

Old Wine is Better The Fire of God

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm
you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
I give Egypt as your ransom,
Cush and Seba in exchange for you.
Because you are precious in my eyes,
and honored, and I love you,
I give men in return for you,
peoples in exchange for your life. (Isa 43:3–4)

5.

The third installment of *Old Wine is Better* ended with the concept that faith is completed by works, which foreshadows the movement of the-disciple-serving-faith to faith-serving-the-disciple ... in the days of Noah, the world was baptized by water into death, but the One who came after John will, as John said (Matt 3:11), baptize the world with spirit [πνεύματι ἁγίῳ — *breath holy*] and fire [πυρί]. Baptism (immersion) in spirit is unto life and is the empowering of the disciple, the liberation of the flesh from indwelling sin and death. For Israel, this baptism will occur at the beginning of the seven endtime years; for the remainder of humanity (the third part — Zech 13:9), this baptism occurs halfway through those seven endtime years, occurs when the single kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man (Rev 11:15; Dan 7:9–14). And it is the proclamation of this baptism that is the endtime gospel or good news that must be proclaimed to all nations as a witness to all peoples before the end comes; for once baptized by, or submersed in the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ], all who endure to the end shall be saved (Matt 24:13; 10:22). All will be under the New Covenant and will not have their sins remembered; all will *Know the Lord*, for the Law (the Torah) will be written on their hearts and placed in their minds. This third part of humankind will then form most of the harvest of the firstfruits of God, and this third part will do no works for God prior to being born of spirit and will only have to endure in faith after being empowered by, or filled with the spirit of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]. Salvation is not for them a matter of works, and it is not a matter of works for disciples now. But enduring in faith without taking the mark of the beast, the mark of death (Rev 13:18); without being able

to buy or sell will involve works of the same sort that is expected of disciples today, the subject of this section. But first fire and baptism by fire must be addressed.

Baptism by fire is unto glory (the mortal flesh putting on immortality) and entrance into the presence of God ... the new heavens and new earth will come with fire, the fire that separates dimensions. The Lord will come in fire (Isa 66:15), for He will come not as a man but as God and come from the heavenly realm, a supra-dimensional realm.

Fire separates the dimensions, separates this earthly realm from the heavenly realm, separated the garden of God from the world that grew thistles and thorns, separated the Lord from Moses at the burning bush ... Israel passed through the waters of the Sea of Reeds, and the Lord was with Israel; the children of Israel passed through the River Jordan and were not overwhelmed by the flooding waters. Likewise, the gloried children of Israel shall walk through the fire separating dimensions, and the flames shall not consume them. Not even the smell of smoke will be on them, for the fire that separates dimensions is not an oxidizing agent but is the energy that sustains life in the heavenly realm as oxygen sustains human life in this earthly realm, with an envelope of oxygen (and other gas molecules) forming the atmosphere that protects the earth from intrusion by foreign objects such as meteorites.

The fire that sustains life in the heavenly realm that can be compared to atmospheric oxygen that sustains life in air breathing creatures, surrounds and protects the heavenly realm.

Paul said that the visible things of this world reveal the invisible things of God (Rom 1:20); so while oxygen molecules are of this “visible” world, they are invisible to the eye, suggesting that the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] is equally invisible in the heavenly realm. And as human life is sustained by cellular oxidation of sugars (a “fire” inside each living cell of the person), spiritual life or life in the heavenly realm is sustained by non-oxidizing “fire” within the living creature, thereby causing the firstborn Son of God to appear like a man with eyes “like a flame of fire” and feet “like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace” (Rev 1:14–15). The angel who brought the prophet Daniel knowledge of what was inscribed in the Book of Truth had a body like beryl. His “face was like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze” (Dan 10:6). Of the Ancient of Days, Daniel says that “his throne was fiery flames; / its wheels were burning fire. / A stream of fire issued / and came out from before him (7:9–10). In describing the glory of the Lord, the prophet Ezekiel said as “for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures darted to and fro, like the appearance of a flash of lightning” (1:13–14). Of the One who sat on the throne, Ezekiel said that he had “a likeness with a human appearance. And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him” (vv. 26–27).

