

What Does Paul Mean by *The Law*?

What law does Paul mean when he writes, "the law is holy" (Rom 7:12)? The same law that he says is abolished (Eph 2:15)? How can that which is holy be abolished?

What is Paul's "law of faith" (Rom 3:27)? Or "law of sin" (Rom 7:23, 25)? Or "law of God" (Rom 7:22, 25)?

What is "the law of Moses" (Acts 15:5)? How does it differ from the law of God, or the law of faith?

What law did Roman Gentiles know prior to conversion? Was it *Pax Romana*, or the law of Moses? How about Galatian, or Colossian Gentiles prior to conversion? Did they know the law of God? The law of Moses? Or the law and peace of Rome? After conversion, what law of God is written on hearts and minds by the new covenant (Jer 31:33)? Which laws of God are written there (Heb 8:10 & 10:16)?

Does "the law" mean *the law*? Or does the icon phrase *the law* operate like a pronoun, changing referents as easily and as often as the pronoun *they* changes antecedents?

Has the law of faith been abolished? Or the law of God? Or even the law of sin? Is "Thou shall not covet" (Rom 7:7) part of the law of God, or the law of Moses, or the law of faith? Or part of all three?

A brief introduction to Semiotics is, perhaps, here necessary. Words are linguistics *icons* or *signifiers* to which either the reader or the hearer assigns meaning (*objects* or *signifieds*). Words do not carry around their meanings in little backpacks that are opened whenever a person encounters an unfamiliar word. Rather, dictionaries exist as the historic record of what meanings have been previously assigned to the icon.

Readers encounter letter combinations, then identify some of these combinations as words, to which these same readers assign meaning. Again, every word's meaning is assigned to it by the reader. If the reader doesn't recognize the letter combination, the reader will be unable to assign a meaning to this letter combination; yet the combination might well produce meaning in another reader.

Semiotics is the study of how linguistic signs or symbols acquire meaning. Two prevailing ideas presently vie for supremacy. The first has words broken into two parts: the *signifier*, or the sound image or letter combination; and the *signified*, or the tangible thing that exists in time and space. No explicit connection attaches the signifier to the signified, so signifiers and signified can be shuffled as if they were playing cards, and dealt two at a time to every reading community, with members of a

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particular community agreeing that no other combinations of signifiers and signifieds make pairs other than the ones received by the particular community.

But a problem exists with this model: many reader communities have the same pairing of signifieds to signifiers. So the French philosopher Derrida and his peers sought to modify this model by introducing the concept of an invisible cultural trace connecting signifier and signified. Thus, a *cow* has bovine-like qualities because historically that cud-chewing animal out there in the pasture has been identified by the signifier "cow."

The other widely held paradigm is that of the Prague linguists, which incorporates the ideas of the 19th-Century American philosopher Charles Peirce. In this paradigm a word consists of three parts, the sound image or *icon*, the tangible thing or *object*, and an element of thirdness that connects the icon and object. This element of thirdness is what causes a typical American to visualize a four-legged, milk-producing mammal nearly as tall as the person whenever this person encounters the letter combination *c-o-w*. This person doesn't envision an animal that would fit into the person's pocket, nor does the person envision an animal that can fly.

And because of the widespread consistency of what is visualized when the icon is encountered, the person shares participation in a large reading community, which now assigns a denotative meaning to the letter combination. The word has a "definite" meaning, which is neither definite, nor fixed, but only presents the illusion of permanency. The connection of object to icon remains as tenuous as it seems to be between signified and signifier, with the two paradigms straddling how firmly attached *things* are to *sounds*. At any moment, the attachment of a name to a thing is both weaker and stronger than anticipated.

Translation of one language's icons into other language's icons becomes problematic when a person realizes that he or she assigns an object to the foreign icon, then lines up the best choice of icons in his or her language for the same object. The person initially assigns an object that has been traditionally assigned to the foreign language's icon. Therefore, skipping a couple of steps, tradition determines how a text is read, or translated. If the English icon *ghost* has been traditionally assigned to the Greek icon *pneuma*, then a modern translator will assign—based upon tradition—the icon *spirit* to *pneuma*, since the traditional object is an invisible, intangible life form. But if the Greek icon *pneuma* were encountered in a differing passage where an invisible, intangible life form would make no sense, the same translator would assign the English icon *breath* to the now-presumed object of *pneuma*, making the object moving air, or an air current, such as wind is. Jesus said that the object of *pneuma* is like wind (John 3:8), which neither had personhood, nor exists as an intangible life form. Thus, tradition, or presumption determines not just what a text means, but how the text is received. If a translator expects to find a ghost-like life form in a particular passage when he or she encounters the Greek icon *pneuma*, the translator will find this ghost or spirit even when an equally valid rendering of sense could be made of the passage by assigning breath, or breath of life to the icon.

How all of the above relates to the biblical expression *the law* is that most translators are governed by tradition, so radical differences between translations really don't exist. (Paraphrased texts are a different story, and are probably best

avoided.) Subtle translation differences come from how translators understand the context in which icons are encountered. No translator is free from tradition; sense couldn't be made from the original language if not for tradition. So translations are compromises between tradition and linguistic artistry, with all meaning assigned to words through a nefarious process received at Babel.

The Lord God might not be the author of confusion, but God created plenty of it when He confused the languages (Gen 11:7) by causing language users to assign meaning to both sound and inscribed images; i.e., words. Even original language icons do not have fixed objects. The icon *pneuma* can best be understood to mean breath, so when used in the context of God, the Holy *Pneuma* means the Breath of God, which is a metonymic expression for the creative power of *Theos* and *Theon*. (These three icons—*Theos*, *Theon*, *Pneuma* 'Agion—altogether comprise the object for the Hebrew icons *Elohim* and *YHWH*.) "Breath" serves as a metaphor for life within the physical creation, but God exists outside His creation. As such, He doesn't have life as we understand the chemical processes that sustain humanity. So no precise object can be assigned to the Greek icon *pneuma*—again, Jesus compared the Holy *Pneuma* to wind, which has the breath-like qualities of moving air. Therefore, the assignment of personhood to the icon *Pneuma* has the translator committing linguistic foolishness, especially so when a separate Breath/Spirit exists for *Theos* ["Spirit of Christ"] and for *Theon* ["Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead"] (Rom 8:9, 11) as seen in the joined radicals /YH/ and /WH/ that form the Tetragrammaton.

All English translations make the traditional assignment of personhood to the Breath of God. Therefore, a person arguing for a more precise translation argues for a different tradition of assigning objects to icons. The person will mistakenly believe, inevitably so, that words have exact meanings, which can be ascertained through diligent study. The person will believe his or her tradition is the only valid one, little understanding that Christ's sheep will hear the Shepherd's voice regardless of which tradition is used (John 10:3-4, 14-16). Admittedly, sometimes hearing Christ's

voice above the din of tradition is difficult, but it can be discerned in every translation that is reasonably honest with the biblical text. This article will primarily use the *New Revised Standard Version* and occasionally the *English Standard Version* because they seem to present a very readable narrative in modern English while retaining most of the traditions of the authorized King James Version.

Translations, though, are merely guidebooks for the Christian walk. Some translations render this passage or that one better than do other translations, but the reverse will be true for a different passage. Even reading the original text is problematic, since a person's first language determines the person's reality. Without sharing the same reality as the prophet or apostle, the initial assignment of linguistic object to icon cannot be reliably recovered. Again, only by Christ's sheep hearing the Shepherd's voice can divine sense be made of Scripture. This means that genuine disciples will assign the God-inspired linguistic object to whatever icon is used when the disciple actually hears Christ's voice. The modern din of voices within Christianity is John's many antichrists all speaking at once. Through this noise, Christ's voice can be heard by the sheep if the sheep will listen. Unfortunately, the many voices bringing to the world a Christian message have dulled the hearing of large numbers of sheep. In fact, some sheep have lost all ability to hear the Shepherd and now need to have their eyes, and ears, and minds spiritually healed before they will return to the fold. As spiritually circumcised Israelites, they have become like the physical Israelites of whom Jesus said, quoting Isaiah, "For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes" (Matt 13:15 — also compare Heb 5:11 NRSV).

