

Through the Open Door

*with Selected Commentaries
From the Margins*

Homer Kizer

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Secular—

the leaning sun sends
long shadows
across sumac hunter red.
chokecherries along the railroad
are almost orange.
even aspens are tinged
pink where they mingle
with yellowed cottonwoods.
a hen searches for snowberries
missed by wild turkeys
that passed through
earlier this Sabbath day.
home alone, nursing a scalded foot
I listen to radio pleadings
for a secular ministry.

what would a secular ministry preach?

a few yellow apples still hang
among yellow leaves
on the seedlings
above the tracks
where a doe & her yearling
hide
from rifles & riflemen
intent upon harvesting
winter meat
& I start a venison stew
while dogs bark
at the mail carrier
honking
for me to sign
for certified letters
for debts I don't remember
for debts I can't pay
despite all the good work
I do.

Introduction

In May 1979, with very little money and even less experience I sailed a thirty foot boat from Homer, Alaska, to Kodiak, where, away from prying eyes, I learned to fish halibut in the remote bays along the west side of Afognak Island and in Shuyak Strait. Dollarwise, I did fairly well—until the Pacific quota was reached in July. I was then faced with a decision: was I to look for a job in town, or should I take the small boat I had out to Dutch Harbor and into the Aleutians, where the Bering Sea quota remained unfilled? I had sold a chainsaw-outboard dealership on the Kenai Peninsula in March; I had no ties to the mainland, no reason to return, and even some reasons not to return. But, at first, the idea of sailing for Dutch Harbor seemed ludicrous. My boat was simply too small.

After a week of thinking about what I wanted to do, I put my three daughters on an AAI commuter flight to Kenai where they were to stay with Bob Clucas, a Eastside beach setnetter, until their mother and I had delivered fish to the Pacific Pearl plant at Dutch. Then with all of our gear on board, an extra barrel of fuel on deck, and the fuel tanks filled, we set out on a seven day run into what was for us the unknown.

We refilled tanks at Sand Point, spent the Sabbath at King Cove, and caught enough fish between Akun and Akutan Islands that we arrived at Dutch Harbor needing to quickly offload. And for more than a month, we caught halibut, a lot of halibut. Our daughters joined us after three weeks, and when the Bering Sea quota was filled, I did some outboard work for Shelikof Net while waiting for another fishery to open.

But life aboard a small boat has its limitations. It became time to acquire a land residence. So in September, when all of us flew to Anchorage to observe Sukkot, my wife and daughters remained in the city while I returned

to Dutch, where I caught enough fish to make expenses into the middle of December.

As the weather deteriorated through late October and November, I spent more time reading and less time fishing. And while tied to the old Sub Dock sometime in late November, I read Ken Follett's novel, *Triple*, and I realized that he either had not been to sea, or had spent very little time at sea. I felt I could tell as good a story, and on a portable, manual typewriter I started pecking out words in the damp cabin of a small double-ender at the end of the world. I had, for English coursework, one semester of English Lit and the second semester of the Composition sequence, and no typing skills. I knew as little about writing as I had known about fishing in May when I did not know enough to turn back after sailing out of Kachemak Bay on the shakedown cruise for the vessel I had purchased only two weeks before.

I figured I could write a novel in six months . . . a year and a half later I had a draft of a novel, and another three years passed before I received a contract for the story. But based on that novel and work on a second, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) admitted me into its graduate writing program without an undergraduate degree and without any English coursework beyond that second semester of Comp.

Why I started writing beyond I felt I had to, I cannot say. It was something I truly had to do, and not something that lay within my natural abilities as I then understood my strengths and weaknesses. But as with fishing, I persisted—and I have been persisting now for almost three decades. My first degree is my Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from UAF (I had started college as a 16 year old math major, dropped out after my second year, and didn't return for 23 years).

Those who will say that I have no theological qualifications to write what I do need to worry less about how I came to be writing and more about what I write; for I realized six years ago that those things which brought me to Little Egypt in January 2002 were not random happenstances. The evidence is in the words.

When I first sailed past Priest Rock in Unalaska Bay in 1979, I felt like I'd come home though I had never been there before. The feeling was one I couldn't explain, and it remained with me all the while I fished around the islands . . . I didn't want to ever leave Dutch, didn't want to sever ties to the island, but when I flew out of Dutch in September 1980, I knew I would not be going back. And I haven't been back since.

Some separations are harder to make than others. But no separation will be more difficult to make than the one most Christians will undergo when judgments are revealed; for many are called but few will be chosen (Matt 22:14), Christ's words, not mine. And most of these many are likeable individuals.

* * *

Through the Open Door—

1.

As Alice wondered what was on the other side of a mirror, Christians have wondered about heaven: *what will it be like on the other side of those pearly gates?* Any number of songs and countless sermons have idolized this destination of the saved just as hell has been demonized as the destination of the damned. Today, a person does not have to attend a Church or take the sacraments or even have lived a particularly good life to be “preached into heaven” upon death. All that’s required is that the person is an American, and not an unrepentant mass murderer. Little else seems important as pastors comfort the bereaved by promising that their departed loved ones have gone *to a better place*, or *to a better life*. Yet, half of all the moneys spent by a person on his or her medical care will be spent in the last six months of the person’s life to prolong life as long as possible—it is as if those who will be preached into heaven are hesitant about going.

The Apostle Paul wrote that “the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23) . . . if the wages of sin is death, two questions must be asked: (1) what is sin, and (2) what constitutes death? In addition, if the free gift of God is eternal life the question must be asked, what constitutes eternal life?

Or is Paul to be believed? Augustine of Hippo wrote, “This faith 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*. Bk 1, XXI. Trans. D.W. Robertson, Jr.) . . . if the impious do not suffer complete annihilation, then for Augustine, “death” does not mean that a person returns to the dust of the earth as a beast does, what Solomon in his wisdom stated

(Eccl 3:18-20), but a person has an immortal soul not received as the free gift of God but received by a man having his way with a woman. And indeed this is Augustine's position for he also wrote, "A great thing is man, made in the image and likeness of God, not in that he is encased in a mortal body, but in that he excels the beasts in the dignity of a rational soul" (Bk. 1, XXII).

Augustine presumed that man was already made in the image and likeness of God. He presumed that the sixth day of the Genesis chapter one creation account (the so-called "P" account) saw the creation of Adam and Eve. But if the "P" account is about the visible physical creation of all that is, then it is contradicted by the account of Adam's creation which begins:

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God [*YHWH Elohim*] made the earth and the heavens. (Gen 2:4)

In this so-called "J" or "E" creation account, Adam is created on the same day God created the heavens [plural] and the earth—and the "P" account begins, "In the beginning, God created [filled] the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). What part of the plural heavens is not created in the beginning, before light comes on day one? What portion of the earth is not created in verse one? Are dry lands formed on which *Elohim* [singular in usage] can make the man Adam from red mud? Yes, they are; for Adam is created from mud so there is dry land. Adam is created before there is bush or shrub, or any other living creature. He is first, as Jesus of Nazareth, the second Adam, is the First of the firstfruits of God.

If the presumption that Adam and Eve are the man [lower case *adam*] and the women of the sixth day is abandoned—this presumption cannot be supported from Scripture and is actually contrary to Scripture—then what becomes apparent is that the first Adam and the first Eve, created from the flesh and bone of the man, *are not yet* in the image and likeness of God, a life-giving Spirit who is not composed of flesh and bone. Adam is created on the dark portion of day one, not on the sixth day, with Christ Jesus being the light of this day one (2 Cor 4:6). Augustine's assumption that man had a rational soul is premature, for the first man was composed of the base elements of this earth. And this first man was driven from the Garden of God before he ate of the tree of Life (Gen 3:22-24). He had no "life" within him when he was driven from the Garden but what came from physical breath that was like the breath of other breathing creatures [*nephesb*]. So man would not receive

“life” like that which God has until he is born of Spirit, receiving a second life through receipt of the divine Breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]. And human beings are first born of Spirit when the waters of humanity are divided, with some being above the firmament that is heaven, and some remaining below on the second day, the dark portion of which is the three days and three nights that Jesus is in the heart of the earth, and the light portion being the forty days that the glorified Jesus is with His disciples. When Jesus returns to heaven, the dark portion of the third day begins. And as the dark portion of day one was long, the dark portion of the third day is long¹.

There is much “creating” or filling of the earth that occurs between day one and the sixth day when *adam* [humankind] is resurrected from death to be like *Elohim* in image and in kind.

In the days of “filling” between day one and the sixth day, a hierarchy of life is created, but created after the divine Breath of God is visibly seen in verse two—and this divine Breath of God was not seen even on that day of Pentecost following Calvary; it was only heard². The “P” creation accounts moves from describing a physical creation to describing an invisible spiritual creation in Genesis 1:2. But this spiritual creation can only be described metaphorically in words that are commonly used for the things of this world. Human languages have few words that pertain only to the invisible things of God. And where these few words are used, they have been misused for so long that a regular plural like *Elohim* [the plural of *Eloah*] has been given linguistic singleness³.

Man can only be a spiritually lifeless shadow of God, appearing as a similitude of God, until man receives life like that of God, with this life coming from the divine Breath of God through Christ Jesus as human life comes from the breath of the first Adam through the person’s immediate father. Man cannot be in the likeness of God until humankind has life in the heavenly realm. And every person who has assumed that Genesis chapter two

¹ Of the six days of the “P” creation account, only about the second day does God not say that it was good; so contextually, the second day differs from every other day.

² The cloven tongues of fire that were seen along with the Breath of God being heard on Pentecost represents, in type, the two baptisms of the earth which Jesus administers (Matt 3:11). So it is not the Holy Spirit that is seen as fire, but the fire that falls on the earth (as fire fell on Sodom and Gomorrah) that precedes the coming of the new heavens and new earth (Rev 21:1).

³ *Elohim* ends with the Hebrew “Mem,” as the regular plural of *eloah*.

is a chronological continuation of chapter one has assumed incorrectly. But this subject will be taken up more fully in later sections. Likewise, the initial questions asked will be answered after stepping *through the open door*.

2.

The focus of God, of both the Father and the Son, has been the creation of humankind in their image and after their likeness (Gen 1:26), with this creation being an on-going work that will be completed with the coming of the new heavens and new earth. The *Logos*, as *Theos* (from John 1:1-3), created the earth to be spiritually harvested; He didn't create the earth for it to be decorated with frosting as was taught by one former radio ministry; and He didn't create all that physically exists to last forever. Rather, as if a rift opened in the supra-dimensional heavenly realm—a tear in the fabric of heaven itself—a bottomless pit appeared, a “space” in which shimmering strings of energy collided to create not one singularity as posited by the Big Bang Theory, but series of singularities from which “mass” emerges as matter in the unfurling of the four known dimensions. And with the formation of mass comes time, its passage becoming a property of the decay of unseen matter that can be literally written as a mathematical function of mass. Thus, time is a unique property of this physical creation. The supra-dimensional heavenly realm is “timeless”: the existing moment remains forever and does not change to the next movement, a condition requiring all that is in heaven to coexist with all that will be in a dance of *oneness* that cannot be reproduced or even well considered within the unfurled dimensions. For human beings, time or rather space-time is as water is to fish. Our apparent solidity requires that one moment becomes the next moment to allow mass to be relocated to another position in space-time in a manner analogous to the buoyancy of water which allows fish to change suspended positions in their world.

Because time and its passage is a property of *all that has been made*, heaven is a timeless dimension where, before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father foreknew many heirs according to a plan mirrored by the agricultural cycle of Judea. The early harvest of the earth occurs midweek (on the fourth day) of a seven-day creation week, with the great or main crop harvest of the earth to occur in the afternoon of the sixth day. The great light of the fourth day is the glorified Bride of Christ. But this is not what has previously been taught to spiritually circumcised Israel: what was taught and what possesses an inherent logic is that the firstfruits are resurrected at the end of the sixth day of the creation that has each day a thousand years long, but the first problem

with this scenario is that within the historical narrative formed by Hebraic Scripture, humankind is already in a seventh one thousand year period (day) without having entered God's rest.

The great White Throne Judgment—the main crop wheat harvest—is represented in the plan of God by the creation of *adam*, male and female, on the sixth day. Speculation will exist as to whom the “helpmate” is, but Jesus told His disciples that there would be *least* and *great* in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:19), with *least* also being descriptive of a commandment. But there is no commandment of lesser importance: the Ten Commandments form one law. So *least* does not adequately convey the sense of how those who relaxed a commandment will be called in the kingdom, or of how the helpmate will be perceived for the *least* might become the helpmates for the *great*.

The harvest of firstfruits, with Christ Jesus being the First of the firstfruits, is analogous to ancient Israel's barley harvest, which began with the Wave Sheaf Offering and continued until the Feast of Weeks . . . in order to take “meaning” from any form of communication, a person must employ a strategy that gives significance to the signs used by another person. During a baseball game, coaches give hitters and base runners many signs, but only one or two of the many signs given are significant at any given moment. Most of the signs are intended to confuse the other team so that its players and coaches are unable to “read” the message communicated to the hitter or base runner. And of the many tugs on the bills of caps and pulls on ear lobes and finger play across the lettering of uniforms used by baseball coaches, only the sign following a “key” has significance. The other signs form a poetry of motion that signifies nothing.

The strategy used by the first disciples—and the strategy that should be used by endtime disciples—for taking meaning from Scripture is no more difficult to comprehend than is the strategy used for taking meaning from baseball signs: the significant sign[s] follow the key sign. With Scripture, the “key” is the one employed by King David as poet and psalmist. It is the sign the Apostle Paul gave to the saints at Rome and at Corinth:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. (Rom 1:18-20)

So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. . . . But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. (1 Cor 15:42-44, 46)

The visible reveals the invisible, and the physical precedes the spiritual. This is the structure of Hebraic poetry, organized in repetitive couplets that feature the first presentation of a thought representing the physical or natural world, and the second presentation of the same thought moving inward to represent the invisible mental or spiritual application of the same thought. The key of David unlocks typological exegesis, which uses *intertextuality* and *hypertextuality* to transform the historical narrative into prophecy about events that occurred to Jesus and to His first disciples, and about what will occur to His endtime disciples. Jesus said He was the first and the last, the beginning and the end, the *alpha* and the *omega* (Rev 22:13). The apparent *eternity* of the physical creation concealed Jesus from natural Israel (Eccl 3:11) so that only David, a man after God's heart, knew that *Yah* was the visible, natural world manifestation of the conjoined deity *YHWH*, Israel's *Elohim* (see Ps 146:1, 148:1; 149:1). And this *Yah* was *Theos*, the *Logos*, who entered this world as His Son, His only (John 1:14; 3:16).

Whereas ancient Israel's barley harvest forms the type and shadow of God's harvest of firstfruits, the later wheat harvest represents in type the great White Throne Judgment of humanity. The early harvest foreshadows this later harvest about which little Scripture is devoted, or is necessary for disciples with spiritual understanding; for the early harvest is the *antetype* of the main harvest.

The reason for God's relationship with humanity has been a mystery for most of human history. Noah neighbors had no understanding of why the rain began. But *what could have been known about God was plain to them, because God had shown it to them* through the visible things made—and in this relationship between invisible and visible, with the invisible revealed through the visible, is the wisdom necessary for endtime disciples to walk through the spiritually opened door placed before them. Noah's neighbors were not offered this key that unlocks the mysteries of God, especially prophecies about the conclusion of this age.

The man Jesus of Nazareth revealed what was hidden since the foundation of the world (Matt 13:35), but He disclosed the mysteries of God in a manner

that only His disciples could understand them (*v.* 11). However, His disciples did not understand His speech or the mysteries of God when they thought they could understand these mysteries. Jesus spoke in parables, a special kind of metaphor, not to unseal these hidden mysteries but to keep the mysteries secret. On the night He was betrayed, He told His disciples that He had only spoken to them in figures of speech (John 16:25). Everything He had told them from the beginning could not be taken literally, but was said in figurative speech. Why? Because during His ministry He spoke only the words of the Father, words which did not originate in this world but in heaven and words about the things of heaven which human words do not directly address and words “too big” to be conveyed by modulations of air; for the miracles that Jesus performed were part of the words of the Father; were modulations of His divine Breath. The Psalmist wrote, “When you [*YHWH*] send forth your Spirit [breath], they are created, / and you renew the face of the ground” (104:30). So when Jesus heals seven times on a Sabbath day, endtime disciples need to understand that seven times the Father, through Jesus, delivered a sermon to Israel, with these sermons confirming the importance to the Father of the Sabbaths as well as establishing the difference in how the Father perceived the Sabbaths as opposed to how the Sadducees and Pharisees perceived the Sabbaths.

The person who says that he or she takes the Bible literally first doesn't, but more importantly, cannot, for knowledge delivered in figurative speech cannot be received literally but only through giving to common words [linguistic icons] uncommon or unusual meanings. If a disciple reading the Genesis “P” creation account assigns to “trees” created on the third day that same meaning [linguistic object] as an arborist assigns to *trees*, then the passage cannot be understood and when this disciple argues for trees being created before the sun is created the disciple argues as an ignorant beast—and he or she does Christendom more harm than good.

However, the mysteries of God were not to remain sealed forever. Jesus' earthly ministry was the shadow of His heavenly ministry: it was the visible ministry that reveals an invisible ministry. Borrowing a phrase from Jonathon Edwards, Jesus' earthly ministry was the lively representation of His pre-second-Passover ministry to spiritual Israel. In analogy, Moses' ministry to Pharaoh and to Israel is a type of Jesus' ministry here on earth, and together, Moses' ministry in Egypt and Jesus' ministry in Judea form the lively representation of Jesus' endtime ministry: the ministry of the visible two witnesses during the first 1260 days of the Tribulation functions in relationship to Jesus' endtime ministry as Aaron functioned as the spokesman for Moses

after Israel left Egypt. Therefore, there are two before the Tribulation begins who serve as the shadow and copy of the two witnesses, and who function as Aaron did when Moses met with Pharaoh.

The typology of 1st-Century disciples and of 17th-Century Puritans was that of *intertextuality*, with Old Testament types or figures “preaching” Christ and the heavenly things of the Gospels to disciples removed by time from the apparent “fulfillment” of these types or figures in Jesus Christ. To use an earthly example of this, the holy nation of Israel (Ex 19:5-6) rebelled against God ten times (Num 14:22), with these rebellions being foreshadowed by the ten plagues that came upon Egypt.

Pause and consider the previous sentence: God used the plagues to separate, or to make a distinction between Israelite and Egyptian, with this distinction becoming more visible with each plague. God used the plagues to show who His firstborn son (Ex 4:22) was to both Israel and Egypt. Now move to the ten times when Israel tested or contended with God in the wilderness: these “testings” were not of God, for Israel was rebelling against God on each of the ten occasions. Rather, these *testings* caused a separation to occur between who believed God and who did not believe even after seeing physical evidence of His involvement with Israel. So after the tenth *testing*, God makes a pronouncement about Caleb having about him a different spirit (Num 14:24). Only Joshua and Caleb of all the Israelite males numbered in the census of the second year will cross the Jordan and enter into the Promised Land or God’s Rest (from Ps 95:10-11). The remainder of Israel is killed as if the nation were a man because of its unbelief (Heb 3:19), with Israel’s unbelief forming the spiritual equivalent to natural Egyptians not covering themselves with the blood of a Passover lamb—

- Within the Old Testament, the following correspondence was established:
 1. Firstborns of Egypt, man and beast, were slain in the tenth plague because of their unbelief; i.e., not believing (or knowing to believe) Moses about putting the blood of the Passover lamb on doorposts and lintels.
 2. Natural Israel was the firstborn son of God (Ex 4:22).
 3. In the wilderness at Paran, where Ishmael dwelt, natural Israel refused to enter into God’s rest because of its unbelief, and over forty years was slain as if a man.

4. The unbelief of Egypt corresponds to the unbelief of natural Israel in the same way that Egypt not sacrificing Passover lambs corresponds to Israel not entering into God's rest.
5. Keeping the Passover, now, becomes the physical type of spiritually entering into God's rest.

This analogy is extended farther by the writer of Hebrews, who said, "Therefore, while the promise of entering [God's] rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For the good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened" (4:1-2).

- The Gospel was "preached" to naturally circumcised Israel just as it is preached to the spiritually circumcised nation of Israel, now the holy nation of God (1 Pet 2:9).
 1. Natural Israel forms the lively representation of the Church.
 2. As the shadow of a person is a dark or "lifeless" copy of the person in one less dimension than the person, natural Israel is the shadow of the Church.
 3. And as the preaching of the Gospel to natural Israel did not benefit this holy nation of God, for a man knows the things of a man by the breath [*pneuma*—πνεῦμα] that is in him (1 Cor 2:11) but requires having the Spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] to know the things of God, disciples are cautioned to fear not entering into God's rest.
 4. As the Gospel did not benefit natural Israel, it has not benefited Christians, who will not enter into God's rest because they are not united in faith with those who deliver[ed] the Gospel.
 5. To be united in faith with Jesus and with Paul, disciples will take the Passover sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed (1 Cor 11:23-26).

But here is the kicker: a shadow does only that which makes the shadow does.

- Natural Israel's unbelief prevented this holy nation from entering into God's rest as Egypt's unbelief resulted in its firstborn being slain.
- As the firstborn son of God, Israel did not cover itself in faith and belief in the wilderness and was slain in the wilderness as the firstborn of Egypt was slain.

- The Church's unbelief manifests itself through disciples not being united by faith with those who preach that *disciples are to take the sacraments on the night Jesus was betrayed*.
 1. Because the Church's unbelief that has it taking the sacraments on every day and/or night other than on the 14th of Abib, disciples, who individually and collectively form the spiritual firstborn son of God, will be slain as the firstborns of Egypt not covered by the blood of a Passover lamb were slain.
 2. As the Gospel did not benefit natural Israel, the Gospel has not benefited spiritually circumcised Israel, for this nation has refused to enter into God's rest: the writer of Hebrews makes the weekly Sabbath the lively representation of God's rest (4:3-11).
 3. Therefore, because of its unbelief the greater Christian Church has not entered into God's rest while the promise of entering stands, God will doubly repay Israel for its iniquity and its sin (Jer 16:18).
 4. The wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23); so for God to doubly repay Israel for its iniquity and sin, Israel must die twice, with the second death being cast into the lake of fire.

A shadow of what is invisible is also invisible, except as it is manifest in actions such as ungodliness and unrighteousness, both of which come from the absence of "spiritual light," as in the absence of God. So as a physical shadow is cast onto a physical landscape, a shadow of what is invisible is cast onto an invisible spiritual or mental landscape, which, in our example, is the mental topography of living creatures. Thus, the absence of "spiritual light" resulting from, say, fallen angelic beings standing between God and human beings causes darkness to lay over the mental mindsets of these human beings, with this "darkness" manifested in this world as unrighteousness in these human beings. And because this darkness is created in the timeless heavenly realm, the shadow of a spiritual event or entity is not time-linked to phenomena in this world though these shadows occur sequentially.

The Church would seem to be a visible entity in this world, but the sons of God are neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, free nor bond, so these sons of God are not their tents of flesh with which they are clothed. They are not visible; rather, the tents of flesh are visible and remain male or female, but the inner new selves or new natures that transform these tents of flesh from

being sons of disobedience into being disciples of Christ are invisible. And if the Church—the assembly [*ekklesia*—ἐκκλησίαν] of God—is composed of these inner new selves, the Church is not a denomination or any assembly visible to human eyes. Rather, the Church dwells “inside” congregations that meet together in this world, with those who are the Church known by their manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit.

The Church consists of human beings who have been born a second time, or born anew, or born again through receipt of the divine Breath of God [*pneuma hagion*—πνεῦμα ἅγιον] . . . the visible things of this world reveal the invisible things of God; thus, human birth and maturation reveal invisible spiritual birth and spiritual maturation, which cannot occur in the timeless heavenly realm because of the necessity for what is to coexist with what will be. The type of “growth” seen in this world that occurs between when an infant draws his or her first breath of life to when this person reaches his or her majority reveals the type of unseen “spiritual growth” in Grace and knowledge that occurs between when a disciple is first born of Spirit and when the disciple is glorified when judgments are revealed. And this type of growth can also only occur in this physical realm where change is mandated. It is always wrong to say that human beings will be glorified as “baby gods,” for disciples, when glorified, will have bodies like Jesus’ though they will forever be younger or junior siblings (Rom 8:29). They will not be *babies* that need to grow to maturity. They will, instead, have done their *growing* in this physical world while dwelling in tents of flesh.

In the timeless heavenly realm, all that has life has everlasting life for the moment is everlasting. The presence of life and the absence of life cannot coexist in the same entity at the same moment—and since in heaven the moment doesn’t change to a next moment, and since the wages of lawlessness is death, rebelling angels had to be cast from the heavenly realm first, because lawlessness would produce gridlock that prevented even movement within the realm, and second, because only within the creation could these rebelling angels die for their lawlessness.

A born again disciple has life that has come from heaven in a manner foreshadowed by the *Logos* coming into this world as His only Son, the man Jesus of Nazareth. The spiritual life that the disciple has originates within the person through receiving the Holy Spirit, the divine Breath of God, which gives to a person drawn from this world a second (or an additional) life apart from the life that comes to the person from his or her first father, the first Adam. The Father of the son of God domiciled in a tent of flesh is the Most High, the God and Father of the glorified Jesus Christ (John 20:17). Same

Father, same parentage. Hence, disciples have, when born of the water of the womb, received life from the breath given to the first Adam, and have, when born of Spirit, received life from the divine Breath of God the Father. And because a disciple has spiritual life that cannot be seen in this world but only in the heavenly realm where it comes and goes as it wills (John 3:8), disciples individually and collectively (as spiritually circumcised Israel) cast shadows onto the mental topography of physically circumcised Israel. Therefore, the unbelief that prevented those who left Egypt, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb (types of the two witnesses), from entering into God's rest is the visible manifestation of the invisible unbelief of the Church which prevents the Church from entering into God's rest, heaven, with the lively representation of this rest being Sabbath observance. This unbelief is seen in the Church's refusal to take the Passover sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed; thus, the Church, except for the portion represented by Joshua and Caleb, will be like Israel was in the wilderness of Paran, and will die as if it were a single person during the Tribulation.

When Christ returns, the slain of the Lord shall be many (Isa 66:16). As the firstfruits of God, the Church has absolutely no excuse for not covering its sins by taking the sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed, and has no covering from death angels except taking the sacraments as Jesus commanded.

The unbelief of today's Christian Church is seen in parking lots every Sunday morning, but the extent of this unbelief can only be fully appreciated by looking at ancient Israel's history: Scripture does not record the rebellion of the spiritually-circumcised nation of Israel, but rather, Scripture records the shadow of this rebellion in ancient Israel's rebellion against God. As a result, the typology of *intertextuality* that Puritan theologians addressed stopped in the 1st-Century although these Puritan theologians knew that since the Gospel preached to Israel under the Old Testament had not profited that nation (Heb 4:2), it was possible and likely that the Gospel preached to Israel under the New Testament would not profit this spiritual nation. They had only to look at the Roman Church to know that the Gospel had not profited many for a very long time. What they did not appreciate, however, is that all of Scripture is a visible thing that reveals the invisible *Book of Life*, in which the lives of disciples form epistles written not with ink but with spirit on the hearts of saints (2 Cor 3:3). This typological movement is from *intertextuality* to *hypertextuality* (where one text is linked to a text outside of itself), and is today what opens the door to understanding Scripture.

The question of whether Scripture forms a Homeric simile or a true metaphor with the *Book of Life* cannot be answered until judgments are

revealed. It is enough to say that sons of God “grow” in Grace and knowledge by putting obedience, as if flesh or muscle, onto a skeleton of faith, with these “bones” of faith occasionally breaking as a child might break an arm or a leg. However, when heavily muscled with obedience, bones don’t break although obedience can be badly bruised in mishaps.

It is not natural to think in terms of obedience stemming from an invisible mindset being like muscles developed from hard work in this physical world. But by looking into the mirror that is the law of liberty, a person can see the growth of a son of God dwelling in a tent of flesh: is there faith? How much faith? How tall has this son of God grown? And is there obedience fleshing out the skeleton, or is this son of God anorexic and near death, a walking bag of stunted bones from its lack of obedience?

In the eighth chapter of Romans, Paul writes about being spiritually minded, saying that the natural or carnal mind cannot understand spiritual subjects or concepts, cannot keep the commandments, and is actually hostile to God. To change metaphors, the natural mind lacks the base constructs necessary to build a spiritual superstructure. Only when a person receives the Spirit of God are spiritual footers poured for the temple of God. Thus, many disciples live as an over-wintering foundation awaiting springtime construction. They know God and are known of God. Everyone who sees the foundation knows that a building project has been undertaken that will eventually produce a dwelling upon the cold footers. But no construction is daily occurring, or if there is construction, little progress is being made. However, when the weather breaks, there will be a flurry of activity and almost overnight a building will be framed, sided, roofed, with windows installed. Then the work of finishing the building occurs again without much progress being observed from outside.

Being spiritually minded allows comprehending the relationship between murder and anger, adultery and lust (Matt 5:21-30), with murder, committed by the hand, being the lively representation of invisible anger and hate, products of the heart, in the same way that adultery, committed by the body, is the lively representation of lust, the fruit of the mind. Murder in the physical realm equates to anger and hate in the spiritual realm. Jesus doesn’t magnify the law. Rather, He moved the law from the hand to the heart; He took the law from the physical realm to the spiritual realm, an understanding necessary before any construction can begin on the foundation laid with spiritual birth and the indwelling of Christ.

As the plagues in Egypt made a separation between Israelite and Egyptian, the testings in the wilderness made a separation within Israel of who believed

God and who did not. And as the firstborns of Egypt, man and beast, were slain in Egypt, the firstborn son of God was slain in the wilderness of Sin/Zin. It was not enough to be an Israelite. Rather, the one who entered God's rest in this *intertextual* example is the one who also believed God—and of the six hundred thousand adult males who left Egypt, only two crossed into God's rest.

Moving now to *hypertextuality*, Israel is a spiritually circumcised nation, the Church, and *the Church fellowship becomes the equivalent of the land of Egypt, with the "Christians" who do not take the Passover sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed being like Egyptians, and with those of the world being like the beasts of Egypt. Only those disciples who take the sacraments on the 14th of Abib are the equivalent of the nation of Israel in Egypt . . .* here is where the *hypertextual* example should frighten spiritually circumcised Israelites: it is not enough to take the Passover sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed if the disciple doesn't also believe God. The seven endtime years of tribulation will begin with the second Passover liberation of Israel. The lives of men will again be given for the ransom of Israel (Isa 43:3-4). And those disciples who take the sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed will be analogous to the nation that left Egypt after the firstborns of Egypt were given as ransom for Israel's liberation.

But of the approximately 600,000 adult male Israelites who left Egypt, only two entered into God's rest. The remainder died because of their unbelief. Thus, of the however-many who take the sacraments on the 14th of Abib, only those who truly have a different spirit about them will enter heaven: a ratio of 2/600,000 puts an exclamation point on Jesus saying that many are called but few will be chosen (Matt 22:14)⁴.

A physically circumcised Israelite kept the commandments by not murdering his neighbor, by not touching his neighbor's wife, by not uttering a falsehood, by not pocketing what didn't belong to him, by not working on the Sabbath, but he (or she) could think about work on the Sabbath, could think about killing a neighbor, could transgress the commandments in hearts and minds without technically breaking the Law. But when Israel ceased being a nation circumcised in the flesh by hands according to the Law and became a nation circumcised of heart by Spirit (Rom 2:28-29; Col 2:11), Israel was no longer under the old written code, but under the laws of God written on

⁴ Although Moses does not cross the Jordan, Moses entered into God's rest when he was on the mountain, with the glory of God being reflected in the shining of his face for the remainder of his life. So the percentage is more favorable than the ratio indicates.

hearts and placed in minds—the same commandments, not a different set of laws, but commandments now written on the inside surface of the cup. Thus, thoughts about work or the mundane activities necessary to live on the Sabbath transgress this inner 4th Commandment; for it is on this day when the disciple spends all day communing with God. It's not that the disciple's thoughts are not on God the other six days of the week, but work must be done to provide for those of the person's household. It is on days one through six when this work is done. The Sabbath is a day of entering into God's rest, not a person's own rest.

- The laws of God written on the heart and mind of every spiritually circumcised Israelite by the Breath of God [πνεῦμα Θεοῦ] has *anger* and *hate* written everywhere the finger of YHWH wrote *murder* on the stone tablets Moses lugged down the mountain.
- These internalized laws have *lust* written in flesh where *adultery* was incised in stone.
- These internalized laws are the legal code by which disciples live their lives: a Christian isn't even to hate his or her enemies.
- A Christian isn't to mock Christ, into whose seventh-day Sabbath rest they will enter when glorified, by profaning the Sabbaths of God.

A spiritually circumcised Israelite satisfies keeping the commandments written on his or her heart and mind, a euphemistic expression for the equally euphemistic expression of receiving a circumcised heart and mind (Deut 30:6), by not hating or lusting, by having inward love for all of humanity, love that will be outwardly manifested in many ways. As a son of God a spiritual Israelite ceases to inwardly identify oneself as Jew or Greek, male or female, free or slave. Outwardly or physically, a person remains male or female. Inwardly or spiritually, a baptized disciple is a son of God. Outwardly, a son of God will keep the Sabbaths of God, will not murder, will not steal, will not commit adultery just as this son of God retains penis or vulva. The new man is inside the existing body of flesh, and hopefully governs the flesh.

The Apostle Paul did not understand why he wasn't better able to rule himself from the inside out.

The essential factor in understanding what Paul wrote in his many epistles is grasping this relationship of the outer physical man being ruled by the inner new man. Disciples are no longer under the law, for the laws of God have been written on their hearts and minds. The bodies of disciples, whether plumed male or female, are to be ruled by the inner new man who operates

under the legal code of love. There is no love in hate, so the inner new man doesn't hate which causes the flesh never to commit murder. Likewise, adultery is a specific type of coveting run amuck. There is no love in coveting sexual gratification outside of marriage, or in coveting revenge through a sexual liaison, or in coveting power or wealth through the giving or withholding of sexual favors. And in a similar manner, there is no love toward God in not outwardly keeping His Sabbaths, of which Christ is the reality.

But saying that Christ is the reality of the Sabbaths of God produces Protestant linguistics problems: if the Sabbaths of God are the lively representation of Christ, then disciples who do not keep these Sabbaths have no relationship with Christ. Natural Israel is the lively representation of the Church, which is a physically invisible assembly. The Sabbaths of God form the lively representation of Christ, a life-giving spirit. Thus, it is through the Sabbaths that a person enters into "life." An Egyptian did not become an Israelite by tagging along behind Israel, but by circumcision and baptism—by participating in the reality of what defines Israel. Likewise, a "Christian" does not become a spiritually circumcised Israelite by going to church every Sunday, but by participating in the reality of what it means to be of Israel with Sabbath observance being an integral part of what it means to be of Israel. If a person says that he or she knows God, the person will keep the commandments and will walk as Jesus walked (1 John 2:4-6): Jesus kept the commandments. If the person will not walk as Jesus walked, will not imitate Paul as he imitated Christ (1 Cor 11:1), then the person has not entered into the reality of Christ, which is to live as a Judean. Since the disciple is not the flesh, physical circumcision is counterproductive, but no disciple can enter the reality of Christ and not keep the Sabbaths *for Christ is their reality*. The person who does not keep the Sabbaths has not entered into the reality of Christ, but is a spiritual bastard.

The teachers of Israel in the latter portions of the 1st Century through the 3rd Century confused foundations for superstructures. They were spiritually so extremely near-sighted that they couldn't read Paul's epistles even though they could see the words on the page; they couldn't read spiritually. Why? Because for one, two, or however many generations they had made no journey of faith that cleansed hearts so that they could be circumcised. Even though born of Spirit, unless a person makes a journey of faith equivalent to the patriarch Abraham's physical journey of faith, hearts are not cleansed; hearts are not spiritually circumcised; and the person in not a part of the invisible Church . . . the person can outwardly receive the honor accorded a bishop, but inwardly be an inverted bastard, conceived

as a son of God but having as an infant adopted the prince of this world as the person's spiritual father.

Because many "bishops" adopted the prince of this world as their spiritual father—not one of the three hundred or so bishops that attended the Council of Nicea (ca 325 CE) was brave enough to tell the Roman Emperor Constantine that he was an agent of the prince of this world—God delivered the Church into the hand of the spiritual king of Babylon, Satan the devil. Yes, Paul wrote to the saints at Rome, "For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed" (13:1-2). But there would be no need to deliver the kingdom of this world into the hand of the Son of Man as will be done halfway through seven endtime years of tribulation (Rev 11:15-18; Dan 7:9-14) if the rulers in place today were agents of God. Rather, God consigned all of humankind to disobedience (Rom 11:32). Because of the transgression of the first Adam, God delivered human beings into the hand of the Adversary, into the hand of the prince of this world, thereby subjecting all of humankind to Satan's broadcast of disobedience that caused/causes all whose father is the first Adam to be sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2-3) until God has mercy upon the person by drawing the person from this world (John 6:44) by giving the person a second birth.

Those authorities who have been appointed by God are of the Adversary until the kingdom of this world is delivered into the hand of the Son of Man, who has qualified to receive it but who will not receive it until Satan is cast from heaven and the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh. Therefore, disciples are today spiritual insurgents in the kingdom of this world, causing Satan the problems that physical insurgents cause authorities anywhere in this world. Only these problems are in the heavenly realm where "obedience" annihilates "disobedience" as an IED made from a 155mm artillery shell destroys a Hummer in this world.

The many bishops who adopted Satan as their father caused the spiritually holy nation of God [as the rulers of natural Israel caused that holy nation of God] to wander away from the ways of God and to profane His Sabbaths. They did exactly to the invisible inner new man what false prophets did to ancient Israelites outwardly. What the prophet Ezekiel records in his chapter 20 is the lively representation of what the early Church did spiritually. *YHWH* sent both houses of physical Israel into physical captivity for not walking in His ways and for profaning His Sabbaths. The Father and the Son sent both the *school of Ephesus* and the *school of Alexandria*, the two houses of Christianity,

into mental captivity for not spiritually walking in His way and for spiritually profaning His Sabbaths. These two houses are today Arian Christianity and Trinitarian Christianity. And as Israel made war on Judah, Arians have made war on Trinitarians, and will do so again. Biblical prophesies are ultimately about war in that portion of the heavenly realm within the bottomless pit, a rift in the fabric of heaven analogous to the fissure in the earth's crust that swallowed Korah and his friends.

The demonic kings who presently makeup Satan's ruling coalition are all rebels, and as Satan rebelled against God, he will reap rebellion within his coalition.

All sons of God are born free to keep the commandments of God; they are not born consigned to disobedience as the tents of flesh in which they are domiciled were. But Paul warned the saints at Rome: "Do you not know that if you present yourself to anyone as obedient slaves [bondservants], you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness" (6:16).

Although born of Spirit with sin having no dominion over sons of God, most disciples have voluntarily made themselves slaves to sin by neglecting the Law and ignoring Moses, the accuser of every Israelite, natural and spiritual (John 5:45-47; Deut 31:25-27) . . . as Alice went *Through the Looking Glass* to find an alternative world, disciples go through the Open Door to find that Christianity is not the "religion" taught by Catholic or Orthodox or Reform theologians, most of whom are sincere men and women that have made no journey of faith, nor even know that such a journey must be made before the person can understand the things of God. Thus, the release of spiritually circumcised Israel from mental bondage to sin, foreshadowed by the release of physically circumcised Israel from physical bondage in Egypt, has been concealed from them.

Jesus is the paschal Lamb of God, sacrificed at Calvary when Temple leaders were then reckoning when Passover lambs were to be slain. He came as the light of this world, the light of Day One (Gen 1:3; 2 Cor 4:6), the light that would be taken away by His death (John 12:35-36; 1:4-5 *et al*). John wrote, "But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes" (1 John 2:11). Whoever breaks the Law walks in darkness. The son of God who breaks the Law has returned to darkness by presenting himself as the servant to sin. He is blinded *because of the darkness*, not because his eyes cannot see as was [and remains] the case with natural Israel. Lawlessness blinds eyes that can see if the son of God would turn to God, hear the words

of the Son and believe the Father. Obedience opens eyes as it opens the door to understanding the thoughts of God.

Unrighteousness and ungodliness represent spiritual darkness—and the story of darkness’s tussle to overcome the light provides the context for the Bible, a narrative told by the *Logos* to His friends. Because meaning must be assigned to words, the Bible speaks as a double-lipped sword to those individuals who hear the words of Jesus of Nazareth and who then believe the One that sent Jesus. It is spiritually silent to those individuals whose minds are set on the physical creation and all that is in the creation; Scripture is meaningless to the beasts of this world and to those human beings who have not yet been born of Spirit. If it is equally meaningless to those who have been born anew as sons of God but who have returned to lawlessness; who have blinded themselves by presenting themselves as willing servants to sin.

Although many disciples have been called, have been born of Spirit, few will be chosen (Matt 22:14). Few will hear the words of Jesus and believe the Father and pass from death to life without coming under condemnation (John 5:24). These individuals are the ones foreknown, predestined, justified, and glorified as the brothers of Christ. And the vast majority of these individuals are not today “Christians,” but come from the third part of humankind (Zech 13:9) that will be born of Spirit when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation. They represent the great endtime harvest of the earth (Rev 14:15) that begins 1260 days before Christ returns as the Messiah. They will make up most of the harvest of firstfruits, and to the shame of every disciple today, they will believe God unto obedience.

A disciple who keeps the commandments of God and holds the testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:17) is as a match struck in a cave. The disciple’s pinprick of light seems exceedingly bright in the darkness of the bottomless pit.

3.

The *Open Door* permits entrance into an invisible spiritual world through the things that have been made, with the things recorded in Scripture forming the lively representation of what is written in the *Book of Life*. The things of a man, his thoughts and desires of his heart, are known to the man by the breath [*pneuma*] of the man that gives to him life in this physical realm. The things of God, His thoughts and His plans, are made known darkly to a son of God by the divine Breath of God [*πνεῦμα θεοῦ*] that gives this son spiritual life in the heavenly realm, life that cannot be seen in this world but

goes as wind blows (again, John 3:8) . . . where wind goes and from where wind comes is now known. Satellites photograph clouds and Doppler radar “peers” into these clouds as the movement of winds around low and high pressure cells make visible what was felt but not seen in the 1st-Century. Even solar winds are now observable: Themis (an acronym for “Time History of Events and Macroscale Interactions during Substorms”) satellites, in tandem with ground instruments, have photographed three dimensional images of the “magnetic ropes” that connect the earth’s upper atmosphere to the sun. A magnetic rope is a twisted bundle of magnetic fields along which solar winds flow, providing energy for magnetic storms and auroras. So what couldn’t possibly be seen or known by earlier generations has become common knowledge. And since the visible, physical things of this world precede and reveal the invisible things of God, more can be said and understood about spiritual birth than ever before.

In an *Alaska Daily News* story dated December 26, 2007, David Sibeck of NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center said the first magnetic rope was detected by Themis satellites on May 20, “It was very large, about as wide as Earth, and located approximately 40,000 miles above the Earth’s surface in a region called the magnetopause,’ which is where solar winds and the planet’s magnet field ‘meet and push against one another like sumo wrestlers locked in combat.”

No one in the 20th-Century had seen a magnetic rope. Few even knew of these magnetic fields twisted together like hemp rope. Yet today more people have seen a photo of a magnetic rope tying the earth to the sun than know what it means to be born of Spirit.

What is known about wind today by a farmer planting spring fields, military planners trying to anticipate the weather for the D-Day invasion of Europe did not and could not know.

The invisible portions of this physical world are rapidly becoming visible as knowledge continues to increase. And in a real world analogy, those who attempted to explain the workings of the Spirit of God and what it means to be born of Spirit in the era when weather forecasting was mostly limited to observing the horizon were spiritually more “blind” than were Allied military meteorologists in 1944. Yet forty, fifty, sixty years later, most disciples in the church of God still look to the knowledge of that WWII era for their explanations of what it means to be born of Spirit. This is like telephoning one’s neighbor to find out what tomorrow’s weather will be instead of turning on the evening news: it is a denial of knowledge. It is the ostrich syndrome bringing forth its fruit of ignorance.

