

The Sons of Light

Chapter Five

The prophecies of Daniel begin with a dream that troubled Nebuchadnezzar, but a dream he couldn't remember. Most Bible students are familiar with the details of the story. The king demands that both the dream and its interpretation be told to him. His magicians acknowledge that only God can do what the king demands, and the king threatens all of the wise men with death if they are unable to satisfy his demand. Daniel reveals the dream and its interpretation to the king, and Daniel tells the king that the dream is of "what will be in the latter days" (Dan 2:28), that the dream is certain and its interpretation sure. So every understanding of the latter days begins with solving the interpretation given the king, an interpretation that satisfied the king for Daniel identified him as the head of gold.

But Daniel's interpretation contains within itself the same juxtaposition of physical/spiritual that the endtime identity of Israel holds, for the God of heaven doesn't establish a kingdom of this world like the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. The kingdom of heaven reigns over the mental topography of humanity. Christ Jesus will be Lord of lords, and King of kings, but His Millennium reign over the earth is also His Sabbath rest. Human nature will be changed in the manner similar to what Isaiah reveals about the nature of beasts being changed. When the Holy Spirit or Breath of God is poured out upon all flesh,

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, / and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, / and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; / and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; / their young shall lie down together; / and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. / The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, / and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. / They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Isa 11:6-9)

When the root of Jesse reigns over all nations, the thought patterns of humanity will have changed. The topography from which the thoughts of human beings and beasts spring and grow as wheat or weeds will change so that war and killing, lawlessness and disobedience no longer exist. Thus, if a predator will no longer kill to satisfy its need to eat, Ishmaelite mothers will finally love their children more than they hate the sons of Isaac. There will be genuine peace and harmony, for the coexistence of timelessness will be established upon the physical earth. The ripening of the maincrop wheat harvest that will be resurrected in the great White Throne Judgment requires these men and women who lived with Satan's reign over their mental topography to preview what everlasting life will be like by being able to see an example.

The most difficult concept a person can grasp is what a changed mental landscape will be like, and the most explainable example is that of maturing from infancy to adulthood. A thirteen-year-old girl will start physically developing, and will suddenly start to think about boys, often going *boy-crazy*. She will not realize how much of a child she mentally remains. But by the time she is seventeen, she will understand that four years earlier, she was a child in a young woman's body. She will not at seventeen, though, realize how much more mental maturing she will experience before she reaches thirty, or fifty. And the same goes for boys, with a few years difference in the ages when mental platforms of maturity are reached. If a person can now translate the experience of mentally maturing to another dimension, this mental maturing revealed through bodily maturing, the person will begin to grasp what it means to receive the Holy Spirit and spiritual life, which begins a new mental maturing process under Satan's reign. And if the person has experienced this second mental

maturing process, the person can use this experience to project what it will be like to live in a world filled with the knowledge of the God, with Christ Jesus' nature being broadcast as the basic nature for human beings. The projection will be imperfect. But when it is coupled to the great predators lying down with their former prey species—we see all omnivores becoming herbivores—a glimpse of how human nature will manifest itself during the Millennium is revealed. We see in the changed diet of predators the law of coexistence at work. The Millennium will be a literal preview of life in the supernal realm, with love revealed as it is defined and established by God.

When the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ, all of humanity will have received the Holy Spirit. All of humanity will be the single great nation promised to Abraham (Gen 12:2). All of humanity will be the holy nation Israel, recovered from spiritual Assyria. And the glorified David will reign over Israel (Ezek 37:24) now that both spiritual houses are united in Truth. And this kingdom is what “shall stand forever” (Dan 2:44). Jesus told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world. Jesus' kingdom is not of rocks and barbwire fences, stillborn calves and gullied fields. Without understanding the comparison of the laws of God written on the hearts and minds of drawn disciples with the old written code, a person cannot understand the nature of Jesus' reign as Lord of lords and King of kings. A born-from-above disciple is not under the old written code; yet by being ruled by the internalized laws of God, the disciple will keep the Commandments, all of them, especially the Sabbath commandment which is the weekly foreshadowing of the coexistence of the supernal realm reigning here on earth.

The continuing pedagogy of this chapter requires that additional time be spent with the changes that will occur during the Millennium—the foremost outward change will be the absence of civil government. Joshua did not establish a national government over Israel when he led the nation across the Jordan. The nation was ruled by judges until the time of Saul. And since all of humanity will have become Israel three and a half years prior to Christ Jesus' return as the Messiah, Christ Jesus will not establish a top-heavy, top-down government upon His return. Read Ezekiel's account of the Prince, and what his duties and responsibilities are. There is no United Nations type of government in Ezekiel. As Lord of lords, and King of kings, Christ's rules mental landscapes and nations. And because He rules through the Holy Spirit, there will be no need for a government structured after any model presently seen on earth. Democracy isn't of God, nor is the type of autocratic government administered by the Roman Church, or even by the former Radio Church of God. The principle of oneness contained in the law of coexistence will not have problems develop that require governmental intervention. Pollution won't occur when it has to coexist with a clean environment—and the implications of coexistence is a subject all of its own. Can resources be extracted without marring the environment? Of course they can. The problem with resource extraction today is the necessity of making a profit. Resources aren't extracted because they are needed to do a job, but they are extracted because a market exists for them, a subtle but poignant distinction.

Everything written about Christ Jesus' millennial reign has been from a physically-minded perspective. And all that has been previously written will not coexist with Christ Jesus' actual reign. None of it will be preserved. Today's literature will go the way of pre-Flood art and literature. When an age concludes with baptism, all that was of that age also concludes. And all of humanity will be baptized, or immersed in the Holy Spirit when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ. Three baptisms: water, spirit, and fire—these are the three birth-stages of the sons of God, with the second and third baptisms representing the two stages of spiritual birth.

The greater Christian Church today gives some form of lip service to the laws of God, and inevitably labels the person attempting to live by these laws as a *legalist*. The greater Church is often correct: the person attempting to live by the law is a legalist, a disciple who seeks to establish his or

her own righteousness. But all disciples who are in covenant with God and Christ are legalists. Christ Jesus is a legalist. And God the Father is the ultimate legalist. For the signifier /*legalist*/ has no meaning but that which is assigned to it by the language user. A legalist is someone who is legal, as opposed to illegal. The person who pays his or her taxes because it is the right thing to do is a legalist. This person believes in being legal. But the person who pays his or her taxes because he or she fears government prosecution is also a legalist. This person does what is right for fear of the consequences of doing wrong. Although each person acts from differing motives, the public appearance of each person is the same. And this is what Jesus references when He said, “If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me, but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father” (John 10:37–38). Belief leads to belief; obedience leads to obedience. With belief in the works of Jesus comes belief in God the Father. With obedience to the commandments of God comes obedience to God the Father. With belief in God the Father will come understanding of the plan of God. With obedience to God the Father will come understanding of godly love. With understanding of the plan of God will come understanding of the Son of Man. With understanding of godly love will come conviction of why obedience to the commandments is the physically manifested expression of godly love. So the person who pays his or her taxes from fear will eventually pay the same taxes because it is the right thing to do. The disciple who is today a legalist trying to establish his or her own righteousness has the Holy Spirit (unlike the Pharisees) and will eventually understand that righteousness must be sought by faith, with faith causing the disciple to keep the Commandments for they are the physical expression of inner godly character. This disciple to today spiritually immature, but this disciple is also on the path to maturity, whereas the disciple who does not keep the Commandments is in the process of committing spiritual suicide.