The noise of greater Christianity is deafening, but the sheep can hear the voice of the Shepherd if they will quit baaing for long enough to listen. The walls of the endtime sheepfold have been broken down by the many thieves who have climbed over (John 10:1), and the sheep have been scattered (Zech 13:7). Christ will turn His hand against these scattered sheep, cutting off two-thirds of them (*v.* 8). Why? why would Christ cut off two-thirds of His sheep? Because they won't listen to Him. They

make Scripture into a handful of memory verses taken out of context. They then put on headphones so they can listen to a tape of a thief expounding his or her understanding of these memory verses. Their headphones block out Christ's voice. Why shouldn't He turn His hand against these sheep? Perhaps a few of them will return to Him before their blood soaks into the earth.

The previous paragraph seems needlessly harsh, but in both the parable of the pounds where ten servants receive a pound (Luke 19:11-27) and in Zechariah, Christ will slay those spiritual Israelites who will not be ruled by Him. The numbers are similar: two-thirds versus seventy percent. In the parable, only two of the three servants who didn't rebel against the nobleman bring forth an increase with the pound left with them. The fate of the third servant is a little vague, but not so in the parable of the talents, where the third servant is cast away. So there is a high price to be paid for blocking out Christ's voice.

Because translation is tradition combined with art, Hebraic poetry has not been uniformly well handled when translated into English. The structure of how words are formed in Hebrew is especially conducive to the doubling of meaning (or assignments of objects). The night/day, darkness/light, death/life, physical/spiritual metaphor is inherent in word and sentence construction. Light comes from darkness (2 Cor 4:6 — Paul cites Gen 1:3). Night exists before day. Life comes after death. That which is physical precedes what is spiritual (1 Cor 15:46). Thus, in Hebraic poetics, the paired thought couplets that sound, when translated into English, like repetition of the same idea are in reality the physical or darkness presentation of an idea, followed by the spiritual or light-filled presentation of the same idea. The first presentation is outside of the body, is of the hand, or of the nation. The second presentation is inside the body, is of the heart, or of the individual. The promised land of Judea into which the uncircumcised children of the nation that left Egypt entered when they crossed the Jordan becomes the visible or physical representation of God's rest (Ps 95:10-11), which is glorification. The weekly Sabbath now becomes the diminutive model (Heb 4:9) of both the Messiah's millennial reign, and of

glorification. Therefore, entering into the Sabbath is as entering into Judea. And once the uncircumcised children of the nation that left Egypt crossed the Jordan, the nation was circumcised and kept the Passover. Entering into the Sabbath now causes the spiritually uncircumcised nation to become circumcised. What was dead has been made alive through receiving the Breath of God, just as the first Adam became a breathing creature [*naphesh*] when *Elohim* [singular in usage] breathed into his nostrils. But *naphesh* is also assignment the object for the English icons “mind” and “soul.” Thus, to receive spiritual life in one’s mind through birth-from-above equates to receiving life through physical breath. The same Hebrew icon, *naphesh*, represents both concepts, one physical or of this world, and one spiritual or of the Jerusalem above.

Because of this inherent night/day metaphor in Hebraic poetics, the commandments of *YHWH*, Israel’s *Elohim*, spoken to Moses and heard by the entire nation from atop Mt. Sinai, go from being what the hand and the body does, when spoken by Jesus in His sermon on the mount, to being what the mind thinks and what the heart desires. Jesus’ disciples equate to Moses, and the commandment prohibiting murder, an action performed by the hand, becomes the prohibition against being angry with, or hating one’s brother (Matt 5:21–22). The commandment against adultery goes from being what the body does to lust, or what the mind thinks (*vv.* 27–28). The letter of the law kills, but the Breath gives life—the commandments of God inscribed on tablets of stone kill, but the commandments on tablets of human hearts give life (2 Cor 3:3, 6). Same commandments. The former represents death and darkness; the latter represents life and light. The former represents physical Jerusalem; the latter represents the Jerusalem that is above, the Jerusalem of God’s rest. Jesus didn’t come to abolish the Law and the Prophets (Matt 5:17), but to keep them, thereby giving death no claim to Him. The wages of sin or lawlessness (1 John 3:4) is death (Rom 6:23). Jesus, who knew no sin, did not earn these wages. Therefore, for Jesus to die as the paschal Lamb of God, Jesus had to be made sin through taking on the lawlessness of human beings, all consigned to disobedience so that God can have mercy on all (Rom 11:32). So light

comes out of darkness as life follows death. Until born-from-above, every person is wholly a son of disobedience and walks in darkness. And those persons who know Christ keep His commandments, and walk in the same way as He walked (1 John 2:3–6).

Scripture exists as a seamless narrative, which is why Paul tells Timothy, “Remind them of this, and warn them before God that they are to avoid wrangling over words, which does no good but only ruins those who are listening” (2 Tim 2:14 NRSV); and why Isaiah writes, “Therefore the word of the Lord will be to them, ‘Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little;’ in order that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken” (Isa 28:13 NRSV). Yes, many Bible study courses will use this passage from Isaiah to teach that the Bible should be studied: *precept upon precept, line upon line*. But God says that to study the Bible in this way is to fall backwards, and to be broken and snared. This isn’t, according to God, how the Bible should be studied. A person traps him or herself when the person doesn’t study Scripture in its entirety, but rather, takes from Scripture a little here and a little there, embracing this precept and that one, agreeing with this line and with that one—with the lines and with the precepts to which the person can assign his or her own meanings (i.e., those meanings with which the person agrees).

The above concept should be repeated: whereas in most Bible study courses that a person can find, regardless of the course’s governing philosophical paradigms, the instructors will say that the Bible should be studied *precept upon precept, line upon line*. But the Lord says that this is how these people shall be taken, how they shall be ensnared in error. As will be seen, the holy ones have their hearts and minds circumcised, a euphemistic expression for having God write his laws on the disciples’ hearts and minds, so that these disciples will know the Lord. The laws of God are now inside the disciples. Only then, when the commandments are inscribed on hearts, can anyone know the Lord, or understand the Bible, or have life. Only then will the entirety of the Bible fit together and make sense. So the courses that would have the student study *precept upon precept, line upon line* acknowledge by

how they admonish students to study that they do not know the Lord. Their instructors would have students study in the same manner as the instructors have so that the students will be equally ensnared in errors. The authors of these courses might be sincere; they are most likely good people, many of whom advocate keeping the law of God, but they do not know the Lord. They do not know how to study the Bible. They teach error. And they are usually short on love for all who don't agree with them.

Once again, it sounds very spiritual, very intellectual to direct students to study the Bible *precept upon precept, line upon line*, but Isaiah says this is how students will be ensnared, taken and broken. Objections will be, how else can a person study Scripture other than to link passages together, *here a little, there a little*, doing key word searches, or topic studies? How can the Bible be taught except by word or topic searches? How can the Bible be studied globally unless a person doesn't run down all of the passages on a key subject, one after another? The Bible should be studied in the same way that Hebraic poetics are structured. The visible reveals the invisible (Rom 1:20), and the physical precedes the spiritual (1 Cor 15:46). The visible forms the shadow of the spiritual. As there was a first Adam, there was a last Adam. As there was a first Eve, there was/is a last Eve. As the seventy (i.e., the patriarch Israel and his sons) journeyed to Egypt where their descendants became bondservants to Pharaoh, the seventy went wherever Christ was to go, and their descendants became enslaved by the spiritual king of Babylon. Thus, the history of the physically circumcised nation in physical Judea and Jerusalem becomes the shadow of the history of the spiritually circumcised nation in spiritual Judea and the Jerusalem that is above. Therefore, instead of practicing *precept-upon-precept* exegesis, or historic exegesis, meaning should be taken from the Bible by typological exegesis.

