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## Commentary — From the Margins What Does It Mean To Take “the Mark of the Beast”?

A book and movie series, popular with Evangelical Christians, have fed upon latent paranoia of the Roman Church and of global government to make the numeral 666 a fearful mark, a mark of men that might be anything from an implanted computer chip to a Social Security number. The numeral 666 comes from a very bad translation of chi xi stigma (Rev 13:18), Strong's #5516; the numeral should be read as the tattoo [stigma] of Xx [chi xi], or the tattoo of Christ's cross; and the numeral is both the identifier of a man, Christ Jesus, as well as the accepted icon for organized Christianity. Thus, halfway through seven endtime years of tribulation, when that old dragon Satan the devil is cast from heaven (Rev 12:9-10) and when the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ (Rev 11:15) and when dominion over the world has been taken from the four beasts (Dan 7:11-12), that old dragon temporarily usurps the Son of Man's authority to rule over humanity by posing as the Messiah and by requiring all who would buy and sell [conduct commerce] to pledge allegiance to him by taking the tattoo of what has become the accepted icon of Christianity. Few Christians alive today would refuse, if required to buy and sell, to take on their hand a simple tattoo of the cross. Even fewer will refuse such a tattoo after three and a half years of tribulation. Those who would refuse are not Christians, but are today Muslim or Buddhist or Hindi or atheist. Likewise, those who will refuse after three and a half years of tribulation have some other belief paradigm by which God has allegedly revealed Himself to the person.

If most Christians would not, today, refuse a tattoo of the cross—and if most Christians will not, after three and a half years of tribulation, refuse to accept a tattoo of the cross, then the majority of those on whom God's wrath is poured out during the last three and a half years of the tribulation are “Christians.” And to most of Christianity, this makes no sense at all. Why would God punish His own holy nation...what if this nation that has identified itself to the world as Christian is not of God, but of the Adversary? Would God not then pour His wrath out upon it? Would He not then doubly repay that nation for its iniquity (Jer 16:18)—and how could God doubly repay a nation for its lawlessness? The wages of sin [lawlessness — from 1 John 3:4] is death (Rom 6:23). To repay doubly would be to punish the nation with death, then with a second death. But in order for a nation to experience a second death, the nation must be born a second time or born of Spirit.

The second death is being cast into the lake of fire, which comes to earth with the return of Christ Jesus when judgments will be revealed (1 Co 4:5). Only when a person has been born of Spirit in a perishable body can the person experience the second death. The person who has not been born of Spirit has only been born once and is only subject to the death of the flesh. This person has no other life than that which comes from his or her physical breath [psuche]. Plus, once a person born of Spirit puts on immortality, the person is no longer

subject to the second death but has passed through fire (Isa 43:2), and baptism by fire (Matt 3:11-12).

All of humanity will be born of Spirit when the Holy Spirit, the divine Breath of God [Pneuma 'Agion], is poured out upon all flesh (Joel 2:28) when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Father and His Son. In the middle of the seven endtime years, Satan is cast from heaven and all of humanity is born of Spirit. Now God can repay doubly every transgression of His law. He can repay doubly those who have polluted the land and have defiled His inheritance with detestable abominations—and His inheritance is a holy nation that walks upright before Him, a nation that is holy as He is holy (1 Pet 1:14-16), a nation of spiritual Israelites that live like spiritual Judeans, not spiritual Gentiles.

Because of the lawlessness of the first Adam and first Eve, God consigned all of humanity to disobedience (Rom 11:32) for the destruction of the flesh (1 Co 5:5) so that the spirit might be saved. The promise made to the people of the Book is that every person will be resurrected from death through receiving a second birth; i.e., being born of Spirit. Following the sin of Adam, every person was consigned to Satan so that when the person was born of Spirit, the spirit might be saved. Therefore, because God gave humankind to Satan to be bondservants to sin for a season, God does not reckon the sin of a person consigned to disobedience against the person (Rom 5:12-14). Only when the person has been brought out of sin, geographically represented by the land of Egypt, and given the Laws of God is sin counted as sin against the person. Thus, only with the giving of the Law did Israel need a covering for its lawlessness—and the animal sacrifices were the acceptable covering given until the coming of the second Adam, who would be the reality of the sacrifices, both of the daily and of annual offerings (Col 2:17).

