

Commentary — From the Margins

A Day Late

When the circumcised nation that left Egyptian slavery now three and a half millennia ago crossed the Sea of Reeds, the nation didn't comprehend the expectation God had of them. This nation didn't realize that it was expected to do what God said when He said it. For 430 years, this nation hadn't seen much evidence that God existed. It could see the Nile, and the annual flooding that renewed the fertility of the region. It could see snakes and spiders, cats and creeping vermin of every sort. It could see the great stone monuments built by former generations of Egyptians. But it couldn't see an invisible God that seemed to have abandoned a people that this deity would identify as His firstborn son (Exod 4:22). So this nation beseeched a God that it didn't know to deliver it from oppression, little realizing that this deity expected from the nation the same type of obedience as the patriarch Abraham had displayed, in that when told to move, Abraham moved (Heb 11:8).

The Apostle Paul claimed that the circumcised nation which crossed the Sea of Reeds and ate manna and drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them set an example that we, as Christians, might not desire evil as they did (1 Cor 10:6). The nation that crossed the Sea of Reeds didn't cross the Jordan River, for this nation believed the report of the ten spies. The spies saw the sons of Anak in Judea, and the spies saw themselves appearing as grasshoppers to these legendary giants (Num 13:33). The spies didn't believe that Israel could defeat giants in battle—and the nation agreed with the ten spies and determined for itself to elect new leaders and return to Egypt. This nation died in the Wilderness of Sin.

The reproach of Egypt was the circumcised nation that left Egypt's inability to see what human eyes couldn't observe. It was a mindset natural to humanity. It was a mindset that although religious and desiring to worship God could not see itself in relationship to a cross-dimensional deity, in a relationship akin to that which a farmer has with a field of wheat or barley that he (or she) has planted.

The relationship analogy of disciples being like wheat or barley was presented in parables two millennia ago. But these parables were not then understood by those who heard them. They have not been well appreciated by those who have since heard them. Human beings don't see themselves as a crop that will be harvested and thrashed, with only a tenth brought into the temple of God (the tithe paid to the Levitical priesthood). What Christian leader would win converts for the Lord by preaching that at the end of the growing season, disciples will be reaped and thrashed. The better (i.e., more saleable) message is that Christians will escape the woes certain to overtake humanity as the population curve overtakes food production and resource extraction curves. The better message is that disciples will prosper in a period of economic chaos, that disciples like the circumcised nation that crossed the Sea of Reeds will spoil the Egyptians, taking to themselves and by extension to God the wealth of the world.

Disciples, like house finches to a winter bird feeder, flock to Christian teachers that bring forth messages about spoiling Egypt, about sowing into these teachers' ministries and reaping physical prosperity in this present age. These disciples eagerly anticipate a

bodily rapture to heaven, or escape to a physical place of safety. They don't want to hear that many or most of these disciples will live into that period of thrashing represented by great tribulation, a period in human history when the Church gives birth to many sons of God by experiencing anguish akin to the hard labor pains a woman experiences during human childbirth. They especially don't want to hear that they, because of their teachers, will be rejected by God as was the circumcised nation that crossed the Sea of Reeds. That circumcised nation couldn't enter God's rest because of its unbelief (Ps 95:10–11; Heb 3:19) which became disobedience when it tried to enter the following day (Heb 4:6). Disciples, during that period when the wheat is thrashed, will not enter God's rest (Heb 4:9) because of this holy nation's unbelief that becomes disobedience (2 Thess 2:3) when it tries to enter on the following day, the day that it has traditionally been set aside for this purpose.

If I stopped here, Sabbatarians of every flavor would understand what I have written and would agree. But these Sabbatarians need to understand that they, too, will be rejected for unbelief that becomes disobedience when they try to enter God's rest on the following day. For there are not merely fifty-two weekly Sabbaths that disciples are to observe during the growing and harvesting season. There are also the annual Sabbaths, the festivals, one of which is the new moon of the seventh month (Day of Trumpets — Lev 23:23–25). This new moon sets the calendar for the Day of Atonement [Yom Kippur] and the high Sabbaths of Tabernacles. And this year, because of the set asides of rabbinical Judaism, most disciples that observe the annual Sabbaths will do so a day late. They will attempt to enter God's rest on the following day, a day designated by the tradition of men so that Yom Kippur, on which no work can be done, doesn't greatly burden keeping the weekly Sabbath—Yom Kippur cannot be used as a preparation day for the weekly Sabbath. Therefore, most Sabbatarians will work this year on the 10th of the seventh month; most Sabbatarians will work on Yom Kipporim, the day of coverings that commemorates Christ being made sin and being sacrificed at Calvary, then bearing the sins of disciples as their glorified high priest.

Jesus of Nazareth is the reality of both goats chosen as the sin offering for the nation of Israel (Lev 16:5). His death at Calvary is the reality of the goat sacrificed on the altar (*vv.* 15–16). Until the fullness of iniquity or lawlessness is reached, He bears the sins of disciples in the heavenly realm, making the resurrected and glorified Jesus the reality of the Azazel goat (*vv.* 21–22). And by keeping the fast on the following day, both disciples and rabbinical Judaism attempt to enter the rest of Christ, where He has sat down at the right hand of the Father, on the following day, just as the nation that left Egypt attempted to enter the promised land on the following day (Num 14:40–42).

Disciples who observed Trumpets a day late because they keep the rabbinical calendar will argue that they are not guilty of unbelief as they work on Yom Kipporim, using it as the preparation day for what they sincerely believe will be the double Sabbaths of this year. The question must be posed to them is, Are they any less guilty of disobedience than is the disciple who keeps Sunday as the Sabbath? No, they are not.

Sabbatarians need to do better than they have—and they need to realize that disciples who don't yet keep the Sabbath are like themselves. They as the Body of Christ will be revealed for the world to see when the Son of man is revealed (Luke 17:26–30). The fullness of iniquity will then have been reached as the thrashing begins. All disciples

will have to then walk blameless before God, for their only covering for sin will be their obedience. And if they try to enter God's rest a day late, they will be rejected as five of the ten virgins were rejected (Matt 25:1-13). This day late rejection pertains to all of the seventy Sabbaths of God: the festivals, new moons, and weekly Sabbaths (Col 2:16).

Another human being isn't your judge; you are. And when Christ returns, He will reveal your judgment (1 Cor 4:5). He will disclose those things that you have or haven't done. And by their disclosure, you will hear the determination of whether Christ has ever known you. The doing of great deeds won't help you if you haven't been obedient (Matt 7:21-23), if you haven't heard the words of Jesus and believed the One who sent Him (John 5:24) by putting those words into practice.

The nation that left Egypt died in the wilderness. The uncircumcised children of this nation crossed the Jordan under the leadership of Joshua and Caleb, the two spies who believed God. They were the only two of those who had left Egypt to enter the promised land—and they were two of 600,000, suggesting that not many of today's greater Church will survive the thrashing of the first three and a half years of the Tribulation. Not many disciples are willing to now practice walking blameless before God under the covering of Grace. Instead, they dilly and dally under this covering, ever accumulating the wealth of Egypt, ever seeing only what can be seen with human eyes, ever believing that obedience to God is impossible. The patriarch Jacob wrestled with God all night. His name was changed to Israel, for he prevailed with God. Yet too many disciples won't wrestle with unbelief and disobedience for long enough to realize that by faith these giants can be defeated. Too many disciples have grown too comfortable in spiritual Egypt or Babylon to undertake a journey to the land beyond the river, a mental landscape holy to God.

* * * * *