Christians will be legalists at some level of spiritual maturity, or their end will be the lake of fire. They have no other options. And if you are a teacher of lawlessness, albeit very moral and righteous appearing, your end will be the same as your master’s, Satan’s. Lawlessness cannot coexist with love in the supernal realm.

Once again, Satan doesn’t appear sinister. He appears as an angel of light. And his servants do not appear evil. They appear as ministers of righteousness. You might well be one of these ministers. Your desire is to serve Christ Jesus. Your desires are honorable. Yet you teach disciples that they do not have to live as spiritual Judeans, but are Gentile Christians.

There is no such beast as a Gentile Christian. They have never existed. The naming phrase is an oxymoron. When a person is drawn from the world and receives spiritual birth, the person is made a spiritual Israelite. The person is born as a spiritual Israelite infant, who will be as the uncircumcised children of the Israelites that left Pharaoh’s Egypt were. This uncircumcised spiritual Israelite will not eat what is *common*, but will eat what is holy so he or she can be holy as God is. For the inner nature of being a spiritual Israelite will rule (or should rule) the outer flesh in which the law of sin and death dwells. Two laws. The laws of sin and death had ruled both the mind and the body (Eph 2:3). And under the laws of sin and death, common food was entirely appropriate, for the person was of the world and in the world. The person was a beast with no distinction between him or herself and the person’s dog. But then God the Father drew this person from the world, gave this person His Breath and spiritual life, wrote His laws on the heart and mind of the person, and gave the person to Christ Jesus who became the spiritual covering for this person. God did not ask the person for permission to draw him or her from the world; He did it because He could, and because He wanted to. And when He did this—all without consulting the person—He started a war inside the person by making this person holy as He is. Now, He waits to see if this person will live as a person made holy, or if this person will, as a dog returning to its vomit, go back to living as a Gentile. The person isn’t a Gentile and can never again be a Gentile. All the person can be is either a

live, or a dead spiritual Israelite. The person has no other choice. And whether the person regrets being drawn and made holy and thinks that God is unfair, or rejoices for the opportunities given the person is immaterial. The drawing has already occurred, and the person has to live with being made special. The person has been taken from being a beast wandering the face of the earth and made into a son of the Most High. If the person truly wants to return to being a beast, God the Father will honor that decision by resurrecting the person to condemnation. The person's fate will be that of the beast that he or she wanted to be. But if the person doesn't want to return to being a beast, then the person needs to begin living as a spiritual Judean.

So you, as a teacher of lawlessness, need to repent of teaching disciples to seek condemnation. You have time, and can use time to effect a change in you. But you do not have unlimited time, especially if you are a firstborn, spiritually or physically...spiritual Israel as the firstborn son of God must, in the Church's entirety, cover itself with the blood of the paschal Lamb of God. Every born again disciple needs to take the Passover as Jesus established the New Testament example. To not cover oneself with the blood of Jesus in a traditional Passover service is making a wager with God on whether He will accept the sacraments taken however and whenever the disciple determines. The odds of winning this needless wager are low.

Hopefully with a good understanding of the physical/spiritual juxtaposition of worldly kingdoms over which human beings reign and the spiritual kingdom here on earth over which Christ Jesus will reign when this kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of the Most High and of His Messiah (Rev 11:15)—this spiritual kingdom reigns over humanity by controlling its mental topography through which it establishes what human nature shall be—disciples will approach the image Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision with wisdom. The king's vision was for “what will be in the latter days” (Dan 2:28). And the vision and its interpretation was sealed until these latter days by Daniel telling Nebuchadnezzar that he was the head of gold (*v.* 38). Thus, the image the king saw has been interpreted as a representation of a series of human empires or kingdoms that stretch horizontally across time until Christ Jesus returns as the Messiah. Christ Jesus' millennial reign has been traditionally perceived to be a final kingdom of this world, which Jesus said was not the case. And this must be understood by the endtime teachers of spiritual Israel: Christ Jesus' millennium-long reign is not another kingdom of this world. It is not established upon any written code. The Ten Commandments will not be the legalistic code of the land. Adherence to the Ten Commandment, though, will be absolute, but will come from citizens of this kingdom being ruled by the inner laws of God written on hearts and minds. Citizens will no longer need an old written code. The dreams of anarchists and Marxists will finally be achieved, for citizens will be ruled by inner good and love coming from Christ Jesus being the prince of the power of the air. Liberation will have come from the laws of sin and death. No harm shall be done with the sole exception of the animal sacrifices that keep alive knowledge of sin and its need for a covering of blood.

The former Radio Church of God began keeping the annual High Sabbaths seventy years ago. Every year during its Feast of Tabernacles services, its ministers presented varying descriptions of what they thought Christ's Millennium reign would be like. As usual, some of these descriptions were more spiritually useful than others. But all of them were centered round a physical understanding of the plan of God. None of them grasped the essence of timelessness, with its law of coexistence (again, *law* used as a descriptive signifier for a self-evident postulate as Paul uses *law* in the law of sin and death). None of them addressed the significance of a changed human nature. In fact, most of them involved some variation of how the best aspects of the reigning kingdom of the world (i.e., spiritual Babylon) could be combined or incorporated into a new regime. None of them perceived Christ's reign to be anything other than a human kingdom of the earth ruled by the glorified Christ rather than by a human king and lord.

Christ Jesus' Millennium reign will be the physical manifestation of the supernal realm, with this manifestation revealed through human beings rather than angels. Christ will be to this manifestation as God the Father is to the angels in the supernal realm. Everything that is done must coexist with everything else as a lion lying down with a lamb coexist. If an activity or a decision will not coexist with what is, the activity or decision will not be attempted or made. Therefore, all understandings of Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's vision that do not realize the stone that becomes a great mountain filling the earth (Dan 2:35) is literally heaven on earth are problematic. A doctrine that has the saints going to heaven for a thousand years, then returning with the New Jerusalem is not of God, and reveals ignorance of the plan of God.

Historically, Daniel's interpretation has been grossly misread. Tradition assigns the image's division to the iron legs, with Rome's eastern Byzantium Empire (beginning in the 4th-Century) being one leg, and the Western Empire capited in Rome being the other leg. This assignment has a single Roman Empire overturning a unified Greek Empire represented by the bronze portion of the image. And these traditional interpretations actually demonstrate just how sealed and secret even the king's dream had been. For the division of the image occurs in its bronze portion—the belly and thighs are bronze (Dan 2:32). And to this bronze portion is given rule of the world (v. 39). The two iron legs form one divided kingdom that never rules its other half until the image itself is broken by the kingdom of the world becoming the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ.