One major denomination (The Latter Day Saints) teaches that “spirit” is a form of matter requiring “purer” eyes to see, making spirit not *analogous* to wind, but a solar-like wind that requires eyes even better than those of the four orbiting Themis satellites, or of the Hubbard Telescope to see. This teaching does not separate heaven from this physical creation by a wall of fire, but makes heaven part of a continuum which includes the four unfurled dimensions in which humankind has life. This teaching does not make the burning bush Moses saw a portal between dimensions, a portal like that of Jacob’s ladder, but makes the physical creation the portion of a sand beach that protrudes above the water . . . through *intertextuality* and *hypertextuality*, endtime disciples can “see” that the shadows of heavenly phenomena are cast not directly onto the surface of the earth but into thoughts and desires of living creatures. A barrier divides or separates heaven from earth, a barrier that causes the conscious mind not to perceive the actions of its subconscious mind. A barrier separates consciousness from the unconscious. Not an impenetrable barrier, but one disclosing that no continuum exists. So “spirit” is not a form of matter needing purer eyes to see. Rather, heaven is on one side of a barrier of fire, and all of the other dimensions, furled and unfurled, are on the other side.

A point on a two-dimensional plane would perceive a cylinder as a circle, for this point would not be able to perceive any of the cylinder’s height. But, because a point on a two-dimensional plane perceives a cylinder as a circle doesn’t make the cylinder any less tall: calling a cylinder a circle merely illuminates the limitations that have been placed upon the point by its inability to grasp the existence of another dimension. So it would be fruitless for two points on a plane to argue about the nature of the cylinder that they sincerely believe to be a circle, but that will not stop them from going to war with one another when consigned to disobedience.

When encountering a cylinder, our two dimensional point would be unable to directly perceive any of the cylinder’s height unless the point observed the shadow of the cylinder’s height cast onto the two dimensional plane—and this determination would be made by observing where the light was and where the light was absent (or where it was dark). If our point did not know to attach significance to the presence and absence of “light,” then the cylinder’s shadow that reveals the height of the cylinder would have no meaning to this point. Our point needs a translator to convert the presence and absence of light into usable code to which meaning can be assigned. And in a manner similar to that of a computer’s language translator, which attaches significance to the presence and absence of electrical resistance in a

silicon chip, if a disciple does not have the spirit of knowledge Jesus promised to send every disciple [the *parakletos*—παράκλητος], the disciple cannot understand the things of God that the interplay of spiritual shadowing reveals. The *parakletos* serves a disciple in a manner analogous to how a language translator functions in a computer.

If a person could be reduced to a point on a two-dimensional plane, receiving the Holy Spirit adds to the point vertical height as if this additional “life” were a line vertically intersecting the plane. Since the world cannot receive the *parakletos* (John 14:17), life in the heavenly realm must be given to the person before the person can receive this spirit of knowledge that permits significance to be assigned to the presence and absence of light. The *parakletos* gives to the disciple knowledge, which adds “thickness” to the line that now casts its shadow of the previously unseen (to points on the two-dimensional plane) line. Without the *parakletos*, a disciple is no more than a spiritual line that has neither width nor depth. With the *parakletos* the disciple acquires presence in the invisible dimension that is heaven, for a line is as a point.

Before leaving our two dimensional point, if the passage of time were perceived as a horizontal line [the “x” axis], then phenomena in the heavenly realm would occur along a vertical line [the “y” axis]. Everything that happens in the timeless heavenly realm occurs along the vertical line, regardless of the distance between these phenomena: distance along the vertical line does not equate to the passage of time, for this vertical line does not move in its relationship to the horizontal line. The shadows now of the phenomena that have occurred along the vertical line will appear as sequential events on the horizontal line, with each event separated by the passage of time. But along the vertical line, no time passes.

As Protestants stumble over their rhetoric when they have Jesus being the reality of the Sabbaths of God, the church of God has stumbled over the *parakletos* being the Holy Spirit:

- In John 14:16-17, the *parakleton* is the spirit of truth [πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας] sent by the Father to be with disciple forever, or until the end of the age. The world cannot receive this spirit or breath [πνεῦμα].
- In John 14:26, the Father will send the *parakletos*, the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον], to teach disciples all things and to remind them of what Jesus had told them.
- In John 15:26, Jesus will send from the Father the *parakletos*, the spirit of truth [πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας] that will testify about Jesus.

So the *parakletos* is, foremost, the spirit [breath] of truth, with this breath coming from the Father, thus it is Holy or divine, and with this breath being such that it cannot be received by the world . . . the world does not know the Father nor the things of God except by the Spirit of God [πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ] (1 Cor 2:11), which a son of disobedience receives when this son of disobedience is drawn from the world by the Father (John 6:44). Receipt of the divine Breath of God gives to the former son of disobedience actual life in the heavenly realm. Augustine’s error of believing that humankind is born with rational souls comes from him being unable to locate where humankind is in the plan of God. On the sixth day, every person will be resurrected from death and will have life in the heavenly realm through a second birth by receiving the same divine Breath of God: every person will be created in the likeness and image of God, for it is the beasts that linguistically represent those who have been resurrected not in the image and likeness of God.

The sixth day of the “P” creation has *not* yet occurred, and is more than a thousand years in the future. Presently, humankind still lives in the dark portion of the third day of the spiritual creation described in the “P” account. The firstfruits of God, of which Jesus was First, have received spiritual life through receipt of the divine Breath of God [πνεῦμα Θεοῦ] in the pattern established by Jesus when He fulfilled all righteousness by receiving the Spirit of God [πνεῦμα Θεοῦ] (Matt 3:16) in the form of a dove.

Is the Spirit of God [πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ] the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον]? Certainly the Spirit or Breath of God is holy [ἅγιον], but is there only one Breath [πνεῦμα] of God?

The visible reveals the invisible: a person has physical life through having breath, through breathing, with this breath being the “spirit” of man [πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου]. But this “life-giving breath” of a man does not teach his son knowledge whereas the *parakletos* teaches sons of God all things. A man would teach his son by “speaking” to his son, using his breath to produce sound that becomes words that convey knowledge. The *parakletos* functions as the voice of the Father—as the language translator that allows the sons of God to learn all things that are true.

Because personhood was assigned to the divine Breath of God in the 5th-Century CE, much misunderstanding was accepted as fact . . . several of the 4th-Century Christian writers had some really screwy ideas about the shape of the earth, with John Chrysostom, in his *Homilies Concerning the Statutes*, espousing the idea that, based on his reading of Scripture, the earth

floated as a disc on the waters gathered below the firmament [expanse]. So it wasn't only about the nature of the divine Breath of God that these early Christian writers held distorted views; for as the Gospel was preached to Israel under the Old Testament but it did not profit that nation (Heb 4:2), it has been preached to Israel under the New Testament and it has not profited this spiritual nation. The earth is not a floating hockey puck, nor is the Breath of God a holy ghost that haunts disciples.

A disciple has received spiritual life from being raised from the dead by the Father (John 5:21) through the Father drawing the former son of disobedience from this world by giving this person the Breath of God [πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ]. But if this person does not have the divine Breath of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ], the person does not belong to Christ (Rom 8:9).

- Every disciple is given spiritual life through receiving the Spirit or Breath of God [πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ].
- To belong to Christ Jesus, every disciple will also have the Spirit or Breath of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ].
- In addition, every disciple will receive the *parakletos*, the spirit of truth [πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας].
- Plus, the person received life in this world when born of water through the spirit of man [πνεῦμα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου].

Of the four spirits [*pneumas*], the first three are of the Father or the Son, so they are all a Holy Spirit or Breath [πνεῦμα ἅγιον] . . . every Breath that comes from God is holy. Each time He speaks there is a renewing of the earth. Only when He keeps quiet are there no miracles performed—and as God promised Israel in the Song of Moses, because of the provocations of His sons He will hide His face from Israel (Deut 32:19-20). With His face hidden, He does not breathe on Israel. No miracles occur.

4.

Our ostrich, its head buried, has been muttering, *Pin test, pin test*, since last seen, and indeed, many ministers trained at one of the Ambassador College campuses and the many disciples whom these ministers have taught the oracles of God sincerely believe that no person is born of Spirit as long as the person remains flesh and blood. Thus, in their reasoning, the truly born of Spirit disciple will not bleed when stuck with a pin. But Jesus said,

Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. *For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.* . . . For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. (John 5:19, 21-23 emphasis added)

If the Father raises the dead and gives life to the dead, to whom will the Son give life? The Son does what He sees the Father do, but He is not in competition with the Father to see who can get to the dead first to give them life. So the Son can only give “life” to the living.

When a son of disobedience, who has no life but that which comes from the spirit or breath of man, is drawn by the Father from this world and given His divine Breath, the Spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ], the Father has “raised” this person from the dead just as much so as if the Father had waited until the person died physically and then waited for a few millennia to pass here on earth. Baptism, now, becomes real death as far as the Father is concerned, not merely a symbolical death; for the Father will not raise this person from the dead a second time. There will be no need to raise this person a second time, for the Father gave to this person real spiritual life when He initially raised the person from death.

But the person remains flesh and blood, an earthenware cup, with the “life” coming from having received the divine Breath of the Father inside the previously empty cup . . . as the former son of disobedience grows in Grace and knowledge, the new creature that is spirit expands to fill the cup; thus, as happened on that day of Pentecost (Act chap 2), when a person is “filled” with the Holy Spirit [πνεύματος ἁγίου] the inside of the cup is brim full. There is no room inside the person for sin and its wages, death. The person is truly liberated from indwelling disobedience and bondage to this disobedience as ancient Israel was liberated from physical bondage to Pharaoh when God first gave the lives of men as ransom for the freedom of Israel. And it was this indwelling sin that the Apostle Paul realized was still present in him even decades after his conversion (Rom 7:7-25). Liberation comes at the second Passover, the event that begins the seven endtime years.

In this era and until the seven endtime years of tribulation begin, a former son of disobedience receives the earnest of the Spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] when the Father raises the person from the dead; the person does not then

receive the cup filled to its brim. As earnest money is real money, the person receives real life in the heavenly realm, only not a “full cup” of life. Thus, the person must spiritually grow. And even when the cup is filled to its brim, the cup is still an earthenware vessel, a tent of flesh that bleeds when stuck with a pin.

But the Son will also give life to whom He wills, and all judgment has been given to the Son:

- The Father gives life to the spiritually dead by giving them the earnest of His divine Breath [πνεῦμα θεοῦ].
- The Son gives life to the spiritually living by causing the perishable flesh to put on immortality.
- But the Son only gives life to those whom He judges worthy to receive this life and to enter into God’s rest.
- If the Son does not give life to a spiritually living son of God domiciled in a tent of flesh, this son of God will perish in the lake of fire.

Our ostrich and its pin test is part of the legacy of the churches of God that must be overcome, just as Christian orthodoxy must overcome its misunderstanding about human beings receiving, as the result of fornication in the backseat of a Chevrolet, eternal life within the tent of flesh. Doesn’t happen! No person receives an immortal soul from the first Adam—and humankind is not yet in the sixth day of the spiritual creation, described in the “P” account.

5.

Two days before He was to die, Jesus, when His disciples pointed out the buildings of the temple, said, “I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down” (Matt 24:2). Later, His disciples came to Him privately and asked when those stones would be cast down, and what would be the sign of His coming and of the end of the age (*v.* 3). They did not ask about what would happen between then and the end of the age, but rather, they asked for a sign. They were not yet “born of Spirit”—they would not receive spiritual birth until Jesus breathed on ten of them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον]” (John 20:22), the afternoon of the day He ascended to the Father. They were still as physically minded as were the Pharisees who had asked for a sign. They wanted a sign, not a history lesson. And what Jesus gave them was a sign, and what leads up to that sign.

Jesus said,

See that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and they will lead many astray. And you will hear of war and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel [good news] of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matt 24:4-14)

The sign for which Jesus’ disciples asked, Jesus gave to His disciples. But somehow, this sign has escaped most of Christendom.

Jesus told His disciples that the sign of the end of the age would *not* be one of phenomena such as wars, famines, or earthquakes. All of these things will occur and have to take place, but they are merely the beginning of Israel’s birth pains . . . Zion will bring forth children before she experiences labor pains (Isa 66:7-8): before her hard labor pains come upon the Church, she will deliver two spiritual sons, a Cain and an Abel. Her hard labor pains are the Tribulation, the seven ripening years for God’s harvest of firstfruits. So what Jesus says through verse 8 precede the beginning of the Tribulation, and are not the sign for which His disciples asked.

But with verse 9 [“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation”], the endtime years of tribulation begin. So in Jesus’ Olivet Discourse, disciples find a hard time marker:

- The second Passover liberation of disciples from indwelling sin and death is the phenomenon that denotes the beginning of the Tribulation.
- The liberation of disciples comes from these disciples being “filled” with the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον], or empowered by the Holy Spirit.

- When empowered by the Holy Spirit, disciples will be “clean” as Jesus was clean, and as such, they will be acceptable sacrifices to God.
- Disciples are the Body of Christ.
- As the head of a paschal lamb cannot be sacrificed without the body also being sacrificed, once liberated from indwelling sin disciples filled with the Holy Spirit will be sacrificed as Jesus was sacrificed (John 15:18-21; Matt 10:24-25 *et al*).
- For disciples, the *place of safety* during the first 1260 days of the Tribulation is the grave.
- The 144,000 who follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Rev 14:1-5) are “virgins,” meaning that they have never had intercourse—in this case, intercourse with the world that produces sin:
 1. The 144,000 have never sinned in the heavenly realm so they could not have life in the heavenly realm prior to when Israel is liberated from indwelling sin and death;
 2. They could not have been born of Spirit until after the Tribulation begins; they are not today part of the church of God;
 3. They are 12,000 of twelve tribes of Israel so they are the natural branches of Israel being grafted onto the Root of Righteousness;
 4. Only the 144,000 and a remnant of the woman’s offspring (Rev 12:17) will be spiritually alive (as in not separated from God) immediately before Satan is cast from heaven.
 5. Every other born of Spirit disciple will be dead, spiritually and/or physically, with the faithful having been sacrificed as those who sleep under the altar were (Rev 6:9-11).
 6. The remnant of the woman’s offspring keep the commandments (they keep the Sabbaths of God) and they have the spirit of prophecy (*cf.* Rev 12:17; 19:10), meaning they know what will happen and who Satan is.

The liberation of disciples from indwelling sin and death is figuratively described as Zion giving birth to her children: the liberation of disciples at a second Passover brings to birth a spiritual Cain and a spiritual Abel. And as the first Cain murdered his righteous brother Abel, a last Cain will murder his righteous brother Abel. For doing so, this Cain will take upon himself the mark of the beast, the mark of death, the tattoo of the cross [χξς’].

But after the succession of bad news events in Matthew 24:9-12, Jesus delivers the first piece of good news to disciples: “But the one who endures to the end shall be saved” (v. 13). In everything Jesus has said so far, this is the only good news uttered. And after delivering this bit of good news, Jesus gives the sign for which His disciples asked: “And this [good news] of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations” (v. 14).

Why is, *but the one who endures to the end shall be saved*, the endtime gospel that must be proclaimed to the world . . . a third son was born to the first Eve after Cain murdered Abel, and this son was accepted by God. A third spiritual son will be born to Zion after Cain kills Abel, after Satan is cast from heaven, after spiritual Babylon falls, after the single kingdom of this world is delivered into the hand of the Son of Man, after the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh—all of these phenomena will occur on the doubled day 1260, the halfway marker for the seven endtime years of tribulation. This third son, a spiritual Seth, will be the third part of humanity that has not previously been born of Spirit. And this third part (Zech 13:9) will obey God when it receives spiritual birth. They form the majority of the great endtime harvest of firstfruits, and they are today Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, or nothing at all. They are not now Christians to whom the Gospel was preached but who have not benefited from the Gospel “because they were not united by faith” (Heb 4:2) with those who delivered this Gospel to them.

- The world will be baptized in the Holy Spirit, the divine Breath of God, a divine wind that gives spiritual birth to every person—and fills every person with the Spirit.
- The Flood of Noah’s day was the lively representation of this baptism with spirit;
- Baptism by water is unto death whereas baptism by Spirit is unto life;
- Together, the baptism of the earth by water in Noah’s day and the baptism of the earth by Spirit on the day when the kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man—two baptisms—form the lively representation of the world being baptized by fire.
- The key to understanding Scripture is revealed in these three baptisms:
 1. Death or darkness forms the shadow of life or light; so the Flood forms the shadow of the outpouring of Spirit on the Day of the Lord.

2. When the world is baptized by fire, all that is physical, not just breathing creatures, will perish.
3. All that has life coming from the breath of God will be glorified.
4. Jesus' ministry in the 1st-Century equates with death, but His ministry on the Lord's day [from when He receives the kingdom through the thousand years] equates with life in this world.
5. Together, the two ministries of Christ form one ministry in this world, with this ministry being the lively representation of the ministry of heaven.

Because "Christians," with very few exceptions, refuse—yes, refuse!—to enter into God's rest while the promise of entering stands, they will die twice for their unbelief. Even when one wants to enter into Sabbath observance, there are ministers telling this infant son of God that while it is all right to keep the weekly Sabbath, this son of God should not keep the annual Sabbaths . . . the Father and the Son have patiently endured these ministers of Satan, these vessels of wrath, these sons of destruction that will be broken when judgments are revealed, but Father and Son have only endured them to make known the riches of the Father's glory for the few vessels of mercy that have been prepared beforehand to receive glory (Rom 9:20-24).

God is love, but He did not spare His own Son when His Son took onto Himself the sins of Israel. Rather, the Father turned His back to His Son, something Jesus had not anticipated.

- When disciples are liberated from indwelling sin—when disciples are revealed as the Body of the Son of Man, naked except for their covering of obedience—the Father will not spare them if they take sin back into themselves.
- Liberated disciples who take sin back within themselves will commit blasphemy against the Spirit [πνεύματος], which will not be forgiven them.
- Blasphemy against the Spirit cannot be forgiven disciples for once disciples are filled with the Spirit, Grace ends—the shedding of blood at the second Passover ends the covenant made on the day when God took Israel by the hand to lead the nation out of Egypt.
- The garment of Christ's righteousness is removed when the Father delivers the saints into the hand of the lawless one for a time, times, and half a time, or 1260 days (Dan 7:25).

Sin is forgiven by only one covenant, the one made with Israel on the day when God took Israel by the hand to bring the fathers of this nation out of the land of Egypt (Heb 8:9; Jer 31:32). Jesus' death at Calvary pays the death penalty *in this world* for every sin committed, which does not mean that every sin committed has been forgiven. If that were the case, then evildoers would not be condemned when judgments are revealed. The Apostle Paul writes, "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" (Rom 2:12); so there is no forgiveness of sin for those without the law or under the law except as they show that the works of the law have been written on hearts (*vv.* 14-15). Grace is all about the covering or garmenting of the Body of Christ so that the lawlessness of these disciples is cloaked and not seen by the Father while these disciples learn—as human infants, toddlers, learn—to walk uprightly before God and angels in the heavenly realm.

Grace is not given to the person who has not been born of Spirit and is not under the law, for where there is no law, sin is not reckoned against the person (Rom 5:13). Why? Because God consigned all of humankind to disobedience so that He could have mercy on all (Rom 11:32). God did it! God delivered the sons of the first Adam into the hand of the Adversary as the lively representation of when, during the Tribulation, He will deliver His sons into the hand of the man of perdition for the destruction of the flesh so that the Spirit might be saved in the day when judgments are revealed (1 Cor 5:5) . . . what does this say about the state of the Church today? Does it not say exactly what God says to the prophet Ezekiel about the state of ancient Israel when its elders went to Ezekiel to inquire of the Lord (chap 20)? It does, doesn't it?

Lawlessness is more serious spiritually than Christian theologians have been willing to admit in recent history. Lawlessness produces gridlock in the timeless heavenly realm. And after rebelling angels were expelled from heaven, God will not permit even a hint of lawlessness back into heaven.

The seven endtime years of tribulation are about the harvest of firstfruits demonstrating that when confronted with lawlessness and when given the choice of whether to transgress the law or not—and when placed under outside pressure to transgress the law—the chosen firstfruits will rather die physically than break the law; they will demonstrate that their love for God is greater than their love of their own physical lives, and they show their love for the Father and the Son by keeping the commandments (John 14:21 *et al.*).

The evidence of Scripture is that God really doesn't care what a person's excuses are for his or her lawlessness. He consigned all of humankind to

disobedience, so He is not troubled by the lawlessness of those who have not been drawn from this world. It is the continued lawlessness of those whom He has drawn from this world that is the problem. And His solution to this problem is to empower His sons by filling them with Spirit, then delivering them into the hand of Satan to see what Satan can do with them. Satan cannot kill the life they have in the heavenly realm; Satan can only kill the flesh in this world. So His empowered sons become the living stones over which Satan will stumble, with Christ Jesus being the First of these stones.

What will be seen once the Tribulation begins is that Satan, through the lawless one, the man of perdition, returns the vast majority of the liberated disciples to sin and to the Christendom presently practiced every Sunday on the street corners of this world. The purple and scarlet clothing of the great whore of Babylon is her Easter finery. The great falling away of the saints is their return to today's Christianity once disciples have been liberated from sin and death. And there is not much anyone delivering the Gospel can do or say to hinder this great falling away, for there is no unity in faith between Christ and those who call themselves His disciples, which is why God turns His hand against two parts of Israel [a spiritual Cain and his righteous brother], beginning with Christ Jesus (Zech 13:7-8; Matt 26:31) . . . God will require no more of any son than He required of Christ.

However, the third part of humankind only has to endure to the end to be saved, but endure with Satan cast into time and coming to reclaim his former bondservants by usurping the authority of Christ Jesus. In order to participate in the economy of the world—an economy that has then collapsed—this third part will have to take upon themselves the mark of death, the mark of the beast, the tattoo of the cross, the Christianity of this present world.

There is no love lost between genuine saints and the synagogue of Satan, those self-professed disciples of Christ that label obeying God as *legalism* and *antichristian* . . . Jesus said that many are called, but few will be chosen. It isn't the "few" that transgress the commandments, but the "many."

The sign Jesus gave His disciples was that the *good news that the third part of humankind will be born of Spirit and born filled with the Spirit when the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of the Father and His Son (Rev 11:15) halfway through seven endtime years of tribulation* will be proclaimed throughout the world as a testimony to all nations. This third part of humankind has only to endure to the end to be saved, but endure without

participating in the world's foundering economic system. This third part will have to live by faith in God for three and a half years. God is not a respecter of persons. What He asked of Israel going into the Tribulation, He will ask of the last third part of humankind—and He will get it from half of this third part whereas He got it from only a few of the many empowered Christians going into these endtime years.

It is not better to be counted among that last third part of humankind than to be counted today as a son of God, but it is not a son of disobedience's prerogative to decide for him or herself to be born of Spirit at any particular moment in history. Yes, a son of disobedience can turn from his or her lawlessness and can seek God with heart and mind and can make a journey of faith into obedience, but the Father still has to give the person spiritual birth. Under the Moab covenant mediated by Moses, the promise of God is that He would give a circumcised heart to the Israelite who, by faith, turned from lawlessness and began to love God with heart and mind (Deut 30:1-6). So by the terms of the Moab covenant made with physically circumcised and uncircumcised Israelites, a case can be made for God giving to the *obedient* Israelite spiritual birth—but this birth is still dependant upon the will of the Father, for a person cannot free him or herself from disobedience and the dominion of sin. The person needs the Father to draw this person from the world before he or she will even want to walk obediently before Him. And the journey of faith the natural Israelite must make goes beyond being obedient to the law, the expectation of the culture, and goes to professing that Jesus is Lord [God] and believing that the Father [also God] raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:9).

6.

Every person will be raised from the dead and given spiritual birth once, not many times. However, in the case of Lazarus (John 11:38-44) and in a few other cases, the physically dead have been returned to life. These cases form the lively representation of life being returned to the body of the man Jesus. And the return of life to Jesus' physical body is the lively representation of the return of life to the spiritual Body of Christ. But—here come the objections—Jesus said that His Body, the Church, would never die.

Did Jesus really say that His Church, the one He would build upon Peter, would not die? Certainly, the Roman Church has taught this, and her protesting daughters have believed this. Even the Sabbatarian churches of

God teach that the Church Jesus built on the “rock” would not die. Yet Jesus said nothing about not dying:

He said to them [His disciples], “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter [Πέτρος], and on this rock [πέτρα] I will build my church, and the gates of hell [*Hades*—ᾗδου] shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. (Matt 16:15-20)

The gates of Hades did not prevail against Jesus’ earthly body, for the Father resurrected Jesus from death. The Apostle Paul said, “If the Spirit [πνεῦμα] of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit [πνεύματος] [that] dwells in you” (Rom 8:11) . . . the Father is the One who raised Jesus from the dead. His “Spirit” is His divine Breath, but every breath that comes from the Father is divine as every breath a person exhales belongs to the person.

If a disciple reads the Greek linguistic icon /πνεῦμα/ and assigns personhood to this icon as in causing the icon to represent a ghost, or shade in hell, then the person (besides being foolish) cannot comprehend the resurrection of the dead through the return of breath to the former breathing person. When Odysseus, in his journey into the underworld (Book 11 of Homer’s *Odyssey*), encounters shades that he cannot hug but can keep from his blood offering with his sharp sword, the shades do not seek the return of “breath” to again live. They are not merely “sleeping” as Jesus said Lazarus was, or as He said the daughter of the ruler was (Matt 9:24). Even the shade of the unburied man killed falling off Circle’s roof (one of Odysseus’ men) doesn’t ask for the return of the breath of life—and the body of this man would have been as intact as Lazarus’ body was. Rather, the shades are, from this pagan Greek perspective, the “life” of the person, having recognizable shape but not intelligence or substance without the blood of Odysseus’ sacrifice. And they are how most Christians perceive the immortal soul to be, but with intelligence and awareness as Tiresias had after the shade of this Theban prophet drank the blood of Odysseus’ sacrifice, with the blood the souls of “Christians” drink being that of the Lamb of God.

Hellenistic converts in the 1st-Century would have been steeped in the lore of classical Greek paganism. They were not merely superstitious; they were believers in human beings possessing immortal souls that went to be shades in the underworld. They could not conceive of a human being not having an immortal soul like that of Tiresias or of Achilles who told Odysseus that he would rather be a slave of another man on earth than to rule the breathless dead (11.556-58). And it is in the plural assignments of meaning to the single linguistic icon /πνεῦμα/ that causes problems for endtime disciples who have many more linguistic icons with which to work than did early Greeks. To these early Greeks, the shade or immortal soul of a person, the deep breath of the former person, and the wind that moved the ship carrying Odysseus to the underworld were represented by the single icon /πνεῦμα/.

Language-use works because a visual image or a sound image produces a frame of references that a reading community can assign to the image. But there is a limitation: unless a referent is within the frame of the auditor, the referent cannot be assigned by the auditor to the image. Thus, language-use conceals referents not within the auditor's frame from the auditor even though these referents might be available to an auditor in a differing reading community. Therefore, the endtime biblical scholar who does not know to assign the referent "breath" or "breath of life" to the Greek icon /πνεῦμα/, translated into Latin as */spiritus/* and then into English as */spirit/*, cannot, even when encountering the oxymoron of a *breathless shade*, perceive the things of God. This scholar cannot go through the open door set before the scholar, for the scholar doesn't see the door or its frame.

In his "Translator's Introduction" to Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*, D. W. Robertson, Jr., wrote,

We do not always realize today the extent to which the theology of Christianity was at once a logical outgrowth of late classical thought and, at the same time, an astonishingly brilliant fulfillment of the best traditions of ancient philosophy as they extend from Pythagoras and Plato to Cicero and Varro. Paganism, as a great classical scholar⁵ has said, "groped and staggered in the pursuit of an ideal concerning which it could have only an obscure prescience. But when the message of the gospel reached its best thinkers, they believed that they had finally attained it in the flash of certainty which suddenly struck them."

⁵ Jerome Carcopino, *De Pythagore aux Apotres* (Paris, 1956), p. 80.

The *before Christ* problem paganism's best thinkers could not overcome was how does a person know whether he or she is "good enough" to go to heaven; what criteria allows a person to escape being a *breathless shade* in hell? This is the present problem of Islam, but a problem negated by the answer that Christ forgives sin. By accepting Christ, a person can "know" that he or she will be accepted into heaven. However, the *Christ* offered to pagan converts by early theologians was scoured clean of its Jewish roots, of its *legalism*. This *Christ* is not the promised Messiah of Israel; this *Christ* never lived, never drew breath, never become a life-giving spirit. This *Christ* is a Trojan horse constructed by Greek philosophers as devious as Odysseus, the man of twists and turns, as in darkness coming by twisting away from the sun—in this case the Son of God. Yes, the Christendom of Hellenistic converts turned away from God, leaving the crucified Body of Christ hanging dead on the tree.

The Apostle Paul wrote,

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Rom 6:1-4)

Paul establishes the correspondence that Jesus' death at Calvary equates with baptism, which now is a real death of the same type that Lazarus (John chap 11) experienced. This now, throws off correspondences that make Jesus' resurrection analogous to the resurrection of saints when judgments are revealed. Instead, being raised from the baptismal pool corresponds to Jesus' resurrection.

Note the above: coming up out of the water—being lifted up by the person performing the baptism—corresponds directly with Jesus' resurrection after being three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The person who lifts the baptized convert from the water forms the lively representative of the Father, who by His divine Breath lifted Jesus from the dead.

Therefore, when Paul adds,

For if we have been united with him [Jesus] in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so we would no longer

be enslaved in sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you [Gentile converts] also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Rom 6:5-11)

Paul establishes correspondences that will seem to be the reverse image (mirror image) of what Christendom teaches. A convert, following baptism, receives the Spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] in an invisible manner as Jesus, following His baptism, received the Spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] in a visible manner (as a dove). This receipt of the Spirit of God is analogous to Jesus' resurrection . . . but where does Jesus' three and a half year ministry—between when He was baptized and when He was resurrected—fit into this model? Is there a period of time between when the convert “dies” in the baptismal pool and when the convert receives the Spirit of God and everlasting life like Jesus has? With the antecedent (Jesus), three and a half years separate baptism and resurrection. In the antetype model, three and a half days separate death and resurrection. And with converts, a spiritual journey of faith equivalent to Abraham's physical journey of faith separates leaving Babylon (Ur of the Chaldeans) and entering God's rest (the Promised Land of Canaan). The suggestion of Scripture is that this journey takes a passage of time.

Jesus' ministry begins in Galilee, from where no prophet was to come (John 7:52), and His ministry ends in Jerusalem before the leaders of the temple—Jesus personally makes a physical journey analogous to the patriarch Abraham's journey from Canaan into Egypt and back, then makes a spiritual journey analogous to Abraham's journey by going from being a prophet in Galilee to being the Lamb of God in Jerusalem. Jesus' physical journey takes approximately three and a half years; His spiritual journey takes three and a half years. And disciples must make a similar spiritual journey that will take the disciple from living as a son of disobedience [from being a citizen of spiritual Babylon] to living by the commandments of God, especially the Sabbath commandment [to being a citizen of heavenly Jerusalem].

However, the journey of faith that every convert must make to become a disciple is not time-linked, but is made in the timeless heavenly realm where the born of Spirit son of God has life through receipt of the earnest of the Holy Spirit . . . have we not just argued ourselves into a corner? Let us consider this matter carefully.

Who will leave Babylon with its perks if the Father does not draw the person from this world (John 6:44) as the Father drew Jesus' first disciples from this world? Jesus did not choose His disciples. The Father choose them as His own (John 17:4), and Jesus kept them in the Father's name without losing any other than the son of destruction, lost to fulfill Scripture (*v.* 12). And these first disciples were with Jesus for three and a half years before they received the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον].

These first disciples did not receive birth by Spirit until Jesus breathed on ten of them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον]" (John 20:22), on the afternoon of the day He was resurrected. They were only body [*soma*—σῶμα] and shallow (natural) breath [*psuche*—ψυχὴν] when Jesus sent them out two by two (Matt 10:28). After receiving the Holy Spirit, disciples are deep breath (from receiving the Spirit of God) and natural breath and their fleshly bodies; disciples are πνεῦμα καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα (1 Thess 5:23).

Whereas the first disciples followed Jesus for three and a half years after being chosen by the Father but before being born of Spirit, a person at the end of the age will not leave the world prior to being drawn by the Father through the Father giving to the person the earnest of His Spirit, or in the vernacular, a puff of his divine Breath, enough though to bestow spiritual life to the person . . . Gentiles are not Israelites until after they have been drawn by the Father. Gentiles [those of "the nations"] have no interest in God until after the Father places that interest in them by drawing them from the world. Therefore, the journey of faith that endtime converts must make—the journey that corresponds to Jesus' first disciples following Him from Galilee (all of His first disciples were Galileans except for Judas Iscariot, an important point to note)—is from the disobedience of "this world" into obedience to the law, and again, especially Sabbath observance. This journey is from death to life. Sin no longer has dominion over the inner nature of the person who has journeyed into obedience.

But the person who does not make this journey remains in spiritual Moab, where under the second covenant (Deut 29:1) life and death are placed before every Israelite (Deut 30:15-19), and no Moabite will enter into the kingdom. Ruth, a natural Moabite, journeyed into Judea, where she married into Israel. She chose life. She would not be counted in David's and Christ's lineage if she had remained in Moab.

Now, consider, a person from *the nations* [a Gentile] must, after coming to believe in Christ, make a journey of faith from disobedience to obedience, but the natural Jew, reared in an Obedient household, must make a journey

of faith that leads to professing that Jesus is Lord and believing that the Father raised Jesus from the dead—and make this journey while remaining obedient to the Law. It will take a comparable amount of faith from this natural Jew to profess that Jesus is Lord as it takes a Gentile to keep the commandments. Both will have made equivalent journeys of faith.

It does a natural Jew no good to profess that Jesus is Lord, then proceed to live as a lawless Gentile. To live as Jesus lived the natural Jew will continue to live as an Observant Jew without emphasis being placed on extra-Scriptural traditions, not necessarily though abandoning these traditions. The Apostle Paul had Timothy circumcised after the Jerusalem Conference for Timothy's uncircumcision would have been a stumbling block when proclaiming the gospel in synagogues; plus, Paul paid the expenses for four men under a vow when he purified himself at the temple. So traditions that are not contrary to Scripture do not have to be abandoned, but too many traditions are contrary so the practice of the church of God has been to abandon all traditions and start over, making new traditions that have the same inherent problems as abandoned traditions for sin and death continue to dwell in the flesh of every person until the second Passover liberation of Israel occurs.

An endtime disciple is only drawn from this world through receiving the earnest of the Spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]. Everything is raised a hierarchal level following Jesus' death and resurrection. Baptism becomes death. Receiving the Spirit of God equates with resurrection from death. Thus, spiritual birth (being born again) is not enough to be judged worthy of being glorified. Spiritual birth merely makes a former son of disobedience like an Israelite was in Jesus' day. The greater Christian Church becomes the spiritual equivalent to the nation of Israel in the 1st-Century. And while much of Israel followed after Jesus, many because He fed them, the leaders of Israel were determined to kill Jesus as the leaders of Christendom are determined to return disciples who keep the Sabbath back to spiritual Babylon and death through separation from God.

The leaders of the greater Christian Church would kill Jesus if He were to come as a man today, for He would denounce them as hypocrites, lawless vipers, Satan's seed, and blind teachers. But Jesus will not come again as a man, but as the Messiah, when many shall be the slain of the Lord (Isa 66:16). Rather, Jesus will work through His visible two witnesses, who are two human beings [like Moses and Elijah were] who have been entrusted with the use of God's divine Breath to call forth drought as Elijah called forth the drought in King Ahab's day, and to turn waters into blood as Moses turned the waters of

Egypt into blood. These two, who have been described in earlier writings as being like Moses and Aaron, will see “Aaron” having powers like Elijah had when he slew the 450 prophets of Baal. Once the second Passover occurs, it will be this “Aaron” who interacts with the kings [Presidents] of this world as Elijah interacted with Ahab. This “Aaron” will not, though, be the last Elijah, but rather, the spokesman for the witness who functions as Moses functioned during the Exodus following the first Passover.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, conciliar Christianity wrenched the Body of Christ from the tree where it hung dead, then buried this Body in a “tell” of disbelief where it awaited resurrection for 1200 years . . . as a remnant of Israel left physical Babylon after seventy years to rebuild the house of God in present day Jerusalem, a remnant of spiritual Israel left spiritual Babylon to rebuild the spiritual house of God in heavenly Jerusalem after twelve centuries (325 CE to 1525 CE). But the last Elijah takes three tries to return life to the spiritually dead Body of Christ as the first Elijah took three tries to return life to the son of the widow of Zarephath. Judaism has traditionally taught that the widow’s son was the prophet Jonah, and this teaching holds up typologically.

The corner from which our argument must escape is a son of disobedience is not of Israel until born of Spirit, but in order for this now former son of disobedience to die spiritually this person must lose life given through receipt of the divine Breath of God. But if this person loses life coming from the Breath of God, this person is no longer of Israel; plus, to lose this life prior to judgments being revealed would be to reveal a person’s judgment ahead of time.

- Spiritual birth through receiving the earnest of the divine Breath of God is necessary to cause a person to seek the Father and the Son.
- Every person in this era of the Gentiles who comes to God by faith must be drawn by God from this world, with this drawing being through receiving the earnest of His divine Breath.
- Once a person has been born of Spirit, the person will retain this second life until judgments are revealed. Then the evildoer will experience the second death, being cast into the lake of fire.
- In order for the spiritual Body of Christ to die as His physical body died, the spiritual Body must be separated from God as physical Israel was separated from God when He delivered Israel into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar.

- When God delivered the Church into the hand of the Roman Emperor Constantine at the Council of Nicea (ca 325 CE), the Body of Christ was dead; it was separated from God and saw only the face of the Adversary.
 1. When Emperor Hadrian outlawed the practices of Judaism (ca 135 CE), the Body of Christ was spiritually dead.
 2. Thus, what occurs at the Council of Nicea is the burial of the Body of Christ so that this Body is no longer in public view or on public display.

The son of God whom God has delivered into death through separation from God retains the *parakletos*, the spirit of truth that now functions as a witness against this son of God in a like manner to how the testimony of the Gospels functions as a witness against this disciple. Thus, it is this *parakletos* that keeps lawless sons of God—those whom the Father and/or the Son have delivered into death before judgments are revealed—thinking about Christ Jesus when they have been delivered into the hand of Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that the spirit might be saved when judgments are revealed.

In effect, the *parakletos* becomes the binding spirit or agent that keeps the Body of Christ from falling into dust until the Body is resurrected from death through empowerment by the Holy Spirit at the second Passover liberation of Israel. Without this *parakletos*, the Body would decompose into nothingness before its return to obedience and life in spiritual Judea when it, as the spiritually circumcised and uncircumcised children of the nation initially born of Spirit in the 1st-Century, chooses life as ancient Israel was commanded to choose life on the plains of Moab.

And as the Book of Deuteronomy was the witness against the nation of Israel that crossed the River Jordan on the 10th day of Abib, the Book of Deuteronomy is the witness against the nation of Israel liberated from sin and death at the endtime second Passover.

The corner which initially seems like a trap was breached when Andreas Fischer led a small following of Believers into Sabbath observance in the 16th-Century.

Paul said that the Father who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to the mortal bodies of disciples through His Breath that dwells in disciples—Jesus said that as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will (John 5:21)—so the *giving life to mortal bodies*

that Paul referenced in his epistle to the Romans is not these mortal bodies putting on immortality, but raising these mortal bodies who are physically living but spiritually dead sons of disobedience from “the dead” by giving them life though receiving His Breath to dwell in them. And every Breath that comes from the Father is holy, and as such is a πνεῦμα ἅγιον.

It is the stepping up one level in a theological hierarchy that has confused and confounded endtime scholars; for as seen in the “P” creation account, succeeding days bring about higher taxonomical levels, with the “waters” of the second day becoming dry land and then vegetation on the third day. The first disciples are taxonomically the waters above the firmament. Endtime disciples walk on dry land as they follow Moses, who did not walk on water as Jesus did; for every endtime disciple will have been called while in spiritual Babylon, not in Judea where the first disciples dwelt when called.

There is no love for the Father or the Son when the person practices lawlessness, and every person who attempts to enter God’s rest on the following day does so from unbelief that becomes disobedience when acted upon.

7.

The Body of Christ actually died in the 1st-Century when a second generation of converts did not make journeys of faith, but remained where they were theologically. Death is, as Protestant theologians have argued, separation from God—but this pertains only until judgments are revealed. That is the kicker: when judgments are revealed, death is being cast into the lake of fire that Jesus will bring with Him when He comes as the Messiah. And in this realm where change is mandated by the passage of time, being cast into the lake of fire will cause that which has life, even spiritual life, to utterly be consumed by this otherworldly fire.

There have been ministers in the church of God who argued that angels cannot die, that Satan cannot die, that God cannot kill what He created . . . why can’t He? If He gave life, why can’t He take that life? What is to stop Him?

The timelessness of the heavenly realm dictates that the presence of life and the absence of life as incompatible states cannot coexist together; thus, all that has life in the heavenly realm has everlasting life that cannot be lost. But when cast into outer darkness, when cast into time, one moment changes into the next moment, and in the transition between moments, life can be lost so that which had life in the previous moment will not have life in the next moment. Death is sudden and spiritual death is permanent. That particular

life no longer exists, and will never again exist. So the lake of fire is not an under-heated rotisserie that is capable of melting plastic but not hot enough to consume utterly a person or an angel. Rather, heavenly fire in this realm consumes everything.

But before judgments are revealed, death is for spiritual entities separation from God of the type experienced by Jesus when He was made sin on the cross at Calvary: “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” (Matt 27:46). Unfortunately, the lawless do not realize that God has forsaken them, for they never knew God. Thus, the lawless merrily pursue their affairs in spiritual Babylon, singing praises to the Son and to the Breath of God, but refusing, yes refusing, to obey God. The lawless in Babylon broadcast their proclamations of lawlessness 24/7 to the world on satellite television. They strut on stage as spiritual bantams without any apparent awareness of how comical they appear, or of how far away they are from God. And every once in a while, they will startle themselves by stumbling over a spiritual truth, but they quickly recover as they go about their business of fiscally mauling the sheep they have captured.

Eternal life is possession of life in the timeless heavenly realm. It is nothing more; nor is it anything less. It comes from receiving life via receipt of the divine Breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ], and it needs a “container” in which it can be housed. It needs a tent of flesh or a tent of spirit, and it is here where the lack of words conveying things in the heavenly realm hinders communication: Paul wrote,

For we know that if the tent [*house of the tabernacle*—οἰκία τοῦ σκηνου], which is our earthly home, is destroyed, we have a building of God [οἰκοδομήν ἐκ θεοῦ], a house [οἰκίαν] not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. (2 Cor 5:1-5)

Paul separates the “consciousness” or self-awareness of a person from the person’s fleshly body, and says that this consciousness is clothed or housed now in a building that is of the tabernacle, this “tabernacle,” now, being a

larger building of many rooms. Thus, there is a commonality of humankind that ultimately states that all men are one with the first Adam, and are not separate entities . . . if all men [and women] are one with the first Adam, each dwelling in *a house of this tabernacle*, and if disciples are to be one with Christ Jesus and with the Father (John 17:21-22), and if in the Father's house there are many rooms (John 14:2), then the Father's house [οἰκίᾳ] is like the *tabernacle* of which each person is a separate house but part of one building. Humankind forms one tabernacle or building. God forms one house or building. Disciples will put on "rooms" [μοναῖ] or dwellings that are like the tents of flesh in which disciples now temporarily dwell.

God is one, for He is the Father's house.

