

## Commentary — From the Margins

### *The Imprecise Linguistic Referent: The Law of Moses (Part 3)*

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On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. ... There Israel encamped before the mountain while Moses went up to God. The Lord [*YHWH*] called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Israel: You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.” (Ex 19:1-6)

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When Israel reached Mount Sinai, the nation’s exodus from Egypt was recent history: Israel had been on the move for two and a half months (because of the ambiguity of the language, possibly three and a half months). They had run out of food after a month (Ex 16:1-3), and they have been eating manna for six weeks. They had quarreled with Moses about the lack of water (Ex 17:2), and they defeated the Amalekites at Rephidim (*vv.* 8-13). God referred to what Israel had experienced as bearing Israel on eagles’ wings and bringing the nation to Himself (Ex 19:4); yet that expression of having borne Israel on eagles’ wings does not seem appropriate to an endtime generation that flies the air-highways of the world [because of territorial claims, eagles themselves have such highways].

When war arises in heaven and Michael and his angels fight against Satan and his angels and Satan is cast into time (Rev 12:7-9), that old dragon will pursue the woman who had given birth to the male child (*v.* 13) who will rule all nations with a rod of iron (*v.* 5). “But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time” (*v.* 14) ... God said that He brought Israel to Him on eagles’ wings under Moses, and in John’s endtime vision God will again bring Israel, the woman, to Himself on two eagle wings. The first forms the shadow and type of the latter.

- Israel walked from Egypt to Sinai. There were neither planes nor chariots, nor wagons, nor horses.
- Israel’s journey was fraught with hunger, thirst, and enemies determined to slay the nation.
- If Israel’s journey to Sinai corresponds to (or forms the copy and type of) endtime Israel’s flight from the fallen prince of this world to the rest or refuge

of God, then this flight on eagle wings will be unlike anything most prophecy pundits have prophesied.

- But most importantly, the Sinai covenant by which Israel could become the holy nation of God comes after this flight, not before. Except for a few, the writing of the laws of God on hearts and minds becomes a reality in the second half of the seven endtime years of tribulation.

Of the many covenants of promise made in the *law of Moses*, the Sinai covenant occupies a unique position; for the Sinai covenant offers to the firstborn natural son of God (Ex 4:22) the promise of becoming the holy nation of God (Ex 19:5-6) if this “son” would keep everything God tells Moses. This covenant offered “holiness,” but offered it on the condition of obedience ... the Sinai covenant ends natural grace (Rom 5:13). Although sin [the transgression of the laws of God – 1 John 3:4] entered the world through the disobedience of one man, and death through sin (Rom 5:12), this sin or disobedience was not counted against humankind where there was no law. Why? Because Adam was driven from the garden of God, and he and his descendants were consigned to disobedience so that God could have mercy on all (Rom 11:32). Their lawlessness was “covered” by their consignment to disobedience, and to being bondservants of the prince of this world. In a figurative sense, God delivered all of humankind as serfs to the king of Babylon when Adam was sent forth to till the ground that would yield thorns and thistles. God said to Adam, “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen 3:19).

Adam had no life but that received when he became a *nephesh* (Gen 2:7), a breathing creature like other breathing creatures [i.e., the beasts of the field]. King Solomon writes,

I said in my heart with regard to the children of man that God is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts. For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity. All go to one place.

All are the dust, and to dust all return. (Eccl 3:18-20).

The Apostle Paul says that the wages of sin is death, “but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23). Jesus said of the twelve He sent out that they were *psuche* and *soma*, breath and body (Matt 10:28). These first disciples had not, when sent out, received birth-from-above in the form of receipt of the Holy Spirit [*Pneuma 'Agion*]; they did not have the Holy Spirit. Hence, they were not of tripart composition: *pneuma*, *psuche*, and *soma* (1 Thess 5:23). They lacked having the Spirit [*Pneuma*] of God.

The lawyer who sought to test Jesus asked, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 10:25). This lawyer knew that he did not have eternal life dwelling within him in the form of an immortal soul that must be redeemed. Rather, this lawyer, who correctly answered Jesus’ response of how did he read the law, understood that the *law of Moses* held covenants that promised eternal life.

Likewise, the rich young ruler asked Jesus, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life” (Luke 18:18).

The covenants of promise in the *law of Moses* were made with the fleshly descendants of the first Adam; they were made with living dust. These covenants promised everlasting life, but on the condition of obedience ... when the first Adam was placed in the garden of God, he was given only one command: “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen 2:16-17). Adam was not told to keep the Sabbath; he wasn’t told not to murder or commit adultery or lie or steal; he was not prohibited from worshiping idols. These “details” were not issues, for he was placed in the garden [or rest] of God. There was no woman with which to commit adultery, or any other human being to murder. There was nothing to steal except the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Thus, one commandment was sufficient.