We will see, when referents are assigned to the iconic expression *the law* from the icon's context, that a *precept upon precept* study will, indeed, cause the Bible student to become ensnared in lawlessness, which leads drawn disciples into the lake of fire. Because meaning is assigned to words, and by their extension, to precepts and to lines of text, tradition

governs how these words, precepts and lines are understood. This doesn't surprise God, for He is responsible for the confusion that resulted from Babel: "[T]here the Lord confused the language of all [Heb: *kol*] the earth" (Gen 11:9 NRSV). Moses doesn't record that God confused all of the languages, except Hebrew, or a paleo-Hebrew tongue. Rather, the usual assignment of linguistic objects to icons has God, at Babel, changing how humanity uses language. It is here in the biblical narrative where endtime semiotics explains what the Most High and the *Logos* did at the beginning of this era.

One additional problem exists with *precept upon precept, line upon line*: the icon translated as "precept" is *tsav*, which usually has the sense of an injunction or commandment assigned to it. The icon translated as "line" is *qav*, which usually has about it the sense of a measuring line or cord, such as a modern tape measure. God seems to be asking, Who shall He teach, children? since the priests are drunkards. Is a just weaned child able to understand commandment upon commandment, each measuring the righteousness of the holy ones. All that the holy ones must do is come to Him to receive rest, but, no, the commandments of God cause these drunkards to stumble and to be broken and snared. Thus, the sense of the passage has less to do with how Scripture should be studied than it has to do with who is able to teach the commandments of God to the holy ones. In the ancient house of Israel (Samaria), priests and prophets were false teachers, confused with wine, staggered by strong drink, erring in vision and stumbling in their judgments (Isa 28:7-8). A comparison between these ancient priests and the ministry of endtime Christianity is unavoidable. While a small portion of greater Christianity's ministry struggles with alcoholism, the larger problem is the ministry's erring in vision and stumbling in judgments, subjects that will cause these latter day priests to teach that the Bible should be studied *precept upon precept, line upon line*, little understanding that the entire passage condemns the ministry, earlier and later, for how it teaches the commandments of God.

The Apostle Peter, in a general way, addresses these drunken priests of the ancient house of Israel: "But false prophets also rose among the people, just

as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive opinions. They will even deny the Master who bought them" (2 Peter 2:1 NRSV). From Peter, two aspects of errant teachings are documented. The first is that the false teachers arise from within the ranks of disciples whom have been bought by Christ, meaning that these false teachings are not imposed from outside of Christianity, but come from disciples who have/had Christ's blood covering their sins. This compliments what Jesus told His disciples on the Mount of Olives: Matthew 24:4 is usually translated in some form of, *Beware that no one deceives you, or leads you astray*, but what Jesus said is better rendered, *See that none of you misleads*. Jesus began His Olivet discourse about the end of the age by warning His disciples not to mislead future disciples. The problem wasn't with someone deceiving the Apostles, but with them leading others astray. Jesus knew from the beginning which of His disciples did not believe and who the one was that would betray Him (John 6:64). He warned those disciples who did not then believe that they needed to be concerned about misleading future disciples.

Jesus adds to His initial warning not to mislead: "And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray" (Matt 24:11 NRSV). And how will these many be lead astray? "[B]ecause of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold" (v. 12). Peter says, concerning these false teachers, "[M]any will follow their licentious ways" (2 Peter 2:2). What is here translated as licentious (i.e., without moral discipline or rules) can equally be rendered as damnable or destructive ways. So these licentious ways can well be an increase in lawlessness. Peter seems to confirm this when he addresses Paul's epistles:

There are some things in them [Paul's epistles] hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, since you are forewarned, beware that you are not carried away with the error of the lawless and lose your stability. (2 Peter 3:16-17 NRSV)

So those who twist Scripture to their own

destruction are ignorant and have the error of the lawless. These false teachers hold the error of the lawless; they are lawless; they teach lawlessness; and their teachings lead to damnation or destruction. And according to Peter, they twist Paul's epistle to achieve their damnation.

Jesus had some of the religious teachers of His day in the crowds that followed Him. Matthew records, "Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet [David]: 'I will open my mouth to speak in parables; / I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world'" (13:34-35 NRSV). But why, actually, did Jesus speak in parables? It wasn't just to fulfill a prophecy. Jesus, when asked by His disciples why He spoke in parables, said, "'The reason that I speak to them in parables is that "seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand"' (v. 13). Jesus spoke in parables so He wouldn't be understood, not so that He would be. He proclaimed those things of God that had been hidden from the foundation of the earth, but He proclaimed them in a manner where they would not be understood by anyone but the disciples who had been drawn by God the Father.

Jesus delivered to the public an encoded message that could only be understood by His disciples; nevertheless, He was considered to be a great teacher by those who couldn't understand the message. This was possible through the separation of linguistic objects from icons. Through of the presence of thirdness (the interpretant), enough meaning could be assigned to Jesus' words by the crowds which followed Him that the crowds heard the message they wanted to hear, but they didn't hear what had been hidden from the foundation of the earth. That information was only revealed to the Disciples. The crowds heard exactly what they would've told themselves if they were Christ, which is how false teachers today lead astray the many. The problem comes from Babel and is of God. And the situation won't change until Christ comes with a new language.

The full explanation of this is a long way of saying that words mean whatever a person wants the words to mean. And when this inexactness of

meaning is coupled to representational distance (i.e., mimetic, metaphoric, metonymic usage), the phrase "the law" doesn't necessarily mean *the law*, what the majority of biblical scholars do not understand to this day. A linguistic icon is tethered only slightly tighter to its linguistic object than a pronoun is to its antecedent—and in metonymical usage, the icon behaves like a pronoun, in that its referent must be determined from the context each time it is used. A reader **cannot** assume that the icon has the same referent each time it is used within a passage, let alone within a text, the fault of all languages (especially Hebrew) since God confused them at the Tower of Babel. Again, Hebrew, more so than Indo-European languages, allows and even encourages doubling within the night/day metaphor, thereby clouding intended mimetic representation.

We see examples of how Paul uses the expression *the law* in his epistle to the Romans. Paul writes, "Do you not know, brothers and sisters—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime?" (7:1 NRSV). The icon expression *the law* appears twice in one sentence, and a person's instincts would have the referent for both uses be the same. Those who know *the law* would be Jews, and *the law* would be the law of Moses. But is Paul's epistle to Jewish converts at Rome? In his long introductory sentence, he identifies his audience: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle...through whom [Jesus Christ] we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ" (1:1, 5-6). So Paul writes this epistle to Gentile converts. We see this in a later sentence: "I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the Gentiles. I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians" (Rom 1:13-14). Paul isn't a debtor to Jews, his own people. His obligation is to Gentiles.

Paul says that there was agreement with the other Apostles that he should preach to Gentiles while Peter and the other Apostles preached to

physical Israelites (Gal 2:7-9). We find in the Book of Acts that Paul didn't go to Israelites, but was, indeed, the Apostle to the Gentiles; so the Gentiles in Rome who knew *the law* weren't necessarily familiar with the terms of the Sinai covenant, or of the Moab covenant, or of the difference between these two covenants which are as night and day. They wouldn't have been schooled in the traditions of the Jewish elders, which became known by the metonymical expression *the law of Moses*. Rather, prior to their conversion, these Roman Gentiles would've snubbed their noses at Jews, and all things pertaining to Judea. *The law* they knew was *Pax Romana*, the peace of Rome, or the law of Rome (i.e., the civil and natural law codes), which the Empire took into the farthest corners of its domain. As residents of Rome, they would've been subject to Roman rule through the statutes of *Pax Romana*, just as a wife is subject to her husband's rule (Rom 7:2-3).