The image that king Nebuchadnezzar saw was of invisible spiritual Babylon, the soon-to-be broken kingdom of the world. This spiritual empire has Satan as its king (Isa 14:4–21), and this kingdom reigns today over humanity through Satan being the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2). It doesn't reign as a national government, with an army of professional soldiers flying fighter jets and firing artillery pieces. Rather, it reigns and will continue to reign over the mental topography of humanity until it is supernaturally broken. Human nature is, today, Satan's nature. This nature often appears *good*, while ever determining for itself what is good and what is evil. It rebels against authority when not in control, then becomes heavy handed in its rule when it receives authority. It is seen in the works and in the teachings of the Nicolaitans. But rule of the earth was given to the image's belly and loins, where the lusts and appetites of humanity reign over individuals. So as the chest and heart of the image are inferior to its head as silver is inferior to gold if numerical value were assigned to the qualitative differences between body parts, the belly and loins are inferior to the heart and lungs as bronze is inferior to silver.

The head can want to rule the body, but the biological functions of the belly and loins will inevitably determine the actions of the sons of disobedience. When God draws a disciple from the world, He overthrows Satan's reign over the head and heart. But He leaves the disciple in bondage to the law of sin and death, which reigns from the belly and loins. Therefore, as disciples wrestle Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's image into subjection, disciples need to remember that the image appears as a man, with Nebuchadnezzar being its head, and with rule of the earth being given to the bronze belly and loins. Again, rule is never given to the iron legs, or to the mixed iron and clay feet and toes. And since the gold, silver, bronze, iron, and clay are together when the feet are crushed, there is no reasonable justification for believing that the bronze belly and loins ever surrender rule of the kingdom of the earth. The better understanding is that the iron legs and mingled iron and clay feet rule as derivatives of the bronze belly and loins, exercising authority derived from physical appetites. And even this understanding doesn't anticipate Israel's liberation from the law of sin and death—from the bronze belly and loins. The real reason the iron legs do not rule the world is because the world is no longer available to be ruled. At the second Passover, half of the world is liberated from bondage in spiritual Babylon. So until Israel's rebellion, the most that remains available to be ruled by Babylon is two of four parts.

Whereas rebelling angels have been imprisoned in darkness to await judgment, Satan and a few of his cohorts have been allowed at least limited freedom. This restricted freedom is seen in the initial chapters of Job. It is additionally seen in the prince of Persia who, for 21 days, withstood the angel bringing Daniel knowledge of a great conflict. It is further referenced in the prince of Greece being even more powerful than the prince of Persia.

The image Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision stood upright like a man—and as a standing man's shadow lies horizontally across the topography of a vegetable garden, the shadow of Nebuchadnezzar's image lies horizontally across the fabric of time. This shadow stretches from Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon to Antiochus Epiphanes's setting a statue of Zeus in the Holy of holies. This shadow doesn't include any of the Roman occupation of Judea, and doesn't continue forward through the Holy Roman Empire's reign over Europe through the Middle Ages. It doesn't stretch, as if it wore elastic hose, through the Protestant Reformation, or into the 21st-Century. Jesus, in His Olivet discourse, identifies the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel (Matt 24:15) as an end of the age phenomenon. This endtime abomination of desolation isn't a statue of Zeus, but the lawless one, coming by the activity of Satan, declaring himself god (2 Thess 2:4). Christ Jesus breaks the reign of this lawless one, the spiritual king of the North, differently than the Maccabees broke the Seleucid Empire's reign in Judea. Christ breaks this lawless one with the Breath of His mouth (v. 8). His breath imparts life. So the shadow, or visible physical reality of the standing image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision ends with the conclusion of Daniel's long prophecy about the conflict between the kings of the North and of the South. The shadow doesn't continue beyond Antiochus Epiphanes's reign, but the spiritual reality is present with all of its pieces intact until the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ. Therefore, Rome and the Roman Empire have no place in the prophecies of Daniel. They are not named, and to insert them into the prophecies is adding to Scripture.

So many prophecy pundits have used an uninspired history textbook to insert Rome, the Roman Empire, and the Holy Roman Empire into the visions of Daniel that listing these spiritual culprits would produce a *Who's Who* of charismatic evangelists. All who have done so will be held accountable. They will have to explain their presumptiveness, and they will have no good explanation for why they, on their own authority, added to Scripture. They were not sent by God to unseal Daniel's visions.

Again, the spiritual reality of the shadow stretched across time is spiritual Babylon, with its hierarchy disclosed by its shadow. At the time of the end (Dan 8:17), a war will occur within this vertically structured empire. This is the great conflict revealed to Daniel (10:1), and because of the law of coexistence mandated by the timelessness of the supernal realm, spiritual Babylon's place will no longer be found in heaven. This civil war will require that Satan and his angels be cast into time where the other fallen angels have been imprisoned while awaiting judgment. Satan had been free to come and go as revealed in the temptation account of Jesus. However, Jesus said, concerning His death as the paschal Lamb for the household of the Father, "Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). The seven years of Tribulation will bring judgment upon the world, for half way through these seven years, all of the world will become the holy nation of Israel. All of humanity will become the household of the Father and of His Son, and judgment today is on the household of God (1 Pet 4:17).

The above needs more closely examined: Jesus linked coming to die as the paschal Lamb of God with the judgment of the world and with Satan being cast out. But Satan wasn't cast from heaven when Jesus was sacrificed, nor did judgment then come upon the entirety of the world. Satan will be cast from heaven when the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Most High and of His Christ (Rev 11:15; 12:9–13). He can then no longer reign over the sons of disobedience as the prince of the power of the air. And what is seen in Jesus' juxtaposition of His 1st-Century death at

Calvary with Satan being cast out of heaven halfway through the Tribulation is the liberation of humanity from bondage to sin.

Jesus' juxtaposition of Him coming to die as the paschal Lamb of God and with Satan being cast out from heaven, with judgment coming upon the world—Jesus told Nicodemus that He had not come to condemn the world (John 3:17)—pushes Calvary up against the end of the age, as if God were rearranging furniture. And in this juxtaposition lurks the second Passover, conveniently hidden from sight and from all who will not hear His voice in His disciples' utterances.

Judgment is, today, only upon individuals who have received a second birth through receipt of the Holy Spirit. Everyone experiences death, then judgment (Heb 9:27)—and the household of God experienced death in the baptismal pool, with resurrection to physical life as a spiritual Israelite occurring when they are lifted from their watery graves. And for all who are not of the household of God, judgment will occur in the great White Throne Judgment. So between Jesus saying that He had come to die (John 12:27), and Jesus saying now is the judgment of the world (v. 31), the Father says, "I have glorified [my name], and I will glorify it again" (v. 28). This repetition of phrasing covers the time that lapses from when the paschal Lamb is sacrificed to when Israel is liberated from bondage to sin by Satan being cast from heaven. The Father glorified His name when He called His Son to life. Jesus was the first of the firstfruits; spiritual Israel represents the firstfruits of the harvest of the earth. And the Father will call spiritual Israel out of spiritual Egypt or Babylon when He again glorifies His name.