The Father by sending His Son into time in the likeness of sinful flesh and as the acceptable sin offering condemned sin in the flesh (Rom 8:3) so that human beings could be, first individually, then en masse, liberated from bondage to disobedience. The Logos came as the man Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:1-2, 14), born of Spirit as the first of the firstfruits, the uncovered Head of the Son of Man, the body of which are Jesus' covered [as in clothed — Gal 3:27] disciples. But what the early Hellenistic Christian Church overlooked is that the Logos deliberately came as a circumcised Israelite, for the nation of Israel was the first born natural son of God (Ex 4:22). This firstborn son had been liberated from physical bondage to Pharaoh, but remained subject to disobedience through “hearing” Satan’s broadcast of lawlessness (Eph 2:3) as evidenced by the nation’s history. However, Israel was able to cover, not remove, its disobedience with its sacrifices.

When the natural nation of Israel divided following Solomon’s reign, the northern kingdom began sacrificing to two gold calves, one set at Bethel and the other in Dan (1 Kings 12:25-31). And with this sin of Jeroboam, which the northern kingdom never overcame, these tribes of Israel ceased covering their disobedience through animal sacrifices at the temple where God had placed His name. The righteous requirements of the law now condemned this northern kingdom to death. Hence, the House of Israel disappears into the historic narrative to never physically live again. Without the covering of being bondservants

to the Adversary [natural grace], or of animal sacrifices [Israel's status under the Law], or being bondservants to Christ Jesus [spiritual Grace], the person or the nation has its sin counted against the person or nation, thereby condemning the person or nation to death.

Today, disciples of Christ Jesus practice walking uprightly before God and man under the dazzlingly brilliant garment or mantle of Jesus' righteousness. Although they are the Body of Christ, they are, themselves, not acceptable sacrifices for sin, for the law of sin and death remains dwelling in their fleshly members (Rom 7:25). Plus, every disciple knows that he or she fails to measure up to Christ (1 John 1:8-10)—and for most disciples, this is enough. The disciple does not try to live as Jesus lived. The disciple does not try [or at least does not try very hard] to keep the commandments, but is eager to relax the commandment the disciple regards as of least importance (Matt 5:19). For most Christians, this is the Sabbath commandment. For some it is adultery. For some it is coveting. All of Western culture, allegedly based upon Christian values, is built on coveting what rightfully belonged to another, a harsh statement but one that can be supported from a theoretical Marxist analysis of history.

The problem with biblical prophecy is what has been revealed: the Christian Church, which is the spiritual nation of Israel, will be liberated from bondage to the law of sin and death that presently dwells in its fleshly members. It will be liberated through empowerment by [or being filled with] the Holy Spirit on a Second Passover. Then, every spiritual Israelite will be as Christ Jesus was. The spiritual Israelite will be without sin—all lawlessness will have been purged from, or pushed out of the body of the disciple and from the Body of Christ. Every spiritual Israelite will be like his or her Teacher and like his or her Master (Matt 10:24-25). The son of Man, both Head and Body, will then be revealed (Luke 17:30) and visible to God and man. The Body of Christ [which is also the Body of the Son of Man] will no longer need the garment of Jesus' righteousness, and will no longer be under Grace.

The vast majority of Christian theologians do not—and even refuse to—believe that the Body of Christ will be any different when Jesus returns than it is now (if they believe that He will return). Hence, they teach disciples to erase the laws of God that were written on hearts and minds through receipt of the Holy Spirit; they teach that because Jesus kept the commandments, disciples do not have to keep these commandments; they teach that because the righteous requirements of the law were fulfilled in the person of Jesus, Christians are and will forever remain righteous through being the Body of Christ. And while the arguments of these many theologians sound plausible from a distance, none of their arguments pertain when the Son of Man is revealed: as a man doesn't "marry" his own body, the glorified Christ will not marry His Body. Thus, the Body of Christ must undergo transformation into being the Bride of Christ, a separate personage who becomes one with the Groom through marriage.