A would-be scholar's instinct to assign Jews or Jewish converts as the linguistic objects of the expression *those who know the law* makes good sense until the remainder of the Paul's epistle to these Roman Gentiles is read. Out of context, Paul's referent can be Jewish converts, but in context, that referent makes no sense, especially so when Paul writes, concerning unconverted Jews, "For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises" (Rom 9:3-4 NRSV). Paul doesn't identify his own people, Jews, as part of the audience to whom he writes this epistle. Rather, for these Roman Gentile converts, Paul's own people are "other," or "them," in an *us/them* paradigm.

Again, the problem with a *precept upon precept* Bible study is the ease with which a person can say that "those who know the law" are Jewish converts, which then makes the law to which these converts have died the Sinai covenant, or the law of Moses (which they never knew prior to conversion), and which then causes a person to misread chapter 13. So Bible students need to flee from any teacher who advocates studying *precept upon precept, line upon line*.

As a Hebrew, one chosen by Christ Jesus to go to *the nations* [Gentiles], Paul understood the day/night metaphor, and uses this metaphor when discussing “the tent, which is our earthly home” (2 Cor 5:1 ESV) and “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (same verse). The physically circumcised Israelite who dwelt in a tent in the Wilderness of Sin along with his uncircumcised son born after crossing the Red Sea becomes the shadow or representation of Paul’s crucified *old man* and born-from-above *new man* dwelling together in a baptized *tent, which is their earthly home*. The tent is subject to the law of sin and death that dwells within its flesh (Rom 7:25), a binding law while the tent remains alive through the inhalation of physical breath. The *old man* and his earthenware tent are inseparable until the death of one or the other causes them to part company. Watery baptism is unto death. If not raised from the water, the earthenware tent would die. But because the tent is resurrected or lifted up, as Jesus of Nazareth was on the cross, it is the *old man* that dies the slow death of crucifixion. So those of *the nations* that know the law can be, and should in context be read as born-from-above disciples who understand the physical/spiritual metaphor. Paul qualifies his example with, “Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God” (Rom 7:4). Therefore, regardless of whether Paul’s intended referent for *those who know the law* is a physical Jew or Gentile, the person has been raised up as the body of Christ was; the person has been baptized. And this born-from-above *new man* dwelling in the earthenware tent of the crucified *old man* is free to marry another. This new man lives within a tent that has the laws of God written on fleshly tablets (i.e., the heart and the mind) as the physically circumcised Israelite in the Wilderness entered a fabric tabernacle within which was the old written code inscribed by the finger of God on two stone tablets. Thus, physical circumcision of an Israelite male becomes the visible shadow of spiritual circumcision of the born-from-above son of God.

If Paul’s epistle isn’t to Jews in Rome, then in his first usage of *the law* in the seventh chapter, the

referent for *those who know the law* cannot be Jews who were observing the traditions of their elders (Jesus said none were keeping the law Moses gave them [John 7:19]). Are not *those who know the law* lawyers? Of course, they are. Therefore, Paul’s second usage of the icon expression *the law* cannot be the law of Moses. It can be “the covenant,” using the definite article. It could be “the Sinai covenant,” but this usage implies Paul’s first usage is also the Sinai covenant, thereby making the referent for *those who know the law* Jewish converts, which remains problematic when the epistle is addressed to *Gentiles who belong to Jesus Christ*. The better reading, then, has Paul’s second usage of *the law* as the law of Rome, which all Roman Gentile converts would have known, and would have been proud of prior to being drawn by God the Father.

Under the Law of Moses, marriage contracts were not binding until death; Moses allowed for bills of divorce, which Jesus said were not part of original intent. So the internal evidence—the example of marriage that Paul cites—precludes *the law* Paul references in verse 1 from being the Torah, or the law of Moses. That is correct. The information contained within the context of the sentence excludes the law of Moses, or the Torah from being the referent for Paul’s second usage of the icon expression *the law*. If the law of Moses or the Torah isn’t the referent for Paul’s second usage, then Jewish converts cannot be the referent for *those who know the law*. A close reading of the sentence contradicts the traditional reading of the passage.

Can *those who know the law* refer to Gentile Christians who have learned the law? Again, possibly. But from what law have they been freed? *Pax Romana* is the only possible referent, for the law of God has been written on their hearts and minds, which certainly doesn’t free them from *the law* to which they were never in bondage, unless that law is the law of sin and death. It cannot be the law of Moses, or the law of God. And we have circled back unto ourselves. The born-from-above *new man* has been liberated from the law of sin and death, which still, though, dwells in his members.

Gentile converts were, indeed, dead to the law of sin and death. They were never under the Sinai covenant, so they were not now dead to a covenant

to which they had never been in subjection. They were previously under *Pax Romana* and they were slaves to sin. These Gentile converts weren't under bondage to God, or Moses, or the temple in Jerusalem. They were living at, as far as they were concerned, the center of all civilization. So to say that they were previously under the bondage of the law Moses is being dishonest with Scripture at best.

The Gentile converts at Rome certainly had not died to the laws of God, which were written on their hearts and minds (Jer 31:31-34 & Heb 8:10 & 10:16). They had become, as disciples, "God's own people" (1 Peter 2:9), so it is to God that they now belong. They weren't previously under the law of Moses, nor under the Sinai covenant, so again, they couldn't be dead to a law to which they hadn't been in subjection. Rather, they have died to the law of sin and death, and they have died to the law of Rome, *Pax Romana*, which is why Paul cannot quit his epistle to these converts at Rome without reinforcing the idea of obedience to civil authority (Rom 13:1-7). Paul wants to make sure that the person who is dead to Roman authority so that the person can bring forth fruit for God doesn't think that the person doesn't have to obey the civil government.

Without changing his iconic expression, Paul either shifts referents, which in Classical Rhetoric is a logical fault called equivocation, or he clarifies the law to which a disciple is dead. In verse 5, Paul writes, "While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work on our members to bear fruit for death" (NRSV). Does the law of God, or the law of Moses arouse sinful passions? It doesn't, does it? Both identify sin, which is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). Neither arouses sin. But what Paul calls "the law of sin" (Rom 7:23) that dwells in his members is what arouses sinful passions. Paul's use of the expression *the law* in verse 5 could be rendered as "base desires"—and looking forward to the end of the chapter, we see Paul pitting law against law: "So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin" (v. 25). The law of sin isn't a formal code; it isn't "the old written code" (v. 6). Rather, it is the passions of the flesh.

A *precept upon precept* Bible study becomes impossible when dealing with the iconic expression

the law, for the expression isn't linked to one precept, but to many, with more to be added shortly. For Paul, there is an additional category of law that might best be called natural law, of which the law of sin and death is its most recognizable member. (As an aside, there has been considerable hooting by would-be scholars at Herbert Armstrong for "inventing" a category of law called natural law. Those who have hooted need now to also hoot at the Apostle Paul.)

Arriving now at verses 6, we find yet another referent: "But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit" (v. 6). In this verse, the expression "the old written code" and "the law" seem to have the same referent, since the referent for both phrases has formerly held Gentile converts captive. This referent cannot be the referent for the law of God, because these Gentile converts have been made into *God's own people*. They were not formerly held captive by God.

Both the *old written code* and *the law of sin and death* reference the physical administration of death. Paul writes, "Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?" (2 Cor 3:7-8 ESV). It is not the face of Moses upon which spiritually circumcised Israelites gaze, but the face of the glorified Bridegroom, Christ Jesus. Not even Moses could gaze at the face of YHWH, circumcised Israel's *Elohim*. Flesh and blood cannot behold those things that are of Spirit. Likewise, until born-from-above sons of God receive a *house not made with hand but heavenly*, they are unable to gaze directly upon the face of the Bridegroom, but must see darkly—as if looking at the sun through smoked glass—the ministry of the Spirit. They are only able to see this glorious ministry by the shadow it casts in the form of the ministry of death. Therefore, the *old written code* forms the visible shadow of the laws of God written on hearts and minds as the ministry of death forms the shadow of the ministry of the Spirit.