Obedience is a test that is “passed” when the person being tested submits by faith to the test. Thus, God tests Israel with the *law of Moses* to determine what Israel believes about everlasting life—and this test separates sheep from goats, spiritually circumcised Israel from the synagogue of Satan. For the last Eve believed the same lie that the first Eve believed: “the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die’” (Gen 3:4). Greek philosophers said to all who would hear them, “You will not surely die for you have an immortal soul.” In fact, Augustine of Hippo wrote,

This faith [Christianity] maintains, and it must be believed: neither the soul nor the human body may suffer complete annihilation, but the impious shall rise again into everlasting punishment, and the just into life everlasting. (*On Christian Doctrine*. Book 1: XXI. Trans. D.W. Robertson, Jr.)

Augustine was wrong. The body is dust, the base elements of the earth. At death it returns to dust that is blown about by the winds of this earth. It is stone ground into fine flour; thus, the law of God written by the finger of God on two tablets of stone is directly analogous to the law of God written by Spirit on the heart and mind of the person born of Spirit ... until born of Spirit, a person has no everlasting life dwelling within the person.

If eternal life is the gift of God, and if God must “raise” the dead who were then audibly hearing the words of Jesus (John 5:18-19, 21), and if the dead hearing Jesus’ words would believe the One who sent Him and thereby pass from death to life (v. 24), then Pharisees in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century CE had no immortal soul but were numbered among the dead of this world even though they were physically breathing. Thus, the person who claims to have everlasting life apart from actually being born of Spirit is a liar! This person believes and propagates the lie of that old serpent, Satan the devil, and as such is of Satan. *So it can be said with certainty that the person who claims to be born of Spirit, but who continues to believe that human beings are physically born with an immortal soul has not actually experienced spiritual birth*—if this person were truly born of Spirit, he or she would know the difference between a “feeling of faith” or a “religious experience” or last night’s indigestion and what it truly means to be born anew; for the person would cease his or her hostility to God and would earnestly desire to keep the commandments of God, all of them, not eight or nine of them. *Every person*

*born of Spirit and circumcised of heart will, in this era, keep the commandments by faith.* There will be no exceptions! Evidence of having a circumcised heart is the journey of faith that will have the person keeping the commandments of God.

Circular reasoning? Yes and no. The Moab covenant by which circumcision of the heart is promised (Deu 30:6) requires that while in a far land (*vv.* 1-2), Israel turns to God and begins to love God with all its heart and mind, thereby keeping the commandments and all that is written in the book of Deuteronomy (*v.* 10). The Apostle Paul calls this Moab covenant the righteousness that is based on faith (Rom 10:6 – *cf.* Rom 10:6-8; Deu 30:11-14) ... the Moab covenant promises spiritual circumcision following demonstrated obedience:

- The Passover covenant promises deliverance from bondage for the simple condition of selecting, sacrificing, roasting and eating the paschal lamb.
- The Sinai covenant offers Israel holiness on the condition that Israel obeys the voice of God and keeps covenant with God.
  1. The giving of the Law ends natural grace and makes Israel accountable for its disobedience.
  2. When the Sinai covenant is made with Israel, the only covering Israel has for its sins is its obedience.
  3. Because Israel was found to be unfaithful, another covenant was added, one that required animal sacrifices to “cover” Israel’s sins or disobedience as a temporary covering.
- After Israel is delivered from bondage and made holy before God through faith that leads to demonstrated obedience, the Moab covenant promises circumcision of the heart and return to God’s rest (*cf.* Ps 95:10-11; Heb 3:16-4:11).

Again, all of these covenants are initially made with the flesh in the *law of Moses*, but when better promises are added to this “law” and its mediator becomes Christ Jesus, the covenants of promise made with the flesh are abolished, but the covenants of promise do not end as they continue in force as Israel continues as the holy nation of God (1 Pet 2:9). But this endtime Israel is circumcised of heart not circumcised in the flesh.

The Passover covenant continues to promise liberation from bondage. The Sinai covenant continues to promise holiness. And the Moab covenant remains in force, for it was not ratified by blood as a copy of a heavenly thing but with a song (Deu chap 32). It is the heavenly covenant to which better promises were added when Christ Jesus became Israel’s high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

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As stated previously, when the Lord led the fathers of Israel and Judah out of Egypt, He liberated them from bondage to Pharaoh; thus, their lawlessness was no longer covered by their servitude to this physical king. But the Lord also did not give Israel many commandments. He said only to select, pen, and sacrifice male lambs (either sheep or goats) and to do this year by year. He also said to consecrate firstborns of man and beast to the Lord, for all firstborns belong to God to do with as He pleased. Two commandments, with these two not being a part of the Sinai covenant, or the *Decalogue*

... **note:** the Passover covenant promises liberation, not eternal life. The Sinai covenant promises holiness upon obedience. It is the Moab covenant that promises spiritual circumcision and inclusion into the holy nation of God that has been born of Spirit—it is through the Moab covenant that Israel could have inherited everlasting life.