The transformation of the Body into being the Bride begins with the spiritual liberation, through empowerment by the Holy Spirit, of disciples from the law of sin and death that continues to dwell in their fleshly members—the flesh was consigned to disobedience when Adam was driven from the garden, but the Spirit has been free since it was given. Thus, a

war has raged within every disciple between the flesh and the Spirit, between the flesh being a bondservant to the Adversary and the Spirit being a bondservant to Christ Jesus. When the Spirit rules the flesh, the whole body is clean. But as the Apostle John wrote, if disciples now say that they are without sin, they are liars. Today, in disciples, the Spirit is unable to entirely rule over the flesh—sometimes it seems as if the Spirit rules over nothing, that the person remains a son of disobedience. However, as the Spirit within a person strengthens through exercise—as the son of God dwelling in the particular tent of flesh matures—the Spirit more ably rules the flesh, losing only occasional battles to disobedience.

In a direct analogy to natural Israel's liberation from bondage to Pharaoh and accountability for its sin through receiving the law from atop Sinai, spiritual Israel will be liberated from sin and death through empowerment by the divine Breath of God, not heard through ears but received in hearts and minds. No longer will any sin remain in any spiritual Israelite. And this liberation of spiritual Israel begins the seven endtime years of tribulation, for in liberating the spiritually holy nation, God again slays firstborns (Isa 43:3-4), beginning with the spiritual great horn of the king of Greece (Dan 8:8). Figuratively, spiritual Babylon, presently reigning over the kingdom of the world, is hit below the belt hard enough to double over this humanoid appearing hierarchy. God delivers the blow. Babylon's days are numbered at 1260. And the Tribulation has begun, for during the second half of these seven endtime years, all of Babylon's remaining hierarchy, including its king (Isa 14:4-21), has been cast down to earth (Rev 12:7-10) and has come as the two beasts of Revelation chapter 13.

When spiritual Israel, the Christian Church, is empowered by the Holy Spirit, this woman will give birth to two sons who have struggled in the womb of this last Eve for centuries. One son will be hated, one loved (Rom 9:6-13 & Gal 4:28-31). Both are the promised sons of spiritual Isaac. But one will take upon itself the mark of the beast as Cain was marked; the other will be [except for a remnant] dead as Abel was killed by his lawbreaking brother. And the woman who flees into the wilderness will be the empowered natural branches of Israel that have been grafted onto the root of righteousness from which they were broken off two millennia earlier. This woman is not the great multitude (Rev 7:9), but the 144,000.

The last Eve is the Body of Christ, not the Bride of Christ. From the two sons that this last Eve delivers in a day—and from the third son that this last Eve will deliver when the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all flesh halfway through the seven years [the great multitude] will come the endtime portion of the Bride. But the bad news for the two sons that's also the good news for the third part of humanity (Zech 13:9) is that so few disciples comprise the loved son, Abel [or Jacob who becomes Israel through prevailing with God], that as in Jesus' parable of the wedding feast (Matt 22:1-14) the remainder of humankind is born as a spiritual Seth.

Yes, so few Christian disciples will walk uprightly before God and man when empowered by the Holy Spirit that the Father will send His angels out to invite the third part of humanity to the wedding supper of the Lamb of God. As the natural nation of Israel rebelled against God in the wilderness of Paran (Num chap 14) and after acknowledging that it had

sinned, tried to enter God's rest on the following day (Ps 95:10-11 & Num 14:40-41), the spiritual nation of Israel will rebel against God (2 Thess 2:3) and try to enter His rest on the following day, the 8th day instead of on the Sabbath. And as the natural nation could not enter on the following day, neither can the spiritual nation enter heaven on the following day—all of Christianity's day of salvation is this present spiritual day that began at Calvary when the light of men died on the cross. And this one spiritual day continues past the midnight hour when death angels will again slay firstborns, continues past when spiritual Israel is liberated from bondage to sin and death, continues past the end of darkness when Satan is cast from heaven, continues through the daylight hours when the Light of Men is with the 144,000 (Rev 14:1-5), continues until the resurrection of saints and the marriage supper in the heavenly realm. Only then will there again be a very brief period of darkness on earth [the night of the 5th day of the Genesis one creation account] before the Messiah comes to slay those human beings who again made themselves bondservants of Satan through taking the mark of death [the tattoo of the cross] upon themselves, thus beginning His reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The importance of those who take upon themselves the mark of death in both the heavenly and physical realms has not been appreciated in the plan of God: these human beings who have each been born of Spirit but were each created as a vessel for dishonorable usage will perish in the lake of fire, thereby forming the dross of the glorified Body of the Son of Man...

