

Commentary—From the Margins

A Work to Do

Part Two

I have related the story many times: on January 17, 2002, I was audibly called to reread prophecy in a calling similar to Paul’s calling, about which we know less than we think for the primary account of Paul’s calling comes from the Book of Acts, a Second Sophist [“Second” because the original Sophists lived centuries earlier] novel, and perhaps the only early Greek novel most Christians will ever read. This calling occurred at about 10:12 CST—I was to teach an English Comp class at 10:30, then another at 1:00 p.m. And I didn’t know how I was going to make the 10:30 class for I was virtually paralyzed after hearing the words, “It’s time to reread prophecy.” That’s all. I heard nothing about what I was supposed to find in rereading prophecy. I didn’t then know (and wouldn’t know until months later) that the calling came exactly forty years to the day and probably to the minute from when Garner Ted Armstrong, speaking with the authority but not the knowledge of his father, said that there would be no new prophetic revelations; all was known; his father was just having doubts about what had been revealed to him.

I sat in the pickup, watching the clock but remaining too weak to move. I knew I had to get to class. I wasn’t parked far from the classroom, but I didn’t know if I could walk. I was doubtful that I could.

Finally, about 25 minutes after ten, I had to try to get to the classroom—I opened the pickup’s door and tested my legs ... they supported me, and I was off, staggering. Steps didn’t come until after I was in the classroom.

During the day, my thoughts were on “what” I heard, not the words for they seemed to be “things” inside my mind that I heard over and over again. But what did *rereading prophecy* mean ... I knew as a matter of graduate classwork that words came without meanings, that readers [auditors] assigned meanings [objects or signifieds] to words, that the same signifier [linguistic icon] could support more than one signified, but not every signified. Thus, rereading a text implied assigning a differing set of signifieds to well-known signifiers, but how would that affect biblical prophecy? So my thought was, as I tried to at least stay partially focused on the material I was to cover in the Comp classes, that rereading prophecy pertained to rewriting the two-houses of Israel doctrine that was advanced in the most poorly crafted book I have ever read: *Great Britain and the United States in Prophecy*.

At 2:30, I headed home (Tuesday and Thursday classes were an hour and a half long). And as soon as I arrived and had sat down at the computer, I opened my Bible to Daniel, and began reading ...

The text didn’t say what I had, for thirty years, believed it said. In fact, it didn’t say anything even close to what I thought it said. And three hours later, I was theological leagues from where I had been.

Thus began a rereading of not just the outwardly prophetic texts in the Bible, but the entire book, a rereading that continues fourteen years later but a rereading that has slowed considerably after I wrestled with Matthew's Gospel in 2013 ... there was so much factually wrong with Matthew's Gospel that it would have been easy to simply dismiss the text as spurious. But inwardly, I knew that not to be the case. I intuitively knew the author of Matthew's Gospel had written a coded text; that the author was converted and wonderfully talented. I knew the Gospel wasn't spurious, but wasn't about what it seemed to be about. Does that make sense?

I wrestled with Matthew's Gospel for months while writing *A Philadelphia Apologetic, Volume 5* (see [Archives](#)), in chapter form. I wrote initially as much to refute the genuineness of the Gospel as to explain its discrepancies. However, before I could put the chapters together into a single volume, I realized what the problem was: Matthew's Gospel wasn't about the physical man Jesus, but about the glorified Jesus that dwelt in every person truly born of spirit. And this revelation by realization placed me as well as every other disciple genuinely born of spirit inside the Gospel.

It was I who was in Egypt, the geographical landscape representing Sin. It was I whom Jesus had to bring out from Egypt as an infant son of God ...

I left Fairbanks in the 1990s to pursue a doctoral degree in English at Idaho State University. I remarried while in Idaho, marrying a woman, a Boise State football fan who became a French Colonial re-enactress—I had been shooting muzzleloading firearms since 1967; had been going to rendezvouses in Alaska. I reenacted as a greasy mountain man, a gun builder and woodcarver with traditional hand adzes and crooked knives. But my new wife, Carolyn, wasn't interested in reenacting as a Native woman wearing buckskin dresses, the traditional companion of greasy mountain men. And she wanted to go to a French Colonial woman's reenactors workshop on the banks of the Mississippi River in early spring 2000.

Since she wanted to go, we went. And while driving back from the workshop—somewhere around Redbud, Illinois—she said she could live on the wrong side of the Mississippi. "Get me a job." And she did. She got me a teaching position at Paducah Community College, at Paducah, Kentucky, and a similar position at Southeastern Illinois College at Harrisburg, Illinois. And we moved from Idaho to "Little Egypt," what the southern-most counties of Illinois are called. Then in 2003, she was offered the village seamstress position at Old Bedford Village, Bedford, PA, and I was offered the church ... I preached one sermon in the church, and members of the board said that would never do, I was too likely to convert someone. So for the remainder of the year I carved wood.

