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## **Commentary – From the Margins** ***“On Whom the End of the Ages Has Come”***

The Apostle Paul wrote to the saints at Thessalonica, “For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven...[a]nd the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them” (1 Thess 4:15-17).

Paul apparently believed he would be alive when Jesus returned. Why? What caused Paul, who was personally instructed by the glorified Jesus, to believe that he would be alive when an event two millennia in the future occurred? All reasons must necessarily be speculative, but the most logical reason would be that Jesus told Paul that he, Paul, was living in the end of the age. For Paul wrote to the saints at Corinth, “Now these things [the events of Israel’s exodus from Egypt] took place as examples for us, that we should not desire evil as they did....Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Co 10:6, 11).

Why would Paul include himself in those *on whom the end of the ages has come* if he did not have solid reason for doing so? And how does Paul know the things that happened to Israel fifteen centuries earlier were written as examples, and not merely as a record of Israel’s history? Again, answers are speculative, but logic returns readers to Paul’s instruction by Jesus while Paul was in Arabia, a period about which Paul writes very little.

Two things are apparent and need no speculation: Paul believed and taught that the end of the ages had come upon his generation, and Paul taught that Israel’s exodus from Egypt was recorded for the instruction to the endtime generation that Christians should not desire evil. Paul taught using typology. He did not rely upon the meager history of the Christian Church leaders, or upon the doctrinal positions of the Jerusalem Church, or upon the teachings of the original apostles. In fact, when disputing with the circumcision faction, a long running conflict that is foregrounded in his epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, and to Timothy, as well as at the Jerusalem conference in Acts, Paul rejected what would then have been historical exegesis. Instead, he wrote,

For I would have you know, brother, that the gospel that was preached by me is not according to man. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ....But when he who had set me apart from my mother’s womb, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother. (Gal 1:11-19)

If what Paul taught came by revelation, the question remains valid: why did Paul believe that he would live to see Jesus' return? And the answer has to be in that Paul knew, by revelation, he was among those *on whom the end of the ages has come*. So what Paul wrote as he continued his instruction to the saints at Corinth becomes tremendously important: "Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Co 10:12). And here is where I want to begin, for most of Christendom believes that it stands on solid ground, on the Rock, and not on shifting sand.

The testimony of John the Baptist (John 1:19-36) was that he was neither Christ, Elijah, or the Prophet [mentioned by Moses], but was the one crying in the wilderness, *Make straight the way of the Lord* to fulfill the words of the prophet Isaiah. John further testified that he did not know the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit, but the one would be revealed to him by the Spirit descending as a dove and remaining on the one who would baptize with Spirit. His testimony was that he saw this miracle, and bore witness to Jesus being the Son of God. Yet as months passed, Jesus didn't do what John expected the Son of God to do. So while imprisoned (and perhaps hoping for liberation), when John heard about the deeds of Jesus, he sent word by his disciples to ask of Jesus if He, Jesus, was the one to come, or should Israel look for another (Matt 11:2-3).

Jesus' deeds were not those John expected from the Son of God. What Jesus was doing was not what John expected. As was apparently true of the Pharisees, John expected Jesus to liberate Israel physically.

Although empowered by the Holy Spirit, John was not born of Spirit; he was not to be the last Adam. He was the greatest man born of woman in that from a physical perspective he did not desire the things of the world but the things of God. John was physically minded, and again, he thought in terms of physical liberation from sin, as opposed to from Roman rule.

Most of Christendom has been as physically or carnally minded as John was. Christendom emphasizes the cross, and Jesus' death on the cross, that death paying the penalty for the sins of the flesh. Christendom doesn't emphasize that the glorified Jesus, the reality of the Azazel goat, bears the sins of disciples in the heavenly realm; for little of Christendom understands spiritual birth as the "real" birth in the heavenly realm of an infant son of God that will dwell in a physical tent of flesh where spiritual maturation is possible through the necessity of change caused by a parade of moments.

