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What Herbert Armstrong Didn't Know [Second Section]

Argument: As a self-educated theologian, Herbert W. Armstrong as the Pastor-General of the former Radio Church of God and Worldwide Church of God, never understood the basic construction of Hebraic poetics, that the visible, physical things of this world reveal and precede the invisible spiritual things of God, with outwardly circumcised Israel forming the chiral (or left hand) image of circumcised of heart Israel, the assembly of inner selves born of spirit through the indwelling of Christ Jesus. Because Armstrong never understood theological chirality, Armstrong placed importance on the surfaces of things and people; importance on appearances, gender, skin color, and genealogy. He therefore prevented himself from understanding the mysteries of God, and was and remained a spiritual novice throughout his ministry that extended from 1934 to 1986.

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Oedipus the king did not set out to slay his father or to marry his mother. He sought to negate the oracles by figuratively getting out of town, but what was to be occurred anyhow. And so it is when it comes to my relationship with Herbert Armstrong: I was willing for others to ravage the theological carcass of his ministry. I didn't consider the work to which I was called to be a continuation of his ministry, but rather a stepping behind his ministry and a new beginning of resurgent Sabbatarian Anabaptism, the ministry of Andreas Fischer of the 16th-Century. In actuality, Armstrong's ministry grew from the seed Fischer planted. The work I do is of this same seed, and in the case of Fischer, he started stronger than he finished: he regressed spiritually in the short while before he was beheaded by beginning to place importance on physical circumcision ...

Herbert Armstrong never ceased being physically minded. He taught that no one, himself included, was born of spirit. And for nearly all of those persons he *discipled*, this was the case ... he knew he wasn't born of spirit.

In most aspects, the work I do is not a continuation of Armstrong's work. But as Matthew's Gospel is about the indwelling Christ Jesus and not about the man that physically lived, and as Matthew's Gospel is written in Hebraic structure, this same structure dictates [again, because of what Matthew's Gospel is about] that there be a physical portion or component to *Philadelphia* and that there be a spiritual portion or component. The half-century long ministry of Herbert Armstrong completed the physical portion: he had only physical understanding of the mysteries of God. And for this, he cannot be faulted. It was God's prerogative to raise him from spiritual death or not.

However, within the splinters of the former Worldwide Church of God, Armstrong continues to be idolized as *God's essential endtime man*, when he wasn't/isn't ... he isn't the last Elijah, Christ Jesus is. And it is this *Armstrong the idol*, not "Armstrong the man" that I need to slay: the man is already dead. His legacy will be finalized a century

in the future. His legacy will be established by those who only know of him through his writings in comparison to the writings and teachings of those who came before and those who will come behind him as I do.

Because Armstrong taught, believed, that the Bible was the infallible Word of God in its original languages, within the scope of this paper I simply need to establish that the Bible is not and never was the infallible Word [*logos*] of God, that the Beloved of God was and is the Word of God—

Do I need, though, to make a comprehensive argument for the fallibility of the Bible through showing how the text has been redacted by many redactors? Or will a cursory argument suffice, such as using the example of what God the Father said to His Beloved when Jesus was raised from the watery grave:

[A] voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." (Matt 3:17)

And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." (Mark 1:11)

Until the 4th-Century CE, Luke's Gospel had the voice from heaven saying, "You are my Son, today I have [fathered] you." After the 4th-Century, what the voice said conformed to what is recorded in Mark's Gospel; so when secondary redaction of Luke's Gospel occurred can be known.

The Father said either, *You are my son*, or *This is my son*. He didn't say both things ... if the Bible is infallible, there would be harmony in what was said, especially so since neither Mark's Gospel nor Matthew's Gospel were written until after Paul's ministry was completed. Neither were written when what was said was truly remembered by witnesses. Both were written after most if not all witnesses had died.

Following Calvary, the first disciples expected Christ Jesus to shortly, immediately return. They didn't expect decades to pass before He returned, let alone centuries and now almost two millennia. And most of Jesus' first disciples were illiterate: they would not have written books or even epistles detailing what they witnessed. At the time and in the first decades afterwards, secular writers didn't compose accounts detailing the ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ Jesus. Rather, an oral Christian tradition developed, a tradition about which little information remains. And this oral tradition was inherently flawed in that it brought to life more than one *Jesus*—

In Paul's second epistle to the holy ones at Corinth, Paul writes,

I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For *if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed*, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, *you put up with it readily enough*. (2 Cor 11:2–4 emphasis added)

How many "other Jesuses" were being proclaimed and accepted by 1st-Century saints? Apparently many, with each super-apostle having his own. In the New Testament there are at least three, with one of these three being the physical man [Mark's Gospel] and with one being the indwelling Christ in each born-of-spirit disciple [Matthew's Gospel] and with one being a talkative look-alike to Mark's Jesus [Luke's Gospel].