In his epistle to the Galatians, Paul uses the imagery of imprisonment to describe the Sinai

covenant: "But the scripture has imprisoned all things under the power of sin" (3:22 NRSV); and "Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law" (v. 23). Legally, the Sinai covenant is a single law, the one that has been abolished (Eph 2:15), the one that separated the circumcised from the uncircumcised. Because of his education, Paul perceives the Sinai covenant as having imprisoned Israel. Christianity, then, becomes the ultimate jailbreak for Paul. Through faith in Christ Jesus, the *old written code* that had enslaved physical Israel has been abolished. It was nailed to the cross in the form of Christ Jesus, who knew no sin but was made sin.

But with the passing of the ministry of death, which had such glory that Moses had to wear a veil over his face, the ministry of the Spirit isn't about drawn and called disciples living as spiritually circumcised sons of disobedience, but as Israelites. Many sons of disobedience are called, but few are chosen (Matt 22:14); for few will hear the words of Jesus and believe the One who sent Him by putting Jesus' words into practice. Too many called sons of disobedience continue to live as Gentiles, thereby squandering mercy and mocking God.

Returning to Paul's epistle to Gentile converts at Rome, readers see that since the earthly tabernacles of these converts haven't been discharged from the law of sin, as Paul will discuss in the latter part of chapter 7, that while the referent in verse 6 might be the law of Rome, that referent is ruled out by verse 7: "What then should 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'" (NRSV). Where is a law written about coveting? In the Ten Commandments? Which is that portion of the Sinai covenant the *Logos* spoke from atop the mountain. Paul makes the entirety of the Sinai covenant synonymous with *the old written code*, thereby making the referent for *the old written code* the law which made holy physical Israelites (Exod 19:6), the law which separated circumcised from uncircumcised. The referent isn't the law of God which Abraham kept both prior to, and after his circumcision (Gen 26:5). Nor is the referent the law of God that Jeremiah says will be written on hearts and minds

under the new covenant.

Backing up now, is it possible that every one of Paul's usages of the iconic phrase *the law* refers to the Sinai covenant? Possible, yes, but contradicted by to whom he wrote his epistle, and by Moses allowing divorce. Even if whoever brought the gospel of Christ to these Roman Gentiles had taught them to *judaiize*, which is what Paul says Peter taught Gentile converts (Gal 2:14) and what he, himself, would have taught Gentile converts since his gospel was consistent with the other Apostles (Gal 2:1-2), then it is a little more likely that some of his earlier references were to the Sinai covenant. But the internal context would never have had these converts being married to God by the Sinai covenant. So while the Sinai covenant cannot be conclusively ruled out as the referent for some of Paul's earlier uses of *the law*, it can be for practical purposes, which means that Paul has introduced a new referent in verses 6 & 7 without modifying his iconic phrase.

The problem with biblical scholars has been their reluctance to challenge the words on the page. All of the biblical text is the inspired word of God, but inspired doesn't mean infallible. Inspired is the global condition in which a text is produced. Infallible is the state or condition in which a text is received. And since Daniel's prophecies were sealed and secret until the time of the end, the Scriptures that Paul read even under inspiration are not the same Scriptures I read today, if, indeed, we have arrived at the time of the end. Yes, the icons Daniel wrote have remained the same. But Daniel's inscribed words were sealed and secret until the time of the end, when these Scriptures change meaning through being unsealed and no longer secret. By changing meaning, then every reading prior to when God the Father unsealed them is flawed. The Bible itself changed its meanings. And with this as background, when we return to Paul's use of *the law*, we don't encounter the reality of *the law* but a linguistic representation that has been filtered through Paul and at least two languages. That representation began as either a mimetic, a metaphoric, or a metonymic expression, each with a certain representational distance away from the reality of what the expression represents.

When Paul's use of *the law* in verse 6 of chapter

7 is placed in context with the other references to *the law* that Paul uses in just this one chapter, we find that Paul treats the phrase *the law* as we do the pronoun "they," which can represent any number of plural antecedents. A person can argue that the Sinai covenant is intended as the referent for the phrase in verses 1 through 5, but to do so necessitates the entire passage being addressed to Jewish converts, which works against what Paul writes in his introductory remarks, and against his entire discussion of his sorrow that his own people are cut off from Christ (chapters 9-11). Also, to argue for Jews being the referent for *those who know the law* (7:1) makes Paul writing, "Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry in order to make my own people jealous, and thus save some of them" (11:13-14) into gibberish if these Roman converts aren't Gentiles—and if Gentiles, they would've been imprisoned by *Pax Romana* prior to their conversion, not by the Sinai covenant or the law of Moses.

Paul uses equivocation in his Aristotelian argument to the Galatians. Equivocation is, again, the shifting of referents for the same linguistic expression. We identify such word usage as a logical fallacy, because we have been taught to make that identification. Apparently Paul didn't perceive this sleight-of-hand usage as a fallacy, for he repeatedly practices it, which is one reason why Peter says Paul's epistles are hard to understand (2 Peter 3:16). If, when a person reads a passage, the person continually has to check how the writer uses a phrase, the writer makes the reader work harder than the reader should have to. Paul is exactly this kind of a writer. His word usage isn't sloppy, but rather, very dependent upon his reader being able to contextualize what he writes. Paul doesn't give his reader much help in understanding his referents. Therefore, careless readers twist Paul's epistles to their own destruction. Even careful readers occasionally have to scratch their heads as they reconstruct the context for Paul's letters. And intellectually dishonest readers find a gospel of lawlessness within Paul's epistles, for which Paul would upbraid them in terms that would scour their consciences, if they were ever genuine.

What about Paul's law of faith? How are we to

make sense of what he writes when he finds a law of works which opposes a law of faith: "Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works proscribed by the law" (Rom 3:27-28 NRSV). Two concepts are in play: justification by faith through the law of faith; and works proscribed by the law of works. Readers cannot turn directly to a scriptural passage and find God or Moses labeling this *the law of works*, and this *the law of faith*; so readers need Paul's help in identifying the referents for his phrases. Certainly, we can say that the law of Moses is the law of works, and the law of love is the law of faith, but we would sound as ignorant as others who have twisted Paul's epistles to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:15-17)—and we don't need to sound this ignorant. Paul adds sufficient clarification in the 10th chapter that a good reader will find Paul's assignment of his intended referents to his *law of faith* and *law of works*.

Paul, continuing his discussion of his own people's lack of conversion, writes, "Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved" (Rom 10:1 NRSV). And we encounter a discussion of salvational issues. In their then present state, his own people (i.e., the Jews) were not saved; so we can expect the ensuing passages to reveal how his own people can alter their spiritual state. "I can testify that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened" (v. 2). Thus, the first thing his own people will have to add to their zeal is enlightenment. "For being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to God's righteousness" (v. 3).

There is a righteousness that comes from God, and one established by Paul's own people, the Jews. We can say that the righteousness that comes from God is the righteousness that comes from the law of faith—Paul will shorten this expression to "the righteousness that comes from faith" (Rom 10:6 NRSV). About this righteousness, Paul has previously written: "Gentiles, who did not strive for righteousness, have attained it, that is, righteousness through faith; but Israel, who did strive for the righteousness that is based on the law, did not succeed in fulfilling that law. Why not? Because they

did not strive for it on the basis of faith, but as if it were based on works" (Rom 9:30-32). And we now have both Paul's *law of works* and his *law of faith*.