Jesus answered John disciples: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me" (Matt 11:4-6). Seven things. The first six are physical. The seventh is spiritual, but the seventh also requires an action [or inaction] by the one who is blessed: the person must not be offended by Jesus.

Most of Christendom, though, has been terribly offended by the Jesus who said,

**Do not think I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them....Therefore whoever relaxes 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)

The boldface was added for emphasis, for most of Christendom refuses to hear the words of Jesus, even when shouted. Christendom would rather twist what it doesn't understand in Paul's epistles to its destruction as it supports its lawlessness (2 Pet 3:16-17) than hear the words of Jesus.

So, what is taught by most of Christendom? Living by the commandments—by the Law and the Prophets? No! Christendom teaches either that it is *legalistic* to keep the commandments for Christians are not under the law, or that the Church [the deceived last Eve] has the right to change the commandments. And way out in left field, a hatful of slivers teaches that Christians should return to the Torah, that external old written code abolished at Calvary, and should not profane the names of Yahweh and Yahshua by using the linguistic icons /*God*/ and /*Jesus*/. Those slivers are today swollen by the foggy runoff of the drowned Church of God, and they now believe they are the beams upon which the house of God is built. But none of those slivers have the spiritual strength of a matchstick, and any house built from them will be for church hobbyists in present-day Jerusalem.

Do evangelical *dispensationalists* not teach that while Jesus lived, Israel was under a “dispensation” of law, but following Calvary, Christians have been under a *dispensation* of Grace? Of course, they do. And is not this a teaching that relaxes keeping the commandments? Does not this teaching, then, qualify one to be called least in the kingdom of heaven? It certainly does, if the person is not a hypocrite whose righteousness doesn't exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 5:20). No hypocrite will be in heaven, and every person knows whether the person is or isn't a hypocrite.

***It's time for a reality check. Are you a hypocrite, knowing to keep the Sabbath but not doing so because all of your friends and neighbors are worshiping on Sunday, or out fishing or shopping or golfing in Saturday? Or maybe your friends went out garage sale hopping on Saturday. Is that a good enough reason to not only relax the least of the commandments, but outright break it? You decide, but understand that you are playing Russian roulette with eternity. You will murder yourself if you continue transgressing the commandments, which are not inscribed on tablets of stone meticulously copied onto scrolls, but inscribed on two tablets of flesh, your heart and your mind.***

***What sort of excuses do you have for transgressing even one of the collective commandments, which if broken in one point is broken—breaking the law in one point breaks the law (Jas 2:10)? Surely your excuses must possess enough logic to cause you to reject the words of Jesus...to whom do you suppose your judgment has been consigned if not to Jesus, who knows whether you are a hypocrite?***

Lay out a map of the Near and Middle East, and see how much geography isn't in the nation of Israel. Now, understand what the Apostle Paul said about examples written for those upon whom the end of the age has come: the geography of Eden, which stretched from the drainages of the Tigris and Euphrates in the north and east to the Pishon and Havilah [both believed to once have been in Egypt] in the south and west (Gen 2:10-14),

forms the visible or observable representation of humanity's invisible conscious mental topography. Human thoughts are only observable when manifest as bodily actions. An un-enacted desire is not discoverable by another human being, but is known to God, which is why silent prayers are answered. Thus, for God to make visible to human beings what He can figuratively see, God established a correspondence between mental landscapes and geography, with the hill country of Judea representing His rest (Ps 95:10-11) as manifest by the keeping of the weekly Sabbath (Heb 4:1-11), which becomes a diminutive form of Christ Jesus' 1000 year millennial reign, which in turn is a foreshadowing of the heavenly realm. Therefore, a physically circumcised Israelite living in Judea is a shadow or type of a spiritually circumcised Israelite keeping the Sabbath. And the physically circumcised nation of Israel in Judea is a shadow and copy of all humanity (which will be born anew when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh — Joel 2:28) during the Millennium. Thus, a spiritually circumcised Israelite who today keeps the Sabbath is as every person will be in the Millennium, when human nature has been changed by humanity no longer being consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32 & Eph 2:3-4).