Humankind is one, for all people are *houses in the tabernacle* of the first Adam.

When disciples are further clothed so that they will not be found naked, they will "dwell" in the house of the Father as they presently dwell in the tabernacle of the first Adam—they will be separate dwellings in a common house, the temple of God. One temple; one God; many rooms or dwellings, each like a house in the tabernacle of the first Adam, and here is additional scriptural support for disciples being called sons of God, and for disciples being one with God as younger siblings to Christ Jesus.

Many are called, but few will be chosen; for *the chosen*, the Elect, will be like Christ Jesus, who is one with the Father and the First of the firstborn sons of God. And again, it is not blasphemy for the son to proclaim that he is a son; whereas it is blasphemy for the servant to proclaim that he is a son. Thus, for a servant, an anointed cherub, to say, "I will make myself like the Most High" (Isa 14:14), this servant blasphemes God.

The Apostle Paul wrote,

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son [πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ] into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. (Gal 4:4-7)

It is blasphemous for those Christian theologians dwelling in spiritual Babylon to claim that they will be God, created to be like God, in His image and after His likeness; created as a "dwelling" or room in the house of the

Father—and they have the good sense not to claim that they will be like God. Of course, they don't know what they will be like other than they will be in heaven as shades like those shades Odysseus kept away from his blood sacrifice with his sharp sword were in hell. They are, themselves, characters in their own fictional stories about God.

Sin is the transgression of the law; sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). Sin is attempting to enter into God's rest on the 8th day, Sunday, a day about which God has said nothing. The sin of Jeroboam that caused the demise of the house of Israel, the northern kingdom of Samaria, included establishing a festival in the 8th month like Sukkot held in the 7th month. The sin of spiritual Israel in spiritual Babylon includes establishing a Sabbath on the 8th day like the Sabbath of the 7th day. And as long as Israel remains in Babylon, it dwells in death, separated from God, even though it is a spiritual nation.

From love for Israel, God will again liberate Israel as He did before, giving the lives of men as ransom for Israel's liberation (Isa 43:3-4). He will gather this spiritual nation from the North Country, the lively representation of Death, and from the four corners of the earth, and He will bring Israel into obedience.

But the "oil" and the "wine," the processed fruits of Judea, will not be sold as merchandise in the stalls of Sin, the third horseman of the Apocalypse. These disciples take the sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed, and these disciples have been separated by their faith from the pool of disciples keeping the Passover. They are "special" . . . at Feast of Tabernacles services in 1996 at Vail, Colorado, Mr. James Turner, a pastor I knew from Alaska and a pastor who remained with the new Worldwide Church of God following its doctrinal revisions, said to me, "Isn't it nice that we don't have to be *special* anymore." His words condemned him to separation from God that will eventually result in him being cast into the lake of fire if he doesn't repent; for all who are of God are special. Out of love for them, God will cast those who are not one with Him, who do not dwell in His house, into the trash that is burned in the lake of fire. And yes, people I like, people who are interesting and often fun to be with, but who are lawless—even my own children—will not be glorified unless they repent of their lawlessness. And this is the harsh reality of what it means to be special before God; of what Jesus meant when He said He did not come to bring peace but a sword. Christianity is not the passive, feel-good religion preached from pulpits in spiritual Babylon. It is a narrow path that is difficult to traverse. It is the way to the house of the Father, where disciples are rooms added to this one house. And because of the peculiar properties of timelessness, the Father knew from the beginning

how many rooms to add. We either are there now even though we are not yet glorified in his realm of unfurled dimensions, or we aren't and never will be there. We judge ourselves worthy or not worthy to be there by whether we will, by faith, live by every word that has proceeded from the mouth of God (Matt 4:4). Your fate is in your hands, for there is nothing stopping you but yourself from keeping the commandments if you have been truly born of the Spirit of God.

Listen to those preachers in Babylon who find in Paul's epistles, and especially in Galatians, scriptural support for their lawlessness—then read what Peter says,

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, *take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.* (2 Pet 3:15-17 emphasis added)

Yes, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless theologians, who as fat sheep, push aside and shoulder the lean sheep, those disciples who are not blessed with the abundance of this world, but with knowledge of God. God will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep (Ezek 34:20), and He will rescue His flock, bringing His flock into His house where they will dwell forever as sons.

* * *

Selected
Commentaries—
From the Margins

ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON

in an Anchorage pizza parlor
I sat behind four ministers
who each on TV that morning
had preached love & mercy
but now were haggling
over how to divide the money.

January 26, 2007

Commentary—From the Margins

Theological Fossilization

In 2003, *The Philadelphia Church* began as an association of fully autonomous fellowships, united in theology, thereby establishing the foundational basis for never allowing the work of a doctrinal committee to become “an appellate function rather than an administrative function” (*UnitedNews*, January 2007; p. 6) as it has become for the United Church of God, AIA . . . only where there is no growth in grace and knowledge does the work of a doctrinal committee shrivel into becoming an appellate function.

God dwells in timelessness: the defining attribute of heaven is its stability, for all that exists must function as one or the dilemma of a paradox will cause irresolvable gridlock. For in timelessness, one moment does not become the next moment, but remains as the domain within which all activity occurs. Thus, all activity interrelates absolutely. The glorified Jesus is one with His Father as glorified disciples will be one with Him. And within this unity of oneness—which the Apostle Paul likens to the human body, in which many cells that are nearly identical function together to do work—what every glorified disciple does must agree-with and support and seamlessly merge with what every other living being does during this same unchanging moment. Any conflict will cause a collision of agendas having the effect of a sabot between the gears of a windmill. So when lawlessness was found in an anointed cherub (Ezek 28:14-15), immediate purging of this out-of-sync element had to occur before all functioning within the heavenly realm ceased due to the opposing agenda. And the visible shadow of this opposition is seen in the rebellion of Korah, where another descendant of Levi and his supporters assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron, saying to Moses and Aaron, ““You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the

Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?” (Num 16:3). Korah advocated democracy—and what Korah then advocated today seems right to Americans, ruled by the same spirit that influenced Korah.

Would ancient Israel have entered into God’s rest [from Ps 95:10-11] if Moses and Aaron had turned power over to the congregation, over to Korah, in the wilderness? Or would Israel have returned to Egypt, what the congregation wanted to do upon hearing the report of ten of the twelve spies? And what event precipitated Korah’s rebellion: was it not the stoning of the Sabbath breaker (Num 15:32-36)? The writer of Hebrews, using typology, makes entering into Sabbath observance a corollary of Israel entering into Canaan (*cf.* Heb 3:16-4:11; Ps 95:10-11; Num chap 14). So Korah’s rebellion also serves as a shadow and copy of the great falling away (2 Thess 2:3) that will occur when the lawless one is revealed, with this mystery of lawlessness already present in Israel, and present since Paul wrote his second canonized epistle to the Thessalonians (*v.* 7). This mystery of lawlessness prophetically involves the little horn on the head of Death attempting to change times and the law (Dan 7:25).

The rebellion of Korah was the continuation of the rebellion of Israel in the wilderness of Paran. So Moses falling on his face and saying to Korah and all his company, “In the morning the Lord will show who is his, and who is holy, and will bring him near to [the Lord]” (Num 16:5), was the prelude to the Lord doing a new thing among men: in the morning, Moses spoke to the congregation, “If these men [Korah and his supporters] die as all men die, or if they are visited by the fate of all mankind, then the Lord has not sent me. But if the Lord creates something new, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you shall know that these men have despised the Lord” (*vv.* 29-30). And indeed, the ground split apart. A rupture or fissure formed. And the earth swallowed alive Korah and all that was his and all his supporters (*vv.* 31-35).

The new thing that God did when the fissure swallowed Korah forms the visible type of what happened in heaven when rebellion was found in an anointed cherub. As if resulting from shimmering strings of elemental energy colliding in an unfurled dimension, a rupture formed in the fabric of heaven, a rupture that swallowed the lawless anointed cherub and all of his supporters . . . these rebelling angels were cast into outer darkness; *i.e.*, the lifelessness of a physical creation subject to time, change, and decay. This creation, within a heavenly fissure for which no linguistic signifier was

assigned in Greek or English, is perhaps best seen in the Kabalist concept of *Tzimtzum*, the “space” created by God where free will can exist—where democratic ideals flourish, and the prince supporting these ideals is confined to death row.

Returning now to a doctrinal committee being assigned an appellate function: a court of appeals does not hear new evidence, but examines the evidence presented to the trial court to determine if the application of law to the evidence presented supports the finding of the trial court. If new evidence germane to the case becomes available, the appellate court will direct the trial court to reopen the case so that this new evidence can be examined by the trial court as it functions in its administrative capacity. If no trial court exists, then no new evidence can be presented. All that this doctrinal committee will now do is reexamine its own decisions and the evidence it initially accepted. So UCG’s doctrinal committee, by its own decision, has chosen to exclude from consideration any new revelation, or any thing done by God. It has fallen into the abyss. And biblical prophecies that were sealed and secret until the restoration of all things will, to this doctrinal committee, remain sealed and secret.

For example, Rome is not mentioned in the visions of Daniel although the Babylonian, Media-Persian, and Greek Empires are. It was the Greek Empire that divided into four administrative districts after Alexander’s death, and from these four administrative districts come two smaller empires [the Ptolemaic and Seleucid] that represent the shadowy kings of the South and of the North of the long sealed vision recorded in Daniel chapter 11. The abomination of desolation within chapter 11 would seem to be the Seleucid king Antiochus Epiphanes IV ordering that a statue of Zeus be placed in the temple’s Holy of holies and a pig be sacrificed on the altar. But Jesus said that this physical abomination was only a type of an endtime abomination that desolates, which the angel told Daniel would come 1290 days after the regular burnt offering is taken away. Plus, in Daniel’s interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar’s vision, Babylon, Media-Persia, and Greece will represent the gold head, silver arms and chest, and bronze belly and thighs, respectively, of the humanoid image Nebuchadnezzar saw. The two legs, now, because of the division of the image that occurs in the bronze portion, represent the Ptolemaic and Seleucid Empires, not the Roman Empire, which was not a divided empire when it conquered Greece. So one leg of the humanoid image Nebuchadnezzar saw represents the Egyptian/Greek Empire that ruled as the shadow and type of an endtime spiritual king of the South, while the other leg represents the Syrian/Greek Empire that ruled as the shadow and

type of an endtime king of the North, with Nebuchadnezzar representing the shadow and type of the spiritual king of Babylon, the fallen Day Star, Lucifer (Isa 14:4-21). And no Rome, Roman Empire, Holy Roman Empire, or United Europe is seen.

Since, now, the breaking of the Seleucid reign over the temple in present day Jerusalem by physical sons of light, the Maccabees, does not foreshadow, or form a copy and type of the endtime breaking of the spiritual king of the North's reign over the spiritual temple [the Church] in heavenly Jerusalem by Christ Jesus—this is what the king of the North sees when the heavens open (*cf.* Dan 11:44-45; Rev 11:19)—*the shadow of the endtime spiritual fulfillment of the prophet Daniel's visions ends with the abomination of desolation being set up 1290 days after the daily is taken away.* And for physically circumcised Israel, the “daily sacrifice” of a lamb morning and night became the “daily prayers” giving thanks to God after the destruction of the physical temple (ca 70 CE). For spiritually circumcised Israel, *the daily* was never the slaughter of physical lambs, but the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Thus, instead of “daily prayers” giving thanks, *the daily* is putting on Christ Jesus as a garment, with His righteousness covering the disciple in the form of Grace. And this daily putting on of Christ's righteousness will cease when Israel is spiritually liberated from indwelling sin and death as physically circumcised Israel was physically liberated from bondage to Pharaoh at a first Passover. Therefore, at a second Passover liberation of Israel, the lives of men will again be given because Israel is precious in God's eyes, honored, and loved (Isa 43:3-4). And this second Passover liberation of Israel will cause the first liberation not to be remembered (Jer 16:14-15; 23:7-8).

Rome is not mentioned in the visions of Daniel because Rome does not belong in these visions. Yet, the doctrinal committee that has become an appellate functionary for the United Church of God (UCG) has inserted Rome into its reading of the visions of Daniel, thereby adding to Scripture and taking upon itself the curses of God that will send this fellowship to its physical death during the 1260 days preceding the breaking of the abomination that desolates. Tens of thousands will have their faith strained to the breaking point when they are slain by 8th-day Christendom instead of going to a place of physical safety . . . for those disciples who keep the commandments yet lack the spirit of prophecy [the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy—Rev 19:10], the place of physical safety will be the grave. Sadly, though, disciples trapped within the administration of the UCG today believe that Herbert Armstrong had the spirit of prophecy, and that as long as they cling to what Armstrong taught, they too have the spirit of prophecy. Unfortunately for

them, Armstrong did not understand the visions of Daniel. He could not understand them, for he did not live during that generic period identified as the time of the end. His rejection of additional prophetic understanding preceded the beginning of the time of the end by forty years.

So close, yet so far from understanding: the Sabbatarian churches of God, collectively, lack any understanding of biblical prophecy. And the United Church of God, the second largest of the Sabbatarian churches of God [the Church of God, 7th Day, is the largest] has now returned to the theological error that caused the demise of its parent fellowship, which in the spring of 1962 rejected further prophetic revelation by God and choose to continue advocating what its founder then knew was a failed understanding of biblical prophecy.

The work of God, however, is not dependent upon any one man, or upon any collection of men. It will be executed by Christ Jesus, the *alpha* and the *omega*, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. So as the first three and a half years of Christ's earthly ministry closely preceded the formation of the Church when He breathed on ten of His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit [*pneuma hagion*—πνεῦμα ἅγιον]" (John 20:22), the last three and a half years of Christ's ministry (Rev 14:1-5) will closely follow when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28). The Church era or Church age fits in the lacunae between Calvary and when Satan is cast from heaven; between the accepted Wave Sheaf Offering (John 20:1, 17) and when the single kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man (Dan 7:9-14; Rev 11:15).

Disciples have assumed that when Jesus said that He is the *alpha* and *omega*, He meant that He was the entirety of the matter, the complete alphabet, but that was not His declaratory claim. He said He was the beginning and the end. However, based upon the assumptions made when reading Jesus' words to Peter, "I tell you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18)], disciples have concluded that since the Church will not die and since Jesus is the beginning and the end, then He and the Church coexist through the entirety of the Church era. But the Church is the Body of Christ. The gates of hell did not prevail against the physical body of the man Jesus of Nazareth although that body died on the cross. The grave, however, gave up the dead body of Jesus. Likewise, the gates of hell will give up the dead Body of Christ in a manner similar to how the garden tomb yielded up Jesus after three days and three nights.

Jesus' statement about the gates of hell not prevailing is not a declaration that the Church will not die, but that death can no more hold the Church than death could hold His earthly body.

Jesus is the endtime Elijah to come, the Elijah that will restore all things, the Elijah that will turn the hearts of born-of-Spirit sons of God back to their Father lest their Father strike this earth with utter destruction. But there can be no restoration of the dead Body of Christ—no resurrection by faith—when doctrinal committees become appellate functionaries. Therefore, UCG has now cut itself off from participating in the great endtime harvest of firstfruits.

The apparent solidity of matter requires change, requires one moment to become the next moment so that matter can be repositioned to another location. Whether disclosed in the rapid expansion of the universe in its first few moments or in the rather slow recession of a glacier, one moment must be succeeded by the next moment to allow the changed status and position of matter to occur. Fossilization of matter permits static observation of matter. Fossilization of doctrine permits the printing of many books and booklets that won't be affected by growth in grace and knowledge.

A work of God cannot be foiled by a thief or by broken promises or by outright deceit or by the fossilization of doctrine. And for the sake of the Elect, and for the Elect, we should all be thankful; for God is today doing a new thing, resurrecting the fossilized Body of Christ.

* * *

26 February 2003

Commentary—From the Margins

What the Watchmen Won't Tell You

Biblical watchmen are self-identified prophecy experts who feel compelled to warn nations, especially the United States, Great Britain and the former Commonwealth countries, that God's wrath is about to be fulfilled if the nations don't repent and return to obeying God. The underlying message of repentance is scripturally valid. Divine wrath will occur against individuals, not nations, who are not in covenant with their Creator. So the premise under which the watchmen warn of God's wrath has merit, but these watchmen inevitably lack both divine inspiration and basic reading skills, as they shill for purveyors of accursed gospels that involve scaring converts into supporting efforts to warn the world about the evils of the New World Order, or the Roman Church, or a rearmed Germany. They find in the visions of Daniel, and in the vision of John the scriptural passages they need to twist, as if these passages were pipe cleaners, into national alliances, each bent on the destruction of the United States. They joust with themselves, each a windmill grinding the good seed God planted into a gritty meal good for nothing. They come in as many styles and colors as GM cars, all with a spiritual I.Q. like a rock. They produce slick magazines, radio and television programs, and millions in tithes and offerings. But they will not tell you, that neither Rome, the Roman Empire, the Roman Church, nor the Holy Roman Empire are mentioned in prophecy by either their ancient or by their modern names; that the mark of the beast is not 666, but *chi xi stigma* [χξς'], which can be read as Xx[tattoo] or the tattoo of Xx; that Christ doesn't return when the armies surrounding Jerusalem are destroyed, but rather the true Antichrist is cast from heaven and arrives on earth when these armies are swallowed by the Mount of Olives. They don't tell you that there will be two

Antichrists, the first the man of perdition (a possessed human being), and the second a supernatural being that poses as Christ and attempts to establish a millennial reign during a period of continuous war. They don't tell you that converting assets into gold and silver will not help a person; that the future leveraged commodity is food following a period of climatic catastrophes, including a meteor strike; that more than half of the world's population will self-identify itself as Christian in the first half of seven years of tribulation; that two individuals, like Moses and Elijah before, will lead these spiritual Israelites out of bondage to sin (i.e., lawlessness); that prophecies which had a physical fulfillment will have a "spiritual" fulfillment; that there will not again be a physical captivity of the descendants of the ancient houses of Israel and Judah; that spiritual Israel (i.e., the Body of Christ) divided into the spiritual house of Israel and the spiritual house of Judah, with both houses being taken into spiritual captivity centuries ago; that the prophecies about which the watchmen warn the modern descendants of the ancient houses of Israel and Judah have been both physically and spiritually fulfilled; that God will not in the future send the descendants of the ancient houses of Israel into national captivity.

To teach that God the Father will bring about the loss of national sovereignty for any peoples prior to Christ's return as the all powerful Messiah is intellectually dishonest, scripturally unsupportable, and is emotionally a form of terrorism. Such teaching reveals a lack of understanding of what constitutes the new covenant. Salvation is individual, not national. Ancient Israel was made a holy nation when the assembled nation agreed to the terms of the Sinai covenant, but this holy nation as covenantee broke its agreement and eventually killed the Covenantor. Spiritual Israel then replaced physical Israel as that holy nation, but spiritual Israel is not a genetically similar people identified by physical circumcision. Rather, it is a nation composed of theologically similar people from all ethnic origins, people whose hearts and minds have been circumcised by having the law of God written on them. And spiritual Israel divided into two houses and both houses were sent into theological captivity in the 4th-Century for the same reasons that ancient, physical Israel had previously been sent into national captivity in the 6th, 7th, and 8th Centuries BCE.

The watchmen are sixteen centuries late with their warning for Israel to repent and return to the covenant relationship into which a drawn disciple is placed when the disciple receives the Holy Spirit.

Today, in the 21st-Century, biblical prophecy must be understood from the perspective of a spiritual plane, which will affect the physical world and secular

politics. God and Christ's focus, though, isn't physically circumcised Israel, but spiritual Israel, the Body of Christ. Yes, events will affect geographical Jerusalem, but theological Jerusalem is of more importance. When the spiritual Moses and Aaron, the two witnesses of the Book of Revelation, lead spiritual Israel out of sin and into the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land, their destination will be spiritual Jerusalem, not any particular set of geographical coordinates.

Theoretical Marxism will be able to offer a reasonable explanation for every single event leading up to the splitting of the Mount of Olives halfway through a seven year Tribulation. But even Marxist academicians will then accept the tattoo of the Cross of Calvary, for which no universally valid economic explanation exists, or they, too, will begin their journey towards spiritual Jerusalem, where I will leave the light on as was done along the underground railroad for escaping slaves.

* * *

March 25, 2003

Commentary—From the Margins

The Preaching of Hell

When Jonathon Edwards delivered his sermon titled, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” he galvanized the preaching of hell, fire, and brimstone with the zinc necessary for the concept of an ever-burning hell to withstand the ravages of revelation and reason. Unfortunately, Edwards, for all of his powerful intellect, never understood that eternal life is the gift of God. Without this gift, humanity dies as deer and dogs do. King Solomon assured ancient Israel that there is no distinction between humanity and beasts: all are of one breath, and all return to dust. But Platonic hubris says that cannot be. Hunter and hunting dog cannot both come to the same end. Surely some difference must exist. And Greek converts to Christianity, by rejecting the wisdom of Solomon, embraced philosophical hubris, and voluntarily accepted mental slavery, offered to them by the god of this world, the king of Babylon. They didn’t believe God, and two millennia later, a “Christian” ministry trained in historical exegesis accepts the intellectual bondage of the prince of the spiritual kingdom of Persia. They read Scripture, read that the gift of God is eternal life, but they cannot liberate themselves from the idea that human beings possess an immortal soul, received by the union of egg and sperm that occurs in or outside of wedlock. In their mental bondage to the spiritual powers that reign during this time of the Gentiles, they are unable to comprehend that for a soul to be immortal it must possess eternal life; it must possess the gift of God. Therefore, since the wages of sin/lawlessness is death, or the absence of eternal life, sinners do not receive the gift of God. They theologically cannot be in an ever-burning hell. They are, instead, in the grave, awaiting judgment. They are dead, knowing nothing and not existing in any state. They have or will shortly return to dust. Only their

names remain, recorded in a Book kept by the Most High God. If they are not resurrected from the elements of the earth, they will never live again. And to teach otherwise is to reveal oneself as still being in mental bondage to the spiritual princes of Babylon, Persia, Greece.

Liberation, however, from mental bondage is coming—that is the good news of Christ. For spiritual Israel, this liberation occurs at a forthcoming Passover.

The Lamb of God has already been sacrificed, but the slaughter of spiritual firstborns did not occur the night the Lamb was slain. Spiritual Israel didn't then exist. The second or spiritual Eve was not created until the evening after Christ's ascension (John 20:22-23). Children were not born until spiritual Eve was filled (as a husband fills his wife) with the Holy Spirit on that day of Pentecost. Spiritual Israel did not immediately go down to Egypt for spiritual food. The nation lived by faith in the hill country as spiritual Judeans. They kept the Sabbaths of the Most High. They kept His law. They were as the uncircumcised children of the Israelites who had left Egypt were: they lived by the second covenant of Moses (Deut chaps 29-31), while they prepared to cross the Jordan to glorification.

But famine entered the hill country of faith through the conversion of both Pharisees and Hellenistic Greeks. Pharisees wanted Greeks to become physical Israelites before they were accepted as spiritual Israelites; they figuratively wanted these Greeks to slip across the Jordan where circumcision awaited them (Joshua 5:2-5) instead of glorification. And these Greeks wanted assurance that heaven awaited them if they slipped across prematurely. So hollow promises were made as both returned, walking hand in hand, to Egypt, where the garlic and leeks of spiritual bondage awaited.

Once spiritual Israel returned to Egypt/Babylon, a future liberation became necessary. As the reality of the Egyptian Pharaoh whose heart *YHWH* supernaturally hardened so that a human could be the shadow of the devil, Satan will not voluntarily let his captives go. Instead, he will inspire his disguised servants who appear as ministers of righteousness to preach about being in the hands of an angry God, so that through intimidation, Christians will fear returning to the Most High God, who remains Love, who has promised not to give sinners eternal life.

You, who appear as a minister of righteousness, need to understand you will abhor yourself for what you have preached when you are spiritually liberated from mental slavery to Satan. Christ's promise is that you will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, if you are even there—if you are not of those to whom He says, *Get away from me, you evildoers.*

How can you recognize that you have been taken mentally captive? A truly deceived person doesn't realize and indeed cannot realize that he or she has been deceived. Thus, a mental mirror of some sort is needed so that you can see yourself as you are. You as a minister of spiritual Israel know that one exists. It is the word of God. But because you assign meaning to words, you need the magnification offered by this mirror in one specific passage: "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace, because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom 8:6-7). Is your mind subject to the law of God? As a condition of the new covenant, the laws of God have been written on your heart and mind (Heb 8:10 & 10:16). Are you subject to what has been written on your heart and mind?

Jesus said that to break the least of the commandments will cause you to be called the least in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:17-19). Are you subject to the least of the commandments? Test yourself. Do you keep the Sabbath as Jesus did, and as He would if He lived within you? Your answer will reveal to you whether you are carnally or spiritually minded. And remember, to be carnally minded is death. It isn't to live eternally in an ever-burning hell.

Two future liberations occur: the first is of spiritual Israel: i.e., of all of Christianity not presently keeping the laws of God. The second is of the remainder of humanity when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Messiah (Rev 11:15 & Dan 7:9-14), halfway through seven years of Tribulation. This is the open salvation about which Joel prophesies (2:28-29).

For the entirety of the last 1260 days prior to Christ's return as the all-powerful Messiah, Satan's former slaves have to accept the mark of the beast (*chi xi stigma*, or the *tattoo* of *Xx*) to remain in mental bondage to him. However, Satan will have been cast from heaven; he will be here claiming to be the messiah. He will, because of him still being the king of fallen Babylon, control the world's economic systems. For a second period of three and a half years, genuine disciples will be required to live by faith. A trip back to Egypt will earn a person a share in the wrath of God.

There is presently a battle being waged for the control of the mental landscape of every person hostile to the law of God. This battle is being fought between the spiritual king of Greece and the spiritual prince of the kingdom of Persia. The king of Greece will win, will establish a new world order, and will control the mental landscapes of commentators and politicians, ministers and lay members. But the spiritual great horn of this Greek king will be broken when no one remains to be deceived. This great horn, or first

horn will be broken the night of that spiritual Passover when all of Israel is liberated, when Christ turns His hand against two-thirds of spiritual Israel. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God, especially when being under His shed blood would have protected the disciple from the death angels. But it is far more fearful to be, as an evildoer, ordered away from Christ's presence on the person's Day of Judgment. If that happens because the person has consistently refused to be ruled by Christ, then he or she will, indeed, be thankful that the person does not have eternal life.

As a rebel, on the day of your judgment, you will regret your refusal to submit your thoughts to the reign of Christ, but your torment will only last the length of time it takes to again end your conscious life. God as Love has no ever-burning fire prepared for eternal torment. Rather, He has an age-ending fire that will prepare glorified humanity for life in the new heaven and on the new earth. This age-ending fire will consume Satan himself (Ezek 28:18-19), thereby forever ending his rebellion and the preaching of hell. And you should have believed the warning you just received.

* * *

February 12, 2003

Commentary—From the Margins *[This is the first one]*

In the conclusion of *Holiness, Righteousness & the New Covenant* [2002 edition], I wrote,

“President Bush speaks of bringing democracy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, which is nothing more than the demonic king of the North muscling his ideology into the historic domain of the king of the South. War is inevitable as the geographic edges of the spiritual realms slip and slide as if these realms were tectonic plates. Boundaries are ideological, theological, so wars without winners can spill out of the margins and into heartlands

“In these margins where ideology overlaps culture, taboos are broken with impunity. Edges melt at the boundaries of spiritual realms. But new edges will form, and can be mapped: possibly, both Iran and Turkey will align themselves with the king of the North as the new edges are extended.

“But the theology of lawlessness stretches across cultures as if it were a nylon stocking over the head of a thief. It masks the demon who will pose as the risen Christ. It conceals its fissures, where an attack might be launched. It deforms its edges along which war will eventually be waged. And it ensnares allies, absorbing them into a gelatinous colony of half-digested amebas. Nevertheless, the battle has been joined. The technology by which the king of the North devours with its iron teeth and bronze claws allows this beast’s underbelly to be probed by printed words, each book like a flea that will eventually drive the beast insane.”

When I wrote the above, I didn't understand that what the Church of God labels as "nominal Christianity" is the actual nation of spiritual Israel in captivity to the spiritual king of Babylon. Christ labels *nominal Christianity* as the "synagogue of Satan" (Rev 3:9), and as I better understand prophecy, I understand that Christ intends to liberate all of spiritual Israel from spiritual bondage just as *YHWH* through Moses liberated physical Israel from Egyptian slavery. This liberation will be the remembered event throughout Christ's Millennium reign. This is the Israel for which there is a highway built. This is the Israel that will live in and around spiritual Jerusalem, which has theological, not geographical coordinates.

Just as Hitler invaded Poland to gain a common border with the Soviet Union, the nation he intended to attack, President Bush will invade Iraq to establish a common border from which the Athenian values of America can be surgically inserted into Islamic cultures, which seem to revel in the warrior cult values of ancient Sparta. Yes, the spiritual entities that empowered Athens and Sparta and used those two poleis as living sets of tin soldiers are, today, restrained only by the dominance of the great horn, the firstborn son of the spiritual king of Greece. When he is supernaturally broken at the Passover that liberates spiritual Israel, the spiritual kings of the North and of the South will no longer be restrained, but will attack each other with a fury that would leave no flesh alive if those days were not shortened by Christ coming to fight as on a day of battle.

Armies surrounding Jerusalem is not a sign of Christ returning as the all-powerful Messiah, but of Him coming to slay the demonic king of the North on a day of battle, a day on which He takes 144,000 physical Israelites to a place of safety, the day on which He liberates all of humanity from spiritual bondage, the day on which Satan is cast from heaven and comes to earth, declaring himself to be Christ and requiring those who wish to serve him to accept the tattoo of the cross of Calvary. And many newly liberated humans will accept his slave mark [$\chi\xi\varsigma'$], thereby returning themselves to the spiritual bondage with which they have grown comfortable and by which they have prospered materially. They will believe they are the true servants of God, and they will curse God when the Father's wrath rains down on them.

Today, the United States and a coalition of nations front for the spiritual king of Greece, who will establish a new world order, one that is spiritual but carries piggyback a secular manifestation, visible for all to see. It has been said that the 20th-Century was the American century—actually, it was the last century of the Medo-Persian ram that pushed north, and west, and south from Susa. The spiritual king of Greece will trample this ram, the symbolic

representation of the spiritual *sars* that carry France, Germany, Russia, Greece, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and most of the world's nations. A he-goat flying out of the west is the symbolic representation of the new world order the United States will establish, a world order that isn't the production of the United Nations, or of a united Europe, but of the endtime descendants of the ancient house of Joseph, the patriarch who established Egyptian hegemony through the distribution of food.

While all eyes are on oil, oil production, and oil reserves, the theological successors of the Vandals shall overturn, again, their long time Trinitarian rivals by bartering food for spiritual servitude. That food is already stored and only awaits the ecological catastrophes that will make it valuable enough to cause hungry Trinitarians to sell the souls they think they have for bowls of porridge. But not enough food has been stored: the theological successors of the Vandals will be more successful than they have anticipated. More than half of the world's population will identify itself as part of greater spiritual Israel. So the means by which these neo-Vandals prevail will also be the cause of their tragic downfall.

The new world order that the United States and its allies establish will break as soon as it succeeds, leaving humanity to the merciless kings of the North and of the South. President Bush will only temporarily succeed in establishing an American hegemony in the Middle East. For a short while, though, we will be as successful as Alexander the Great.

I wrote the conclusion to *Holiness* in October 2002. It is now February 2003. What I needed in October was a common border from which to attack the theological synagogue of Satan. That border is the error of Bishop Arius.

* * *

February 15, 2003

Commentary—From the Margins *A Response to “Coming Ashore”*

In *Time’s* February 17, 2003, issue, Charles Krauthammer writes, in his Viewpoint piece, “Coming Ashore,” that the war with Iraq isn’t just to disarm Saddam, but to reform a whole part of the world. Indeed, it is, for this war signals the replacement of one world order with a short-lived another, one that will be broken while it is still ascending in power just as Alexander the Great’s reign ended when he had no more enemies to conquer.

Biblical prophecy has been the nearly exclusive domain of Evangelical Christianity, the theology of President Bush, who can see in text (Rev 9:15) that at some specific hour four angels presently bound at the river Euphrates will be loosed to kill a third of humanity. As the President of this nation and as a born-again Believer with the available authority to eliminate weapons of mass destruction in and around the river Euphrates, he is without choice: he must do what he can to remove WMDs from this region and to eliminate the possibility of their return. To do anything less is irresponsible to both the citizens of this country and to the third of humanity whose death is prophesied, for prophecy can be abolished.

Theoretical Marxists find an economic cause for every societal action (they do not have to look far for one in our squabble with Saddam), but our coming ashore is prophesied in the visions of Daniel—if not our coming ashore, then the intervention of a lone superpower coming out of the west. The meaning traditionally assigned by Evangelical scholars to Daniel’s Greek he-goat that tramples the Medo-Persian ram has the prophecy being fulfilled by Alexander, but the vision is for the time of the end; it was sealed and secret and not understandable by anyone until that generic period. So all traditional understandings need scrapped, as the intervention taken to eliminate WMDs

from the region will bring about the prophesied destruction, making the President's actions those of a Cassandra.

The Athenian values of democracy and political correctness are those of the spiritual king of Greece, which explains why France, Germany, and Russia will only, after the fact, support the toppling of the present world order. Two topplings will occur, one physical or secular, the other spiritual. The secular toppling can be easily predicted. Oil, oil production and oil reserves are its catalysts—but as oil men, the President and Vice-President know that oil is not a finite natural resource, but is renewable at a not yet determined rate. So oil is only the toppling's lubricant. The issue is truly the installation of democratic reform instituted worldwide in an attempt to bring peace and prosperity to human society, thereby demonstrating that there is at least one social construct which will deliver all that it promises.

France, Germany, and Russia's objection to the US's coming ashore is not visibly predictable, and pertains to them being the spiritual spokes-nations for the spiritual princes of Persia, the presently reigning *wicked spirits in high places*. The king of Greece's trampling of these spiritual *sars* will provide the context for war between Trinitarian and Unitarian or Arian Christianity, with the two "kings" over Trinitarians and Arians being subordinate kings to the great horn or first king of the king of Greece, a federation of demonic spirits.

Western cultures pride themselves on being the masters of their destinies. We philosophically reject the concept that we are pawns of spiritual powers in an unenterable dimension, yet that is the undeniable claim of Christianity: God governs the affairs of men. Yes, this is true. We believe that we have individual freewill, but we are collectively lab mice confined to a round cage, with every person consigned to disobedience or sin (Rom 11:32).

God has given prophecies, has sealed them, and has now unsealed them to establish His credibility with humanity. And what He has unsealed reveals that the single superpower flying out of the West will be suddenly broken. Four lesser powers [or kings] emerge from the breaking of this single horn. These four consolidate into two.

The biblical watchmen who would have us fretting about the forthcoming war with Iraq lack spiritual discernment, evident by their continued anti-Rome bias. They will still be looking for a united Europe to emerge as the world's premier superpower when ecological and military catastrophes make all life in Europe tenuous. There will, indeed, be another world war, one in which two thirds of humanity perishes. President Bush's good intentions will only set the stage for the rearrangement of the world order necessary for food, not

oil, to be the leveraged commodity, thereby shifting the primary battlefields away from the Middle East.

Yes, world war will be *coming ashore* to a field near you. Food will be the weapon that topples Trinitarian Christianity as God softens psyches prior to the liberation of humanity from spiritual bondage to lawlessness. Liberation always seems to involve *coming ashore*.

* * *

24 February 2003

Commentary—From the Margins

Marxism vs. Prophecy

How was it that Noah could, for more than a century, build an ocean liner in his backyard and his neighbors remain unaware of *Elohim's* intention to drown humanity? The question can be dismissed by asserting that the Flood narrative is fiction, an allegory to match the equally allegorical fire that will again destroy the face of the earth. Or the question can be trivialized by asserting that the Flood was a localized phenomenon, a local legend exploited by early moralists to impose order over superstitious herdsmen and farmers. Or the question answered by saying that of course Noah's neighbors knew what he was doing, but that they didn't believe that Noah spoke for God, that they believed God was love and wouldn't destroy innocent life.

Jesus says that immediately prior to His return, cultural conditions will be as they were in the time of Noah. The implication is that the prophesied, endtime Tribulation will take humanity by surprise. But that seems hardly possible when a large segment of Christianity believes that we are presently living in the time of the end, that the Rapture could occur anytime, that Christ could return at any moment. And therein exists how this segment of Christianity can be taken by surprise: if the Tribulation precedes any rapture of saints, those who look for saints to escape divine catastrophes by being taken to heaven before these catastrophes occur will, indeed, be as surprised by fulfilled endtime prophecies as Noah's neighbors were when it began raining.

But the mass of humanity is not Evangelical Christian, is not Christian at all, and even in the United States, the majority of the nation doesn't believe that the God of ancient Israel will directly intervene in the affairs of men; for this God has delayed coming far longer than my grandfather did when I was sent out to the barn to await a promised spanking—my grandfather waited long

enough that my cousin and I were having a wonderful time chasing chickens before he showed up with a yardstick, made of a good grade of beech. This God's promised return has been delayed so long that theoretical Marxists will be able to explain every event leading up to Armageddon.

We see this today: France's opposition to the United States militarily engaging Iraq can be explained by economic causes. Iraq supplies France with significant quantities of oil, and Iraq owes France debt that will be uncollectible under a democratic regime. It is not in French interests to have Saddam toppled. Nor is it in French interests to have the United Nations made impotent; France will never again acquire veto power over the actions of the United States, Russia, and China. Plus, there might well be French fingerprints on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, if any really exist. So for very explainable reasons, France resists the implementation of an American hegemony in the Middle East.

What we don't see is that France and Russia are the leading spokes-nations for spiritual powers [*sars*] behind the existing world order, or that these spiritual powers are presently engaged in a raging turf war in the spiritual realm governed by the *Elohim* [*Theon* and *Theos*]. We don't see that the spiritual king of Greece will utterly trample the spiritual *sars* of Persia, and by extension, Babylon.

The spiritual king of Greece has a great single horn, which is his firstborn son that will fly out of the West, carrying away all opposition just as Alexander the Great did.

Humanity refuses to perceive itself as a manipulated species: we are the masters of our destinies, or so we want to believe. The idea that we don't determine our collective fate is intellectually repugnant and philosophically alien; yet the underlying construction of Christianity is that "God" governs the affair of men. The story of Nebuchadnezzar living as a beast concludes with the restored king acknowledging that the Most High God can give the kingdom of men to whomever He will—and His will has been made known in the prophecies and visions recorded by Daniel.

Theoretical Marxism solves two problems associated with prophecy. It eliminates the need to believe in a God that rules over humanity, and it excludes many of the prophetic readings of would-be experts and biblical watchmen. There will not be yet another revival of the Holy Roman Empire under the EEC/EU banner, with Germany as the dominant power. Won't happen. Rome is nowhere mentioned in prophecy, let alone in endtime prophecies, which were sealed and secret until that generic period identified as the time of the end, the period beginning approximately a year ago. A future

pope will not be the man of perdition: that prophesied man of perdition must theologically hold the error of Bishop Arius. And Christ does not return when armies surrounding Jerusalem are destroyed—the one who will then claim to be Christ and who will require everyone to receive a tattoo of the Cross will be the true Antichrist.

Marxism, like evolution, offers humanity a reasonable explanation for what God does and has done without acknowledging the existence of a spiritual or supernatural realm. Natural forces, economical or biological, determine the course of humanity, thereby indirectly deifying “nature.” And like evolution, Marxism makes more sense from a distance than it does when examined closely. It answers questions of a general nature better than it does questions that are specific, such as why would two oil men like President Bush and Vice-President Cheney implement an action that will exert downward pressure on oil prices when they know that oil is not a finite resource, but renewable at a yet undetermined rate? Why would these two oil men not allow oil prices to climb above \$40 a barrel, thereby making extraction from oil shale practical, or production from vegetative sources practical, or production from fields like Alaska’s Cook Inlet that has a high water content practical?

When I lived on the Kenai Peninsula, drillers told me that the oil-bearing strata under the Inlet was 1,500 feet thick as opposed to the 55 feet thick strata under Saudi Arabia, but that the Cook Inlet strata was fractured shale which had allowed water to seep into the deposit, making drying the oil too expensive under our “old oil” pricing structure. Two oil-men, such as Bush and Cheney, know that we don’t need oil from Iraq. Although Iraqi oil will indirectly benefit this nation by artificially depressing the price per barrel, that indirect benefit will come back to bite us unless existing fields refill at a rate faster than reason suggests, which might be the case since I am not privy to the same technological information that Bush and Cheney have.

So the existence of Iraqi oil provides the economic justification for excluding fulfilled prophecy as the reason we will bring democracy to the citizens of that nation while, at the same time, overturning an existing world order. Yes, we will be successful regardless of when we engage Saddam. We will be successful beyond even our expectations. For a short while, democracy and political correctness will sweep through the region. But just as French peasants were not ready for democracy in 1792, or Russian peasants weren’t in 1917, or German workers weren’t in 1918, Islamic fundamentalists are not ready for democracy. In the historic succession of Napoleon, Lenin, Hitler, a four-headed king of the South will emerge following the breaking of that first horn of the spiritual king of Greece.

When the first horn of the spiritual king of Greece is broken no Marxist will be able to explain how this first horn was broken—the “why” is that there will again be a Passover like the one when Moses led ancient Israel out of Egypt. Two men, like Moses and Aaron, will lead spiritual Israel (i.e., greater Christianity) out from bondage to sin, which is lawlessness.

The Old Testament’s morals of 18th-Century Puritanism will return to Christianity with a vengeance—actually, the morality of 1st-Century Christianity will return. Half way through seven years of Tribulation, when armies surround Jerusalem Marxists will explain about food shortages, about food being leveraged to produce spiritual disciples for denominations that hold the error of Bishop Arius, about how the meteor strike has disrupted European economies, about how only the United States and Russia had the land mass necessary to absorb the use of weapons of mass destruction. And they will neither expect the arrival of Satan as the Antichrist, nor the return of the Messiah forty-two months later. I suspect it is my job to read prophecy for them, so that they can fit their explanations into a prophesied framework, given, then sealed until the time of the end.

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March 7, 2003

Commentary—From the Margins

The Case Against Iraq

Last night, President Bush firmly and solemnly established the case that nothing short of overturning the existing government in Iraq will satisfy the United States' need for, and sense of national safety. His mindset, his administration's mindset changed with the attack of 9/11. Containment was no longer a strategic option. The President said that he swore on the Bible to protect this country, our Constitution, me. And I wonder if he realizes that the decisions he will make, and the actions he will take during the next few weeks and months will impact national sovereignty and individual safety more than the collective decisions and actions by all preceding Presidents; yet, he probably has no choice about what he will do. If he does nothing, there will be another Islamic provocation. And if whoever is then President does nothing, there will be another until we fly out of the west to trample the physical remains of the Medo-Persian Empire, thereby instituting a new world order and ushering in what would be the American Century if it were not the time of the end, that period in history when one age ends and another begins.

Today, a clear division about how to read biblical prophecies has become apparent: the watchmen of all denominational flavors see in France's, Germany's, and Russia's opposition to a war in Iraq the rise of a unified Europe that will eventually unite with the Roman Church to become the dominant superpower in the world, the beast power that will impose peace in the Middle East through a man declaring himself god, thereby forcing everyone to take the mark of the beast in order to buy and sell. They see every world event through Cardinal Red glasses, and they couldn't be more blind. Europe will not prevail, but will become irrelevant if it doesn't join with the United

States in establishing a democratic hegemony throughout the Islamic world, a hegemony that has within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

Moses set forth two guidelines for prophets: first, the prophecy the prophet spoke must come to pass; and second, the prophet must not cause the people to go after strange gods. Three and a half millennia later, the office of prophet has fallen on hard times. With no new prophecies being recorded since the reigns of the Caesars, and with each would-be prophecy expert reassembling poorly deconstructed Scriptures according to his or her denominational exegesis, would-be prophets and prophecy experts should thank God that community sanctioned stoning is no longer practiced. For too long, the Roman Church has been Protestantism's boogeyman. Each Pope was potentially the man of perdition. The sacramental wine he drank was the blood of Protestant saints. The whore of Revelation chapter 17—the great city that rules over the kings of the earth—was Rome, even though the name on her forehead reads, Babylon the great.

