death and resurrection. The symbolism of baptism to a jaded world seems light and trivial. A person has been dunked, that's all. (Sprinkling with holy water is not baptism.) But to the Father and the Son, the person has literally died and has been resurrected into a physical body, just as if the person had actually experienced death and resurrection unto judgment. This is why judgment is now on the Household of God, why no further judgment awaits saints than what will occur in the remainder of their lives, why saints will pass directly from death to life (John 5:24). We live as new creations, just as if we were resurrected in the White Throne Judgment. We don't live with sin: one goat on Yom Kipporim symbolically reconciles us to the Father by paying the penalty for our past sins. The other goat symbolically justifies us to the Father by continuing to pay the penalty of our sins on an ongoing basis. Both goats represent Christ, who died that we might be reconciled to the Father, and lives to bear our sins so that we might be justified. And I repeat myself because of the importance of what baptism represents. You, as a baptized person, have voluntarily sacrificed your life. Christ has resurrected you, so that you may live again as a new creation. For both Christ and the Father, your sacrificial death and resurrection are real. Through faith, they need to be as real to you. If they are not, you will desert the covenant relationship to which you have been drawn, thereby making you worthy of the lake of fire.

I don't know how to say the above more forcefully, so all I can do is repeat myself, for which I apologize. As a writing instructor, I know I should edit out my redundancy. But just as Paul will throw everything he can at a figurative wall in hopes that some of it will stick to these Galatians, I will keep pounding away at the significance of Christ's

death and life in hopes that no drawn saint will end up in the lake of fire.

The sins that Christ now bears for us will be given to Satan when Yom Kipporim becomes a reality. Therefore, the *Logos* came as Jesus the Christ and died so that only two groups of individuals can have a relationship with the Father. The first group consists of the individuals the Father chooses to draw during this period in history. The number of individuals in this group cannot be accurately known to us and will continue to rise as we enter the Tribulation, but the number as a percentage of the world's population is small.

The second group covered by Christ's sacrifice is the remaining remnant of both houses of Israel that survive the Tribulation. They will enter into a relationship with Christ upon His return as the all powerful Messiah; they can only then be reconciled and justified to the Father.

The very small number of individuals who are covered by Christ's blood and life makes Christ's sacrifice extremely precious, much more so than we have previously considered in the Church of God. We have been given a tremendous opportunity, the likes of which are hardly conceivable by us. And far too many drawn disciples have walked away from this opportunity to be not just special, but extraordinarily special.

Bringing someone who has wandered away from the truth back into the faith covers a multitude of sins because of the price that was paid by both the Father and the Son for a relationship with the one who wandered away. Again, we are exceedingly precious to the Father. He allowed the *Logos* to die so that a relationship with us would be possible; He gave His only begotten Son for this relationship. The rest of the world can wait until the great White Throne Judgment as far as the Father is concerned. We presently have His undivided attention. In a real sense, He chose us; we didn't choose Him. Knowing Him wasn't even possible until He spiritually drew and modified us. And if we wander away, after accepting Christ's sacrifice and being modified, no additional sacrifice remains for us. Our baptism was not only symboli-

cally but also literally our first death. Either glorification or the second death awaits drawn saints. There are no second chances.

Galatians 3:1–4—

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified! The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? Did you experience so much for nothing?—if it really was for nothing.

Evangelical scholars leap tall buildings as they, being faster than speeding bullets, identify *the works of the law* as the keeping of the law of God. By their haste to justify their lawlessness, a person would think each has just slain his or her mother, such is their fear of the law of God. Those saints who believe God to the point of obedience have no such fear of either God or His law.

First, we must answer the question Paul asks these Galatians: who has bewitched them? These Galatians would have known. Unfortunately for us, their reply isn't recorded. However, Feminist literary critics have taught all of us to read both what is foregrounded as well as what is "other." When we do this, we find the Spirit foregrounded and *the flesh* as other. We know that a work of the law was circumcision, just as the animal sacrifice was a work of the law. Not murdering your mother was not a work of the law: no work is performed in not committing a murder. Likewise, no work is performed in not committing adultery, or in not lusting, or in not stealing or not coveting or not bearing false witness or in not having other gods or in not having idols. Some work might be required to honor one's parents, or to keep the Sabbath, but it is apparent from the linguistic structure of the phrase *the works of the law* that Paul wasn't addressing the keeping of the law

of God, the works of which are the absence of sin by the negation of carnal works, or by not committing transgressions of the law.

Since the Spirit is foregrounded in this passage, and the flesh is backgrounded; and since we have Paul mentioning having to upbraid Peter for being intimidated by *the circumcision faction* (2:12); and since Paul mentioned that Titus hadn't been required to be circumcised when he accompanied Paul to Jerusalem (2:3); and since we will see Paul asking, Why am I still being persecuted if I am still preaching circumcision (5:11); and since we will see Paul saying, It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised (6:12), we can safely deduce that the "other" in this case is the work of circumcision. Thus, the juxtaposition Paul establishes is the foregrounding of Spirit against the background of circumcision. And we can say with absolute certainty that the works of the law Paul references is circumcision. We know these works of the law cannot be keeping the commandments of God, for if that were the case, then Paul would be teaching a gospel contrary to Christ's and would be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. We know these works of the law cannot be having love for one's enemies, for love is not referenced.

The Galatians had received the Spirit, meaning that these Galatians were drawn and spiritually modified disciples. Paul doesn't write to establish a fellowship of newly drawn disciples. If he were doing so, he would have instructed these disciple to obey everything Jesus had taught His disciples (Matt 28:20), which includes keeping the law of God. Rather, *the circumcision faction* has been at work among these Galatians, trying to make for themselves a goodly showing in the flesh as if foreskins were scalps for which bounty money was paid. Enough foreskins and the bounty hunter could return to Jerusalem, satisfied that his zeal for the Most High would win him a throne in the kingdom of heaven. And these foolish Galatians had willingly scalped themselves as if a few drops of their blood could somehow cover their sins.

Galatians 3:5—

Well then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law, or by your believing what you have heard?

Apparently the miracles worked among these Galatians include Jesus Christ being publicly exhibited as crucified (3:1), and a portion of Paul's argument must necessarily remain unknown to us. What miracles were actually worked must remain speculative.

Spirit and working miracles is foregrounded against the same "otherness" of circumcision as the works of the law. Someone will argue that meats are under discussion, that eating clean meats and observing the holy days and the Sabbath are incorporated in the works of the law. By this argument, "works" becomes the abstention from work, or the abstention from eating what God never identifies as food, as opposed to the real work of cutting off foreskins or killing bulls and goats. The logically devoid position of arguing abstention from work is work is theologically unsound, and intellectually vacant. Among fishermen, a person would say that such an argument is sheer idiocy, and indeed, it is.

In the tenth chapter of Romans, Paul equates faith with the circumcision of the heart that produces belief unto obedience under the Moab covenant. It is this level of belief that brings about miracles. No, the Spirit didn't come through circumcision. If it had, there would have been no need for Christ to have come and died. In fact, under the first covenant the Spirit only came to the prophets, all of whom were circumcised.

Does what I say seem redundant? It certainly does to me. I have fished this water before. Do you think I will find anything different in the remainder of the epistle than I have found so far? You know I won't, don't you? Paul's argument has problems, as does any argument based upon revelation. He is actually writing the text he needs to overturn circumcision, a situation I find interesting considering how mod-

ern scholars assume Paul's epistle had for the Galatians the authority of Scripture. This was not the case. Scripture was the Septuagint. The situation Paul faced is analogous to a person reading this book and the Bible. Two different levels of authority are inherent in the two texts. Paul didn't think he was writing Scripture. He was writing to refute the reasoning behind what these Galatians were doing. He believed, through revelation, they were practicing a misapplication of Scripture.

The situation of many Gentile converts reading the Septuagint was unique to Christianity. Whereas a Gentile had once in a while converted to Judaism as practiced by the Pharisees or Sadducees, never before had large numbers sought a covenant relationship with the God of Abraham. As a practical matter, circumcision had always hindered such conversions. But with the arrival of the new covenant, the specialness the physical descendants of Israel had enjoyed ended. No longer did the lack of being a physical Israelite prevent a person from having a relationship with God—and what must be understood is that the Pharisees and Sadducees had no relationship with the Father. Their sins, which didn't go away when sprinkled by the blood of livestock, prevented them from having a relationship with even the Logos until they allowed their hearts to be circumcised. Even then, they could not have one with the Father. Their sins stood in the way. Their deaths were needed to reconcile them to the Father.

Galatians 3:6–9—

Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.” For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed.

We see Paul twice quoting Genesis in this passage, both quotes coming before Abram had his name changed in accordance with the

covenant ratified by circumcision. Thus, Paul, in his argument to overturn the sacred text, begins to show how the latter covenant with Abram is an added covenant, that the prevailing covenant is found in chapter 12, where God first tells Abram, “Go from your country and...I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (verses 1–3). That great single nation is the “one new humanity” of Ephesians 2:15. No longer will the world be divided into the circumcised and the uncircumcised, the result of the covenant in which Abram is promised to be the father of many nations. Thus, what we again see is original intent superseding ensuing covenants made for whatever reasons. God’s original intent was to bless *all the families of the earth* through being part of one nation.

Hagar happens between when God promises Abram that he will be the father of one nation, and when God covenants with him about being the father of many nations. Abram’s faith was greater than his patience. He fathers a child who would be blessed, but wasn’t the child through whom the blessing would come, that blessing being Jesus the Christ.

Just as Christ reinstated original intent in the marriage covenant when He was asked about whose wife would a woman be under the law of Moses, Christ through a revelation to Paul reinstates His original intent to make from Abram a single nation in which *all the families of the earth* would be blessed. Right now, Christ is reinstating original intent as to the day on which He will be worshiped. Just as Paul had to combat *the circumcision faction* that held the latter covenant, which came about as a solution to sin, was the defining covenant concerning how God intended to relate to humanity through Abram, the Church of God today must combat the 8th-Day heresy which came about when the king of the North hijacked Christianity. In both cases, and as with marriage, the argument is that original intent determines purity of belief.

Original intent is that all of humanity keep the law of God. Sin is lawlessness. Your decision is this simple: you will either keep the law of God and eventually receive eternal life, or you will reject the law and become a crispy critter in the lake of fire. You have no other option.

Did I make myself clear? The lawless do not receive grace, since in their Christian walk, they never get past the Table of Showbread. They are the seven of ten servants to whom the nobleman gave a pound in the parable. They will not be ruled by Christ. And they will experience the second death.

In the above passage, Paul argues the *logos* portion of his case. While *the circumcision faction* can go to several passages to support the necessity of circumcision in unambiguous language, Paul doesn't have that option. He must make his case by offering many scriptural passages, each not directly dealing with the issue at hand. God's original intent to bless all families through Abram doesn't preclude the necessity of circumcising everyone. Circumcision is the ratifying sign of many nations coming from Abram, and Paul's argument here is strongest in saying that God doesn't want all families divided up into many nations, but wants them together in one nation. Thus, God doesn't want circumcision, which is the sign of the division of nations.

Paul's argument seems pretty straightforward: by the *Logos* coming as Jesus the Christ to reconcile disciples to the Father, the many nations ratified by circumcision have become one, so circumcision stands opposed to the work of reconciling humanity to the Father. It's time for circumcision to go. It will return when the one nation is again divided, with "the descendants of Zadok, who alone among the descendants of Levi may come near to the Lord to minister to him" (Ezek 40:46), having both their hearts and their flesh circumcised. The text seems silent about anyone other than the descendants of Zadok being circumcised.

The priestly line of Zadok will be separated from the remainder of humanity by circumcision. So circumcision signifies division. Right

now, there should be no division of humanity other than that portrayed by the circumcision of the heart.

What we see by looking back across history and forward into the future is that Israel was separated from the world by circumcision of the flesh, and by a covenant relationship with the *Logos* that promised materialistic (or fleshly) blessing upon the nation. Today, drawn disciples are separated from the world by circumcision of the heart, and by a covenant relationship with the Father. In the future, the priestly line of Zadok will be both circumcised in the heart and in the flesh to minister unto the Father, who receives the kingdom of the world half way through the Tribulation (Rev 11:15–16), and unto Christ, His Messiah. It might be that all of humanity will be circumcised in both the heart and in the flesh to symbolize relationships with both the Father and Christ during Christ's Millennium reign. Circumcision signifies separation, with the flesh representing the material creation, and with the heart representing the Spirit. At this time, the promises of the new covenant are to individuals in the form of eternal life and a relationship with the Father; the promise of the new covenant is not national prosperity. Thus, circumcision of the flesh is a meaningless act.

Galatians 3:10—

For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law."

Again, because Paul doesn't have an unambiguous passage he can cite, he must resort to as much support as he can muster from related passages. And a question must be asked since the translation is a reasonable rendering of the original language: does the person who has no other gods but the Most High rely on the works of the law? She doesn't, does she? How does a person rely on the works of the law? Not committing adultery isn't relying upon works, is it? Surely no one believes that not succumbing to temptation is a work of the law. Like-

wise, does anyone believe that resting on the Sabbath is a work of the law? Isn't grocery shopping on Saturday work? The converse is to honor God with rest, so to not go grocery shopping is not working. No work is involved in not shopping. So a person who doesn't shop isn't relying upon works, is she? Rather, the person, by honoring God, prepares an offering for God that the person now can place on the Table of Showbread. This person, if she endures, will rest under the Mercy Seat that is Grace.

We must actually read what Paul writes: those who rely on the works of the law are under a curse. Circumcision is the work under question. Those converted Jews who trust in their heritage to make them righteous before God are cursed. All of Abram's faith won't make a single descendant righteous. Paul's cite doesn't aid his argument, which here rests in the logic that a father cannot make a son or daughter righteous. Each person must stand or fall according to the person's own relationship with God.

Galatians 3:11–14—

Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for “The one who is righteous will live by faith.” But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, “Whoever does the works of the law will live by them.” Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming accursed for us—for it is written, “cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

In Paul's second cite in this passage we see the best example so far of Paul's perverted education affecting his reasoning, for the passage from Leviticus is an affirmative statement within the Church of God, not the negative statement that Paul makes it. Within the Church, keeping the law causes a person to be able to live. For Paul, keeping the law was imprisoning, a restriction placed upon freedom. The differing conno-

tation attached to the cite comes from the differing mental paradigms upon which our respective social constructs are built. As a Pharisee, Paul had to keep the law. He was imprisoned, literally, by the law of Moses. But within the Church of God, converts left lawlessness behind, and choose to keep the law of God when it was written on our hearts and minds. We feel what is written on our hearts, because we can remember when it wasn't there. We had no life before being drawn by the Father; therefore, it is exciting to be able to keep the law, knowing that with it comes eternal life.

Paul's attitude towards the law is that keeping it is nothing special; he thinks he has been doing it all his life, when in reality, Christ said that none of the Pharisees were keeping the law (John 7:19). Perhaps this is the attitude of the pip-squeak, who grew up in the Church of God, and attended Church gradeschool, highschool and college. He, like Paul, received a perverted education under the guise of being rightly educated. He, like Paul, felt imprisoned by the law, so he was looking for how to break out of jail. He saw Evangelical Christianity's doctrine of lawlessness, and he took the first occasion that came along to flee from the Church of God's misapplication of the law of God (like the Pharisees of Jerusalem, the Church of God at Pasadena scoured away love from the law). As a bald Houdini, our pip-squeak scholar slipped out from his new covenant relationship with the Father. He now worships the king of the North, which Paul didn't do.

Paul's attitude towards the law might well be why he was sent to the Gentiles. His zeal for Christ separated him from *the circumcision faction*, just as his zeal had earlier caused him to advance in Judaism beyond many his own age (1:14). But he had to unlearn the same perverted education that *the circumcision faction* had received. Remaining among other Pharisees, *the circumcision faction* never overcame their educations. For Paul's sake, Christ sent him as far away from organized Judaism as Christ could without shipping him off to China.

As I have written, justification comes with death and resurrection. It has nothing to do with whether a person believes God to the point of

obedience, nothing to do with anything we do, nothing to do with this physical world. It has to do with the afterlife, symbolically lived today through faith in Christ. It is all about drawn disciples, through faith, being born anew as if resurrected. Whereas one sin separates a person from the Father, by Christ's death and life drawn disciples have the death penalty for their sins paid on a moment by moment basis. This doesn't mean the disciple is free to practice lawlessness. On the contrary, lawlessness puts the disciple into the lake of fire if not repented of before death.

The curse of the law is death. It doesn't matter when the law is broken, the curse remains the same. If the transgression occurs before death, the person will experience the first death, then judgment, unless the person has been drawn by the Father, for that person who has been drawn and who has eternal life "does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life" (John 5:24). Glorification awaits this person when the Lamb marries His Bride.