John's Gospel is interesting in that its *Jesus* was God and was with *the God* before entering His Creation as His unique Son, the man Jesus the Nazarene, then dying on the cross, being resurrected and returning to being God, the Beloved of the Father. Because of this Gospel's prologue (John 1:1–18), no account is told of Jesus being baptized and the spirit of the Father in the bodily form of a dove descending upon and entering into the man Jesus, whose relationship with God the Father was that of being the Father's Beloved, not His Son ... as a literary artifice, John's Gospel foregrounds the divinity of Christ before human birth, during His human life, and following human death.

Because of how many *Jesuses* were being preached by good orators, each with his hand in the pocket of those to whom he preached (2 Cor 11:7–15), a Christian oral tradition developed that incorporated half-truths that could be likened to Abram telling Pharaoh's men that Sarai was his sister ... about this oral Christian tradition of which most endtime Sabbatarian Christians are not aware we must return to Bishop Papias of Hierapolis: Eusebius quoted Papias from Papias' preface,

I shall not hesitate also to put into ordered form for you, along with the interpretations, everything I learned carefully in the past from the elders and noted down carefully, for the truth of which I vouch. For *unlike most people I took no pleasure in those who told many different stories, but only in those who taught the truth*. Nor did I take pleasure in those who reported their memory of someone else's commandments, but only in those who reported their memory of the commandments given by the Lord to the faith and proceeding from the Truth itself. And if by chance anyone who had been in attendance on the elders arrived, I made enquiries about the words of the elders—what Andrew or Peter had said, or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples, and whatever Aristion and John the Elder, the Lord's disciples, were saying. For *I did not think that information from the books would profit me as much as information from a living and surviving voice*. (Eusebius. *Hist Eccl.* 3.39.3–4. Trans by Richard Bauckham — emphasis added)

I did not think that information from the books would profit me as much as information from a living and surviving voice—again, Papias is believed to have written his five volume work before 109 CE; for that is when Eusebius' fourth book begins. Eusebius quotes from Papias only in his third book. So while Papias lived, books about Christ Jesus were already in circulation, two of which Eusebius in his citation of Papias confirms: Mark and Matthew. But from Papias' perspective, the books written about Jesus were apparently less reliable than testimony from living, surviving voices ...

Note, Papias separates “John, the Lord's disciple” from John the Elder, a separation scholars have explored but that the Christian laity has ignored, and a separation that is of significance when it comes to the anonymous author of the Gospel of John.

Herbert Armstrong taught that Matthew's Gospel was the first to be written and was written about 35 CE, four years after Calvary, but if this were the case, which Matthew wrote? Not the author of the Gospel of Matthew. For Matthew's Gospel didn't appear until about the destruction of the temple; didn't appear until the author of Matthew's Gospel knew for certain that Jesus wouldn't soon return.

Again, Jesus' disciples initially expected Jesus to return in their lifetimes. Consider what Paul wrote in perhaps his first epistle:

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep.

For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words. (1 Thess 4:13–18 emphasis added)

Encourage one another with these words—how encouraging is it to know that Paul too has fallen asleep, and so far none have met Christ in the air? No bodily resurrection of the dead has yet occurred. Yet the hope of such a resurrection remains alive within Sabbatarian Christendom. Disbelief continues to be suspended, but at a very high price: abandonment of reason and logic.

Paul expected to still be alive when Christ Jesus returned as the Messiah—and as long as the return of Jesus was expected any day, there would have been no need to write down those things that Jesus said and did. Only when there was a general realization that Jesus would not return anytime soon would there have been the need and urgency to write books that recorded what Jesus said and did. Only when the strongest memories remained vivid [secondary memories having faded and no longer able to be recalled] were books written, with Mark's Gospel being a notable exception and most likely the first of four exceptions.

About Mark's Gospel, Bishop Papias of Hierapolis cited John the Elder, who said that *in his capacity as Peter's interpreter, John Mark accurately wrote down as many things as he could recall from memory (though not in an ordered form) of things said or done by the Lord; for John Mark neither heard the Lord nor accompanied Him. Peter taught using a form of chreiai [meaning "useful"]. But Peter had no intention of providing an ordered arrangement of the logia of the Lord. This John Mark attempted to do, and consequently, Mark did nothing wrong when he wrote down individual items from memory. He made it his concern not to omit anything he heard or to falsify anything.* (Eusebius. *Hist Eccl.* 3.39.15–16. Trans Bauckham)

If Peter taught using a form of *chreiai* (a brief anecdote about a particular character, with Jesus being the character, the anecdote commonly being in the form of, *On seeing ...; On being asked ...; He said ...*) then Peter introduced what he would teach through a structure similar to how the Gospel of Thomas is written, suggesting that the Gospel of Thomas could well be genuine.

Mark's Gospel is in fairly rough Greek. In all probability, Mark's Gospel was the first of the Gospels written; for both the author of Matthew's Gospel and the author of Luke's Gospel in places uses word-for-word phrasing that seems to have been copied from Mark's Gospel, only both Matthew's Gospel and Luke's Gospel are in better (more grammatically correct) Greek than the Greek used in Mark's Gospel.