Jesus at Calvary paid the ransom price for the firstfruits who have been individually drawn from disobedience (John 6:44), but His death was only of the flesh, thereby condemning sin in the flesh; i.e., in this world. Since He was the last or second Adam, no human being had life in the heavenly realm other than Himself at the time of His death. No human being, except Himself, had been born of Spirit when He died at Calvary. Therefore, because He was without sin, no ransom price in the heavenly realm—where He had life through being born of Spirit (Matt 3:15-17)—was required to be paid for Him. In fact, in order for Him to die, He had to be made sin through taking on the sins of others.

But again, Jesus will not be crucified a second time. He will not die in the heavenly realm as the sin offering for the lawlessness of born of Spirit disciples—and every sin committed by a son of God in the heavenly realm requires in that realm a death, a sin offering. Spiritual Israel is in the heavenly realm as physical Israel was in the physical realm. And as physical Israelites, after the giving of the Law, offered bulls and goats for their sins in the physical realm, with Christ Jesus being the reality of these offerings, spiritual Israelites, after empowerment by the Holy Spirit, must cover their sins with the loss of spiritual life. After empowerment, Jesus will not bear the sins of His disciples in this heavenly realm as He has done since the birth of the last Eve.

Ultimately, Satan will pay with his spiritual life for the disobedience of all of his spiritual bondservants, but this payment occurs after the thousand year long reign of Christ Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus paid with His physical life for the physical disobedience of His bondservants, this disobedience occurring prior to the new creatures being born of Spirit in the fleshly tents of the old man. Thus, the payment for disobedience

occurs after the occurrence of the disobedience; payment is not made in advance, a reality Christian theologians have not understood, for the old creature is crucified with Christ following spiritual birth, not before. Even though Jesus died at Calvary two millennia ago, today's son of disobedience has no life in the heavenly realm, so for this son of disobedience, Calvary has not yet occurred. It will occur after the Father draws this son of disobedience from the world; it occurs when this newly drawn disciple is baptized into the death of Jesus. At this moment, the physical event that happened long ago here on earth occurs in the timeless heavenly realm for this son of God. Therefore, since payment for sin is made after the occurrence of the sin (a person doesn't draw wages before working), Jesus has had to bear every post-baptism sin of every disciple in the heavenly realm since He breathed on ten of His Disciples (John 20:22). And again, since He will not die in this realm [since He will not be crucified anew], the death penalties attached to these post-baptism sins of disciples remain unpaid in a manner analogous to how the death penalty for the lawlessness of natural nation of Israel was delayed but not paid by the blood of bulls and goats. The death penalty for the lawlessness of natural Israelites was ultimately paid by the Israelite dying in a manner similar to how the remainder of humanity consigned to disobedience died.

What advantage, then, was the giving of the Law to Israel?

If Israel had pursued the Law by faith instead of by works, the nation would have collectively received circumcised hearts (Deu 30:6) and the promise of eternal life. Whereas no other peoples on earth were offered the promise of everlasting life, Israel knew what righteousness was, and as such, could have pleased God if that righteousness had been based upon faith (Rom 9:31-32)...under the second covenant mediated by Moses (Deu 29:1), if Israel when exiled in a far country turned to God and began keeping His commandments and statutes [this would require an act of faith], God would bring Israel back to Judea and would give the nation the promise of salvation [spiritual circumcision]. But Israel never loved its neighbor (Luke 10:25-29), a requirement of the Law, and never had faith (Luke 18:18-23), necessary to please God. Thus, the Law was of a great advantage to Israel, but an advantage that this nation could never realize because of its spiritual blindness. As a result, of this holy (Ex 19:5-6) firstborn son of God (Ex 4:22) no Israelite was an acceptable offering for sin until the Logos came down from heaven to be born as the circumcised man Jesus of Nazareth.

When spiritual Israel is liberated from sin and death through empowerment by the Holy Spirit, every spiritual Israelite will—at that moment—be as sinless as Jesus was. Every spiritual Israelite will be an acceptable sin offering in both the physical realm and in the heavenly realm. And this is what sealed prophecies have concealed from earlier generations of disciples, for the entirety of the holy ones will be delivered into the hand of the man of perdition (Dan 7:25) as the acceptable sacrifice of the Lord. Thus, it is this delivery that works to transform the endtime Body into the spiritual Bride.