Said another way, the king of spiritual Babylon is Satan, who continues to reign until cast from heaven. He doesn't fade away to be replaced by the spiritual princes of Persia or Greece. Rather, the image Nebuchadnezzar saw stands erect, with the king of Babylon as its spiritual head. Daniel said Nebuchadnezzar was that king, but he also said that God had given, wherever they dwelt, the children of men, beasts and birds into the king's hand for him to rule over them (Dan 2:38). And this clearly didn't happen, for Nebuchadnezzar ruled no one in Chile or China. Nor did he rule over the birds that migrated where their instincts directed them. Nor did he rule over the wild beasts, or even over the mice that ate from his table after he went to sleep. However, Satan has reigned over the sons of disobedience worldwide. He reigns by placing his nature in men and beasts—and his nature does not allow a lion to lie down with a lamb. So Satan does reign over beasts and birds and men wherever they dwell. He is the king of Babylon who will remain its spiritual head until the image is toppled. He is the gold that will be present at the end, not Nebuchadnezzar—"Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors" (v. 35). Neither Darius the Mede, nor any part of his reign is present when the image is struck by a stone cut without human hands (v. 34). Alexander the Great isn't present when the image is struck. So the silver at the end of the age isn't the Media Persian Empire; the gold isn't Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon; the bronze isn't Alexander's Greece. But Satan and his angels will fight against Michael and his angels (Rev 12:7). Satan is defeated, and he and his angels—the silver princes of Persia (Dan 10:13) and the bronze prince of Greece (v. 20) and the iron horns (Dan 8:8 & 11:4)—are cast to earth.

Jesus compressed the two millennia between when He would be sacrificed as the paschal Lamb for the household of the Father and when this household would be released from bondage into the hours between the even of the 14th of the first month when paschal lamb was killed and midnight of the 15th when the death angel passed throughout the land, slaying firstborns not covered by the blood of a paschal lamb. Since Jesus was slain from the foundation of the universe (i.e., the plan for humanity's redemption existed from the beginning), the six hours between even and midnight represent the six days of the spiritual creation week, with each day of this week representing a thousand years. So the six hours represent six thousand years, with a whole roasted lamb not being

ready to eat until nearly midnight. The paschal lamb was eaten at the typological hour when Adam was placed in Eden, the hour at which humanity has presently arrived in its recorded history.

The spiritual reality of all things is Christ Jesus. It is His blood that has been poured out for many for the forgiveness of sin (Matt 26:28)—and Jesus drank from the cup a day earlier than circumcised Israel would eat a physical paschal lamb. Yet Jesus identifies this last meal He would eat with His disciples as the Passover. Earlier in the afternoon, Jesus told disciples, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, ‘My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples’”” (v. 18). The Apostle John’s Gospel gives the chronology for the week: Jesus was crucified on the “day of Preparation” (John 19:31) for the High Sabbath of Passover (John 18:39). He was dead and in the tomb before sundown of this “Jewish day of Preparation” (John 19:43). And it was twenty hours or so earlier during the night portion of this preparation day that Jesus washes His disciples’ feet.

Jesus breaks the bread and drinks from the cup with His disciples a day earlier than the remainder of Israel eats a physical paschal lamb. When He eats the Passover, His twelve disciples have not received spiritual life—the last Adam is not yet a life-giving spirit (1 Cor 15:45). They won’t be born-from-above until the glorified Jesus breathes on them and says, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). And when Jesus passes the cup, He says, “I tell you I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matt 26:29). Jesus will be that nobleman who goes into a far country to receive a kingdom and then returns (Luke 19:12). This nobleman gives a coin to ten servants; Jesus breathes on ten disciples to give spiritual life to the second Eve.

When it became time to eat the Passover the second year the Congregation was in the Wilderness, certain men were unclean from touching a dead body. They asked Moses about keeping the Passover, who in turn asked the Lord. And a second Passover was established one month after the first for those Israelites who were unclean or on a long journey (Num 9:10–12). The language seems innocent enough. The reason for establishing a second Passover was logical. **But Jesus as the firstborn Son of God and as the first of many brethren (Rom 8:29) is an Israelite on a long journey. He will keep the Second Passover.**

Jesus will not, on the second Passover, drink from the cup for the forgiveness of sins. The covering of Israel for sin will not then need to be renewed, for the Passover of the night He was taken hasn’t yet been completed—and won’t be completed until the death angels pass over spiritual Babylon.

The paschal lamb sacrificed for each household by circumcised Israel was done in remembrance of that nation’s release from physical bondage. The bread and the cup of the New Testament Passover are taken in remembrance of Christ Jesus (1 Cor 11:24–25). He died as the paschal Lamb of God for the household of Israel, but the liberation from bondage to sin hasn’t yet occurred. Jeremiah prophesies that the Lord bringing Israel out from bondage in the north country will cause Israel’s liberation from bondage in Egypt to no longer be remembered (Jer 16:14–15). The paschal lamb sacrificed during the Millennium won’t commemorate liberation from physical bondage, but liberation from sin and death—liberation from sin, then liberation from death. Two liberations. Death will be dealt a deadly wound when the two witnesses are publicly resurrected to life (Rev 11:7–12). By the testimony of two witnesses a thing is established—the resurrection of the two witnesses testify to Death’s defeat. But before Death is defeated, Israel will be liberated from bondage to sin.

Disciples drawn from the world were spiritually unclean. They were unclean until the Father drew them. That drawing makes them clean, or holy, or sanctified—each word conveys aspects of being set apart for God’s use. They are to keep the Passover at its time. *YHWH* told Moses to tell Israel, “But if anyone who is clean and is not on a journey fails to keep the Passover, that person

shall be cut off from his people because he did not bring the Lord's offering at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin'" (Num 9:13). The Passover sacrifice is a covering for sin. It has an appointed time. And physically uncircumcised Israelites who have been made holy through receipt of the Holy Spirit will bear their sins if they do not keep it at its appointed time. Jesus as the Logos or Spokesperson for God had the authority to move the appointed time from the end of the day to the beginning. He spoke the words of the Father; He and the Father were one. And disciples who keep the Passover at its appointed time are one with Jesus and with the Father.

Again, spiritual Israelites do not keep the second Passover on the 15th of the second month unless there are extenuating circumstances. Rather, they will keep the Passover as Jesus established the example. For when Jesus ate this Passover early, He moved the observance of the New Testament Passover from the even between the 14th and the 15th of the first month, to just after the even between the 13th and 14th. No additional killing is required, for the Lamb of God was slain on the 14th. Thus, the intervening day between the taking of the Christian sacraments at the beginning of the 14th and when circumcised Israel ate the lamb in remembrance of its release from bondage on the 15th represents a first and a second Passover. Spiritual Israel remains in bondage to sin (Paul's *imprisoned by the law of sin and death*). The spiritual birth process has two stages. Spiritual Israel has been mentally released, but the new man created in Christ remains in bondage to the appetites of the flesh. The flesh of this new man will not be released from bondage to sin until a second slaughter of firstborns not covered by the blood of Jesus occurs.