Paul cites the second covenant mediated by Moses as *the righteousness that comes from faith*, for under this second covenant (Deu 29:1), after the blessings and cursings had come upon the circumcised nation, and the nation found itself in a distant land (Deu 30:1), if the nation then turned by faith to God and began to keep his law and to love God, He would bring the nation back to Judea and give the nation circumcised hearts and minds (30:6). The physically circumcised nation would then have pursued righteousness by faith, and would have become spiritually circumcised; thus, salvation was offered to the physical nation by a law (Rom 9:31) that was not obtained. But when born into Judea, the nation needed no faith to keep the commandments. The nation needed faith to love their neighbors as themselves (Luke 10:25-37), or to give away wealth and follow Jesus (Luke 18:18-30). That faith wasn't present. Gentiles, however, are like Israelites in far countries. When these drawn and called Gentiles turn from disobedience and begin living by the laws of God, loving God with all of their hearts and all of their minds, they obtain a righteousness that they were not before seeking. And herein is the flaw within the greater Christian Church: if Gentiles when called do not turn from disobedience and do not begin living by the laws of God written on their heart and put into their minds, they reject the righteousness that comes by faith. They are, when naked before God, cloaked in the righteousness of Christ so that they can make the journey from distant lands to Judea fully clothed. They did not put on Christ to live as they had been living in these distant mental landscapes. Therefore, they reject Grace when they continue to live as Gentiles.

Again, additional identification of Paul's law of works is found in, "Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that 'the person who does these things will live by them'" (Rom 10:5 NRSV). His citation of Moses comes from Leviticus: "You [Israel] shall keep my statutes and my ordinances; by doing so one shall live: I am the Lord" (18:5). If Paul didn't habitually practice equivocation, we could stop here and identify with

certainly *the law* that is his *law of works*. But since he uses the language without the precision we expect at the beginning of the 21st-Century, we must track down his referents: Paul writes to Gentile converts at Galatia, "My point is this: the law, which came four hundred thirty years later, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance comes from the law, it no longer comes from the promise; but God granted it to Abraham through the promise" (3:17-18). So *the law* here is the Sinai covenant, made with Israel and by which Israel became a holy people (Exod 19:5-9).

The promise made to Abraham introduced circumcision with receipt of the Breath of God—the addition of the aspirated /*ab*/ radical to Abram's name is the addition of vocalized breath to his name. This addition of vocalized breath, or visible breath, forms the shadow of the addition of the invisible Breath of God [*Pneuma 'Agion*] to disciples when born of Spirit [*Pneuma*]. Therefore, Abraham's circumcision following receipt of the promise of life equates to the uncircumcised children of the nation that left Egypt becoming circumcised after they cross the Jordan and enter into the promised land of God's rest. Uncircumcision puts on circumcision when entering into life. The uncircumcised Gentile will mentally put on circumcision and live as a spiritual Judean when born of Spirit, or this son of God will not be chosen. Again, many are called but few are chosen, for few will by faith leave the mental topography of their nativity and journey to Judea and to the Jerusalem above.

Paul tells the Galatians that Abraham was granted the inheritance through the promise, but the Lord told Isaac, "I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and will give to your offspring all these lands; and all nations of the earth shall gain blessing for themselves through your offspring, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws" (Gen 26:4-5 NRSV). So the inheritance that comes through promise came to Abraham because he obeyed God, and kept His commandments, statutes and laws. Therefore, Paul's law of works cannot be the commandments, statutes, and laws of God that Abraham obeyed.

The laws of God actually stand opposed to the *law of works*, which cannot be of promise.

The above is an important concept to remember: the law of God (Jer 31:33), or the commandment of God (Deu 30:11)—both expressions singular in number but inclusive of all that is written in the Book of Deuteronomy—is actually opposed to Paul's law of works. Abraham obeyed by faith. If Christ's disciples have faith, they will obey God as Abraham did. A gospel of lawlessness first grieves the Holy Spirit, then sends drawn disciples into the lake of fire. So as a disciple, don't be fooled by Satan's ministers of righteousness who teach that you can ignore the laws of God that have been written on your heart and mind (Heb 8:10 & 10:16). God the Father wouldn't have bothered writing His laws on your heart and mind if He didn't intend for you to keep them.

Returning to Paul's epistle to Gentile converts at Rome, the juxtaposition of promise and works has Paul's *law of works* coming 430 years after the patriarch Israel kept the laws of God—as did his grandfather Abraham—by promise, or by faith. This makes Paul's *law of works* the Sinai covenant. And we see this in Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. Paul writes to the converts at Ephesus: "So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called 'the uncircumcision' by those who are called 'the circumcision'...remember that you were at one time without Christ....But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near...For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity" (2:11-15 NRSV). What law had divided circumcision from uncircumcision? The Sinai covenant: it was by the Sinai covenant that Israel became a holy people (Exod 19:6), a people set apart for God's service. That covenant has been abolished, for under the new covenant, drawn disciples "are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Peter 2:9). The barrier of physical circumcision has been broken down. Circumcision is now of the heart and mind.

The law that has been abolished is the Sinai

covenant, with its commandments and ordinances and clipped foreskins. But *the law* of God, with its commandments, statutes and ordinances hasn't been abolished. Rather, this is *the law* that is holy; this is *the law* of God that has been written on the hearts and minds of drawn disciples (Jer 31:33) through spiritual circumcision.

We can say with certainty now that *the law* Paul references in Romans 10:5 is the Sinai covenant, which was abolished by the Covenantor's death at Calvary. Israel is free to remarry if anyone will have her, as faithless as she is. Gentiles are likewise free to remarry, for they are no longer under bondage to the law of sin and death. Nor are they spiritually subject to the laws of Rome, which defies the Emperor. They no longer have to worship the Emperor, and their liberation will cost many of them their physical lives.

The law to which these Gentile converts at Rome are dead is *Pax Romana*, which required each resident to worship the Emperor as god. They were never under the Sinai covenant. Rather, they were formerly in a covenant relationship with the Roman Empire, a covenant which required them to worship the Emperor. Paul likens *Pax Romana* to the Sinai covenant, from which his people (i.e., the Jews) have been liberated. The analogy works quite well. And Paul isn't above using equivocation to reinforce his analogy, so he freely shifts referents, sliding one in and one out within the same sentence as if the iconic expression *the law* is the pronoun *they*.

Now, for Paul's law of faith, which he identifies by the icon phrase, *the righteousness that comes from faith*. Paul writes, "But the righteousness that comes from faith says, 'Do not say in your heart, 'who will ascend into heaven?'" (Rom 10:6), and Paul continues his quoting of the second covenant mediated by Moses, which he here identifies as *the righteous that comes from faith*, or his *law of faith*. Thus, Paul's law of faith is the covenant mediated by Moses, made in Moab with the children of the Israelites that left Egypt. It is the second covenant, or the Moab covenant, by which God promises to circumcise hearts and minds [*naphesh*] (Deu 29:1-31:13) when Israel believes God unto obedience by observing all of the commandments and decrees written in the Book of Deuteronomy.

The new covenant (Jer 31:31-34; Heb 8:8-12 & 10:16-18) is the Moab covenant with better promises. When the mediator changed from Moses to Christ Jesus, the promises changed from being physical to being spiritual. Life and prosperity, death and adversity (Deu 30:15) go from being physical life to eternal life, physical death to the second death.

All of the above discussion of law relates to eternal life through understanding that a person cannot assume a passage says this or that without reading the passage in its context. With Christ's death at Calvary and His resurrection three days later, passages that pertained at a physical level have been elevated to a spiritual plane. The eternal covenant, or new covenant, is the second covenant mediated by Moses (Deu chpts 29-31) with better promises added. Until a person comprehends how binding are its terms, the person will not realize the seriousness of his or her calling.