If we were to apply the same standards of getting it right to prophecy experts as were applied to prophets, we would find that the experts are false, each worthy of being stoned. No one who finds Rome, the Roman Church, or the Holy Roman Empire in the prophecies of Daniel or Revelation is genuine. All are impostors. All will be blindsided by the spectacular ascendancy of an American religion that holds a sophisticated form of the error of Bishop Arius; a religion that will leverage food into discipleship.

But before food shortages occur, the United States, with or without a supporting coalition, will, as the fronting nation for the spiritual king of Greece, fly out of the west to trample the nations fronting for the spiritual *sar* of the kingdom of Persia, which is an extension of spiritual Babylon. While rifle shots might only be exchanged in the Persian Gulf region, real war is being waged between fallen angels in the spiritual realm. France, Germany, Russia, modern Greece, Iraq, even the United Nations itself—all are fronting nations for the spiritual *sar* of Persia, and for the world order that he has established.

Intellectual Modernism and Post-Modernism require lip service be given to the idea that humanity is the master of its own destiny, but at best the idea is only partially true. We believe that, individually, we have free will, but collectively we execute schemata beyond our control. Historic events often seem to have lives of their own. These events overtake the individuals involved, as if the individuals were lab mice responding to outside stimuli—and we are lab mice, according to the concept of “deity.” We are air-breathing tin soldiers, positioned here, moved there, advanced, retreated, arrayed in this formation, or that one.

Can President Bush not overturn the existing world order? No, not really. He might not want to, but forces beyond his control are, indeed, at work.

Until the time of the Gentiles runs its course, the kingdoms of the world aren't of God, regardless of how much we want them to be. The ruler of this world is the devil, who desperately wants one of his organizational constructs to vindicate his rebellion against the Most High God. But he reaps what he sowed: he sowed rebellion, and is now reaping rebellion. And concerning the spiritual *sar* of Persia/Babylon, the Most High God inspired Daniel to write, "when he has become strong through his riches" (Dan 11:3), this *sar* shall provoke the spiritual king of Greece, causing this enraged angelic king to trample the Persian *sar* (Dan 8:7), as one world order is replaced by a short-lived another. The provoking has occurred, and was cited by President Bush as having changed our perspective about handling future security threats.

The Most High God sealed the visions of Daniel with a physical fulfillment of the longest and most detailed prophecy in the Bible. The biblical watchmen and would be prophecy experts recognize this fulfillment, and thereby fail to realize that the prophecies are records of events in the spiritual realm occurring today and in the near future.

Endtime prophecies are the revealing of what happens and will happen in a dimension that we cannot enter to make observations and calculations. Except by revelation, we would not even know of the existence of this spiritual dimension, and only by faith will we give credence to revelations about what occurs in this dimension. Without faith, though, God doesn't exist for us, even though He will forcibly make His existence known at the conclusion of this age.

Because the watchmen explicate prophecies they can neither read, nor understand, they kill the faith of wannabe disciples through their errant explications. The watchmen can only cry, *Rome, Rome*, a limited number of times before they cause biblical prophecies to be dismissed as so much hooey. Whereas the recording, sealing, and revealing of age-ending events should cause doubters to reconsider their denial of God's existence, the watchmen have produced the opposite effect, leaving all of us to deal with being intellectually discredited whenever we introduce biblical prophecy into a serious discussion of historic events.

But we are living through a pivotal moment in prophecy: the spiritual king of Greece will prevail against the *sar* of Persia. One world order will replace another. Democracy and what we regard as democratic ideals will sweep all other contenders from the arena of ideas. But shortly after establishing an American hegemony, the first horn or great horn of the spiritual king of Greece

will be broken in the manner that Alexander the Great's reign was broken when he had no more world's to conquer. From that first horn's breakage will come two coalitions that will front for the spiritual rulers known as the kings of the South and of the North. The United States will be divided, partly for the demonic king of the North's coalition, and partially for the king of the South's coalition, with both coalitions theological rather than political. I suspect we will be mostly for the king of the North, but we really don't want to be for either.

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February 27, 2007

Commentary—From the Margins
“ $\chi\xi\varsigma'$ ” —*Chi Xi Stigma*
Can These Three Letters Be Read?

Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all of the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of [alternate reading: on behalf of] the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. And it was allowed to give breath [$\piνευμα$] to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is $\chi\xi\varsigma'$ [*Strong's* #5516]. (Rev 13:11-18)

Have three Greek letters, purporting to represent a number and the name of a man, ever been more poorly translated than *chi xi stigma* as the Arabic numeral 666? The textual call for wisdom apparently went unanswered; for in Indo-European languages of which Greek is one, the Arabic numeral /6/ phonetically requires a /x/ sound. In Greek, “six” is *hex* [ἕξ], the verbally aspirated /x/ sound. So three “sixes” will require the repetition of the /x/ sound three times as in “six hundred sixty six.” But the /x/ sound only occurs once in *chi xi stigma*; plus, “600” is written as ἑξακκòσιοι, not as /χ/.

The logic for translating χξς as 666 comes from /*chi*—χ/ visually appearing as an /x/ and from /*stigma*—s/ representing two sharpened or pointed sticks, as it two crossed sticks, which could also be made to visually appear as an /x/. So the wisdom behind framing one phonetic /x/ with two visual /x/s—as if the two visual /x/s were the two thieves on either side of Jesus—was enough for someone in the 10th-Century or earlier to produce a mistranslation that has caused a Western cultural aversion to the numeral /666/. Thus, a Senate bill with a §666 is perceived by some fundamentalist Christians as an Antichrist manifesto, especially considering that this bill might limit their ability to say silly things about God.

The above passage is nearly all that has been written about the “mark of the beast,” with the remainder of the references being to God bringing destruction upon those individuals who have taken this mark onto themselves. So to “read” χξς with the required wisdom, a person must return to the above passage, which is part of John the Revelator’s vision that doesn’t occur until the Lord’s day is at hand (Rev 1:10), when the described phenomena will soon happen (*cf.* Rev 1:1; 22:6-7, 10). And here true wisdom is required: if this vision of John’s is about events that have not yet happened—as would be the case if John were in vision on the Lord’s day, a specific period of time beginning when the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ (Rev 11:15—*cf.* Dan 7:9-14; Rev 11:15-19)—then the unsealing of the scroll seen in the vision (chaps 5-6) has not yet happened. And if this scroll remains sealed, then all of what occurs within the vision after the seals are removed remains to happen. The scarlet woman and the red dragon and the heavenly signs and the kingdom of this world becoming the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ—all of these things [and events] are futuristic. Likewise, the messages to be delivered to the seven named churches also remains futuristic, meaning that the seven churches on the ancient Roman mail route through Asia Minor have a hypostatical relationship with seven endtime spiritual churches that cannot be visually seen, but exist in the heavenly realm on the Lord’s day.

The prophecy pundit who purports to understand the things of Revelation can only read the back of the scroll at best (Rev 5:1), for those things within the scroll remain sealed. So what the angel told John about not sealing up “the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near” (Rev 22:10) speaks from a rhetorical position that remains in the future. Therefore, contrary to popular belief, the book of Revelation has been sealed to all those who thought it unsealed through the narrative device of the vision occurring on the Lord’s day, which is not a day of the week as too many teach but that period in time when Satan is cast to earth and the single kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man (*cf.* Dan 7:9-14; Rev 11:15-19) . . . a more expansive view of the Lord’s day would have it begin when the seven endtime years of tribulation begin, but even this expansive view still places the Lord’s day in the future from the perspective of being within time.

John’s vision has had its detractors throughout the centuries. Two major Christian theologies—Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism—do not place much credibility in the book of Revelation, for both subscribe to the position that the kingdom of God is now here on earth in the form of the Church, a position that allows “the Church” to participate in the civil governance of nations. They hold to a “realized eschatology” that ascribes to Jesus saying, “The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, “Look, here it is!” or “There!” for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you” (Luke 17:20-21) the meaning that the kingdom of God arrived with the first Advent [first coming of Jesus] and has been here ever since, even though Jesus also said, “My kingdom is not of this world . . . my kingdom is not from this world” (John 18:36).

Participation in civil governance when this world remains consigned to disobedience and ruled by the “prince of this world,” the Adversary of Christ Jesus, means participation with Satan in a joint venture analogous to the physically circumcised nation of Israel helping to rule Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon. The prophet Daniel, by being made a captive, helped make Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom function, as did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So a pattern exists for a born of Spirit Israelite to help make Satan’s Babylon function more smoothly and more fairly, but this pattern also has Israel being the eunuchs and bondservants to the king of Babylon.

The Church, because of its lawlessness, like natural Israel before it, was delivered by God into the hand of the spiritual king of Babylon, with this lawlessness of the Church most easily observed by the day on which the Church attempted/attempts to enter into God’s rest. Even if it repents, Israel cannot enter into God’s rest on the following day (Num chap 14). And because

the Church is not a physical assemblage but the fellowship of those who have been born-of-Spirit (John 3:3-8), the Babylon to which God delivered the Church was also not a physical nation, but the single spiritual kingdom of this world, presently ruled by the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), the spiritual king of spiritual Babylon (Isa 14:4-21). So as Daniel held the reins of power in Babylon while Nebuchadnezzar was incapacitated, the Church held the reins of power in this world for a comparable length of time.

When the seventy years prophesied by Jeremiah had passed, Daniel prayed to God for the release of Israel from captivity—Daniel never leaves Babylon, nor does most of Israel—and God answered Daniel’s prayer through the seventy weeks prophecy (Dan chap. 9). Thus, in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia [also king of Babylon—Ezra 5:13], Cyrus issued a proclamation that God had charged Cyrus with building Him a house in Jerusalem, and a remnant of natural Israel left Babylon for Judea (Ezra chap 1). This was the first of three decrees, the last made in 451 BCE. And the kings of Persia built a house for God in Jerusalem, using a remnant of Israel to do the work and to staff this house. This was not a house built by free Israelites, something that should not be overlooked.

Note well: God ordered the construction of this house in Jerusalem through the auspices of the secular king of Persia. This is not a house like Solomon built, but the work of a foreign king and a still captive people. Likewise, after twelve centuries of formal captivity, a remnant of spiritual Israel left spiritual Babylon to rebuild the spiritual house of God in heavenly Jerusalem. This leaving of Babylon occurred in the 16th-Century when reformers sought to rebuild the Church that produced the Borgias. But leaving spiritual Babylon requires leaving civil governance to the spiritual king of Persia. The followers of Martin Luther used civil government to wage war against the Holy Roman Emperor. The Swiss Reform Movement also used civil government to enforce its reforms, leaving only the Radical Reformers—the Anabaptists—to actually separate themselves from the spiritual prince of Persia, an agent of the king of spiritual Babylon. And the price in blood paid by these Radical Reformers was too great for them to continue their aggressive evangelism: they became “quiet” folk, as the Amish are today. They compare nicely to natural Israelites living Beyond the River, still subjects of the kings of Persia but free to worship God with a little bit of autonomy. Today’s “plain folk” that come from the Radical Reformers are spiritually lifeless shadows of their Anabaptist ancestors. They are apologizing agents for the “enthusiasm” of their ancestors, and of *my* ancestors—and it was the enthusiasm of the Radical Reformers that nearly turned the world upside down before it was time for Christ Jesus to return. It

is now time to return to that enthusiasm, and to quit being spiritually lifeless dolls that the Adversary plays with whenever he is bored.

No Christian leaves spiritual Babylon and the administration of Satan when that Christian participates in civil governance. The preacher who uses his pulpit to preach against civil officials—even against the political corruption of these officials—makes himself an agent of the prince of this world, who reigns over a divided kingdom that is presently embroiled in internal strife.

If Jesus' kingdom, the kingdom of God [or of heaven], is not of this world or from this world, then His kingdom can only be "other worldly," meaning that Jesus' kingdom is not like kingdoms of men, whether secular or theocracies. It is, again, the same kingdom that the prince of this world presently reigns over through being "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience" (Eph 2:2). Halfway through the seven endtime years, this prince of the air will be cast from heaven and into time (Rev 12:9-10). Then the One who will rule the kingdom of God will be the life-giving Spirit, Christ Jesus, the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45). And the kingdom of heaven will be a kingdom in heaven, where human beings who have been born of Spirit have life. Thus, even when Christ Jesus returns, His kingdom will not be of this world, or even on this earth. Rather, it will be "over" this earth through reigning over the mental topography from which thoughts of humankind sprout, take root, and grow as weeds or wheat. He will rule over the "inside of the cup," which when clean makes the whole cup clean. Hence, He will reign not with physical means or through physical force, but by imparting His mind and His nature into human beings just as Satan now imparts his nature and mind into humankind.

Who will seriously argue that the Borgias were anything other than a family of corrupt men reigning over earthly kingdoms in a manner closely resembling how Hitler and Stalin reigned over Germany and Russia respectively? Who will argue for political intrigue, murder, adultery, lying, deceit, warring being of God? Who will argue for the selling of indulgences being of God? Who will argue for the suppression of knowledge and learning being of God? Who will argue for child molestation being of God? Who will argue for the Roman Church being of God? A billion Catholics, you say? One of every seven people alive.

Who will argue with Jesus who said that "the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many; for the gate is narrow and way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matt 7:13-14)? Who will argue that being one of seven makes the person one of the few in this world? No sane person, certainly. So who will

argue that one in seven follow the narrow path and the difficult way? Who will argue against many are now called to be disciples, but few will be chosen (Matt 22:14)? Would not the few be those who keep the precepts of the law, having their uncircumcision counted as circumcision (Rom 2:26) in a world where being uncircumcised is celebrated as liberation from the Law of Moses. Would believing Moses cause a person's walk to be hard? Jesus said, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words" (John 5:46-47). How, indeed? The few are those who believe the writings of Moses and the words of Jesus. The few are not one of seven, or even one of seven million. The few are truly few in number. They are as rare as ivory-billed woodpeckers, a species not long ago thought extinct.

Those Christian theologies that teach a realized eschatology are large and powerful, but they are assemblies of spiritual illiterates; for if the kingdom of God is now on earth, it is not anything to be celebrated or commemorated. The visible Christian Church has made itself a hissing and a cursing in this world, something that humanity would really be better off without. Yes, the world would be better off without the large reservoirs of hypocrisy that exist within stone cathedrals. For Christians have as high or higher divorce rates than the world in which they live, producing broken homes and a culture of guilt-laden children wondering what they did wrong to cause mommy and daddy to break up. Christians receive as many traffic tickets as those who are of the lawless world in which they live. They are no different from their neighbors, with the exception that they are more self-righteous and less willing to admit that they are sinners. They don't see themselves as God sees them. They don't see that doing their shopping on the Sabbath, then attempting to enter God's rest on the following day causes them to mock God. They don't see that eating vermin prevents them from being holy as God is holy (1 Pet 1:15-16; *cf.* Lev 11:45; 19:2). They are not of "Israel," that nation whose hearts are circumcised "by the Spirit, not by the letter" (Rom 2:29) of the law. They are, indeed, of the nations of this world; they are spiritual Gentiles that deny Christ through their acts and attitudes while singing praises to Jesus with their mouths—they are like Israel in Babylon, the nation that with very few exceptions bowed down and worshiped the gold image Nebuchadnezzar made (Dan 3:7). "Christians" today worship the golden image constructed by the prince of this world; they "worship" wealth, cars, houses, the finer things in life. Their preachers strut around on stage in silk suits, bragging that it isn't just drug dealers who can have the best this world has to offer. And there is the problem: the best this world can offer isn't enough for those who are of

God, for this world cannot offer “life.” It can only offer death, crucifixion on crosses of gold and silver, VISA cards and BMWs. It sells the lives of men as it sells sex, painted and airbrushed, hard and lean, the work of the prince of the power of the air, that spiritual Adversary who would devour all of humankind if permitted, the Adversary who would transform every person born-of-Spirit back into a groveling bondservant begging a boon from this king if he could.

Reading the mark that requires wisdom begins not with /χ/, but with the last letter /ς/—*stigma*—an obsolete letter used to represent a number as /π/ represents 22/7s. The letter /ς/was between the fifth and sixth letters of the Greek alphabet, but the letter had not been in common usage for a century when John recorded his vision; thus, the use of /ς/should clue the auditor that there is something unusual about the three letters that would cause the third letter to function differently than the first two function.

The last letter of the mark, /ς/, has a name that carries with it a relatively narrow “usual” assignment of meaning: for those disciples who have grown familiar with Strong’s, the number is 4742, *στιγμα*, from the root *στιζω*, usually meaning “to stick” or “to prick” as in a mark incised or punched to denote ownership. Thus, *stigma* is the action of pricking or punching a mark of ownership; it is used as the Greek linguistic icon that most closely is aligned to the English icon /*tattoo*/. It is a tattoo, or the action of tattooing. It does not produce the Arabic numeral /6/ in any reasonable form of translation, or transliteration. And since this letter alone represents a “mark” or “marking” as in ownership, the remainder of the “mark of the beast” should, logically, be that mark or should describe that mark which is tattooed as the sign of ownership.

Here wisdom is truly required: *YHWH* said to Moses, “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, “Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths [note the plural form], for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you”” (Ex 31:12-13). So the Sabbaths of God, with these Sabbaths listed in Leviticus chapter 23, are “a sign” that God sanctifies Israel, the nation that now consists of Jews with circumcised hearts (Rom 2:29). Therefore, when that old dragon, Satan, and his angels are cast to earth (Rev 12:9-10), two signs exist: the first sign (1) is the Sabbaths of God, a sign made between God and Israel that this holy nation (1 Pet 2:9) may know that God sanctifies none other. The second sign (2) is /χξ/, the tattoo, /ς/, of which on the hand or in the forehead [referring to a mindset] denotes the person being the property of the beast that the whole earth follows as the whole earth worships the dragon (Rev 13:3-4).

Now add, the dragon, when cast into time, goes after the remnant who keeps the commandments and have the testimony of Jesus (Rev 12:17); so, since keeping the commandments requires keeping the Sabbath commandment, the sign that the offspring of “the woman” of Revelation 12:13-17 bears is the Sabbaths of God, the first sign, the sign that denotes those human beings who have been sanctified by God during the first half of the seven endtime years of tribulation, when the man of perdition attempts to change times and the law (Dan 7:25).

If the sign of those human beings who have been sanctified by God—the sign of those who constitute the holy nation Israel, a people with circumcised hearts that was not before a people (1 Pet 2:10)—is observance of the Sabbaths of God, then those human beings who take the tattoo, /s/, of *chi xi*, /χξ/, the second sign, do not observe the Sabbaths of God. Therefore, during the first half of the seven endtime years, observance of the plural Sabbaths of God marks those who are sanctified by God in a manner analogous to how χξς´ marks those who are of the beast and who will be slain by Christ Jesus on His return (cf. Rev 19:20-21; Isa 66:15-17). And the prophet Isaiah offers more information about those whom the Lord will slay upon His return: “Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one in the midst, eating pig’s flesh and the abomination and mice, shall come to an end together, declares the Lord” (66:17).

God sanctifies those who observe the plural Sabbaths of God, with Sabbath observance being an outwardly visible sign of divine sanctification. The tattoo of χξ marks those who do not keep the Sabbaths, and who sanctify and purify themselves, who eat swine flesh, and who will be slain by Christ Jesus . . . does anyone recognize a theology that does not keep the plural Sabbaths of God, that eats swine, that sanctifies itself through its liturgy? Hold that recognition for a little while before being appalled.

Now, returning to the front of χξς . . . the first letter, /χ/, produces the phonetic /chl/ sound, and is the common substitute for /Christ/ as in /Xmas/ for /Christmas/. The Roman Emperor Constantine claimed to have seen the superimposed Greek letters *chi-rho* or /χρ/, the operating system by which Microsoft sought to conquer its competitors, as a heavenly sign on the eve of a battle against overwhelming forces. Constantine used the sign to energize his legions, while publicly professing conversion to Christianity, saying that it was he, not Bill Gates, who would conquer by the sign of the tipped cross. And his troops won the battle and prevailed throughout Asia Minor, thereby consolidating the empire that had shortly before been divided among four regents.

Constantine's conversion to Christianity is not how "conversion" works scripturally; plus, his actions after his alleged conversion suggest that nothing other than political expediency occurred. So what really happened when Constantine said that he saw a cross in the sky remains shrouded in the political realities of the day; nevertheless, it was Constantine's acceptance of a Greek belief paradigm—openly placed before the philosophical gates of Rome as Greeks had earlier placed a wooden horse before the gates of Troy—that brought an end to the Roman emperor-worship cult by which the empire had long sustained itself. And it was Constantine's acceptance of /χ/ as a representation of the "Christ" that has made the "cross" the universally recognized symbol of Christianity.

A Roman made /χ/ the sign of Christ, not God.

Since early in the 4th-Century, the /*cross*/ equates to /*Christ*/ throughout the Roman world and all of Western civilization. Even today, the correspondence of visual sign, /χ/, and lordly title, /*Christ*/, remain inseparable. Only a few minor denominations and fellowships, with the Jehovah Witnesses being the largest, do not use the cross to represent Christ. Even scholars regularly translate the Greek linguistic icon /σταυρός—*stauros*/ as the English icon /*cross*/, when *stauros* would have a usual object-to-icon assignment of a "stake" or "pole set upright" if it were found outside the Bible.

Whether Jesus was crucified on an upright stake or on the traditional lower case "t"-shaped cross remains debatable if resolution of this controversy is restricted to Scripture alone, or even to archeological evidence. But when using wisdom to read "the mark of the beast" the Roman introduction of the cross to represent Christ strongly suggests that Jesus died on an upright pole to which was affixed a crossbeam.

The infamous χξς´ is the name and number of a man: the name of the man is "Christ."

Since a Roman made /χ/ the shortened representation of Christ, and since Jesus was killed on a Roman "σταυρός—*stauros*," inscription of the middle letter, /ξ/, or /*see*/, in Latin characters as an /*x*/ is within the logical restrictions of the concept of Thirdness . . . if the three letters, χξς´, were to be read by a 4th-Century Roman, they would read as /*Christ-x-tattoo*/.

How would a pagan Roman have read the mark of the beast: χξς´? He or she would have read it as the "tattoo [ς] of Christ's [χ] cross [ξ]." How should an endtime disciple read χξς´? As the "tattoo of Christ's cross"? Yes, this is how χξς´ should be read. Why, then, is χξς´ translated as 666? Because someone centuries ago could read the mark of the beast as a politically sensitive symbol—would you, as a scholar in a Mediaeval scriptorium, have gone to

your patron and said that “*the Cross*” is the mark of the beast? To do so would have been suicidal as well as against personal beliefs held because God had consigned the Church to mental servitude in spiritual Babylon. No one was released earlier than twelve centuries after the Church was “officially” sent into its Babylonian captivity at the Council of Nicea (ca 325 CE-1525 CE). Those few disciples who tried to escape were unsuccessful, as was most of the remnant that left as Anabaptist Enthusiasts. A very few, such as Andreas Fischer and some of his followers, escaped for long enough to reach spiritual Judea, that mental landscape Beyond the River denoting obedience to God.

A dishonest mistranslation of $\chi\xi\varsigma'$ was really the only option facing Mediaeval translators. But the logic for the Cross becoming the universally recognized symbol of Christendom is truly remarkable; for if Jesus would have been killed with a mace, would a “mace” become the revered symbol of the Savior? What about an axe? An AK-47 assault rifle? A tomahawk cruise missile?

The person who wears a crucifix wears the image of a murder weapon.

The Cross is the image of the beast that was dealt a death wound by God, a wound that occurs when the two witness are publicly resurrected; when the Holy Spirit [$\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\iota\omicron\nu$] is poured out on all flesh, thereby liberating everyone from indwelling sin and death. The mark of the beast is the mark of “Death,” the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse (Rev 6:7-8), the fourth beast of Daniel chapter 7, on whose head is ten horns, three of which are uprooted before the little horn that is the workings of Satan who enlivens and empowers the man of perdition. The mark of Death is $\chi\xi\varsigma'$.

When Satan is cast to earth, acceptance of the tattoo of the Cross is acceptance of the mark of death—this person has just marked him or herself for death when Christ returns. This person is today a “Christian” in one of the many visible denominations that do not keep the Sabbath and would have its members sanctify themselves. And there is little anyone can do to cause this person to cease worshipping Death, the beast to whom God will deliver a mortal wound half way through the seven endtime years. Not even the death of Jesus and of two parts of humankind is enough (Zech 13:7-8) until the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh.

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June 20, 2007

Commentary—From the Margins *Circumcision & the Synagogue of Satan*

The entire course of the history of Israel and Judah is pervaded by blasphemy of God's word, by persecution, derision, and murder of the prophets. Judging them by history, these people must be called wanton murderers of the prophets and enemies of God's word. Whoever reads the Bible cannot draw any other conclusion.

Martin Luther
(*On The Jews and Their Lies*. Trans.
Martin H. Bertram.)

Nor can anyone who reads the Bible draw any other conclusion than that the Christian Church, judging it by history, is a wanton murderer and an enemy of God's Word; that the Christian Church has committed the same abominations Luther condemned in Israel and Judah. When has the state Church not persecuted, tortured, and killed disciples holding "heretical" beliefs? It wasn't Islam or Judaism that hung Andreas Fischer for his Anabaptist Sabbatarian beliefs, or twelve years later, lopped off his head to finish the work the hangman's noose could not complete. No, it wasn't Judaism that pursued Anabaptists through Alpine mountain communities until only the "quiet folk" remained alive. It wasn't Judaism that drowned Anabaptists. It was the followers of Luther and of the Swiss Reformers. It was Christians who believed in a two-kingdom doctrine—and in the left-hand kingdom, it was perfectly acceptable to hunt down my ancestors because they practiced "Believers'

baptism.” Yes, Christians, not Jews, not Muslims, hunted my ancestors as if they were deer nibbling turnip tops in the king’s garden. They hunted them down to kill them, not just to drive them to the uttermost corners of the world. Yes, Christians who behaved at Nazis hunted my ancestors until Anabaptists in German-speaking lands were silenced in a final solution.

Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world, nor from this world (John 18:36) . . . this heavenly kingdom has not yet been delivered to Jesus even though He qualified to receive it two millennia ago; this kingdom that is not of this world is what Luther identifies as the right-hand kingdom of God. And the Son of Man will not receive this kingdom until spiritual Babylon is cast down (Dan 7:9-14; Rev 11:15). Until then, the single kingdom of this world remains the dominion of the prince of disobedience and his cohorts, a reality that would seem to be in conflict with the Apostle Paul writing, “For there is no authority except from God, and those that have been instituted by God. . . . [The ruler, king or emperor] is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer” (Rom 13:1, 4). Therefore, any discussion of the kingdom of God must address (and if necessary, refute) what Luther wrote about two kingdoms; for Luther justified the state murdering dissenters through the state being the servant of God who was to execute God’s wrath on evildoers.

This is not an issue from the past that is not likely to again plague Christianity; rather, this issue will be in the foreground, alive and bloody, throughout the seven endtime years of tribulation. Now is the time to begin a frontal assault on Luther’s two-kingdom error—and this assault must begin with identifying the synagogue of Satan, a body of sincere believers who lie to men and God; for the synagogue of Satan will regain control of the reins of Luther’s left-hand kingdom once the Tribulation begins. And circumcision of the heart will divide humanity as circumcision of the foreskin once did.

In the 16th-Century CE, the old and the new Church compared infant baptism to circumcision of natural Israelite males on the eighth day. Neither understood what circumcision signified (nor did most of Judaism); for circumcision is, perhaps, the least understood ritual within all of religiosity. Therefore, Anabaptist theologians did not employ the argument that would have vacated the validity of Protestant Reformers’ objection to Believers’ baptism.

If circumcision were primarily an inclusionary rite, as Reformers’ taught, why clip the foreskin of the penis and then conceal the evidence of this ritual by the modest apparel of daily wear? Other primitive rites of inclusion include facial tattoos and cuttings, distinctive attire or adornment. So why separate a

man from the remainder of humanity in a way that is only visible when the man is naked? And what role does “nakedness” play in the ritual?

The Lord God—*YHWH Elohim*—created a man from red clay, the dust of the ground, and breathed life into the nostrils of His creation, thereby transforming base elements into a breathing creature, a *nephesh*. There was then neither another living creature, nor any vegetative life, contrary to what is popularly taught by “Christian creationists.” The first Adam, the man of mud, was not created on the fifth or sixth day of a seven day creation week, but on “the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens” (Gen 2:4), and after the Lord God made this first breathing creature, God “planted a garden in Eden, in the east” (v. 8), and there He put the man He had formed. There He gave the man the single 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” (vv. 16-17).

What kind of a “tree” bears knowledge of good and evil? Not any tree listed in today’s nursery catalogues, nor recognized by an arborist. So this tree has about it a symbolic quality that asks the reader to assign an unusual referent or linguistic object to the linguistic icon. Now, understanding that God covered Adam and Eve’s nakedness with garments of skin, and understanding that Adam was the covering for Eve, a concept that will be addressed shortly, assigning a similar referent to the skin garment God made as would be assigned to a tree bearing knowledge of good and evil causes the foreskin of the penis to symbolically be this animal skin covering God made for Adam in the garden. Thus, when this covering foreskin is removed, a man is naked before God as Adam was when covered by his obedience to God—Adam was naked without realizing that he was naked. However, once he was no longer covered by obedience, he realized his state. He became as the Apostle Paul writes of himself:

What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.” But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. (Rom 7:7-11)

For Paul, knowledge of the law equated to Adam eating forbidden fruit, and sin coming alive to slay him equates to Adam realizing that he was naked. Thus, being naked before God—that is, not being covered with the garment of obedience—produces death, or is death, so every circumcised person, whether of foreskin or of heart, must have a covering of obedience. The person who is only covered by his or her obedience loses his garment and becomes naked before God with his or her first knowing transgression of the law. Therefore, the letter of the law kills, and the commandments carved in letters on stone form a ministry of death (2 Cor 3:6-7); whereas the Spirit gives life through Israelites circumcised of heart putting on the garment of Christ Jesus' righteousness, thereby covering themselves with Christ's obedience. Hence, physical circumcision after being born of Spirit becomes a shedding of Christ's obedience and reliance upon the person's own obedience to cover his nakedness before God.

It is important to remember, according to the second Genesis creation story, that the man was created outside of Eden and that he was created first, created before there was any other life. This man was created on the day when God made heaven and earth; he was created on day one . . . Christian and Jewish apologists attempt to explain away the obvious contradiction between this creation account and their reading of the Genesis chapter one creation account, but they are wrong when they do so. The first Adam was a type and shadow of the last Adam, Christ Jesus, now a life-giving spirit (Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:45). As no human being preceded Christ Jesus to heaven, no living creature was formed from the dust of the earth and placed in the garden of God before God placed the first Adam in His garden.

There was no "light" in this world before the *Logos* (Λογος) as *Theos* (Θεος) entered this world (John 1:14) as His Son, His only Son (John 3:16). The man Jesus of Nazareth said,

The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light. (John 12:35-36)

He identified Himself as "the light" and His disciples as "sons of light." Those who do not hear His words and who do not believe the one who sent Him have no eternal life dwelling within them (John 5:24); they are spiritually lifeless; they are sons of darkness, who inevitably believe the lie of the old serpent, Satan the devil, that they shall not surely die (Gen 3:4) for they have

an immortal soul. These sons of darkness include those individuals that form the synagogue of Satan.

The world can fairly be divided into sons of light and sons of darkness or disobedience. All of the sons of light were at one time sons of disobedience (Eph 2:2-3; Rom 11:32). They did not, at birth, become sons of light; rather, they became sons of light when they were born of Spirit.

Within the great classification of sons of darkness is a subset that lies to man and God: this subset claims to have been born of Spirit, hence they claim to be Jews ["Christians"—Christianity began as a sect of Judaism; it should still appear as a sect of Judaism]. But their lawlessness proves that Satan is their true father. Unknowingly they have lied to themselves by convincing themselves that they have been born again or born anew and that God is their Father; yet, they do not submit to God's law. Instead of submitting, they voice their profound ignorance by saying that since Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (Matt 5:19), they do not have to keep the Law . . . they are not the children of God. If they were, they would, by faith, attempt to cover themselves with obedience. Thus, they remain the children of disobedience, bondservants to sin, and enemies of God.

The Judaism of the Qumran Community [Dead Sea Scrolls] foresaw an endtime conflict between the sons of light and the sons of darkness, a cataclysmic conflict that would leave most of humanity dead. This community perceived that a struggle between *good* and *evil* would see *good* prevail.

The sons of light will prevail, but not through physical warfare. Lawlessness or sin is not defeated with swords or battle tanks. It is defeated with obedience, and it can only be defeated by obedience to the laws of God.

Unfortunately, the Qumran community was also without spiritual understanding even though they were not far from enlightenment . . . when sin and death entered the world through Adam eating forbidden fruit, this man of mud took to himself the determination of both good and evil: human beings now define "good" within their understanding of the concept, and this includes the ancient Qumran Community.

According to God, however, eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil made a person evil . . . "evil" is nothing more than determining for oneself what is good. Making such a determination causes the person to be a judge of God, and of His commands. Determining for oneself what is good causes the person to rebel against God as Korah rebelled against Moses in the Wilderness (Num chap 16). After all, do you not have a good mind? Are you not capable of determining what is right and what is wrong? You are, aren't you? So hasn't God taken too much onto Himself when He tells you that, say,

homosexual activity between consenting adults is evil? Or that the revealing gown of a female entertainer is not “modest” apparel? According to the great horn, the first king of Greece, God has taken too much onto Himself.

Sounds plausible? Seems reasonable?

What did Korah do that Democrats don't do when Republicans have the Presidency? If Luther's teaching about a left-hand kingdom of God were true, then what is the role of political opposition other than to oppose the servant of God that He has appointed as a terror to bad conduct?

The person who determines for himself or herself whether he or she will obey God is a rebel of the same type as Korah was and as the anointed cherub in whom iniquity was found (Ezek 28:14-15) is. This person is of Satan, the father of rebellion and the father-figure of the first spiritual king of the rebelling coalition that is the king of Greece. This person is an evildoer even if this person “decides” that he or she will keep the commandments of God because they are good moral principles by which to live.

How, you ask, can a person who keeps the commandments of God be evil?

Keeping the commandments (the reasonable expectation of all who are of the household of God) does not, of itself, produce righteousness or cleanse hearts so that they can be spiritually circumcised. Faith and belief, two sides of one coin, are counted to a person as righteousness; the journey of faith from this world and its great city of Babylon to Judea and on to the heavenly city of Jerusalem cleanses hearts. Thus, by faith the person who would be righteous will keep the precepts of the law (Rom 2:26), and will have his or her uncircumcision counted as circumcision. This person will begin to keep the law as his or her expression of love for God while the person is yet far from God (Deut 30:1-2), while the person dwells in a far land. Yes, this person has chosen to keep the commandments, but not because the person has determined that the commandments are ten principles that will produce goodness and happiness. Rather, this person, in turning to God when estranged from God in a far land, will do that which the person knows will please God as an expression of love for God. Keeping the commandments, now, becomes a making straight of the way to God—keeping the commandments comes as an expression of the person's rejection of this world and its values, and becomes the evidence of repentance.

Keeping the commandments because doing so is the cultural expectation in which the person matures produces no journey of faith, no righteousness, and is merely doing what is expected of the person. This person, like Timothy was, must still make a journey of faith, which will usually be an extended evangelistic mission.

Korah was a Levite. He had the “right” to come near God. So his complaint that Moses and Aaron had gone too far, that “all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them” (Num 16:3) had a logical basis . . . doesn’t Korah’s complaint sound legitimate and like something that should be discussed? It does, doesn’t it? So why should God do a “new thing” (Num 16:30)—unless, of course, this new thing reveals how and what happened in the heavenly realm when iniquity was found in an anointed cherub?

The essence of democracy (self-determination) is the essence of evil. Democracy itself is a “cultural construct” that comes from the spiritual king of Greece, that coalition of demonic rebels which rule the appetites of the flesh (the bronze belly and loins of the humanoid image Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision). And democracy is just one construct among many that have been imposed upon the sons of darkness, who are not limited to being witches and warlocks, Hindus or Buddhists, atheists or agnostics, but include reasonable Jews and Christians who have chosen to keep the commandments of God because they form the tradition of the community, or express godly principles for “right” living whereas obedience from faith will have the disciple keeping the commandments because God said to.

Yes, you, Christian, you who claim to be born of Spirit are of the synagogue of Satan if you still present yourself as an obedient servant to sin. By your acts, you reveal that you have not been drawn from this world and set free from the disobedience to which God consigned all of humanity (Rom 11:32). Yes, you can know that you are of the synagogue of Satan by whether you keep the precepts of the law: “the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed it cannot” (Rom 8:7). So what you, as a member of the synagogue of Satan, disclose about yourself even when you “decide” to keep the commandments is that you cannot. You cannot because you are still the bondservant of the prince of this world; hence you are of the synagogue of Satan.

All those who say they are “Christians” but who do not keep the laws of God (i.e., the commandments the ΛΟΓΟΣ as ΘΕΟΣ uttered from atop Sinai and repeated by Moses in the second covenant) are liars. Collectively, they form the synagogue of Satan . . . it’s not enough to keep eight of these commandments, or even nine; for all ten of these commandments form the law of God, and when one of these commandments is broken, the person breaks the law of God (Jas 2:10). And those who are of the synagogue of Satan will break the commandment they consider least (Matt 5:19), the Sabbath command; for they reject liberation from bondage, which under the second covenant is the reason for remembering the Sabbath and keeping it holy (Deut 5:15).

The person who is of the synagogue of Satan, a son of darkness who has broken into the household of God as a thief, will inevitably keep Sunday as his or her Sabbath; for this person must break one of the commandments. This person cannot—on the authority of the Apostle Paul having laid the foundation for the house of God in heavenly Jerusalem (1 Cor 3:10-11)—keep the commandments; this person is hostile to God and will not submit to God’s rule over him or her. This person has not, regardless of what he or she believes about himself or herself, been born of Spirit so this person does not have the Holy Spirit. This person lies when he or she says that the person has been born again, or born anew. Rather, this person is spiritually blind, living in darkness, groping for truth in all the wrong places. And what this person perceives as enlightenment is being taken into the confidence of Satan, who comes disguised as an angel of light.

Writing with boldness and comparing the gospel of Christ with Moses, saying that unlike Moses who put a veil over his face after descending from talking with God disciples reflecting the glory of the Lord are transformed into the same image of Christ, one degree to another, the Apostle Paul said,

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is only veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor 4:3-6)

Where does God say, *Let light shine out of darkness*? Does He not say this on day one (Gen 1:3)? And is this light not seen in the face of Christ Jesus, the image of God? Is, then, Christ Jesus not the light of this world, the light of day one of a creation week which has the Spirit of God hovering over the waters of humanity?

As no air breathing creature was created prior to the man of mud, no human being had spiritual life, received from the divine Breath of God [Πνευμα Ἅγιον—or *Pneuma Ἅgion*], prior to when the Holy Spirit descended as a dove upon the man Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, the lifeless corpse of Adam—the elemental elements of this earth [mud] formed into flesh and bones and appearing as a man but without the breath of life—is the

type and shadow of the living man, Jesus of Nazareth, circumcised of flesh, before the divine Breath of the Father descended upon Him as a dove. Thus, God placing the man of mud in His garden, a type and shadow of heaven, is analogous to the man Jesus entering the temple, where God had created spiritual beasts that the last Adam would name: Hypocrites, blind guides, serpents (Matt chap 23).

To get inside the physical temple, a man had to be physically circumcised. (He had to be a Levite to get into the sanctuary.) But physical circumcision only placed the person in the spiritual equivalent to the garden of God—in other words and this is a primary concept to remember, physical circumcision makes a man naked before God as Adam was naked when God placed him in the Garden of Eden. Again, the only covering Adam had was his obedience to God, but Eve was covered by Adam's obedience. Thus, sin does not enter the world when Eve eats forbidden fruit. Adam's obedience covered His wife, who was bone of his bone. Rather, sin entered when Adam ate of the same fruit (Rom 5:12): they both then knew they were naked (Gen 3:7). They were no longer covered by obedience.

Eve does not say that she was naked after eating forbidden fruit. The sparse account has both of them realizing they are naked after Adam eats.

A beast is naked before God but without knowledge of being uncovered. Its hair coat (if it has one) is its only covering; so beasts are clothed as Esau was (Gen 25:25) in the womb of Rebekah—and Esau is hated [disrespected] while still in the womb . . . Esau's circumcision on the eighth day nevertheless made Esau naked before God despite his natural hair covering; thus, as a man, Esau covered his nakedness with clothes (Gen 27:15). But again, Esau was hated by God while still in the womb (Mal 1:2; Rom 9:13); he was hated before he had done good or evil. He was rejected as if he were a beast rather than a son of God.

Sadducees and the Pharisees, naked before God because of their circumcision but without awareness of their nakedness (they sincerely believed that the works of their hands made them righteous), are the spiritual equivalent to the beasts the first Adam named in the garden of God (Gen 2:19-20). They covered themselves with their own righteousness, but none of them kept the law of God (John 7:19) even though they were excellent readers of the law (Luke 10:25-28). They were without faith (Rom 9:30-32) and without love for their neighbor. And without faith, no one can please God.

Natural Israel was, with a few exceptions, rejected by God as Esau was rejected—and as the greater part of those who have been born of Spirit (i.e., true sons of light) will be rejected because, while under Grace, equivalent to

the womb of Rebekah, they covered themselves with their own righteousness, their own bloody coat of hair. They claim to be covered by the blood of Jesus, but if this were true, they would use this garment of Christ's righteousness to practice walking as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6), and Jesus walked as an Israelite of His day, keeping the annual Sabbaths as well as the weekly Sabbaths.

This is what has not been previously recognized: Esau does not symbolically or spiritually represent lawless Christendom, those self-identified disciples who claim to be born of Spirit but who, by resisting God and refusing to keep His commandments, show that they are liars (1 John 2:3-4). Rather, *Esau represents Sabbatarian disciples who cover themselves with their own righteousness by not taking the Passover sacraments on the night Jesus was betrayed.* Together, Esau and Jacob represent Sabbatarian Christendom, with the largest denomination of Sabbatarian Christendom—the Seventh Day Adventists—not taking the Passover sacraments on the night Jesus was betrayed.

Yes, Sabbatarian Christendom, composed mostly of one super denomination that follows a false prophetess, chooses for itself who will wear the hair coat of a prophet. It chooses whom it will obey, and too much of Sabbatarian Christendom has obeyed con men, ad men, and a channeling woman . . . the one great denomination within Sabbatarian Christendom has prospered in this world by gradually making itself a part of this world, a process that began a half century ago. This denomination, seeking converts from the synagogue of Satan, has adorned itself as a worldly woman. It became a member of national and international religious associations; it added *the cross* to its logo. It became “respectable,” but its teachers are liars. Its god has become the prince of this world. And no one should be surprised, for those who have been born into this great Sabbatarian denomination have made no journey of faith for two, three, four generations; they have not cleansed their hearts. So this denomination is now led by Satan's servants disguised as ministers of righteousness (2 Cor 11:15), with these ministers teaching generation upon generation not to be like Jesus, who covered His nakedness produced by His circumcision with obedience to “every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt 4:4).

Yes, Samuele, the woman prophetess you defend prevents you from keeping the high Sabbaths of God. Ask yourself, Samuele, where do you go to show when the Sabbath day begins? Do you not go to the command to keep Yom Kipporim (Lev 23:32)? You do, don't you? So why don't you also keep the holy day, which is, certainly, “a shadow of the things to come” (Col 2:17) but a shadow of that which has not yet been completed; for Christ Jesus, as the reality [substance] of the Azazel goat, still bears the sins of Israel

in a far land. He will continue to bear these sins until spiritually circumcised Israel is liberated from the indwelling sin and death that presently resides in the members of every disciple (Rom 7:21-25). Only then, when the second Passover liberation of Israel is an historical event, will the shadow be fully replaced by its reality.