Jesus said, concerning those who have been born anew, “Do not marvel at this [Jesus executing judgment], for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment [condemnation]” (John 5:28-29). Judgment is today upon the household of God (1 Pet 4:17); judgment is only upon that portion of humanity born of Spirit. The remainder of humanity awaits its second birth in the grave; this remainder waits as if asleep, in that the dead know nothing (Eccl 9:5). At death, a person enters a state of unconscious timelessness until resurrected. The person who has heard the words of Jesus and has believed the Father passes from death to life (John 5:24), for this person has been under judgment while still physically conscious. But the person who has done evil will be condemned to the lake of fire if the person had been of Spirit prior to death—and the person who, as a son of disobedience, never knew God, never heard the words of Jesus, and never received life in the heavenly realm will be resurrected to judgment. This person will be as one of the two thieves crucified with Jesus at Calvary; this person will either seek to save his [or her] physical life, or the person will acknowledge that he [or she] was worthy of death and will ask to be remembered.

Returning to that map of the Near East, the visible geography of Egypt represents sin, just as leavening does during Passover week. The physically circumcised nation of Israel left Egypt hastily, taking their daily bread dough with them before it was leavened (Ex 12:34). They didn't leave the following day, as some have taught disciples. They left in the early morning hours of the same night the death angel passed through Egypt, slaying all firstborns not covered by the blood of a paschal lamb, this night being the dark portion of the 15<sup>th</sup> of the first month for the paschal lambs were killed at even on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

When Moses gave instructions to the elders of Israel, Moses did not know when the death angel would pass throughout the land. He knew that it would occur during the night, and he told the elders, “None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord will pass through to strike Egyptians, and when he sees the blood

[of the paschal lamb] on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you” (Ex 12:22-23).

The destroyer of the Lord did not need to make a second pass throughout the land; so once the destroyer passed through, leaving every Egyptian household in mourning, Israel left their houses when, by night, commanded to do so by the new Pharaoh (v. 31). And the nation left hastily, for the Passover was eaten with loins girded, feet shod, and staffs in hand (v. 11). The nation was ready to go all the while it was eating of the roasted lamb; it had only to plunder the Egyptians on its way out of Egypt.

But this nation, because of its unbelief (Heb 3:19), never entered Judah (Num chap 14). In the wilderness of Paran, the home of Ishmael, the nation of Israel, except for Joshua and Caleb, rebelled against God. This nation died within miles of its designation, and it died because of a physical mindset.

Except for a spiritual Joshua and a spiritual Caleb, the entirety of today’s Christian Church will die because of a spiritual mindset of unbelief...the problem with prophecy is what it reveals; the problem with typology is also what it reveals.

***I don’t know that you answered me: what are the reasons for your hypocrisy? your reasons for transgressing the Sabbath commandment? Why do you, knowing that under the new covenant the Sabbath commandment goes from governing what your hand and body does on the seventh day to governing what your thoughts and desires should be on the seventh day, attempt to enter God’s rest on the following day as the nation that left Egypt so attempted? Do you believe that you, as a spiritually circumcised Israelite, will have any better “luck” than the physically circumcised nation had? Why, knowing you should be keeping the Sabbath holy, would you believe that God will somehow forgive you for relaxing the least of the commandments and teaching others to do likewise? You say, because He loves you? And He will say to you, “I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness” (Matt 7:23). That is what you are: a teacher of iniquity, an old-fashioned word for lawlessness.***