If a person intends to copy passages from a text, it is unlikely that the person who copies the passages changes good Greek into poor Greek. It is much more likely that the person who copies changes poor Greek into good Greek. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that Mark's Gospel was written before either Matthew's Gospel or Luke's Gospel, and was a faithful account of what Peter taught, set in chronological event order as best that Mark could untangle Peter's use of *chreiai* ... to the best of Mark's ability, he created the

event chronology that the author of Matthew's Gospel and that the author of Luke's Gospel used.

Would Mark's Gospel have been inspired by God in its original language? Not likely. Could Mark's Gospel have been inspired? Possibly. But if Mark's Gospel is inspired when it reports that the voice from heaven said, *You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased*, then can Matthew's Gospel also be inspired when it reports that this voice from heaven didn't say, *You are my Son*, but said, *This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased*?

The author of Luke's Gospel makes no claim of inspiration, but tells readers that his Gospel is a redaction of previously written accounts, witness testimonies, and the preaching of elders:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1–4)

Mark's Gospel would have been a from-memory redaction of what Peter taught. Luke's Gospel is a redaction of the oral Christian tradition and the books that had been written (notably Mark's Gospel and Matthew's Gospel) plus others that have since been lost, with scholars identifying one lost source as "Q," apparently the text from which the *Mary material* comes.

Study of orality (as in the oral Christian tradition) discloses that every time a story is told, the basic structure of the story remains but the specific words used to tell the story vary, usually according to audience. If telling and retelling accounts of the same incident occur over, say, several decades, memory of the incident fades and what remains is memory of telling about the incident. When this happens, the "story" stabilizes and each retelling of the story varies little from previous retellings, but does vary enough that word-for-word transmission of the story can come from inscription only.

When Brits took over civil governance of East African peoples, European-style courts were established and testimonies inscribed by court stenographers. An African person, according to his or her tradition, would give the person's genealogy before testifying about a matter. These genealogies became part of the court record—and what was found was that oral genealogies tend to shrink in number of generations as least important ancestors are forgotten and more important ancestors remembered. Over a period of fifty or so years, one or more generations would be omitted from a genealogy: when an African person testified about a matter a decade or more after this same person had testified about a previous matter, the person's genealogy was shorter than before. It is only through inscription that narratives or genealogies are frozen into fixed words that can be repeated verbatim ... consider politicians for whom videotape exists of the person saying this or that, then denying that the person said what the person did, with supporters confirming that the politician didn't say what was said and with detractors magnifying the heinousness of the video recording. Oral words are spun as if they orbit "truth," rather than tell the truth.

And all of this brings us to Matthew's Gospel, sophisticated and fictionalized, but the Gospel that is of most importance to endtime disciples first coming to Christ Jesus; for

the “Jesus” of Matthew’s Gospel is the indwelling Christ Jesus that gives spiritual [eternal] life to sons of God ...

If the Bible were infallible, we would know the color of the garment Roman soldiers placed on Jesus to mock Him:

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before Him. *And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him*, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head and put a reed in His right hand. And kneeling before Him, they mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spit on Him and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they stripped Him of the robe and put His own clothes on Him and led Him away to crucify Him. (Matt 27:27–31 emphasis added)

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And the soldiers led Him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. And *they clothed Him in a purple cloak*, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on Him. And they began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they were striking His head with a reed and spitting on Him and kneeling down in homage to Him. And when they had mocked Him, *they stripped Him of the purple cloak* and put His own clothes on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him. (Mark 15:16–20 emphasis added)

Purple was the color of royalty, and purple would have been the proper color for the garment placed on Jesus when mocking Him for being a royal pretender. So for the author of Matthew’s Gospel, presumably written after Mark’s Gospel, to have changed the color of the garment from purple to red/scarlet establishes textual *difference* through which Matthew’s Gospel can be deconstructed.

If the author of Matthew’s Gospel had a copy of Mark’s Gospel available to him as it apparently seems and deliberately changed a purple cloak into a scarlet robe [cloak], the author of Matthew’s Gospel moved the focus of the mocking away from Jesus being a royal pretender to being the shed blood of Christ Jesus, with oxygenated blood being bright red or scarlet in color (oxygenated blood being *living blood* as opposed to *dead blood*). The author of Matthew’s Gospel had no reason to address the issue of Jesus being a royal pretender for he had in his genealogy of Jesus established that Jesus was true royalty, descending from King David through King Solomon and down through the kings until the deportation of the House of Judah to Babylon:

Jesse the father of David the king, and David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel (Matt 1:6–12)

Right away, a problem exists: the people of the land made Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, king in the place of his father (2 Kings 23:30), but Pharaoh Neco II took Jehoahaz from the throne and made Eliakim, son of Josiah, king in his place and changed Eliakim’s name to Jehoiakim, who then died in Jerusalem (2 Kings 24:11) and his son Jehoiachin reigned in his place in Jerusalem. It was Jehoiachin whom Nebuchadnezzar carried

away to Babylon (v. 15), making him the grandson of Josiah, not the son. So in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, the author misses the generation of Jehoiakim.