The fire or oxidation that occurs within a person at the cellular level forms the shadow and type of the fire that sustains life in heavenly creatures, including the inner new creature that has been born of fire; i.e., the divine breath of God ... disciples are not accustomed to thinking in terms of being born of fire. They are barely able to comprehend being born of the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] as a real “birth.” Thus, it is

unreasonable to expect Israel, natural or circumcised of heart, to understand that following the golden calf rebellion against the Lord, Israel was condemned to death (Ex 32:10) in an irrevocable sentence when Moses assembled all the congregation and said to them, “These are the things that the Lord has commanded you to do. Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day” (Ex 35:1–3). What Moses relayed to Israel following the nation’s rebellion when it had no covering for its sin was the command of the Lord given so that Israel could not have life (Ezek 20:25).

The Sabbath represents entering into God’s rest (*cf.* Ps 95:10–11; Heb 3:16–4:11; Num chap 14), again a euphemism for entering into His presence. But by the Lord commanding Israel to kindle no fire on the Sabbath, He condemned Israel to only entering into a geographical land representing His rest by barring Israel from kindling a fire that on the Sabbath—fire was or would be a representation of indwelling life in the heavenly realm—and every person, whether of rabbinical Judaism or of messianic Judaism, who keeps the added command not to kindle a fire on the Sabbath has no indwelling spiritual life or denies before God that the person has been born of spirit.

The above has greater significance than it might first seem: by kindling no fire on the Sabbath, Israel reminds the Lord of its rebellion at Sinai. It isn’t as if the Lord would forget about Israel’s rebellion; its more that the Lord would cover Israel’s rebellion at Sinai with His righteousness for His name’s sake if Israel did not continually remind Him of its rebellion as soon as Moses was not there to lead the nation ... the person who does not kindle a fire on the Sabbath might think he or she is doing what God desires, but the person is actually including him or herself in those who have been prevented from having life. This person probably doesn’t think about having fire burning within him or herself, with this cellular oxidation of sugars forming the chiral image of the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] that gives life to, and sustains the life of inner new selves. Within the Israelite, there is on the Sabbath (as well as on every other day the person lives) “fire” being kindled in every new cell that comes by cellular division; so the prohibition that prevents kindling a fire is a death sentence. It is the Lord, in a manner understandable to those who have been born of God, telling Israel that though He temporarily spared the life of the nation that left Egypt, He has not forgiven the nation; for He tells Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book. But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, *in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them*” (Ex 32:33–34 emphasis added).

Think about where any person would be if the new cells within the person’s body could not sustain themselves by cellular oxidation, *by kindling a fire within themselves*: how long would the person live? Would the person grow? Would the person live forty years, forty days? The person would begin dying immediately, with the day of the person’s death being sooner rather than later.

If now, no fire can be kindled when entering into God’s presence (represented by the Sabbath) how will the creature live when the creature had no life before? The creature will not live.

The wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23). Israel’s idolatry at Sinai was sin that required the death of the nation. Moses knew this and tried to offer himself as Israel’s covering if the Lord would not forgive Israel (Ex 32:30–32), but the Lord would have none of it.

Moses was a man with sin and was not an acceptable sacrifice for Israel. Only the One who created Israel could cover Israel's transgression with blood. Thus, the Lord, through Moses, gave Israel a statute by which the nation could not have life; He did it: He condemned Israel to only life in this world even though in the Moab covenant (Deut chaps 29–32) the means by which Israel could inherit eternal life was given. The spirit (a second breath of life, the breath of the Father) would not be given to natural Israel. The best any Israelite could do was to receive the promise of inheriting everlasting life.

Understand the significance of the command not to kindle a fire on the Sabbath: when the children of Israel entered Canaan, the Promised Land, they entered into the geographical representation of God's rest according to the Psalmist. These children of Israel could have also received a second breath of life, such is the model that they were establishing, if the nation would have journeyed from Egypt to Canaan without sin; for once liberated from bondage to Pharaoh, Israel was as Abraham was when a different Pharaoh sent him away as a wealthy man (Gen 12:16, 20). But Israel lacked the faith of Abraham, its forefather. If Israel by faith had kept the commandments of the Lord (a big "if") the spirit would have been given to Israel as children were given to the nation.