Once drawn by God the Father, a disciple is no longer under the law, because the laws of God or the essence of all that is contained in the Book of Deuteronomy has been written on the disciple's heart and mind; the disciple has been spiritually modified. The disciple has received the Holy Spirit, which causes hearts and minds to be circumcised through the writing of the laws of God on these hearts and minds. The Breath of God inside a person causes the person to receive a circumcised heart and a circumcised mind—and such circumcision was offered to physical Israel under the second covenant (Deu 30:6). The "key of David" is understanding this fact, which explains why King David will be in the first resurrection, why he has received the promise of eternal life. King David had the Holy Spirit/*Pneuma* (Ps 51:11); Jesus confirmed that David had the Holy Spirit (Mark 12:36; Matt 22:43), which is the *Pneuma* or Breath of God. Jesus described the Holy *Pneuma* as being like wind (John 3:8). Breath is like wind. The Holy Spirit is the Breath of God, the breath of either *Theos* or *Theon* (John 1:1-3). Both have the same Breath, as you have the same breath that I presently have. Jesus' disciples received this Breath when He met with them after being received in heaven (John 20:22). Three thousand additional disciples received this Breath on that day of

Pentecost. And King David, who never knew God the Father [*Theon*], received it from *YHWH* through faith. It was offered to physical Israelites who believed God by faith, believing unto obedience by observing all of the commandments and decrees written in the Book of Deuteronomy, the same criteria required of genuine disciples by Christ today.

The internalization of the commandments (Deu 30:11) of God is receiving the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Breath of God. The Commandment or law of God is now inside the person, who is under Grace, the garment of Christ's righteousness and as such remains outside the disciple. Receiving Grace isn't receiving the Holy Spirit, and isn't receiving permission to ignore what's written on the person's heart and mind by the Holy Spirit. Literally, receiving Grace is accepting Christ's sacrifice as your sin offering. This is why even a physical Israelite who had his or her heart and mind circumcised still had to profess that Jesus is Lord, and believe in his or her heart that God raised Him from the dead before receiving salvation (Rom 10:9). King David did both while he lived. This is the answer to Jesus' unanswerable question (Matt 22:41-45; Mark 12:35-37). The reason why the lawyer and the rich young ruler asked Jesus what they must do to receive eternal life was the cultural failure to understand the reason for why King David had received the promise of eternal life. The religious establishment recognized the promise, but had lost the means for achieving the promise. Paul says that they strove for righteousness through works, not faith. David had works: he killed Goliath. But it was by faith that he applied his works; it was by faith that he was willing to engage Goliath. And this is what James tries to explain in his epistle—James' entire discussion of works revealing faith sailed over Martin Luther's level of spiritual understanding. Likewise, Christ's unanswerable question has stymied Christians for two millennia. King David had the Breath of God, received from *YHWH*. In Psalm 110, he confesses that the Messiah will be the physical son [*Adoni*] of *YHWH*. Strong's Concordance is not a reliable guide to understanding the passage, since the second "Lord" in verse 1 isn't *Adonai*, which refers to God, but *Adoni*, which always refers to a human.

Have I sailed all of this over heads? King David knew the Messiah would come as a human, and he said so in Psalm 110. Translators haven't understood what David wrote—they couldn't answer Jesus' unanswerable question—so they have messed up this most important Psalm. But modern translators are not alone in messing up this Psalm: Jesus actually cites the Septuagint rendition of this Psalm. And from the Septuagint, the question cannot be answered, for *Adoni* was rendered as *Kurio* [that "o" is *omega*, not *omicron*].

The key of David is necessary to answer Jesus' unanswerable question, which relates directly to King David, with Jesus even pointing to where His audience should look for the answer. David will be in the resurrection of firstfruits because he had received, by faith, a circumcised heart and mind, and because he had confessed with his mouth that the Messiah would come as a man, as a descendant of his, and that the Messiah would be a priest forever. King David, in Psalm 110, satisfies the criteria Paul lists for a person with a circumcised heart and mind under the Moab covenant to receive salvation (Rom 10:9). The key of David isn't identifying the endtime descendants of the ancient house of Israel—David was king over both houses of Israel, and will again be king over both houses of Israel—so how can knowing physical genealogy open any door pertaining to spiritual Israel? That knowledge is nice, but nearly useless since the law that separated the uncircumcised from the circumcised was abolished at Calvary (Eph 2:15). Since then, there has been one new humanity.

The promises of the new covenant change physical life to eternal life. When the rich young ruler asked Jesus, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 18:18 NRSV), the young ruler thought that receiving eternal life was possible. Christ didn't tell the ruler that he already had eternal life, that he already had an immortal soul, the nonsensical teaching of Greek philosophers. Rather, Jesus said, "You know the commandments" (v. 20), and He listed enough of the single royal law (i.e., the Ten Commandments) so the young ruler would know the law to which Christ was referring. Jesus certainly didn't tell the young ruler that receiving eternal life wasn't possible until after His death on Calvary. So the better

promise added to the second covenant by the mediator changing from Moses to the glorified Christ wasn't, as I have previously written, the promise of life changing to become the promise of eternal life (Deu 30:15), but the promise of receiving circumcised hearts and minds upon being drawn by God. Under the Moab covenant, obedience preceded spiritual circumcision. Under the new covenant, spiritual circumcision precedes obedience, thereby making necessary the cloak of Grace.

It is easy to teach that salvation wasn't available to physical Israel, but King David makes that teaching a lie. He was a bloody man who will again reign over all of Israel. And in death, he has slain far more hypocrites than he slew Philistines while he drew physical breath. Jesus used him to confound the religious leaders of His day. David continues to confound spiritual leaders today.

Achieving eternal life requires of each of us the faith of David, who believed God, and put his belief into action. Moses told physical Israelites that, with circumcised hearts and minds, keeping the laws and decrees written in the Book of Deuteronomy was not too hard for them (Deu 30:11). Jesus' disciples kept the law of God. We are, likewise, expected to keep the laws, commandments, statutes, and decrees written in Deuteronomy. To not keep them is grieving the Holy Spirit. And to teach others not to keep them makes a person least in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:19), if the person will even be there.

Keeping the Ten Commandments as part of the law of God was the reasonable expectation of a person under the Moab covenant; yet Jesus told the Pharisees that none of them were keeping the law Moses gave them (John 7:19). The young ruler thought he had been keeping the commandments as required (Luke 18:21), but if the Pharisees weren't, then the young ruler wasn't as shown by his attitude about selling all he had. His wealth came before God; thus, he wasn't keeping the first commandment. In addition, he was a little short on love toward the poor, which is directly addressed in the Book of Deuteronomy.

Earlier in Luke's account of what Jesus did, a lawyer stood up to test Jesus and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life (10:25), the same

question the rich young ruler asked. Jesus' answer was almost the same as in the later incident: "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" (v. 26 NRSV). The lawyer recited the two summary commandments that incorporate all Ten Commandments as well as all of the Book of Deuteronomy, with the necessary requisite of love both toward God and toward neighbor. It is a mistake to state that these summary commandments reference only the Decalogue, when, in actuality, the Ten Commandments are the codification of the larger law of God that has been bound in a book and placed with the holy ones as a witness against them (Deu 31:26). And Jesus tells the lawyer, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live" (Luke 10:28). So, according to Jesus, to receive eternal life, it is necessary to correctly read *the law*, and to keep this right reading of *the law*. And we again see how poorly Christians have been taught: Jesus then tells the lawyer he could receive eternal life from the law. Reread the passage for yourself. Doesn't Jesus tell the lawyer, *You have given the right answer; now do this right answer, and you will live eternally?* That is what Jesus said. Salvation was available under the law.