Is the logic understandable? Spiritual birth has two stages. A son of disobedience who is perfectly satisfied stockcar racing every Saturday during the summer, then spending October and November Saturdays hunting deer, then turkey hunting and bass fishing in the spring—a *good ol' boy*—is suddenly drawn from the world by God the Father, given the Holy Spirit, and sent reeling into church services. Sure, he has attended before, but never with much enthusiasm. More to satisfy first his mother, then his wife. But now he's interested. Enough to get baptized. Even thinks he might want to go to seminary.

He always has sort of lived by the laws of God. He remembers when he was thirteen and shoplifted a carton of .22 shells. He felt bad about that for a month, even though he needed them to go coon hunting that night. Otherwise, he never has stolen anything. He's always paid for everything. He hasn't even bounced a check since he dumped his first old lady—she was bad about spending what they didn't have. So what exactly does he need to repent of? Cutting brodies in the school lawn the night he graduated? He married his first wife when she came up pregnant; he did the right thing by her.

Well, he's determined to do better than he ever has before—and to witness for Lord Jesus. He won't have a testimony like some of those ex-addicts on television, but he'll have enough to say that maybe, just maybe, he can bring some of the younger generation to the Lord.

And never once does it occur to our *good ol' boy* that he must actually read the words of Jesus for himself, and then believe the One who sent Him by putting those words into practice. It never occurs to our *good ol' boy* that he is now under obligation to take the Passover as Jesus established the example. It will not occur to our *good ol' boy's* widow that he died the night of the second Passover because he didn't bother to cover his sins with the blood of the paschal Lamb of God. Actually living by the laws of God just didn't seem necessary or that important to our *good ol' boy*, who will now appear in the resurrection to condemnation—and he really was a good guy.

The two stages of the spiritual birth process are, first, receiving spiritual birth through receipt of the Breath of God, then, second, receiving a glorified body when the disciple's judgment is revealed. First, the mind is liberated from bondage to sin and death through receipt of the Holy Spirit. Then the physical body is liberated from sin and death just as physical Israel was liberated from physical bondage. The liberation of the mind begins a war inside the disciple. The second liberation pits the

disciple against the world—and as long as the disciple follows the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, the disciple will arrive in the promised land of glorification.

Two stages to the spiritual birth process; two Passover liberations from bondage to sin and death. One of the mind and heart, one of the belly and loins.

The Preparation day that occurs during which Jesus takes the Passover with His disciples and is crucified and buried represents a disciple's life between being drawn from the world and dying in faith. Truly, all human beings will figuratively hang as lawbreakers on the two additional crosses on Calvary. Release from bondage to sin has, for the past two millennia, come with death. The question of why saints die if their sins are not counted against them is answered in understanding what happened when a disciple is born again. The disciple's heart and mind have the laws of God written on them, but rule of the body was given to the belly and loins when Adam was driven from Eden. Thus, for all of the disciple's spiritual life, he or she lived in bondage to sin and death. The mind and the heart fought valiantly (hopefully) against the appetites of the flesh. The *Prosperity Gospel* is a doubly accursed gospel, for it would have a spiritual Israelite serve these appetites and lusts of the flesh—and no one can serve two masters. A person cannot desire the prosperity of the world and walk with God. The Apostle John writes, "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from God but is from the world" (1 John 2:15–16). Therefore, a spiritual Israel needs liberation from bondage to the law of sin and death that dwells in the flesh. Death, now, becomes that liberation, for the disciple's name has been recorded in the book of life. The disciple has life, and will be resurrected in a glorious body when his or her judgment is revealed. The dead know nothing (Eccl 9:5). They experience no sensation of time passing. They have, with absence of physical breath, unconsciously entered a timeless realm. Thus, from the disciple's perspective, death brings instantaneous liberation from bondage to sin, regardless of how much time passes without calling attention to itself.

But for disciples that remain alive when the Tribulation begins, release from bondage to sin comes with the second Passover. The slaughter of firstborns that occurred in Egypt will be repeated when God begins to recover Israel a second time. The Passover initiated at Calvary will be competed at the conclusion of the sixth hour—about now, or in the next few years. And the changed hour for when the New Testament Passover is eaten reveals the duality of God's recovery of Israel.

What can be seen in Nebuchadnezzar's image is the similarity between spiritual Babylon and a son of disobedience, over whose head and heart Satan reigns. This similarity is the basis for understanding endtime fallen Babylon and Christ Jesus' millennial reign. As the prince of the power of the air, Satan has bestowed upon humanity his nature. As a born again son of light, a disciple has the mind of Christ, but remains in subjection to the law of sin and death that dwells in his or her flesh. And by continually drawing disciples from the world, God the Father initiated and now fuels a rebellion within Satan's Babylon. Satan has been judged, and his judgment is revealed (Ezek 28:11–19). Just as Satan started a rebellion against the Father, the Father uses Satan's broadcast of rebellion against him. By writing His laws on the hearts and minds of drawn disciples, the Father inserted cancer cells, little fellowships of saints practicing righteousness, into the bloodstream of Babylon. These cells are colonies of clay vessels created for special use. And the gates of Hades can never prevail against the Father continuing to draw called out ones from the world. Satan cannot stop the Father's use of righteousness to undermine the strength of the feet of spiritual Babylon.

The feet of the image Nebuchadnezzar sees in vision are mingled iron and clay. Human beings are made from clay; the sons of God are made from clay. And the sons of darkness cling to spiritual Babylon as miry clay clings to iron—and herein lies a mystery of God. As disguised ministers of righteousness, the servants of Satan have helped him maintain his reign over humanity. But, beginning with the second Passover, God turns His hand against two thirds of humanity. This

turning occurs over the next three and a half years when the little ones are refined as silver is refined, and tested as gold is tested (Zech 13:7–8). Silver is refined with heat—the hearts of the little ones are tested with fire. And when fired, clay vitrifies. It now will cut iron. Ceramic whetstones sharpen steel faster than any natural stone. But it is also brittle. And gold is tested against a touchstone; it is tested by applying pressure. So the minds of the little ones will be put under great pressure.

Fired clay under pressure will withstand tremendous compression, but even a light blow will shatter it. Spiritual Babylon will be doubled over from the second Passover slaughter of firstborns. It will wobble like a man hit below the belt, for God will suddenly break the erect great horn or first horn of the king of Greece. Figuratively, Babylon will have to put its head between its knees to keep from passing out, this action seen when Satan comes as the little horn. He will possess an Arian Christian as he comes as the man of perdition. And as the head of Babylon, he will be with the feet of iron and clay to keep the empire from being knocked out with one punch.

But God isn't done with Babylon. He keeps the empire reeling by giving over a fourth of humanity to Death to be killed every way possible. He then delivers a second blow, nearly as hard as the first—the clay of Babylon's feet will shatter when God releases the four angels bound at the river Euphrates. The clay will not withstand the blow dealt by the sixth trumpet plague. The clay of the feet shatters, and Babylon starts to fall as a boxer hit one too many times. In an attempt to keep the inevitable from happening, the man of perdition will declare himself god 1290 days before Christ returns as the Messiah, and 30 days before the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of the Father and of the Son. Those thirty days will form the most difficult month in all human history. Those thirty days represent the three days and three night Jesus was in the grave. The war the sons of light have been fighting seems lost. Finally, even the two witnesses lie dead for all the world to see...and then Death is defeated when the two witness are resurrected. There are still three and half years remaining before Christ Jesus returns, but all of the world is now Israel. And Death has no power over them. If they endure to the end, they shall be saved. To now die, a person has to be given over to Death by God, or the person has to willingly take the mark of the beast. There will be no accidental deaths, or incidental deaths, or natural deaths. Death will come either through martyrdom, or by taking the tattoo of the Cross.