Because all has been known from the beginning, what could have happened remains only as a possibility that could never be for Israel's rebellion was known beforehand. This is seen in the Lord's anger when He tells Moses, "Go down, for the people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them ... let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you" (Ex 32:7–8, 10). The Lord doesn't change his mind about either consuming Israel or about making a great nation out of Moses. That great nation comes by hearing Jesus' words and believing the One who sent Him (John 5:24), and to hear and believe Jesus' words requires believing Moses' writings (vv. 46–47).

When Israel does at Sinai what the Lord already knew the nation would do but does what requires that He enter His creation to die at Calvary, He has reason to be unreasonably angry. Thus, Moses was not as successful in getting the Lord to forgive Israel as Moses thought; for again, in commanding Israel to kindle no fire when the nation entered into His presence, He condemns Israel to death as He condemns circumcised of heart Israel to the second death when He sends a strong delusion over those liberated disciples who did not believe the truth (2 Thess 2:11–12).

The two condemnations are comparable: following the second Passover liberation of the Church from indwelling sin and death, the majority of the Church rebels against God on day 220 of the Tribulation, with the visible cause of this rebellion being Christmas observance which is the Christian Church making for itself a god other than the Lord (Jesus kept the Feast of Dedication — John 10:22 — and those who walk as Jesus walked will also observe the dedication of the temple, now the Church, with this dedication to occur at Passover in the year of the Lord's return). Immediately following this rebellion, God will send a strong delusion over the rebels so that they cannot believe the truth, cannot repent, cannot enter into the presence of the Lord. The command not to kindle a fire on the Sabbath given after Israel's almost immediate rebellion against God functions physically in the same way that sending a strong delusion over the rebels following the second Passover functions. In the first, rebelling Israel cannot receive life; in the second, rebelling Israel (i.e., the Church) cannot be glorified.

Israel needs to understand that repentance is meaningless when the Lord condemns Israel to death, as the nation that left Egypt learned in the wilderness of Paran (Num 14:40) ... the death sentence doesn't go away, but remains on Israel for as long as the nation continues in the command not to kindle a fire on the Sabbath. Only when Israel is born of spirit and is given spiritual understanding does the nation realize that a change of the law has occurred, a change that negates those things that were added so that Israel could not have life ... hear again the words of the Lord:

Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God, Is it to inquire of me that you come? As I live, declares the Lord God, I will not be inquired of by you. Will you judge them, son of man, will you judge them? Let them know the abominations of their fathers ...

And I said to their children in the wilderness, *Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor keep their rules, nor defile yourselves with their idols.* I am the Lord your God; walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules, and keep my Sabbaths holy that they may be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God. But the children rebelled against me. They did not walk in my statutes and were not careful to obey my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; they profaned my Sabbaths.

Then *I said I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the wilderness. But I withheld my hand and acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out.* Moreover, I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries, because they had not obeyed my rules, but had rejected my statutes and profaned my Sabbaths, and their eyes were set on their fathers' idols. Moreover, *I gave them statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life,* and I defiled them through their very gifts in their offering up all their firstborn, that I might devastate them. I did it that they might know that I am the Lord. (Ezek 20:3–4, 18–26 emphasis added)

The idols of the nation's fathers were the calves of Egypt, and the Lord did not immediately destroy the nation at Sinai, but He gave the nation a command by which the nation could not have life: He commanded Israel to kindle no fire on the Sabbath when Israel was to enter into God's rest. And unfortunately, there are Sabbatarian disciples apparently "tired" of struggling against the prince of this world, for they have returned to kindling no fire on the Sabbath in their rejection of the liberty that came with a change in law, made necessary by Israel no longer being an outwardly circumcised nation.