But it was the move from "Little Egypt" to Bedford that caused me to write a Commentary about being called out from [Egypt](#) (Hos 11:1). It was that Commentary that came to mind as I wrestled with the validity of Matthew's Gospel; for there is no evidence that Herod had male children two years of age or less killed in Bethlehem. As a Roman puppet king, he would have been censured for such a brash undertaking: some official record would exist to support the murder of these children. Plus, for theological reasons, nothing should be written about Christ Jesus prior to the beginning of His ministry. The "Jesus" as a child material in Luke's Gospel is a problem, as is the "Jesus" at twelve years old material in the

Qur'an. But this is not the place to open this very large theological problem [so why bring it up: because the childhood narrative in Matthew's Gospel advances a differing agenda than the childhood narratives in Luke's Gospel or in the Qur'an].

I have been writing about Hebraic thought-couplet verse since before 2008 — thought-couplet poetics has the first presentation of an idea or thing being physical, natural, of darkness [why "night" precedes "day"], while the second presentation of the same idea or concept or thing is spiritual, of light, of God. However, it wasn't until I began to wrestle with the validity of Matthew's Gospel that I realized the "thought-couplet pattern" could also apply to Hebrew narratives, as well as to Hebrew poetry. And I immediately understood what Bishop Papias (late 1st-Century, cited by Eusebius in Book III) had written about Matthew's Gospel being written in "Hebrew Style" ... it wasn't written in Hebrew as some Christians believe. Rather, it was written using the thought-couplet template of Hebraic poetics.

Now, a word about copying texts: I just copied word by word text from my brother Ben's memoir, *Gift of the Journey*. Before retiring, my brother was a top notch forester, but he makes no claim to being a writer. And in copying his words, I had to be careful not to straighten out his grammar or punctuation, which is vastly improved in the second edition of *Gift* from the first edition of *Gift*—

The reality concerning copying any text is that the one doing the copy tends to rewrite the text being copied in his or her own words. But the one who copies doesn't transform good grammar into poor grammar even when the copier doesn't really possess grammar skills; rather, the copier retains good grammar while turning poor grammar into good or better grammar. And by this measure, it can be ascertained which handwritten text preceded the other, that is which text is the source text.

Extensive passages in Matthew's Gospel have been copied from Mark's Gospel, which means that Mark's Gospel is a [the] principle source text for Matthew's Gospel, which also means that Matthew's Gospel was written after the insurrection of 66–70 CE, meaning that the author of Matthew's Gospel knew that the glorified Jesus would not be returning anytime soon ... the theology of the insurrection held that God would support Israel against the might of Rome by sending the Messiah to intervene in the affairs of men. So when no Messiah came (when Christ didn't return), Christian converts were fairly certain that Christ's return wouldn't be anytime soon; that Christians were in for a long work that would have to be protected from ideological corruption. It had become time to conceal from unbelievers the core of the Gospel.

As an aside, Mark's Gospel has mediocre grammar at best and in places actually poor grammar, with these passages rendered in good grammar in Matthew's and in Luke's Gospels. This will now have Mark's Gospel being written prior to Matthew or Luke—and about John Mark and Mark's Gospel, Bishop Papias said that John Mark had never met Jesus; that he wrote the Gospel by straightening out and placing in chronological order the sayings of the Apostle Peter, whom he served as a translator; that according to John the Elder, Mark did nothing wrong. Mark's Gospel remains a reliable source text whereas the author of Luke's Gospel acknowledges that he has written a redaction of the oral gospel as well as of the writings of earlier eye-witnesses and commentators (see Luke 1:1–4).

For reasons I will address in later Commentaries, Mark's and John's begin as they should—with Jesus' ministry (with John's Gospel stepping behind His ministry to identify Jesus as the Logos, *Yah*, the God of Abraham, the God of living ones). Therefore, we should assume and should accept that Mark's Gospel and John's Gospel are about the ministry of the physical man, Jesus of Nazareth.

If Matthew's Gospel overtly copies passages from Mark's Gospel, and if Matthew's Gospel is written in Hebrew style [it is], then readers should expect the first half of Matthew's Gospel to be the physical portion of a thought-couplet narrative, and the second half—beginning with the account of Canaanite woman—the spiritual portion of the narrative. And this seems to be the case, with one example serving to illustrate the point:

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But He answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except for the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold something greater than Solomon is here." (Matt 12:38–42)

Jesus' use of the sign of Jonah in this first half of Matthew's Gospel concerned physical death (*the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*) in the physical portion of the couplet forming His answer, and a resurrection to judgment in the spiritual portion.

