

Commentary — From the Margins *The Function of Wilderness and Wildness*

PART TWO

Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'" (Ex 5:1)

2.

When typological exegesis is employed as the Apostle Paul laid its foundation, with the things that have been made (i.e., the visible physical things of this world) revealing and preceding the invisible, spiritual things of God (*cf.* Rom 1:20; 1 Cor 15:46), and with this pattern of movement from darkness to light, physical to spiritual, hand to heart undergirding Hebraic poetics as seen in Hebrew poetry being based on thought-couplets that have the same concept being repeated, doubled, with the concept's first delivery pertaining to the physical [darkness] and the concept's second delivery pertaining to the spiritual [light] — and with this doubling seen even in man [*adam*], a physical, sentient being created in the image of God — then it should come as no surprise to a Christian that the single kingdom of this world [ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ κόσμου — from Rev 11:15] is first ruled in darkness by the Adversary, the spiritual King of Babylon of whom physical King Nebuchadnezzar was his shadow and type, and then, when light comes, is ruled by the Son of Man, Head [Christ Jesus] and Body [τῶν ἁγίων — *the holy ones*, saints that keep the commandments and have the faith of Jesus—τὴν πίστιν Ἰησοῦ—rather than faith in Jesus (Rev 14:12)].

Over time, knowledge gets lost and ideas grow stale as bread does. We are presently witnessing the concept of personal liberty and responsibility being lost in the United States of America: the formation of social safety nets, a good idea, has as its unintended consequence the development of the welfare state and an *entitlement* mentality ... an equally good idea is salvation by faith, which has as its unintended consequence the continued enslavement of Christians to indwelling sin and death.

The Adversary is not a physical being such as President Obama, and he doesn't reign over the single kingdom of this world via any one nation or ideology. Rather, the Adversary as the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2–3) reigns over the mental topography of living creatures. He rules the mental turf

from which ideas grow as weeds or wheat, and he has ruled this mental turf at least since the world was baptized into death in the days of Noah. But the essence of the Christian message is that the single kingdom of this world will be taken from the Adversary and given to the Son of Man at a specific moment in time (see Dan 7:9–14; Rev 11:15–18), a moment that is preceded by a 1260 day transition period [the Affliction] and followed by a 1260 day transition period [the Endurance], with these two transition periods forming the mirror image of one another.

When the physical reveals the spiritual, and when no event has occurred in the past 1900 years that has caused Israel, the outwardly circumcised nation of descendants of Jacob, to forget its ancestors' exodus from Egypt as the prophet Jeremiah wrote would happen (see Jer 16:14–15; 23:7–8); and when no event has happened that has caused the New Covenant about which Jeremiah also wrote (see Jer 31:31–34) to have the Torah written on hearts, a euphemism for the inner self, and placed in minds so that all *Know the Lord* from the least of Israel to the greatest; and when the author of Hebrews writes, “In speaking of a new covenant, He makes the first one obsolete. And *what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away*” (Heb 8:13 emphasis and double emphasis added) and when no event has occurred in the period since Hebrews was written to cause the implementation of the promised New Covenant that will have the Law written on hearts, it is safe to say that Calvary and all that it represents did not cause the kingdom of this world to be taken from the Adversary, its prince then (when Christ Jesus lived) and its prince now. The kingdom of this world has not yet been given to the Son of Man: the Adversary remains the prince of this world, with the authority to reign over the mental topography of living creatures, with this authority having been given to the Adversary when the World was baptized into death, a baptism that occurred so long ago that intelligent humans question whether such a baptism ever occurred.

In his non-scholarly book, *Jesus, Interrupted*, Bart D. Ehrman, Professor of Religious Studies at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, wrote, “There came a time when I left the faith. This was not because of what I learned through historical criticism, but because I could no longer reconcile my faith in God with the state of the world that I saw all around me. This is the issue I deal with in my book *God’s Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question—Why We Suffer:*” (17).