Again, it was the son of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin whom Nebuchadnezzar carried to Babylon and who was liberated from prison following Nebuchadnezzar's death:

And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table, and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his daily needs, as long as he lived. (2 Kings 25:27-30)

In 1 Chronicles 3, we find a list of the sons of Josiah and their descendants:

The sons of Josiah: Johanan the firstborn, the second Jehoiakim [named changed by Pharaoh Neco II], the third Zedekiah [named changed by Nebuchadnezzar], the fourth Shallum.

The descendants of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah [Jehoiachin] his son, Zedekiah his son. (1 Chron 3:15-16)

The sons of Zedekiah, son of Josiah, were killed by the Chaldeans:

The army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him. Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they passed sentence on him. They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him in chains and took him to Babylon. (2 Kings 25:5-7)

The son of Jehoiakim the king in 2 Kings is <Jehoiachin, the king>, but in 1 Chronicles is <Jeconiah, the captive>.

The Chaldeans and Nebuchadnezzar in particular made the sons of kings into spoils of war by castrating them, turning them into eunuchs. But since no eunuch could enter the temple [when it stood], Israelite chroniclers were reluctant to write about the fate of either the son of the king or the sons of prominent people in the Chaldean court. Chaldeans were not as reluctant to write about making eunuchs of the sons of captured kings, and having these eunuchs serve Chaldeans ... Shealtiel was born to Jehoiachin before Jehoiachin surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar and was taken to Babylon as a captured king:

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city while his servants were besieging it, and Jehoiachin the king of Judah gave himself up to the king of Babylon, himself and his mother and his servants and his officials and his palace officials. The king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign (2 King 24:11-12)

Unlike his uncle King Zedekiah, Jehoiachin surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar and had his life spared as a result; had the life of his son Shealtiel also spared. But surrendering didn't keep Jehoiachin from being imprisoned, nor did surrendering keep Shealtiel from being made into a eunuch.

However, after 37 years of captivity, Jehoiachin was released and invited to regularly dine at the king of Babylon's table. He could at this time resume his life and he would have had the company of his wives, or new wives:

And the sons of Jeconiah, the captive: Shealtiel his son [the second *Exilarch*, king-in-exile], Malchiram, Pedaiiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama and Nedabiah; and the sons of Pedaiiah: Zerubbabel and Shimei; and the sons of Zerubbabel: Meshullam and

Hananiah, and Shelomith was their sister; and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-hesed, five. (1 Chron 3:17–20)

By order of Nebuchadnezzar II, following the siege of 597 BCE, the royal house and the elite of Judah were exiled to Babylon. This exile included Jehoiachin and his young son Shealtiel, but Jehoiachin was himself still too young himself to have fathered seven children. He didn't begin to reign until he was 18 years old, and three months after beginning to reign, he provoked the Lord and the king of Babylon, who sent his army against Jerusalem, laying siege to Jerusalem for some period of time before the Nebuchadnezzar himself came to Jerusalem. It was in these months that Shealtiel was born to Jehoiachin, thus becoming the second *Exilarch* when taken to Babylon with the rest of the captives.

Pedaiah would have been the much younger brother of Shealtiel. He was not an *Exilarch*, and he was apparently enough younger than Shealtiel that there was no interest in castrating him.

Because Shealtiel would have been involuntarily made into a eunuch he would have been as good as dead as far as leaving his seed in this world. He would have been to the royal house of Judah as Chilion was to his Moabite wife, Ruth. And in order for seed to be raised up to Mahlon, the Ephrathite son of Naomi from Bethlehem in Judah, a kinsman-redeemer was needed, this kinsman-redeemer being Boaz who took Ruth as his wife “to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place” (Ruth 4:10), and to Ruth was born Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David (*v.* 17).

Mahlon, whose name was not lost to Israel was of Ephrath, the former name for Bethlehem; for in Obed, Mahlon's name was continued.

Jesse grew as a tree from Obed, his root. And of this root derived from the kinsman-redeemer Boaz, the prophet Isaiah declares the words of the Lord:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the spirit of [YHWH] shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of [YHWH]. And His delight shall be in the fear of [YHWH]. He shall not judge by what His eyes see, or decide disputes by what His ears hear, but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His waist, and faithfulness the belt of His loins. ... In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of Him shall the nations inquire, and His resting place shall be glorious. In that day the Lord will extend His hand yet a second time to recover the remnant that remains of His people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea. He will raise a signal for the nations and will assemble the banished of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. (Isa 11:1–5, 10–12)

The Messiah is the one that *shall come forth as a shoot from the stump of Jesse, a branch from his roots that shall bear fruit* ... of the Messiah comes from a shoot growing from the stump of Jesse, then Jesse and the tree that has grown from Jesse has been cut off, cut down. David is of the tree of Jesse. The Messiah grows from the same roots as Jesse, but grows as His own tree. Thus, the Messiah will be one generation removed from the kinsman-redeemer that gives life to—in this case—the Root of

Righteousness which has had its natural branches broken off and wild olive scions grafted on.