If the transgression of the law of God occurs after resurrection, the curse is the second death, from which there is no escape. Therefore, since a drawn disciple has been symbolically resurrected (a for-real resurrection as far as the Father and Son are concerned), any transgression of the law by a drawn disciple will result in the second death. However, because Christ, as the goat sent away, bears our sins today, we have no transgressions; we are sinless, and as long as we stay in this covenant relationship with the Father and Christ, we cannot sin, which does not give any saint license to disobey the law. For the drawn disciple, the wages of sin is death—this second death is the lake of fire (verses 28–29). To deliberately sin is problematic, for if the transgression of the law is not repented of promptly, the person will be unable to repent of it. This person has now committed the unpardonable sin, for even one sin chalked up to a saint's account will result in the second death. A saint must remain sin-free by staying in the covenant relationship with the Father and Christ. If a saint wanders away from this relationship, the saint must return before his or her death, or the saint will go into

the lake of fire. This is why renewing someone to God covers a multitude of sins. If the person who has wandered away doesn't return, the person is permanently lost. No eternal torment. The person will, repeating myself, be tossed into the lake of fire, where the person will not last long, and where the person will be utterly burned up.

Again, so there is no mistake, being drawn, called and baptized is the equivalent of actual death and resurrection, as far as the Father and the Son are concerned. When a person rises out of that watery grave, the person has been symbolically resurrected. Judgment is upon the person just as it would have been in the great White Throne Judgment if the person hadn't been drawn by the Father. Thus, it is a travesty to mock the Father by teaching a doctrine of lawlessness. Put as bluntly as Peter would say it, the person who spurns his or her baptism, who practices lawlessness, who ignores the opportunity to have a relationship with the Father isn't worth the effort to resurrect. Nevertheless, in fairness, the Father will resurrect the person so the individual can understand that Christ will not be mocked. The person will then be cast into the lake of fire, where death will again painfully occur. There is no everburning hellfire, but the earth will be renewed by fire. All flesh will perish. I suspect death will come quickly, but not before the person comprehends the opportunity the person squandered.

The blessing of Abraham is the birth of Christ, His death and resurrection, so that by His death and resurrection we might have a relationship with the Father, which would otherwise be denied us. The lie of the immortal soul conceals this blessing of Abraham, for the lie has all of humanity living after death in one of two, three, or seven, or however many places. But unless resurrected, no person will ever know anything after death. A person goes nowhere. There is no consciousness in the grave. There is no life in a person except through the person's breath, unless the person has been drawn by the Father. A person is a complex arrangement of elements that hosts a vast array of chemical actions and interactions. Said poetically, a person is dust, unless the person is a Muslim; then he or she is mud. Both expressions are true.

And nothing beyond that is true until the person has been drawn by the Father, or has been resurrected.

Have I said this enough times that you feel like I'm pumping bullets into a dead horse? I hope so. Paul flogged *the circumcision faction* to death, but not before the lawless ignorant twisted his epistles into mini-pretzels, each small enough that a reader can devour many chapters a day and still come away with no understanding.

One problem remains: Evangelical Christianity uses the expression "born again" for accepting Christ's sacrifice. Because it believes the lie taught by demons of humanity having an immortal soul, its use of *born again* conveys almost the same meaning as justification: a person is born again, or born anew when the person rises out of the baptismal's watery grave. The Church of God has traditionally spurned the phrase *born again* because a person hasn't technically been born, only begotten as a spirit being. Glorification is actually the birthing of a new spiritual being; thus, with being drawn, the person receives the earnest of eternal life, which will abort if the person doesn't endure to the end. However, in an equally technical aspect, the person who has been baptized into the Body of Christ is a new creature; the person has been resurrected. Therefore, the person has been born again as a resurrected adult through faith in that having happened to the person.

The role of faith becomes huge: if a person is merely dunked when baptized, the person has only gotten wet. The person, by faith, needs to believe that baptism isn't a casual ceremony, but the literal portraying of a real death and resurrection. The emersion as symbolically dying pays the death penalty for the person's sins. The lifting up out of the water is the person's symbolic resurrection as a sin-free creature in the great White Throne Judgment. Two goats are necessary as our sin offering on Yom Kipporim, for the goat sacrificed represents the Christ who died for our sins, so that our emersion can symbolically represent our death. The second goat that is lead away represents the resurrected Christ who now bears our sins, so that as resurrected creatures we cannot sin again. And we have to believe by faith that all of this is, indeed,

so. If, after being baptized, we begin to doubt that Christ really died for us, then we come out from under the covenant that has Christ bearing our sins. The person must then bear his or her own sins, which means this born again person will go into the lake of fire.

I have pumped so many bullets into this dead horse that I need to reload...because of how serious the problem of lawlessness is within greater Christianity, I will keep firing away. My promise to you is that I will not let up. Without even knowing you personally, my love for you is as great as Paul's love was for these Galatians. I do not want to see anyone thrown into the lake of fire, and to the best of my ability, I will work to prevent you from throwing yourself in.

Returning to Paul's argument, it doesn't make any difference if you have honored your parents, been faithful in marriage, never stole even a peanut, never lusted even as a teenager, a person is not justified before God: somewhere and at sometime, the person did break the law of God, the penalty of that transgression being death. No amount of works, no number of good deeds, no anything—even to cutting away an adult male's foreskin—will make that death penalty go away. It has to be paid. No exceptions. Every person will pay this penalty for his or her sins. All have died, and all will die (those saints who are changed from life to glory died at baptism). This is the curse of the law, which doesn't make the law evil or something that shouldn't be kept. Rather, the curse of the law is the simple statement of the Father's impartiality. If angels are condemned for breaking His law, so will humanity be.

The only way to pay the penalty for having broken the law is to die. Christ offered to drawn disciples the only means to die without actually experiencing death. By belief unto faith in Christ having paid the penalty for the person's past sins and by belief unto obedience in Christ today bearing the person's sins, a drawn disciple can escape the death penalty that is rightfully the person's. The person will still die (unless Christ returns first), but only in form. The person will be glorified when Christ returns. The earnest of eternal life the person possessed while alive is by some manner kept in the Book of Life. No

future judgment awaits the person. It is, for all practical purposes, as if the person today lives in the great White Throne Judgment.

What I write has become tediously redundant, because this concept has not been well taught in the Church of God, and hasn't been taught at all by greater Christianity. Rather, the visible Church has minimized the importance of Christ's sacrifice by inserting Platonism into its theology. And too many splinters of the Church of God believe that Herbert Armstrong restored all things theological decades ago, which gives these splinters an excuse for them not growing in knowledge. Their deification of Mr. Armstrong now prohibits growth, much to their Laodicean shame.

Galatians 3:15–18—

Brothers and sisters, I give an example from daily life: once a person's will has been ratified, no one adds to it or annuls it. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring; it does not say, "And to offsprings," as to many, but it says, "And to your offspring," that is, to one person, who is Christ. My point is this: the law, which came four hundred thirty years later, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance comes through the law, it no longer comes from the promise; but God granted it to Abraham through the promise.

First, remember that this is the core of the logos portion of Paul's argument, which is actually the weakest part of his argument. He began with a pathos appeal, continued with an ethos construction, the strength of his argument. Now in the logos portion of his argument, he pits Abraham against Abraham. He began by referring to the earlier covenant God made with Abram, and in the above cited passage, he attempts to show how a later covenant cannot annul an earlier covenant. His use of a person's will probably worked better for the Galatians than for us, today, when wills are updated at periodical intervals, with the updated will superseding all previous wills, even if they have

been ratified. So “ratified” probably should be understood in the context of the will being executed. For us, a will as a covenant often doesn't even outlast a marriage covenant, which has a life expectancy of how many years? Ten, say.

Paul commits a logical fallacy in his use of “offspring.” Going to where promises are made to Abram, we read, “The Lord said to Abram... ‘Raise your eyes and look from the place where you are... for all the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth; so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted’” (Gen 13:14–16). How many *offspring* is there in the dust of the earth? More than one? Yet Paul says that “many” aren't at issue. Paul has shifted meaning for the icon “offspring.”

We can make an excuse for Paul: the single offspring is Christ, and the many who are as the dust of the earth are all of those drawn disciples who are in Christ. But what we have done is to have made an excuse for Paul, who is guilty of equivocation, which is shifting the meaning of a word. This is bait-and-switch advertising. All of the nations of the earth will be blessed (Gen 12:3) through Christ's birth. Christ is the single offspring Paul references, but his cited passage refers to Isaac and physical geography. Paul shifted referents to bolster his case, which lacks the unambiguous language that *the circumcision faction* has for support. To use equivocation is to acknowledge that the person's case is weak.

Who am I to challenge Paul's argument, some will ask.

I write with the same authority Paul had, that of being a drawn disciple. Paul didn't think of his epistles as Scripture when he wrote them. It was up to Peter to establish Paul's letters as Scripture. It will be up to those who come behind me to decide the fate of my writings. If there is no revelation in them, they will not endure, nor should they.

In the above cited passage, Paul clearly identifies his referent for *the law* by writing *which came four hundred thirty years later*. The Sinai covenant comes 430 years later. The Moab covenant comes another forty

years after that. So we can say with reasonable certainty, since Paul juxtaposes *the law* with *a covenant previously ratified by God*, that in this passage and in related passages, Paul uses *the law* as a metonymic expression for the Sinai covenant, which is only part of the law of Moses albeit the main part. Circumcision, though, doesn't come to Israel from the Sinai covenant, as Moses, himself, learned: "On the way, at a place where they spent the night, the Lord met him and tried to kill him. But Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched Moses' feet with it, and said, 'Truly you are a bridegroom of blood to me!' So he let him alone. It was then she said, 'A bridegroom of blood by circumcision'" (Exo 4:24–26). The referent for "him" is apparently Moses' firstborn son, from the preceding verse concerning what Moses was to tell Pharaoh about Israel being the Lord's firstborn son. Equally apparent is that this is not an incident about which Moses wished to elaborate. Circumcision according to the terms of the Lord's covenant with Abraham was of such importance that the Lord intended to kill Moses' son because the child hadn't been circumcised. And we see that circumcision is not part of the Sinai covenant; it is a preexisting covenant made with Abraham, which not even Moses could violate with impunity.

In an Aristotelian argument, the presentation of the logos claims are from the strongest to the weakest, as a series of inverted pyramids again going from strongest to weakest. What we find in the structure of Paul's epistle to these Galatians is that after concluding his ethos claims of revelation, Paul begins his logos argument with a direct confrontation of the covenants made with Abraham. Paul cites original intent as his strongest claim, which is certainly a claim I'm willing to accept.

Paul's second logos claim involving Abraham is that a covenant made with Abraham supersedes a later covenant made with Israel. However, with this claim Paul has a problem, which we don't get to see *the circumcision faction* refute. But, due to the Pharisees' spiritually perverted education, those converted Pharisees that made up *the circumcision faction* might not have attacked Paul's argument at its under-

lying assumption, that circumcision was part of the law of Moses. If I were disputing with Paul—I am not—I would attack him at this assumption: circumcision is not a part of the law of Moses, but a pre-dating covenant based upon the faith of Abram. I would take Paul's argument and use it against him. Circumcision ratifies the covenant of faith. But such an attack would place me on the wrong side of God, not somewhere I want to be. So all I can do is point out the weaknesses of Paul's argument. He has already made his point, just as I have concerning baptism and justification. He should quit as I should. But he won't, and neither will I. A drawn disciple is too precious to risk losing as long as any hope remains of renewing the disciple to God.

We see a little of *the circumcision faction's* argument in, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1), and in, “It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses” (verse 5). Two separate issues are presented in verse 5, but based upon James' decision, and based upon the first statement of these converted Pharisees—if a person is saved, what more does a person need—it appears that circumcision was inseparable from the law of Moses, which is how Paul treats the first covenant. In other words, by how Paul pits the Sinai covenant against the covenant made with Abraham, and by how *the circumcision faction* lumps circumcision in with the law of Moses, we see that for both Paul and *the circumcision faction*, circumcision is part of the Sinai covenant, which they identify as the law of Moses.

In the Church of God, we have traditionally been more precise in our usage of language, noting that the converted Pharisees of *the circumcision faction* presented two points to the Jerusalem conference, which, when reading what little is recorded, treated the two points as a single point. In other words, we have been more precise than Paul, while greater Christianity has easily accepted circumcision as part of the law of Moses.

The average Christian scholar poorly understands human languages and language use. She places a human language on the same spiritual

plane as God, thereby deifying that which is of man. What deeply troubled Herman Melville, who wondered how anyone could trust a book, the crux of *Moby-Dick*, was this deification of a received text. Language use is always less precise than we want it to be, but too precise to dismiss. Fiction writers use ambiguity to enlarge their texts. Scientists fight ambiguity to narrow their texts. And God uses ambiguity to both conceal and reveal meaning as He sees fit, and from whom or to whom He wants.

The Church of God has traditionally sought to find revealed knowledge in the text by ever more precisely examining the text. This is exactly what the Pharisees did as they polished love off the linguistic icons, leaving the text lifeless and dead. And the Church of God has traditionally been a little short on love, while professing to be the Church of Brotherly Love. On the authority of Christ, I will say that any fellowship which has wouldbe converts jumping through hoops for two years before allowing these converts to attend its services has no love, and should cease to exist for its lack of love.

Does the Pharisees', or Paul's lack of linguistic precision mean that within the Church of God we need to slop up our language usage? No, not at all. But we must not fear to identify what is evident: Paul's epistles are inspired, but they are not infallible. To make them infallible is to make an idol of them; is to place them, received in a human language, on the same plane as God; is to make that which is of man into God. This should never be. Paul's epistles are not God breathed, except as filtered through Paul's mind and social constructs. Paul stands as the mediator between his inspiration and the production of his fingers. Thus, we see Paul's education emerging in his epistles when we read them as if they were literature, and not genuflect before them as if they were little gods. We see the values and informing paradigms of the region's social constructs emerge through the production of his fingers. And we hear the filtered voice of Christ.

I want to hear what Christ has to say through Paul's writings. The fact that some social junk is also evident in his epistles doesn't bother

me. I can tell one from the other—Christ's sacrifice has made that possible.

Returning for a moment to why I would dare quibble with Paul's argument: as David had killed a bear and a lion before taking on Goliath, I have killed a couple of bears, have experienced the power of the North Pacific and of the Bering Sea, have actually wrestled out from under the hand of an angel, only to have a red fir snag fall across the top of me (the angel was trying to protect me). I then watched that snag, some three feet in diameter and 120 feet long, be hurled out over a canyon two hundred yards or more. The incident was witnessed by the Cat skinner. Not in an ephemeral way, I have actually experienced the power of God, an expression used today by too many of Peter's lawless ignorant to describe their experiences with demons. So I don't fear to make of Paul a man like myself—and perhaps this is the reason I have been drafted to do this job of rereading the sacred texts, which doesn't mean I cannot make mistakes. It will be the task of those who come after me to purify what I have written, just as I purify the work of those who began this latter day task five centuries ago. At some point in the not too distant future, the Bride will have made Herself ready for Her wedding, but it is the Bridegroom who works in the Bride, then as now. Likewise, it was the Bridegroom working through Paul to purify the fellowship at Galatia that we encounter in Paul's epistle. Paul cannot help the spiritually perverted education he received, nor can Paul escape the social constructs that underlay the age and the geographic region where Paul teaches. Why should we expect that of him? Christ doesn't.

Galatians 3:19–20—

Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring would come to whom the promise had been made; and it was ordained through angels by a mediator. Now a mediator involves more than one party; but God is one.

In this passage, we again see the spiritually perverted education of 1st-Century Jews enter the text: Stephen says to those about to stone him, Saul/Paul included, that, “You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and you have not kept it” (Acts 7:53). Previously in his recounting of history, Stephen says, “Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him [Moses] in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush” (verse 30). But who was it that appeared to Moses in the burning bush? It wasn’t an angel, except as the icon conveys the sense of a messenger or the Spokesman (i.e., *Logos*). We see this in the following passage:

There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he [Moses] looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, “I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.” When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” He said further, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (Exo 3:2–6)

Joseph Smith as the Mormon visionary apparently concluded from these passages that the Lord, prior to His birth as Jesus, was an angel, a brother of Michael. Enough other commentators and scholars have had similar beliefs that wars have been fought about who Christ was prior to His human birth. Historical exegesis stemming from the 325 A.D. Council of Nicea gave back to Jews their idol of strict monotheism in the form of making Christ part of a triune Godhead in exchange for Jewish converts giving up both the Sabbath and the Passover—the decision was completely inverted, and the product of the demonic king of the North seizing control of Christianity. So who Christ was prior to His birth as Jesus must be confronted before proceeding.

In the account of Moses and the burning bush, the biblical text identifies the messenger of the Most High God as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This is the God that the Pharisees of the 1st-Century worshiped. This is the God that Paul had worshiped prior to his roadside conversion. This is the only God revealed in the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (i.e., the Old Testament) except in two places: in Genesis in, *Let us make man in our image*, and in the vision recorded in the 7th chapter of Daniel. This is the God around which monotheism became an idol, for this is the God which spoke from atop Mount Sinai, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me” (Exo 20:2). Yet of this deity, Paul and Stephen both say He was only an angel.