When the Christian Church is empowered by the Holy Spirit and is thus an acceptable sin offering for humanity, the entirety of the Church will be sacrificed in either the physical

realm where physical lives are given thereby saving spiritual lives, or in the spiritual realm where those disciples who sin make themselves slaves of sin to die for the sins of humanity in the heavenly realm in the same way that bulls and goats died for the physical lawlessness of Israel prior to when Jesus died as the reality of these sacrifices.

The significance of the above statement will escape too many: when Christians are empowered by the Holy Spirit, every Christian will be without sin dwelling anywhere in their fleshly tents. These tents, then, will be like Jesus'. As disciples and servants, every disciple will be like his or her Teacher and Master, who died as the ransom price paid for withdrawing those individuals previously consigned to disobedience from their consignee. But because no one had life in the heavenly realm prior to Jesus, no human son of God had disobedience in that realm. Therefore, only physical death was required to pay the ransom price of disobedience. However, since Jesus breathed on His disciples, the firstfruits have had life in the heavenly realm as well as in the physical realm—and lawlessness in this heavenly realm has been committed by these disciples, with Jesus as the reality of the Azazel goat bearing this lawlessness. Jesus, though, will not pay the death penalty for this heavenly realm lawlessness. Eventually, Satan will pay for all lawlessness. But until Satan pays, the spiritual slaves of Satan—those liberated Christians who take upon themselves the mark of death, the tattoo of the cross—will, as bulls and goats paid for the physical lawlessness of the natural nation of Israel, pay with their lives in the heavenly realm for the post-baptism sins of the spiritual nation. They pay for their own sins, and they are sacrificed as many vessels of God intended for dishonorable use (Rom 9:14-24) for the spiritual lawlessness of foreknown and predestined sons of God (Rom 8:29-30).

Here is the difficulty of prophecy: most Christians today have been called by God to be vessels of dishonor, vessels to be sacrificed in the heavenly realm, vessels to be cast into the lake of fire as bulls and goats were burned by the physical nation on the temple altar. They must first make themselves into a slave of sin by taking sin into themselves after they have been liberated from sin and death, but realistically, what portion of the lawless Christian Church will not make itself into a slave of sin when liberated? As a simple test, what portion of the lawless Church will repent of its lawlessness and enter God's rest when God says to rest from the works of the flesh? Worldwide, there are, probably, fifty million Sabbath keepers, with forty million being circumcised Jews. Out of a billion Christians, ten million or less enter God's rest when He says to rest. And there is nothing any servant of God can do or say to the majority of Christendom to cause these vessels of God to keep the commandments of God. It is as if this vast majority of Christendom has been predestined to be sacrificed in the lake of fire for my lawlessness and for your lawlessness in the heavenly realm.

Should we thank them, or attempt to warn them? What should we do? The plan of God is certain. Ultimately, we cannot alter this plan. But as I am a brand plucked from the fire—and so, probably, are you—can we not attempt to drag from the fire whomever we can?

The arguments for keeping the commandments come down to whether we will live as Jesus lived, or whether we will live as Augustine, or Luther, or Calvin, or Menno Simons, or John

Fox, or Darby, or whichever televangelist you want to name lived or lives. Jesus lived as a Judean. He kept the Sabbaths of God—the Pharisees never kept the law of God or of Moses (John 7:19). He ate as a Judean. He was, as one observant Jew commented to me, an observant Jew. And His disciples were and are Judeans in their minds, not necessarily in their flesh—for the fleshly tent in which a son of God dwells is of no importance, or of very little importance. Jesus' disciples lived, live, and will live as spiritual Judeans.

All disciples who live as spiritual Gentiles will take to themselves the tattoo of the cross, thereby upon liberation sacrificing themselves as if they were a bull or a goat. The same will apply to that portion of the third part of humanity that takes upon itself the mark of death after being born from above when the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all flesh—for all who endure to the end without the tattoo of death shall be saved (Matt 24:13); enduring means not accepting the mark of the beast.

The Buddhist, the Muslim, the Hindi, when born of Spirit, will continue for a while in their present belief paradigm, thereby racking up the transgressions in the heavenly realm. It will take many spiritual bulls and goats to cover these transgressions—I suspect the third part of humankind should, today, thank mass-marketed Christianity for bringing to God the clay that will be spun by television spinmeisters into many vessels of dishonor, each to be burned to nothing in the lake of fire.

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