Coupling the humanness of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw to God writing His laws on the hearts and minds of drawn disciples, then adding to this welded image God turning His hand against the little ones, refining them as silver is refined and testing them as gold is tested, the focus of the image becomes the belly and loins. The use of coin metals, with the metals presented in the scale of their economic worth—without additional Scripture—strongly suggests that spiritual Babylon rules the world's economic system. A link has now been established between world economics and the appetites of the flesh. We should not be surprised to find that sex sells automobiles in this world.

But the suggestion of Daniel's interpretation is that the king below Satan is inferior in authority to him as silver is inferior in economic value to gold. Likewise, the kingdom below the silver is inferior as bronze is economically inferior to silver. Again, however, rule of the world was given to the bronze kingdom.

Visual learners can comprehend the hierarchical structure of spiritual Babylon by observing their own shadows stretching across a lawn. Lateral distance now becomes the passage of time. The shadows of their heads emerge dark in the surrounding light shining on the lawn; their heads are farthest away. But closer and connected to the head are the chest and arms, belly and thighs, legs and feet. If the sun is nearly overhead, even toes will cast short shadows. And it is the toes and feet of the image that are crushed. If a person were toppled by having his or her feet crushed, all of the person will fall in a pile. The head, arms, belly, and legs will form one heap, thereby accounting for the gold, silver, bronze, iron and clay to be jointly present when Babylon falls.

Because spiritually Nebuchadnezzar's image is not a series of kingdoms but one kingdom with its hierarchy disclosed, the descending economic valuation of coinage made from the four metals (especially when coupled with the description of Babylon in Revelation) identifies Babylon as the theocracy ruling through control of the world's economy. Satan's kingdom is not a giant tied down by many Lilliputians, with its feet dangling free to be crushed. Rather, it rules the world through a Greek structure of free-market economics, coupled to political democracy. And the United States with her Puritan restraints impaled on the pike of political correctness provides the spiritual king of Greece with the muscle, economically and militarily, to rule from the invisible supernal realm. What hasn't been as discernable is the animosity between the princes of Persia and the confederation identified as the king of Greece. Satan introduced rebellion into the supernal realm, and God introduced rebellion against spiritual Babylon into the visible, physical realm—that is what living within the laws of God means, rebellion against the world. Satan's authority over the world originates with his introduction of death following the temptation of Eve, the mother of human life. And Christ Jesus overcame Death and Hades. The crushing of spiritual Babylon's feet will include the mortal wound delivered to Death through the public resurrection of the two witnesses. Satan will no longer have inherited authority over humanity. No human beings will any longer be in bondage to sin and death.

The ten horns on the head of the fourth beast of Daniel chapter seven are ten kings that teach humanity to commit spiritual suicide by ignoring the laws of God, or by erasing the laws of God written on hearts and minds of spiritual Israelites. These ten horns are not ten resurrections of the Roman Empire as was taught by the former Radio Church of God. They are not ten European nations in a federation led by Germany. They are, rather, empowered agents of death, three of whom are overturned by the little horn who attempts to change times and the law. Thus, the juxtaposition of the changes that the little horn attempts to make and the overturning of the three horns suggests that these three horns are Sabbath-keeping organizations. The implications of the suggestion should cause all Sabbath keepers to reexamine their relationship with Christ Jesus—and if they don't have one, to begin one centered round living within the laws of God. It will do a rabbinical Israelite no good to accept Christ, then to jettison the laws of God, especially the Sabbath.

Spiritual Babylon will reel from the blow delivered by the death angels on the second Passover. The empire will, literally, be doubled over, its head between its legs to keep from passing out—its head, Satan, comes to earth through possessing a human being, the man of perdition. The Passover blow will break the first or great horn of the king of Greece. The saints will be liberated from bondage to sin, from bondage to their flesh, from bondage to the world's economic system (a liberation they won't necessarily appreciate). Figuratively and literally, the Passover blow God delivers is a punch to the belly and loins of the image Nebuchadnezzar saw.

An aspect of spiritual Babylon that isn't well appreciated is the connection between fallout in the physical realm from what happens in the supernal realm, and with the spiritual events themselves. This fallout is not the shadow cast by these spiritual events, but the immediate physical effect the events have when filtered through the mental topography of humanity. This immediate endtime effect will usually be similar to the shadow, but occurs as a response to the event.

Within the Church of God, it has been taught that prophecies have earlier and later fulfillment. This can seem to be true. When an event in the supernal realm occurs, it casts a non-time-linked shadow that reveals the event—the earlier fulfillment. Then because Satan reigns over the mental topography of the sons of disobedience, events that involve him are transmitted to the sons of disobedience as they occur. In a somewhat unstructured way, this transmission of what is occurring as an ongoing action in the supernal realm can seem to be a latter fulfillment. The problem is the prophecy was given to reveal the event in the supernal realm. So the idea of a latter fulfillment is technically wrong. And it is wrong because of the unstructured manner that events in the supernal

realm effect human landscapes. Elements of the prophecy will seem to repeat while other elements do not.

Roman Jakobson writes about allusions expanding a text in an unstructured manner, causing meaning in a text to spill over as an over-filled wineglass might spill its red contents onto a white linen tablecloth. These seeming latter fulfillments of prophecies behave in the same manner. They are not reliably predictable, for they are not what the prophecies are about. A paved road won't be bulldozed from Germany to the modern nation of Israel to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy (Isa 11:16). There wasn't one constructed for Israel from Egypt to Jericho. If there had been, its engineer needed fired, for it doesn't take forty years to walk that distance. Rather, what was constructed was a pathway to righteousness. The journey out of Assyria will be from spiritual darkness to everlasting life. This is a mental or spiritual journey; it isn't a trek over a geographical terrain.

Imagine a person becoming angry with the person's dog. Extremely angry. This anger isn't seen through the shadow cast by the person as long as the anger remains inside the person. However, the dog senses the anger and will usually cringe without a blow being struck. The shadow will reveal the dog cringing for no apparent reason. But dogs don't cringe without cause. So the person observing this shadow who possesses wisdom will realize what is happening with some level of accuracy. Everyone else will wonder what is wrong with the dog. For the dog and its master have a level of communication that conveys unspoken and unacted upon information. This communication is real, just not discernable in the shadow. And if the observer only had the shadow of the dog upon which to judge the situation, the observer would say something stupid about the shivering dog, or the urinating pouch.