I first heard this question posed as *Why did God let little Tommy die?* And the answer is simple: this is not now God’s world, and this will not be God’s world until He takes it back from the Adversary, thereby bringing light to the present state of darkness that reigns over the mental landscapes of all living creatures, from the great predators to all human persons, with God having given to humans the basest of men to rule over them (Dan 4:17) through having delivered the single kingdom of this world/cosmos into the Adversary’s hands for the destruction of the flesh.

Shakespeare in *King Lear* welds physical and mental landscapes together when the old king matches the tempest occurring in his mind with that violent storm that is occurring outside ... the prophet Isaiah wrote, pertaining to the Messiah,

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of Him shall the nations inquire, and His resting place shall be glorious. In that day the Lord will extend His hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. (Isa 11:6–11)

When a wolf, a wild dog—all dogs share 99.8% of their DNA with gray wolves—has its nature changed *as man's nature will be changed* when the Lord extends His hand a second time to recover the remnant of His people, the wolf will change physiologically as well as psychologically as seen in the appearance and mannerisms of dogs, with dogs presenting a unique opportunity to study the transition from *wild man* to God.

Until the predatory nature of wolves are changed, man too has a *wild nature*, a predatory nature like that of a gray wolf, not received as a production of the flesh but received as a result of the Adversary reigning over the mental topography of living creatures, a reign that ends at a specific moment, when the single kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man.

Is this too complicated to understand? In Siberia a study of silver foxes, now fifty generations old, has shown that by selecting for non-aggression alone, the physiology of the foxes change: not only have these foxes become dog-like in their natures, but there are breed-variations seen in dogs beginning to appear in these foxes even though there has been no selection for the breed-like variations. So in this Siberian study, in fifty years is seen the *evolution* of silver foxes into dog-like foxes, a repetition of what happened over time with gray wolves.

Again, by selectively breeding for non-aggression, both the nature and physical appearance of silver foxes have been altered—and human females may like the attention of dominate males, but they inevitably choose less aggressive males as their mates, with this *biological selection* for non-aggressive traits having altered human beings as selection for non-aggressive traits altered gray wolves and now silver foxes. And all of this before the Lord changes the natures

of the great predators by ending the reign of the present prince of the power of the air ...

In dogs and in *smooth man* is seen physical alteration that forms the left hand enantiomer of the spiritual alteration that will occur when the kingdom of this world is taken from the spiritual King of Babylon and given to the Son of Man.

As a scholar, an intelligent and well educated reader of Scripture, Ehrman lost his faith not from the alleged contradictions he found in Scripture—as he said, others have found the contradictions he found and “have remained committed Christians” (17)—but because he couldn’t answer his own question of why God allows suffering.

Now a decade ago, I wrote that humankind was in a demonstration project in which man was both the principle and an observer, with the demonstration having been set up for the two parts of the angelic sons of God that did not succumb to the Adversary’s blandishments that they had good minds, that they knew right from wrong, good from evil, that they had the ability to judge God, what the serpent told Eve in the Garden ... using what is given in Scripture, we see Paul writing to the holy ones at Corinth in the matter of the man being with his father’s wife,

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, *you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.* (1 Cor 5:1–5 emphasis added)

Paul discloses in what he writes that he understands two principles that Professor Ehrman did not grasp when he lost his faith: the first is that Satan is the reality of King Nebuchadnezzar about whom Jeremiah wrote,

Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you [Jerusalem and men of Judah] have not obeyed my words, behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for *Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant*, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp. This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then after seventy years are completed, I

will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste. (Jer 25:8–12 emphasis added)

The Adversary is the servant of the Lord, albeit an unwilling servant, employed by the Lord to do His dirty work of chastising His firstborn son (Ex 4:22). And there is a principle here that must be grasped: the Adversary can do to the son of God no more than the Lord permits, with this seen in the Book of Job where the Adversary can do no more to Job than the Lord allowed:

The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. (Job 1:7–12)

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD. And the LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason." Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face." And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. (Job 2:1–7)