A change in the law did not abolish the law, but moved Israel from serving the law to serving faith, with faith not being simple belief ... as a physically living human being is born spiritually "dead" and remains dead until the person receives a second breath of life, the divine breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]; and as the first man Adam was dead until *Elohim* [singular in usage] breathed into his nostrils and the man of mud became a nephesh (a breathing creature), the faith of disciples is dead and lifeless until it is manifested in "works," that ugly word that Christendom avoids with all of its might. For works are not of God who has already worked, or of His Christ who has also worked, but

are of the disciple, who does no work to receive the breath of God, and who does not work to believe in God as Abraham believed God and had his belief counted to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3) — a son of disobedience is made into a Christian, and is given life in the heavenly realm as a son of God without this former son of disobedience doing any “works,” for this former son of disobedience is not under the law but under grace, the garment of Christ Jesus’ righteousness. And if the mysteries of God stopped right here, the Christendom of this world would have a theological leg on which it could stand, but the mysteries of God continues as the story of Abraham continues past when Abraham had his belief counted to him as righteousness (Gen 15:6).

Understand the role that “fire” plays in salvation: the first Adam had no life until *Elohim* [singular] breathed into his nostrils (Gen 2:7) and kindled a fire within the previously lifeless cells formed from mud; kindled a fire in each cell so that the cells used oxygen to reduce or oxidize complex carbon molecules ... carbohydrates are composed of the elements carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen in a 1-2-1 ratio so that white sugar is $C_6H_{12}O_6$. Oxidation of this molecule will require twelve molecules of oxygen and will result in the formation of six molecules of carbon dioxide (CO_2) and six molecules of water (H_2O), and it is the heat or energy generated in “burning” the sugar molecule that sustain life in the descendants of the first Adam, who “became a living being” (1 Cor 15:45).

The “last Adam became a life-giving spirit” (again, 1 Cor 15:45). Instead of receiving life, the last Adam gives life to those who already have life, who have been raised from the dead by the Father (John 5:21). This last Adam gives life through the revealing of judgments—all judgment has been given to Him (v. 22)—on the last day, but He gives life to the already living by causing the mortal flesh to put on immortality, by turning the oxidizing fire presently used to sustain the flesh into the fire that comes from heaven that sustains life in the heavenly realm. The transformation of “fire” (the oxidation of elements) into *fire* is the movement from physical to spiritual, with the physical preceding the spiritual (1 Cor 15:46). Thus, the work that is done in this world by fire forms the chiral image of the work done in the heavenly realm by the breath of God. So while the command to kindle no fire on the Sabbath serves to enforce physically resting on the day of rest, for the work of man is mostly dependent upon the controlled use of fire, more importantly the command prevents the creation of life when entering into God’s presence: the body cells (as representations of human beings) that die are to stay dead and are not to be replaced with new by the person ... judgment is now on the household of God (1 Pet 4:17), which means that disciples consciously participate in their judgment by what they do or do not do. Disciples, as the Body of Christ and by extension as Christ, judge themselves, a privilege and responsibility of almost unimaginable importance (and a privilege that could have been ancient Israel’s as it was Abraham’s) by what they do or don’t do while knowing that they are under judgment.

If a person can knowingly shape the outcome of an event by what the person will do, the outcome of the event is then entirely up to the person ... how can this be said more simply? If a Christian knows that whether the inner self will be glorified or not glorified is dependent upon what the person does, the Christian determines whether this person will be glorified once the Father has made the person alive, or raised the person from the dead (again, John 5:21). Therefore, the person who hears the voice of Jesus and believes the One who sent Jesus into this world will pass from death to life without coming under judgment (v. 24). The person “judged” him or herself in (1) hearing the voice of Jesus,

and (2) believing the words of Jesus, for Jesus only spoke the words of the Father. Merely hearing the words is not enough: it is not the hearers of the Law that are justified but the doers (Rom 2:13; Jas 1:22–25). Believing the words of Jesus requires doing what the Law requires, which is loving God and loving neighbor, with the most visible outward expression of love for God being Sabbath observance, the entering into God's presence through resting from pursuing the needs and pleasures of this world.