Right here, greater Christianity has a problem. An angel, or messenger, cannot be equal to the Most High God. Of linguistic necessity, at the time Paul wrote his epistle to these Galatians, the God that Abraham had worshiped could not, from the sacred texts, be the Most High God to Christians. Jesus came to reveal the Father to His disciples. The Father is the Most High God. Therefore, the Pharisees were and had been, from a linguistic sense, worshiping an inferior God. It is little wonder that the Pharisees sought to destroy Christianity. These Christians had another God before the God who spoke from atop Mount Sinai.

Neither Paul nor these Galatians had the Bible as we have received it. John had not yet written anything, meaning there was no revelation about, “In the beginning was the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was with God, and the *Logos* was God....And the *Logos* became flesh and lived among us” (John 1:1 & 14). Therefore, Paul couldn't go to this passage in John to explain to these Galatians the relationship between the God of Abraham, who spoke from atop Mount Sinai, and the promised offspring of Abram, through whom all of the families of the earth would be blessed. Instead, Paul pit one against the other, recognizing Jesus as

the promised offspring but not understanding that this promised offspring is also the “angel” who brought *the law* to Israel.

Humanity tends to abuse history, in that it doesn't well separate events and contextualize them. It is extremely difficult for a scholar today not to insert the Book of John into the historical flow prior to when Paul wrote his epistle to the Galatians, just because John comes before Galatians in our organization of the Bible. Unless a person makes a conscious effort otherwise, the person thinks of the Bible being written in the order that we read it, with Genesis first and Revelation last, and with the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John being written before Acts, and before the epistles of Paul. This, however, is not the case. The Gospel of John comes decades after Paul was executed in Rome. Neither Paul, nor Peter read John's Gospel. Paul has to construct his argument against *the circumcision faction* without having the textual ammo that I have. Everything Paul writes about *the law*, the metonymic expression he uses for the Sinai covenant, is without a full understanding that the *Logos* or Spokesperson for Elohim is equal to, but subservient to the Most High God. Therefore, Paul errantly states that *the law was ordained by angels*, which is also what Stephen said, and is what was being taught by the early Christian church.

John apparently wrote his Gospel to correct many misunderstandings or partial understandings of the early Church. He had to reinsert both the law of God and love into the practice of fellowships, and he had to explain who Jesus was and the nature of Elohim.

In the Church of God, we have, based upon our published literature, understood for many decades that Elohim is a family, not a triune entity. We would like to believe that our understanding goes back to those original Apostles, but only in John can we firmly find the awareness of this relationship. There are suggestions of it in passages about adoption in Paul's epistles. Consider, however, the present situation in the Church of God, where many splinters still teach an errant understanding of prophecy even though endtime prophecies have been

unsealed by revelation: most, if not all of the splinters are part of the Body of Christ, even though their doctrinal understanding is flawed. This was the case in the 1st-Century. Paul's epistles are to purify practices and doctrines, as he understood those practices and doctrines, his understanding coming by revelation. John Calvin wrote to purify practices and doctrines of the then Universal Church. He better understood the will of God than did the collective ministry of the Roman Church, but his understanding wasn't perfect. In places, there was much he still didn't understand. Purification is an ongoing process.

Doctrinal error doesn't prevent the plan the Father and Christ have for humanity from being carried out; therefore, neither Satan nor the king of the North nor any other demon can prevent a drawn saint from being part of the first resurrection. Only the saint can prevent him or herself from being there. But one way that saints are tested generation after generation is through the demonic introduction of error into fellowships—and I have not just contradicted myself. If a fellowship is absolutely pure in belief (I don't believe any have ever been), then when error is pushed into the fellowship from an outside source, individual members of the fellowship are tested in how they receive or reject the error. Some pass the test. Others will fail, because they are not in a close enough relationship with the Father and the Son to hear Christ's voice when it's encountered. Likewise, when error has been established in a fellowship and a purifying doctrine is pushed unto the fellowship, some saints will reject the purifying doctrine because they are not in this close relationship with the Father. Thus, the continual introduction of error by demons and purification by Christ prevents a person from looking back through history and saying, *This fellowship was of God*, or, *That one wasn't*. All we can say is, *That fellowship better understood the doctrines of Christ as we understand those doctrines*. Therefore, just because Paul and Stephen say that the Sinai covenant was brought by angels doesn't make that so. The one who brought the Sinai covenant to the elders of Israel was Moses, who Paul identifies as the mediator. But it was the *Logos* who spoke the law of God from atop

Mount Sinai. Angels didn't bring the covenant. The *Logos* wasn't an angel. Paul is wrong. This isn't the only place he is wrong, but this is one place I can show that his education did him a disservice. Again, Jesus said that none of the Pharisees were keeping the law of God. The entire spiritual education system of 1st-Century Judaism was perverted, just as is rabbinical Judaism today. Why would we think Judaism had it any more right in the 1st-Century than it has it in the 21st-Century? Such an assumption is idiocy.

The early Church didn't well understand Jesus' relationship with the Most High God prior to His birth as a man. As a result, John writes his gospel late in the 1st-Century. It is John who identifies Jesus as the God of Abraham, with a claim of former and future equality with the Most High God. It is John who tells of Jesus coming to reveal the Father to disciples. It is John who recounts Jesus' prayers to the Father—in Jesus' final prayer before He was taken, Jesus lays out the plan for drawn saints to be one with the Father and with Jesus. These were not passages that Paul read, or could know except through direct revelation.

Two plus centuries after John writes his gospel, the nature of who Jesus was prior to his human birth still troubled greater Christianity, which by this time consisted of more who were perishing than who held even a semi-pure doctrine. Therefore, when the 325 A.D. Council of Nicea met to establish for all time who Jesus was, the agreed-upon solution was to create a triune Godhead. This is a theologically unsatisfactory solution; it is blatantly wrong!

Whereas both Stephen and Paul identify the God that the Pharisees had been worshiping as only a messenger of the Most High God, which certainly would justify stoning both in the minds of those who had a zeal for the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the knowledge of Elohim being a family was a purifying doctrine that reentered the Church of God in the early 20th-Century. Because of the zeal with which this doctrine has been trampled since 325 A.D. it is difficult to find a continuous record of it being held since the time of Christ. We

see its reoccurring appearance in trial records of martyred saints. We see it coupled with 7th-day Sabbath observance in 17th-Century Baptists, but for decades at a time through the Middle Ages, it exists only in 8th-day fellowships. While the gates of hell will never prevail over the Church of God, demons dragged a lot of their hellish doctrines into the Church for centuries at a time.

As far as has been revealed, Elohim is a family that presently has two members, the Father and the Son, who together compose one God. However, upon the Son's return as the all powerful Messiah, all drawn disciples who have died in faith will receive glorified bodies, and will be adopted into the family of Elohim as younger siblings to Christ, all of whom together will then compose one God. After Christ reigns a thousand years as the King of kings, all of humanity who have never had a chance to have a relationship with the Father will be resurrected as physical human beings in the great White Throne Judgment. This will be their first chance for salvation, not a second chance. And from fifty to sixty billion resurrected humans, many more family members will be added to Elohim, all of whom together will compose one God, thereby making of God a species rather than an individual, with the Father as the senior and most powerful member of the species. Angels have never been offered the opportunity to become members of Elohim. And until glorified, we cannot, nor need not answer the question of where did Elohim come from. I have written this before, but I will here again: our thoughts are electro-chemical impulses, which make our thoughts part of the created universe. Elohim, like angels, exist outside of the created universe. Our thoughts are technically not capable of conceiving what is beyond Creation. Therefore, to speculate about what is beyond the ability of our thoughts to conceive is vanity. Certainly someone is welcome to play in the realm of what-if, but the person's time might be better spent fishing.

Someone is certain to take me to task for embracing the error of Satan, which Evangelical Christianity defines as wanting to be like God. I would answer this person, except that she so poorly understands

what is written that discussion between us isn't possible. This person will inevitably believe that she has an immortal soul. This person will believe that she will be in heaven with God, and that I will be in hell. This person is one of Peter's lawless ignorant. When this person is resurrected as a physical being, I will then sit with the person and explain the written Word of God, which is now only readable by drawn disciples who had been spiritually modified. My patience will be greater, and the person will have had her heart circumcised so communication between us is possible. Until then, I will let this person go her way as another slave to the king of the North.

Some of the problem I address of Paul and Stephen having angels ordaining the Sinai covenant is in the translating from the original languages to English. Because angels are not part of the physical Creation, the linguistic icons used to represent them are also used for other representations; angels only exist in figurative language. Jesus as the *Logos* or Spokesperson for Elohim doesn't appear linguistically different than an angel, or messenger from God would. Translation is an art, not a science. With the initial arbitrary assignment of objects to icons, the secondary assignment of icon to represent icon is always problematic. Perhaps borrowing an icon directly from one language to the other will help add artistic Realism to an otherwise abstract canvas, but a person can never be certain about what objects a reader will assign to the writer's icon, the reason I find myself becoming increasingly repetitive, since each usage of the icon narrows the total number of possible objects that can be assigned to the linguistic icon.

Galatians 3:21–22—

Is the law then opposed to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could make alive, then righteousness would indeed come through the law. But the scripture has imprisoned all things under the power of sin, so that what was promised through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

First, notice *those who believe*. The blessing of all families that was to come through Abram is available only to those who believe; it isn't offered to those who don't believe. Thus, the Buddhist isn't blessed through Abram's faith, nor is the Muslim who actually claims Abram as his father, for this faith isn't that Jesus was a prophet, which he indeed was, but that Jesus as the Son of Man died for the person's sins and lives today to bear the person's sins.

Paul asks, is *the law* opposed to the promises of God, and he answers by saying, of course not. Again, Paul uses the icon phrase *the law* as a metonymic expression for the Sinai covenant; so in this passage we have Paul confirming that the statutes and ordinances of the Sinai covenant don't conflict with the promise of God blessing all families through the birth of Jesus. He does this in a much shorter but more ambiguous passage what I am attempting with very much writing: the Sinai covenant pertains to the flesh, pertains to the physical Creation. Salvation is not of the flesh, is outside of the physical Creation. The promise of the Sinai covenant was national prosperity for obedience. Eternal life was never offered to Israel under the Sinai covenant. Eternal life was never offered to anyone on this side of death prior to the *Logos* being born as the man Jesus.

In his epistle to the Romans, Paul writes about sin entering the Creation through Adam, but that it wasn't counted as sin until *the law* came with Moses. Life died. Men and women paid the price for their sins with their deaths. And since sin is the transgression of the law of God, none of these people who died for their sins knew why they died. They knew only that all physical life dies, which is the curse of the law of God. They invented stories to explain death; they invented an after-life world order; and they killed each other until it grieved God that He had created humanity. But they were mostly clueless about why they died. Yes, Enoch and Noah were preachers of righteousness, but we don't know the extent of either's knowledge beyond both having faith in God. Both lived by their faith. In Noah's case, if he hadn't obeyed by faith, he wouldn't have constructed the Ark; he would have

drowned with all other life. So Noah's faith was of the type James describes.

Since Paul finds no conflict existing between *the law* and the promise of the *Logos* being born as a man, we can safely say that Paul does not in his epistle to these Galatians advocate lawlessness. Paul has not changed the Sabbath day, nor sanctified piggy, nor even commanded mothers not to have their infant sons circumcised. Rather, what he argues is that nothing done in the flesh will reconcile a person to the Father once the person has sinned. These Galatians were reconciled by their faith in Christ's sacrifice. For them to now begin trusting in the cutting away of foreskins misses the entire point of why Jesus lived and died and lives again. They are in danger of making idols of their penises, just as greater Christianity has made idols of Paul's epistles, trading wood and plaster statuary for leather-bound paper.

All that *the law* is capable of is showing humanity the reason for its death as it conveys the will of God to this same convicted humanity. People aren't souls imprisoned in flesh that dies, but they are imprisoned by being flesh. And what here Paul portrays negatively is actually the greatest blessing Elohim could have bestowed on humanity, for through death, life can come. By his own admission in his epistle to the Romans, Paul didn't understand why his flesh opposed his will; by his admission, Paul didn't fully understand the plan of God. In the reproductive process of Elohim, our flesh is necessary to cause us to choose to do that which is right over and over again. This is why doctrinal error cannot prevent saints from entering the first resurrection: returning to what I wrote at the beginning of this book, it is our decision making process of always choosing to do what is right that the Father desires, and actually needs. If we don't know to do something, we do what is right in our mind by not doing what we don't know. Does that make sense? Let me express this concept differently: if a person doesn't know that God would have the person worship Him on the Sabbath, the 7th-day of the week, and if this person sincerely believes that the 8th-day is the Christian sabbath, then this person is under moral obli-

gation to keep the 8th-day as the Sabbath until such time as Christ informs this person of his or her error. The obligation of this person who is in error is two-fold: first, the person is to do what the person believes is right. Second, the person is to grow in grace and knowledge until he or she comes to a perfect understanding of the will of God. That perfect understanding won't come earlier than halfway through the Tribulation, so for practical purposes, the person is to grow until death. If in growing, the person encounters knowledge of the Sabbath being the 7th-day, the person is to begin keeping the 7th-day as the right thing to do. If the person knows to keep the 7th-day, but for some reason doesn't, then the person is a hypocrite, who has scheduled him or herself reservations in the lake of fire. So we need only to have been drawn by the Father and to have faith that Christ died for our sins and now bears them to have a part in the first resurrection as long as we do what we know is right. Again, if we know to kept the Sabbath, we must, as keeping it is doing part of what is right. If we know to keep the holy days, we must, again as part of doing right. If we know not to eat piggy, we must not eat piggy, as part of doing what is right. Purity will come to the Bride, but not to each drawn saint prior to Christ's return as the all powerful Messiah. So what I write is as much a witness against the world as it is a purifying corrective to the Body of Christ. My desire is that all saints come to unity in faith, but the letters to the seven endtime Churches of God show that won't be the case.

Sin is identified as sin through the knowledge that comes from the law of Moses. Identifying sin as such does nothing when it comes to paying the penalty for these now-labeled sins. All sin, regardless of how small, carries the death penalty. Only death will reconcile the person who has sinned to the Father. Without a resurrection, there can be no life after reconciling, since a person has no life except his or her breath. Without resurrection, one sin would cause a person to die and never live again.

But the blessing of Abram that was to come to all families is the life and death of Jesus the Christ, which allows drawn disciples from all

families to, through faith in Him and in what He did, live as though they have died and have been resurrected. Thus, comparing *the law* and justification is as comparing road-killed skunks and purring kittens. There is no valid comparison. Paul attempts to establish what is impossible, because *the circumcision faction* has the better case when it comes to treating the Scriptures as an idol to be worshiped, a practice that began when Ezra returned from Babylon. Therefore, in his construction of his argument, Paul grasps at many straws, but he doesn't want to leave the impression that the Sinai covenant conflicts with the promise of Christ's birth. It doesn't.

Galatians 3:23–29—

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to the disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

We again see Paul's perspective on living under *the law* (i.e., the Sinai covenant). He doesn't think much of it, such is how it was being applied as a burden on people, with the Pharisees commanding the people to do what they themselves wouldn't do. Indeed, Paul's earlier spiritual education was perverted. The Pharisees had changed the *cause* for life into a prison from which there was no escape until Christ was born.

Under the new covenant, the laws of God are written on the hearts and minds of drawn disciples; therefore, saints are no longer under the law of God, but have become literal arks of the new covenant, in which the law of God has been placed. These thousands of arks are under the

mercy seat of Grace when they endure to their end. So no longer is the Sinai covenant, with its physical temple, the controlling model for Israelite behavior. The Sinai covenant ended with Christ. It no longer exists, which doesn't mean that drawn disciples are free to ignore the intent of its provision, for Paul has just told Peter's lawless ignorant that the Sinai covenant doesn't conflict with faith in Christ.

The Sinai covenant as a schoolmaster should have taught drawn disciples what the will of God is in every situation (certainly, most situations in which a person can find him or herself are directly addressed). As such, the drawn disciple will attempt to live by what the disciple knows is the will of God, as well as by the laws of God which are written in his or her heart. A genuine disciple will not practice lawlessness. If a genuine disciple has been beguiled by demons or by their ministers, who appear as ministers of righteousness, then when corrected in love by another disciple, the genuine disciple will return to faith in Christ. If he or she doesn't return prior to death, the disciple has reservations in the lake of fire.