Unlike when the Lord sent Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem and the men of Judah who were guilty of gross idolatry, Job was perfect in his ways. But did Job's trials and suffering come about because of anything the Lord did? Job thought that was the case, but that is a misreading of the text: the Adversary brought about Job's suffering in the Adversary's attempt to show that Job would curse God if the Lord quit protecting him, prospering him. But the Adversary

underestimated Job and never really understood why Job was *perfect in all his ways*: Job believed God and did what he knew to do because he truly feared God, feared the consequences of not doing what was right. Job was perfect in all of his ways for the wrong reason. He was perfect out of fear, not out of love. Therefore, when the Adversary attacked Job, the Adversary confirmed Job's fears and reinforced those fears and made it so that under no circumstances would Job curse God, which is what the Lord would have known and understood so Job was in no real danger of succumbing to the Adversary for as long as the Adversary attacked Job through the possession of things and through the flesh of his body. For Job knew he was righteous, perfect in his ways, even to saying in his defense that if he could give God an account of all he has done, "like a prince I would approach Him" (Job 31:37), not understanding the gulf that exists between man and God.

Because the Adversary could make no dent in Job's righteousness, the Lord had to take over the job and told Job to stand like a man and answer His questions if he could (Job chap 38).

Any close reader of the book of Job will quickly realize the problem that Satan never perceived:

And [Job] took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself while he sat in the ashes. Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die." But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. *Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?*" In all this Job did not sin with his lips. (Job 2:8–10)

The evil was not from God, a lesson that Professor Ehrman never grasped. The evil was from the present prince of this world, the same prince that delivered evil to Christ Jesus, the same prince that will have his dominion over the kingdom of this world taken from him halfway through seven endtime years of tribulation and given to the Son of Man ... *why did little Tommy die?* Because the present prince of this world is the basest, the lowest, the skuzziest of all sons of God. He was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, and he hasn't changed his ways. So why would Professor Ehrman fail to realize what Job realized in the end?

Because Professor Ehrman was better at historical criticism than were his peers, his friends, and because he felt betrayed when he encountered apparent contradictions in Holy Writ—and without being truly born of God through receiving a second breath of life, the breath of God [πνεῦμα Θεοῦ] in the breath of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ], Ehrman couldn't account for evil in this world without God Himself being evil ... Ehrman never understood the gulf between man and God, the gulf Job couldn't initially comprehend, the gulf that is seen darkly when a *smooth man* journeys into the wilderness, be it in this century or in an earlier era: a person, a Christian, cannot really understand spiritual things [i.e., the mysteries of God] until he or she undertakes a journey of faith through the dark wilderness of unbelief.

The above introduces another problem: how does a person know if he or she has received a second breath of life and thus has been truly born again? John wrote that the person who is born of God will keep the commandments of God and have love for his brother (1 John 3:1–10), unborn or born; that keeping the commandments is not burdensome (1 John 5:3). And this is in agreement with what the Apostle Paul wrote when he said,

Or do you [O Man] presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? *But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.* For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. So, *if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? Then he who is*

physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God. (Rom 2:4–29 emphasis added)

Among devotional Christians, it is popular, even expected that pastors teach that the Law, the commandments, have been abolished and that the epistles of Paul prove that they were abolished ... **such teaching is nonsense!** Where in Paul writing that it will be *the doers of the law who will be justified* is there any wiggle room for Christians not keeping the commandments? Is that wiggle room found in Paul writing to the holy ones in Galatia that had started to circumcise themselves so that they could become physical Jews?

What is it that Paul wrote of the Galatians:

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, πῶς τὰ ἔθνη ἀναγκάζεις Ἰουδαίειν [*how the Gentile do you compel to live as Judeans*]?" We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because *by works of the law no one will be justified.* (Gal 2:11–16 emphasis added)

First, we know what Peter was teaching: Peter was teaching Gentile converts to live as Judeans without being outwardly circumcised and becoming Jews in the flesh, the subject of Paul's epistle to the Galatians. This means that Peter was teaching Gentile convert to eat clean meats and to keep the commandments, again, all without being circumcised, the reason why he, himself circumcised, separated himself from the converts when members of the Circumcision Faction arrived from Jerusalem. For Peter had already come under criticism for eating with uncircumcised men when he and others baptized Cornelius:

Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." (Acts 11:1–3)

Peter, apparently wanting to avoid another round of criticism, did what circumcised Jews were supposed to do: Peter separated himself from outwardly

uncircumcised converts to avoid creating a scene when men of the Circumcision Faction came from Jerusalem. And Paul, realizing that he couldn't let the importance of the flesh be interjected into Christendom, intervened ... it isn't the works of the Law that justifies anyone; it isn't what the flesh does that justifies anyone; it is what the person does by faith that justifies the Christians. It is the Gentile who by birth is under no obligation to keep the commandments beginning to do so by faith that justifies this Gentile. Those things that the hands do and that the body does should follow along behind what the mind thinks and what the heart desires. Thus, when the Law of God is written on hearts and placed in minds under the New Covenant, the hands and body will do those things that the Law requires, which is *prima facie* evidence that greater Christendom has not yet been born of God.

It is in Professor Ehrman's absence of spiritual birth where Ehrman couldn't reconcile what he knew to be true about *Christians* and what he found in Scripture as he began to seriously study the text that is Holy Writ.

There is no conflict between what Paul wrote and what Peter wrote and what John wrote when the critic carefully reads the text: endtime Christians have received: the Gentile who believes that Jesus is Lord and believes that the Father raised Jesus from death and who by faith begins to keep the commandments of God stands on the same theological turf [mental landscape] as the Jew who by birth has kept the commandments and who now professes that Jesus is Lord and believes in his or her heart that the Father raised Jesus from death. But the Gentile who continues to live as a Gentile does not stand on this same piece of theological turf, but lives as a spiritual *wild man* in the wilderness of this world/cosmos regardless of whether this person self-identified him or herself as a Christian, a Jew, a Muslim, or nothing at all—a worshiper of the earth and the mother god Gaia.

The most honest Gentile will worship Gaia rather than claim to be a Christian and not strive to keep the commandments, thereby making him or herself into a bastard son of the Adversary.

3.

Human suffering comes from dwelling in the present wilderness of darkness, the production of the Adversary's reign over mental topography of living things—and because there shall be no harm in all of God's holy mountain when the single kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man, *little Tommy* won't die, nor will any other mortal human being die from inner causes for the duration of the Thousand Years of the Millennium, a reality that will be difficult to accept considering how accustomed human beings are to dying of old age just about when a person should be beginning to live.

The long lives of antediluvian patriarchs form the shadow and type of the long lives that will return in the Millennium. But not everyone in this present era is able to comprehend that human death comes from dwelling in darkness, with

darkness being visibly represented in our present era by the wildernesses of the world.

Until Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), the wilderness was something to be feared by Europeans: nature was the pasture, the orchard, the stone fence meandering through the meadow, the domesticate goose on a pond. But Rousseau, who wrongly receives credit for introducing the *noble savage* concept into popular culture, gave (especially to Brits) permission to visit the Alps and attempt to capture a spirit of *wildness* in art and life ... for British Colonials, the wilderness of North America existed to be tamed, to be made civilized, to be subdued by the axe and plowshare. And the alleged *wild men* that Amerindians represented had to be *civilized* even if this meant exterminating them—

But if Adam and Eve were clothed in skin (Gen 3:21) that was covered with hair as goats are covered with hair, as Esau was covered with hair, as the legendary Sasquatch are covered with hair, then Native Americans were not *wild men*. The true *wild men* were those whom Native Americans killed, the cannibals that had terrorized them until they got stronger bows that would kill these *wild men* at a distance as David killed Goliath at a distance. The true *wild men* were to human beings what wolves are in relationship to dogs.

British Colonials and their descendants killed Native Americans in a case of mistaken identity—and they were successful because of their technological superiority that had come from generations of war on the European continent before any of them arrived in North America.

The question of why there is suffering in this world, with native peoples having suffered much from colonial powers, becomes the same question raised by Job's so-called friends: *What have you done wrong, Job? What are you hiding?* For surely the suffering party has done something wrong. Surely there is a reason for the suffering. Surely there is concealed guilt, concealed sin. And as Native Americans understood, the ones suffering have done nothing wrong, but were doing everything *right* as far as they understood right from wrong.