***What do you think about being a worker of lawlessness and being denied entrance into heaven when you have done all of your great works in Jesus’ name? Do you still believe in the weak magic of being under a dispensation of Grace...grace is the wearing of the mantle of Christ Jesus’ righteousness. You have been playing dress-up with His righteousness—and you have used grace as the tent in which you preach lawlessness to infant sons of God, thereby causing spiritual toddlers to stumble over the law of God.***

A physically circumcised Israelite in Egypt, waiting for the death angel to pass over the land, is directly analogous to a spiritually circumcised Israelite with the law of sin and death dwelling in his flesh, waiting for liberation through empowerment by the Holy Spirit. What the Apostle Paul didn’t fully understand was that one long spiritual night began at Calvary. He realized that he was living in *the end of the ages*, but he thought in terms of human lifetimes, and he apparently believed that Jesus would return while his generation remained alive. And what seems like Paul misunderstanding

when *the end of the ages* was to occur can be likened to the Church falling into the same carnal mindset that John the Baptist suffered while imprisoned. *The end of the ages* began with the single long spiritual night (again, foreshadowed by the Israel's long night of watching in Egypt) that will have, at its midnight hour, the Church liberated from bondage to sin and death by the lives of men being given as ransom (Isa 43:3-4, note especially verse 4, which pertain to Israel whereas verse 3 pertains to Jacob within the structured movement of thought of Hebraic poetry).

***You don't believe that God will again give the lives of men as ransom? If He won't do it a second time, why would He do it the first time—have you ever asked yourself that? Why did God harden the heart of Pharaoh, who apparently would have released Israel earlier? Was He merely being cruel, or did He have to harden Pharaoh's heart to cause that human king to serve as a copy and type of Satan, who will not want to release spiritually circumcised Israel from bondage to sin and to the cross?***

***I seldom talk directly to you; I am now, for the second Passover will soon be here. And after the second Passover, you will not again have the opportunity to enter into covenant with Christ Jesus until next year. For the sacraments of bread and wine are the fruits of the ground—they are Cain's offering to God—except on the night that Jesus was betrayed. On that night, the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first month, bread and wine become the body and blood of the Lord. And because there will be a second Passover liberation of Israel (this time of the spiritual nation from bondage to sin and death), a **second chance to take the Passover sacraments** exists (Num chap 9) for those who were unable to take them earlier.***

The course of human affairs has gone on as it is presently going for so long that mega-catastrophes are really unimaginable. A “mega-catastrophe” might be another San Francisco earthquake, or an earthquake in Puget Sound that turns the earth of the basin to jelly. A *mega-catastrophe* might be a nuclear bomb detonated in London or New York or Berlin; might be a meteorite striking Mexico City or Beijing; might be a pandemic influenza outbreak; might kill 20 million people, and disrupt the world's economy for years. The idea that one or two billion could die overnight is unimaginable. Yet if God were to again cause death angels to pass throughout all of spiritual Babylon, the single great city that encompasses the world and its economy, slaying all firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb of God, a true *mega-catastrophe* would occur; for no nation would be unaffected. No nation would escape; every nation would mourn its dead. And the number of dead would be approximately a third of every industrialized nation and most of China.

No human government would long endure the anger of its citizenry, or the stresses placed upon it to care for the survivors. Both democracies and totalitarian states would succumb to anarchy...perhaps the lucky ones will be the firstborns who died—whom God took because they are His (Ex 13:1-2) to do with as it pleases Him, even if that means resurrecting them in the great White Throne Judgment.

Only religion will survive. Every person will turn to the beliefs of the person's ancestors as the person attempts to make amends for the sins that caused what will certainly appear to be the work of God. And humanity has a record of what happens

when religions vie with one another for supremacy over scarce resources: the wars will not end until one side wipes out the other, or until both sides are too exhausted to continue. There can be no peace, for every person will not want a repeat of what happened; so the person, believing that he or she correctly worships the God that caused the *mega-catastrophe*, will fight for demons until maybe a third of humanity becomes half of those who were alive before the death angels passed throughout the land. And just when it seems as if it cannot get worse, the sixth trumpet plague is released. Humankind will only then be approaching the middle of seven endtime years of tribulation. Another third of humanity will die before it is all over; before the seven days of Unleavened Bread that began with one long spiritual night end.