Two-dimensional shadows formed within the physical creation are time-linked to the three-dimensional realities that cast them. So the person angry with his or her dog and who strikes the dog is betrayed by his or her shadow when the blow is delivered. But place oneself in the position of a farmpond bluegill, with the person angry with his or her dog standing on the pond's bank. The sun is behind the person, and the shadow of the person and of the dog lie across the surface of the pond. As a bluegill, you are aware of this shadow. But when the person stomps his or her foot, the bank vibrates—and you as a bluegill feel the vibrations, but these vibrations don't exactly match what is occurring in the shadow. They somewhat match action for action. But not enough information is conveyed through these vibrations to realize that the dog had jumped up on the person with muddy paws and had soiled, with red Georgia clay mud, the person's white silk suit. Only through a narrative is this additional information conveyed. And now, our bluegill will understand why the dog cringes in a shivering manner.

Prophecy is the revealing narrative of events that occur in the timeless supernal realm. The shadows of these events allow context and understanding to be supplied to the revealing narratives. The latter effect of the supernal event will also be felt, sometimes powerfully. But this latter effect doesn't convey enough information without the shadow and the revealing narrative to be understood. Therefore, teachers of Israel who expound an earlier and a later fulfillment of Bible prophecies really lack understanding of prophecy. They are spiritual bluegills, suffocating for lack of spiritual breath.

Applied to the image Nebuchadnezzar saw, the shadow of dog jumping up with muddy feet is a pushing by the spiritual princes of Persia against the king of Greece that looks like the historic campaign of Xerxes trying to conquer Greece. The vibrations of the dog jumping up—of the spiritual princes of Persia pushing against the spiritual king of Greece—assume the form of an oil embargo, or more recently a terrorist attack. The shadow of the spiritual king of Greece's response is Alexander's conquest of Persia. The vibrations felt are of the United States' intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq, with old Europe (including the United Nations) opposing this intervention, old Europe being part of the spiritual king of Persia's reigning power base.

The United States' quick overturn of the governments of Afghanistan and Iraq—and probably of Syria and Iran in the near future—is the fallout of the spiritual king of Greece flying out of the west to trample the ram that is the prince of the kingdom of Persia. Alexander's conquest of Persia is the shadow. And what is seen is that the United States, possessing traditional Greek values, becomes a second Alexander, but with a difference. The war is now worldwide, and is fought as a clash of values and mental landscapes.

Again, because the endtime fallout of spiritual events appears somewhat similar to the earlier prophesied fulfillment that formed the visible shadow of these events, the many physically-minded teachers of spiritual Israel teach a doctrine of earlier and later fulfillment of prophesied events. What they teach contains a facet of truth, but is a very inadequate explication of prophecy. If a weather forecaster in Newport, Oregon, forecasted rain, the forecaster would be correct most of the time. Likewise, if an endtime prophecy pundit prophesies in the name of God, saying that the United States will experience great sorrow because of the spiritual lawlessness within the nation, this pundit will be correct. That will indeed be the case, just as rain along the Oregon Coast is sure to occur. The problem of the pundit not really being sent by God, though, becomes apparent when this pundit is pressed for details. Vague generalities will spew from the pundit's mouth as rain does from November storm clouds along Oregon's coast. The pundit's generalities verify that he or she hasn't been sent by God, but explicates prophecy on his or her own authority. And if the pundit successfully gets spiritual Israelites to return to living within the laws of God, the pundit will have stored up treasure in heaven. Unfortunately, the pundit will mislead many disciples, and endtime pundits will set disciples up to worship Satan when he is cast from heaven. They are doing, and have already done this. And most Sabbath-keeping Christians have been set up to worship Satan when he is cast from heaven.

Teachers who insist that the United States and Britain will go into national captivity are false, but almost correct. For when the death angels pass through these two nations that refuse to take the New Testament Passover as Jesus established the example, a great slaughter will occur, one that will leave these nations staggered. Many Americans, Canadians, Britons will needlessly die. But the great nation of China will virtually cease to be because of its one-child policy coupled with its suppression of commandment-keeping Christianity. Western Europe will be devastated. However, the cultures and nations that have traditionally had larger families, though heavily impacted, will survive this body blow from God far better than industrialized nations. And they will likely mistake the meaning of them enduring this blow. Islamic nations will attribute this destruction of the United States and Western Europe to Allah. They will attack Western Europe. The physically-minded pundits will exclaim, *See, I was right!* The man of perdition will, however, rally northern and western forces round the Cross. This will be Satan in the spiritual realm trying to squelch the war occurring between his princes, but the fallout of his efforts will have the man of perdition spreading the Christianity of the Cross to the remaining half of humanity. This will include the conversion of Islam to Arian Christianity.

The test of anyone who explicates prophecy is in the details. Coastal rain is sure to fall. But the second Passover liberation of Israel from spiritual bondage to sin isn't a common dinner topic, not even within spiritual Israel. The vast majority of Christians do not believe that this holy nation is in any kind of bondage despite statistical evidence showing otherwise. The Christian Church doesn't significantly differ from the world in frequency of divorce, or drug addiction, or disappearing fathers. God has drawn disciples from the world (John 6:44), but these disciples dragged the world into the Church, thereby causing Israelites to crossdress as spiritual Gentiles. For too much of the world, Christianity is merely the faltering belief system of Western Europe. However, by continually erasing the laws of God from the hearts and minds of disciples, the greater Church continues its

march towards having half of the world self-identify itself as Christian. The second Passover can occur any year after that happens.

Again, the test of those who explicate prophecy is in the details. Between the second Passover and the middle of the Tribulation—a three and a half years period—two-thirds of humanity will die, but all of the remaining third will profess being Christians (Zech 13:8–9). They will be the holy nation of God. But the second half of the Tribulation is foreshadowed by the first half. The great falling away of the Church occurs with the coming of the man of perdition (2 Thess 2:3). About seven months after the second Passover liberation of Israel—about Christmas time—the majority of the Christian Church will return to the Cross. They will quit or refuse to live as spiritual Judeans, and they will return to living as spiritual Gentiles. They will return to Sunday observance, and to taking the sacraments whenever and however they choose. The Christianity of the Cross will return after appearing all but dead immediately after the second Passover.

In a similar manner, the sixth trumpet plague followed by the fall of Babylon two and a half months later produce the same liberation as occurred at and following the second Passover. For a few months, all of remaining humanity will live as spiritual Judeans. Satan will have been cast from heaven when Babylon fell. He will no longer be able to come and go as portrayed in the initial chapters of Job. He and his angels were not bound in outer darkness when the other rebelling angels were, for they were needed as foils in the spiritual maturation of the sons of God. But when cast into time, he will know that his days are limited. He will seek to devour as many Christians as he can—and when, as the antiChrist, he becomes organized enough to require all who would buy and sell to take the mark of the beast, the vast majority of Israel will accept this mark. Their desire will be to worship Christ, and they will hate those who refuse the mark.

Israel accepts the mark of the beast for the same economic reasons that Israel rebelled against God and followed the man of perdition back to the Cross. God couldn't possibly require them to truly live by faith. If they cannot work, how will they eat—and doesn't Paul say that anyone not willing to work, let him not eat (2 Thess 3:10). So a person has to work, even if that (in the first half of the Tribulation) means working on the Sabbath, or taking the mark of the beast (in the second half). And this will be preached from pulpits around the world. *Support the returned messiah, take the mark, turn in those who refuse*—once cast from heaven, Satan will come as a man posing as the returned Christ Jesus. He will be as Nebuchadnezzar was when the human king lived as a beast. His seven years will be split, three and a half before Christ's return, and the remaining three and a half years after a thousand years.