A Christian is to work out his or her salvation with fear and trembling, for the judgment of the person is given to the person, with the criterion by which the person will be judged found in the Law. If the person is a coward—no cowards will be in the kingdom—and is afraid of Jesus and of the change in the Law that came with the change in the priesthood and in the change of Israel from being an outwardly circumcised nation to being an inwardly circumcised nation, the person will keep the added commands by which Israel could not before and cannot now have life. The man will attach tassels at the corners of his garments, and no fire will be kindled on the Sabbath, and animals will be sacrificed as the daily offering and as sin offerings and as guilt offerings. This Christian will embrace the theological positions of the Circumcision Faction and will insist that converts keep all of the Law of Moses, even to physically circumcising the flesh as the Galatians were doing when last heard about. They will speak Hebrew if they can, calling the Father and the Son by bastardized Hebrew names, and they will join with others of like mind in MIA fellowships, where these *missing in action* Christians will be found dead when Christ Jesus returns.

It is Christian cowards that take refuge in the commands added so that Israel could not have life.

It is Christian cowards that fear the revealing of their judgments if they so much as relaxed the least of the commandments, not understanding that by doing those things by which Israel could not have life they, too, cannot have life ... would the Lord actually give commands by which Israel cannot have life? Rabbinical Judaism thinks not. Likewise, many Sabbatarian Christians think not. They don't believe the Lord anymore than Azariah, son of Hoshaiiah, and Johanan, son of Kareah, believed the prophet Jeremiah when he delivered to them the Lord's words (Jer chap 43). Their fate will be like that of the insolent men who told Jeremiah that he had lied to them (chap 44).

Truly, the Lord gave to Israel commands by which the nation could not live (as in receiving spiritual birth), commands that today separate disciples who hear Jesus' voice from disciples who expect His voice to be something that it is not; for words are conveyed by the breath of a person, and the words of God are conveyed by the breath of God, the fire that burns within the inner new self. The disciple who is afraid of fire is also afraid of the words of Christ Jesus.

6.

Hearing the voice of Jesus equates to the faith Abram had when he heard the words of the Lord and believed that his offspring would be like stars when he had no offspring. Believing the One that sent Jesus, the One whose voice is not as a soft whisper, equates to the faith Abraham displayed when he offered up Isaac as a burnt offering to the Lord, with fire remaining central to this faith.

Paul wrote to the converts at Rome:

For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed

God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.” Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:

“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,
and whose sins are covered;

blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”

Is this blessing then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but *who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised*. (4:2–12 emphasis added)

Because the Body of Christ has been dead for most or all of the past 1900 years, what Paul writes has not been well understood if understood at all: to become a Christian, the person does no work prior to being born of the divine breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ]. The person was a son of disobedience, going the way of all sons of disobedience, following after the ways of this world, with its pursuits, pleasures, and passions, until the moment when the Father drew the person from this world (John 6:44) by giving to the person a second breath of life in a manner analogous to a human infant not asking to be born and doing no work to be born.

Prior to being born of the breath of God, the inner creature that animates the flesh was dead in a similar way to how a computer’s operating system is a “dead” program; the inner creature did what it was told to do. It did not think for itself even though it solved (and created) complicated problems. It was not a blank slate upon which anything could be written as some disciples hold; it was a “fully programmed operating system” that was subject (as a person is the subject of a human government) to the prince of the power of the air so it was no more free to worship God than Israel in Egypt was free to go three days’ journey into the wilderness to worship the Lord. But it was no less free than Israel in Egypt was free to cry out to the Lord, to complain to the Lord about the evilness in which they dwelt.