But in the spiritual portion of Matthew's Gospel, the same question is asked but answered differently:

And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test Him, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." (Matt 16:1–4)

And,

When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. Jesus said to them [not to the crowd; not to Pharisees and Sadducees], "Watch and beware of the leaven of Pharisees and Sadducees." (Matt 16:5–6)

One sign—that of a red sky—has two opposing meanings: going into darkness [night], the sign represents tranquility; good weather. But the same sign going into the light portion of a day represents stormy and threatening weather ... said in other words, the sign of Jonah, going into the long spiritual night that began at Calvary represents the "good times" disciples will experience in that natural world. These *good times* have seen plenty of persecution and religious wars, but these are the good times when a Christian can sleep at

night without being unduly fearful. What is ahead for every Christian is what Matthew's Jesus warned His disciples about:

As He sat on the Mount of Olives [a granite monolith that will be cut in two, but not by human hands], the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" And Jesus answered them, "See to it that you deceive no one (Matt 24:4 direct translation). For many will come in my name, saying 'I [Jesus] am the Christ,' and will lead many astray (v. 5). And you will hear of wars and rumors of war. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet (v. 6). For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places (v. 7). All these are but the beginning of the birth pains" (v. 8).

All of the preceding is in the physical position of Jesus' couplet answer to His disciples question of when the end would be—Matthew's Jesus continues:

Then they will deliver you up to tribulation [bad news] and put you to death [bad news], and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake [bad news]. And then many will fall away [bad news] and betray one another [bad news] and hate one another [bad news]. And many false prophets will arise [bad news] and lead many astray [bad news]. And because lawlessness will be increased [bad news], the love of many will grow cold [bad news]. But the one who endures to the end will be saved [good news]. And this good news [gospel] of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matt 24:9–14)

The "light" portion of the "spiritual day" that began at Calvary begins between verses 8 and 9, so that we see the beginning of the seven endtime years of tribulation in verse 9, meaning that the Second Passover liberation of Israel from sin and spiritual (not physical) death comes with the fruition of the birth pains. And from here we can go to the prophet Isaiah:

Before she was in labor
she gave birth;
before her pain came upon her,
she delivered a son.
Who has heard such a thing?
Who has seen such a thing?
Shall a land be born in one day?
Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment?
For as soon as Zion was in labor
She brought forth her children. (Isa 66:7–8)

indented lines are spiritual portion of couplets

Two nations will be born in a day, these two nations today struggling with each other in the womb of greater Christendom; these two nations analogous to Esau and Jacob, or Cain and Abel ... because they will be born in a day (the day of the Second Passover), Esau and Jacob

are the better model, with Esau being hated while still in the womb [with those Christians who will comprise spiritual Esau being hated for their lawlessness today] (Mal 1:3).

Those Christians who believe they are today “right” with God are not. Those Sabbatarian Christians who are absolutely convinced that they know Scripture and are doing what is pleasing to God, know little or nothing about the Scriptures. They have deceived themselves. Rather than heeding Paul’s instructions to the Corinthians—“Therefore let anyone who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor 10:12)—they say that they will not be taught by any man; they will only be taught by God; that they will stand because God is their teacher ... permit them to stand as they are. They will not live long in the Affliction, but maybe martyrdom is what they need to be in the Kingdom.

All of Matthew’s Gospel serves as the spiritual portion of a double-Gospel narrative, with Mark’s Gospel being in the physical position of a narrative thought-couplet, and with Matthew’s Gospel being in the spiritual position.

I’ve written all of this before—enough times before that this past spring I had gotten tired of repeating myself. But even today the concept of Matthew’s “Jesus” being the indwelling glorified Jesus remains alien to the vast majority of greater Christendom, and even to most Sabbatarian Christians ... tell me if you can when does the glorified Jesus receive all authority in heaven and earth? Does he have all authority in heaven and on earth while the Adversary remains the prince of the world? Does He have all authority on earth prior to dominion being taken from the Adversary and given to the Son of Man? Compare Daniel 7:9–14; Revelation 11:15–18; 12:7–12. When is dominion taken from the Adversary? Is dominion not taken from the Adversary when Michael and his angels make war with Satan and his angels, and Satan is cast to earth?

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of His testimony, for they loved not their lives, even unto death.” (Rev 12:10–11)

Now, return to Matthew’s Gospel: “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me’” (Matt 28:18).