Seven days without leavened bread; seven years living without sin—the first six hours of the first night of those days, of those years will be two millennia long. We are living in the time of the end. The Apostle Paul lived his life earlier during this same single spiritual night that began when the light of men was buried in a garden tomb. He didn't make a mistake when he wrote, *Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.*

When I was initially drafted to reread prophecy [a claim for which I no more apologize than Paul apologized for his calling], I thought Paul had made a mistake when he wrote, *on whom the end of the ages has come.* The end of the age obviously hadn't come in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century or in any century between then and now. We Christians made apologies for Paul, saying something like if Jesus had revealed that He wouldn't return immediately, the early disciples would not have taken the gospel to the world with the same vigor. Possibly true. Probably not, though. For Paul, as I am, was under compulsion to do a work. Whether anyone else is involved is immaterial. So while there is enough reward for everyone who wants involved, the work will be done regardless.

As a map of the Near East reveals, Judea is a very small portion of a strategic region of the world. And if entering Judea mentally represents entering God's rest, the weekly Sabbath, then crossing the Jordan still leaves an Israelite outside of Jerusalem. Keeping the Sabbath merely means that the disciple has crossed the Jordan; it doesn't mean that the disciple has returned to the Jerusalem above, where the house of God is to be rebuilt.

The early Church, because of its refusal to walk in the ways of God and because it profaned the Sabbaths of God as physically circumcised Israel had (Ezek chap 20), was sent into mental or spiritual captivity after it divided into a northern and a southern school—God exiled the early Church to spiritual Babylon, where most of it still remains worshipping the golden idol of Babylon's spiritual king (Isa 14:4-21). Thus, the rebuilding of the house of God in the Jerusalem above was assigned to a remnant of the Church that left spiritual Babylon as Anabaptists in the first decades of the 16<sup>th</sup>-Century.

So there is no mistake: in the 16<sup>th</sup>-Century and since, the majority of the Protestant Reformers refused to leave Babylon, and only changed neighborhoods within the spiritual city. The remnant given the task of rebuilding the house of God in the Jerusalem above doesn't include the followers of Luther, or of Calvin—followers of both men remain part of spiritual Israel, but remain in Babylon where they worship the idols of its king as natural Israel, with the exception of Daniel and his friends, worshiped

Nebuchadnezzar's golden idol. The remnant to whom the reconstruction was assigned separated itself from the majority of Christendom by the sacrament of baptism.

The error the Churches of God made in their attempt to trace "the true history of the Church" was using the Sabbath as the historical marker...when God sent the northern school of Christendom into mental captivity in spiritual Assyria [death], and the southern school into captivity in Babylon, none of the Church dwelt in Judea. None of the Church kept the weekly Sabbath. Thus, in their dishonest attempt to find a continual trace of Sabbatarian Christians from the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century to the 20<sup>th</sup>, scholars for the Churches of God assigned to 8<sup>th</sup>-day Christian sects observance of the weekly Sabbath. And their scholarship was rightly rejected by most of Christendom.

The historical trace that Sabbatarian scholars should have used is adult baptism, for the practice of infant baptism left the Jerusalem above without spiritual inhabitants for centuries, just as physical Jerusalem was not inhabited by natural Israelites for seventy years. And just as natural Israel prospered in Babylon spiritual Israel has also prospered in spiritual Babylon, as evidenced by the worldwide satellite network that broadcasts the cross to the world.

Because the marker of who has left Babylon is baptism, the progress of the remnant can be traced, for when Anabaptists began keeping the Sabbath, the remnant mentally crossed the Jordan to enter the land beyond the river; the remnant entered God's rest. But keeping the Sabbath has nothing to do with laying the foundations for the house of God that was to be rebuilt in the Jerusalem above. The foundation upon which the house will be rebuilt is spiritual birth, which is directly related to baptism.