Because disciples of Christ Jesus are covered by the garment of Christ's righteousness (this garment identified as Grace), when they sin they are as the first Eve was when she ate forbidden fruit. They are as one of the two sons of promise born to Isaac: Esau or Jacob. No sin is imputed to them; they are not naked before God. They form the now covered Body of the Son of Man. But—and here is the caveat—disciples of Christ Jesus have all been born of Spirit. They are all sons of light. They are not part of the synagogue of Satan, for they willingly submit to God's law. In fact, they eagerly submit to too many teachers of the law, each speaking his or her words. They are as the saints at Corinth were (2 Cor 11:3-4).

When the first Adam named the beasts, there was no other man; when the last Adam named the spiritual beasts that frolicked in the spiritual garden that was Herod's Temple, there was no other person born of Spirit. Again, physical circumcision only gets a living creature [a human being] into the garden of God. To be a spiritually living creature other than a beast, a person must also be circumcised of heart; for circumcision of the flesh keeps the person's mind on the flesh and on his circumcision, which is of no value to the person beyond the extent that those who are circumcised were entrusted with the oracles of God (Rom 3:2).

Now, do disciples today need to be physically circumcised . . . no, for these disciples are the living stones (1 Pet 2:5) that form the temple of God in heavenly Jerusalem (1 Cor 3:16-17; 2 Cor 6:16). Disciples do not need to be physically circumcised to enter the temple; again, they are the temple. Whereas a series of correspondences (a layering of shadows) worked together in the natural realm to reveal the depth of God to natural Israel if this firstborn son (Ex 4:22) had believed God, a truly born again disciple understands that Judea, the Promised Land, is a type of the weekly Sabbath, which in turn is a type of the Millennium and a type of heaven.

Although entrance into heaven is the reality of entering into God's rest, the only one who has so far entered heaven is the one who came from heaven and has since returned. Everyone else awaits resurrection and the revealing of their judgments (1 Cor 4:5), *or* waits being born of Spirit when resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment (Rev 20:11-15). Today, all sons of darkness wait receipt of the Holy Spirit—the defining characteristic of a son of darkness

or a son of disobedience is not being born of Spirit; whereas those who are of the synagogue of Satan are self-identified Christians born of Spirit but serving Satan in spiritual Babylon. Hence, they are dead in that their willful lawlessness has separated them from God. Thus, with pedagogical redundancy, the synagogue of Satan is a subset of individuals within the larger grouping identified as the sons of light, with these many sons choosing to dwell in darkness. Now, to the problem: Martin Luther's left-hand kingdom of God, the secular kingdom that reigns over the visible affairs of men, has been and remains the domain of the synagogue of Satan. This is why self-identified Christians persecute and murder other self-identified Christians; why a Roman bishop, when seeking to eliminate the Cathars, ordered everyone in certain Languedoc villages to be killed with the quip, "Let God sort them out, He knows His own." Yes, He does—and His own love one another. They do not kill anyone, friend or foe. Jesus, Himself, washed the feet of Judas Iscariot when He knew that Judas would betray Him within hours.

The synagogue of Satan is not the hated son Esau, born to the last Isaac (the Apostle Paul identified disciples as children of promise as Isaac was a son of promise—Gal 4:28); rather, this hated son, like endtime Jacob, is of promise, but because he is covered by his own righteousness and has chosen his own prophets and prophetesses he does not strive or wrestle with God. He does not have the spirit of prophecy. He falsely teaches the ways of God, and he will die either physical or spiritually during the first 1260 days of the seven endtime years of tribulation. Sadly, even though spiritual Esau publicly teaches disciples to keep the weekly Sabbath, this Esau will be rejected because he will not keep the high Sabbaths of God. He will not cover himself with the Passover blood of the Lamb of God.

The bloody hairiness of Esau at birth forms the shadow and type of Sabbatarian Christians who, when the tribulation begins, refuse to keep the Passover or to take the Passover sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed. Spiritual birth for both Esau and Jacob occurs when the Son of Man is revealed. Until then, disciples constitute spiritual Isaac. Thus, many Sabbatarian Christians who today struggle in the womb of Isaac (Rebekah's womb is Isaac's womb) are hated or disrespected by God. Few are those who are truly loved by God as Jacob was loved.

How can that be true, that God doesn't love everyone?

The Apostle Paul wrote, "What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory" (Rom 9:22-

23) . . . is a vessel of wrath prepared for destruction loved by God? How about by the God that inspired, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated” (Rom 9:13; Mal 1:1)? The problem really is in human understanding of abstract words like */lovel*, */goodl*, */evill*, */fairl*; for human understanding comes from the disobedience broadcast by the prince of this world. And when sons of darkness assign referents to abstract words, God will always appear unfair and unjust. This comes directly from how God is perceived by demons.

Returning to what has previously been stated: for the past five years, lawless Christians have been identified as spiritual Esau—this was giving these lawless Christians more compassion than Scripture gives them. Lawless Christians form the synagogue of Satan, for they say they serve Christ but they lie. They have not made a journey of faith; they have not cleansed their hearts. They remain in spiritual Babylon where they cannot comprehend keeping the commandments by faith because they love God. Therefore, they label those disciples who keep the commandments as *Judaizers*, to them the most derogatory label they can attach to a Christian. But really, this label testifies to the *Judaizer’s* righteousness before God.

* * *

March 14, 2003

Commentary—From the Margins *“No More Hype”*

Will “Christian” television admit it has hyped the promises of God, thereby creating in too many disciples unrealized expectations? It did tonight at the beginning of Trinity Broadcast Network’s “Praise the Lord” broadcast. It aired an unscripted program in an attempt to “get real” with the Holy Spirit, little realizing that within its attempt to be honest with God, Scripture, and disciples were the hyped proclamations that will lead to its undoing.

I seldom have the opportunity to watch popular Christian telecasts, so perhaps my opportunity to view portions of today’s “Praise the Lord” program was of the Holy Spirit (Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον). After all, we are, today, witnessing the earthy manifestations of war in the spiritual realm. Not a war for the affections of human beings. Rather, the war occurring is between two fallen angels for the control of spiritual Babylon, as the time of the Gentiles winds toward its conclusion halfway through seven years of tribulation, its conclusion coming when Christ Jesus fights on a day of battle, destroying the armies surrounding Jerusalem. Then, the Lord’s Day begins. All of humanity will be liberated from bondage to sin—and fleshy vessels of clay will be sculpted by war as liberated humanity learns to live by faith in Christ and in God the Father, for everyone who doesn’t voluntarily return to slavery by accepting the mark of the beast will be excluded from participation in the Antichrist’s economic system and will have to trust God to provide all of the person’s needs.

Certainly Christian television has hyped the promises of *YHWH* to circumcised Israel, declaring those promises to be the will of Christ for spiritual Israel. Certainly the glorified Christ as the mediator of the new covenant wishes that all of spiritual Israel prospers and has good health. But those

promises come with conditions, the primary one being that Israel believes God unto obedience by observing all of the commandments and decrees written in Deuteronomy. Hundreds of Christian broadcasters have hyped what God promised to do for circumcised Israel when Israel kept His commandments and Sabbaths without telling spiritual Israelites that God didn't write His laws on their hearts and minds for them to ignore the fine print of the covenant in which they were placed when drawn from the world. They weren't called to be spiritual Gentiles and to continue living as Gentiles, but they were called to be spiritual Israelites and to live as Judeans, meaning that those hyped promises apply when Gentiles drawn by the Father live as Judeans. The law or covenant that separated physically circumcised Israelites from the world has been abolished. One new humanity now exists. Circumcision is of the heart and mind, and that spiritual circumcision determines who is in covenant with God by believing Him unto obedience.

But hyping the promises of God isn't the greatest problem Christian broadcasters face: hyping escapism is.

For too many spiritual Israelites, Christianity is about escaping unpleasantness in every form, especially the endtime tribulation through which humanity will emerge either broken, as cracked clay pots, or glorified as mature heirs of God. As a doctrine, the pre-Tribulation rapture is without Scriptural support—those who are alive will not precede in resurrection those who have died. Yet most Evangelical Christians believe they will be raptured to heaven prior to the woes of Revelation; they believe hype about spending heaven in Jesus while humanity wrestles with survival. And when they are not raptured—and they won't be—their faith will be severely tried. Disillusioned, bewildered, betrayed, they will be easy prey for an American denomination holding the error of Bishop Arius, as food becomes the leveraged commodity throughout the industrialized world. They will still believe they deserve to be protected from the turmoil engulfing the world, turmoil that will result in their liberation from lawlessness; they will continue to believe that God wouldn't put those disciples who are "right" with Him through what they're experiencing. Home and community stored food will seem like protection, so they will change "Christianities," becoming what they previously ridiculed.

But not enough foodstuffs will be available for the unprecedented conversion of former Trinitarian Christians. The spiritual house of Israel will turn against the spiritual house of Judah, as these two divisions of spiritual Israel again struggle for dominance within spiritual Babylon, little realizing that both houses will be liberated in a future Passover when the Death Angel

slays all firstborns, spiritual and physical, not covered by the blood of the Lamb's sacrifice.

We cannot really imagine death on that scale, but passages prophesying such carnage have been in the Book since John saw the end of this age in vision. John saw what would happen on the Lord's Day, the day when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Father and His Messiah, when all of humanity not just spiritual Israel is liberated from bondage to sin/lawlessness, when Satan is cast from heaven and comes here as the Antichrist who requires humanity to accept the mark of the beast to buy or sell, when the 144,000 physical Israelites enter a geographical place of safety, when the Elect of spiritual Israel closes the gates of spiritual Jerusalem, its walls composed of living stones strengthened by the doctrines of Jesus. Christ won't return as the all-powerful Messiah for another 1260 days beyond the Lord's Day. No one is resurrected, or raptured until His return.

Christian television has hyped more blessings and greater escapism than God has promised to well-meaning disciples who abound in sin and celebrate a theology of lawlessness. As was done to circumcised Israel, God sent both houses of spiritual Israel into spiritual slavery because they profaned His Sabbaths and transgressed His laws, written on the hearts and minds of these disciples when they are spiritually circumcised by the Breath of God. Their lawlessness grieves the Holy Spirit: they transform Grace into justification for erasing what the Father wrote on their consciences. A great many disciples upon whom judgment has come and who should be in the first resurrection will fail because Christian broadcasters have hyped what disciples will get from God, rather than have taught what they, what we, through love, should desire to give to God. They will have squandered their chance for salvation because of hyped broadcasts today. So tell me, you who hype what you don't understand, how do you think you will fare when judged? How responsible will you be for the death of two billion potential sons and daughters, heirs, of God? Just a little? How little will be enough to cost you your salvation?

* * *

March 18, 2003

Commentary—From the Margins *The Demise of Diplomacy*

French defense of the status quo wasn't effective. Out of the West has ridden a cowboy turned marshal who has given the black-hat villain forty-eight hours to get out of town. This is the plot of many westerns I watched during Saturday afternoon matinees: for ten cents, I saw Roy Rogers or Gene Autry or the Cisco Kid right wrongs, protect women and children, defeat the arrogant and defend the defenseless. This is what the United Nations was created to do, but championing the cause of the little guy is a quixotic application of justice, requiring from all parties involved the values of muscular Christendom. When member nations are tolerant of duplicity or reluctant to act, the UN becomes a Parliament of Fowls, where no mate for the eagle roosts.

The French cannot help themselves: they are the unknowing front nation of the existing world order, representing “old Europe” and centuries of civilized development. They span both the republicanism of the United States and the colonialism of Europe. Remembering having had colonies in Asia, Africa, and America, they are globalists, practiced at savior-faire. They would never think of wearing a white Stetson and tooled leather boots to an affair of state, let alone to the liberation of an oppressed people. They are not American, not cowboys, not a superpower. Yet, they are the best that the spiritual *sar* of Persia/Babylon can send to battle the nations fronting for the spiritual king of Greece, with the United States being the principle power in the world today.

The United States and President Bush didn't set out to front for the spiritual king of Greece: the battle being fought between the spiritual king of Greece and Persia has no geographical or national boundaries. When a person realizes that this war is fought without an established frontline, then

the person can begin to comprehend how endtime prophecies are being and will be fulfilled. Yes, there will be a physical fulfillment: the United States and its coalition allies will trample Iraq, and will within a short period historically bring democracy to the Arab world, but little French, German, or Russian blood will be shed as these fronting nations for the king of Persia are utterly defeated. These nations will either belatedly support an American hegemony in the region and throughout the world, or they will complain to themselves about the United States going it alone.

Last century's biblical watchmen would have us fear a union of European nations as the final revival of the Holy Roman Empire, but the Roman Empire isn't mentioned anywhere in biblical prophecy. Insertion of Rome, the Roman Empire, or Roman Church into prophetic passages is adding to Scripture. The person who finds Rome in endtime prophecies is always a false prophet, or a false teacher, who has taken upon himself the plagues of the Book.

Harsh words? How can I say that Rome isn't mentioned prophetically when every commentary has the two legs of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw as the two divisions of Rome; plus, commentaries have the fourth beast of Daniel being the Roman Empire? But where in Scripture is Rome mentioned? Babylon is mentioned, as is Media-Persia, Greece, and the four divisions of Greece. Those four divisions quickly become two, and these two divisions are the two legs of the image that is Babylon, named for its head. Greece's reign extends down into the thighs—the division of the kingdom is during Greece's reign. And about Greece, Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar that this kingdom shall rule the world. The fourth kingdom is divided from its conception. It never rules the world. Thus, the person who identifies this fourth kingdom as the Roman Empire is false. I cannot say this more bluntly: And with both guns blazing, I leave diplomacy to die a messy death in a French alley where Algerians whet their knives.

Rome is not directly mentioned in biblical prophecy. The two legs of Babylon are the two theocracies empowered by the kings of the North and of the South. The king of the North backs Christendom; the king of the South is also the spiritual power behind Christendom. Both powers are part of the dragon's rebelling coalition, but they do not like each other, and have periodically fought the other as far back as Athens and Sparta. They will again fight during the first half of the Tribulation.

Before the kings of the North and the South empower national coalitions to fight each other, the spiritual king of Greece will fly out of the west to establish a short-lived, new world order. This is where we are right now in endtime prophecy: a battle in the spiritual realm is occurring between the king

of Greece and the spiritual *sar* of Persia/Babylon, who, increased with wealth, pushed at Greece. Because of the vision of Daniel at Susa, we know what the outcome of this battle will be: the he-goat, white Stetson on his single horn, tramples the ram; no one can save the spiritual *sar* of Persia. Both France and Russia are on the wrong side, but then, they wouldn't believe they are earthly puppets for spiritual powers even if someone told them.

The concept of deity is more encompassing than even Christian apologists comprehend: I can turn on Christian radio nearly anytime, day or night, and within a few minutes hear a version of *God has a plan for you*, and *God is in charge of what happens here on earth*. Both statements are true, but only partially convey the truth. *YHWH* sent both houses of Israel into physical captivity because of unbelief that became disobedience. Both went after foreign gods, would not keep His commandments, and profaned His Sabbaths. Both serve as the shadow of spiritual Israel, who went after Platonism, adopted a theology of lawlessness, and profaned the Father's Sabbaths by ignoring the annual festivals, ignoring new moons, and changing the weekly Sabbath from the seventh day to the eighth.

Spiritual Israel did what physical Israel did. So, for the same reasons that *YHWH* sent both houses of circumcised Israel into captivity the Father sent both houses of spiritual Israel into spiritual captivity. The Father has that prerogative, and He exercised it. Yes, He is in charge. Yes, He can liberate humanity whenever He pleases. And we will see that liberation occurring in the middle of seven years of tribulation. But until then, Satan remains the prince of this world, and the vast majority of spiritual Israel remains deceived by him; thus, both the world and spiritual Israel remain in spiritual captivity.

I will anger many sincere but deceived Christians when I assert that they are in spiritual captivity. Their first impulse will be to reject everything I write. They are free to do so, and they will thereby affirm their captivity.

Tell me, spiritual Israel, if you can, what are the terms of the new covenant? As a spiritual Israelite, you are being judged by those terms. So if you don't know what those terms are, don't you suppose you should find out; for the Father didn't write His laws on hearts and minds to have the fine print ignored.

Paul's law of faith will have you keeping everything written in the Book of Deuteronomy. The law that has been abolished is the Sinai covenant. The second or Moab covenant was made with the mixed nation of physically circumcised and uncircumcised Israelites. You, regardless of the status of your foreskin, are uncircumcised under the second covenant until you cleanse your heart by a journey of faith equivalent to Abraham's physical journey of

faith. You, who would enter the Promised Land, were not called to become spiritual Gentiles, but spiritual Israelites, whose hearts and minds have been circumcised.

Diplomacy would have me pedal softly around your lawlessness, your profaning of God's Sabbaths, your pursuit of other gods. Diplomacy would have me discussing the areas in which we agree. Diplomacy would have me check my guns at the edge of town. But prophecy says that even after a third of humanity dies, you will still worship idols and demons (Rev 9:20). You didn't suddenly start worshiping demons, but have been all along. So, will diplomacy get your attention? Did the weapons inspectors get Saddam to disarm? Maybe you'd like me to take the French approach and ask the king of Babylon for a little more time for you to get "right" with God. If you aren't right now, you won't get right by continuing to do what you have been doing.

Diplomacy on my part isn't showing you love. Judgment is upon you today.

Your theology of lawlessness will result in you being called least in the kingdom of heaven if you are there, despite all of the good works and mighty deeds you have done in Christ's name. Why should you settle for being least? Why not begin keeping, by faith, the laws of God that have been written on your hearts and minds.

Diplomacy is for negotiating from a position of strength—and there can be no negotiating with sin, which is simple lawlessness (1 John 3:4).

I don't have a white Stetson or tooled leather boots with Spanish rowels. I don't have time to give (only God can give time). I don't have absolutions. I was called to take a fight to a spiritual Goliath. I wasn't called to be a diplomat. As such, I share with the President that American monomyth of one man taming the wilderness, where diplomacy hangs lonely on cholla cacti thrones, looking for all the world like the white flag of a surrendering Iraqi. So what if the French take their roosters and go home. The eagles can then soar.

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February 28, 2007

Commentary—From the Margins *Lazarus and Dives*

Hock in, “Lazarus and Micyllus,” argues against the notion that an Egyptian folktale concerning the contrast in otherworldly fate between a man buried splendidly and another buried simply is the source of the parable of Dives and Lazarus. Instead he cites the *topos* of the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition of fortune reversal after death. We have already seen this in the satires of Lucian, whose *Gallus* (The Cock) and *Cataplus* (The Downward Journey) Hock cites. Hock concludes: “The parable of Lazarus has an unmistakable Cynic coloring” (462). For the assignment of influence to the Egyptian folktale, see Joachim Jeremias, *The parables of Jesus*, rev. ed. (New York: Scribner’s, 1963).

Citation from: Bernstein, Alan E.

Footnote # 24; “Damnation.”

The Formation of Hell. Ithaca, New York:

Cornell University Press, 1993.

In the vision of John the Revelator, the glorified Jesus said, “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. . . . I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright

morning star” (Rev 22:12-13, 16). The churches to which Jesus refers are the seven named churches of chapters two and three.

If the rich man in the parable Luke records (Luke 16:19-31) is in Hades being tormented while his brothers yet live during Jesus’ lifetime or earlier, then what recompense will Jesus bring with Him at His return for this rich man? What additional recompense will there be other than fiery torment (Luke 16:23)? And herein lies the fundamental problem with traditional understandings of the Lazarus/Dives parable: in order for this rich man to receive torment after death, he must have life that the Apostle Paul says is the free gift of God, “eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23), for the wages of sin are death, not everlasting life in a rotisserie not quite hot enough to consume the person whereas the prophet Ezekiel, writing about a spiritual king of Tyre who had been in Eden, the garden of God, and who was an anointed cherub (Ezek 28:12-14), has *YHWH Elohim* saying about a future event that from the perspective of heaven has already occurred, “I cast you to the ground (*cf.* Rev 12:9-10; Dan 7:26); I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you (*cf.* Isa 14:3-21; Rev 20:1-3, 7). By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so *I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you.* All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever” (Ezek 28:17-19—emphasis added).

The above spiritual king of Tyre is the Adversary, Satan, the old dragon, and if God brings fire out from his belly to utterly consume Satan, making him no more forever, then who is in charge of Hades? And why won’t Dives [Latin for “rich man”], likewise, be utterly consumed? Is that the recompense Jesus is bringing with Him when He comes again? An end to Hades? John the Revelator saw Death and Hades “thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev 20:14), thereby making Hades really a euphemistic expression for the grave, for Hades followed Death, the rider of the fourth horse of the Apocalypse to whom power was given to kill a fourth part of humankind (Rev 6:8).

John the Revelator saw a great White Throne, and judgment of the dead, great and small (Rev 20:11-12). Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each of these dead men and women were then judged, “according to what they had done” (*v.* 13). They had not previously been judged, an important concept to note. The rich man had not been judged when he was being tormented in the Lazarus/Dives fable. He entered Hades upon death and was tormented before his judgment was revealed. The Apostle

Paul wrote concerning his ministry and those who were already accusing him of being false:

I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. (1 Cor 4:4-5)

The Apostle John wrote, quoting Jesus,

Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. *The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son*, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. (John 5:19-23 emphasis added)

So in order for the Lazarus/Dives fable to be a revealing of afterlife fates, the Father must consign unjudged humankind to torment or to the bosom of Abraham, where the Son will find them on one side or on the other side of a great abyss where He will then judge these men and women upon His return as the Messiah. That is nonsense, for the Father judges no one, and consigning one person to torment and one to paradise is certainly the judging of personhood.

Contained with the passage about all judgment being given to the Son is the statement that like the Father, the Son will give life to whom He will. This statement contains the implicit concept that the Father gives life to whom He will, which would make the Father a respecter of persons if He does not give life to everyone. His will must, then, be that everyone is raised from the dead. But the writer of Hebrews says, "And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (Heb 9:27-28). Thus, when Christ,

to whom all judgment has been given, returns as the Messiah, He does not come to deal with sin, but to save those who await His coming.

The world does not await His coming.

When does Christ deal with sin, especially considering that all judgment has been given to him? Jesus told the Pharisees, “Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words” (John 5:45-47).

If Jesus accuses no one of sin, letting Moses do that work, which he does in Deuteronomy 31:26-27, and if He does not deal with sin upon His return, then who accuses the portion of humankind of wrongdoing that has never heard of Moses? A problem appears to exist that doesn't really exist at all; for the Apostle Paul wrote,

For all who have sinned without the law will also perish under 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 and even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (Rom 2:12-16)

The thoughts of those who sinned without the law will accuse these individuals of sin, thereby causing them to perish. The thoughts of those who have the precepts of the law written on their hearts and in the consciences, but who have never heard of Moses, will accuse and will excuse those who are judged by God through Christ Jesus, and who are thereby justified by Jesus being the propitiation of their lawlessness (Rom 3:25). The righteous requirements of the law must be fulfilled (Rom 8:4). But again, the Father judges no one; He has given all judgment to Jesus. Yet the Father judges through Jesus, so there can be no judgment of anyone revealed until after Jesus returns to not deal with sin but to reveal judgments of those whom the Father has raised from the dead.

But the Father has only raised from the dead whom He will at this time, and here is where problems enter the traditional teachings of Christendom: the Apostle Peter wrote, “For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God” (1 Pet 4:17). The household of God are those whom the Father has raised from the dead—and endtime disciples of Christ Jesus do not find that the world is, today, the household of God. The dead remain dead. There has been neither a resurrection of the dead from Hades, nor has the sea given up its dead (Rev 20:13a).

In the context of saying that the Father judges no one, Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life” (John 5:24). So the person who hears Jesus’ words and believes that the Father sent Him (this requires more “belief” than is initially apparent, for it requires the person to believe that the Son and the Father are two entities forming one deity, *Theos* as His Son plus *Theon*) does not come under judgment, why? Why no judgment on those who hear and believe? This would seem to make God a respecter of person if a portion of humankind is not judged.

Is “not coming under judgment” because judgment is presently on those who are of the household of God? If this is the case—and it is—then baptism into the Body of Christ equates to “real” death; for judgment follows death and does not precede it. Belief, now, equates with keeping the precepts of the law. Belief does not occur where sin exists, and sin is the transgression of the law; i.e., lawlessness (1 John 3:4). Thus, to hear the word of Jesus and believe the One who sent Him requires the person to keep the commandments of God by faith, which now causes the provisions of the second covenant mediated by Moses and made with Israel on the plains of Moab (Deut chaps 29-31) to come into play. And the terms of this second covenant offers to Israel circumcised hearts (Deut 30:6) upon returning to God when in a far land (*vv.* 1-2), with returning to God described as loving God with heart and mind [*nephesb*], and obeying the voice of God to keep His commandments and statutes and all that is written in “this book of the law—Deuteronomy” (*v.* 10).

Part of this second covenant mediated by Moses and made with the mixed circumcised and uncircumcised nation of Israel is choosing life or death on “this day, today” (Deut 30:15), the day of salvation. And here is where what Paul writes about the righteousness that comes from faith (Rom 10:6) is poorly understood by Christendom: on the plains of Moab was the assembled nation of Israel, none of which (except for Joshua and Caleb) had

been counted in the census taken in Numbers 1:1. This was a new nation of Israel, a nation of the children of Israel and of the mixed multitude that had escaped from Pharaoh. And the entirety of the nation was assembled before Moses to hear the terms of this second covenant that would, when accepted, be ratified by a song (Deut chap 32), a better sacrifice than the blood of bulls and goats (Ex 24:5-8). The song was a heavenly sacrifice that purified this covenant as a spiritual or everlasting covenant (Heb 9:23) and not as a shadow of a future covenant, and this is an important concept to note: this second covenant will get a new mediator in Christ Jesus, but this second covenant, itself, endures with the better promises brought to it by its new mediator. It will never be replaced by another covenant. And the terms of this covenant require that on a particular day, the day when this covenant is made with Israel, that the circumcised or uncircumcised Israelite chooses life or death, with the choice of “life” being made through loving God with heart and mind, with this love for God revealed by the Israelite obeying His voice to keep His commandments.

On the day when an Israelite enters into the second covenant with God, this covenant now mediated by Christ Jesus, the person who is of Israel will choose either life or death. If this Israelite chooses life by hearing the words of Jesus and believing the One who sent Him, this Israelite passes from death to life and does not come under judgment. Why? Because Christ Jesus as the Master Potter now sculpts this person into a vessel for honored usage (Rom 9:21-24): from the same lump, the mixed circumcised and uncircumcised nation of Israel, Christ Jesus forms the person who by faith keeps the precepts of the law into a vessel for honorable use, while He sculpts the person who chose death by choosing to reject keeping the precepts of the law into a vessel for dishonorable usage, a vessel of wrath, a vessel of destruction to be endured for a season. One lump, Israel, made alive by the Father through Him giving to this nation His Spirit. Now not a physical nation, Israel is a spiritual nation that was not before a nation (1 Pet 2:9-10); a chosen people who, literally, have been chosen one at a time to be drawn by the Father (John 6:44) from all of humankind—this is the Israel that has life and death placed before it on a particular “day,” which is not a twenty-four hour period but a short period of darkness after spiritual birth with light coming from this darkness. And the promise of entering into life, into God’s rest, will close on the born-of-Spirit disciple as it closed on the natural nation of Israel when this nation believed the ten spies rather than the two (Heb 4:1—*cf.* Num chap 14; Heb 3:16-4:11).

Ten against one who spoke (Caleb) and one who was silent (Joshua)—who would you believe? The ten? Logic would say, yes, the testimony of ten is

more trustworthy than the testimony of one. But what if the ten were wrong? How would you know? How would you keep from being an Israelite who was condemned to die in the wilderness of Sin/Zin because of unbelief (Heb 3:19), never able to enter the Promised Land of God's rest (Ps 95:10-11) even though you repented of your unbelief (Num 14:40-42)? When is repentance not enough? If Israel acknowledged its sin but still stood condemned to death before God, which is the case when Israel refused to enter into the Promised Land when the promise of entering stood, then there is a time when changing one's mind about whether to choose life or death will be ignored by God. Certainly changing a person's mind after judgments have been revealed is pointless. Repentance then could only be interpreted as a ploy to save one's life. So if repentance is to have any meaning, then repentance must occur while the promise of entering into God's rest still stands—and this promise only stands on the person's day of salvation, which again is not a calendar day.

The above goes against traditional teachings of Christendom, but so does Hades being thrown into the lake of fire . . . the problem can be reduced to Christendom not understanding that there will be two harvests of God, both represented by the grain harvests of Judea. The first harvest—the harvest of firstfruits; the barley harvest—began with the resurrection of Christ Jesus, the First of the firstfruits, and continues until His return when judgments are revealed for all who have been born of Spirit [i.e., raised from the dead by the Father while still physically alive through being born of Spirit]. This is the initial harvest that ripens by the coming of the early rains, with these early rains forming the shadow and copy of the giving of the renewing Breath of God, the Holy Spirit [*Pneuma 'Agion*], to the holy nation of Israel.

The second harvest, the main crop wheat harvest, occurs after the thousand year long reign of Christ Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords. This harvest occurs when Death and Hades gives up all that is in them. This is the great White Throne Judgment, when every human being not previously born anew, or born of Spirit, will be resurrected from death to receive the honor or condemnation of the person's thoughts that either accuse and excuse the person, or accuse and not excuse the person, according to Paul's gospel. This is the harvest of the latter rains, which do not come in the spring but in the late summer. So even though most of this harvest will have physically lived before and/or with the firstfruits, this latter harvest was not "watered" with the renewing Breath of God until the last great day, the day following *Sukkot*. This harvest will be of all those that traditional Christendom has consigned to an ever-burning lake of fire. This harvest will be of the Buddhist, the Hindu, the Muslim, the ones who worshiped Zeus and Molech and any

number of pagan deities. None will be left out, except for those who had their judgments revealed upon Christ Jesus' return. And the one who was without the law but who kept the precepts of the law will receive everlasting life. The one who sought righteousness by a different path will now obtain that righteousness by belief of the type expressed by the second thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43).

Finally, the Lazarus/Dives fable has a theological basis for understanding what it was that Jesus said.

The gospels record the beginning and end of Jesus' ministry, with very little of the intervening three years mentioned, for what the gospels record is also the shadow and copy of the endtime ministry of the glorified Christ. And Luke's gospel account has a timing mark in chapter nineteen, when Jesus enters Jerusalem on the 10th day of Abib, four days before He is to be taken and crucified on the Preparation Day for the high Sabbath (John 19:31), the first day of Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:5-8). So when parables are told after Luke 19:28 is known within the precision of four days.

Since the cleansing of the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19) occurs on His way to Jerusalem as He was passing along between Samaria and Galilee, disciples will find that this trip to Jerusalem is the same trip on which He will enter Jerusalem on the 10th of Abib. Thus the parables told and the events recorded between Luke 17:11 and Luke 19:28 occurs in the preceding few days prior to the 10th; for in Luke 18:31, Jesus said to His first disciples, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished." This is the third time that Jesus told His disciples that He would be taken and killed.

The next earlier timing mark is the Sabbath on which Jesus healed a man (Luke 14:1); so the telling of the Lazarus/Dives fable occurs between this Sabbath when He healed the man and when Jesus entered Jerusalem on the Sabbath that was the 10th of Abib. The continuity of narrative requires that Jesus leave the house of a ruler of the Pharisees where He ate and told the parable of the great banquet; that He be accompanied by great crowds (Luke 14:25; 15:1) along with the scribes and Pharisees that had, most likely, been at the house of the ruler of the Pharisees; that He teaches about the cost of becoming one of His disciples (Luke 14:17). Thus, the incident with the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-30) comes as a logical outgrowth of teaching about the cost of discipleship.

In fact, beginning with the Sabbath healing Jesus tells a series of parables that are thematically related: the invited guests do not come to a banquet given by a great man, so this man sends his servants out to bring to the banquet

the poor and crippled, blind and lame—the maimed of Israel who could not be chosen as offerings to God if they were lambs; they would be “unclean” because of their infirmities. The cost of discipleship relates to the great man who gave the banquet being able to finish what he began even though his invited guests did not come, with this cost of his guests not coming being tallied while the time for the banquet is still a great ways off; for the great man’s invited guests were like salt that had lost its “saltiness,” which when thrown out is neither good for the soil nor for the manure pile.

Tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to Jesus, for they were hearing about ones like themselves being gathered to fill the available seats at a great banquet—no, these publicans and sinners did not hear what Jesus said in the house of the ruler of the Pharisees, but they knew what was being said for the murmurings that would have taken place among the scribes and Pharisees would have carried the essence of the parable outward into the crowds. So Jesus adds to the Pharisees’ discomfort by telling the parable of the ninety-nine sheep, who were like the Pharisees in that these sheep were where they belonged—the shepherd leaves these sheep who are where they belong to go after the one that is lost, with great rejoicing to occur when the lost sheep (like the publicans and assorted sinners) is found by the shepherd. And in the parable of the lost coin, a similar message is relayed, with Jesus adding, “I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10), and Jesus launches into the parable of the prodigal son (*vv.* 11-32). So there is no narrative break, no break in thought, between when Jesus heals the man on the Sabbath and the beginning of Chapter 16. All could have occurred on the same day, or within a day or two. All probably occurred on the Sabbath, when Jesus delivered the speech-acts of the Father in the form of figurative speech and healings.

Without a thematic break, Jesus tells the parable of the dishonest manager (Luke 16:1-13), who certainly could be likened to the scribes and Pharisees, “managers” of the secrets of God for Israel. Their debt to God as teachers who miss-taught the principles of God was greater than that of Israelites who were being miss-taught. Jesus finished the parable by saying that the one who is faithful in little will be faithful in much, for no servants can serve two masters, God and money—and Jesus here stepped hard on the toes of the Pharisees who had shortly before eaten with Him. These Pharisees were certain that they served God, the justification for being called a Pharisee, and they sincerely believed that making money was their reasonable service as stewards of the treasures of God. So these scribes and Pharisees, all educated, intelligent men—not under-educated Galilean fishermen like Jesus’ first disciples—began

to mock Jesus: Luke wrote, “The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard these things, and they ridiculed him [Jesus]” (v. 14).

The Pharisees had taken one verbal punch after another since they had sat down to eat with Jesus on the Sabbath. Jesus had not cut them any slack. Telling them that they could be replaced by publicans and sinners was almost too much. Literally, Jesus had skewered those who sincerely believed they were above reproach; thus, when Jesus figuratively reached into their wallets to show them their greed, these Pharisees hit back by ridiculing Jesus. And it is this ridicule that establishes the context for the Lazarus/Dives fable.

Jesus did not like to be mocked. No person enjoys mocking, but Jesus as the Son of *Theos*, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, especially did not like being mocked by those creatures *Theos* had made from red clay mud. Therefore, in a brilliant overturning of tables (like when Jesus twice drove the moneychangers out from the temple) Jesus turns the mocking of the Pharisees back onto themselves: He calls them Gentiles without ever using the word, and He tells them in a way that only they can understand that they are Gentile students at the feet of their Master. Jesus uses the education of these Pharisees against them. And of Jesus’ first disciples, apparently only Luke has the education to understand or appreciate what Jesus does.

After being initially mocked, Jesus tells the Pharisees that they justify themselves before men but God knows their hearts (Luke 16:15); that what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God. Then Jesus points to the apparent place where these mocking Pharisees transgress the Law of God, and this place is in allowing, even condoning divorce. The Pharisees are guilty because they have another god other than the Most High: this god is money and prestige, the perks of being religious rulers under authorities from Rome. And they have transferred their guilt to others by apparently “selling” divorce decrees, an unstated but relatively obvious accusation based upon the presentation order of subject matter.

And Jesus now tells these mocking Pharisees an after-death-fortune-reversal parable in the format of a Greek Cynic fable. Jesus tells these Pharisees a fiction, a story that suggests pagan “truths,” but a story that is definitely not Hebrew in origin or of Scripture. By Jesus telling these Pharisees a Greek pagan story, He calls them “Greeks,” and not just any Greeks, but Greek students who are hearing their Master deliver to them a childhood instructional fable. Plus, Jesus speaking only the Father’s words tells them that they are to the Father as “the nations” are.

As an educated person, a religious leader, a community leader, how would you like being called a dog, or even worse, a pup nursing the paps of a bastard from which you will get only condemnation? This is how those mocking Pharisees felt when they heard Jesus relay the Lazarus/Dives parable. They understood perfectly the reason why Jesus was telling them a Cynic narrative. You too would understand if you were an educated person in that age of Classicism. But you are probably not so educated. So to you, the Lazarus parable is about entering Hades at death—while your siblings still live—and about a unbridgeable chasm separating the just from the unjust. Which are you? On which side of the abyss will you enter Hades? Do you know? If you do, then you know what your judgment is even before it has been revealed, and so does everyone else. You see the problem: you cannot know what your judgment will be until Christ comes to reveal it to you. If this were not the case, those who did great works in the name of Christ Jesus but who taught disciples to be lawless entered Hades and will enter Hades with the rich man. Some of them will have “stewed” for two millennia waiting for the “mistake” to be corrected, but these teachers of lawlessness will be denied in their resurrection (Matt 7:21-23). They will not enter into Abraham’s bosom, from where they would have to be cast into the lake of fire when judgments are revealed.

If a person enters either Abraham’s bosom [i.e., paradise] or Hades upon death, and if judgments are not to be revealed until Jesus’ return, then what assurance does the person have who is in paradise that he [or she] will remain there when judgments are revealed? And from where did this person receive eternal life, the gift of God, given to those who have no sin imputed to them? The answer to the questions is that no person is born with an immortal soul that must go somewhere at death. The flesh of every person returns to dust. The person who has not been born of Spirit has no other life, and ceases to exist except as a name in the book of remembrance, a name that will be raised from the dead in the great White Throne Judgment. The person who has been born of Spirit is a son of God who enters timelessness as one who sleeps under the altar of God (Rev 6:9-11), awaiting awakening and the revealing of judgments. Jesus used “sleep” as an analogy for death. So the flesh sleeping forms the shadow and copy of what occurs to the spiritual son of God that had been domiciled in a tent of flesh when the flesh dies.

After Jesus tells the Lazarus/Dives fable, the Pharisees are no longer present. They have left, for they are now determined to kill Jesus—yes, these Pharisees will from henceforth support killing Jesus.

It isn't always easy to get oneself murdered, especially when the crowds believe that you are the prophesied Son of David (Matt 21:9), the "*adoni*" who sits at the right hand of God. Therefore, Jesus had to provoke the scribes and Pharisees to get them to do what they must do before He would be free to marry another. And as it was, if Jesus had not kept quiet before Pilate, He would most likely have been set free.

But Jesus had to die on the Passover's Preparation Day, and He had to die "between the evenings" as Pharisees then reckoned when the Passover lambs were to be slain. His provoking the Pharisees had to coincide with the Passover season; thus, on a Sabbath shortly before Jesus entered Jerusalem as Lamb and High Priest, Jesus spent a day verbally stabbing Pharisees who would determine whether He lived or died. And the nastiest wound He inflicted was calling these Pharisees *Gentiles*, and in the process making Him their instructional master. Not even Jesus openly calling them hypocrites and vipers cut them any deeper.

There are as many explications of the Lazarus/Dives story as there are denominations. Every one of these explications either supports the idea of the "soul" of a person immediately going to Hades upon death, or supports some variation of the story being set in the future after judgments are revealed. Even cynical scholars have difficulty accepting the realization that Jesus really told a pagan Greek after-death-fortune-reversal story as a means to an end. It is easier, and more convenient to ascribe to Luke an evolving sense of the afterlife, revealed for the first time in this fable.

The Lazarus/Dives parable is important for another reason: it is an example of Jesus telling a fictional story, for Lazarus is not a real person, nor is the unnamed rich man a real person. Both figures are literary constructs, devices used in a figurative sense to deliver a differing message than the message that would be "normally" assigned to the linguistic icons of the text. And understanding the "figurativeness" of the fable becomes an important stepping stone in understanding that everything Jesus spoke was the words of the Father, which were about heavenly things that could only be "named" with icons used for linguistic objects in this world. Therefore, nothing Jesus spoke is as it seems. At best a hypostatical relationship exists in which the usually assigned objects for the linguistic icons become a type of the invisible and conceal heavenly objects that the Father intended for the words Jesus delivered—this means that the Father had Jesus deliver the Lazarus/Dives fable not for the usually assigned meaning but for an assignment of objects that has the Father telling these Pharisees that they are to Him as *the nations* are to Israel.

Jesus concluded the fable with an especially important statement: *if a person will not believe Moses, the person will not believe one raised from the dead, with Jesus being this one.*

The fable will be accepted as “fact” by biblical illiterates until Christ returns to reveal judgments. Hopefully no one reading these words will be in that category, or at least remain long in the pews of ignorance.

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March 23, 2003

Commentary—From the Margins *The Battle for the Mind of Humanity*

When discussing Shakespeare's *King Lear*, literary critics recognize that the mental and physical landscapes have merged when the tempest rages in the old king's mind. The storm's fury is no longer confined to the elements of nature, but has transcended the barrier of thought. Within the play, this link between geography and the domain of the mind exists for a temporary period. Within the theology of the primitive Christian Church, this linked landscape was the reality created by abolishing the covenant separating physically circumcised Israel from the uncircumcised world. Circumcision for disciples was of hearts and minds. Disciples were dead to the physical law, for disciples now lived in this linked landscape.

The Apostle Paul's one new humanity was created in this linked landscape; it was not created in a landscape bound by geographical coordinates. But it remained within existing geographical coordinates; i.e., the "flesh" of disciples. A born again disciple wasn't suddenly vaporized to become like wind, but received a wind-like addition to the mental paradigms governing the disciple's construction of reality.

Eventually, this addition overwrote the disciple's prior mental constructs in a manner similar to how a computer virus works. The disciple becomes Christ-like, becomes increasingly self-aware of his or her location within the person's mental landscape that remains linked to personal geography until death, meaning that a born-again disciple's behavior acquires greater spiritual attributes the more the disciple grows, with one of those attributes being awareness of life in this mental landscape.

How to write about the presently occurring worldwide war for domination of mental landscapes without using philosophical double talk remains the

problem I must overcome if I am to effectively explain biblical prophecy. The war against Iraq isn't limited to desert battlefields, but is being fought in Europe and here in the United States. American troops will not successfully occupy Iraq for an extended period, but American hegemony will be established through our insertion of democratic ideals into the Islamic culture. Our mental occupation of Iraqis will continue in one form or another until Christ liberates humanity from mental bondage. Our victory in the desert, though, will be less important than the victory won against the established world order that has for centuries had its capital in Paris.

Knowledge of this victory (and of what will happen next) is the message revealed in endtime biblical prophecies, which are about linked mental and physical landscapes with emphasis placed on the forces reigning over the minds of humanity. These spiritual entities reign in the physical realm through their control of humanity's mental realm. Only occasionally does one of these entities actually enter the physical realm.

But the problem is less one of word usage than of cultural acceptance. Is it really possible for all of humanity to be in mental servitude to spiritual entities when so many divergent ideas vie for ascendancy? Surely, not everyone is deceived? Someone must possess the Truth. Christians will tell all who listen that Christ's words are truth; that they are the sole possessors of truth; that those who haven't accepted Christ as their personal Savior are in spiritual bondage. But canonical Scripture says Satan has deceived the whole world (Rev 12:9); no caveat is given for Christians. And Islamic clerics label the United States as the Great Satan, because of our secular mores. So deception is widespread by everyone's agreement, but no one wants to believe that he or she has been deceived and made a mental captive. No one wants to admit that he or she doesn't fully control the thoughts of the person's mind. Yet medically, we acknowledge that clinical depression can occur from chemical imbalances, producing in the person uncontrollable thoughts. If thoughts, then, can be connected to biological problems, why can't thoughts be subject to a deity?