No person is born a blank slate: the premise underlying the concept is false, for Nebuchadnezzar had his “human nature” taken from him in an instant and was given the nature of an ox so that for seven years he grazed without knowing he was a human being. The *human nature* of a person is a full operating system that is figuratively plugged into the person with conception, but an operating system without an overfilled hard drive holding memory. Thus, human maturation is less a matter of the operating system learning how to handle new situations as it is a matter of additional information being written on the hard drive that is reorganized periodically as a computer’s hard drive is defragged: the thoughts of a man do not come from the operating system, but from the hard drive—from the mental turf over which the present prince of this world

reigns as king of Babylon, with thoughts sprouting from this mental turf as if the thoughts were weeds or wheat. The barrier or membrane that exists between subconscious and conscious thoughts functions as soil functions in a vegetable garden, with roots buried in the subconscious and foliage and seed in the conscious mind. Thus, when a person is born of God, the operating system is made alive. It ceases to be a “dumb system,” but becomes dynamic, taking additional instruction from the *παράκλητος* (*parakletos*), the *spirit of the truth* (John 14:16–17). The world cannot receive the *parakletos* simply because the inner self, represented by the icon phrase *human nature*, is dead, lifeless, dumb.

Disciples are individually and collectively the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27), and disciples individually and collectively leave sin as Israel left Egypt, meaning that at any one time, an exodus of individual Christians out from bondage to sin will be encountered, with this exodus stretching from those who just left sin to those who have already arrived in the Promised Land; but also meaning the Christian Church as the collective will begin its exodus from sin when liberated from sin at the second Passover as Israel left Egypt following the first Passover. Thus, the Apostle Paul began his exodus from sin in the 1st-Century, and arrived in the Promised Land of God’s rest a little before Herod’s temple was razed in Jerusalem. But Paul wasn’t glorified in the 1st-Century; he didn’t permanently enter heaven in the 1st-Century when he visited while still living; he doesn’t now consciously participate in the affairs of heaven; rather, he “rests” as in sleeping as one of the souls under the altar (Rev 6:9–11) until judgments are revealed when Christ comes as the Messiah (1 Cor 4:5) ... the linguistic icon phrase “God’s rest” is a euphemism for entering into God’s presence, but the phrase does not command the immediacy of the phrase “entering into God’s presence.” Likewise, the icon “the Sabbath,” the weekly representation of entering into God’s presence, lacks the grandeur of “God’s rest.” But the person who keeps the Sabbath enters into God’s rest and enters into God’s presence as Paul has entered in as a soul under the altar, resting a little while longer, waiting until the number of the Lord’s servants are slain as he was.

Paul did no good works prior to being born of the breath of God. His works were those of the Adversary, a point he well understood and expressed when he spoke of Satan appearing as an angel of light and his ministers as servants of righteousness (2 Cor 11:13–15) ... Paul served Satan when he was persecuting disciples; yet Paul sincerely believed he was serving the Lord. And every Christian pastor and teacher must be aware the he or she can sincerely seek to serve the Lord as Paul sought to serve the Lord when he condoned the stoning of Stephen, and can sincerely be an agent of the Adversary as Paul then was.

The good works that Paul thought he was doing when he ravaged the Church were the works of Paul when he was called of God and born of spirit through receiving a second breath of life; thus, Paul well understood that the calling of God was not dependent upon works. And it may well be that the closer the person thinks that he or she is to God before receiving a second breath of life, the farther the person is actually away from God, thereby making the one who thinks that he or she stands tall before God is less likely to be born of spirit than the one who knows that he or she is far from God. Said otherwise, seldom will this world’s righteous submit to Christ whereas the one who knows that he or she is a sinner will quickly repent when called.

There are no works involved in being born of God, and born under no condemnation (Rom 8:1–2). Former lawless deeds are forgiven, covered by Jesus’ blood shed at

Calvary, and the post-birth lawlessness is covered by the garment of the living Christ's righteousness; post-birth sins are not covered by blood shed in this world, for these sins do not occur in this world and cannot be covered by a death in this world. They are covered by a death in the lake of fire; they are covered by the second death, either of the disciple or of the Adversary (with the Adversary's first "death" coming from being cast from heaven — Rev 12:7–10 — and his second "death" occurring when fire comes out from his belly — Ezek 28:18–19 — when he is cast into the lake of fire after the thousand years — Rev 20:10).

Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt 5:27–28) ... if a man never acts upon his lust, looking but never touching, the man never transgresses the commandments in this world, and as long as the man is not born of spirit and has no life in the heavenly realm, the man is without guilt for the man remains a son of disobedience and the bondservant of the Adversary. The man has his lust "covered" by being the bondservant of the Adversary, and his behavior in this world (not touching) covers him in this realm where blood can be shed. But when the man has been born of God, the man is no longer the bondservant of the Adversary. God has, by giving him a second breath of life, withdrawn him from this world even though he remains in this world. His citizenship, though, is no longer in the present kingdom of this world, for he has become a citizen in heavenly Jerusalem. Thus, if this man now looks with lustful intent at a woman, his lust is covered by grace, the garment of Christ's righteousness. The man is still without sin, but the death penalty for his lust is only covered, not paid. When judgments are revealed—there would be no need to reveal judgments if grace were unmerited pardon—this revealing will disclose who pays the death penalty for the man's lust, he or Satan. Christ will not; for He will not be crucified a second time.

The blessing of having sins forgiven as opposed to merely being covered by an animal sacrifice or by the person being a bondservant of the Adversary came to both Jew and Gentile when the spirit was given; for the tent of flesh that is male or female (biological status), Jew or Greek (ethnic status), bond or free (social status) is not the disciple but the temporary abode of the disciple who has actually come from heaven in that the disciple has received life from heaven, the fire that burns in all heavenly creatures. The disciple is not free to "go to heaven," but must remain in that portion of the heavenly realm within the bottomless pit until entering into God's rest. It is convenient and sometimes useful to refer to a visible person striving to serve God as a disciple, but it is actually the inner new self or new creature that is the disciple. The tent of flesh should do what the inner new creature desires or commands it to do; so they (the inner new creature and the tent of flesh) should function as one entity as the Body of Christ and its Head should function as one entity. But as any elderly person will confirm, the flesh doesn't always behave as it should. It often lets the inner creature down, as the Body of Christ lets the Head down.

Paul addresses the above situation when he writes,

For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.

For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. (Rom 7:14–25)

Because every disciple is individually the Body of Christ, what Paul writes about himself reflects what has occurred, is occurring, and will occur in the Christian Church, the collective Body of Christ ... the Church, represented by the Paul's body, serves a different law than the law of God, and serves sin rather than righteousness. Whereas the Head of Christ, the glorified Jesus, wants the Body to serve the law of God, the Body because of weakness and because nothing good dwells in the flesh, serves the Adversary instead. And the louder the denials of serving sin by the Body, the greater the service Christendom renders to the Adversary.

Gentiles as well as Jews have sins forgiven when they become the single nation of Israel that is born of God and circumcised of heart. They do no work, but they believe God and have their belief counted to them as righteousness. They believe by having faith in God and in the word of God. And if they continue to believe, doing nothing but professing their faith in God, they will be as immature apples hanging on a tree, not ripening, not growing, not doing anything but hanging there, occupying space on a fruiting spur that cannot set another flower bud until the stunted fruit falls to the ground.

It is not enough to teach that disciples are like apples hanging on a tree—disciples are to grow in grace and knowledge as apples are to grow in size if they are to be worth harvesting, and growth in disciples occurs when disciples begin to serve their faith. Ahh, says the one who teaches that disciples are like apples: apples do nothing to grow but remain attached to branch (the vine). True, but apples are also thinned for apple trees tend to overset fruit; so in former times the husbandman went along each limb, selecting the fastest growing fruit, one every three inches or so, knocking off all other fruits. Now, when the apples the orchardist wants to keep are the size of his thumbnail, he sprays the tree with Sevin to cause all of the smaller fruits to abort. Either way, most of the fruits are removed from the tree by early summer so that the remaining fruit can grow to size. ... If those born of God are like apples, most do not make it to maturity, confirming what Jesus said that many are called but few are chosen (Matt 22:14).

It is from ignorance that someone teaches disciples are like apples without telling these same disciples that they must quickly put on size or they will be aborted by the one who gave them birth. Fortunately, disciples are not like apples, but like figs, with the common fig producing fruit without pollination and without life inside of the fruit, but with its fruit filled with empty seeds, with the common fig representing *common Christians*. (All common fig trees come from one cutting a long time ago.) It is the Smyrna fig that requires pollination to set a fruit crop and that bears seeds with life within them.