Three major covenants of promise mediated by Moses, two of which were ratified by blood and will end when blood is again shed, these two being copies of heavenly things that pertain to the forgiveness of sins (Heb 9:22)—and humankind is divided into three parts, with God turning His hand against two parts (Zech 13:7-9) ... a third part of humankind will perish when the lives of men are again given as ransom for Israel, now a spiritually circumcised nation. Another third part will perish during the seven endtime years of tribulation because this third part will not cover its sins with obedience. And the third third-part will be refined as silver is refined and tested as gold is tested and will be God's people, the great endtime harvest of firstfruits. This third third-part constitutes "[all who endure to the end](#)" (Matt 24:13; 10:22), those who shall be saved through merely living by faith day by day although "enduring" in faith will be more difficult than anyone can today imagine.

The first third-part perishes under the Passover covenant by being firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb of God. The second third-part perishes as a result of liberating Israel from bondage to indwelling sin and death. Liberation ends Grace, for Christ Jesus will no longer bear the sins of Israel as the reality of the Azazel goat. Rather, the Son of Man will be revealed (Luke 17:30). Both Head and Body will be made naked to be covered only by its obedience to God. And the great falling away (1 Thess 2:3) will occur: when liberated from indwelling sin, most of spiritually circumcised Israel will not walk uprightly before God as the patriarch Abraham did (Gen 26:5) or as Jesus of Nazareth did (1 John 2:3-6). Most of Israel will rebel against God and will return to sin as the nation that left Egypt desired to return to Egypt (Num chap 14). Those who return to sin will die spiritually without ever entering into God's rest as the physically circumcised nation died in the wilderness; they will die by God sending over them a strong delusion so that they believe what is false (2 Thess 2:11). Today, they take more pleasure in sin than in righteousness, and they will return to sin after they have been liberated from disobedience and disbelief. They profess love for Christ, but by their persistent lawlessness they show that they really despise Him and His shed blood.

Yes, the person who will not, by faith, keep the precepts of God's law shows to man and angels how much this person despises God and all that God represents.

The new covenant that the prophet Jeremiah disclosed would replace the covenant of promise made on the day God led Israel out of Egypt has the laws of God written on the hearts and minds of Israel. Has this happened? Does all of Israel "Know the Lord"? Or is it still necessary to teach neighbor and brother to "Know the Lord"?

It is still necessary to teach neighbor and brother to "Know the Lord."

Either there is, today, no *Israel*, a nation circumcised of heart—or at least no *Israel* of any consequence—or *Israel* is a divided house that needs to be taught to keep the precepts of the law ... the Body of Christ is not divided, but one.

The Apostle Paul wrote,

So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit [that] is

from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. (1 Co 2:11-13)

The *Israel* that is circumcised of heart understands spiritual truths imparted in words that come from God. Those who do not understand these truths, which will be to them foolishness, do not have the Spirit of God or the mind of Christ. Instead, they have the spirit of this world, which is a spirit of disobedience, of lawlessness, of rebellion against God.

*Israel* is today dead, or *Israel* has been for a long time in conscious rebellion against God. Either way, if *Israel* does not cover its lawlessness by taking the Passover sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed, it (being the firstborn spiritual son) will die spiritually and its firstborns according to the flesh will die physically.

With pedagogical redundancy, since Calvary a Jew is not now one who is outwardly circumcised but a person who is inwardly circumcised (Rom 2:26-29)—whose heart has been circumcised by Spirit, not by the letter of the *law of Moses*. Only the person who has cleansed his or her heart by a journey of faith has a circumcised heart, and this person will keep the precepts of the law and thus demonstrate that the law of God has been written on his or her heart and placed in his or her mind. This person “Knows the Lord” and does not have to be taught to keep the rudimentary principles of God. And this person is extremely rare in this transitional era that equates to *Israel* in Egypt waiting for the death angel to pass over the land.

As the physically circumcised Israelites in Egypt ate their slain Passover lambs before the nation was liberated from bondage to Pharaoh, so too has spiritually circumcised *Israel* eaten its slain Passover Lamb through taking the sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed while it waits liberation from bondage to indwelling sin and death. The wine represents the blood of the Lamb. As such, this covenant retains its former “earthiness” even as it became a heavenly compact by which the laws of God would be written on hearts and placed in minds, a euphemistic expression for circumcision of the heart by the Spirit.