Do Christians really believe that the Father hears unspoken prayers? If God does, then it logically follows that life forms upon whom humanity has bestowed the concept of deity are able to influence thoughts.

In *King Lear*, audiences see enacted the linked mental and physical realms in a recognizable form, but in Shakespeare's words, *All the world is a stage*, a statement never more true than today as American troops approach Baghdad. In vision, the prophet Daniel saw a he-goat fly out of the west to trample a ram. Also in vision, the symbolism was explained to Daniel by the archangel

Gabriel, who said this vision was for the time of the end, that what Daniel saw was the king of Greece utterly destroying the king of the kingdom of Persia. The kingdom of Persia/Babylon would remain, but would henceforth be ruled by the king of Greece, but only for a little while. The he-goat is the king of Greece, not the horns even though the great horn is identified as the first king of Greece.

The angel who brings Daniel the vision of what will happen to Israel at the end of the age fights against the *sar* of Persia, and will have to fight against the *sar* of Greece. Both the *sar* of Persia and the *sar* of Greece are rebelling angels. The *sar* of Greece, then, becomes the he-goat that supports a great horn, or its first king, followed by four additional horns or kings. The king or *sar* of Greece is not a human, but an angelic being.

The shadow of his “time of the end” conquest of Persia occurred when Alexander the Great conquered all enemies with then lightning speed. But that shadow was of a geographical landscape. The king of Greece mentally conquers the kingdom of Persia/Babylon when the end of the age is near. His first horn or king now isn’t Alexander, but a spirit being. Flesh and blood conquerors occupy physical territories, not mental territories. If they occupied the minds of the vanquished, there would never be rebellions. Only when a conqueror loses control of an occupied people’s mental landscape can rebellion occur.

The essence of Christianity is the liberation of disciples from bondage to sin or lawlessness through the forgiveness of sin and the creation of the “new man.” The assumption present in the concept of liberation is that of prior enslavement. We don’t see every disciple drawn coming from a physically enslaved population, so the assumption of enslavement must be of a mentally captured people. And we can begin to explain the reality of the passage that has Satan deceiving the whole world—all of the world has been taken captive by the prince of the air, who portrays himself as an angel of light. No exceptions are given. There is none for the French foreign minister, or for President Bush. There is none for the Muslim, or for the Christian; none for you, or for me (to the inverse of our possession of the mind of Christ, we are subject to being deceived). But the conjoined mental and physical landscapes conceal the reality of mental captivity.

A Christian can determine the extent of his or her captivity by the person’s attitude towards the law of God, for the carnal or natural mind is hostile to the law of God. The changed or liberated mind, then, is subject to the law of God. Sin is lawlessness (1John 3:4), or the practice of not keeping the laws of God that have been written on the hearts and minds of disciples as a

condition of the new covenant (Heb 8:10; 10:16 & Jer 31:33). Thus, if you reject God or submission to God, you don't claim to be in covenant with Him. As such, you are carnal, no question about it. But if you think keeping the law of God is a good idea, but are unwilling to actually put this good idea into practice, your mind is also carnal; you remain tacitly hostile to God. Same if you say keeping the law of God is legalism, and the great apostasy. Your mental landscape rejects the concept of you being required to observe the laws of God. You were mentally taken captive by "lawlessness" prior to your conversion, but you were not fully liberated by your conversion to Christianity. You are still in bondage to sin, even though you will vigorously deny that you are in bondage of any kind. And you are not even seeking to rebel against your captors; you're a victim of the Patty Hearst syndrome. For God the Father would not have written His laws on your heart and mind unless He intended that you keep them. But your mental landscape remains part of the enemy's territory. Literally, your lack of belief in God unto obedience has left you still brainwashed.

The ongoing battle for control of humanity's mental landscape will be won by the spiritual king of Greece, but this king's reign will be as Alexander's was once no empires remained to be conquered. The ideals of ancient Greece and modern America will prevail. An American hegemony will be established in both physical and mental landscapes, this hegemony won by bombs and bags of rice, missiles and medicine. Imbedded journalists as a tactic is an idea whose time has come. What nation or what peoples will want to fight against us, or will not want to be liberated by us? Imbedded journalists is a tactic worthy of the spiritual Alexander, for the victory won this time will not be by technology alone, but by the ideas producing that technology. Occupation will not be by foot soldiers, but by the exercise of democratic rule.

France has been the ideological center of the spiritual kingdom of Persia/Babylon. French fashion reigned supreme, as has French cuisine. The intellectual elite went to Paris. French loan words introduced sophistication into one's writing. Derrida has confused a generation of literary critics, as deconstruction left the literary canon in shambles. And for a decade the French have fought against the introduction of American culture and language into France, but their fight against the mental hegemony of the spiritual king of Greece will fail, for the citizens of the nation are combatants in a battle they neither understand nor can conceive.

Just as the French foreign minister doesn't understand the mental paradigms that have his government supporting the use of the United Nations' inspectors, most 21st-Century Christians don't understand endtime

biblical prophecies because these prophecies are about the liberation of their minds—spiritual Israelites are like the enslaved Israelites in Egypt. They cry out to God for deliverance. They recognize their need for physical deliverance, and for spiritual deliverance. But their present pleas for liberation are really pleas for fewer “bricks” to be required of them. They seem perfectly content to remain in Egypt, where the leeks and garlic enhance French cuisine.

However, on a future Passover—on the night of the second Passover, taken a month after the first—spiritual Israel will again see death angels pass over the land, killing all firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb. These Israelites will finally be mentally liberated, will be delivered from bondage to sin. They will want to keep the laws of God; they will abhor themselves for not having kept the laws of God. Christians will return to being spiritual Judeans, not spiritual Gentiles.

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March 26, 2003

Commentary—From the Margins

The Race for Baghdad

American and British troops are less than fifty miles from Iraq's capital as I write. Two columns of Iraqis are on the move. Within the next day or two, the world will know if Saddam's Republican Guard will use the chemical weapons that the Iraqi government claims not to have. By leaving their defensive positions around Baghdad, the Republican Guard will shorten this war by days, if not weeks, regardless of whether they use gas or bio-toxins. They have transformed themselves and their equipment into moving targets—and in classrooms this coming fall semester, military strategists will ponder their decision to expose themselves to the rolling thunder of high altitude bombardment. It will seem as if the Iraqi commanders suffered some form of sandstorm delusion, with both their field commanders and our classroom strategists failing to comprehend the spiritual nature of this conflict for the mental landscapes of soldiers, politicians, protesters, and supporters; for the minds of all humanity.

The attack of September 11th and the ensuing war against terrorism began the most pivotal period in recent human history. The Bush doctrine of military and ideological intervention in, perhaps, the last remaining region of the world that philosophically resisted democratic Capitalism—even China has been partially captured by Greek values—began as the physical manifestation of spiritual warfare in a dimension humanity is unable to enter or to observe, an alien concept to the social constructs underpinning current Western mental paradigms.

Translated: the minds of men are manipulated by major and minor spiritual entities. The claim of God the Father is that He is the Most High God, that there is none like Him. But humanity doesn't, even after a future

catastrophe occurs that will leave a third of humanity dead, worship the Most High God, but rather, worships demons and the works of its hands (Rev 9:20). That worship of demons doesn't begin during the Tribulation, but has been occurring all along. It occurs today. Both Muslim and Christian believe that Buddhists worship demons, without realizing that they, too, worship the rebelling angels whom the Father has allowed to reign over the mental landscapes of men until the lawlessness of humanity reaches its full measure (Dan 8:23). Then, and not before, the kingdom of this world shall be given to the saints (Dan 7:27). God the Father doesn't even set about reclaiming the kingdom of the world until halfway through seven years of tribulation (Rev 11:15; Dan 7:9-14). Only then is the old dragon cast from heaven (Rev 12:7-12; Dan 12:1). Thus, the claim of pre-millennialist Christianity is that Christ, not Satan, will reign sovereign for a future millennium. The assumption present in this claim is that Satan reigns today. But we don't see Satan (we will when he is cast from heaven and comes as the true Antichrist; the man of perdition is his antetype). We see men and women in political offices. So how does Satan and his most powerful cohorts reign, if they indeed do? Through control of the mental landscapes of humanity. And how will Christ reign during the Millennium? The same way.

What the Iraqi commanders cannot appreciate is how controlled their thoughts are by spiritual entities outside of humanity's perception. Commanders on both sides are air-breathing tin soldiers, carefully arrayed in a world that has more in common with *Shandy Hall* than we care to acknowledge. Fallen angels ride their hobby horses, each demon vying to prove that its construction of society will work better than the Most High's. All swallowed Satan's lie of competition's superiority over cooperation, just as Eve swallowed the serpent's lie that she would not die.

Most of humanity still believes the lie of humans possessing an immortal soul, thereby possessing eternal life apart from receiving it as the gift of God. Likewise, the fallen angels reigning with Satan strive with one another as Satan reaps the rebellion he sowed through his advocacy of competition.

The United States had not previously ideologically occupied the Persian Gulf region—this war has never been about sandstorms, or GPS jamming equipment. From its conception, it's about overturning the mental paradigms of one world order, and the ascendancy of the paradigms of another, Greek in values and ideals. For us, it is ideas that will get trampled as the he-goat representing the spiritual king of Greece flies out of the west to utterly destroy the two-horned ram representing the spiritual *sar* of the kingdom of Persia/Babylon. Thus, Babylon today is, for us, the philosophical construction

of its spiritual king, Satan. It is the world-ruling image Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision. In the landscape of the mind, it has reigned continuously over the world since *YHWH* sent circumcised Israel into both physical and spiritual captivity. Daniel's interpretation of the king's vision has been trustworthy, but scholars have looked for physical fulfillment of world-ruling and endtime prophecies. Humanity doesn't need prophecy to provide it with a history text written in advance of events; it needs prophecy to "see" into the supernatural realm where war is presently being fought between the spiritual king of Greece and the reigning prince of Persia. And when we "see" into this realm, we realize that the physical fulfillment of endtime prophecies is the uncoupled shadow of a reality that occurs outside of space-time. The outcome of the present struggle for occupation of humanity's mental landscape can be seen by how Alexander defeated the Persians. Following his victory in the geographical landscape of Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, he ventured east to the Indus Valley where he defeated elephants with long spears before making an alliance and returning west to be broken suddenly. The spiritual first king of the fallen angelic coalition identified as the king of Greece will also be broken after he has prevailed with equal success in the mental landscape of all humanity. Yes, what will be defeated in this war are the social constructs that inform all societies worldwide. What will emerge from this war isn't a stronger United Nations, nor a politically powerful Europe, but an American philosophical hegemony that revolves around Athenian democracy and individual rights.

Iraqi commanders will never be able to fully explain why they left Baghdad. They will mention the sandstorm, and the bridge taken by American forces, and the aerial pounding they were taking where they were dug in. They will tell their captors that they were going to be destroyed if they stayed put, but it won't occur to them to blame an angel, or a demon for their decision to leave Baghdad. The world is too sophisticated to truly believe spiritual powers directly and powerfully influence the minds of men. Even among Islamic fundamentalists, mistakes are *The will of Allah*. Humanity is programmed to mostly deny the possibility that an idea could be implanted in our minds by supernatural powers. We want prayers answered, but we don't want God or any other spiritual entity exercising dominion over our thoughts. We want to receive a word from the Lord, but we cannot conceive of humanity being universally deceived—yet, that is the claim of the Book of Revelation (12:9). We cannot conceive of the possibility that the received "word" was not from God or Christ, but from a demon.

Christians are commanded to test the spirits, but what test is applicable under the new covenant, especially if a dispensation of grace as opposed to law is falsely taught?

There really is only one test revealed in either the Sinai, or in the new covenant by which the spirit can be determined—"the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom 8:7). The previous verse says, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace"; so the juxtaposition of the carnal mind versus the spiritual mind is firmly established. The test then is to determine whether a person's mind is subject to the law of God. The singular icon is more encompassing than when it is commonly used to represent a singular prohibition. It represents a single body of commandments, ordinances, statutes, and decrees as contained in the Sinai covenant, abolished by the death of Christ (Eph 2:15), or as mentioned by Jeremiah (31:31-34), or by Moses (Deut 30:11). When asked which was "the greatest commandment in the law" (Matt 22:36), Jesus summarized the law and the prophets (two of the three divisions of the Old Testament and a euphemistic expression for all of the Old Testament) by citing two commandments, one from Deuteronomy and one from Leviticus. So in Jesus' use of language, the law of God can be summarized by the two commandments He cited. Therefore, there should be no debate over the law to which the spiritual mind is subject. Abraham kept *YHWH's* ordinances, commandments, statutes and laws (Gen 26:5) long before ancient Israel agreed to do so and thereby become a holy nation. Under the new covenant, God the Father writes His laws on the hearts and minds of disciples after they have cleansed their hearts by a journey of faith. Accordingly, Jesus' command to keep and to teach keeping the commandments of God is as binding on disciples today as when He addressed His original disciples (Matt 5:17-19).

Theologians who teach otherwise are carnally minded, regardless of whether they believe Christ died for them and rose again after three days. Yes, I meant what I wrote: theologians who teach a dispensation of grace are enslaved by a spirit of rebellion, or lawlessness. By definition, sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). To teach that disciples do not have to keep the laws of God is to teach disciples to sin, thereby leaving both disciple and teacher in bondage to sin. Thus, through its teaching of a dispensation of grace—not understanding what grace is—the greater Church of God has taken spiritual Israelites captive, and has done the work of the prince of the power of the air through deceitful ministers of righteousness. A harsh claim? Certainly. But a supportable claim,

for a deceived person does not, nor, indeed, cannot realize that he or she is deceived, or no deception has truly occurred.

If you, as a Christian, are hostile to the laws of God that were written on your heart and mind as a condition of being placed in a new covenant relationship with Christ and the Father, you are carnally minded; you are not spiritually minded. You are still in bondage to sin in your mind. And until you are liberated from this bondage, which will, every time, cause you to want to keep the laws of God, you remain a mental bondservant to Satan. You were not called by God to become a spiritual Gentile, but a spiritual Judean, in that you will live as a Judean would, sans the physical sacrifices. Your submission to the laws of God is your reasonable service to God, considering that Christ's atoning sacrifice is all the work that ever needs done. Submission to the laws of God is not doing works. What work is involved in not doing murder, in not committing adultery, in not coveting the things of your neighbor, in not taking God's name in vain? It takes works to violate the laws of God; it takes works to labor on the Sabbath, to create idols, to bear false witness. The teaching of a no-works gospel always has disciples doing the heavy work of breaking God laws. Fornication is the work of the flesh. To not commit fornication is the application of not committing a proscribed act; so those who teach a dispensation of grace have inverted word usage, for grace covers all of those times when the flesh defeats the spirit after a real battle. A person mocks Christ by willfully practicing lawlessness/sin. Again, the Father didn't write His law on your heart and mind for you to ignore the fine print.

The race for Baghdad has been won—I know for the shadow of what will occur is available to be studied in many historical texts. Alexander's victories are ours.

Time has been created along with matter. The war presently occurring in the spiritual realm for the mental landscape of all Babylon occurs outside of time. Thus, the shadow of these real events can appear anywhere within time, depending on the location of the light source. Just as your three-dimensional body casts a two-dimensional physical shadow, three-dimensional spiritual entities cast their two-dimensional shadows on the mental landscapes of humanity. Their shadows cause human psyches to act out the dramas of the spiritual realm, as if humans were mental automatons. When a person is drawn by the Father (John 6:44, 65), the person receives a small measure of the Holy Spirit, enough so that the person can break free of the mental paradigms of Babylon. Usually, the person's body isn't enslaved, but the person's mind is. Christian conversion is liberation of the mind. And at some future hour, all who self-identify themselves as Christians will be mentally

liberated following the slaying of spiritual and physical firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb. Shortly afterwards, the remainder of humanity will be liberated 1260 days before Christ returns as the all powerful Messiah. Unfortunately, most Christians, when liberation is offered, will not place themselves under the blood of the Lamb. They will perish, because they are never able to comprehend the possibility that they are presently enslaved by mental paradigms that celebrate lawlessness.

The spiritual war being fought is for control of your mind, with neither side representing Christ. However, for those disciples who are being called out of season—they need to be in place and at work teaching the gospel of Christ prior to the liberation of greater Christianity—the battle you have to fight will be for control of both your mental and geographical landscapes. Christ has armed you for this fight by giving you the very Breath of God. No demon can prevail against Christ, so to the extent that you have the mind of Christ in you, your mental landscape is liberated territory.

* * *

March 31, 2003

Commentary—From the Margins *This Gospel into all the World*

All biblical commentators recognize one sign: “And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come” (Matt 24:14 NRSV used throughout). When the gospel of Christ is preached to the world, the end of the age will be upon humanity. But does this passage really say what it is purported to say? Is the preaching of the gospel of Christ the sign of the end? One energized voice on radio thirty, forty, fifty years ago claimed that the gospel that must be proclaimed wasn’t a gospel about Christ, but the good news of the soon coming kingdom of God; that the gospel that must be proclaimed was the gospel Christ proclaimed. This voice (that could be heard all night long as I drove across the continent in my youth) insisted that the gospel of Christ hadn’t been proclaimed for 1900 years, a claim for which he was vigorously ridiculed. Christian leaders of all persuasions demanded to know what message had been taken to the world for these nineteen centuries if not the gospel of Christ. Yet, the *prima facie* evidence validating the correctness of this energized voice’s claim was the objection made to the claim: if the gospel to have been preached was the gospel of Christ, then the end would have come long ago. So the message that must be taken to the world for the end to come necessarily differs from the gospel of Christ as delivered through the middle of the 20th-Century if Jesus’ words are reliable.

Today, the charismatic gospel of Protestant Christianity is beamed from satellites into Catholic or Orthodox lands. At the same time, young missionaries bring another testament of Christ to these same nations. Converts from one form of Christianity to another form are being made, as missionaries baptize the children of former missionaries. The far corners of the world have

been reached, yet the end of the age hasn't come. So perhaps the gospels being preached and the gospels that have been preached are not the ones required. Perhaps that energized voice of a generation ago was onto something.

Using close reading skills, the direct referent for *this good news of the kingdom* is contained in the preceding sentence: "But the one who endures to the end will be saved" (Matt 24:13). So the *good news of the kingdom* is that the one who endures to the end will be saved. This, however, is not the gospel of the charismatic church. Their gospel is that the church will be raptured and will escape being handed over to be tortured, killed, and hated by all nations because of Jesus' name (v. 9); will escape seeing many false prophets arise (v. 11); will escape the increase in lawlessness, and the love of many growing cold (v. 12). So the gospel of the charismatic church is decidedly not the gospel that will bring about the end of the age.

The gospel contained in another testament of Jesus Christ doesn't promise escapism to heaven instead of salvation coming by enduring to the end; rather, it is a gospel that comes from another prophet. According to those who follow this prophet, the test of this gospel is reading it and seeing *if in your heart you don't know that it's correct*. The prophet Jeremiah, though, says the heart is deceitful above all things (17:9), so an emotional judgment is never a valid judgment. The only criteria for whether a prophet is genuine is found in Deuteronomy 13: "If prophets or those who divine by dreams appear among you and promise you omens or portents, and the omens or the portents declared by them take place, and they say, 'Let us follow other gods' (whom you have not known) 'and let us serve them,' you must not heed the words of those prophets" (vv. 1-3). So the scriptural test of a prophet isn't whether a prophecy or a dream is true, but whether the prophet teaches Israel to follow other gods. *YHWH* told Moses to tell the Israelites, "You shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, given in order that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you" (Ex 31:13). So the sign of *YHWH*, Israel's *Elohim*, is the Sabbaths that commemorate "that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (v. 17). When *Yah*, of *YHWH*, is born as the man Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:1-2); and this same Jesus said that disciples were not to break even the least of the commandments of the law (Matt 5:17-19), the test of a prophet becomes whether the prophet teaches Israel to keep the commandments. Therefore, keeping the seventh day Sabbath becomes the test of whether a disciple or a prophet worships other gods besides the Son of Man and His God and Father (John 20:17).

If a prophet teaches Israel to worship on any days other than the Sabbaths of God, the prophet is false, regardless of the truth of the prophet's utterances. So the gospel of this "another testament" of Jesus is a false gospel.

Apparently the gospel that *the person who endures to the end will be saved* hasn't been preached to the world, meaning that a work remains to be done. A great work. A worldwide work. This gospel isn't that Christ returns to reign as King of kings for a thousand years, nor is this gospel the message about who Christ was and what He did as a man. Rather, this gospel is a consoling message that despite everything that will happen to spiritual Israelites and to Gentiles prior to their liberation from spiritual slavery and after, the person who endures to the end (a person cannot accept the mark of the beast and endure) will be saved; will have a part in the first resurrection. Salvation will be available to everyone who endures: all who endure the last 1260 days of the seven endtime years will be glorified.

Spiritual Israel will be liberated from bondage to sin at a future second Passover, when all firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb will be slain. Then halfway through seven years of Tribulation, the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Messiah (Rev 11:15). Satan is cast from heaven, and comes to Earth as a roaring lion seeking to devour whomever he can because he knows his time is short. But he comes as the Antichrist; comes claiming to be the Messiah. He comes deceiving whom he can, for if he deceives the person, he has devoured the person. Once a person, liberated by the Father and called out of Babylon by Christ (Rev 18:4), accepts Satan's slave mark, the person has made him or herself an enemy of the Father. The person will not have a part in the first resurrection, for the person didn't endure in faith. And endurance in faith is required for glorification.

That energized voice of a generation ago was correct: the gospel that would bring about the end of the age hadn't been proclaimed for 1900 years. Actually, it never was previously proclaimed, for endtime prophecies were sealed and secret until the time of the end. Only now can they be understood. Only now can this gospel be proclaimed. Only now can this gospel be taken to the world. Only now can the end of the age come.

April 4, 2003

Commentary—From the Margins

The Birth Pains of Spiritual Israel

For nearly two millennia, the good news of the kingdom of heaven has been preached to the people of the world. Early disciples took this “gospel” into the farthest corners of the world. The English literary tradition of the solitary monk in the woods doesn’t come from the Roman Church, but from the Christianity brought to the British Isles in the 2nd-Century by disciples largely forgotten. Likewise, when Spanish Conquistadors overran Mexico, they found Amerindians believing a gospel that was close enough to the teachings of the Roman Church that Conquistadors said the devil had delivered to these peoples a counterfeit gospel, little realizing that six centuries earlier the Bishop to Iceland had taken the gospel of the kingdom of God to the “Western lands.” So, while it cannot be said with certainty that all peoples of the world had received the good news of Christ prior to the modern era of mass communication and worldwide travel, that possibility certainly seems to be the case. And 19th-Century missionaries probed the underbellies of the remaining physical wildernesses where the gospel might not have been delivered. The dark heart of Africa heard the good news of Christ’s mighty deeds. The frozen reaches of the Yukon River became home to missionaries. Even the mountain man Joe Meeks preached Christ to the Nez Perce peoples for a bride, as a reformed gospel was taken to peoples converted to a “dead faith of works.” One gospel message wasn’t enough. The right gospel hadn’t been delivered to all nations. This was why the end of the age hadn’t yet come, or so the claim has been made. Another gospel must be proclaimed to all tribes and tongues, and the world evangelism received new life as missionaries “converted” the children and grandchildren of missionaries. The world needed

to receive the Protestant gospel instead of the gospel of the Roman Church, or of the Orthodox Church, or of the Coptic Church.

But the end of the age did not occur in the 19th-Century. It didn't occur in 1843, or in 1844, or in 1905, or in 1914, or with the conclusion of World War I. Jesus' Olivet discourse needed to be rethought. No man of perdition appeared although for a while Hitler seemed to qualify. Clearly, the world had not been reached with the "correct" gospel message.

In the first half of the 20th-Century, two competing gospels began to be preached. One, the *Holiness Gospel*, devalued the importance of keeping the laws of God, and stressed the experience of receiving the Holy Spirit. God the Father was no longer a stern disciplinarian, but a kindly grandfather. He became *Daddy*, instead of *Father*. The cultural informality of post-war America was transferred to the theology of the Cross. Christianity dressed itself in bobby socks and saddle shoes as it danced to the beat of a different drummer. Hell was still there, but all it took to avoid hell was confessing with one's mouth that Jesus was Lord.

The other gospel said, *even the demons confess that Jesus is Lord*. This competing gospel insisted that the good news of the soon-coming kingdom of God hadn't been proclaimed for nineteen centuries, that when this gospel of Christ's Millennium reign over humanity was preached to the world, the end would come. And this gospel of Christ's return as the Messiah was proclaimed over radio and television to all nations, and was proclaimed by personal evangelism to most nations.

But the end of the age did not come.

Out of the *Holiness* movement has come the Charismatic Church, which is now beaming its *just-believe-&-confess* gospel into areas of Asia and Africa (especially the 10-40 window) 19th-Century missionaries might have missed. But the Charismatic Church wasn't ready to move aggressively into Eastern Europe when the Iron Curtain rusted away, nor has it been able to effectively evangelize Afghanistan since the Taliban were defeated. Now the liberation of Iraq poses an even greater challenge if the gospel of the kingdom that must be proclaimed to the world before the end comes is the *just-believe* message. But one Christian tradition has the Apostle Peter going to Babylon, and being crucified upside-down there. Certainly Asia Minor and the Middle East had the gospel of the kingdom delivered to these regions by the early Church. Thus, the implication of Christ not yet returning because these regions haven't heard the gospel of the kingdom is that this *just-believe* gospel isn't the message of the primitive faith, but is "another gospel," a gospel contrary to the one preached by the Apostles. If this *just-believe* gospel were the message of the

Apostles, then there would be no need to again take it to these regions until half way through seven years of tribulation.

Meanwhile, missionaries of Arian Christianity are taking the gospel of another testament of Christ to the world. Missionaries of another sect of Arian Christianity attempt to correct the name by which Jehovah is worshiped. And these combined missionaries will have greater success than even they anticipate. In the next few years, they will be as spiritually successful as the U.S. military has been in Afghanistan and Iraq—until the man of perdition is revealed, the spiritual creation lags a little behind its physical shadow. So, before the end will come these missionaries will reach all peoples. They might have already reached all peoples such is the enthusiasm of their missionaries, especially in South America. But still no end has come. And no end will ever come if that end is contingent upon the gospels of Arian Christianity being preached to the world.

How are the words of Christ's Olivet discourse to be read? The translation into English seems correct: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matt 24:14). The translation seems free of ambiguity. When *this gospel of the kingdom* is preached worldwide, the end of the age will occur. But *Christ* has been preached to the world—and the end of the age has seemed at hand a few times, but it hasn't come. We are all still here. So perhaps, this unambiguous passage needs to be more closely read.

The antecedent for the pronoun phrase, *this gospel*, is in the preceding verse: "But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt 24:13). So the *good news of the kingdom* that is to be preached to the world before the end can come is, *the person who endures to the end of the age will be saved*. This is indeed good news if enduring isn't living a life of emotional and material prosperity. The linguistic implication of "enduring" is that life will be difficult. So there seems to be more to *this gospel of the kingdom* than merely *enduring*.

The phenomena that reflect directly upon the phrase *enduring* are found in the preceding verses:

Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. (Matt 24:9-13 NRSV)

Enduring means surviving being handed over to be tortured and being put to death. It means surviving being hated by all nations because of Christ's name. It means surviving having many fall away, having many betray one another, and having many hate one another. It means surviving the seduction of false prophets, and the increase of lawlessness, and the failing of love. *Enduring* isn't simply keeping on keeping on, as the saying goes. It is something more than doing what a person is doing. It will be a difficult thing to perform, but its performance is required if a person is to be saved. The gospel that must be taken to the world is that salvation requires a person to endure to the end of the age. Halfway to the end isn't good enough.

The carrot Jesus' gospel offers to humanity is that if a disciple will endure to the end, this disciple shall be saved. That is truly good news, for all of humanity will be liberated from spiritual bondage to Satan, the king of spiritual Babylon, halfway through seven years of tribulation. Everyone can come to Him; everyone can be His disciple. The mental barriers have been removed. The call has already gone out (Rev 18:4). No longer will Satan supernaturally deceive humanity (Rev 12:9) by controlling its mental landscape. He is cast to Earth, and he must now deceive individuals one at a time. And he will have considerable success, for he will still control the world's economic systems. But if a person will resist him, and will endure in faith to the end of the age, this person will be in the resurrection of firstfruits.

But why will the world so hate Christ's disciples that they torture and kill them?

The question almost seems inane. The world has been torturing and killing disciples since the 1st-Century. When has the world not tortured and killed disciples? Yet the linguistic structure of what Jesus said implies changed conditions. Something changes. The fate of disciples isn't the same as it was. If it were, then why hasn't the end of the age come? The gospel of persecution could have been delivered in the 1st-Century. Indeed, the Apostles thought they would live to see Christ's return such were the conditions they faced. Therefore, if linguistic sense is to be made of what Jesus said, there must be the development of deteriorating world conditions that adversely impact disciples. The level of persecution and martyrdom isn't the same as before. The level of the hatred isn't the same. The level of betrayal isn't the same. *Enduring* has become more difficult, and is actually something special, something that separates disciples into two categories, saved and lost.

There is one event that lies ahead of humanity that will cause the world to hate spiritual Israelites as it has never hated anyone: that event is the death of all firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb on a future, second Passover night. Not only will the firstborns of the world be killed, the firstborns of spiritual Israel will be slain if those firstborns are not covered by the blood of the Lamb of God. So betrayal of spiritual brothers is almost inevitable, considering that most Christian denominations do not observe the Passover. Disciples who didn't keep this future Passover will turn upon those that did. These same disciples will turn against their teachers who didn't convey the spiritual importance of the Passover to their flocks. Christianity will experience both the wrath of the world, and its own self-inflicted wrath—and the wrath of the Father still lies ahead.

This endtime gospel of *salvation goes to whomever endures in faith until Christ returns in power* is an easy gospel to preach. The Church is the woman who will bear many sons and daughters in glory; she is the second Eve, betrothed to the second Adam, impregnated by the Holy Spirit, and about to give birth. She was, centuries ago, deceived by Satan just as in the Garden of Eden the first Eve was deceived by the serpent. Both swallowed the lie that she would not die if she ate forbidden fruit; that the Church would not die. The penalty was that she would receive pain in childbirth, and that her desire would be for her husband. Certainly, spiritual Eve's desire is Christ. Her desire is nothing more than to be with Christ. And she will experience pain in childbirth—the Tribulation is that pain. But those who endure this pain will be saved. Those who endure will be the teachers of liberated spiritual Egyptians half way through the seven years of travail. And the endtime gospel that must be preached is no more complicated than “endure and be saved.” A person has no immortal soul. A person doesn't receive eternal life except as the gift of God. A person won't be raptured until glorified at Christ's return. The Church goes nowhere. Christians will be here on earth experiencing their own spiritual birth pains, because they haven't believed God unto obedience. Their desire is Christ, but they don't want to be ruled by Him. So, guess what, they will learn to be ruled by Him, or they will accept the mark of the beast. They will not have endured, and they will go into the lake of fire.

Indeed, the endtime gospel is easy to teach, but most of the Church will not believe it. And apparently, a half of that remaining third of humanity will not bear spiritual fruit and will join the rebels in the lake of fire.

Jesus' parables suggest that only twenty percent of the Church will be in covenant with Him when He returns, so enduring really becomes much

more important than just desiring Christ. Enduring begins with believing in faith unto obedience then continues on to teaching others to believe unto obedience. And this gospel hasn't been preached since Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives.

But after most of twenty centuries, the gospel that will bring this age to a close has begun going to the world.

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April 11, 2003

Commentary—From the Margins

Who Rides the Beast?

A plethora of Protestant theologians will, without hesitation, assert that the woman “clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication” (Rev 17:4 NRSV used throughout) is the Catholic Church. For five centuries, these theologians have linked spiritual Babylon and the Roman Church, as they found in the papacy evidence of Satan reigning over the Body of Christ.

The Pope, himself, became the embodiment of evil. Any ecumenical spirit that might have existed was burned at the stake, with a bag of gunpowder hung from its neck, as the great schism leaped centuries, swung on its axis, and stands to this day between the Roman See and the Church’s protesting daughters. And no image better personifies that schism than the great whore of Babylon.

One theological construct more than any other keeps the schism separating the Roman Church from her daughters from being bridged: that construction is the elevation of Mary, mother of Jesus of Nazareth. And it is the role of Mary as the shadow of a spiritual reality that I wish to examine in this season when Christianity again remembers the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus; for it isn’t a fallen *Mary* who rides the seven-headed beast. It isn’t the Roman Church, or any other religious organization as formulated today.

The great whore will be the derivative Christendom created from the liberation of spiritual Israel at a future second Passover. She will consist of those self-identified Christians who either remain in spiritual Babylon after being liberated, or who choose to return to spiritual Babylon by accepting the mark of the beast (*chi xi stigma*). The blood of martyrs on which she becomes

drunk isn't blood shed in the 1st or 2nd or 3rd Centuries, but the blood of the saints martyred during the Tribulation. The Apostle John sees her in vision during the second half of seven years of tribulation. The liberation of spiritual Israelites from their present mental paradigms occurs during the first half.

The Christian Church is the born-of-Spirit nation of Israel, created when the law or covenant that divided the circumcised from the uncircumcised was abolished. Arguably, it began when Jesus sent forth the seventy, saying to them that *the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few*. Traditionally, it began on that day of Pentecost when the one hundred twenty were filled with the Holy Spirit, and three thousand disciples were added to the Body of Christ. In actuality, it began when the glorified Christ returned to earth the day of His ascension and breathed on ten of His disciples, saying, *Receive the Holy Spirit* (John 20:22-23).

The Church becomes the second or spiritual Eve, created from the wound in the side of the second Adam. The Sinai covenant, the law by which circumcised Israel had been made a holy people (Ex 19:5-6), was abolished with the death of the Covenantor, *Yah* of *YHWH*, born of Mary as the man Jesus of Nazareth. Spiritual Israelites became the holy nation and royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:9) that was in covenant with God the Father. While *Yah* of *YHWH* was physical Israel's *Elohim* (Ex 20:2) and was the Creator of life and of the physical universe (John 1:3-4), *Yah* of *YHWH* (*Theos*), when born as flesh (John 1:14) and when again glorified as God has a God (*Theon*), who was not previously known to physical Israel. God the Father is spiritual Israel's God (John 20:17).

The problem theologians have had for the past two millennia is seeing the parallel between two creations, one physical, one spiritual. The physical creation is the shadow of the spiritual, or at least, that portion of the physical creation that has been recorded in Holy Writ is the shadow of the spiritual creation that begins with the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. For theologians to understand biblical prophecies, they must see the typology present in what has been included and excluded in Holy Writ. For example, Moses was the mediator of the Sinai covenant. *YHWH* instructed him, when asked the name of the God of these Israelites' ancestors, to say that the singular, *I AM*, had sent him. He was not to say that *Elohim*, or *YHWH*, both linguistic icons plural in construction, had sent him. Rather, he was to use an icon that can only be singular in construction. (*Elohim* is plural although usually singular in usage. *YHWH* is always singular in usage, but in actuality, is plural, revealing both *Theon* and *Theos* and their Breath—the "h" or apostrophe in *Elohim* also reveals the Breath/*Pneuma* of both entities). So when the Sinai

covenant is given, the physical shadow has circumcised Israelites receiving the spoken law of God, and accepting a covenant that promises material blessings for obedience, this covenant mediated by Moses as the intercessor for *I AM*. The spiritual reality of what the Sinai covenant foreshadows has all people receiving the laws of God by having these laws written on their hearts and mind when hearts are circumcised by the Holy Spirit/*Pneuma*, with the glorified Christ as their intercessor with God the Father. The Sinai covenant corresponds to the new covenant to the extent that hearing the spoken Living Words of *YHWH* corresponds to receiving the Holy Spirit, or Breath of God. Moses corresponds with the glorified Christ, and *I AM* corresponds with God the Father. Likewise, the first physically created first man is Adam; the first spiritually-created first man is Christ Jesus. There was a first Eve, who believed the lie of the serpent when told that she would not die; there is a second or spiritual Eve, who believes Satan's lie that humanity had an immortal soul. Physical Israel rejected *YHWH* and asked to be ruled by a king. Spiritual Israel rejected the Father and asked to be ruled by the spiritual power behind the Roman Emperor. Because physical Israel profaned God's Sabbaths and would not keep His laws, *YHWH* sent first the house of Israel, then the house of Judah into national captivity. Because spiritual Israel profaned God's Sabbaths and would not keep His laws, God the Father sent first the spiritual house of Israel (Arian Christianity), then the spiritual house of Judah (Trinitarian Christianity) into spiritual captivity. Then, as a remnant of circumcised Israelites under Ezra left Babylon to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, a remnant of spiritual Israel left spiritual Babylon to rebuild the temple of God in spiritual Jerusalem, which doesn't have geographical coordinates, but theological doctrines. So everything recorded in Holy Writ prior to Jesus of Nazareth's baptism is the shadow of a spiritual reality, such is the tightness of the inspired typology, with spiritual Babylon the mental landscape by which Satan has deceived the whole world (Rev 12:9).

Everything physical has been raised a level in the spiritual creation: whereas the focus of biblical prophecies given under the old covenant was the world's physical geography and geopolitics, the focus of endtime prophecies is the spiritual landscape of the world. The prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel are primarily about physical nations and peoples—Israel, Tyre, Babylon, etc.—and these prophecies were fulfilled. But these prophecies retained spiritual fulfillments, many of which have come to pass without theologians recognizing what occurred because these theologians are, themselves, reading Holy Writ from the perspective of living in spiritual Babylon. Their mental landscapes are occupied territory, for a truly deceived person does not, and

indeed, cannot realize he or she has been deceived until the person escapes from enemy-occupied mental landscapes.

Reasoning becomes circular. Catch-22 logic abounds. And the Christian Church spiritually corresponds to the nation of Israel in Egyptian bondage, with Satan being the reality that Pharaoh typified. Spiritual Israel will be liberated from the mental landscapes of spiritual Babylon on a future second Passover night. This should be good news for every Christian, but most of spiritual Israel will not take the Passover, will not place themselves under the blood of Christ as instructed to do so by both Jesus and the Apostle Paul. They will instead take communion however and whenever they choose. As such, when the firstborns of spiritual Babylon are killed, so will be the firstborns of spiritual Israelites who have determined for themselves when and how they will take the Passover.

When firstborns are slain, the great horn of the spiritual king of Greece will be broken, for this first king (a spiritual being) has already rebelled against *Elohim*, and will never again place itself under Christ/*Theos*. Today, the spiritual king of Greece as the he-goat of Daniel chapter 8 is trampling the spiritual king of Persia/Babylon. The shadow of this trampling is the success of Alexander the Great. The physical manifestation of this spiritual warfare is America's success in Iraq. The mental landscape of the United States and Britain will be imposed upon the mental landscapes of ancient Persia. Victory won't consist of physically occupying the land as Alexander did, but of mentally occupying the spiritual landscapes of that geographical region. The democratic ideals of the spiritual king of Greece will replace the ideals of the spiritual king of Persia. Spiritual Babylon will have a new king, but one that is still subservient to Satan.

When the great horn of the spiritual king of Greece has been broken, four lesser horns or demons will arise. Two of these four horns will make war on each other. They are the king of the North and the king of the South. And these horns are supernaturally broken halfway through seven years of tribulation. If they were not broken, humanity would not survive. So many saints are martyred prior to the doubled day 1260 that if Christ didn't then crush these two warring kings with their coalitions that militarily surround and occupy a portion of Jerusalem, humanity would exterminate itself (i.e., in religious parlance, *if these days were not shortened, no flesh would be saved alive*).

The gospel or good news of the kingdom of God that must be taken to the world prior to when the end of the age can come is that despite the martyrdom of the Tribulation, despite the betrayals, the lawlessness, the love

of many growing cold, those individuals who endure will be saved (Matt 24:9-13). All of humankind will be born of Spirit on Day 1260, for on this day the world is baptized in Spirit. Enduring requires, though, not accepting the mark of the beast.

Elohim [plural] said, on the sixth day, *Let us make humankind in our image* (Gen 1:26), but Adam was created on day one from red mud by *Elohim* [singular]. The creation of many spiritual heirs of God involves creating a taxonomical hierarchy that begins with making the first Adam an air-breathing being (1 Co 15:45). The first Eve was created from a wound in Adam's side, and she swallowed the serpent's lie that she would not die, but would become like *Elohim* if she ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She ate, and she gave the fruit to her husband. He also ate. They then hid from their Creator, who pronounced judgment upon them and expelled them from Eden. And as promised by their Creator, they both died. But humanity derives its air-breathing life from being the offspring of this first Adam and this first Eve, who were not then created in the likeness of God.

While the creation of many spiritual heirs began with the physical creation of Adam, this creation has a second stage prior to the actual glorification of heirs. The Apostle Paul writes, "The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven" (1 Co 15:47-49). Christ Jesus is this man of heaven, the second Adam.

The Church, created when the glorified Jesus breathed on His disciples (John 20:22-23), is the second Eve. This spiritual Eve, though, doesn't conceive children through spiritual intercourse with her husband. Rather, she conceives children when she is immersed in the Breath of God, or in the vernacular of Christianity, when she is baptized by the Holy Spirit on that day of Pentecost when three thousand are added to the Body of Christ. She is a sexual virgin, just as was Mary, mother of Jesus.

Mixing metaphors is, for writers, a cardinal sin. Mixing analogies when explicating Scripture is also problematic unless the text clearly does this mixing—Paul assures disciples that they will bear the image of Christ. Disciples, when glorified, will be like Christ is now. Heirs are not of some lesser kind or species, but are descendants of those to whom they are heirs. Angels are not heirs of *Elohim*. They are ministering spirits. They are not family members even though they presently have higher status than humans; thus, since glorified humans will be like Christ is now, their spiritual conception

and gestation will also be analogous to Christ's. But the analogy of Jesus as the second Adam breaks down when Jesus doesn't eat the forbidden fruit; rather, he overcomes the spiritual serpent, Satan. Jesus remains in spiritual Eden; He remains in the garden of God. Spiritual Eve, though, does not. Just as the first Eve believed the serpent's lie that she would not die, the second Eve swallowed Satan's lie about humanity having an immortal soul, thereby not dying at death but living on in an altered state, fully conscious of its surroundings.

Because the analogy of Jesus being the second Adam seems to break down when He defeats Satan, a second analogy is merged with the first. That analogy is the role Mary shadows. Matthew writes, "Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit" (1:18). The Church is identified as the Bride of Christ—this second Eve is betrothed to Christ, but the wedding doesn't take place until Christ returns as the Messiah. The Church has the same relationship to Christ today as Mary had to Joseph. The Church has conceived many sons and daughters who are not yet glorified. Their conception was by the Holy Spirit, and began on that day of Pentecost when three thousand were added to the Body; so the Church is the spiritual reality of the physical shadow that Mary, mother of Jesus, cast in history.

When Joseph was going to quietly put Mary away because of her pregnancy, "an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit'" (Matt 1:20). Mary's pregnancy fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, *Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel*. But the angel told Joseph that he was to name the Messiah Jesus, which is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew name Joshua. The child wasn't to be named Emmanuel, so let's look at the name Emmanuel, meaning "God is with us" (Matt 1:23). As a description of Jesus, the name applies: Again, Jesus was *Theos*, the Creator of Adam and of everything physical (John 1:1-2). As such, He was *Yah* of *YHWH*, Israel's *Elohim*. So He was literally God made flesh, dwelling with humanity. But the primary referent for the name *Emmanuel* isn't God, but "us." The meaning of the name implies discipleship, implies the presence of *Elohim* being with disciples. As such, the name *Emmanuel* introduces the analogy of Mary being a type, or the shadow of the Church.