It was Israel in the Promised Land that were doing things wrong, that had adopted the idolatrous practices of the Canaanite neighbors, that had *married* the Lord to the Queen of Heaven; yet if Israel had not known to do better than Israel was doing, the nation would have lived.

Now take this knowledge and apply it to an ideological nation and people: greater Christianity.

An ideology is a mental landscape, a mental territory, not a physical or geographical territory. Therefore, when the physical, visible things that have been made reveal the invisible spiritual things of God, the geography of Moab, of Egypt, of Assyria, of Babylon, of Tyre—all lands outside of Judea—represent competing mindsets with that of Israel, the firstborn son of the Lord (Ex 4:22). And when Israel is the nation circumcised of heart rather than in the flesh, any Christian ideology that would have those that hold a mindset of not keeping the Sabbath is represented by a geographical land such as Moab, and no Moabite will enter the kingdom of the heavens, not because God has anything against the

people of Moab but He has plenty against ideologies that refuse to cover themselves with the garment of obedience.

The Christian who reads biblical prophecies from a *literalist* perspective is a spiritual illiterate ... if Jesus only spoke to His disciples in figures of speech (John 16:25), in metaphoric or metonymic language, why would the Christian not also assume that the Logos [ὁ Λόγος] who was God [Θεὸς] and who was with the God [τὸν Θεόν] in the beginning (John 1:1) and who entered His creation as His only Son (John 3:16), the man Jesus the Nazarene (John 1:14), did not also utter the prophecies given to the prophets of old in figures of speech that were enacted in visual demonstrations condemning invisible mindsets and mental landscapes that cannot be directly seen?

Is thinking in metaphors too difficult for devotional Christians? Is thinking in metaphors beyond the intellectual capacity of an esteemed professor of theology? Apparently so. For why else would a Christian quit on God when God won't quit on the Christian, but will give understanding to the person who truly desires understanding, thereby taking this person into and through the wilderness that is represented by the darkness of sin, of unbelief?

The Apostle John wrote, "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4).

The Apostle Paul wrote, "For whatever does not proceed from faith [πίστεως – *pisteos*, or *belief*, Strong's #G4100/4102] is sin" (Rom 14:23).

Unbelief is sin. The nation of Israel that left Egypt could not enter the Promised Land because of unbelief (Heb 3:19; Ps 95:10–11; Num 14:11–12). Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden because of their unbelief that resulted in eating forbidden fruit. For unbelief will inevitably manifest itself as an intentional transgression of the Law. So what both Paul and John write agrees, with Paul getting behind the actual act that comes from manifested unbelief and with John referencing the act itself.

Unbelief is the Wilderness of Sin through which every Christian must journey, and the *wild man* is the man of the wilderness who was never enslaved by the ways of this world and its cultural expectations—

John wrote,

Do not love the world or the things in the world. *If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.* (1 John 2:15–17 emphasis added)

What seems right to a human person comes from the mindset of the Adversary, comes from the person being enslaved by the things of the flesh as Paul writes:

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit. For to set the mind on the

flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. For *the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.* Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Rom 8:5–8 emphasis added)

All that Egypt represents—the splendor and grandeur of culture, of wealth, of sin and unbelief—must be left behind when a son of God, already a *civilized man* through professing that Jesus is Lord, treks into the wilderness as Moses fled into the wilderness when seeking to escape from Pharaoh. And Moses escaped whereas his brethren did not, with the difference being that Moses was an educated man, a Hebrew adopted into Pharaoh's house and reared as an Egyptian, even to dressing and acting as an Egyptian (Ex 2:19), whereas his people remained slaves, *enslaved* by their own mentality, not thinking about raising up and battling for their freedom ... Christians within greater Christendom are enslaved by indwelling sin and death, and they remain slaves because of how they think: they refuse to keep the commandments and thereby break the shackles of sin, lawlessness, unbelief. They sincerely believe that they are free, that they have been freed from the Law that had never enslaved them, that they are free to keep on living as they lived when they were sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2–3), consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) for the destruction of their flesh.