Zerubbabel can be likened to Obed: both are the son of a kinsman-redeemer...

The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that [YHWH] of hosts has sent me to you. For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. (Zech 4:9–10)

Gerald Waterhouse, an evangelist-rank minister in the former Worldwide Church of God (WCG), delivered spellbinding sermons across the nation and around the world about Herbert Armstrong being *Zerubbabel*, his hand beginning a work that he would also finish, the work of preparing the way for Christ's return and the *wonderful World Tomorrow* ... didn't happen. Neither Waterhouse nor Armstrong could read the then-still-sealed prophecy that the author of Matthew's Gospel sought to unseal—and actually did unseal when he wrote,

So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. (Matt 1:17)

Examine Scripture and count the generations that have been left out: generations have been left out, more than just that of Jehoiakim. But generations were left out so as to draw attention to *<three sets of fourteen>*. If generations were not left out, there would be no challenge to there being three sets of fourteen [seven plus seven], with three kinsman-redeemers, two in the first set (Judah serving as the redeemer for his eldest son Er, and Boaz serving as the redeemer for Mahlon) and one in the third set (Pedaiah for his brother Shealtiel).

Christians have one kinsmen-redeemer, Christ Jesus, who raises up sons for God the Father.

In the case of Judah, the father brought forth seed that would be counted as his eldest son's child, the mirror image of Christ Jesus bringing forth seed that would be counted as His Father's.

In the case of Boaz, an older man, a relative that wasn't the closest but was the most honorable, raised up seed for his relative's son, most likely a nephew.

In the case of Pedaiah, a younger brother raised up seed for his elder brother who, though still living, was as good as dead thanks to the king of Babylon.

And in order for the pattern the author of Matthew's Gospel is establishing to hold, there has to be a kinsman-redeemer in the "second seven" of the third set of fourteen generations, with Christ Jesus being this spiritually positioned kinsman redeemer, but also with Joseph functioning as a kinsman-redeemer as Judah functioned in this position, the theological justification for the vision of Joseph (Matt 1:20–23).

Without using the phrase for "kinsman-redeemer," the author of Matthew's Gospel introduces the concept as well as discloses the structure of the Gospel in the traditionally appropriate narrative position through using three sets of fourteen generations, with the middle set confined to the kings of Israel, all of whom represented the people of the land in a manor akin to being the redeemer of the people if the king were righteous. This does not mean that what the author of Matthew's Gospel assigned to Christ Jesus as his genealogy is true; for the Christ/Messiah was not to be of David, but of a root sucker growing from the stump of Jesse, meaning that the Christ was to be

of Obed, whose parents were honorable people, one of Israel and one of Moab about whom Moses said that no Moabite shall enter the congregation of the Lord (Deut 23:3; Neh 13:1).

The balance that the author of Matthew realized and exploited in their being chiral kinsman-redeemers in the first fourteen generation set and in the last fourteen generation set can be—because of the nature of Hebraic structured narratives—used as prophecy about spiritual Israel, the nation to be circumcised of heart rather than in the flesh, with the Body of Christ being redeemed by the Father (analogous to Judah with Tamar, Judah raising up sons for his eldest son Er) early in the 1st-Century and with the glorified Christ raising up sons for the Father according to Moses after the Law was given:

If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel. And if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, "My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me." Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, "I do not wish to take her," then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, "So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house." And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, "The house of him who had his sandal pulled off." (Deut 25:10)

Again, in Hebraic structured narratives there is a physical presentation then a spiritual presentation of the same narrative, same phenomenon, same thought; thus in the fourteen generations (there are actually more generations) between Abraham and David, there is one kinsman-redeemer [*goel*] in the first seven generations and one kinsman-redeemer [*goel*] in the second seven, with the first seven forming a physical type of the second seven in which the *goel* [Boaz] follows the pattern established by Moses for brother raising up seed for brother even though Boaz isn't Mahlon's brother.

The Gospel of Matthew has a physical face and a spiritual face in a manner analogous to two sets of <seven> together making one fourteen generation genealogical set that is bilaterally symmetrical, akin to a human person.

And in the author of Matthew's Gospel omitting generations to arrive at fourteen when more exists, especially in the unit between Abraham and David which will have the genealogy presented in the Book of Ruth and used by the author of Matthew's Gospel omitting approximately 200 years of Israel's history, causing endtime scholars to date the Exodus to about 1250 BCE rather than the more appropriate date of 1450 BCE.