Joseph was told not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. Today, we should not be afraid to identify the spiritual *Mary* as the future Bride of Christ. And

the question of whether analogies should be mixed enters the discussion: the second Eve eats the forbidden fruit of taking to herself the knowledge of good and evil. She has been driven from the garden of God. *Elohim* pronounced judgment against her, that judgment being that she shall desire her husband, the second Adam, and she shall have pain in childbirth. Indeed, her desire is for Christ, and she will experience the pain of living through seven years of Tribulation. She will experience the hard labor pains of childbirth after she delivers children (Isa 66:7-8). The spiritual *Mary* also gives birth to spiritual sons and daughters. Both analogies work equally well when the Messiah marries His Bride.

Neither a spiritual Eve nor a spiritual *Mary* exists apart from the disciples that comprise the Church. Metaphors exist only until examined closely. Again, the reality of what physical Israel in Egypt foreshadowed is spiritual Israel in spiritual Babylon, subject to Satan as the spiritual type of the Egyptian Pharaoh. It is easy to see how the second Eve is deceived and in spiritual bondage to Satan, who deceives the world (Rev 12:9); no caveat is given for spiritual Israel, or for anyone else. Only the man Jesus defeated Satan. So only to the extent that a person possesses the mind of Jesus is a person free from being deceived. Thus, spanning analogies, if Joseph was told not to be afraid to take Mary for a wife, and if Joseph is a type of the spiritual Bridegroom, then Christ isn't afraid to take the spiritual *Mary* as a wife—and if Christ will accept the spiritual *Mary* as His Bride, and if judgment has been given to Him to determine which disciples shall be in the resurrection to life and which in the resurrection to condemnation (John 5:29), then it can be presumptive of us to label any disciple as not genuine. We can judge fruits; we can judge the Church (1 Co 5:12). We can identify where there is an abundance or a want of spiritual fruit being manifest in a person's life. But we cannot say who is, or who isn't genuine unless the matter is established beyond doubt. Paul says schisms will separate those who are genuine from those who are not, but when schisms cut across schisms (and have for two millennia) after all of spiritual Israel was sent into spiritual captivity, identifying genuine Israelites from Egyptians becomes a task worthy of God. All self-identified Israelites must be presumed genuine until they prove themselves not so. This is the key: the self-identified Christian must prove him or herself false. Therefore, a Mormon, a Catholic, and a Baptist stand equally tall before Christ though not before each other. Each is a spiritual Israelite living in Babylon; each is part of spiritual Eve/*Mary*; each will be mentally liberated on that future night of the second Passover. The two witnesses of Revelation chapter 11 are the spiritual reality of Moses and Aaron, and it is these two witnesses who

will lead spiritual Israel out of Babylon and into the wilderness where God the Father will again feed His holy nation with manna (John 6:53-58), while showing Israelites His Sabbaths. The work of the remnant of Israel that has already left Babylon is to rebuild the temple of God, and the walls of spiritual Jerusalem—this is the work of the Church in Philadelphia.

Again, Christ will make the determination of which spiritual Israelites are genuine when all of spiritual Israel is liberated at a second Passover. Those who are genuine will live by faith. Those who are not will eventually accept the mark of the beast. It is these false Israelites who constitute the fallen woman that rides the beast; they are the great whore. And they will have expelled the genuine saints from the Church they represent.

The mental paradigms that form the social constructs upon which humanity recognizes “reality” are the production of the spiritual powers reigning in Babylon.

Because the early Christian Church rejected keeping the laws of God which the Holy Spirit wrote on the hearts and minds of disciples as a condition of being spiritually circumcised; and because the early Christian Church profaned the Sabbaths of God; and because the early Christian Church did not believe that eternal life was a gift of God, God the Father drove the early Christian Church out of His garden. The Father sent the early Church into spiritual captivity—and that captivity has been continued through historical exegesis. Again, the mental landscapes of “Christian” theologians have been and continue to be enemy occupied territory. And a person’s thoughts are derivatives of the social constructs upon which the person recognizes reality. Until a person is mentally liberated, the person is a spiritual slave of the king of Babylon, Satan himself. The person is deceived, and has no hope of becoming undeceived until drawn or liberated by the Father from mental bondage. The person is as a chess piece manipulated by Satan. The person can tire of being black, or of being white, and can change sides of the board, but the person cannot leave the game until God the Father draws the person. The good news of the endtime gospel is that liberation will shortly come, and the liberated person who endures to the end will be saved (i.e., will be part of the first resurrection). The downside of this good news is that there will be martyrdom and betrayal, that enduring will not be easy. There will be no pre-Tribulation rapture of the Church. Saints must live by faith; they must not return to mental or physical slavery by accepting the mark of the beast.

The great whore isn’t the Roman Church, or any other singular entity. She is the woman who accepts the tattoo of the Cross (*chi xi stigma*) on her hand or forehead. She consists of two-thirds of the holy ones or the seventy

percent who won't be ruled by Him (Luke 19:27). She is a fallen *Mary*. And she doesn't exist until after spiritual Israel has been liberated from bondage to Satan, the king of Babylon (Isa 14:3-21). Until then, only Christ knows what is in the hearts and minds of self-identified disciples; for part of Satan's deception is concealing the law of God from drawn disciples through the reassignment of linguistic objects to icons. But when liberated from spiritual bondage, genuine disciples will manifest themselves through their obedience to Christ. The Bride and the whore will part company, with the whore betraying and slaying many genuine disciples. Again, the endtime gospel that must be proclaimed to the world is that those disciples who endure to the end will be saved. They are the face of the Bride.

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July 2, 2007

Commentary—From the Margins
*The Imprecise Linguistic Referent:
The Law of Moses*

But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. . . . When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses. (Acts 15:1-5)

What is the Law of Moses? Many Christian theologians have created arguments to “prove” that disciples of Christ Jesus are not under the law of Moses, but none of these arguments identify the substance of, or location of this allegedly abolished law. Rather, the arguments are usually against the Sinai covenant, made on the third day of the third month of the year in which Israel left Egypt. So is the Law of Moses the Sinai [Horeb] covenant (Ex chaps 19-24)? Or is the Law of Moses the Moab covenant (Deut chaps 29-32)? Or is the law of Moses the covenant God made with Israel on the day that He

led this nation out of Egypt—the Passover covenant (Ex chaps 12-14)? And where is circumcision found in the Law of Moses? Where, on Israel’s journey between the Sea of Reeds [the Red Sea] and the River Jordan, does Moses or God through Moses command Israel to be circumcised?

The Law of Moses is a vague linguistic phrase that refers to everything Moses wrote. It can be nothing else; thus, it is the Torah, five books that represent the testimony of Moses. And within the Torah, Moses is the mediator of three covenants between God and Israel, not one. In addition, God tells Moses on at least two occasions that He will make of Moses “a nation greater and mightier than they [Israel]” (Num 14:12; Ex 32:10). On both occasions Moses implored God not to destroy Israel and make of him a great nation. Both times God deferred His wrath; nevertheless, His intention to make of Moses a mighty nation stands unaltered for three and a half millennia, for Jesus said, “But if you do not believe his [Moses’] writings, how will you believe my words” (John 5:47). Thus, to hear Jesus’ words and to believe the One who sent Him and thereby pass from death to life (*v.* 24) is to believe Moses’ writings; for Moses is the house that *Theos*, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt 22:32), built (Heb 3:3-4) when He led Israel through the wilderness of Sin/Zin.

The *Theos* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the *Logos* who, in the beginning, was with God [*Theon*—θεόν] and who was God [*Theos*—θεός] (John 1:1-2). This *Theos* came as His Son, His only (John 3:16), to be born as the man Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:14). He became the Son of the Father [*Theon*] when the divine Breath of the Father [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] descended upon Him as a dove (Matt 3:16-17) and gave the man Jesus a second birth, and this only Son of *Theos* came to reveal the Father to those whom the Father has made spiritually alive through receipt of His divine Breath after the pattern through which Jesus fulfilled all righteousness (Matt 3:15).

The world does not know the Father (John 17:25), whom Jesus has revealed to the firstfruits in an age quickly drawing to a close. Nor does the world know Christ Jesus, the beginning and the end (Rev 22:13) that was concealed by the creation (Eccl 3:11). But those whom the Father has raised from the dead—they were spiritually dead even though they were physically living (John 5:21)—know Him because the man Jesus made the Father known to His first disciples who, by their testimonies coupled to the testimonies of Moses and the Prophets, reveal what could not be known through observation or measurement.

In the beginning were two who functioned as one as if married: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’” (Gen 1:26); “So

God created man in his own image . . . male and female he created them” (*v.* 27); “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen 2:24). These two who were in the beginning are disclosed in the Hebrew linguistic icons used for God: *Elohim* and the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*. In Hebrew, the word or linguistic icon for /God/ is *El* as in *El Shaddai* or “God Almighty” (from Gen 17:1). *Elohim*, now, is the regular plural [the “*im*” or “*em*” ending] of *Eloah*, the linguistically singular noun, and *Eloah* deconstructs to /*El*+ /*ahl*/, with the /*ahl*/ radical representing “breath,” either vocalized or aspirated. Thus, *Elohim* is /*El*+/*ahl*/ + /*El*+/*ahl*/ an undetermined number of times. But the Tetragrammaton gives the multiple: two. For *YHWH* deconstructs to /*YH*/ or *Yah* (see Ps 146:1a; 148:1a; 149:1a in Heb.) and /*WH*/, with the /*H*/ again linguistically representing “Breath.” So what is grammatically seen is that the *Logos* who was *Theos*, with His Breath or Spirit, is *Yah*, whom Moses and the seventy saw (Ex 24:9-11); for no human being has seen the Father or *Theon* (John 1:18) at any time. And what the creation or eternity [Heb: *olam*] has concealed (Eccl 3:11) is that in the beginning was a marriage that ended with the death of *Theos*, the Helpmate to *Theon*, and in the end will be the marriage of the glorified Son to glorified disciples, who will be in the position of “helpmate” to the One who was *Theos*. The narrative of Scripture begins with marriage and ends with marriage. And the basis for this narrative is found in the Law of Moses.

Circumcision comes from Genesis chapter 17: “When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord [*YHWH*] appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty [*El Shaddai*]; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly” (*vv.* 1-2). Circumcision was the sign of this covenant (*vv.* 10-14), its ratification confirmed in the droplets of blood coming when the foreskin is cut away. It is a covenant made in the flesh (*v.* 13) and with the flesh. Its terms call for the circumcised person to walk blamelessly before God, meaning that circumcision causes the man to appear before God covered only by his obedience to God . . . obedience functions as a spiritual garment that conceals a man’s nakedness as the foreskin of the penis physically concealed the head of his penis and hence, his nakedness.

The juxtaposition of a physical skin covering equating to a spiritual covering of obedience has been poorly understood by all of Israel. It is difficult to conceive of obedience as a garment that is put on to cover one’s nakedness. Likewise, it is difficult to perceive that Christ’s righteousness functions as a garment that disciples put on daily as physically circumcised Israel covered its transgressions of the law through the “daily” or daily sacrifice. But Grace

when properly understood is the garment of Christ's righteousness that covers the daily sins of disciples; for all who are "baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:27). And what those believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees never understood is that the garment of Christ—literally, Grace—covers the transgressions of the new creature born of Spirit, with this new creature being neither male nor female, Jew nor Greek, free nor bond (*v.* 28). All of these physical attributes pertain to the flesh: a man has outdoor plumbing while a woman has indoor. An Ethiopian has a darker tent of flesh than has someone of Nordic heritage. But Grace does not cover the lawlessness of the flesh, which today remains in subjection to sin and death (Rom 7:21-25). Rather, Grace covers the transgressions of the new creature, a son of God born of Spirit and domiciled in an outer nature (2 Co 4:16) or tent that is the son of God's earthly home (2 Co 5:1). And it is this son of God over whom sin has no dominion (Rom 6:14), for this son's Father is not the first Adam who lost his covering of obedience when he ate forbidden fruit. Rather, this son's Father is *Theon*, the Most High God.

The tent of flesh into which a son of God is born was before birth—from above a son of disobedience (Eph 2:2-3), consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) and not free to keep the law of God (Rom 8:7). Being born again or born of Spirit sets the mind and heart free from disobedience, but until the tent of flesh is liberated from the indwelling law of sin and death (Rom 7:21-25), the mind and the heart which "delight in the law of God" (*v.* 22) are at war with the law of sin that dwells in the flesh . . . the new creature is light in a jar of clay, and the jar will not enter heaven for it is of this world that is passing away (1 John 2:17). It, too, will pass away before the coming of the new heavens and new earth.

Words are linguistic icons that are either visibly inscribed or orally heard . . . the first disciples heard the words of the man Jesus with their ears as did the scribes and Pharisees. These words were controlled modulations of air: they were moving air, *pneuma*—πνεῦμα, the Greek linguistic icon borrowed by English speakers as a root for common words such as "pneumatic tools" and "pneumonia." To a 1st-Century Greek speaker, *pneuma* was either deep breath or wind or an invisible force.

The Greek modifier *hagios/hagion* [Greek uses linguistic gender with the /os/ case ending employed for masculine singular nouns in nominative case, and the /on/ case ending employed for neuter singular nouns] would translate as the English icon "holy." In Greek, an apostrophe before the first vowel if a capital or above if lower case indicates rough breathing; thus /ha/ would be written as /há/, or as /Ā/.

The Greek icon phrase /Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον or πνεῦμα ἅγιον/, written in Roman characters as *Pneuma Ἅγιον* or *pneuma hagion*, would be neuter singular from the /on/ case ending which would agree with *Theon* and would translate as Breath Holy or Wind Holy or Spirit Holy. All would be valid translations. This Breath or Wind or Spirit is not that of *Theos*, the *Logos* [again there is case ending agreement: both *Theos* & *Logos* are masculine singular in John 1:1-2] . . . in inscription the Breath of *Theos* would be written as /Πνεῦμα Ἅγιος/, but in Scripture this Breath is most prominently seen after the man Jesus had His former glory returned to Him (John 17:5), and it is seen in the icon phrase as /Πνεῦμα Χριστου/, translated as the “Spirit of Christ” (Rom 8:9). And this Breath of Christ has to, by context, be different from the Breath of the Father seen in the icon phrase /Πνεῦμα του ἐγείραντος Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρων/, translated as the “Spirit of the (One) raising Jesus from (the) dead” (Rom 8:11). So the Apostle Paul writes of two Spirits or Breaths, one that belongs to Jesus (*v.* 9) and one that belongs to the Father, who resurrected Jesus from the dead (*v.* 11). Paul consistently addresses the Father and the Son in his epistles, while never sending greetings to the saints from a third personage—and Paul separates the Spirit of Christ from the Spirit of the Father, which is the Spirit by which the Father raises the dead (again, John 5:21). So for Paul, the Holy Spirit [*Pneuma Ἅγιον*] does not have personhood but is a force in the heavenly realm that equates to physical breath or wind in this physical realm.

To every word in whatever language, meaning must be assigned to the word by the auditor [the one hearing the oral icon or reading the inscribed icon], and this meaning will be assigned by a community or a collective of hearers and readers. Concerning Scripture, this community is all those who hear the voice of Jesus (John 10:3-5). It is not the world; nor is it those who are hostile to God . . . the Apostle Paul gives the only “test” to determine whether a person has truly been born of Spirit: “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 8:7-8). Thus, those human beings who do not have the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of the Father dwelling in them (who have not been born of Spirit) have their minds set on the flesh and do not submit to God’s law. So the person who claims to be born of Spirit but who cannot submit to God’s law is a liar and a member of the synagogue of Satan, for the person remains a son of disobedience (Eph 2:2-3) and remains in bondage to disobedience (Rom 11:32). Sin still has dominion over this person, whereas sin has no dominion over those who have been born of Spirit (Rom 6:14).

The person who actually has been born of Spirit and who does not submit to God's law is a hypocrite. This person knows to keep the law of God and is thereby condemned by Moses (John 5:45; Deut 31:26). This person's righteousness does not exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, and this person will never enter heaven (Matt 5:20).

According to Jesus, to be "great" in the kingdom of heaven a person will keep the commandments and teach others to do likewise; for whoever relaxes one of the least of the commandments that Jesus fulfilled and teaches others to do likewise will be called least in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:19). And the person who teaches Israel to break the commandments, regardless of the mighty works the person has done in the name of Jesus, will be denied when judgments are revealed, and will be cast into condemnation (Matt 7:21-23). So the person who teaches others will either (1) keep the commandments and so teach others, or will (2) relax the commandments and so teach others, or will (3) teach against the law [*ἀνομία*ν]. In the first case, Jesus says the person will be great. In the second case, Jesus said the person will be called least in the kingdom. And in the third case, Jesus said the person will not be in the kingdom. Therefore, men who say that Christians are not to keep the law have already been condemned by Jesus. Their arguments, such as *dispensationalism* [that the law is only for physical Jews and that after Calvary Christians are not under the law but under grace], are the millstones by which they have condemned themselves. For the law that was written on two stone tables is the same law that is now written on two tablets of flesh, the heart and the mind of the person who has been born of Spirit and has made a journey of faith to cleanse the heart—what happened at Calvary was the ending of a covenant made in the flesh and with flesh, a covenant that was a shadow of a heavenly covenant, and implementation of the heavenly covenant that is the shadow's spiritual reality.

To understand what happened at Calvary, an Israelite born of Spirit [by the divine Breath of the Father] and circumcised of heart by Spirit [by the divine Breath of Christ] must first understand the house that is Moses is built on Christ (Heb 3:3-4) . . . Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses who initially mediated the covenant to which better promises have been added (better promises are not added to a covenant that has been abolished, nor does the mediator change for an abolished covenant). The writer of Hebrews said of Jesus, "Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb 5:8-9). Moses did not lead all

of humankind out of Egypt; he led Israel out from physical bondage to a physical king [Pharaoh]. Likewise, Jesus is not the source of salvation for those who will not obey him; he is the source of salvation for those who hear His words and believe the One who sent Him (John 5:24). And the person who obeys Him will keep the commandments and teach others to do the same (Matt 5:19). But this person is a son of God, for those who have not been born of Spirit cannot keep the commandments (Rom 8:7). So to understand the house that is Moses, a person needs to realize that Moses pertains to the flesh made naked by circumcision, or to the fleshy tent in which the born of Spirit son of God dwells. Moses rules the hand and the body, whereas Jesus is the high priest of the new inner creature. And Calvary saw construction of the bridge that in the fulfillment of all righteousness permitted God the Father to raise from the dead that which never before had spiritual life unlike Jesus, who entered His creation (John 1:3) as His Son, His only (John 3:16). Israel goes from being a physically circumcised nation to being a spiritually circumcised nation.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "In him [Christ Jesus] also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh, by the circumcision of Christ" (Col 2:11) . . . the circumcision of Moses is the circumcision of the flesh, the cutting away of foreskins, but the circumcision of Christ is circumcision of the heart by Spirit, not by the letter of the law (Rom 2:29). This circumcision is from God. And the juxtaposition of hand to heart is also that of the first Adam, a man of mud, to the last Adam, a life-giving spirit (1 Co 15:45).

The Law of Moses covers not just the covenants Moses mediated between God and Israel, but covenants between God and Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, some ratified by the shedding of blood, some by better sacrifices. The Law of Moses serves as a house that covers or shelters the flesh in a manner that foreshadows the mantle of Christ Jesus' righteousness.

Jesus said, "If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well?" (John 7:23). So Jesus used the linguistic phrase Law of Moses as a covering that included circumcision, a "cutting" that made a portion of the body well, with the importance of this cutting exceeding the importance of ceasing work on the Sabbath. The command to circumcise precedes the giving of the Decalogue [the ten living words of God] as does the giving of the Passover covenant made on the day when God took Israel by the hand to lead the nation out of bondage to Pharaoh. And if circumcision has preeminence over the Sabbath, then it reasonably follows

that the Passover covenant also has preeminence over the Sinai covenant, an issue to be addressed later.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote,

Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquities, and I will remember their sin no more. (31:31-34)

When all "know the Lord" the least of Israel is not the physically or materially poor of Judea, but those who relax the least of the commandments, while the greatest of Israel is the one who keeps the commandments and teaches others to do likewise . . . note: when this new covenant is made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, this new covenant is only made with the house of Israel. There will no longer be two physical houses, but one spiritual house comprised of all who have circumcised hearts; for this new covenant is not a covenant like that made with the fathers of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah on the day when the Lord led their fathers out of Egypt. And if it is not a covenant like the one made on the day when Israel left Egypt, it does not begin and end with the shedding of blood—and this is an important concept to remember, for the shedding of Jesus' blood at Calvary does not begin or ratify this new covenant.

Also note, going to Exodus chapters 12 and 13: On the day when the Lord [YHWH] took the fathers of the house of Israel and the house of Judah by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, the Lord said nothing to them about the Sabbath, about murder, about adultery, about lying, about stealing, about idols or coveting. What He said was, "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month every man shall take a lamb according to [the size of] their fathers' houses, a lamb for a

household” (Ex 12:2-3). The lamb was to be penned until the 14th day then slain between the evenings (*v.* 6). Blood of this Passover lamb was to be put on the doorposts and lintels of the houses, and the lamb was to be roasted whole with fire and eaten with bitter herbs (*vv.* 7-9). It was to be eaten with belts fastened, feet shod, and staffs in hand; it was to be eaten in haste (*v.* 11). The blood would be the sign that the Lord would pass over the houses of the fathers of Israel and Judah, and that no plague would destroy them when He struck the land of Egypt, slaying firstborns of both man and beast (*vv.* 12-13).

On the same night that God struck down the firstborns of Egypt, Pharaoh rose up in the night and summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Up, go out from among my people, both you and the people of Israel and go, serve the Lord, as you have said. Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also” (Ex 12:29-32).

On what night did God strike down the firstborns of Egypt? Did the death angel pass over Egypt during the dark portion of the 14th, or the dark portion of the 15th day of the first month? This question has relevance in relation to whether Jesus instituted celebration of the Passover one day earlier than Moses. Traditionally, the Churches of God have taught that celebration of the Passover on the night that Jesus was betrayed originated with Jesus, but Jesus’ disciples did not object to when Jesus would eat the His last Passover meal. They came to Him on the first day of Unleavened Bread. And the man whose house they used apparently wasn’t surprised by when the disciples prepared for the Passover meal (Matt 26:17-19). However, this day was one day before when the Pharisees would slaughter Passover lambs that they would eat on the dark portion of the 15th day, the High Sabbath. Plus, John’s gospel clearly states that Jesus was slain on the Preparation Day, which is the 14th of Abib. So understanding has been lacking in how to read Matthew’s and Luke’s gospels.

Luke writes, “Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it’” (22:7-8).

Secular sources, most of whom deny that Jesus was three days and three nights in the grave as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, the only sign Jesus gave of His divinity, have lambs only being slaughtered after the evening sacrifice on the 14th, which would make Jesus’ crucifixion the reality of all Passover lambs previously sacrificed, a reasonable supposition considering that the lambs were “a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ” (Col 2:17). But Luke is a very careful historian.

How to reconcile the two timelines [i.e., Matthew's/Luke's with John's] has caused any number of problems among Sabbatarian disciples over the past few decades . . . if Jesus is slain on the 14th, the Preparation Day as Pharisees kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread, then the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed (the Preparation Day) that Luke references is one day earlier than the Preparation Day that John references.

Using the timeline from John, Jesus eats the Passover on the dark portion of the 14th of the first month, is taken captive and questioned by the religious leaders while it is still dark, then when day comes He is turned over to Pilate and crucified about noon, dies about 3:00 pm, and is taken from the cross and hastily buried at dusk as the 14th ends and the 15th begins. The 15th is the high Sabbath, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread—and Jesus spends all of the 15th in the tomb. Likewise, He spends all of the 16th and the 17th, the weekly Sabbath, in the heart of the earth. Then He is resurrected in the dark portion of the 18th, and is gone from the tomb when Mary comes before daylight on the first day of the week. Therefore, the 14th is Wednesday, mid calendar week, and Jesus was resurrected on Sunday, the 18th, the midday of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a significant correspondence considering the reason for keeping the Sabbath under the Sinai covenant (Ex 20:11) as opposed to the reason for keeping the Sabbath under the Moab covenant (Deut 5:15). [Under the Sinai covenant, the Sabbath is kept as memorial to the physical creation, but under the Moab covenant, the Sabbath is kept as a remembrance of Israel's liberation; thus, the Sabbath under the Sinai covenant points to the weekly time-cycle begun at creation whereas the Sabbath under the Moab covenant points to the Passover covenant and the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread.]

In John's timeline, Jesus entered Jerusalem on the Sabbath, the 10th day of the first month (John 12:1, 12); He entered as both high priest and as Passover Lamb. And His confrontations with the Herodians, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees recorded in Matthew chapter 22 would have probably been on Monday, the 12th.

Jesus did not die twice, and He did die midweek (too many prophecies have Him being cut off mid-week: in the middle of a seven year ministry as well as mid calendar week). Thus, reckoning Luke's timeline with John's, Luke calls the 13th *the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed*, which would then necessitate that the Passover would be eaten at the beginning of the 14th, during its dark portion, and not on the 15th, the high Sabbath under the Sinai covenant (Lev 23:6-8). And a person can see what the ensuing problems will be: two Passover lambs sacrificed, one at the

end of the 13th and one at the end of the 14th. And across time, a person can hear the reverberations of Emperor Constantine's argument against Passover observation: Jesus is not slain twice. But by tradition, Judaism keeps the Passover on two successive days.

The easy way out of the problem of two Passover sacrifices is to shout, "Scribal error!" But is that being honest with Scripture? It isn't, for if there is scribal error in one place then there will be scribal error in many places, and Scripture cannot be believed. But meaning has to be assigned to words, and since there are many reader communities that do not hear the voice of Jesus, these communities will assign meaning to the same inspired icons, but meaning that comes from human reasoning and understanding. Thus, many false readings of Scripture will simultaneously exist. Therefore, hearing the voice of Jesus is essential for born of Spirit disciples if they are to comprehend Scripture—they cannot listen to the many false readings and teachers and still leave Scripture with the understanding they should have. They must test the spirit of the reader and reading (1 John 4:1), and if they find that the reader denies that Christ came in the flesh or that Christ was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, then the reader and the reading must be rejected.

The day on which the Passover lamb is eaten shall be a memorial, kept as a feast to the Lord (Ex 12:14). For seven days Israel was to eat no leavened bread (*v.* 15), and the first day and seventh day of these seven days [the 14th day at even through the 21st day at even of the first month] were to be holy assemblies and high Sabbaths when no work other than preparation of food for that day was to be done . . . if these seven days begin at the end of the 14th, and if these seven days include all of the 21st, then these seven days are the same seven days given in Leviticus, with the first high day being the 15th and the last the 21st. This reading excludes the 14th, but includes the 21st even though the same language is used for both. So the passage could legitimately be read to include the 14th and exclude the 21st, especially in light of neither Jesus' disciples nor the man whose house they used were surprised when Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover on the dark portion of the 14th. Note: the keeping of the seven days of unleavened bread according to this Passover covenant made on the day when the Lord took Israel by the hands to lead the nation out of Egypt could reasonably be read as differing by one day from the keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread as expounded in the Sinai covenant and in Leviticus chapter 23 (*vv.* 5-8), so the rabbinical practice of keeping the Passover on two nights has limited scriptural support apart from Israel being unable to determine in advance the new crescent moon that begins the

first month [of course, the date of the new moon would have been known for two weeks before the Passover lamb was slain].

Clearly, Jesus ate the Passover on the 14th, and the Apostle Paul commands the saints at Corinth to eat the Passover on the same night that Jesus was betrayed, the 14th (1 Co 11:23-26).

The Emperor Constantine's argument against the Passover (that Christ was not crucified on two days, but only once) begs for reconciliation of the instructions given in the covenant made on the day when God led Israel out of Egypt and instructions given in expounding the Sinai covenant . . . the Law of Moses requires the interpretation of men. And in this case, Jesus as substance of preceding shadows doesn't remove the ambiguity although Paul gives unambiguous instructions as to when the Passover sacraments of bread and wine are to be taken.

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July 5, 2007

Commentary—From the Margins
*The Imprecise Linguistic Referent:
The Law of Moses (2nd part)*

This day [*YHWH's* Passover] shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord [*YHWH*]; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you. And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generation, as a statute forever. In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwelling places you shall eat unleavened bread. (Ex 12:14-20)

Why the repetition? Isn't it enough to tell Israel not to eat leavened bread once? Israel is only told once that the first day and the last day shall be holy convocations. Why does God need to tell Israel two, three times not to eat leavened bread? And why does most of Israel today, a nation inwardly circumcised, eat leavened bread during these seven days?

God made a covenant with Israel on the day that He led this physically circumcised nation out of Egypt: for liberation from physical bondage to Pharaoh, Israel was to sacrifice a Passover lamb and to smear its blood on door posts and lintels, the entrances into Israel's houses. Then Israel was to commemorate this liberation by keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread, seven days during which Israel was not to eat any leavened bread or to have any leavened bread in its houses . . . Moses tells the elders of Israel, "Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of his house until the morning" (Ex 12:21-22). So the terms of this covenant do not ask of Israel to do anything but select and sacrifice a lamb, then with hyssop put some of the lamb's blood on their houses' doorposts and lintels and stay inside their houses until morning. This covenant says nothing about keeping the law of God or about being holy as God is holy; this covenant is about liberation from bondage and about all firstborns belonging to God for Him to do with as He pleases.

Moses further says to the elders of Israel, "You shall observe this rite as a statute forever. . . . And when your children say to you, "What do you mean by this service?" you shall say, "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses"" (Ex 12:24, 26-27). Thus, the Passover sacrifice of a lamb asks Israel to remember its liberation from bondage to Pharaoh.

The covenant God makes with Israel on the day that He leads the nation out of Egypt has two additional clauses: the people of Israel asked the Egyptians for silver, gold, and clothing, and thus plundered the Egyptians (Ex 12:35-36). Plus, as mentioned earlier, God claimed as His own all firstborns: "Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine" (Ex 13:2). Israel was to redeem its firstborn through either sacrifice or payment of a ransom price; however, Egypt is not offered a way to redeem its firstborns, which died when the death angel of the Lord passed over the houses of both Egypt and Israel. The lives of the

firstborns of Egypt were given as the ransom price for Israel's liberation (Isa 43:3). God exercised His claim to the lives of all firstborns when He slew Egyptian firstborns, both of man and beast.

Note what is not in the Passover covenant that God made with Israel on the day when He led the nation out of Egypt: there is no mention of His law, or of Israel being the holy nation of God, or of Israel being holy as He is holy. There is no mention of sacrifices other than the Passover lamb. There are no laws or statutes about how one Israelite is to treat another. There is nothing said about restitution or social justice or the Sabbath or the high Sabbaths, except for the two holy convocations that occur at the beginning and end of the seven days of Unleavened Bread. Thus, this Passover covenant is silent about most of those things that Christians attribute to the Law of Moses.

But this Passover covenant is not silent about leavening being found in the houses of Israel from the 14th day of the first month at even to the 21st day at even. It makes eating or having leavening in the houses of Israel during these seven days a great offense to God and a negation of the covenant by which He liberates Israel from bondage. Yes, the person who eats leavened bread during these seven days shall be cut off from Israel, and if cut off, then this person is as an Egyptian.

Typological exegesis holds that what is and can be known about God, including His invisible attributes [e.g., His eternal power and divine nature] has been clearly perceived through the visible things of this world (Rom 1:19-20), and further, that the physical things that can be seen and described precede invisible, spiritual things (1 Co. 15:46). Therefore, physical circumcision reveals and precedes spiritual circumcision—the circumcision made by hands and concealed by modest attire forms the copy and type [shadow] of the circumcision of the heart by Spirit, and not by the letter of the law of Moses (Rom 2:28-29; Col 2:11), given to the patriarch Abraham as ratification of the covenant by which Abraham was to walk upright before God (Gen 17:1-2). It was the physically circumcised nation of Israel with whom God made the Passover covenant on the day that He led this nation out of bondage. But following Calvary, Israel ceases to be a physically or outwardly circumcised nation and becomes a spiritually or inwardly circumcised nation.

The marriage covenant made when God passed by Israel (Ezek 16:8; Ex 19:5-6) was initially made with physically circumcised Israel, but this nation [that became two nations] played the whore in Egypt (Ezek 23:3) and brought adultery into the marriage covenant. Thus, physically circumcised Israel was put away as a divorced woman, but the One who had married her was

not free to marry again until death ended the marriage—and here is where typological exegesis can be confused with isogesis, the bringing of meaning from outside sources into Scripture.

The Passover lamb is selected and penned on the 10th day of the first month, and Israel enters the Promised Land on the 10th day of the first month (Josh 4:19). Jesus and His first disciples enter Jerusalem on the 10th day of the first month (*cf.* John 19:31; 12:1, 12). So both the natural nation of Israel under Joshua, then a mixed nation of circumcised and uncircumcised Israelites (Josh 5:2-7), and the man Jesus of Nazareth are selected by God and penned in God's rest, which was initially all of the Promised Land, but after return from the Babylonian captivity was only the rebuilt temple. Both enter God's rest on the 10th day of the first month. Both enter as the Passover Lamb of God that is to be sacrificed.

But the natural nation post Joshua's leadership played the harlot with sticks and stones in hilltop groves and became a blemished lamb that could not be sacrificed, but became the prey of wolves. So a new Israel was needed, one that would not play the harlot, one that was not consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32), one over whom sin had no dominion (Rom 6:14). This new Israel could not be a physical nation for a physical nation already existed; thus, this new Israel had to be a nation of a different type, a nation with whom a covenant could be made that was unlike the covenant God made with the fathers of Israel and Judah on the day when He took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt (Jer 31:32). This new Israel had to be a spiritual nation, which did not exist prior to the *Logos* as *Theos* entering His creation as His only Son, the man Jesus, the first man of circumcised Israel who covered His nakedness with obedience to God.

Jesus' disciples form the Body of Christ.

By His obedience, Jesus was made the Passover Lamb of God—and when a lamb is sacrificed, it isn't only the head that is killed, but also the body. The Head of the Lamb of God cannot be sacrificed without the Body also being sacrificed, or crucified with Christ. And if crucified with Christ, then the flesh of disciples can be slain as was the fleshly body of the man Jesus; for the disciple is not above his teacher or the servant greater than his master (Matt 10:24). It is enough for disciples to be like Christ Jesus (*v.* 25), to walk as He walked (1 John 2:6), and to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God (Rom 12:1). And this becomes especially important when disciples are liberated from bondage to indwelling sin and death (Rom 7:21-25), for the number of disciples who have been "slain for the word of God and for the witness they have borne" (Rev 6:9) is not yet complete (*v.* 11).

Israel does not cease to be when circumcision moves from being of the outer man to being of the inner man, born of Spirit as a son of God. This new creature is housed in a tabernacle or tent of flesh; so the following correspondences exist—

- Circumcision of the foreskin is physical and as such precedes and serves as the copy and type of circumcision of the heart.
- The physically circumcised Israelite in a house in Egypt precedes and serves as a copy and type of the spiritually circumcised Israelite [i.e., the new creature born of Spirit] in a tent of flesh.
- The two doorposts and lintel of the physically circumcised Israelite's house in Egypt delineate the entryway into the house and as such correspond to the mouth of the tent of flesh in which the born of Spirit son of God dwells.
- Thus, the physically circumcised Israelite who, after smearing blood on doorposts and lintels, eats of a physical lamb roasted whole with fire serves as the copy and type of the spiritually circumcised Israelite who eats the flesh of the spiritual Lamb roasted over the fiery sins of Israel.
- For disciples, eating the unleavened bread that is or represents Christ's body functions spiritually as eating the flesh of an actual lamb by a physically circumcised Israelite.

The covenant that ends at Calvary is the covenant[s] made with the flesh, beginning with Abraham who was to walk blamelessly before God. Born of Spirit disciples are to walk blamelessly before God (Rom 2:26; 3:31; 6:12-13 *et al*) as Abraham walked, keeping commandments and statutes and laws by faith (Gen 26:5). And it is the faith that causes disciples to keep these commandments and laws in a rebellious world that will be counted to them as righteousness, not the keeping of the commandments, a distinction that will be lost on those individuals who have not truly been born of Spirit.

Where typology comes close to being isogesis is in Egypt representing sin, a correspondence taught for centuries as a Christian truism . . . when Jesus, during the eating of His last physical Passover, took the cup and after giving thanks over it, says, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt 26:27-28), He made the wine the equivalent of His blood—and His blood the equivalent of the blood of the Passover lamb. He also made forgiveness of sins the equivalent of leaving Egypt. So the long held correspondence of Egypt representing sin is confirmed when the Passover covenant made

with the flesh of physically circumcised Israelites moves inward to become the Passover covenant made with the spiritually circumcised new creature, a son of God.

The validity of typological exegesis is now strengthened when returning to Exodus: “None of you shall go out the door of his house until the morning” (12:22) . . . the house of a spiritually circumcised Israelite is the tent of flesh in which this son of God dwells. So, as no physically circumcised Israelite was to leave his house until the morning, no spiritually circumcised Israelite will leave his house [again, the tent of flesh] until the “Light” returns, meaning until Christ Jesus returns and the judgment of saints is revealed (1 Co 4:5). Disciples do not consciously go to heaven upon death, but dwell as sleeping spirits under the altar of God (Rev 6:11) until the end of this age.

Of equal importance prophetically is the realization that the darkness [i.e., the long spiritual night that began at Calvary] does not end until the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of the Ancient of Days and of His Christ (Rev 11:15; Dan 7:9-14). This means that the first half of the seven endtime years of tribulation are the dark hours between midnight and when Pharaoh tells Moses and Aaron to take the people of Israel and go and serve the Lord.

The Passover covenant does not end when the covenant made with the flesh—what is traditionally identified by the very imprecise icon phrase, the Law of Moses—is abolished. The Apostle Paul writes,

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants [note the plural] of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. (Eph 2:11-16)

The covenants of promise are not abolished when the hostility created by physical circumcision dies on the cross. Rather, what had been two peoples, one physically circumcised, one uncircumcised, are now the same as far as

God is concerned. Both “have access in one Spirit to the Father” (Eph 2:18). Both are uncircumcised of heart until both have made a journey of faith that is spiritually equivalent to the patriarch Abraham’s physical journey made by faith from Ur of the Chaldeas to Haran, then on to the Promised Land (Rom 4:9-12). Thus, the 1st-Century Greek who, by turning to God, separated himself or herself from his or her neighbors all worshipping a pantheon of deities that sprang from the heads (as Athena sprang from Zeus’) of ancient peoples, began a spiritual journey in the same way that Abraham began a physical journey when he set out with his father Terah from Ur to go into the land of Canaan. This Greek’s journey called for him or her “to abstain from things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood” (Acts 15:19-20). Everything else this Greek would need to know could be learned from hearing Moses read every Sabbath (*v.* 21). Likewise, the Jew who kept the commandments as a cultural expectation and who broke with his or her culture by professing with his or her mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in his or heart that God had raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 10:9) would have made a journey of faith of equivalent distance to that of the Greek’s, for to confess that Jesus is Lord requires perceiving God as two, not one.

Without undertaking a journey of faith equivalent to Abraham’s journey while still uncircumcised, no heart is cleansed. The heart cannot be circumcised. The person born of Spirit will be as a Hebrew infant of less than eight days of age, and will remain as a new born infant until the heart is cleansed by faith; for with God, maturity is not obtained by the passage of time but by the journey of faith from spiritual Babylon to the heavenly city of Jerusalem. Circumcision comes when the person spiritually crosses the River Jordan and begins living as a spiritual Judean, thereby taking the Passover sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed.

The Law of Moses is not one covenant, but rather, all of the covenants of promise that were made with the flesh. It includes the Passover covenant (Ex chap 12-13), the Sinai covenant (Ex chaps 20-24), the covenant between God and the men of Levi (Ex 32:25-29), the added laws concerning offerings (the Book of Leviticus), and the Moab covenant (Deut chaps 29-32). All of these covenants of promise are shadows and copies that are continued as covenants of promise made with born of Spirit sons of God—and this is what greater Christendom has failed to understand. Disciples take the sacraments of bread and wine on the night that Jesus was betrayed (1 Co 11:23-26) as the continuation of the Passover covenant made with Israel on the night that God took Israel by the hand to lead this nation out of Egypt.

It is convenient to use the theological shorthand of saying that the covenants of promise made with the flesh were “abolished” rather than “continued on at a higher plain.” Yes, they were abolished, for all covenants made with the flesh were abolished at Calvary. But “Israel” was not abolished! And if Israel is not abolished but becomes a nation with circumcised hearts, then the covenants are not abolished either but become covenants made with this spiritual nation that used to be two peoples, divided by the hostility created through physical circumcision. And Jesus’ actions on the night that He was betrayed, when compared to what happened at the first Passover, disclose the relationship between the physical and the spiritual . . . the plundering of Egypt, now, becomes an interesting case study: when Israel took the gold and silver of Egypt, it took those things that “reflected light” as the moon reflects the light of the sun. Jesus is the light of this world (John 1:4, 7; 12:35-36; 1 John 1:5 *et al*), and when He died at Calvary, darkness overcame this world. It is physical things that reflect visible light; the true light of this world is invisible and spiritual. And Jesus was the true light of God. So as Egypt lost those things that reflected light, the world lost its light and was plunged into darkness when Christ died on the cross.

A word needs to be said about covenants: a “covenant” (Heb: *bereth*) or a “compact” or a “law” in its broad sense is a formal declaration of contractual terms that begins with the shedding of blood or a cutting and extends until blood is again shed or a cutting is again made. Hence a covenant is the space or distance from cutting to cutting. A marriage covenant was to extend from when the hymen of a virgin is broken by her husband and blood is shed in the marriage bed until blood is again shed at death (for the hymen could not be restored). Thus, a covenant made in the flesh cannot be spiritual for death ends a covenant ratified by blood.

Since death ends every covenant or “will” (Gr: *diatheke*) made in the flesh, the Law of Moses was abolished at Calvary. However, the covenants of promise were not dependent upon the flesh, but upon the will of God. Isaac was not born through the strength of Abraham and Sarah’s flesh, but by promise. Likewise, Jesus was not resurrected from the dead through the strength of His flesh, but by the will of God. So Moses remains as the witness against every Israelite (John 5:45; Deut 31:26) regardless of whether physically or spiritually circumcised. And the covenants of promise remain in force.

The writer of Hebrews said, “Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Thus, it was necessary for copies of heavenly things to be purified with

these rites [i.e., the shedding of blood], but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these” (Heb 9:22-23—read *vv.* 15-28).

The covenant the Lord made with the fathers of Israel and Judah on the day when He took their fathers by the hand to lead them out of Egypt began with the shedding of blood by Passover lambs and was confirmed by the death of Egyptian firstborns as the ransom price for Israel’s liberation (Isa 43:3). This covenant continues forward, now, until it ends when blood is again shed (*v.* 4). And it is this second shedding of blood that will make Israel forget its liberation from bondage to Pharaoh (Jer 16:14-15; 23:7-8).

The annual shedding of the blood by Passover lambs was a memorial of the inauguration of the Passover covenant by which physical liberation is promised from physical bondage to Pharaoh. When this blood became the blood of the Passover Lamb of God, taken when the disciple drinks from the cup on the night that Jesus was betrayed, liberation ceased being from physical bondage and became liberation from spiritual bondage to sin and death. Everything moved upward one step on a spiritual hierarchy—

The spiritually circumcised Israelite who eats the bread and drinks of the cup on the night that Jesus was betrayed becomes the spiritual equivalent of the physically circumcised Israelite in Egypt who smeared blood on doorposts and lintel and ate the flesh of the paschal lamb in haste.

- The person who claims to be born of Spirit but who has not been (but who lies) becomes the spiritual equivalent to Egyptians on the night when the death angel passed through Egypt.
- The person who has no interest in God becomes the spiritual equivalent to the livestock of Egyptians on that fateful night.
- All firstborns who do not cover themselves with the blood of Christ will be slain when the lives of men are again given as ransom for the liberation of Israel.

This second slaying of firstborns will end the Passover covenant, which began when God took Israel by the hand to lead the nation out of Egypt. The exodus from Egypt will no longer be remembered, for the covenant will no longer be one of promise—the promise will be fulfilled in the recovery of Israel from the north country and out of all the countries where God has driven these peoples (Jer. 16:15), with the north country representing death.