I have addressed baptism, and all families of the earth being blessed in the life and death of Jesus. Spirit beings are neither male, nor female, so even these distinctions disappear after death. As such, they disappear after baptism in the Body of Christ. While Paul commands women not to speak in services, a position I have previously supported, that position cannot be supported from any scriptural text except Paul's command. If there is no distinction between male or female, free or slave, Jew or Greek after baptism as there won't be when glorified; and if baptism signifies death and resurrection, then women have as great of an inherent right to speak as men do in the Church of God. However, the practical concern remains of Paul having addressed this situation from his cultural perspective. Until Paul's epistles lose their idolatrous status, the fight over women speaking in services is best avoided by our founding fathers' principle of having allowed slave states, thereby ducking the question. But I shall no longer count a man as six-tenths of a person: if a woman feels compelled to speak, and she teaches that

drawn disciples are to keep the law of God and are to love even their enemies, then there is no Scriptural barrier to her speaking beyond that which Paul inserts. Paul gets other things wrong. I won't here address whether he got this situation wrong for his age and geographic region. What I will say is that few social barriers today prevent a woman from speaking in services. None will in the kingdom. None will after resurrection, when marriage covenants will have been broken by death, and physically resurrected women, though still female, are subject to no one but God. None should now among women who have been lifted up as if resurrected out of their baptismal deaths. And I might have just opened a can of worms. I must, though, be unavoidably honest with the text. All barriers to women speaking are social, and fall under the classification of not doing what is even lawful if it will cause a little one offense. Thus, in social constructs where woman have true equality with men, women are free to speak. They are not free to speak where such social equality does not exist, even though they have every right to speak. To deliberately cause a little one to stumble by the exercising of a person's liberty before God remains problematic.

Galatians 4:1–7—

My point is this: heirs, as long as they are minor, are no better than slaves, though they are the owners of the property; but they remain under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

The *elemental spirits of the world* are usually perceived to be angels, specially the demons which now rule the world under the reign of

Satan as the king of Babylon. They are opposed to Christ (Col 2:8) as this passage also shows. The reason for enslavement to demons is for humanity to overcome them through not worshipping them. There is nothing any human can do to remove him or herself from this enslavement. Our only way out of *the world* is being drawn by the Father: unless we have been drawn by the Father, we are of *the world*, with no escape this side of death.

There is here a translation problem, which was addressed by the translators looking forward a few verses. What translators have rendered as *elemental spirits* is the icon, *stoicheion*, which usually has assigned to it an object related to an orderly arrangement, or by extension, a foundational element or rudimentary principle. The juxtaposition Paul establishes might well be rendered as heirs of God are enslaved to the elements of the earth, as in flesh, until the fullness of time.

Thus, how this passage has been translated works, but it might have been better rendered if the translators were not quite so quick to look ahead to humanity serving as slaves to those things which by their nature are not gods (verses 8–9).

What we also see in this passage is the Sinai covenant having become part of Satan's reign, which introduces an additional element of mystery in what the demonic powers are presently doing as we approach the end of the age. Jesus told Pharisees that their father was the devil. A certain number of people today fear what is written in *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, a probably spurious manuscript of demonic activity behind a Zionist plan for world domination. The activities of these demons will not succeed, if such a plan exists, since the more powerful king of Greece through the demonic kings of the North and of the South will reign until Christ defeats them.

Again, humanity is subject to demons as it is subject to its flesh until Christ comes as the all powerful Messiah. The Father has chosen to have a relationship before that time with a few individuals. For these relationships, the Most High God and the *Logos* paid the very high

price of the *Logos* being born as the man Jesus. The production of these relationships will be the adoption of glorified saints as actual members of Elohim. These drawn disciples are now children in the sense that they (we) haven't yet received the promised inheritance. Receiving that inheritance, though, is certain for all drawn saints who endure to their end. These saints will in no way be inferior to Christ, except in birth order.

Galatians 4:8–11—

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods. Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits? How can you want to be enslaved by them again? You are observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted.

The Dr. Alberts of the world read this passage and shout, *Looke there! Christians aren't to keep the holy days*, little understanding either the argument Paul was making, or how Paul has been arguing his case, or the referent Paul assigned to these special days. They are such poor readers that the universities from which they have degrees should be ashamed of having certified that these men and women are educated.

The *elemental spirits* are again the icon, *stoicheion*, which is here described as poor and weak (*asthenes* and *ptochos*). Paul positions his thoughts such that he has these Galatians wanting to be enslaved again to these beggarly elements by their observance of special days, months, seasons, and years. Clearly, what Paul asks is why do these Galatians want to return to the spiritual state in which they previously were, prior to when he preached Christ to them. These Galatians weren't circumcised; they weren't Jews. They were not observing God's holy days, nor were they observing the Sabbath. Rather, they were worshipping the sun on the 8th-day. They were keeping Saturnalia, most likely. Cer-

tainly, they would have been observing a spring fertility festival in honor to the queen of heaven, a festival with attributes of our national observance of Easter.

These Galatians weren't returning to keeping the law of Moses, a covenant previously as alien to them as Christianity was to them before they were drawn by the Father. This other gospel that Paul says is accursed isn't returning to keep the law of Moses. It is them leaving faith in Christ through trusting in circumcision and bondage to their flesh. These Galatians lived according to their fleshly desires prior to conversion. Paul's argument is against them now trusting in the flesh to make them right with God. He is presenting his case from strongest to weakest. His first inverted pyramid of claims begins with his ethos claims of revelation, then he proceeds to how justification occurs. He then adds his comparison of Abramic covenants, where his argument is weak at best, considering the number of logic faults he commits. He has now proceeded to a pathos appeal not to return to worshipping the flesh, a yet weaker claim from the standpoint of constructing an argument. The flesh under discussion is foreskins, but Paul, attempting to bolster his argument, opens his appeal up to include their former practices of living according to the flesh, observing any number of meaningless times.

I would laugh at the Dr. Alberts of the world, who would make of these weak and beggarly days the sabbaths of God, if they hadn't already done considerable damage with their dishonest arguments within the Church of God. Because of the slaughter of little ones these hypocrites have caused with their lawlessness, I must honestly label them as ministers of Satan. Perhaps their ignorance has allowed them to deceive themselves—and now I'm making excuses for them. Because of the damage they have done to the little ones, they belong in the lake of fire. May they repent before they receive what they deserve.

Galatians 4:12–20—

Friends, I beg you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong. You know that it was because of a physical infirmity that I first announced the gospel to you; though my condition put you to the test, you did not scorn or despise me, but welcomed me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. What has become of the goodwill you felt? For I testify that, had it been possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? They make much of you, but for no good purpose; they want to exclude you, so that you may make much of them. It is good to be made much of for a good purpose at all times, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, I wish I were present with you now and could change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

Paul continues his pathos appeal, dropping to a weaker claim, but to one that is intended to produce a greater emotional response: he here begs them to ignore the flesh. His condition which initially necessitated him staying among them is of the flesh. He is now dead to his condition, whatever it is. The juxtaposing of *eyes* and *infirmity* suggests his condition was blindness. Perhaps when those scales dropped from his eyes, real damage to his eyes was done, damage which Christ doesn't choose to heal. It is difficult for a blind person to be arrogant. Humility is almost guaranteed, which makes God casting the angels that rebelled into darkness interesting. Rebellion could be the logical fruit of arrogance, which is generally considered the inverse of humility.

The above passage also shines additional light on what was occurring with these Galatians: *the circumcision faction* had, indeed, come among these Galatians and is the referent for the pronoun “they” in the sentence, *They make much of you, but for no good purpose*. I can look forward to, “Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be

circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you” (5:2) and see where Paul takes his pathos claim triangle. The entire inverted pyramid has to do with not trusting in the flesh, and will lead to the conclusion, “It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised” (6:12). Thus, it is the same faction that Paul had resisted before who had come among these Galatians, and who flattered the egos of these Galatians for no good purpose, but to make a good showing among their fellow converted Pharisees.

Once again, Paul hasn't told these Galatians not to keep the law of God; he repeatedly tells them not to trust in the flesh, in the elemental things of this earth. Neither the law of God, nor the law of Moses can make a sinner right with God. Only death pays the penalty for one sin, and John assures us that no one is without sin other than Jesus. So all of humanity stands condemned under the law, which says nothing about whether a person should try to keep the law of God. Therefore, to begin to trust in any work of the flesh to make a person right with God is stupid. Equally stupid is to practice lawlessness, which removes a drawn disciple from the covenant relationship into which Christ's death had allowed the person. The orthodox theology of greater Christianity at this beginning of the 21st-Century is unbelievably stupid. Any doctrine but lawlessness is condemned. What sense does that make? Greater Christianity condemns the person who attempts to please the Father by observing His laws. It is one thing to trust in the law, but an altogether different thing to believe God unto obedience to the law. Maybe, though, false Christians cannot comprehend this difference.

An analogy can be set up: if disciples were to begin trusting in their baptisms to save them, what has happened to their faith in Christ? It no longer has any value to them, because it is their baptism that saves them, or so they believe. They now trust in a work of the flesh—getting dunked—to save them. They might as well get circumcised while they are at it.

The circumcision faction has changed the attitude of these Galatians towards Paul. This negative change constitutes a logos claim that Paul cannot, because of propriety, use to its fullest advantage, yet is one of his strongest claims. If a thing, anything, produces bad fruit, the thing needs to be abandoned, usually. Christ said He came to bring a sword, to set son against Father and Mother against daughter, which isn't good fruit in our social constructs, so an absolute rule cannot be made. But if a person enters a fellowship, and suddenly the entire fellowship is upset and at odds with each other, even without direct evidence, the fellowship should suspect the bad fruit stems from the person who has entered. Such is the case with these Galatians and their relationship with Paul. Since *the circumcision faction* arrived, these Galatians would like to harm Paul.

Galatians 4:21–22—

Tell me, you who desire to be subject to the law, will you not listen to the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and the other by a free woman.

I want to pause here to ask if this is true: did Abraham have only two sons? It isn't, is it? "Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah" (Gen 25:1–2). So what are we to do with these other six sons of Abraham, who now is, indeed, the father to many nations, all of which are circumcised? Are we to ignore them as if they don't exist? Or has Paul stretched his argument precariously thin?

It is, indeed, written that Abraham had two sons. It is also written that he had six more sons by a free woman. But only one son, Isaac, came by way of the promise.

Galatians 4:23–28—

One, the child of the slave, was born according to the flesh; the other, the child of the free woman, was born through the promise. Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One woman, in fact, is Hagar, from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the other woman corresponds to Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, “Rejoice, you childless one, you who bear no children, / burst into song and shout, you who endure no birth pangs; / for the children of the desolate woman are more numerous / than the children of the one who is married.” / Now you, my friends, are children of the promise, like Isaac.

Again, what Paul writes must pass the fact test, or truth test; he is constructing an argument. He doesn't think of this epistle as Scripture, or as infallible, but as an argument against *the circumcision faction* to convince these Galatians to quit trusting in their flesh. As such, he pushes his claims beyond reason. Is Abraham married to Hagar? Or has Paul misapplied a citation?

Paul fails the truth test when he writes concerning the number of sons Abraham fathered. Let's see how he does here: he writes, *One woman is Hagar bearing children for slavery*. But are the descendants of Hagar, through Ishmael, slaves? God says, in the covenant ratified by circumcision, “As for Ishmael, I have heard you; I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation” (Gen 17:20).

What we again see is Paul attacking the covenant of Genesis 17, where circumcision is introduced. In Paul's construction, the princes of this earth as slaves to sin; they cannot free themselves. Yes, Ishmael will father a single great nation which is never unified, and which plays a key endtime role in world affairs. That nation is one of the two legs of iron of Nebuchadnezzar's statue. It is ruled by the demonic king of the South. Its unity is the umbrella of Islam. And by Islam's rejection of

Christ's sacrifice, it is, indeed, slave to sin. So while it doesn't look good for Paul from a 1st-century perspective, he will be correct in the long haul. However, *the circumcision faction* would have taken Paul apart on this point.

Continuing in Genesis, God tells Abraham, "But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year" (17:21). Indeed, Isaac was the child of promise, but where was he promised? Through the covenant ratified by circumcision. The birth of Isaac is not promised in the earlier covenant, in which God says, "[I]n you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3), for Paul has just assured these Galatians that offspring by whom all peoples would be blessed is Christ. That offspring isn't Isaac. Instead, where God promises Abraham Isaac's birth is in the covenant of circumcision. Without circumcision, no Isaac. So actually Isaac is the promise of circumcision, and *the circumcision faction* has won another point.

But I won't concede victory to *the circumcision faction* quite this quickly: the other leg of iron of Nebuchadnezzar's statue is the reign of the demonic king of the North, who formally hijacks Christianity in the 4th-Century. He reigns through the power of the Cross, and that power shifts away from the Near and Middle East and into Israelite Europe by the 8th-century. Ever since then, an Israelite nation or combination of nations has/have been the empowering nation[s] for the king of the North. So through Christianity by way of Isaac has come the promise.

Allow me to say this more plainly. When the *Logos* tells Moses that Israel is His first born, and brings Israel out of the slavery, it was the *Logos's* intention that Israel be the world's leading nation. The *Logos* had toppled Egyptian power so that was possible. In addition, he intended to wipe out the Canaanite nations, leaving no power this side of the Indus Valley able to match Israel. Then came the golden calf incident, and Israel was lucky to have lived.

Through David, Israel became the regionally dominant power. Solomon inherited a national power the likes of which we still fail to appreciate. In Israel's alliance with Tyre, Israelite military power and Phoenician sea power combined to produce the worldwide extension of Israel's influence, which was to have been for the good. Instead, Israel went whoring after every god invented by humanity, and God used first Assyria, then Babylon to break Israel's power. He then gave to Babylon the role of preeminence. The time of the Gentiles began, and Satan actually took complete rule of the world as the king of Babylon.

Under Satan's reign, nations composed primarily of the descendants of the north house of Israel gained world power through fronting for the king of the North in his bickering against his fellow demon, the king of the South. Without the assistance of Israelites, neither Rome, nor Constantinople were able to contend with the Ishmaelite peoples united under Islam. Eventually the power of the Cross shifted into Israelite France, where it didn't remain long. By the 19th-Century, the power of the Cross was held almost exclusively by the sons of Abraham—the plural is intended, for many of Abraham's sons by Keturah are in Russia and the TransCarpathian region, and are mainly Orthodox Christians.

While the sons of Abraham have fought among themselves, they have also ruled through the power of the Cross as the front nation of the king of the North. Today, that front nation is the United States. Halfway through the Tribulation, it will be Russia. The former Soviet Union's Cold War decentralization effort will allow it to best survive the forthcoming attack by the king of the South on the king of the North.

Thus, Paul is indirectly correct that through Isaac will come the power of the Cross. Paul's reasoning wasn't this expansive. He saw the Jews as the seed of Isaac through which the Seed would be born. However, Isaac's birth is by a different covenant than the promise of faith, for Ishmael is the result of Abram's lack of faith. Sarah received her

name change because of her lack of faith. So it is really stretching it to say that Isaac's birth is by faith, either Abraham's or Sarah's. It is more accurate to say that Isaac came through the ratification of circumcision.

So far Paul's allegory of the two women has a hard time with the truth test. Paul neither accounts for the many sons born to the second free woman, Keturah; nor for the twelve grandsons of Hagar becoming princes; nor for the promise of Isaac's birth being ratified by circumcision. In kindness to Paul, I should mention that in his argumentative structure, we are at the bottom point of the smallest inverted triangle; we are at the weakest point of all of his points. If I were arguing with him, it is here where I would attack his argument: Isaac came by circumcision, and it is through Isaac that the promise of blessing to all families came. Without circumcision, no person will enter the temple of God in the Messiah's Millennium reign. So through circumcision comes the promise of the Messiah, who will continue that circumcision during His reign. The only problem would be that my argument would be against God's will.

What we see in Paul's epistles to these Galatians is God's will being presented as an overlying principle. Paul tries too hard to put too fine a point on his argument. He really wants to convince these Galatians that they shouldn't trust in the flesh to save them, or to make them right with God. He hasn't much to work with except God's revelation to him. He has to overturn unambiguous language in the sacred writings. So he starts off by swinging with all he has, and he follows up by throwing a lot of straw into the air and seeing if any of it will stick to the proverbial wall. If these Galatians aren't careful readers, they might buy some of Paul's straw. Plenty of readers ever since have. And I have had to determine if Paul devalues (mocks) the education of these Galatians, or if what I am reading is an application of his own spiritually perverted education.

As I write this, the war drums are beating along the Hudson. I assigned my students to write an argument for why we should or shouldn't go to war with Iraq, and while reviewing research for their

arguments, I saw a few lines about Iraq being unable to build rocket engines. I remember seeing video footage of the machining of our space shuttles' engines. The heart of a shuttle's engine took about two weeks of steady milling by one of the most advanced CNC machines in the world. It was not something any nation besides ourselves and a few in Western Europe and Japan could produce. It was too complex. There is too great a technology gap between us and Iraq for them to produce the sophisticated rocketry we possess.