Whether Herbert Armstrong was capable of understanding how a Hebrew structured narrative can be used to both conceal information and to reveal what is not recorded won't be known until judgments are revealed. What can be known is that he gave no indication he could "read" what the author of Matthew's Gospel wrote in a Hebraic-styled biography. He simply assigned Matthew's genealogy of Jesus to being the genealogy of Joseph, husband of Mary, and assigned Luke's differing genealogy of

Joseph to being the genealogy of Mary, a simple though dishonest solution to New Testament contradictions.

The sum of the problem of textual reconciliation remains on the shoulders of Zerubbabel, who either did or didn't lay the foundation for the second temple:

[From Tattenai the governor's letter to Darius] However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, Cyrus the king made a decree that this house of God should be rebuilt. And the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple that was in Jerusalem and brought into the temple of Babylon, these Cyrus the king took out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered to one whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor; and he said to him, "Take these vessels, go and put them in the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its site." *Then this Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the house of God that is in Jerusalem, and from that time until now it has been in building, and it is not yet finished.*' (Ezra 5:13–16 emphasis added)

But the prophet Zechariah wrote,

Then the word of [YHWH] came to me, saying, "*The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that [YHWH] of hosts has sent me to you. For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. "These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth."* (Zech 4:8–10 emphasis added)

The foundation for the house of the Lord that Sheshbazzar laid was the foundation for the second temple, not the foundation for the spiritual or heavenly temple seen in Revelation 11:1 — a *Zerubbabel* different from the man that carried on the name of Shealtiel. This Armstrong seemed to understand (he wouldn't have permitted Gerald Waterhouse to preach what he did otherwise), but by his denial of being born of spirit, he couldn't be this spiritual *Zerubbabel* whose parent was the kinsman-redeemer Christ Jesus. And this those who idolize Herbert Armstrong do not understand.

Regardless of how many times Ezra identifies Zerubbabel as the son of Shealtiel or what the prophet Haggai claims about Zerubbabel being the son of Shealtiel; regardless of what Matthew's Gospel claims about Zerubbabel being the son of Shealtiel, Zerubbabel was the son of Pedaiiah, the much younger brother of Shealtiel who would have been made a eunuch by Nebuchadnezzar when his father, King Jeconiah [Jeroiachin] was taken captive by the king of Babylon. Shealtiel fathered no son. Zerubbabel was only the son of Shealtiel through his brother Pedaiiah serving as a kinsman-redeemer for Shealtiel, raising up a son for Shealtiel so that his name continues in Israel.

In Luke's genealogy of Jesus through Joseph, the name Zerubbabel appears, but in Luke, is the grandson of Neri, not King Jeconiah [Jeroiachin], and his son is Rhesa, not Abiud (Luke 3:27) ... a different *Zerubbabel*.

All of the above seems far from making a simple argument against the infallibility of Scripture, the premise behind Herbert Armstrong's ministry, as well as every other Protestant ministry. The Latin Church, however, subjugates Scripture to the decrees of the Pontiff ...

Islam contends that both Judaism and Christianity have been unfaithful and simply got Scripture wrong, that the visions of Mohammad are correct even when they carry within them the flotsam of Christian myth ... yes, Judaism and greater Christendom

have been unfaithful, but the visions of Mohammad are at least equally unfaithful to God.

The problem with the people of the Book is the *Book* itself; for the Word of God lives in the personage of the glorified Christ Jesus, not as ink stains on vellum or paper. And without the indwelling of the spirit of Christ [*pneuma Christou*], the person—regardless of intellect—cannot grasp the things of God. This includes imams, rabbis, pontiffs, pastors and pastor-generals.

*

How many women came to the tomb on the morning of the Wave Sheaf Offering (as Sadducees reckoned when this offering was to be made)? Disciples find that in Matthew's Gospel, two women, both named "Mary," came to the tomb where Jesus had been placed (Matt 28:1), but in Mark's Gospel, three women came: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome (Mark 16:1). In John's Gospel, one woman came, Mary Magdalene (John 20:1). Yet in Luke's Gospel, a chorus of woman came:

"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ..." And all His acquaintances *and the women who had followed Him from Galilee* stood at a distance watching these things. ... The women who had come with Him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. (Luke 23:28, 49, 55–56; 24:1 emphasis added)

One woman, Mary Magdalene, doesn't represent *the women who had come with Jesus from Galilee* in either number or address; so the authors of three of the Gospel accounts present wrong information. Three accounts do not agree with one account, nor does any account agree with another. These four Gospel accounts are as four witnesses offering contradictory testimony about the same phenomenon—when this is the case in a trial, the defendant is set free for reasonable doubt is reinforced by witness testimony. The only testimony that remains consistent through being imbedded in the other three accounts is that one female person came to the tomb on the day after the Sabbath.