Because the test of those who explicate prophecy remains in the details, the mark of the beast needs read—and everyone warned against accepting it. So before further decoding Nebuchadnezzar's image and identifying the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, the infamous mark should be better understood, for the mark is mistranslated.

A prominent local man asked that I speak to his wife about the mark of the beast. While reading the *Left Behind* series of novels, she has become frightened by remaining humanity's inability (in the novels) to refuse this mysterious mark. And if she has been frightened, so have others been. Thus, the mark of the beast needs demystified. Spiritual wisdom is required, and that remains the domain of the remnant of Israel that has left spiritual Babylon to rebuild the temple in spiritual Jerusalem.

First, the mark is not 666, or any variation of the number such as 616. The mark is not an Arabic numeral. In koine Greek, the number of the man is *chi xi stigma*, which in Strong's is #5516. These are the 22nd, 14th, and an obsolete (in the time of the Apostle John) letters of the alphabet, and while Greek letters were used as numerals, these letters are not. For in Greek, *six* is *hex*—Greek is an Indo-European language. A characteristic of Indo-European languages is words representing *six* carry the /x/ sound, such as *hex*. So the middle letter can represent a single *six*, but *stigma* cannot represent a *six*. Rather, *stigma* means “to tattoo.” *Stigma* comes from the root /stei/, which is usually

assigned the signified [or meaning] of sharpened sticks, as in two sharpened sticks. An action taken — /ma/ — with sharpened sticks is traditionally tattooing, or making a mark on a body. So the best assignment of a signified to the signifier *stigma* remains its traditional meaning of tattoo, or tattooing, not an /x/.

Chi is written as an /X/, but it doesn't carry that sound image. It is the signifier that is most commonly used as a short form of *Christ*, such as in *Xmas*. That is how it is used to produce the name of a man in the mark of the beast. And the 14th letter of the Greek alphabet is not represented by a Roman character, but requires two letters to represent its sound /xi/. In Greek, this lowercase character appears as an uppercase script /e/ with a tail on its bottom.

Indo-European languages use characters to represent sound, not visual images. Letters placed close together to produce numbers still remain the principle element of each sound image. Thus, wisdom, both physical and spiritual, preclude using the first and last letters [*chi* & *stigma*] as visual representations of the /x/ sound necessary to convey a six in an Indo-European language, while ignoring the visual image of the middle letter [xi] but excepting a distorted sound image. And for a modern writing team such as the authors of the *Left Behind* series to use such a poor translation in works of fiction in a brazen attempt to scare readers into accepting the writing team's theology has precedence, but not ethicality.

The three letters [*chi xi stigma*] when presented as a single numeral cannot be directly read, the probable reason for their truly odd translation as 666. Spiritual wisdom is required to read them—and even if that wisdom were present when these letters were initially translated from Greek, it is doubtful if the translation would have seemed credible. The Roman Church dominated Western Christianity. Its defining icon is the Cross. Thus, presentation of the translation from Greek to Latin would have been problematic, and from Latin into English would have been doubly so, with public acceptance of the translation being the main difficulty. Acceptance remains problematic even in these end times, for the mark of the beast reads as “the tattoo of Xx,” or “the tattoo of Christ's cross.”

Although *the mark of the beast* as a signifier can be rather easily read, believing the reading is, indeed, difficult, for the Cross has come to represent all of Christianity, not just the Roman Church. No other icon is more widely recognized across cultures, languages, and nations than the Cross. So reading *the mark of the beast* as *the tattoo of the Cross* seems heretical. Many will ask, How can God allow such a situation to exist? Well, why did He allow His beloved Son to be crucified on a cross? Why not have His son killed with the sword, or by some other means? Why the Cross, if not for this means of death producing an icon that visually represents how or why all of humanity will be killed? Remember, in the conclusion of the Temptation account, the serpent was condemned to crawl on its belly. Serpents have shoulder girdles. At one time, they had arms like lizards. How would a standing serpent with arms appear?

The Cross is the universally recognized icon pertaining to Christ Jesus' victory over death, but it is a poorly thought-through symbol. For Jesus is either absent in the symbolism, or hanging dead on the Cross. But the mark of the beast is used by the antiChrist to compel acceptance of his imitation millennial reign during the last forty-two months of the Tribulation. It is not used until after Satan and his angels are cast from heaven. It is not used until Satan comes pretending to be the Christ, borrowing the authority to reign that properly belongs to Christ Jesus. So a misused icon is entirely appropriate considering the use to which Satan will put it.

Words carry no meaning of their own. Rather, meaning is assigned to words by language users. And the same can be said for other icons (words are icons). So a word or a cultural icon has a particular meaning because a particular group of language users has assigned that particular meaning to the icon. Within the group, everyone agrees to this meaning. And the group becomes a reading community, as per Stanley Fish's understanding of community.

Historically, when the Cross began to represent Christ can be reasonably determined, and it wasn't in the 1st Century. As the icon for Christianity, the Cross is a late comer, an extra-textual assignment made long after the Christian Church quit teaching converts to live as spiritual Judeans, or spiritual Israelites. In fact, a tracking of the early Church's iconography shows the Cross replacing the Sabbath as the strong expression of the Hellenization of Christianity; i.e., of Greeks replacing Hebrews as the dominant ethnic group of converts. These Greeks squeezed out Hebrew thought and social constructs, and inserted traditional Greek concepts such as human beings having immortal souls that go either to heaven or hell immediately after death. And herein lies the problem: Israel remains the holy nation of God, not Greece. Disciples are to become spiritual Israelites; they are not to become spiritual Greeks. They are not to drag Greek concepts into the Body of Christ, and palm them off as Pauline theology. But that has been the history of Christianity.

While the sons of God are neither Greek nor Jew, bond nor free, male nor female (Gal 3:28), until glorified, the sons of God still dress appropriately for their biologically determined sex. A man's or a woman's physical appearance doesn't change until glorification, nor does the Sabbath day, nor does what an Israelite eats. So a spiritual Israelite, with the laws of God written on his or her heart and mind, will be ruled by his or her mind to the extent possible while the law of sin and death still dwells in the disciple's members. But everything becomes more interesting when the spiritual Israelite is liberated from bondage to sin: a spiritual Israelite will then be able to rule his or her flesh. All spiritual Israelites will live as Judeans in Babylon. If they return to living as Gentiles, they will have rebelled against the Father and the Son. They will have made themselves part of the great falling away.

For the record, and so there is no mistake, the mark of the beast is the tattoo of the Cross. The person who accepts this tattoo is marked for death, physical and spiritual. The body of the beast is cross-shaped; its image is the Cross; and this beast is dealt a mortal wound when the two witnesses are resurrected from death. All disciples can then ask, *O Death, where is your sting?*

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