It is easy to forget that a philosophical technology gap exists between the 1st-Century and today. This gap is readily apparent when a person reads Augustine's discussion of *signs* in *On Christian Doctrine*. Perhaps we haven't come as far philosophically as we have come mechanically, but we certainly better understand the nature of language and of human thought than Augustine did. Likewise, we understand both on a secular level better than Paul did. So I shouldn't hold Paul's argument to the same standards that I hold my students. I benefit from two thousand years more of experience than what Paul had. And I wouldn't do any of this if biblical scholars hadn't deified Paul's epistles. They are inspired. They are not infallible. To make that claim for them causes the person to place them on the same level as God, and I can show you God learning about humanity from the biblical text. God didn't know what Abraham would do when it came to sacrificing Isaac until Abraham had the knife in motion. God couldn't believe that Israel would make for themselves a golden calf, and He blamed Moses for bringing Israel out from Egypt. We actually see in text His anger preventing Him from considering all possibilities. However, He is not human, and we are not even close to being on the same plane as God. The gulf is literally beyond all means of measurement. But God is real. He lives. He learns. He executes on time plans made thousands of years before. And He works through human beings for both the benefit of the person and because of restrictions He has placed upon Himself.

In working through fallible humans, and through fallible languages, God has introduced into His inspired word fallibility, which doesn't harm His plans for humanity. He will not have allowed linguistic usage to stand that is harmful to the spiritual development of saints. Where it really doesn't matter, such as Paul writing that he will live to see Christ return, God let the error go. What difference does it make to drawn saints? To Peter's lawless ignorant, Paul's error gives reason for them to believe Paul went to heaven, but drawn saints know Paul died and now rests in the grave, awaiting his change. The points Paul makes are valid; many of them are revealed knowledge. Therefore, Paul's grasping at straws to better make his point about salvation isn't of the flesh is of no consequence. However, the person who attempts to build a theology, or to tear down a theology on the straw Paul tossed out in hopes that some of it would stick will have to produce a better argument than Paul has. What I lack in intellect, Christ supplies through inspiration. Lawless Pharisees couldn't match Christ's wit two millennia ago; their lawless descendants are even less able to match wits today. They have no alternative but to fall back on historical exegesis, which is the means by which the demonic king of the North has reigned for the passed seventeen centuries. If they dare attempt to reread the text, they will find that they are on the wrong side. They then have the choice of self-acknowledging themselves as hypocrites, or accepting the purifying of faith that Christ will bring to greater Christianity. Those who know they are hypocrites but fear men more than they fear God will become as aggressive as cornered rats. What they won't realize is that it will be Christ who slaps them down.

Returning to Galatians: if Isaac is born of the promise, then why did Abraham circumcise him on the eighth day (Gen 21:4) if circumcision isn't part of the promise? The promise is ratified by circumcision. And can you see how *the circumcision faction* could argue against all Paul writes? *The circumcision faction* could have added, *Does not the sacred writing say, "You must diligently observe everything that I command you; do not add to it or take anything from it" (Deu 12:32)? What does Scrip-*

ture say about a dreamer of dreams, or of a prophet who endices you to follow other gods or to take away from the very word of God? Does it not say that this man or woman shall be stoned, that you shall show this person no pity (Deu 13:1-11)? It certainly does. Read it for yourself. And this dreamer of revelations would have you break the very covenant with God through which the promise of Isaac came, and from Isaac, Jesus the Christ. He would, by his imaginations, make the law of God of no effect. He would have you, Galatians, be like the uncircumcised dog Goliath, whom David slew with a pebble. He would make of all of you dogs by his imaginations, making of you greater prey than when he held the coats of those who stoned righteous Stephen.

Can you now see why Paul asks, “Have I now become your enemy” (Gal 4:16)—and who still wants to argue for textual infallibility? Is not Paul’s argument the taking away from, or the adding to what Moses commanded, depending upon how you wish to argue the claims Paul makes for his revelation? Of course it is. To think otherwise isn’t to think. So only by hearing Christ’s voice calling to His sheep can drawn disciples know whether to accept the argument from Scripture of *the circumcision faction*, or accept that Paul had really received divine revelation. These Galatians, for whatever reasons, couldn’t hear Christ’s voice. And Paul really has very little ammo to shoot at those circumcision wolves. After a couple of shots, all he has is blanks, which make noise but kill nothing. In the structure of his argument, I am claiming that those blanks actually do his case more harm than good. The additional muzzleblasts give the wolves the light they need to slaughter additional sheep.

The circumcision faction was opposed to Paul at the Jerusalem conference. They might well have been seeking Paul’s death for him teaching that circumcision as a work of the flesh was no longer of any value.

So that there never is any mistake about what I teach, circumcision is a work of the flesh that has no correspondence with reconciliation to the Father, which only comes by death and resurrection, either literal or figuratively in baptism with faith that Christ bore and bears the sins

that would otherwise separate us from the Father. Justification, or reconciliation is always by faith in Christ, in who He was and is, and in what He did and does on an ongoing basis. No work of the flesh can absolve us of the death penalty we have been under since committing our first sin. The doctrine of original sin is a doctrine of demons. The infant who dies before committing a sin only needs resurrecting to be reconciled. This infant is not under judgment. How Christ and the Father receive this infant who had not yet succumbed to Satan is Their business. The text is, to me at this time, silent about how They will receive such infants. The text is too spare to say with certainty that the infants' mothers will care for them to an age of accountability in the great White Throne Judgment, as has been suggested in the Church of God.

Galatians 4:29—

But just as at that time the child who was born according to the flesh persecuted the child who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.

In this verse, we see some of what 1st-Century Judaism taught, and can see how Paul was educated. The passage referenced by Paul is probably Genesis 21:9. What Paul describes as *dioko*, which is usually understood to mean to pursue as in to persecute, is in Hebrew *tsachaq*, a primary root usually understood to mean to laugh outright in either merriment, or in mocking. The connotative determination of either merriment or mocking must come from the context. And the context has Abraham throwing a party or festival for the occasion of Isaac being weaned. Ishmael is now fifteen or sixteen. Sarah sees Ishmael sporting, or playing with this just-weaned baby, and tells Abraham that Hagar has to go, “for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac” (Gen 21:10).

The Pharisees apparently taught that the playing of Ishmael with Isaac was mocking, that Sarah was justified in demanding that Hagar be cast out of Abraham's household.

Galatians 4:30—

But what does the scripture say? "Drive out the slave and her child; for the child of the slave will not share the inheritance with the child of the free woman."

The word Paul uses that is translated above as child is *huios*, a common icon for son, which better matches the Hebrew *yeled*, which can be used for young man, to convey the sense that Ishmael was nearly of the age that he should receive an inheritance so that he could begin a patriarchy of his own. What Sarah apparently sees is the juxtaposition of Hagar's son being nearly an adult and her son being still a babe in arms; she becomes territorial. No son of a slave will receive, if she can help it, anything that should rightfully go to her son.

From a practical observation, having reared children and now having grandsons, I ask, how does a fifteen year old play with a, say, two year old? They are not equals. The older plays as an adult with the baby, does he not? How can the older effectively mock the baby? Take a toy away and not give it back? Call it a name it cannot understand? No, the older is as a parent to the baby. And this is what Sarah would not tolerate. She could see by the contrast between the two that Ishmael would be Abraham's favorite son if Ishmael remained. In order for Isaac to have that favored position in Abraham's heart, Ishmael could no longer remain in the household. Hagar and her son had to go immediately; for prior to Isaac being weaned, the baby had been in the company of woman. Abraham would have had little to do with his son until weaned, such was the culture.

Therefore, what we see in the above two verses is the racial bias of 1st-Century Jews: that prejudicial bias has Paul and other Pharisees assuming that the playing of Ishmael with Isaac was mocking, was neg-

ative, was persecution. But the Genesis account will not support anything beyond Sarah's protection of Isaac's inheritance.

Paul was unable to entirely free himself of the racial prejudices that were the informing paradigms of the social constructs of 1st-Century Judaism. *The circumcision faction* were steeped in prejudice. They were no friends to these Galatians, and this will be what Paul tries to convey to these converts.

Galatians 4:31–5:1—

So then, friends, we are children, not of the slave but of the free woman. For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Paul's analogy has some difficulties, but the principle behind the analogy is solid: the promise to Abraham was reconciliation to the Father through freedom from sin by Christ's sacrifice of Himself as our sin offering. To establish doctrine by closely reading Paul's epistles is a mistake; they will not hold up to critical scrutiny as texts to overturn what Jesus taught. Christ, alone, established the doctrines of Christianity. Paul never intended to teach anything contrary to what Christ taught. Yes, modern scholarship has placed Paul in opposition to Christ though the concepts of "dispensation of Law" versus "dispensation of Grace." But this imaginary opposition is the lawless ignorant twisting Paul's epistles to their own destruction. No such twisting should be even attempted.

Paul was the product of his education just as modern scholars are the products of theirs, and as I am of mine. A critic coming behind me will find my biases encoded in my selection of what I have included and excluded in this text. A critic, however, will not find where I condone lawlessness. If I personally don't measure up to the standard that is Christ, then I have failed to do what I should. The critic has no excuse for he or she not doing what he or she should, according to that standard of Christ.

Keeping the law of God is not submitting to the yoke of slavery, which is the flesh, and by extension, trusting in one's flesh to make one right with God. Keeping the law is the cause of life, not a prison from which one must escape to experience freedom. Paul inherited a perverted understanding of the law from 1st-Century Judaism, an understanding that caused him to be a Pharisee of the Pharisees, none of whom, according to Jesus, kept the law of God. This single understanding is difficult for modern scholars to comprehend, so I will repeat myself: the Pharisees were NOT law-keepers. There were merely teachers of the law, and then, not very good ones. Paul did not keep the law as he should prior to his conversion, for always present in the law of God is love, first towards God, then towards all of humanity. The racism of Judaism precluded Pharisees from loving Gentiles; therefore, it was actually impossible for the Pharisees to keep the law of God. But with the writing of the law on the minds and hearts of drawn disciples, saints can both intellectually keep the law and emotionally keep the law. The saint is not a slave to his or her flesh, beyond which sits the law as an owl in a tree, judging the person as if the person were a gopher about to become lunch. Rather, the law is concealed inside the person as if the person's flesh were gopher wood. The law rules the person's intellect and emotions from inside him or her. That rule is not perfect as the person struggles with the flesh being subject to the rebellion of Satan. The flesh is enslaved by Satan, just as were the angels under Satan's dominion. It cannot free itself. It will die and return to being the elements of the earth. Paul commands these Galatians to stand firm, and resist the slavery that comes from being ruled by the flesh, and by extension, by Satan. Even though his argument runs beyond where it should have stopped, Paul doesn't want to quit his argument as long there is anything he can say that might persuade these Galatians to return to their first love for Christ. Thus, what we see is Paul throwing everything he can against a wall of unbelief in hopes that some of it sticks.

Galatians 5:2–4—

Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. Once again I testify to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the entire law. You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

Here is the issue which caused Paul to write to these Galatians; here is the reason for him constructing his argument; here is the matter and its summation. Paul's epistle to these Galatians wasn't written to tell these Gentile converts that they didn't have to judaize, or that they weren't to keep the law of God. It was written because *the circumcision faction* had been at work within the fellowship, teaching these Galatians that justification came by the works of the law. A person either lives by the flesh or by faith. The lawless do not live by faith any more than the Pharisees kept the law. They trust in the flesh having received an immortal soul at birth. All of the Dr. Alberts of the world do not live by faith as they think they do—the Pharisees thought they kept the law of Moses, yet Jesus said that none did. Rather, by their lawlessness, they reject Christ, trusting instead in the Platonism that infected the early Church. Christ doesn't care whether the person trusting in his or her flesh is a Pharisee or a Platonist, that person has cut him or herself off from God. Justification doesn't come from the flesh. The lawless will not be raptured to heaven to escape the Tribulation; they will die in their sins, having rejected the relationship the Father offered to those He drew to do always that which is right.

Sin is lawlessness. Sin isn't keeping the law of God.

How did such a spiritually perverted idea—sin is keeping the law of God—ever enter Christianity? To believe a person has an immortal soul is sin, because the one who believes this damnable lie places Satan before God. To believe that God is a single triune deity is sin, because the one who believes this lie makes the Breath of God equal to the Most High God, while denying the deity of Christ. To believe that

Christ fulfilled the law so that Christians don't have to keep the law is sin, because the one who believes this lie justifies lawlessness, and has thereby placed his or her faith in sin to reconcile the person to Christ. Do I exaggerate? Not in the least. Lawlessness is the production of the carnal mind, which is against God: the lawless mind is against God, for the law of God either was never written in the person's mind, or the person erased the law from where the Father wrote it. The person trusts in his or her salvation coming through the lawlessness the person practices even though the person professes faith in Jesus; the person trusts in Christ's shed blood doing what the person doesn't believe needs done. If the person believes that he or she doesn't now need to keep the law of God, then the person doesn't believe that a living Christ must bear the sins the person committed today. The person trusts that the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ covers the sins the person will commit today and tomorrow. That is not the case. The blood of Jesus pays the death penalty we were under prior to our accepting His sacrifice. His blood does not cover the sins of the symbolically resurrected disciples. Rather, the risen Christ bears our sins today. The risen Christ is the goat over which the sins of Israel are pronounced each Yom Kipporim. He is our High Priest today. Like the high priest of ancient Israel, who had to offer a sin sacrifice for himself, the risen Christ will return the sins He now bears to Satan when Yom Kipporim becomes a reality. He will not reign burdened by human sins. So the person who practices lawlessness mocks the risen Christ by denying that the person is under obligation to keep the law of God. Because the person denies that obligation, Christ doesn't carry the person's sins; He has no need to carry them, for the person has placed him or herself outside of the covenant relationship. The person has another god, so the person bears his or her sins. No additional sacrifice remains for this person who was drawn by the Father.

No excuses, no valid reasoning can make lawlessness anything except rejection of Christ's rule over the person.

All who knowingly practice lawlessness will perish in their sin, for lawlessness is a work of the flesh. It is the circumcision pendulum swung to the other extreme—the pendulum didn't pass through faith, but through fornication and fratricide and falsity, as the flesh stands as erect as a steeple. And it is in this condition that the lawless come before the Father, demanding that He admit them into heaven, that He rapture them before He pours His undiluted wrath down on their enemies who are those people who worshiped Christ in that church across the street, those who mowed their lawns on Sunday, those who brought a tuna casserole to a potluck. They trust that being seen in services each Sunday will be good for their businesses, will help them get financing, will get them invitations into all of the right circles. For them, it is unthinkable of God to expect them to keep His law, with all of its dos and don'ts. I can even now hear them say, *Can you just imagine? going to church on Saturday, like some kind of a religious weirdo?* Well, God can.

Paul's epistle to these Galatians is about one issue only: trusting in circumcision to make a man right with God. Such trust excludes Christ from the fellow's life.

Galatians 5:5–6—

For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love.

The faith that matters isn't of the flesh, but of God. The type of faith produced by the flesh is a work of the flesh. Only when the Father has drawn us from the world and has spiritually modified us will we have His faith, which will always cause us to want to please Him by being as obedient as possible.

Nothing else matters but faith. However, the lawless by their lawlessness demonstrate that they do not have this faith. There is a vast

gulf between keeping the law of God because we know that is the right thing to do, and trusting in a person's keeping of the law for the person's justification. The first is pleasing to God; the latter is spurning Christ's sacrifice. And the greater fault is claiming Christ's sacrifice, then mocking Christ and the Father by insisting that the person has eternal life, regardless of what the person does; that the wage for lawlessness isn't death, but life in either heaven or hell, depending upon whether the person ever once mumbled the sinner's prayer.

Galatians 5:7–10—

You were running well; who prevented you from obeying the truth? Such persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough. I am confident about you in the Lord that you will not think otherwise. But whoever it is that is confusing you will pay the penalty.

First, Paul's use of yeast's invasive growth habit is not a veiled reference to keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread. Germs were not known. Paul didn't have many examples from which he could draw an analogy about a little sin spreading as an infection, poisoning the whole body. Without knowledge of other microorganisms, what else could Paul have used to describe the insidious nature of *the circumcision faction's* lie, which spread as yeast spores in a lump of dough throughout the fellowship of these Galatians.

Also interesting is Paul's question about who prevented these Galatians from obeying the truth. Paul wants to blame a person, specifically, one from outside of the fellowship. He doesn't believe these Galatians discovered circumcision on their own. Certainly, I wouldn't believe that they had. They were not Jewish. They weren't keeping the law of Moses prior to their conversion to Christianity. They aren't returning to the law of Moses after having left it. Rather, someone has come among them who has taught them that person's spiritually perverted understanding of the old covenant. As a result, Paul can now

reference the covenants of Abram/Abraham, whereas, before, it was unlikely that these Galatians knew the Septuagint well enough to understand Paul's allegory of Hagar and Sarah, which doesn't really pass the truth test.

Paul's little yeast is the person who, through apparently considerable diligence, has spoiled the understanding of the entire fellowship. Paul says this man's gospel is accursed. Here, he says the man will receive the penalty he has coming to him.