Is more than one woman needed to establish the reality that with God, women are the equal (or more than the equal) of men? No, one is sufficient. But this also implies that what is presented as factual—as fact-based history—in each of the four Gospels is fabricated for theological purposes: each Gospel is a literary artifice rather than a historical account. And if a literary artifice, then the Gospel should not in any way be idolized or worshiped, a practice of the Latin Church. The Bible is a book[s] as its name implies. It is not the living Word of God; the glorified Christ Jesus is. And what are the terms of the New Covenant:

Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. For they did not continue in my covenant, and so I showed no concern for them, declares the Lord. For *this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.* For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more. (Heb 8:8–12 emphasis added)

The Great Commission of Matthew's Gospel—"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19–20)—stands, in this present era, opposed to the New Covenant that has the Lord putting the Torah (from Jer 31:33) in Israel and writing His laws on the hearts of Israel so that Israel will be His people, knowing the Lord. Israel shall not teach neighbor and brother to know the Lord; Israel shall not make disciples for the Lord; Israel shall not make disciples of all nations. This is a task that the Lord has reserved for Himself.

Returning to the end of Section Three and the citation of Matthew 15:13–14 that has Jesus saying,

Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. **Let them alone;** they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit. (Boldface added)

There is no need for Christian evangelism beyond permitting the disciple's manifested love for God, neighbor, and brother speak for the disciple until the disciple is asked the reason for the hope that lies within this son of God. Then—not before then—the disciple should speak Jesus' words as best that the disciple understands them. The disciple will speak imperfectly as a human child speaks human words imperfectly, but if the person who asks is being drawn from this world by God the Father (see John 6:44, 65), the person who asks will hear Christ Jesus' voice in the disciple's words.

Herbert Armstrong never understood that the entirety of his ministry was based on vanity; on being a *little person* in a world of *big people* that at one time he desperately wanted to join. His physical stature determined his mindset; for he was not born of spirit—he would have told you so himself. And even during the half-century of his ministry, he wanted to be received by heads-of-state, by people who were somebody. He acquired the hand-me-down mansions of the rich. He ate on gold-rimmed china and with gold-plated flatware. He had a trove of antiques. And late in his life, he had a virtual fleet of Bentleys, none of which he could drive because of his failing eyesight ... in the end, he was blind.

There is so much that Armstrong didn't know, didn't understand, that where to begin remains the problem at hand.

Consider the account of the temptation of Jesus: from what very high mountain can all of the kingdoms of this world and their glory be seen (see Matt 4:8)? From what height can the opposite side of the earth be seen? What height is needed for a person to see what is concealed by the curvature of the earth at the earth's widest diameter?

Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" (Matt 4:8–10)

Why would an intelligent person believe that the Adversary took Jesus to the top of a tall mountain from which he showed Jesus all of the kingdoms of this world and their glory? Any attempt to visualize the scene negates the reality of the scene. And if the reality of this temptation scene is negated, so too is suspension of disbelief ... the reader should not continue to believe in the literalness of the words on the page. Yet Christians blindly continue to believe that Scripture is infallible.

Consider, also, Mark's account of the temptation of Jesus:

The spirit immediately drove Him out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And He was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to Him. (Mark 1:12–13)

In Mark's account, Jesus was tempted by Satan throughout the forty days, but the nature of these temptations isn't recorded nor should they be recorded; for who would have witnessed what was said to Jesus or what Jesus said back? Who would have taken notes that, forty plus years later, would be inscribed? And would Jesus have told His disciples exactly what happened? Not likely. It was enough for His disciples to know that temptation had occurred.

In Mark's account of the temptation, angels were ministering to Jesus throughout the forty days. But this isn't what either Matthew's Gospel or Luke's Gospel records:

Then Jesus was led up by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ... Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to Him. (Matt 4:1–3, 11)

In Matthew's Gospel, how Jesus answered the Adversary is the proper answer for each disciple in similar circumstances. But the author of Matthew's Gospel wasn't with Jesus when He was being tempted; plus, this author ascribes to the Adversary temptations and responses that could not have possibly happened. The Tempting of Jesus as recorded in Matthew's Gospel is fictional, but apparently became part of the oral Christian tradition that the author of Luke's Gospel redacted. Thus, the ordered creation of Gospels will have Mark's Gospel appearing first, followed by Matthew's, then Luke's, and finally John's, with the author of John's Gospel writing to set everything straight for the "Jesus" of Matthew's Gospel is not the Jesus of Mark's Gospel. And the *Jesus* of Luke's Gospel is neither the "Jesus" of Matthew's Gospel nor the Jesus of Mark's Gospel. And all of this would have made no sense to Herbert Armstrong, who would have insisted that the <Jesus> of each of the synoptic Gospels was the same Jesus ... he simply was not a close reader of the texts. He assumed all of the Gospels were about the same human man. He couldn't have imagined that anything in the Gospels had been fictionalized.

When the four Gospels are sequentially placed in their most probable order of composition, Mark's Gospel is in the physical position of a Hebraic thought-couplet; Matthew's Gospel is in the spiritual position. Luke's position is in the physical position of a secondary thought couplet; John's Gospel is in the spiritual position of this secondary couplet ... what would such an analysis of the Gospels mean for endtime Christians? It would mean that the author of Matthew's Gospel and the author of John's Gospel had a degree of spiritual maturity endtime disciples are only beginning to approach; that into and through the 20th-Century, Christians—including Herbert Armstrong—were as children using their parents' Bible as their coloring book.