If *common Christians* are like common figs then Jesus cursing the fig tree has relevance to Christendom; for when Jesus looked for fruit before it was the season for fruit, He expected to find fruit ... is it unreasonable to look for fruit before it is the season for fruit? Jesus didn't think so. And He expects to find in every disciple the fruit of the spirit before it is the season to bear that fruit by the disciple dwelling in the kingdom of God.

If *common Christians* are like common figs then the churches that feed and nourish these Christians will be cursed, and will wither and perish at the time of the second Passover.

Abraham's faith was not complete when he believed God that his seed would be as the stars of heaven; for Abraham's faith was his fruit, with the seed in his fruit being Isaac ... fruit doesn't ripen overnight, but over the course of a season. Likewise, Abraham's fruit (set and pollinated when he believed the Lord that his offspring would be as the stars of heaven—Egyptians believed their pharaohs would be stars in heaven) did not suddenly grow to maturity even though Abraham took his destiny into his own hands in the matter of Hagar.

The fruit that contained the natural seed was rejected for it could not be made complete: the seed was not of God but of this world ... for a person's faith to be made complete, the faith cannot be in the things of this world or in the work of hands or in demons. A person cannot worship God and worship demons. A disciple cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; a disciple cannot eat at the table of the Lord and at the table of demons (1 Cor 10:21). A disciple despises the Lord when taking the sacraments of bread and wine on any night but the night Jesus was betrayed, the dark portion of the 14th of Abib. When taking bread and wine as symbols of the Lord's body and blood on another day, the person offers to God Cain's sacrifice, not Abel's, for sin lurks at the person's door; its desire is for the person; its success is seen in the great falling away.

To complete his faith, Abraham offered up Isaac (Jas 2:21–23) when told, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you” (Gen 22:2). Abraham was to offer his promised seed to the Lord as a burnt offering, an offering made by fire—and every disciple as the promised seed descended through Christ Jesus will be offered to God by fire, not the oxidizing flames of this world but the flames that separate dimensions. If the seed cannot pass through the flames, the seed will perish; for it takes the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to walk in flames as Israel walked when passing over the Sea of Reeds dry shod, or as the children of Israel crossed the River Jordan.

Fire tests whether a person is of God or of the Adversary: Sodom did not pass the fire test, but perished in flames when fire and brimstone rained down on the city. However, because of their faith, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego passed the test in the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar. And the difference between the inhabitants of Sodom and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego was not one of flesh, but of faith made complete when the Hebrews told Nebuchadnezzar that “our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not [not that He's not able, but that He doesn't], be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up” (Dan 3:17–18).

But again, fire typifies entering into God's presence for dimensions must be crossed to enter heaven. Fire and the Sabbath are symbolically interlocked; thus fire on Sabbath becomes a doubling of shadows and types, with Sabbath observance becoming a test of endtime disciples' faith in the Tribulation as Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace was a testing of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's faith.

Natural Israel could not enter into God's presence except through the high priest on *Yom Kipporim* once the children of Israel crossed the Jordan, and the children of Israel could not look on Moses' face for the veil that Moses wore so they could not really enter into Moses' presence (who was as God to them — Ex 4:16) after the golden calf incident. Therefore, the command that Israel was not to kindle a fire on the Sabbath (Ex 35:3) is a death sentence through separation from God.

What Paul writes about Abraham's faith pertains to the disciple up to circumcision, with the children of Israel not circumcised in the wilderness but after they crossed the Jordan and entered into God's rest (Josh 5:2–7), but before they kept the Passover in the Promised Land. Abraham is the father of all who walk in the footsteps of the faith he had before he was circumcised (Rom 4:12). He will be the father of all who complete their faith by entering into God's presence; of all who, by crossing through fire, reveal that they have been glorified.

The fifth presentation of *Old Wine is Better* will address Sabbath observance during the Tribulation, when keeping the Sabbath will complete the faith of endtime disciples as Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice completed his faith. It will continue the discussion at this point.

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