Apparently the person who had come among these Galatians had enough authority residing in the man's reputation that Paul references angels and so-called church leaders and even Peter when beginning his argument; the man's reputation appears to have been great enough that Paul presents an unusually long argument in which he throws the proverbial kitchen sink at the man. If the man came without inherent authority, Paul would not have constructed an Aristotelian argument, using all of the empirical evidence he can muster and a little he can borrow, to refute what the man has been teaching. So by what Paul's epistle foregrounds, we can say with reasonable certainty that the man who brought circumcision to these Galatians was a prominent figure in the early church, which isn't to suggest that the man was one of the original Apostles.

Galatians 5:11–12—

But my friends, why am I still being persecuted if I am still preaching circumcision? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettle you would castrate themselves!

We can know a little more about the man who brought circumcision to these Galatians: he is a former Pharisee, who, like Paul before conversion, preached circumcision prior to becoming a Christian. The problem seems to be that he hasn't quit preaching circumcision; so it's reasonable to say that the man had never been a fisherman, or someone who worked hard with his hands. It is also reasonable to say that the

man is a Levite, someone who would normally be cutting foreskins on the eighth day. Who other than a Levite would ordinarily have the means to castrate within the community of the Pharisees?

Galatians 5:13–15—

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

As I have earlier written, the Pharisees and Sadducees were teaching that the law of God could be reduced to the bi-part expression, *Love God with all of your heart and all of your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself*. Jesus put His stamp of approval upon this reduction. Thus, because loving God was never at issue, the Pharisees had further simplified the expression to the single commandment that Paul states. Therefore, by usage, we can say with confidence that Paul instructed these Galatians to keep the law of God, which in application makes one Christian a servant of every other Christian. The alternative to keeping the law of God is to devour one another, which Paul warns against.

Galatians 5:16–17—

Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want.

Once again, we see Paul's damaged education coming into play: did you receive the earnest of eternal life to prevent you from doing what you want? In his epistle to the Romans, Paul admits that he doesn't

understand why the Spirit and flesh are opposed to each other. I think I have explained why enough times in this book that it would be redundant if I said the reason for the opposition of the flesh is to cause the drawn disciple to repeatedly choose to do what is right until the disciple has developed the habit of always choosing to do what is right. The flesh resists this choice, thereby causing the disciple to again choose to do what is right. The Father is reproducing Himself indirectly by taking the character (or will) of the person who always chooses to do what is right, and installing that character (or will) in a glorified body. It is this decision making process to always do what is right that the Father cannot produce rightly, as evidenced by Satan having been created perfect.

Paul didn't understand what I have just explained. Revelation doesn't come all at one time; it didn't all come in the 8th-Century B.C., or in 1st-Century A.D.; it hasn't all come yet, but you have read what Paul would've liked to have known.

Galatians 5:18—

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law.

Since Paul, by his own admission (Rom 7:15), doesn't understand the struggle between the Spirit of God and a person's flesh, he is, perhaps, not the best source of information about this struggle between Spirit, flesh, and law.

Once the law of God has been written on a person's heart and mind, the person is no longer under the law, or subject to the law, but the person's heart and mind are the two tablets upon which the law is written. The law is holy (Rom 7:12), as is the ark of flesh which houses the tablets upon which the law has been written. But this holy flesh is only holy because of faith in Christ's sacrifice. It really doesn't want to be holy. It wants to be a part of the world. It is corruptible, and corrupted, and under penalty of death.

If a person possesses the earnest of the Holy *Pneuma*, the person has become the law of God, so the person isn't under the law, but under Grace, which, as a gift of God, remains outside the person. In the model of the temple given to Moses, Grace corresponds to the Mercy Seat, just as the Ark of the Covenant corresponds to a drawn disciple's flesh, and the two Tablets of Stone to the drawn disciple's heart and mind. Christ represents the three gates between the world and the holy of holies. Along the Way is the altar of sacrifice, where the disciple lays down his or her life to come under the shed blood of Christ, whose sacrifice makes all of this possible. Then there is the laver which symbolizes baptism and resurrection, the candlestick which symbolizes spiritual illumination, the table of showbread where the disciple offers his or her works as a sacrifice, the altar of incense where the disciple's prayers are poured out, then entrance into the holy of holies, possible only because Christ today bears our sins. The outer gate is opened by the Father. The other two gates are open because Christ died for our sins, and lives again to bear our sins, the two goats of Yom Kipporim. Christ is our sin offering. Without faith that all of this is so, we have no sin offering, no life, no relationship with the Father. The earnest of eternal life we received from the Holy Breath self-aborts. And with no sin offering now remaining for this drawn disciple who loses faith and dies an actual death, the disciple will be resurrected into the lake of fire; for in accepting Christ's sacrifice of His life, the disciple died his or her first death. The disciple actually laid down his or her life on that altar of sacrifice, covered by Christ's shed blood. For this disciple, who has gone past the altar of sacrifice, to turn away from faith and return to the world, no sacrifice remains. The disciple cannot again offer his or her life for the disciple's sins: this disciple's only possibility for eternal life is to return in faith to Christ. Paul understands this, at least mostly. The passion that causes Paul to wish the man castrated who has deceived these Galatians into trusting in circumcision to make them right with God comes from his understanding that this is it for these Galatians if they turn from Christ and return to trusting in the flesh

through either the law of Moses or through their previous idolatrous practices. The *how* makes no difference. Only by continuing in faith will the living Christ continue to bear their sins. No faith, no belief that Christ bears these sins—if you don't believe He does, you won't give those sins to Him. You will die the second death because of those sins.

The symbolism of the table of showbread is what condemns the lawless in the model of the temple that represents the Christian's life. To return to trusting in the flesh is to walk back out the gates that are Christ, whereas to practice lawlessness causes the disciple to self-abort inside the sanctuary for lack of an offering. What has the person who practices lawlessness to bring? This person doesn't believe he or she must bring anything; *Christ has done everything*. Christ, as the gates, stands open for the disciple to walk through. Once inside the sanctuary and illuminated by the knowledge of God, the disciple encounters two tables or altars before resting under the Mercy Seat. The first is the disciple's works, and the second is the disciple's prayers. Without works and prayers, the disciple will not rest under Grace until glorified. Our works do not make us holy or righteous; they do not get us into the sanctuary. They are our offering to God to show that we not only appreciate what He does for us, but that we will honor what He does and has done. The lawless bring nothing. Their prayers are not heard. They are unable to proceed past the candlestick of spiritual knowledge. They will either return entirely to trusting in the flesh, or they will wither and die within sight of the Mercy Seat, now that the veil separating the holy of holies from the rest of the sanctuary has been rent.

Paul's love for these Galatians shows in the passion with which he writes. I understand both Paul's passion and his frustration. I feel it everytime I turn on Christian television and see the lawless teach would-be disciples that they have no need to bring an offering to God, that Christ has done everything, that the work of salvation is finished. For them it is finished: unless they repent, their future will either be that of being called least in the kingdom of heaven, or will be in the lake of

fire. This is not my judgment, but Christ's. I would have these men and women repent and turn to the Christ they now profess to worship. Most won't. They are the minions of the king of the North. Their reputations and incomes are dependant upon them continuing to teach a lie. Most have neither the strength nor the skills to work for a living at an honest job. They depend upon their "ministries" to support them, so they dare not teach anything other than what they have in the past.

Galatians 5:19–21—

Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Let's consider for a moment: none of these works of the flesh involve keeping the law of Moses, do they? Paul, in this listing, doesn't warn these Galatians against keeping the sabbaths of God, or eating only clean meats, or even against circumcision. Rather, this listing is of things that these Galatians were doing prior to their conversion; Paul says so. Thus, the beggarly elements, with their days and seasons, to which these Galatians returned are not those things that pertain to the law of Moses, but they are the above listing, with the days being occasions for religious fornication and carousing.

Paul has written plenty against trusting in circumcision. He now addresses the other result of trusting in the flesh, that of returning to the ways of the world.

The list deserves more attention than I wish to here spend with it. I really have no interest in spending time with the works of the flesh, but at some point in the future, I will return to this listing and address each fault. Why? because someone will say that I ducked addressing the hard issues of the flesh. Such is not the case. These works are repugnant

to me. I don't volunteer to clean toilets. I will, though, when asked. The same for dealing with these works of the flesh.

Galatians 5:22–23—

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

Note that the fruit is single: one fruit, nine aspects or facets. Just as the law of God is one law of ten commandments, the production of the Holy *Pneuma* within a person is fruit with many attributes, not many differing kinds of fruit.

The end of this book is in sight, and since I will eventually have to address the works of the flesh, I will then address the contrasting fruit produced by the earnest of eternal life within a drawn disciple.

The fruit of the Holy *Pneuma* isn't the offering that the drawn disciple brings into the sanctuary, but the characteristics of the life living within the disciple's heart and mind. Of course there is no law against that which is within the written law that lives inside a holy ark.

Galatians 5:24–26—

And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

A reason for a man being circumcised is envy of the flesh of another, a feeling of inferiority because of the presence of a foreskin on oneself. This can, indeed, lead to competition of who can have the most cut off, with castration the logical conclusion, possibly the reason for Paul mentioning his desire that the person teaching these Galatians castrate himself.

Returning again to the model of baptism, the emersion under water is symbolically the sacrifice of one's life. The person belongs now to Christ, who has purchased the person from the world. Yes, the Father has drawn the person, but that drawing is only possible because of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary. By His death, Christ has purchased all whom the Father chooses to draw. Thus, in symbolism we are crucified in Christ's death. Christ bears the curse of the law for us, but by identifying ourselves with Christ, we are cursed by the world, since we no longer are part of the world. Christ came to bring a sword, thereby setting son against father and mother against daughter. The curse we now bear by identifying with Christ is that we cannot all get along. If the world does not hate us, we are not sighing and crying loud enough about the abominations committed within it.

If Christ bears the curse of the law for us, we cannot turn away from Him and live. He will simply hand us back our sins, for which no sacrifice remains. Judgment has been upon us. We determine how we will be judged, and by turning from Christ, we judge ourselves worthy of damnation. Repentance is possible only until our physical deaths. Then what awaits this person will seem immediate, even if millennia have passed (the dead know nothing). The person is cast into the lake of fire. All of the person's protests about Christ not requiring works, about having done mighty deeds in the name of Christ, about being a good person will not change the judgment the person rendered upon him or herself. Christ will simply say that He never knew the person.

Galatians 6:1–2—

My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

The law of Christ is bi-part, and can be found in the writings of John, which were penned after Paul was martyred: it is to keep the

commandments of the Father, and to have love for even one's enemies (1 John 2:3–5; John 13:34–35; 14:15, 23–24; 15:10, 12–13). Love is bearing one another's burdens. Christ loves us enough to bear our sins. It would seem that we could bear wrongs and slights and a host of offenses as burdens, not counting the types of burdens that are physical necessities.

Paul says in his words what James says (5:19–20) about restoring someone who has wandered away. With Christ, recovering a drawn disciple who is headed into the lake of fire is an occasion for celebration. Paul cautions the one who would restore the other to use gentleness, and to be wary of also falling away. However, if Paul's epistle to these Galatians is his use of gentleness, then those who experience the fury of his wrath need to have very tough hides.

Galatians 6:3–5—

For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. All must test their own works; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride. For all must carry their own load.

Paul's reference to "neighbor's work" looks forward to verse 12: "It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised—only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ." So Paul's admonishment is for each individual to test his or her own work. The implication is that the Levite who has been teaching these Galatians that they must be circumcised hasn't any work of his own, but rather, glories in how many Christians he can get to cut off foreskins, thereby showing himself approved to the Jews who would otherwise persecute him.

This passage also pertains directly to what I write, as someone will be sure to note. Within the Church of God, I am nothing. Do I think I am someone and thereby deceive myself? That is really the judgment of those who read what I write. And honestly, who am I to criticize tel-

evangelists who teach lawlessness and an immortal soul, or leaders within the Church of God who find the Roman Empire in the prophecies of Daniel? Who am I to criticize Paul's argument to these Galatians? Do I not think more highly of myself than I should? It will certainly be easy to dismiss what I write on the grounds of me being nothing.

But consider who Paul was from a mid 1st-Century perspective: did he not think more highly of himself than he ought? He was not one of the original disciples. He wasn't credentialed by the Apostles at Jerusalem. He only rarely conferred with the original Apostles. As his entire epistle to these Galatians reveals, his authority to command them wasn't as great as that of someone from *the circumcision faction*. He has to construct an argument to convince these Galatians not to have themselves circumcised; he cannot just tell them to knock off this silliness. He cites the sacred writings, because his writings don't possess the same level of authority.

I do not glory in my neighbor's works, nor do I glory in my own. A great work of purifying the Body of Christ is to be done. I will be a part of that work, but the prophecies that tell of this work also tell of Christ opening the doors. If Christ supplies the revelation, then opens the doors so that His revelation can be spread worldwide, then draws thousands to repentance when they read His revelation, exactly what part have I played in this work? A fairly insignificant part. I get to pick a fight with the demonic king of the North, then wait for Christ to bail me out by destroying this demon halfway through seven years of Tribulation. I will receive more credit than I deserve for picking this fight. So you decide if I think more of myself than I ought, for I'm also picking a fight with you, if you practice lawlessness. And understand, it will be Christ who slaps you down, not me. I don't have the means.

Galatians 6:6—

Those who are taught the word must share in all good things with their teacher.

If I receive credit for starting this promised fight with the king of the North, those who read what I write and who believe that they hear Christ's voice in my words will share in whatever glory there is for participating in the greatest mismatch of all time. We will take on a Goliath that we know ahead of time we cannot kill. We will take him on to bring as many as we can to the fullness of Christ. We will take him on in an effort to restore Christianity to Christ. And we will rescue tens of thousands of drawn disciples who have wandered away from their faith in Christ. So there will be some spiritual glory, enough to share with everyone involved and have plenty left over. But perhaps I think more highly of myself than I ought.

Are you willing to fight for Christ? How about for those drawn disciples ensnared by the king of the North? I am, even though I know I cannot win. But all I have to do is pick the fight, then fight on until Christ rescues me. He promised He would nineteen centuries ago.

Galatians 6:7–10—

Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

“Let us not grow weary in doing what is right”—the message of this entire book. This is all that God requires of us. We must endure in faith until the end, our end or the end of the age. We must again choose to do what is right everytime the flesh lets us down. And this habit of always choosing to do what is right is what the Most High God cannot create directly.

God will not be mocked. We are flesh, and our concerns are for what we can see and measure, what we need to sustain ourselves, what

we acquire through whatever means. All of these concerns are physical; they are the type of thoughts your dog has. And as long as these physical concerns for foremost in a person's heart and mind, the person will not submit to God. The person will figuratively sow to his or her flesh, and will reap fleshly things. Only when a person places higher value on what the person cannot know except by faith will the person reap a spiritual harvest.

Paul's instructions are to do good to all of humanity, but giving some preference to the Church of God. The type of bickering the Body of Christ has experienced is shameful though understandable. It will end shortly, or those who have sought their own followings will find themselves enemies of Christ. But who am I to criticize giants?

I have been drafted by Christ to slay giants.

Galatians 6:11—

See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand!

If Paul had problems with his eyes, the "large" could refer to the size of the letters as well as the length of the letter. Regardless, he wrote this epistle to these Galatians with his own hand, for he was deeply concerned about them having wandered away from the faith. His intent was to renew them in Christ. To this purpose, he constructed the best argument that he could. He cannot resort to commanding them, for his words, even in an epistle, did not have the authority of Scripture to these Galatians. In fact, the length of this epistle and its content and structure suggest that he felt he had a great deal of work to do to overturn the authority of the one who was teaching circumcision to these Galatians.

Galatians 6:12–16—

It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised—only that they may not be perse-

cuted for the cross of Christ. Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh. May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I do to the world. For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

Here in his final sentences of his summation to his argument, Paul says in his words and from his perspective what I have written from mine, two thousand years in the future. The inspiration is of God. The understanding we now have is our growing in grace and knowledge.

The circumcision faction didn't keep the law; Jesus said they didn't. Saul would have disputed the point with Christ. Paul agrees with Christ, and understands that he is a new creation. Spiritual Israel is not of flesh, or about flesh. Saints are begotten with the earnest of eternal life, but they are born again as physical men and women once they have been baptized. The terminology will prove problematic for both greater Christianity and the Church of God. Because greater Christianity almost universally believes the lie that humanity has an immortal soul, the idea of physical humans only being begotten with eternal life is an alien concept. The Church of God hasn't well understood the new covenant, nor exactly what Yom Kipporim portrays. It has believed that God wasn't working with any fellowship who didn't or doesn't hold sound doctrine; therefore, it has narrowly defined who is of God, while failing entirely to understand how God works with drawn disciples. Not fully grasping how greater Christianity uses the phrase *born again*, it has spurned the phrase. It hasn't comprehended that two concepts are at work, the first glorification, the second justification. Concerning glorification, we are begotten. Concerning justification, we are born again, just as if resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment. And the good works that we do are our offering to God, who didn't need the showbread, or the grain offering. God

doesn't have any need of our good works, but they are pleasing to God, if for no other reason than they mean something to us. The lawless have nothing that they can offer; they don't believe they need to offer anything.