Mention needs to be made of the order of temptations in Luke's and in Matthew's accounts: in Matthew, we find,

And the tempter came and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But He answered, "It is written, "'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God [cit. from Deut 8:3].'" Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and

said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "'He will command His angels concerning you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone [cit. from Ps 91:11–12].'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test [cit. from Deut 6:16].'" Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve [cit. from Deut 6:13].'" Then the devil left Him (Matt 4:3–11)

Bread, temple, mountain—the order ascends in height ... the quotations attributed to Jesus are from Deuteronomy, the codification of the Moab covenant, the covenant made with the children of Israel that is in addition to the Sinai covenant—the covenant made on the flat lands east of the Jordan with those present at the time and those not present (Deut 29:15).

In Luke, we find,

The devil said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" And the devil took Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to Him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." And Jesus answered Him, "It is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.'" And he took Him to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, "'He will command His angels concerning you, to guard you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. (Luke 4:3–13)

Bread, authority, temple—the order forms an inverted <v>, which in Greek is the inversion of the nasal consonant ... because Luke's Gospel was probably written a decade after Matthew's Gospel, the change in order represents a conscious decision by the author of Luke, for the similarity in phrasing suggests that the author of Luke copied phrasing from Matthew's Gospel. Of course, the possibility exists that both copied from a common source text, but considering the limited changes made and that the oral Christian tradition would not produce identical phrasing and that Matthew's changes of Mark's temptation account have a recognizable purpose, it is most likely that the oral tradition is the source for both Matthew's and Luke's temptation accounts, with the author of Matthew changing the order of temptation of his literary purposes and with the author of Luke's Gospel *borrowing* the phrasing of Matthew but retaining the temptation order of the oral tradition.

Concerning the claim, *the oral Christian tradition would not produce identical phrasing*, to repeat myself, study of orality discloses that every time a story is told, the basic structure of the story remains but the specific words used to tell the story vary.

The oral Christian tradition would have wobbled here and there until memories of what Christ did and said dimmed and all that remained were memories of telling about Christ's deeds. At this point, for good or bad, the oral Christian tradition would become stable enough to *walk* into the following century. But this tradition, long ago lost, would

have included what the Apostle Paul identified as the mystery of lawlessness (2 Thess 2:7) and what Peter described when he wrote,

But according to His promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. *There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.* But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:13–18 emphasis added)

It can be assumed that the oral Christian tradition included many stories that were not fully true; it can also be assumed that the temptation of Christ story as presented in Matthew's Gospel and in Luke's Gospel is in the category of stories told by itinerant preachers about whom Bishop Papias wrote, "[U]nlike most people I took no pleasure in those who told many different stories, but only in those who taught the truth" (cit. from Eusebius. 3:39).

The mistake greater Christendom has repeatedly made is the mistake Herbert Armstrong made—

God, Father and Son, does not need the help of human agents to teach those on whose hearts the Lord has written the Law to *know the Lord*. God is perfectly capable of teaching all that He draws from this world to *know the Lord*. And from a historical perspective, in nineteen centuries greater Christendom has accomplished nothing more than to teach a great many people to transgress the Law, ignore Moses, and to justify their carnal desires through twisted readings of Scripture, then take great offense when told they are spiritual bastards.

Christian orthodoxy in the 2nd-Century CE would have taken great offense if told that the Body of Christ was spiritually dead: they weren't dead, so how could the Body of Christ be dead? Weren't they part of the Body of Christ ... indeed they were—and they were spiritually dead. For how did the man Jesus walk in this world? Did He not walk as a believing Judean? And if He dwells in the person as Paul wrote to the Galatians (2:20), then the Christian can only walk in this world as a Gentile through having killed the indwelling *Christ*.

Because each of the Gospels is a literary artifice, it would be reasonable for the anonymous author of Matthew and the anonymous author of Luke to have expanded John Mark's inscribed recollections of what Peter taught about the temptation of Jesus into an incident showing Christ Jesus besting the Adversary, not through "might"—in both Matthew's and Luke's temptation accounts, the Adversary physically takes Jesus from the wilderness to Jerusalem and sets Him on the pinnacle of the temple (Matt 4:5; Luke 4:9), which should have been against the will of Christ—but through use of Holy Writ, meaning that there remains reasons for reading Scripture apart from reading to *feel good*.

*

The same message pertains here as pertained at the end of the First Section: this is still an incomplete work, with many more words waiting to be e-published. But I have

already gotten comments on the First Section—and the remnant of Herbert Armstrong’s ministry remains without understanding even though many who once idolized Armstrong now loathe him. That is too harsh of a judgment of Armstrong, who without being born of spirit could only be as Nicodemus was.

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