That portion of Christendom in Babylon universally accepts the spiritual king of Babylon's lie that human beings are born with immortal souls—the Church, the last Eve, accepted the same lie that the first Eve swallowed (Gen 3:4). So does the remnant that left, except for a virtually invisible portion of the remnant that entered spiritual Judea in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century and arrived at the base of Jerusalem early into the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century. This miniscule portion of the remnant screamed as loud as it could across the radio waves of the world, and attracted much negative attention to itself; plus, with rejecting Satan's lie it also rejected revelation from Christ Jesus, choosing instead to believe an ad man that liked to write with all kinds of gimmicks to emphasize his ignorance...the death of this portion of the remnant would not have been the spiritual tragedy that it has become if the ad man had made disciples for Christ instead of making them for himself, whether intentionally or unintentionally doing so.

The Father and the Son have no essential endtime man, or even essential endtime men as humans understand */essential/*. But certain men [and woman] will be given by the Father to Christ Jesus to fulfill Scripture, including the ongoing betrayal of the Son of Man (John 17:12). So human beings will be drawn and used to complete prophecies written by those men set apart for that purpose: the Apostle Paul wrote that he had been set apart from the womb (Gal 1:15). Jeremiah was known before he was formed in the womb (Jer 1:5). Therefore, when future generations of disciples engage the historical record of this portion of the end of the ages, they will likely find that certain men [and women] were called to reject revelation that would have shortened the age by forty years...in those forty years, more than two billion people have been added to the world's population, thereby statistically increasing the harvest of firstfruits by almost a billion

while fulfilling in all aspects the counting of days. So, yes, the Father might well have called an ad man full of himself to a very important task, but not to be God's essential endtime man. Only Christ Jesus fulfills that position.

***Have you been drawn to rebel against God in the great falling away? As harsh as it seems, many Christians will be drawn for that very purpose—many are called, but few are chosen (Matt 22:14). Or are you one who will flee Babylon now that return to Jerusalem is permitted? Maybe you have a choice about what you do; maybe you don't. If you do, "while the promise of entering his rest still stands" (Heb 4:1), enter His rest so that you don't fall as did the nation that left Egypt (v. 11), which tried to enter God's rest on the following day because of its unbelief.***

***It is a tremendous privilege to be able to keep the Sabbath, as well as the other commandments, and not a privilege that should be lightly regarded. So don't let your former associates delude you with plausible arguments for remaining in Babylon (Col 2:4) when you have the chance to leave. The portion of Christendom remaining in Babylon has a few reasonable sounding arguments, but every one of the arguments call for relaxing the least of the commandments. And who are you going to believe? Jesus, or them? And by how you answer reveals whether you are predestined for glory.***

***You probably don't have a choice about going or staying. You are either foreknown as a son of destruction, or a son of God—and if a son of God, then you are seed sown on the path, or on rocky soil, or among the thorns, or on good ground. If you are not already rooted in good soil, then you need to hastily begin amending the soil in which you grow before you become one of the many who are not chosen.***

***The job I have to do carries with it its reward, so whether you act upon what I write or blow all of this off doesn't affect me. You are the one who will, from this point forward, either relax a commandment, or strive to keep them while practicing to walk uprightly before Father and Son under the mantle of Christ Jesus' righteousness. Remember the map and how small Judea is and how you must mentally walk across a lot of desert landscape before you arrive in the Judean hill country, where the twin harvests of God grow.***

***It is my desire that you live by the laws of God that are, or will be written on your heart and mind. But you are a vessel of clay made for honored or dishonored usage. If you have read this far, you are probably made to be a special vessel—and if you are, then it's time to get to work, for the harvest is great and the laborers are very few.***

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