Again, what the lawyer asked about was eternal life, not physical life. So the life Jesus references will be eternal life. And how does a person achieve eternal life, since a person doesn't have it except as a gift from God (Rom 6:23)? Jesus said to do what is written in the law. That single law is the Moab covenant, which has hearts and minds being circumcised, a euphemism for the equally figurative expression of writing the law of God on drawn disciples' hearts and minds under the new covenant.

Gospels of lawlessness actually prevent disciples from receiving eternal life. These gospels are murder weapons, wielded by Satan and his ministers of righteousness. They are accursed gospels. And there are many spiritually uncircumcised Goliaths who must be slain by endtime Davids. He would welcome the fight. Should we be any less eager to spiritually slay Satan's ministers? The battle has been joined, with Christ granting us temporary invisibility. A lot of damage can be done when Satan's ministers of righteousness are unable to see us.

Under the new covenant, what actually occurs

is that a person, for whatever reason, has been picked by God the Father to be spiritually modified so that a relationship between Himself and the person is possible. Sin—any sin, even the smallest sin—separates either angel or human from the Father. Therefore, to have a relationship with the Father, a person must be sin free, which no human has been except for Christ Jesus. But as God the *Logos* prior to His human birth, Jesus' physical life was worth more than all of the Creation. Thus, His shed blood is of sufficient worth to cover a person's sins, thereby reconciling the person to God the Father. As the drawn disciple's high priest, the glorified Christ Jesus bears the sins of the disciple as long as the disciple stays in the covenant relationship which has the disciple believing God unto obedience by observing all of the laws and decrees written in Deuteronomy.

A drawn disciple can argue that he or she is under Grace and not under the law of God, but all the expression means is that Grace remains outside the person as a garment and can be withdrawn, as seen in the pattern of the temple. Likewise, a person can argue that Jesus taught a dispensation of law, while Paul taught a dispensation of Grace—and all the person does is reveal his or her ignorance as the person pits Christ against Paul as if somehow God changed between Passover and Pentecost when Scripture says He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. A person can argue that the law and its commandments have been abolished (Eph 2:15), and that is true. But the law that was abolished is the one that separates the circumcised from the uncircumcised. That law is the Sinai covenant. However, the person who uses this argument usually isn't a careful enough reader to properly assign referents to the metonymic expression *the law*, which, as addressed earlier, functions linguistically like a pronoun, in that its context determines its assignment of object to icon (or signified to signifier). A person can argue that all of Deuteronomy is part of the law of Moses, and as such, is no longer binding on a Christian, but what part of the so-called law of Moses did Abraham not keep? Using the referent Paul does in Romans 7:7 for *the law*, did Abraham covet the possessions of the four kings? Or the land which Lot chose? He didn't, did he? Rather, Abraham obeyed God's

voice and kept His ordinances, commandments, statutes and laws (Gen 26:5), and because Abraham obeyed God's voice, he was counted as faithful, which is what James says about the law (Jas 2:18-24). So it isn't God's laws that are no longer binding; rather, it is the covenant made with physical Israel by which that nation would become a holy people (Exod 19:6) that is no longer binding. Today, drawn disciples are a holy people, a royal priesthood, God's own people (1 Peter 2:9), called to proclaim the mighty deeds of Christ Jesus.

There are nearly as many excuses for not keeping the laws of God that have been written on disciples' hearts and minds as there are Nicolaitans. The ancient Israelites who left Egypt, except for Joshua and Caleb, were unable to enter the promised land because of unbelief [*apistia*] (Heb 3:19), which became disobedience [*apeitheia*] (Heb 4:6). The two icons work the other way also: disobedience produces unbelief. When a drawn disciple chooses to disobey the laws of God that have been written on the disciple's heart and mind, the disciple no longer believes God, nor does the disciple know the Lord. The disciple is no longer in the covenant relationship in which the person was placed when drawn by God; thus, the person bears his or her own sins. If baptized, no further sacrifice remains for this person. Unless the person repents and returns to that covenant relationship, when resurrected the person will be thrown into the lake of fire. There are no exceptions for good works, or for being a *soul warrior*, or for anything. The Christian who knows the Lord keeps His commandments, which aren't bound in a book that can be misplaced but are inside the person, written on a circumcised heart and mind. The Christian who refuses to keep God's laws has deceived him or herself, and awaits the lake of fire, despite all of his or her good arguments.

If Jesus kept the laws of God, and if Jesus lives in a drawn disciple, why would this disciple think that he or she doesn't have to keep the laws of God, especially when Jesus specifically states that disciples are not only to keep the least of the commandments, but are to teach others to also keep the least of the commandments (Matt 5:19). The more reasonable application of what Jesus taught would have all of humanity keeping the laws

of God, which includes tithing, clean meats, and appearing before the Lord at three seasons each year (Passover, Pentecost, and the Fall Holy Days). Moses didn't think these things were too hard for physical Israelites who would receive circumcised hearts and minds by believing God unto obedience (Deu 30:11). They certainly cannot be too hard for similarly modified spiritual Israelites who have been drawn by God the Father. And for decades, these were the practices and customs of the Church of God even though the church never fully understood why it was doing these things—and because it never fully understood, the practices of the formerly most visible administration changed when a pipsqueak scholar sought to liberate himself from his repressed childhood.

For the purposes of this article, the new covenant is the writing of the twin laws of loving God with all one's heart and mind, and loving one's neighbor as oneself on a person's heart and mind, these two laws summarizing the Torah and Deuteronomy, which exists as a witness for or against a Christian. The new covenant isn't inviting Jesus to come live in the person's heart. It is observing all of the commandments, laws and decrees found in the Book of Deuteronomy. Grace is Christ's righteous covering the disciple as a garment.

Until the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High God and His Messiah (Rev 11:15 & Dan 7:11-12), only those individuals who have been drawn by the Father and spiritually modified by Him can come to Christ or the Father. Circumcision stands as the symbol of separation. Only under the new covenant, circumcision isn't of foreskins, the point Paul makes, but of hearts and minds. As such, disciples are drawn from the world but must still live in the world. They are not of the world, and they should not love the things of the world. Their desires should not be for the tender things of the world, but should be for the things of God.

The new covenant elevates the obligations of covenantees to match the better promises of the Covenantor. The expressions of the obligations remain the same as do the expressions of the promises, but what is meant by those expressions has changed. Life and prosperity (Deu 30:15)

become eternal life and spiritual prosperity. Death and adversity become the second death (John 5:28-29) and the type of delusion that doesn't allow those who are perishing to repent (2 Thess 2:11-12). And finally, we are ready to talk about the law of God.

Again, the new covenant is, simply, the second covenant of Moses with spiritual instead of physical promises. When the mediator changed, the promises changed, but the contractual terms of the law remained the same, which is why the fault of the first covenant wasn't with the law but with Israel (Heb 8:8-9). While the promised life of the Moab covenant was, in actuality, eternal life if a person had enough faith to actually believe God, for practical purposes that promised life was physical, sustained by military victories, and by rain in due season. But the promised life of the new covenant is only eternal life, which Jesus specifically says is linked to keeping the law of God (Luke 10:25-28 & 18:18-20; plus add Matt 5:17-19 to 1 John 2:3-6). Likewise, the promise of prosperity under the Moab

covenant was the accumulation of "things" and children—money, property, houses, livestock, vineyards, servants, which are the things that televangelists promise today if a person will sow seed (money) in good ground, that good ground always being the televangelist's ministry. As such, these televangelists are keeping alive the promises made under the Law of Moses, either when the law was given or when prophets, speaking for God, tried to coax Israel into returning to the covenant relationship by which physical life was promised. These televangelists are such poor readers that they do not realize they have blended the promises of the old and the new covenant without accepting any of the contractual terms for achieving those promises. They have kept all of the promises, and they have jettisoned all of the laws. They are, frankly, intellectually dishonest with the Word of God, either through their own ignorance, or through spiritual malice by being Satan's ministers of righteousness (2 Corth 11:14-15).

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