Remember, as a contractual term of the Passover covenant, all firstborns of man and beast [i.e., what is first to open a womb] belong to the Lord and must be ransomed if not sacrificed to the Lord (Ex 13:1-2). God’s claim on

firstborns is largely unrecognized by humankind; His claim would seem unreasonable and arbitrary if it were recognized. Nevertheless, what typology reveals is that firstborns not covered by the blood of the Lamb will lose their lives as spiritual Babylon is dealt a below-the-belt blow that staggers and wobbles the prince of this world and his angels. There will be a second Passover ransom of firstborns paid for the liberation of Israel. A third part of humankind will die, but as importantly, the first or great king [or horn] of the spiritual coalition identified as the king of Greece will also lose his life because he is “first.” Then those rebelling angels who have been cast into outer darkness will realize that the death sentence under which they are imprisoned will be, and can be executed.

The Passover covenant made on the day when God took Israel by the hand to lead this nation out of Egypt did not include the Decalogue or the need to be physically circumcised or the promise of spiritual circumcision. A mixed multitude left Egypt with Israel, and this mixed multitude would not have been physically circumcised in Egypt and they were not physically circumcised in the wilderness. Nor were the children born into the tents of Israel in the wilderness physically circumcised . . . physical circumcision is not seen again until after Israel crosses the River Jordan under Joshua’s leadership (Josh 5:2-7). So partaking in the exodus from Egypt did not require a person to be physically circumcised even though to eat of the Passover required a person to be circumcised (Ex 12:48). Circumcision, now, and the blood shed when a person is circumcised equates to the blood shed by Egyptian firstborns as ransom for Israel. Therefore, no one can enter into this Passover covenant at a future time unless the person is circumcised, physically *or* spiritually, until lives are again given for the ransom of Israel.

An uncircumcised Greek in the 1st-Century, prior to being a disciple, would not have eaten of the Passover, and the context of Jesus’ comment about circumcision making well only a part of a man emerges: circumcision makes a man naked before God, makes the man covered only by his obedience to God. But when covered by obedience, the man is liberated from sin and death; he is healed so that he should live forever . . . circumcision equates to liberation, or the exodus from bondage to disobedience. It is only when the man loses this covering of obedience that he needs another covering (fig leaves or animal skins). As long as a man has his covering of obedience, he has not returned to sin or to Egypt, the earthly representation of sin.

But physical circumcision was done to a man on the 8th day of his life—done before he could sin. Unfortunately, circumcision did not prevent a man from sinning; physical circumcision did not compel obedience. Hence,

circumcision produced death when the promise of obedience is life. Therefore, spiritual circumcision does not occur until after a person cleanses his or her heart by a journey of faith that will leave the person living as a Judean. Spiritual circumcision doesn't automatically follow spiritual birth. Many are those who have died from spiritual SIDS before they were circumcised of heart.

The mixed multitude that left with circumcised Israel was covered by the loss of their firstborns in a manner similar to how the sons of Levi were ordained at the cost of their sons and brothers . . . much blood is shed in the Law and the Prophets, too much blood for the sensitivities of modern Americans and Europeans. This shedding of blood has become a stumbling block that prevents "modern" nations from worshiping the *Theos* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or from recognizing the validity of Scripture. In most churches the Bible story has been rewritten with a blotter to remove the blood. The love of Jesus is emphasized, and the Law of Moses is devalued. The numbers recorded in Scripture are reduced: the 600,000 adult male Israelites that leave Egypt under Moses become 40 or 50, maybe as many as 200 in documentary dramas aired on *The History Channel*. Israel's exodus from Egypt is told as a good story that should not be taken literally, and the stumbling block of shed blood is covered by a mantle of disbelief.

The Passover covenant was not ratified by the blood of bulls and goats cast on the people and the altar, but by Passover lambs and the lives of Egyptian firstborns, both of men and beasts. At Calvary, the blood of the Lamb of God was shed on the 14th day of the first month at even as the Pharisees then reckoned when Passover lambs were to be sacrificed. But lambs slain on that first Passover in Egypt were killed the previous evening if Moses' command that none shall go out of their houses until morning was obeyed; so the one day difference has tremendous significance that has been lost. Again, when Jesus eats the Passover, He eats it at the beginning of the 14th of Abib, the first month. He is then sacrificed as the Lamb of God at the proscribed time when Pharisees taught that Passover lambs were to be sacrificed. So the Passover covenant was not abolished when the Sinai covenant was added—if it had been abolished Jesus would not have eaten the Passover on the dark portion of the 14th. Rather, because of ambiguity within the covenant as to when the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed, two Passover sacrifices were needful in the 1st Century CE. This ambiguity enhances the annual provision for a second Passover in the second month to be eaten by all who were unclean or on a far journey on the 14th of the first month.

Two Passover observances annually; probably two Passover sacrifices in the 1st month—human reasoning is left with doubts. Yet rabbinical Judaism

today eats the Seder meal twice each spring. Its reason, however, stems from tradition and from the calculated calendar.

Are two Passover sacrifices logical, or has Scripture been misread for a long time? Is there really only one Passover sacrifice and only one seven day period when unleavened bread is eaten? There is certainly reason to believe that Israel in Egypt remained in its houses until morning, spoiled the Egyptian during the daylight hours of the 14th then left Egypt with a high hand under the full moon on the beginning of the 15th. If this is the case—and this seems to be the best reading of Scripture—then the past practices of the Churches of God are correct: the sacraments of bread and wine are to be taken on the 14th, shortly after dark, and the night of the 15th is to be remembered as the night of Israel's exodus from Egypt.

Unfortunately, there might not be more than 30,000 people annually taking the Passover sacraments on the 14th of Abib, and if this is the case, the Churches of God stand condemned before God as worthless servants who have hid the knowledge of God that they have.

When Jesus' disciples asked Him, "Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?" (Matt 26:17)—this occurring on the 13th—no one said that He would be eating the Passover a day early. The owner of the house where Jesus ate the Passover did not say that He was a day too early. So in the 1st-Century CE it was not unusual to eat the Passover on the dark portion of the 14th although Pharisees would not begin slaughtering Passover lambs (as far as records reveal) until the ninth hour [3:00 pm] on the afternoon of the 14th. And this apparent discrepancy, allowed by the ambiguity of Scripture, highlights the failure of Israel to teach simple truths to a jaded world, turned off by hypocrisy and dishonestly.

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July 7, 2007

Commentary—From the Margins
*The Imprecise Linguistic Referent:
The Law of Moses (3rd part)*

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)

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. 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 is not counted against humankind where there is 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 1st-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 (Deut 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; Deut 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.
- The giving of the Law ends natural grace and makes Israel accountable for its disobedience.
- When the Sinai covenant is made with Israel, the only covering Israel has for its sins is its obedience.
- 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 (Deut 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 are 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! Separation from God is, until judgments are revealed, spiritual death. So when God delivered Israel into the hand of the prince of this world, Satan the devil, which God did at the Council of Nicea (ca 325 CE), the Father delivered the Church into death for the destruction of the flesh so that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord after the example of the Apostle Paul commanding the saints at Corinth to deliver the one who was with his father's wife to Satan, and after the example of *YHWH Elohim* delivering Israel into the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar.

Spiritual Israel remains lifeless to this day. The last Elijah, after the example of the first Elijah, laid over the Body and breathed into it the first time in the 16th-Century when Andreas Fischer led a few disciples into Sabbath observance. But the Body did not then "breathe" on its own; so the last Elijah laid over the Body a second time during the Great Awakening, and the Body breathed for awhile, but did not return to life. The Body quit breathing when it rejected revelation in 1962. Hence, the last Elijah is now again laying over the Body, and breath will be restored shortly. The Body will be resurrected from death when the seven endtime years of Tribulation begin.

All the while the Church dabbled/dabbles in the affairs of State, the Church remained/remains separated from God, and as such, the Church is dead through its conscious rebellion against God. Evidence of this is that the Church does not cover its lawlessness by taking the Passover sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed, and because it doesn't, 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 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 14th 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 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.

* * *

December 14, 2007

Commentary—From the Margins *“Whether They Hear or Refuse to Hear”*

And he said to me, “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with my words to them. For you are not sent to a people of foreign speech and a hard language, but to the house of Israel—not to many people of foreign speech and a hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, if I sent you to such, they would listen to you. But the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, for they are not willing to listen to me. Because all the house of Israel have a hard forehead and a stubborn heart. Behold, I have made your face as hard as their faces, and your forehead as hard as their foreheads. Like emery is harder than flint have I made your forehead. Fear them not, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house.” Moreover he said to me, “Son of man, all my words that I shall speak to you receive in your heart, and hear with your ears. And go to the exiles, to your people, and speak to them and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God,’ whether they hear or refuse to hear.” (Ezek 3:4-11)

A story I have told before: on Thursday of the second full week in January 2002, about 10:12 CST, as I was pulling into the parking lot of Southeastern Illinois College at Harrisburg where I was to teach two back-to-back sessions of English Composition, I was called to reread prophecy. This was not a spontaneous feeling, but a hearing within the mind as if the words were

heard with the ears of an authoritarian voice saying, "It's time to reread prophecy." For the last ten or so miles of the thirty mile drive from where I lived to the college I had experienced something akin to a heightened sense of awareness, something I then could not explain nor since have tried to explain. Nevertheless, the words that were heard came suddenly and unexpectedly. There was no context from which the words came other than what I was feeling. My thoughts were on the class, which would begin shortly after I arrived on campus. I was neither seeking an answer to a question, nor possessing a desire to do something other than what I was doing. I was baptized into the Body of Christ nearly thirty years earlier so I wasn't a novice in the faith. I had been writing professionally since 1979 (I have a Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing from University of Alaska Fairbanks), and I had avoided writing about theological matters for I wasn't then called to ministry, something upon which my few detractors capitalize: "He's just a fiction writer." Yes, I spent the decades of the 1980s and '90s writing fiction for I was not then called to write about theology, and I wasn't about to usurp authority not granted. Too many attempt to teach when they have not been called by God to be teachers; thus, to support their ministries, they beg for support, ever reminding their followers that God loves a cheerful giver.

But beginning on that Thursday of the second full week of January 2002, I was called to reread prophecy in a manner less spectacular than how the Apostle Paul was called but in a similar manner—and I make no apologies for being called. It wasn't me who did the calling (I would not have chosen me for this task, for I know what is covered by the blood of Christ), but I am thankful for the chance to do a work. And since being called, beginning that very day, I have been about the task of rereading prophecy, which has opened all of Scripture.

I wasn't called to make nice with sin, or to play patty-cake with heresy, or to say pleasing things to keep financial contributions coming. I wasn't called to soft-sell the gospel to a world increasingly unwilling to hear the Christian message. I wasn't called to apologize for the soon-coming slaying for all firstborns not covered by the blood of Christ, the Passover Lamb of God, a slaying of approximately a third of humankind. Yes, God will again give the lives of human beings as ransom for Israel as He gave the lives of Egyptians before for the ransom of Israel, then a physical nation (Isa 43:3-4). Israel is now a spiritual nation in bondage to indwelling sin and death. . . . I was called to remove the seals from long sealed and secret prophecies, and this calling has left me in a position like that of John the Baptist's, who said to the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism,

You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father," for I tell you, God [θεὸς] is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (Matt 3:7-10)

Christians, Sabbatarians and the lawless, need not to presume to say what Korah said to Moses and Aaron, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord [YHWH]?" (Num 16:3). Indeed, everyone in Israel was holy, the chosen nation of God, His firstborn son (Ex 4:22). But not all of Israel or even all of Levi had been chosen to speak for God. Not all of the prophets of Jeremiah's day were given messages from God, Hananiah being an example (Jer chap 28); nor were all of the priests hearing the words of God, Pashhur being an example (Jer chap 20). Of the first Apostles, none were chosen to lay the foundation of the house of God. That job was given to Saul of Tarsus, who had approved of the murder of Stephen. So being called to a job is not a matter of being holy, or of a democracy of opinion, or of already having authority within the Church. Moses did not ask for, nor seek the task for which he is remembered; nor did Jeremiah or Paul, neither of whom was collectively held in high regard by Israel, physical and spiritual respectively. Only the passage of time established whom God used for what job, with Paul's position still doubted by Messianic Christians.

The sealed and secret prophecies of Daniel were not unsealed by Ellen G. White, who died more a century before the spiritual king [sar] of Persia pushed against the spiritual king of Greece, the event that began a war within the bottomless pit that has seen the king of Greece flying out of the west to trample the king of Persia, an on-going war fought partially with toy soldiers firing real bullets and dropping real bombs and exploding real IEDs in Iraq. The king of Greece will win this war, which means that the democratic values of Greece will prevail, not that an occupying force from the United States and Britain will bring peace to a region divided by theology. This king of Greece is not a king or a nation of this world, but part of Satan's reigning hierarchy that will, in its entirety, be toppled when the lives of men [and women] are twice given as ransom for first Israel, then for all of humankind (the sixth Trumpet Plague).

The visions of Daniel were not unsealed by Herbert W, Armstrong although it was possible that they could have been if he had “gone spiritual” in 1943, when he saw that world events were not unfolding as he then understood biblical prophecy. As it was, he identified himself as a watchman sent to warn Britain and the United States of a revival of a Rome-German alliance in the form of a United Europe that would enslave the English-speaking peoples of the world. He stayed physically minded even though Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world, nor from this world (John 18:36).

If Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world, then why teach that it is of this world? Why teach that His kingdom is a one-world-government like that attempted to be formed by men through the United Nations?

Satan as the present (though disqualified) prince of this world doesn’t rule through a single human government, but through a mindset of disobedience and rebellion.

Jesus will not rule men through other men but through a mindset of obedience to God; for He will receive the kingdom taken from the four demonic kings by the court of the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:9-14). And He will not leave this kingdom to others to rule, but will rule through every person being fully empowered by the Holy Spirit, thereby giving to every person the mind of Christ.

Both Ellen G. White and Herbert W. Armstrong were without prophetic understanding, the most polite way that it can be said that they were false prophets. But as the exiles of Israel in Babylon said, “The Lord has raised up prophets for us in Babylon” (Jer 29:15), so too has spiritually circumcised Israel said of the many prophecy pundits who would have the holy nation of God focusing on what happens in physical Jerusalem, while barely acknowledging that the heavenly city is without occupant.

The house of God in the heavenly city, along with its walls, are to be built on the foundation Paul laid before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes upon the remnant that left spiritual Babylon. If a portion of this remnant is figuratively caught on the plains of Jericho, that portion of the remnant will be slain. Only in heavenly Jerusalem, not a city of this world with geographical coordinates but a city with theological coordinates—the city to which disciples come on the high Sabbaths of God—will disciples find safety. . . . For most Sabbatarian disciples, the place of safety is the grave. Only the remnant that keep the commandments and hold the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit of prophecy, will cross from the first 1260 days of the Tribulation into the second 1260 days. And Ellen G. White did not have the spirit of prophecy. If she had any spirit, it was not of God for she

denied the only sign Jesus gave that He was of heaven, this sign being that He would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish. He was three days and three nights in the grave [all of the 15th of Abib, the high Sabbath; all of the 16th; all of the 17th, the weekly Sabbath], not two nights and a day as Ellen G. White claimed to have received in a vision.

Herbert W. Armstrong figuratively reached heavenly Jerusalem—whether he was first is not as certain—but he never located the foundation Paul laid. Instead, he started to work on his own house, building for himself a theological dwelling that he hoped would rival Solomon’s physical house, little realizing that only what is built on the foundation Paul laid will endure . . . the house Armstrong built was consumed by the fires of dissent throughout the 1990s. Only charred splinters remain, with these splinters now vying with each other for who can remain most true to the message Armstrong delivered when they should be sweeping away the rubble and relocating their foundations to where Paul built.

And in the valley of Hinnom, a few disciples build a mean little dwelling in which only Hebrew names for the Father and the Son can be spoken aloud. These few deny Christ by denying that by Him and for Him were all things made. They don’t like how Scripture reads so they have printed their own Bible . . . they are blasphemers, liars, spiritual murderers, and seek the same sort of purity before God that the Pharisees sought. They are equally blind, equally deaf, and equally vile. (Oh, but their dancing at Missing In Action conventions is so tantalizing.)

Those disciples who have swallowed the sacred names heresy shall receive no apologies from me—I am presently watching an infant in Christ spiritually die from ingesting this poisonous weed. Friends from Lewiston died now several years ago although they would say that they are enlightened while the rest of us err in holding that the *Logos* who was with God [θεός] and was God [θεός] and who made all things entered His creation as His only Son, the man Jesus. If I err in believing Jesus, then let me have that error counted to me. And let those who deny that the One who created all things came as the man Jesus also have their denial of Christ counted to them, for this denial shall not be forgiven in this world.

How many infant sons of God did the Apostle Paul watch die? All in Asia, correct? And how many infant sons of God will we, in this last generation, have to watch die physically and/or spiritually? Many! Too many to count! They will be our physical children, grandchildren, neighbors, friends, acquaintances, disciples with whom we have worked, have baptized. Will we come to hate

death so much that we will reject lawlessness without consideration of the question to which a lawless answer can be posed? Will we hate death enough to live our lives in a black and white world? If we do not, then we can expect to meet death ourselves, not that we won't face death from outside sources every day throughout the seven endtime years.

There can be no compromise with sin.

The world was baptized into death in the days of Noah's Flood, and out of death came eight, plus seven pairs of clean animals and one pair of every common species. Death is darkness, and out of the darkness came light in the face of Christ Jesus (2 Co 4:6), a life-giving spirit (1 Co 15:45) with seven spirits that function as His eyes and with seven horns that are seven churches (Rev 5:6). What isn't seen at the beginning of the seven endtime years is the single pair of every denomination, every sect, every schism within lawless Christendom, for these single pairs have not yet been visually determined . . . which congregation of the tens of thousands of Baptist fellowships will be the one that will hear the words of Jesus and believe the one who sent Him? Which congregation of Methodists will believe? Or which congregation of the Assemblies of God will believe? Even those congregations that will believe do not, today, know who they are. If they did, they would begin to keep the Sabbath and would become one of the seven churches.

It is always an error to say that the seven named churches in Revelation are seven eras of the Church of God—this is a false teaching borrowed by White and Armstrong from the Plymouth Brethren.

When disciples are born of Spirit [the divine Breath of God] they are typologically represented by humankind being born from physical breath. They must now be baptized into death in a manner analogous to the world being covered by the waters of the Flood [sprinkling is not baptizing]. Their physical bodies are types of Noah's Ark, as well as the Ark of the Covenant. And when they emerge from the waters of the baptismal font or horse trough or lake or river in which they were baptized, they form a common pool of disciples that was foreshadowed by Noah's descendants, to whom all flesh was given as meat.

But of Noah's descendants, only one found favor with God and had his belief counted to him as righteousness: Abraham, who left Ur of the Chaldeans [Babylon] and journeyed by faith to Canaan, the Promised Land, God's rest, represented typologically by Sabbath observance (*cf.* Heb 3:16-4:11; Ps 95:10-11; Num chap 14). Only one is called the father of the faithful. And if disciples are to have the faith of Abraham—this is the criteria for being chosen from the many called (Matt 22:14)—disciples will leave the common pool of those who have been born-of-Spirit and who today lounge in the wealth

of Babylon, and these disciples will journey to the Land Beyond the River, with this mental journey taking disciples into living outwardly as physically uncircumcised Judeans.

The Methodists, the Baptists, even Latter Day Saints—all of these denominations have built spiritual houses in Babylon, with Sunday observance being the defining characteristic of those congregations that remain in theological exile. Mennonites, Brethren, and the Amish built houses on the plains of Moab, where they can look across into the Promised Land from which they are separated by their refusal to cross the river into Sabbath observance. Seventh Day Baptists and Seven Day Adventists built spiritual houses on the plains of Judea, but they have yet to journey to Jerusalem. And many, tiny COG fellowships camp on the outskirts of the heavenly city, where these charred splinters, smug and condescending, smolder in turmoil as they wait for a United Europe to send armies against physical Jerusalem. They are so busy watching the physical horizon that they cannot see how far away they are from the foundation Paul laid in this heavenly city.

And I watch an infant son of God die from ingesting spiritual locoweed, the sacred names heresy.

I don't know that I will ever get used to seeing sons of God perish in disbelief. Health care workers become somewhat desensitized to death as they see it on a regular basis. I suspect that will happen . . . another dead son of God, a corpse that still breathes physically, a promise that did not develop. But I'm not yet to that point although I have seen many who have died, including a pastor with whom I shared a couple of deer hunts back in 1982, '83—including my own daughters, who knew to keep the commandments and who were baptized but who have since returned to the world or to exile in spiritual Babylon.

God will send a great delusion over those disciples who return to sin after being liberated from indwelling sin and death by being filled with the Holy Spirit. Those under this great delusion will believe that they are correct in what they do; thus, they will not repent of their lawlessness. And because they will not repent, their blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven them. They will still physically live in lawlessness while believing that they please God, but spiritually, they are dead . . . they are observable; they are known to me, to others; their lives are today the saddest stories in the world. Well, almost the saddest stories, for even sadder is the story of someone who left Babylon, then left fellowships in Moab to cross the figurative river Jordan only to be given a false translation of the Bible, a translation that encourages its readers to feast on locoweed.

Jesus wept over Jerusalem as He drew near and saw the city, for the city did not know the time of its visitation (Luke 19:44). Disciples today, though sensing that the end is near, do not know the time of their visitation. If they did, they would not practice lawlessness or eat locoweed. They would, instead, preach repentance to Israel, including to the vipers that seek purity through how they utter the name of God.

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December 20, 2007

Commentary—From the Margins

Hinder Not the Children

Now they were bringing even infants to him [Jesus] that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” (Luke 18:15-17)

Knowing no other Christianity than that of the Roman Church, throughout the Medieval period Western Europeans accommodated the abuses and hubris of priests and bishops, but the Renaissance saw the rise of humanism—and this rise elevated the importance of the individual and individualism, thus raising men to a height from which they could see God for themselves. No longer were disciples necessarily blind. The 16th-Century saw Martin Luther post his 95 theses (ca 1517 CE), but it was Zurich’s Ulrich Zwingli who persuaded civil authorities to strip pictures, statues, and relics from churches (1524 CE). By then, he had for two years proclaimed that Scripture alone, not the Catholic hierarchy and its traditions, was the sole source of salvation. And with Zwingli were men who would go farther than Zwingli in restoring the faith of the early church: some of these men, George Blaurock, Conrad Grebel, and Felix Manz, in particular, sought more meaningful reform, what they called “Believers’ baptism,” the practice of baptizing after the disciple could make the conscious choice to become a “Christian.”

For the Reform movement, the idea that Scripture alone—*Scriptura sola*—contained everything necessary for belief in God and salvation pushed disciples away from typological exegesis or metaphorical readings of Scripture even though Jesus said that He had spoken about the Father only in figurative language (John 16:25) . . . words are symbols that represent referents, with the connection between an uttered or inscribed word having no true permanence but existing as an ephemeral application of tradition: a word “means” what it does because that is what a community of readers says it means. The things of this world are the referents for the words used in everyday communication, and when speaking to other human beings the words used are ones that the listener [auditor] will have heard before if communication is to occur. Otherwise an interpreter is needed. But God the Father is not of this world so for Jesus to have revealed God and the things of God to those who heard Him speak, He would necessarily have spoken in metaphors; for His words, as symbols for referents in this world, would have been used for heavenly referents, thereby establishing a metaphorical relationship between the usually assigned referent for the symbol and a “thing” in heaven.

What might easily be confused as doublespeak in the sentence above is the problem inherent with using any human language to discuss heavenly things; for truly doublespeak of a different sort is being employed even when using the word, God, which would seem to be an earthly symbol for a single heavenly referent. And comprehending this doublespeak of a different sort was hindered by the Reformation’s application of *Scriptura sola*. Now, nearly five centuries later, this comprehension is still being hindered by spiritual immaturity in those few disciples who have undertaken a journey of faith of sufficient distance to cleanse hearts.

In the 16th-Century CE, many disciples left Catholicism to begin journeys out of Babylon, which wasn’t the Roman Church’s time in France, but the commingling of secular and ecclesiastical authority and power that began with the Council of Nicea (ca 325 CE), where the Roman Emperor Constantine determined what sound doctrine would be . . . Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world or from this world (John 18:36); it was among men when He was among men. And it will not return until Christ Jesus returns to rule over the single kingdom of this world in the same way that the present prince of this world rules through being the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:3). As King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus will not rule as human kings rule. He will not live as human kings live. And the territory over which He will reign is the mental typography of all living things.

Zwingli and those who supported him began journeys of faith which would have led them to heavenly Jerusalem if they would have completed their treks from Babylon to the plains of Moab where they chose life or death, with those choosing life then continuing on to enter into God's rest, which the writer of Hebrews equates with Sabbath observance (Heb 3:16-4:11; Ps 95:10-11; Num chap 14). Andreas Fischer was one of the few 16th-Century disciples that actually entered into God's rest. Most stopped somewhere in what could be pictured as western Iraq. But because all started journeys of faith, they cleansed hearts and came under judgment. Christ will disclose upon His return what their judgments will be.

In the long trek from Babylon to Jerusalem, a mile-marker denotes when a disciple leaves Babylon . . . a generation ago and perhaps even now, travelers up the Alaska Highway would stop and have their photos taken at the Mile Zero sign in Dawson Creek, British Columbia, then again by the road sign noting when they entered Alaska (most of these travelers did not continue on to Fairbanks where the Alaska Highway officially ends, but turned south at Tok Junction). A substantial turnoff was placed beside the *Welcome to Alaska* sign to accommodate the number of people stopping. And similar road signs mentally exist to designate where disciples leave Babylon and enter into Moab, the transition landscape, and where disciples leave Moab and enter into spiritual Judea, with this latter sign being Sabbath observance.

The sign that disciples have left Babylon is non-participation in the governance of this world, the spiritual kingdom of Babylon, ruled by its prince (Isa 14:3-4). . . . Zwingli would not leave Babylon. So when his more radical supporters began to preach the concept of a Believers' baptism that would have churches be voluntary assemblies of Believers gathered with others of like mind, with conversion coming not by the sword, but by the Spirit, Zwingli attacked his former supporters with vehemence; for the practice of rebaptism implied that those baptized as infants were not "genuine" Christians, meaning that heavenly Jerusalem had been uninhabited by disciples since shortly after the Apostle Peter died in the 1st-Century; meaning that the Church as the body of Christ was as dead as Jesus' physical body had been for three days and three nights.

Zwingli's vigorous resistance to the "rebaptizers," the Anabaptists, apparently came from him understanding the implications of their teachings. And the argument Zwingli used against the men who had formerly supported him was that Jesus said not to hinder the infants, the little children from coming to Him. Zwingli contended that their teaching that infant baptism was invalid hindered little children from coming to Christ; hence, their teaching

against infant baptism was itself invalid. And none of the early Anabaptists effectively refuted Zwingli, partially because of their spiritual immaturity which left them unable to distinguish between spiritual symbol and referent, the same obstacle that Zwingli himself faced but never overcame.

Jesus taught in parables: “All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet: ‘I will open my mouth in parables; / I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world’” (Matt 13:34-35).

A parable is a short allegory, a kind of a metaphorical conceit in which the symbol (say, the king in the parable of the wedding feast) represents a referent outside the parable. Jesus spoke only in figurative language (again John 16:25); He spoke in parables, and through parables, He uttered what had been hidden in the beginning for the end. Israel never knew what God was doing in the beginning or would do in the end (Eccl 3:11). Israel never knew Christ, who came to His own, but was rejected by them (John 1:11); for He is the beginning and the end (Rev 22:13), and knowledge of Him was hidden in the “literalness” of Scripture, the text created by Moses, the Prophets, David, Solomon, and in the historical narrative of the kings, which contains details of wars and intrigues that have served to conceal what Jesus came to reveal.

All of Scripture is an extended metaphoric conceit, an epic or Homeric simile, a metaphor containing details about the symbol that are not necessary for the metaphor’s purpose.

The details contained within a Homeric simile can but do not have to function as secondary metaphors—when these details function as tiered metaphors, discovery of one of these secondary metaphors tends to obscure the Homeric simile from the perception of the one discovering the secondary metaphor. Thus, details that function as metaphors hide the Homeric simile.

What has been hidden from the foundation of the world is the spiritual realm, which cannot be directly ascertained. Only through revelation and the interplay of shadows can anything be known of this supra-dimensional realm.

The Apostle Paul wrote that the invisible attributes of God have been clearly perceived in the things that have been made (Rom 1:20).

Christ Jesus is the one who has made all things (John 1:3; 1 Co 8:6; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2; Heb 3:3)—the invisible attributes of God are clearly perceived in Christ Jesus (John 14:8-11), who revealed the hidden things of God in parables.

Jesus is now both man and symbol for the referent that is God, but He is also the referent for the symbol that was the first Adam (Rom 5:14; 1 Co 15:45). So Jesus is both referent and symbol. He is the bridge between the physical world and the supra-dimensional spiritual realm.

A symbol is something that someone intends to stand for something other than itself, an intentionally vague definition that encompasses the relationship between symbol and referent in figurative language usage. When the first Adam was constructed from red mud, God intended that Adam represent or serve as the symbol for the *Logos* entering His creation as His only Son, for Jesus was sacrificed from the foundation of the world. Jesus was to be the bridge, the way, by which humankind could enter heaven; therefore, Jesus was also the type, the symbol, for how men could cross dimensions. Thus, Jesus was the referent for the first Adam, but those things that He did, collectively, form the symbol for a different referent: the actions of disciples who, when born of Spirit, will enter into God's rest.

Child psychologists have demonstrated that nine-month-old human infants cannot distinguish between a representation of an object and the object, even to trying to suckle a high quality photograph of a mother's breast; yet the primary characteristic of human beings is their ability to use symbols, with language usage being the foremost use of symbols. Baby gorillas and chimpanzees behave in the same way as human infants do at nine months when encountering photographic symbols. Even at two and a half years of age, most human infants cannot conceptualize a symbol representing its referent, but by age three, connecting a symbol to its referent is almost embarrassing easy for the child. These six months (between 30 and 36 months) see a physical maturation of mental processes that cause a permanent separation between the great apes and human beings.

The invisible things of God are revealed by the things that are—the physical maturation of a child both in size and in mental maturity reveal the spiritual maturation of an infant son of God, born as a new creature into a tent of flesh. And as a human infant cannot distinguish between symbol and referent, and cannot connect symbol with referent until nearly three years old, a new born son of God likewise cannot distinguish between symbol and referent, nor connect symbol to referent until a degree of maturity is reached that is comparable with a three year old human infant. . . . It is not possible for a disciple, newly born of Spirit to take meaning from Jesus' parables. Even at a spiritual age that is equivalent to a human infant of nine months, the disciple still cannot comprehend that physically circumcised Israel is the symbol that reveals the acts and activities of spiritually circumcised Israel in

the heavenly realm. Only when this child of God reaches a spiritual age that is equivalent to a human child of three years can the disciple comprehend that in the historical account of the natural nation of Israel the disciple can see how the Church looks to God. And even greater maturity is required before the disciple can appreciate the significance of Christ as both referent and symbol.

The little children that Jesus said not to hinder coming to Him are foremost disciples that are sons of God, with most of these sons of God being in spiritual maturity of an age that is the equivalent of a human infant younger than three years old. The infants and small children He addressed—remember, He spoke only in figurative language to His disciples at this time—were symbols for the disciples themselves, the referents and representatives of disciples ever since. Thus, the first disciples were (as Jesus was) both referents and symbols, with, say, what Philip asks Jesus in John chapter 14 being detail not necessary for the Homeric simile that has the things being made revealing (as symbols for) the divine nature and attributes of God. Yes, what Philip asks and how Jesus answers his question are important pieces of information that affirm the hypostatic union suggested in the visible revealing the divine, but the Homeric simile is not dependent upon this information. The Homeric simile exists because it is the structure necessary for the visible to reveal the invisible. It is not dependent upon any information contained within the symbolic narrative about the things that have been made. It existed before Jesus uttered His first parable; however, it is through analysis of the parables that the Homeric simile can be seen.

Zwingli and those who aided him in breaking away from the Roman Church began journeys of faith when they left Catholicism, and it was these journeys that cleansed their hearts so that they could be spiritually circumcised, which occurs when an infant son of God is the equivalent in age to a human infant of eight days. So Zwingli was still a newly born babe absolutely unable to connect symbol with referent when the schism developed between himself and those who pursued a Believers' baptism. None of the men involved were mature enough in faith to see past *Scriptura sola*. They would have attempted to suckle a photograph of a teat if their spiritual ages had been reflected in their physical mentality.

Moving forward four hundred years, the status of the movement begun by the Radical Reformers (ca 1527 CE) had reached another of its low points when Herbert W. Armstrong came among the Oregon Conference of the Church of God, Seventh Day. He was, at best, a novice when he began to teach what he was quickly learning as he undertook a journey of faith which

cleansed his heart so that it could be spiritually circumcised. He possessed no spiritual maturity when he began to teach. His understanding of Scripture in 1927 could only be like that of Zwingli, Blaurock, Grebel, and Manz in 1522-27 although Armstrong benefited in actual possession of greater knowledge by living four centuries later—from the work of others, he proved to himself that the Sabbath was to be kept. Nevertheless, he had spiritual maturity equivalent to a human infant's mentality of less than ten months when he began preaching on the radio.

Because Armstrong began preaching when so young spiritually, his spiritual maturity was greatly retarded—he was never able to see how the symbol related to the referent. He spiritually remained to the end like the physical child who pats a book to see what the book is. And those disciples who continue to follow his teachings are still spiritual infants, who have been hindered in coming to Christ by their teachers.

In ancient Israel, an infant was circumcised on the 8th day of life, but could not perform priestly duties until age thirty. The years in-between represented the time required to obtain mental maturity. The infant Hebrew child would have distinguished between symbol and referent by three, leaving twenty-seven more years of maturing before God thought this person was old enough to serve as a priest . . . how many Christian pastors come to the ministry when they are still physical youths, with many/most of them never undertaking any journey of faith but rather following in the traditions of the household in which they were born? Nearly all? Yes, nearly all. Very few pastors come to ministry after being disciples growing in grace and knowledge for long periods.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Therefore an overseer [bishop—*episkopos*] must be above reproach . . . [h]e must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim 3:2, 6). Zwingli, Blaurock, Grebel, Manz, and Armstrong were all, when they began their ministries, recent converts. Christ will reveal at His return whether they became puffed up with conceit and fell into condemnation. But what can be now said is that none of them had the spiritual maturity necessary to connect the symbol—all of Scripture—to its referent, the Kingdom of Heaven. Oh, they talked about the Kingdom of Heaven, or the Kingdom of God, but they talked without ever understanding that this kingdom would reign over the mental typography of living things [the mindsets and natures], not over the physical bodies of living things.

Paul wrote, "And you [saints at Corinth] show that you are a letter [epistle] from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with Spirit of the living

God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts” (2 Co 3:3) . . . the lives of disciples are epistles in the heavenly Book of Life, the referent for the symbol that is the Bible in which the lives of Israel’s kings are recorded with ink. The Homeric simile that has been at work since the beginning has Scripture being the symbol for the referent works, the Book of Life. Only at the end of this age have a few disciples obtained sufficient spiritual maturity to connect the symbol with its referent—and this lack of spiritual maturity is a terrible indictment of Israel’s teachers for the past 482+ years, a number that is perhaps significant.

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May 5, 2003

Commentary—From the Margins *A Response to Cal Thomas' "False prophets"*

When Cal Thomas suggested that *a cultural war crimes tribunal* be established following the demolition of the Berlin Wall, I was in graduate school at University of Alaska Fairbanks. I was there as a middle-aged writer without a viable trade, without an undergraduate degree, without a wife after a quarter century of marriage, but with three daughters in college and living with me. I was in graduate school so my daughters could live at home while obtaining their degrees. Otherwise, they would have had to leave the state for their schooling. Alaska's economy has traditionally been the inverse of the Lower 48. Weakened by President Carter's disastrous economic policies, Alaskans experienced President Reagan's economic boom as cultural collapse. For example, during the fall of 1978, I received weekly price increases of about 5% on the two lines of Swedish and one line of Norwegian chainsaws I sold. Everything imported—cars, electronics, fishhooks, even grapes from Chili—had prices regularly adjusted upward because of the weak dollar on currency exchanges. But wages were rapidly falling as Pipeline construction ended, leaving many workers unemployed or underemployed. So with a glut on the labor market and with the prices of everything imported skyrocketing upward, President Carter used the Antiquities Act to lock up vast portions of the State, thereby limiting both potential for employment and existing employment. Those economic niches where Alaskans traditionally sought refuge during the "bust" portion of the boom-bust cycle were suddenly no longer available. The land was now National Monuments the size of states in the Lower 48. And President Reagan's repair of the economy caused a suddenly strengthened dollar to limit Alaskan exports to Asian markets. Thus, the few refuges where Alaskans had sought economic shelter shriveled like raw

wool washed in hot water. The felting was felt in the number of homes FHA repossessed, in the number of businesses that failed, in the political climate that allowed a former governor to borrow a political party and win an election, the party itself dedicated to Alaska seceding from the Union.

The State is still trying to recover from years of economic cannibalism following President Carter's D-2 legislation that left many Alaskans, such as myself, jobless and with few prospects. Generational ways of life were wiped out when President Carter's "regulators" declared war on all forms of resource extraction. Although James Watt as Reagan's Interior Secretary defused the situation by not enforcing Carter's regulations for long enough that the anger abated, the overall picture for Alaska hasn't changed. The State's resources are for wolves and tourists. They remain largely unavailable to working-class Alaskans. And the economic cultures that developed over three-quarters of a century became the enemies of young environmental activists. Their willing allies have been Democratic lawmakers that needed a political toehold in the otherwise Conservative resource states. And never was there a more co-dependent assemblage of Democratic lawmakers than during President Carter's administration.

I became the enemy of these environmental activists, who look like me and speak like me and have the same ancestry, but who hated their fathers, successful in a world that was inherently unfair. These activists, tutored by an enabling academia, needed an enabling media that would allow them to express their anger at being privileged Caucasians. They didn't have to look far afield to find one—and because the media served as their cultural megaphone, they were heard in Senate and in House and in Appellate Court chambers. So if any *cultural war crimes tribunal* is established, I want to lobby for charges to be brought against ex-President Carter and his entire administration for his abuse of (and their support of his abuse of) the Antiquities Act.

My list of cultural culprits has shrunk some during the past two decades. I've mellowed a little. I'm more willing to forgive Carter's 1978 lie that bulldozers were posed to rip up the last shreds of wilderness if he didn't hastily act to protect *Tundra Roses*, which some in his administration apparently thought were endangered shrubbery. President Carter couldn't help being influenced by a *Zeit Geist* of environmental protectionism that originated outside of humanity's collective consciousness. He was, truly, a dancing *marionette*, with his spiritual strings being pulled by the ruler of this world. President Carter's desire was to serve God. And he seemed unable to resolve the conflict between his role as President and his Christianity. He has been a far better ex-President than President, for that conflict of being a world leader

and of being a Christian has no resolution until humanity's mental topography is forcibly seized by Christ halfway through seven years of tribulation.

Cal Thomas wanted people from academia, the media, government, and the clergy to be forced to confront their mistakes. They were the enablers and apologists who helped sustain communism's grip on a sizable portion of humanity, Thomas's observation. And they are still tenured within the institutions of power today.

I want—in addition to the clergy that teach a theology of lawlessness—the environmental activists who have no god other than an old-growth forest to be tried for their destruction of the cultures brought by Pilgrims, Puritan and Separatist. A nation doesn't atone for the sins of its fathers by slaying grandsons.

Therein lays the difficulty of creating a *cultural war crimes tribunal*—the false prophets of global cooling, global warming and ozone holes should be burned on stakes made of environmentally safe soy ink and recycled paper. They have been the enablers and apologists for clean waters legislation that doesn't allow a miner to dip a bucket of water from a creek and pour it back in without first constructing a settling pond to remove the glacial silt.

Yes, I am lobbying for the return of the *Thou shalt not* culture that begins with, *Thou shall not have any other gods before Me*. That means wolves will no longer be deified, and the *Adversary* will no longer be a logger with a chainsaw. The *man of perdition* won't be a Republican, and the *abomination of desolation* won't be the statute of an armed Minuteman. The *mark of the beast* won't be a N.R.A. membership card, and the demonic *prince of the power of the air* won't be Rush Limbaugh.

Today, Thomas would have the “scores of false media prophets” who predicted military disaster in Iraq remembered for their many mistakes. Those mistakes should permanently discredit these prophets, but as Thomas knows, the collective memory of Americans is so short that this nation should be named Manasseh . . . who remembers spending two hours in gas lines to buy five gallons on either even or odd days? It was those gas lines, and being unable to buy gas for two and a half months (December 1973 through the middle of February 1974) where I then lived on the Oregon Coast that pushed me North to Alaska. I had to trap to keep the electricity turned on during those two months. Today, I don't know how I will pay next month's light bill.

Afterward

Over the winter and through late spring 1975, I logged a section of white spruce timber near the Russian Old Believers' village of Nikolaevsk on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula, and during the coldest part of the winter, Bob Clucas and I had parked our skidder at the village's boat shop where electricity was available to plug in its tank heater. Bob was accepted in the then otherwise closed village, and I was accepted because of Bob. So I was a little surprised when told that we should stay away for a day because Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was coming for a visit just to hear Russian spoken.

I had read all of Solzhenitsyn's writings that had been translated into English—he was close to the age my father would have been if he had lived—and from Solzhenitsyn's works, I felt as if he were a father to me. I would have liked to have met him, but all I saw of him was the waggle of his plane's wings as it flew low over the village on its way back to the Lower 48.

That year, in his speech to the AFL/CIO, he used the phrase, "a caricature of morality," and no better description exists for not just law, but for the teachings of Christendom itself. He would, three years later in his Harvard address, say,

Destructive and irresponsible freedom has been granted boundless space. Society appears to have little defense against the abyss of human decadence, such as, for example, misuse of liberty for moral violence against young people, motion pictures full of pornography, crime and horror. It is considered to be part of freedom and theoretically counter-balanced by the young people's right not to look or not to accept. Life organized legalistically has thus shown its inability to defend itself against the corrosion of evil.

Life organized legalistically has thus shown its inability to defend itself against the corrosion of evil—this is true. And this is made evident whenever I assign students a comparison/contrast essay about two movies of their choice.

The *legalism* that Evangelical orthodoxy abhors is not a defense against evil, but flight from it. Obedience by faith separates a person from this world. In a figurative sense, obedience causes the person to journey to *the land beyond the river*, with this mental landscape being akin to the remnant of Israel returning to Judea from Babylon to rebuild the house of God, in which each disciple is a room. This is the message that has been suppressed by the unrighteousness of the Church.

The former Vice-President's *inconvenient truth* has an inconvenient corollary: without the industrialization of the Western world, with its "scores of false media prophets" (Cal Thomas' words), it would not yet be possible to deliver a message to the far corners of this world within a few minutes of the message's composition, the message being a call for all to come out of spiritual Babylon. The *inconvenient truth* is that computer software developed to spread pornography also allows the spread of the endtime good news that *all who endure to the end shall be saved*. The "irresponsible freedom" that has been "granted boundless space" permits delivering to an uncaring world a separatist message akin to the Radical Reformers' gospel of the 16th-Century. This message is of no commercial value in this world. No corporation will pay for its delivery. No national government will subsidize its delivery. No Church will put its limited resources into delivering a message about the Church itself being taken captive by the Adversary. Only someone like John the Baptist would deliver this message, or someone like Solzhenitsyn.

Solomon wrote, "The words of the wise are like goads" (Eccl 12:11) . . . but the world resists these goads. Sobeit. Nothing short of the second Passover liberation of Israel will get the world's attention; nothing else will show that Sunday morning homilies are *caricatures of morality*.

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"of making many books there is no end"