Again, when *Israel* left Egypt, it left under obligation to two commands: keep the Passover, and consecrate all firstborns to God. When spiritually circumcised *Israel* is liberated from bondage to indwelling sin and death, it will leave sin and death under obligation to two commandments: keep the Passover sacraments and thereby cover itself with the blood of Christ shed for the forgiveness of sin, and consecrate all firstborns to God, for the entirety of spiritually circumcised *Israel* is the firstborn son of the Father, with Christ Jesus being the First of the firstfruits, the First Son of many brothers (Rom 8:29).

Evangelical Christendom contends that Satan’s sin was wanting to be like God, or to be God; therefore, Evangelicals hold that Sabbatarian disciples who teach what the Apostle Paul wrote, “For those whom he [God] foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Rom 8:29), teach heresy when they say that glorified firstfruits will be younger siblings of Christ Jesus, and will be like Christ in mind and substance. Evangelicals are wrong. Disciples are “born” as sons of God, not created as servants as

Lucifer/Satan was. Thus, it is not blasphemy for a son to declare himself *a son* (John 10:33-36), whereas it is blasphemy for a servant to declare himself the son.

Only the one persistent problem remains: very few self-identified disciples of Christ Jesus keep the Passover, or take the sacraments of bread and wine on the night that Jesus was betrayed [i.e., the 14<sup>th</sup> of Abib]. So there are either very few disciples truly born of Spirit, or too many sons of God do not cover their sin with the shed blood of Christ. Either situation leaves most of Christendom and all of the remainder of the world with uncovered sin when the lives of men are again given as ransom for the liberation of Israel. And since all firstborns belong to God to do with as He pleases those firstborns who have not covered their sins with the blood of Christ will die as firstborns of man and beast perished in Egypt for the liberation of natural Israel from bondage to Pharaoh.

A two millennia delay between the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb of God and the giving of lives as ransom for the liberation of spiritually circumcised Israel—yes, forty jubilees is time enough for those who would liberate the captives to restore what has been taken, specifically knowledge of God; for the geographical territory of Israel formed a visible shadow and copy of Israel's knowledge of God and obedience to Him.

Throughout all of natural Israel's generations, this physically circumcised nation was to remember the day when God took Israel by the hand and brought the nation out of Egypt, but this remembrance will end when the lives of men are again given for the ransom of Israel and God takes His spiritual sons by their hands to bring them from the north country and from the far corners of the earth (Jer 16:14-15; 23:7-8). The two millennia delay between the sacrifice of the Lamb of God and the giving of the lives of men as ransom will cause Egypt to be forgotten and liberation from death to be remembered; for a third of humankind (approximately 2.3 billion human beings) is today a firstborn who belongs to God, and a firstborn who does not cover his or her sins with the blood of the Lamb. These firstborns are presently as Egyptians and their beasts were when Moses confronted Pharaoh. And their deaths will cause all of humankind to hate death, especially as another third perishes over seven years. This is catastrophe of an order and magnitude that is truly unimaginable, but this catastrophe will also be the result of Israel having no love for its neighbors.

As an aside, the dispute over whether the blessed bread becomes the actual flesh of Christ or only represents the flesh is a non-sensical argument that distracts from the significance of the lives of men again being given as ransom for Israel. What goes into the stomach will come out of the bowels; so regardless of whether the bread only represents the flesh of Christ or becomes the flesh, the bread will be discharged as excrement and covered with dirt or flushed down the toilet. The person who eats on the night Jesus was betrayed has eaten of the Passover Lamb of God.

Throughout Scripture, false shepherds, false prophets, false teachers are condemned for they are ever present. God made a covenant with the sons of Levi Israel that they should stand before Him ... when Israel told Aaron to make for them gods—the gold calf or calves—and Moses, coming down from the mountain, cast down and broke the two tablets of stones, God through Moses established an additional covenant ratified by blood, but not a covenant with all of Israel. Rather, this covenant was with “all the sons of Levi” (Ex 32:26), and it was for ordination to serve God. This covenant was ratified by

the sons of Levi killing “his brother and his companion and his neighbor” (v. 27), about three thousand men of the people (v. 28). Moses then said to these sons of Levi, “Today you have been ordained for the service of the Lord, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day” (v. 29).

Disciples are today the royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:9); they are the reality for which the sons of Levi served as copy and type. And if disciples do not love God more than they do mothers and father, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, they are not worthy of Christ (Matt 10:37). Jesus did not come to bring peace to the earth (v. 34), and His disciples are not here to bring peace. Rather, they are to do spiritually what the sons of Levi did physically. They must slay their “natural love” for their kin if they are to follow Christ. They must understand that they cannot physically or spiritually save their firstborn son or daughter, father or mother. And while a disciple’s human love reaches out to those who will not cover themselves through obedience to God, especially when the disciple understands the consequences of the Passover covenant, the disciple is a spiritual Levite, a person without inheritance in this world.

[The above represents the third part of this *Commentary* that was too lengthy to be published as one piece. These three installments, however, will be e-published as one article at a latter date.]

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