What Matthew’s Jesus tells the eleven was not true in the 1st-Century CE, and is not yet true in the 21st-Century. It will, however, be true halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation. Therefore, the resurrection of Matthew’s Jesus cannot have occurred in the 1st-Century—and what is it that Paul wrote: “For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:7–8).

Sin doesn’t precede human conception although some Christians would argue for “original sin.” No Christian, however, will sincerely argue for transmigration of souls; therefore, the person who “never was” has no sin. Not until a person is humanly conceived is it even theologically possible for a person to be a sinner. Yet Paul declares that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. In a literal sense of the passage, Christ cannot die for us until after we are conceived and have actually drawn the breath of life, a real possibility thanks to the dynamics of timelessness. But if Christ can die for me, as a sinner, nearly two

millennia after Calvary, then He can also live in me two millennia post-Calvary ... I can be the “son of God” (Israel) called out from Egypt (again, Hos 11:1).

All of this is background and foundational knowledge for examining perhaps the most important prophetic passage in Scripture:

Brother will deliver brother over to death, and father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my [Jesus’] name’s sake. ***But the one who endures to the end will be saved.*** (Matt 10:21–22 double emphasis added `)

But ***the one who endures to the end will be saved.*** And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matt 24:13–14 double emphasis added)

At the Second Passover liberation of greater Christendom—of all who claim to be “Christians”—the Adversary will remain the prince of this world, but he will have been dealt a body blow by Christ Jesus that doubles him over and causes him to stagger about; for Christ will have separated Sin from Death, thereby liberating all Christians from slavery to Sin, but not from Death. In effect, Christ will have broken one of the two legs supporting the humanoid image Nebuchadnezzar saw in vision. He will break the other leg when dominion is taken from the Adversary; He will deal Death a mortal wound with the resurrection of the two witnesses when He receives the Kingdom. And when Death has been dealt that mortal wound, the Adversary, when cast into space-time, will have to make an image of Death (and make this image speak) for the Adversary to be able to kill anyone.

The passage in Matthew 10:22 is from the physical portion of Matthew’s Gospel, and there isn’t much good news in that passage in which Jesus sends His disciples forth. But again, *the one who endures to the end shall be saved.* In the spiritual portion of Matthew’s Gospel, this “good news” is repeated, suggesting that the one who endures to the end shall be twice saved, physically and spiritually, hence passing from life to glory without experiencing death, something that John’s Jesus declared: “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my words and believes Him who send me has eternal life. He does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life” (John 5:24).

The endtime gospel that will be proclaimed throughout the world as a witness to all nations is the good news that ***all who endure to the end shall be saved.*** All will be saved because all will be baptized in spirit (Joel 2:28; Matt 3:11) when dominion over the single kingdom of this world is taken from the Adversary and given to the Son of Man (*cf.* Dan 7:9–14; Rev 11:15–18; 12:7–12) halfway through the seven endtime years that consist of the 1260 days of the Affliction, the doubled day 1260 of the Kingdom, and the 1260 days of the Endurance in Jesus, with the Affliction and the Endurance forming non-symmetrical mirror images of one another, but with the Adversary remaining as prince of the power of the air in the Affliction and with Christ Jesus being this prince during the Endurance.

Matthew chapter 24 gives endtime disciples more information about when the end will be than previously imagined; for what is it that Matthew’s Jesus tells His disciples, “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man” (Matt 24:36–37).

If the coming of the Son of Man will be as the days of Noah were, what can be known about the days of Noah: “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all of the foundations of the great deep burst forth” (Gen 7:11) ... Noah had entered the Ark and had been sealed in the Ark seven days earlier (v. 10) [the narrative is broken in verse 13—see my [previous discussion](#) of the Book of the Covenant being lost in the temple].

Noah entered the Ark on the 10th day of the second month, the day when, in the future, the Passover lamb for the second Passover would be selected and penned ... as there was a first Adam, there was a second or last Adam (1 Cor 15:45; Rom 5:14). As there was a first nation of Israel, circumcised in the flesh, there will be a second nation of Israel, circumcised of heart. And as there was a first Passover liberation of Israel under Moses, there will be a Second Passover liberation of circumcised of heart Israel from indwelling sin and death under the two witnesses who will be types of Moses and Aaron—and this Second Passover liberation of Israel will be of such importance that the Exodus from Egypt will no longer be remembered (see Jer 16:14–15; 23:7–8). But it is in, as there was a first Noah who built an Ark of wood to save a remnant of humanity, there will be a second Noah who builds an Ark of Covenants to spiritually save humanity through creating a bridge between heaven and earth. But more about this in another Commentary. It is enough here to say that Matthew’s Gospel is the spiritual corollary to Mark’s Gospel—and in Matthew chapter 24 is found the good news that represents the salvation of sons of God.

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