That is sad, the enslaved Christian not trying to escape from sin but willingly remaining enslaved to disobedience as a praise-singing devotional Christian, sincerely believing that by transgressing, say, the Sabbath commandment the Christian can better serve the lord of this world, the prince of the power of the air.

Professor Ehrman quit on the Father and the Son when they wouldn't disclose to him knowledge he sought, knowledge he would have rejected, something he didn't know about himself at the time, but something that the Son knew about him as *YAH* knew that Job would not succumb to any outside pressure ... Job's trials were a testing of Job as the Lord tested Abraham in the matter of whether Abraham really believed that his seed would come from his loins,

There were things that Paul never understood, things about which Paul said he didn't understand ["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)], and the foremost thing that Paul didn't understand was what James addressed:

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe--and shudder! Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is

useless? *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works;* and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead. (Jas 2:14–26 emphasis added)

Paul tended to leave part of the narrative about Abraham untold, the part where the Lord tested Abraham:

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. (Gen 22:1–4)

Yes, Abram believed the Lord that his seed would come from his loins, and yes, his belief was counted to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6), but the remainder of narrative has the Lord testing Abraham's faith in the wilderness that for Christians today represents the darkness of unbelief ... the *wild man* will not enter the kingdom of God as Adam and Eve could not remain in the Garden after they ate forbidden fruit: the wild man must change his nature as the wolf will change its nature and already has changed its nature in the household pet dog. Thus, in the wolf is seen both the *wild man* that was driven from the Garden of God and the civilized man that will pack up in cities [city-state, or polis] to kill for the sake of killing.

The *noble savage* was a figment of imaginations; for when a son of promise (Gen 25:21) is born to Isaac—with Paul identifying Christians with Isaac (Gal 4:28)—two sons are born, one hated from before birth and one loved even though this younger son was deceitful. Native Americans were less deceitful than European colonials that well represent Jacob, who by guile stole his brother's birthright and inheritance. So who really is the wild man? The one who knew nothing of Christ Jesus yet lived honorably with his brothers, or the one who had Scripture and the Law and refused to believe God and thus be saved?

The concept of wildness and wilderness equates to the darkness of unbelief, the darkness in which rebelling angels are presently still imprisoned ... a logger with a chainsaw in hand and a rifle in his pickup fears no cathedral of old growth fir crowns, the cathedral where the followers of Gaia worship, but instead, begins falling timber to let in the light so that there can be new growth.

I wrote the following piece two decades ago:

Separation—

to be seen I have to fall
a few trees
here along the road
so with waiting saw
I check a lean
begin the face
feeling in vibrations
the chain pull
life from years
of growing
before my conception

my aim is certain

my bar is too short
to reach across
so I reach behind
her bleeding face
& send a shower
of chips & fines
into her deathbed

in small groans
& squeaks
no louder
than a caught mouse
this pine
tells of her separation

I jump atop her butt
saw in hand
its bar hard before me
& sever limbs
that once caught dew
& snow
spring breezes
& huntingcamp smoke

I lop off her crown
survey my handiwork

conclude I've done
man's work

The work of a Christian, a son of God, is to destroy the darkness of unbelief, letting the light of God reach the forest floor. In doing this work, the Christian cannot fear the darkness of unbelief but must be able to handle questions he or she doesn't yet know the answer without losing faith. The Christian cannot be like the men of cities that worship the darkness, where what happens in Las Vegas remains in Las Vegas ... no, it doesn't. It goes with the one who transgresses the commandments until this person fears the darkness and will not leave the company of other men [and women], all imprisoned in disobedience as Israel was imprisoned in Egypt.

It really is the smooth man who isn't content to dwell in tents but dwells alone in the fields who wears the hair coat of a prophet.

*

This subject is NOT yet complete enough to be left alone, but there are other subjects I need to address as Passover is at hand. Therefore I will close this Commentary but will return to it after the Days of Unleavened Bread are behind us.

* * *

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Ehrman, Bart D., *Jesus Interrupted*. First edition. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.

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