Paul's epistle to these Galatians is about one issue: trusting in the flesh to make a person right with God. That issue manifests itself in circumcision, and what has been taught to these Galatians by someone who has come among them.

Paul assures us that circumcision is nothing. The same can be said for other issues that are of the flesh such as clean meats. Understanding this, at least one denomination teaches that abstaining from unclean meats is for health reasons. That reason is true, but the truth is eating clean meats pertains to being holy. As drawn and spiritually modified disciples we are holy. The Father has made us holy. So why would anyone want to put into that which is holy that which is profane? Does the person intend to mock God? Eating a pork chop by a disciple is directly analogous to inserting piggy into the Ark of the Covenant inside the holy of holies. If you were to have committed such a great sacrilege, what would God think? Do you suppose He would be amused, or say the offence was nothing? What would His attitude be? The pork in a disciple's stomach really means nothing other than it will give the disciple indigestion, but to deliberately eat what was never intended to be food is an attitude of mocking God. The flesh just doesn't matter much, nor do the things of the flesh. But spiritual attitudes mean everything.

Paul tries his best to convey to these Galatians the unimportance of the flesh when it comes to salvation. Evangelical scholars have made from Paul's words permission to jettison the law of God. In their lawless ignorance, they have twisted Paul's epistle to their own destruction.

What claim do I make for myself? I am an inspired disciple of thirty years maturity. I am the one who would teach Dr. Albert the plan of God if he were teachable.

Too much of Christianity today is theatre. Historical exegesis prevents lies from ever dying of old age. Idolatry prevents epistles from being reread. Grown men cringe in fear of a hell that doesn't exist; they pray they will be raptured in an event that will never happen. And it is among these actors and cowards that I have come as a latter day David, twirling words as pebbles, my targets the ministers of righteousness that shill for the demonic king of the North. As David's pebble buried itself in Goliath's skull, so shall my words bury themselves in foreheads. Initially, I was reluctant to sling a stone; no more. The nation is in trouble. We have abandoned God and His law. We will be overturned by Satan if we don't return to the shared legalism that produced respect for the rule of law, and the rights of individuals within a society built upon the new covenant. A tithe of this nation in a covenant relationship with the Father and the Son might be enough to forestall the prophesied calamity. Concerning the destruction of Sodom, Abraham argued the *Logos* down from fifty to ten before the *Logos* ended the negotiations. Perhaps this nation can avoid what will happen if thirty million Americans are in strong relationships with the Father.

Galatians 6:17–18—

From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.

Sounds like Paul has had enough from *the circumcision faction*—I don't carry marks of physical suffering for Christ on my body, but I somewhat comprehend what Paul writes. Between having been scraped up off the road and put back together a couple of times, and paying the economic price of being a Sabbath keeper in our mostly irreligious society, parts of me don't work as they were intended; one of those parts is my creditworthiness.

I, too, will close this book with my prayer that the Father draws and disciples everyone who has struggled through to the end, that this reader accepts Christ's offer of grace.

The plan of God is surprisingly simple, and surprisingly understandable. The most difficult part of the plan is actually believing a ceremony as simplistic as baptism really represents death and resurrection. For humanity, death seems so very final. Judging from the amount of money spent to delay the end of life an extra few months, most Americans really don't believe in an afterlife of any kind. Most of us are extremely reluctant to leave life behind. Too much evolution has been accepted by the culture. So baptism is little more than dunking the individual. If it doesn't take the first time, it's repeated. Within greater Christianity, it's important, but it isn't nearly as important as saying the sinner's prayer. The ceremony's significance isn't well understood.

How difficult it will be for God to resurrect an individual can be seen in baptism. The evidence is that it won't be difficult at all, which places a much larger gulf between humanity and God than is usually advertised.

Father,

I realize public prayers are nearly meaningless, but I ask for all who have read this far that You remember them with special fondness in Your relationship with them, whenever that is; that you not only set Your angels about them to protect them, but that You cause other drawn men and women to strengthen them when they are weak, and to return them to Christ's fold when they wander away. I especially ask that You make all who read my words a blessing to others by them always doing that which is right in Your eyes. In Christ's name, Amen.

APPENDIX A

The following selection is from *A Philadelphia Apologetic*, and best represents my teaching on two popular passages used to support a person having an immortal soul:

My readings of two passages should here be included. The first passage is 1 Thessalonians 5:23: “May the God of peace sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I have heard many scholars state that this passage shows that humans have a tri-part composition of *psuche*, *pneuma*, and *soma*. But both *psuche* and *pneuma* mean breath, with *pneuma* meaning to breathe more deeply than does *psuche*.

If the passage were better translated, it would read, *may your breath and life and body be kept sound*. To me that seems reasonable and understandable. We have an English idiom that is similar: you are flesh and blood. Textually, the life is in the blood: “Only, you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood” (Gen 9:4). So what Paul wrote the Thessalonians was (rearranging the word order), *may your flesh and blood and breath be kept sound*. That is what we humans are, flesh and blood and breath. Paul, in his salutation to his first letter to the Thessalonians, wasn’t writing doctrine but a figurative acknowledgment of all that composes a person. Paul was, simply, praying for their good health and that they be found blameless before Christ.

The second passage is the one that causes the most confusion. It is the parable of Lazarus and Dives:

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man

named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames." But Abraham said, "Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us." He said, "Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house—for I have five brothers—that he may warm them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment." Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them." He said, "No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:19–31).

Considering the audience to whom Christ was speaking—"Pharisees, who were lovers of money" and who "ridiculed" Christ (verse 14)—the last sentence contains the essence of what Christ was trying to communicate: if these Pharisees would mock Christ for saying that they couldn't serve both "God and wealth" (verse 13), Abraham was not their spiritual father; and if they could find no mercy in the writings of Moses, they weren't about to listen to Him even though He would rise from the dead as once again part of Elohim, the creating godhead.

I have offended some Believers when I have told them that there is fiction in the Bible: the story of Lazarus and Dives is a fiction that Christ used to indict the Pharisees, then in his audience, of their false teachings. The parable that causes the Pharisees to mock Christ is of

the dishonest manager. The manager has been given notice that he is being fired. He wonders what he will do for he is “not strong enough to dig” and too “ashamed to beg” (Luke 16:3), an apt description of the Pharisees. So the manager cuts some under-the-table deals to set himself up financially. His master actually applauds the manager’s shenanigans. Then Christ delivers His message about the person faithful in little will be faithful in much. And Christ’s message was well enough understood by the Pharisees that they ridiculed Him. But Christ will have the last word. He said, “But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one stroke of a letter in the law to be dropped” (Luke 16:17). Now, Christ details the area in which the Pharisees had been compromising the law: “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery” (verse 18). The Pharisees had been, for a little money, allowing unjustified divorce decrees.

Christ, immediately after naming the specific area in which the Pharisees had been compromising the law, relates the fiction of Lazarus and Dives. Abraham is often mistakenly read as being alive in heaven, but Christ said, “No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man” (John 3:13); so Abraham and Lazarus cannot be in heaven. They are not in Hades, for a chasm separates them from Dives. They are in “story,” in this parable which fits into the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition of *fortune reversal after death* tales. The parable is a Cynic narrative. The Lazarus and Dives story wasn’t recent history; that is, it wasn’t the literal story of two men who died during Christ’s ministry in Judea.

The Pharisees were, collectively, the rich man who showed no mercy to an oppressed laity. They did not believe Moses and the prophets. Christ knew it would be futile to cite Moses or the Writings to them, and He gave them a Greek story to which they could relate. In a very real sense, Christ turned these Pharisees mocking back upon themselves by telling them a Greek story. **He, by His selection of the Lazarus and Dives parable, said to them both in content and in form**

that these Pharisees were not of Abraham's seed, the claim they valued most, but that these Pharisees were spiritual aliens. They might as well have been Greek gentiles.

In the Lazarus and Dives parable Christ was not negating the importance of the resurrections from the dead, but was using a fictional construct to make a point to mocking, money-hungry Pharisees. Paul used a similar strategy on Mars Hill when he quoted lines from Greek poets to the assembled philosophers. In both cases, the text is audience-specific. Both Christ's and Paul's use of Greek poetics conveyed more-encompassing messages to their immediate audience than either's use of Hebraic poetics would have. And in both cases, the strategy loses the additional meanings when read by audiences unfamiliar with Greek poetics.

On other occasions Pharisees tried to match wits with Christ. They lost each time. On this occasion, they not only lost but were humiliated in such a subtle way that generations of scholars haven't fully appreciated how thoroughly Christ bested them. Luke evidently did, for he relates the incident in sufficient richness that a reader can grasp the indictment Christ made of these Pharisees, even to his citing a specific violation of the law they were committing (i.e., granting unjustified divorce decrees, probably for payoffs). The reader can also grasp Christ's reversal of humiliation; for this parable, by its Greek content and form, stands out from all of the other parables recorded. It is no wonder that the Pharisees were determined to kill him. He humiliated them in a way that they understood, but in a way that few others in the audience could grasp. In other words, Christ used the Pharisees' education as the means for the Pharisees to understand what he had done to them. But no one with less education in the audience would have any appreciation for what had been accomplished. It was a "silent" humiliation, in that only the ones upon whom the figurative tables had been turned knew that the humiliation had taken place. These Pharisees couldn't even point to Christ and say to the rest of Christ's audience,

See, he is like us, for only they knew how badly they had been bested. They and Luke, the educated physician.

The parable of Lazarus and Dives verified already existing mental paradigms of the underworld for Greek-educated scholars in the first few centuries after Christ's crucifixion. These readers of Luke's account did not have to rid themselves of their own understandings of the underworld, of their neoPlatonic beliefs; rather, they could superimpose their understandings over the Hebraic paradigm of resurrection to create a logically-devoid construct of an immortal soul escaping to heaven at a person's death, then returning with Christ to receive a glorified body when Christ returns to earth, with that good soul's parallel being an evil soul going to Hades to be punished without ever receiving a glorified body upon which flames would have no effect, the reason why angels will be cast into outer darkness rather than roasted forever, ever sizzling but never quite charring enough to be served as tablefare for an angry god.

The Greek-educated Augustine, in *On Christian Doctrine*, even attempts the claim that Plato was inspired by the God of Abraham, or at least had contact with Jeremiah when Jeremiah went to Egypt. D.W. Robertson, Jr., famed Princeton scholar, writes in his "Translator's Introduction" to his translation of Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*,

We do not always realize today the extent to which the theology of Christianity was at once a logical outgrowth of late classical thought and, at the same time, an astonishingly brilliant fulfillment of the best traditions of ancient philosophy as they extend from Pythagoras and Plato to Cicero and Varro. Paganism, as [Jerome Carcopino in *De Pythagore aux Apotres*, Paris, 1956, page 80] a great classical scholar has said, "groped and staggered in the pursuit of an ideal concerning which it could have only an obscure pre-science. But when the message of the gospel reached its best thinkers, they believed that they had finally attained it in the flash of certainty which suddenly struck them" (*ix-x*).

Readings of text that use the parable of Lazarus and Dives to prove an immortal soul are not readings that derived from the community of Christ's disciples. They are, instead, readings descended from those of paganism's best thinkers.

APPENDIX B

The following selection is from *A Philadelphia Apologetic*, and best represents my teaching on clean meats:

Appetites, whether for food or sex or whatever, are products of the mind. Biology plays a small role only. Appetites are lusts, in spiritual parlance. As such, Christ said, “First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside may also be clean” (Matt 23:26), this passage used in its broad application. It isn’t what goes into a person that pollutes him or her, but what comes out. Salvation is not for the flesh and blood that makes up Paul’s figurative “old man,” but of the character developing within a person’s mind. Thus, in the broadest sense, what a person consumes means little to the person’s salvation. However, to lust for that which has been prohibited is a violation of the Law of Love for God and for one’s fellow human, regardless of whether that lust is for sexual gratification, possessions, or idols. To desire to eat what God has identified as not being fit food is lusting for self-gratification. So what goes down a person’s gullet means nothing spiritually, but what goes on in the person’s mind means everything.

In the above citation, the textual suggestion is that the outside of the cup cannot be cleaned by only polishing its outer surface. The passage addresses the fault of the Old Covenant, which wasn’t with the covenant but with the people trying to keep it. As long as the law of God remains outside a person, the person cannot be clean, regardless of whether the person is a physical Israelite or a gentile. Keeping a Kosher kitchen, with four sets of dishes, does nothing for the person, other than to deny the person the pleasure of eating a cheeseburger. Likewise, abstaining from eating any or all meat does nothing for a person if the person hasn’t first been modified spiritually. I think a person will live

longer if the person doesn't eat piggy, but salvation isn't of the flesh. A pork eater who hasn't been drawn and modified by the Father only receives physical benefits from giving up pork chops. The only promises offered under the Old Covenant were physical blessings. The covenant relationship offered Israel has been withdrawn through divorce, but a person will still benefit physically by keeping whatever portion of the Old Covenant that a person does. The laws given under the Old Covenant contain within themselves physical blessings.

Therefore, understanding that the consumption of clean or unclean meats only physically effects a person's flesh, which will return to dust (or the elements of the earth), the issue of which meats to eat becomes spiritual when desire becomes lust. God, through Moses, has clearly identified some types of flesh as being unfit for human consumption. This identification predates Noah, who was commanded to take "seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and its mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and its mate" (Gen 7:2). Noah didn't need to be told which animals were which. He knew. The knowledge of which animals were fit food for humans was part of basic instruction about how to live that had been passed on from generation to generation.

Before someone argues that Christ did away with ceremonial laws, thereby making all flesh fit to eat when received with thanksgiving, the determination of which meats are clean and unclean is not a ceremonial law. Noah didn't have ceremonial laws. An animal's identification of being unfit for human consumption wasn't baptized away by the New Covenant. It was actually magnified, making lusting for, not the actual consumption of unclean flesh sin. Thus, imitation bacon bits, which contain no pork, can be—if a person lusts for pork—unclean. The determination of what is included in the magnification of the law, then, becomes a matter for an individual to resolve for him or herself. But that magnification has nothing to do with whether the animal is fit for food. A Christian wouldn't receive that which is unfit for food with thanksgiving. The error in understanding is thinking that a Christian

would, for what would be received with thanksgiving is fit flesh that might have a questionable origin, such as being offered to idols. All being offered to idols affects is whether a person wants to eat the meat, not the meat itself. The meat remains either fit food, or unfit. But if eating is a stumbling block for a novice weak in faith, a Christian will not eat even fit flesh.

Someone might argue that clean and unclean laws pertained to earlier times for health reasons, but these laws don't pertain now with our improved food distribution systems, and knowledge of parasites. To those someones, I say, I fished in the Aleutians. One of the new fisheries being explored while I was there was clamming. Clams abound. But Alaskan clams grow slow due to the colder waters in which they live. For the same size, they are much older than New England clams. Since all clams contain PSP (Paralytic Shellfish Poison), and since PSP accumulates in shellfish, the older the shellfish is, the greater the amount of PSP is in its flesh. The amount of PSP in shellfish's flesh determines whether the shellfish is "safe" to eat. That amount is determined by mouse bio-assay, where a small portion of the clam is ground and injected into the mouse. All of the mice die. The length of time it takes for a particular mouse to die determines whether the sample from which it was injected is safe for humans. So a clam that is safe to eat is one that contains a smaller amount of poison than one that is unsafe—and who knows whether consumption of PSP in humans is accumulative as it is in the shellfish? It seems to be. So the longterm health effect of eating clams is, at best, questionable. Clams from remote Alaskan beaches aren't to be consumed by humans. Only clams from beaches that are regularly dug are considered safe. So I don't buy the "our food is now safe" argument.

God wasn't giving merely health laws when He explained clean and unclean meats for ancient Israelites: He said don't eat "and be holy, for I am holy...you shall be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:44–45). God doesn't change. He is the same yesterday as He will be tomorrow. He is Holy. You as an Israelite, or now, a spiritual Israelite are to be holy. I

am to be holy. And neither you, nor I can be holy and eat unclean meats—or as magnified, lust for unclean meats.

Paul's writings about meats have been misunderstood and misapplied, because the audiences to whom he writes are saints, both experienced in the word of God and novices. He doesn't write to wouldbe Christians who retain hostility towards the law of God because they haven't been drawn by the Father. He doesn't write to the descendants of the crowds that followed Christ. He writes to congregations of individuals who choose righteousness daily, who desire to be holy, who would worry about eating from a dish a mouse ran across. All of his teaching about meats center around the principle of making the person's insides "clean," and letting the outside of him or herself reflect that cleanliness.

Particular passages of Paul's writings can be cited and wrestled to prove that Christ made pigs fit human food, but why? Either a person wants to be holy like God, or the person doesn't. If the person does, he or she will do whatever God says without trying to weasel out from under reasonably clear instructions. Besides, Isaiah addresses the subject prophetically:

For the Lord will come in fire,/ and his chariots like the whirlwind,/ to pay back his anger in fury,/ and his rebuke in flames of fire./ For by fire will the Lord execute judgment,/ and by his sword, on all flesh;/ and those slain by the Lord shall be many./ Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following the one to the center, eating the flesh of pigs, vermin, and rodents, shall come to an end together, says the Lord" (Isa 66:15–17).

At Christ's second coming, all of those individuals who have found textual support for eating whatever they desire—who have sanctified and purified themselves—will be slaughtered. I don't think a person really wants to be counted among them. But that is an individual's choice.

A true Christian is not condemned if his or her brother-in-law slips a piece of pork fat into his chili to see what the Christian will do when he tells the Christian that he or she is eating piggy. For the brother-in-law's sake, the Christian will quit eating. But if the brother-in-law never says anything, the Christian doesn't need to either when he or she finds that lump of fat. Just set it aside. The issue is really a non-issue except as lusts are involved.

APPENDIX C

The following is an excerpt from the discussion of annual sabbaths found in *A Philadelphia Apologetic*, with additional new text addressing Colossians 2:16. Of necessity, I have paraphrased portions of the *APA* discussion:

The question I asked was, “What about keeping the Holy Days? God says He hates your Holy Days.” The Scriptural passages I was referencing were Isaiah 1:14, and Amos 5:21.

A little timidly, the younger minister said, “I think the key word in those verses is, *your*.”

I understood. The festival days listed in Leviticus 23 aren't the Holy Days of the Jews or of Israel, but “the appointed festivals of the Lord” (verses 2, 4, & 37). They weren't being kept as they should have been by either the house of Israel or by the house of Judah as evidenced by what happened during the reinstatement of the Feast of Tabernacles as recorded in Nehemiah 8:17: “And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them; for from the days of Jeshua son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so.” The passage says that since the generation that entered the promised land neither Israel under the judges, nor under Kings Saul, David, and Solomon, nor the houses of Israel and Judah prior to being put away as adulterous wives kept the Feast in booths as per Moses' instructions. Both Israel and Judah had profaned God's sabbaths; they had profaned not merely the weekly Sabbath, but the annual sabbaths. An example is recorded in 1 Kings 12:32–33, where Jeroboam changed Feast of Tabernacle observance from the seventh month to the eighth. An analogy between Jeroboam and visible Christianity today can be

made: by human decree, the eighth day rather than the seventh has been set aside as the weekly sabbath.

The Holy Days of God were given as binding statutes upon Israel; they were as binding as was the weekly Sabbath, the first of the Holy Days listed in Leviticus 23. Therefore, they remain as binding on spiritual Israel as is the weekly Sabbath. They stand or fall together, the reason they are listed together.

(Here the case for the weekly Sabbath being “rest in Christ” enters the discussion, for if Israel were unable to enter the promised land due to unbelief [Heb 3:19] which is also identified as disobedience [Heb 4:6] as addressed earlier in the main body of *Holiness*, then would Israel have kept a Sabbath if they had entered through belief? Jesus abridged provisions of the Law of Moses concerning divorce by inserting original intent [Matt 5:32 & 1 Cor 7:10]. The same would have been the situation concerning the weekly Sabbath. In Eden, God rested on the seventh day [Gen 2:2–3]. Eden prior to the entrance of sin was a type of the promised land, and as in Eden, in the promised land God would have rested on the seventh day, as would have Israel. Original intent trumps the Law of Moses in its broadest application—concerning Sabbath observance, God’s original intent is clearly revealed, so it is a dishonest argument to say that Israel would not have kept the Sabbath if the nation had believed God and had entered Canaan as intended. It is equally dishonest to say that in Christ’s millennial rest the weekly Sabbath will not be observed. Such an argument reveals a lack of understanding about what God intends to accomplish in His creation of humanity.)

Seventh day Sabbath-keepers who do not observe the annual sabbaths fall short of perfection, a situation they need to correct just as a drawn disciple needs to begin observing the Sabbath if he or she is presently trying to make holy Sunday. We can profane God’s sabbaths, but we cannot make holy that which hasn’t been sanctified by God.

I understood without additional explanation that *your* holy days are the days a person keeps in lieu of “the appointed festivals of the Lord.”

They are not the national holidays such as Thanksgiving, or Fourth of July, unless spiritual significance is assigned to these holidays. They are, rather, Halloween, Christmas, Easter, the latter an especially repugnant holiday as far as God is concerned (Ezk 8:16–18). Baptizing and repackaging the day with its hot cross buns and egg-bearing rabbits doesn't make it any more spiritually palatable.

Because the seventh-day Sabbath is a memorial to creation, I expected similar memorializing to be associated with the annual Holy Days as listed in Leviticus 23. I found that memorializing. The seven festival days are the First and Last Day of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement, First Day of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day (or the Eighth Day). I found the chronological plan of God put forward in these feast days, and my keeping of these Holy Days assures that I won't forget this plan God has for humanity.

My reading of Scripture has Pentecost as the memorial of called-out Body of Christ receiving the Holy Spirit; has Trumpets being the memorial of Christ's Second Coming; has Atonement being the memorial of when the sins Christ took onto Himself on the Tree are reassigned to their rightful owner, Satan; has the First Day of Tabernacles being the memorial of the Millennium, the thousand years of Christ's reign over humanity; has the Eighth Day, being a memorial to the general resurrection at the end of the Millennium when the bulk of all of humanity that has ever lived will finally have their first chance to be ruled by Christ. All of these memorializing events are commonly associated with their respective Holy Day within the Church of God. What hasn't been as widely recognized are the two events that are memorialized by the two Holy Days of Unleavened Bread.

Because Christ died when the traditional Passover lamb would have been sacrificed, and because Christ is our sacrificial lamb, and because the Wave Sheath Offering is a memorial to the resurrected Christ's presentation of Himself to the Father in heaven, Christ has always been associated with the High Sabbaths of Unleavened Bread. But the other Holy Days are memorials of when God intervened or will intervene

mightily in the affairs of humanity; they are joyous occasions. Calvary is certainly of great importance, but it is commemorated by the Passover, which is not a Feast. The death of Christ was and should remain a somber event. Therefore, my reading of text has the First Day of Unleavened Bread being the memorial to the Exodus, to the coming out of Egypt, or coming out of sin, Egypt being a representation of sin. The Last Day of Unleavened Bread is the memorial to the escape of the 144,000 saints, of the splitting of the Mount of Olives as pictured in Zechariah 14 when the saints “shall flee by the valley of the Lord’s Mountain” (verse 5).

In the first Exodus, Egypt or sin was swallowed by the Red Sea. This event is remembered in the Song of Moses: “Pharaoh’s chariots and his army he cast into the sea;/ his picked officers were sunk in the Red Sea./ The floods covered them;/ they went down into the depths like a stone./ Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power—/ your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy” (Ex 15:4–6).

In the future exodus, the flood that Satan sends after the woman or church will be swallowed by the earth: “Then from his mouth the serpent poured water like a river after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman; it opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth” (Rev 12:15–16). This event is also prophesied in the Song of Moses: “You stretched out your right hand,/ the earth swallowed them./ In your steadfast love you led the people whom you redeemed;/ you guided them by your strength to your holy abode./... You brought them in and planted them on the mountain of your own possession,/ the place, O Lord, that you made your abode,/ the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hands have established” (Ex 15:12–13 & 17). In Zechariah 14, physical people shall flee “as [they] fled from the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah” (verse 5). This is not Christ returning with a heavenly host when the saints in glorified bodies are to meet Him in the air. Rather, this is Christ fighting “on a day of battle” (verse

3; note, the indefinite article is used) to take the saints to the place of safety He has prepared for them.

My understanding was and remains that the saints are those individuals who “keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus” (Rev 12:17 & Rev 14:12). Saints are told to pray that they are worthy to escape the things to come. The saints will have, through their spiritual modification of having the law of God written on their hearts, put sin out of their lives for long enough that they are accounted worthy to escape to a place of safety. The week of living without leaven is the shadow of living sin free, so the holy day at the beginning of the week portrays leaving sin or Egypt behind and the holy day at the end of the week portrays being accounted worthy to enter the place prepared by Christ for the 144,000, that place being Mt. Zion. Days two through six of Unleavened Bread are the shadow of my life today: sin is lawlessness. I cannot ignore the law and live sin free. Neither can you. Saying, *Lord, Lord*, doesn’t make me sin-free. David had to kill Goliath. Christ had to overcome Satan. He did; His work is finished. Our work isn’t. We must endure to the end, which will either be our death or Christ’s return. If you have been drawn by the Father, don’t make the mistake of thinking you have nothing to do because Christ did it all. That is a bad mistake; that is eating yeast breads during Unleavened Bread. After we take the New Testament Passover, Unleavened Bread shadows us living sin-free as Christ did. Because we can’t, grace is necessary to blot out our transgressions. But to deliberately sin places one in peril.

The pattern for conversion is in the blueprint of the temple: Christ is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6), the three gates between the world and the holy of holies. The Father is the first gatekeeper (John 10:3): discipling begins with the Father opening the outer gate, figuratively identified as *the way*, and drawing the person inside the inner court. Once inside, the person encounters the altar of sacrifice. Christ is our sacrificial lamb, so the person must choose to accept Christ’s sacrifice or the person goes no farther. Repentance is required

before our sins can be covered by Christ's shed blood. But upon accepting Christ's sacrifice, the person encounters the laver, a bronze basin with a bronze stand in which hands and feet are washed (Ex 30:17–19). The washing done in the laver symbolizes baptism, that symbolism renewed annually by footwashing at Passover. Hands don't need to be washed annually because no more sacrifice is needed; no more blood beyond Christ's needs to be shed. We still have a work to do, but that work has no sin attached to it so no sin offering is required. Our hands remain clean of blood once we accept Christ's sacrifice. But our feet still get dirty as they remain our contact with the world. However, we cannot clean ourselves up. Another saint washes our feet at Passover services.

Beyond repentance and baptism, we encounter the door or gate into the sanctuary, that door figuratively called *the truth*. Under the Old Covenant, only priests could pass through *the truth* to enter the sanctuary, and only the high priest on Yom Kipporim could pass through *the life* to enter the holy of holies where the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat were. But under the New Covenant, drawn out disciples are a kingdom of priests, or kingly priests (Rev 1:6), and as such, saints can enter the sanctuary, inside of which is the veil called *the life*, which has been rent so that we have access to God whenever we come before Him, and we have the earnest of eternal life residing within us. Thus, once baptized, we figuratively enter the sanctuary where we are enlightened by the seven lamps. No other enlightenment is needed or is useful. In addition, we encounter the table on which the showbread is placed: Christ is the bread of life (John 6:35), but true Christianity smells better than it tastes. Resisting Satan, society and ones' own self takes works, for which the visible Church condemns the newly drawn disciple. Yet we show our faith by our works: "faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2:17). Our offerings becomes what we do in and with our bodies. Our prayers, then, become the incense that goes up daily to the throne of God (Ex 30:7; Rev 5:8 & 8:3–4) from the alter of incense. And we enter *the life* to claim the mercy that sits atop

the ark of covenant which houses the law of God: because we have become the law, we are no longer under the law, but under grace, which symbolically resides between the cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat.

As the path for discipleship is shadowed in the gates and furnishings of the temple, all of God's plan for humanity is shadowed in the eight Sabbath days: the weekly Sabbath, and the seven annual sabbaths listed in Leviticus 23. The difference is with Christ's sacrifice, the shadow for discipleship has been replaced by that which cast the shadow. The blood of goats and calves cannot truly purify anything. Eternal life, once sin entered the world through Adam, needed a better sacrifice: the blood of the One who made the earth and all life on it. His life was worth more than everything He created; so with His death, His work was finished in the sense that all of the elements of God's plan to reproduce Himself were in place—"finished" doesn't mean that Christ is not now working. If He were in heaven enjoying a sabbatical, he wouldn't be our high priest. The temple shadow has the high priest doing hard labor. So the difference between the temple as a shadow and the sabbaths as shadows is the plan of God is still running. All of the elements are in place, but we are just past the middle of the plan: all eight sabbaths are memorials to events, past and future. They are to be kept in perpetuity, which means at least till New Jerusalem arrives. They are not Jewish holidays, or Old Testament High Days that were fulfilled by Christ and now have no relevance in our lives today: Christ hasn't yet returned, so we haven't yet reached the event shadowed by Trumpets. The sabbaths are God's Holy Days, and as such, they serve as reminders to us of joyous times when God intervened and will again intervene in the affairs of humanity. Without knowledge of their significance, humanity cannot understand its own role in God's plan. Its own explanations and speculations aren't very good.

We still need the shadow of God's plan just as ancient Israel needed the temple as a shadow of the work Christ would do when He came the first time. Unfortunately, the visible Church, by rejecting the

shadow, has voluntarily blinded itself to the best message it could possibly teach. By observing the weekly and annual sabbaths, we see in the shadow what will soon come to pass. We don't need a shadow of Calvary, no more than we need the temple. Calvary is history, and a central element in the plan of God. But the remainder of God's plan for humanity has disappeared from visible Christianity; the plan isn't understood because the shadow has been deliberately ignored since the gospel of Constantine began being taught. However, because the Church of God retains the shadow, the Church still understands and still teaches the plan God has for you and me.



1 Corinthians 2:16

A former presenter on *The World Tomorrow* telecast once labeled this passage as the verse Herbert Armstrong couldn't explain. I don't know whether that is true. The verse seems rather straight forward: "Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matter of foods and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths." The subject of the sentence is "the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae" (1:2); so the passage isn't addressed to the crowds that followed Jesus, but to drawn disciples who have the law of God written on their hearts and minds. These disciples will believe God to the point of obedience as discussed in the main text of the manuscript. They will want to do what is right above all else, and they would have been keeping the weekly Sabbath—according to the decision of the Jerusalem conference, once newly drawn disciples met the four essentials (Acts 15:28–29), then, since "in every city, for generations past, Moses...has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues" (verse 21), these disciples would learn what else they needed to know by hearing Moses read each Sabbath.

As a Gentile in a Hellenistic Asia Minor city, entering the synagogue to hear Moses read would certainly be grounds for getting oneself condemned. The Jews wouldn't want you there, especially not as a disciple of Christ's. Gentile relatives would think you were possessed. Friends would vaporize into the social construct you just left for Christianity. The thin sliver of geographical wilderness between the overlapping constructs didn't offer much protection from the taunts of former acquaintances.

I remember one Church of God pastor describing the abuse his family took as Sabbath keepers in a Catholic county in New Mexico: their house was regularly stoned, windows broken, fires set. The kids were beat up by school bullies. They were economically shunned. And after a while, they left New Mexico and relocated in California.

Life wouldn't have been any easier for a Gentile convert in Colossae. In fact, it would likely have been much more difficult. So Paul sent a letter which theologically bolsters these disciples. And in his letter, he says the sabbaths "are only shadows of what is to come" (verse 17), which is truly correct, for the completion of the plan of God "belongs to Christ" (verse 17), that completion being adoption into the family of God at Christ's return, adoption as Christ's younger siblings, one with the Father just as Christ is one with the Father (John 17:21–23), a magnificently glorious promise which the annual sabbaths merely shadow.

In the former television presenter's discussion of the passage, so much time was spent "proving" that a shadow is a shadow that I lost interest in the case he was attempting to make. Someday I will return to his argument, but for now, let's look at what Paul writes:

As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up to him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. (2:6–7)

What would these disciples have been taught? The glorified Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nation, . . . *teaching them to*

obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt 28:19–20 emphasis mine). And what did Jesus command the Apostles if not, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets...whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great” (Matt 5:17–19). So on sound theological footing, we can say with certainty that these disciples at Colossae were taught to keep the commandments, including the “least” of the commandments, observance of the Sabbath.

Understanding that Epaphras would not have neglected teaching disciples *to obey everything Jesus commanded*, we can return to the passage with even greater confidence: the disciples need not be troubled by what the Jews taught concerning the *dead works* of the law. (I am beginning to like Paul’s pun, for truly, the heavy butchering of sacrifices are *dead works*, just as would be the vocation of a matador.) Nor should disciples be troubled by the masochistic doctrines of demons. The disciples needed nothing more than Christ. In His sacrifice and in what He taught was all that was needed for salvation. They weren’t to let anyone convince them otherwise. They weren’t to let anyone condemn them. They had nothing to be ashamed of. They had only to set their minds on Christ. They would do that by putting to death whatever was in them that was “earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry)” (3:5). In addition,

[Y]ou must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. (3:8–10)

These disciples were to do that which is right. They were to go beyond the commandments, and get rid of even evil desire and greed. They were to be pure, holy, righteousness—and this begins with keep-

ing the commandments, and not letting anyone condemn you for doing so.

In today's society, what Paul wrote means that disciples aren't to be concerned when greater Christianity labels them legalists. They should, indeed, be legalists in their pursuit of purity. Plus, the implication is that they will be *observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths*. Perhaps observing the annual festivals and sabbaths still leaves part of what Epaphras taught the disciples at Colossae unkept. Now, that is a twist I didn't expect.



“of making many books there is no end”

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