

Commentary — From the Margins *Seeing is Believing?*

Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, "Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? And here He is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to Him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where He comes from." So Jesus proclaimed, as He taught in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I come from? But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and Him you do not know. I know Him, for I come from Him, and He sent me." So they were seeking to arrest Him, but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. Yet many of the people believed in Him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will He do more signs than this man has done?" (John 7:25–31)

1.

The person not born of spirit—that is not a son of God and as such is not a younger sibling of Christ Jesus—believes through seeing signs, miracles, mysteries being performed before their eyes. Traditionally, they believe what their eyes see, but in this present age of computer animated graphics, they have come to simultaneously believe and not believe what their eyes see. Although scientists today still believe their eyes, their instruments, their measurements, the nature of multiple dimensions, of string theory, of four dimensional space have called into question the “completeness” of what eyes can see, with the real possibility existing that “outer space” is a computer-like simulation left over from an earlier demonstration.

But if eyes cannot really be trusted even while necessarily trusting them, what about dreams and visions and revelations from angels? Can they be trusted, considering that there can be lying spirits (see 1 Kings 22:13–23)? And again, the answer is yes and no. There must be a “testing” of spirits. John writes,

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. (1 John 4:1–3)

After John wrote, false “spirits” began to figuratively *play to Scripture*, confessing that Christ Jesus came in the flesh [proto-Gnostics did not believe that Jesus was born of flesh] so as to pass the test John established for genuineness, then these false spirits delivered false messages to duped Christians who believed the messages because the ones delivering the message satisfied the criterion for genuineness that John established. These duped Christians did not put false spirits to any other test; they treated Scripture as if it were a static rather than dynamic reality.

If what eyes see in this age of computer graphics cannot be trusted to be “real” and if visions can be false and if there are lying spirits, can there not also be lying signs of sorts considered as infallible, such as canonized texts? How does any Christian know that Jesus is descended from King David through Solomon (Matt 1:6) or whether Jesus was descended from David through Nathan (Luke 3:31) or even if David was an ancestor of Jesus, who wasn’t the son of Joseph according to both Matthew and Luke, but was fathered by the Logos [*’o Logos*] according to John’s Gospel (1:14)? ... Did the Adversary, the spiritual king of Babylon (Isa 14:4), father King Nebuchadnezzar, the human King of Babylon? No he did not. And if Nebuchadnezzar is the shadow and type of the Adversary, the “real” king of spiritual Babylon, does King David as the shadow and type of the “real” Shepherd of Israel have to have fathered the man Jesus the Nazarene? Most likely, David was the ancestor of Jesus, but not through blood but through David having within him the “spirit” of *Yah*, David’s Lord; for David wrote,

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy on me, O God, [physical or outer self]
according to your steadfast love; [spiritual or inner self]
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.

Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
and **take not your Holy Spirit from me.**
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you. (Ps 51:1–13 double emphasis added)

All of the indented lines form the spiritual portion of thought-couplets, with the above thought-couplets forming expanded couplets such as the following doubled pair in which “P/p” represents physical and “S/s” represents the spiritual:

Pp – Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
Ps – and in sin did my mother conceive me.
Sp – Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
Ss – and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

King David employs expanded couplets and doubly expanded couplets to reveal the depth of his repentance—and to reveal that although he is not born of spirit through having received the indwelling of the breath/spirit of God the Father, he has within him the breath/spirit of *Yah*, whom David knew to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of living ones (Matt 22:32), with David revealing what he knew to be true of God in his later psalms. By David placing *Yah* in the physical or of-this-world position of the thought-couplets beginning Psalms 146, 148, and 149, and the Tetragrammaton *YHWH* in the spiritual position in the thought-couplets, David disclosed to those who have the *Key of David* that he, David, knew the Lord to be the God of living ones (Matt 22:32) and not the God of dead ones, the God who raised Jesus from death (Rom 8:11).

If the man Jesus the Nazarene has any biological descent from King David, it has to be through Mary, His mother, not through Joseph, whose genealogy is of no importance. But both the genealogy found in Matthew’s Gospel and the genealogy found in Luke’s Gospel are allegedly of Joseph, not Mary. Only in John’s Gospel do endtime disciples find a genealogy of Jesus that satisfies the claims made in both Matthew and Luke—and in John’s Gospel, there is no mention of Mary until the wedding at Cana, after Jesus has been baptized and has disciples. In this lack of a human genealogy, John’s Gospel agrees with Mark’s Gospel.

David claims to have the spirit or breath [the exhalation of breath] of the Lord, the God of Abraham, with or in him, a claim that can be made by the prophets and by John the Baptist and by his parents—King Saul received this spirit:

Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his [Saul’s] head and kissed him and said, "Has not the Lord anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the Lord and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that the Lord has anointed you to be prince over his heritage. ... After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim, where there is a

garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. *Then the Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you, and **you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.*** Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. (1 Sam 10:1, 5–7 emphasis and double emphasis added)

But King Saul lost this spirit long before his reign came to an end with his death:

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." ... Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And *the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward.* And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah. *Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him.* (1 Sam 16:1, 13–14 emphasis added)

The spirit of the Lord (that is, the breath of *Yah*) caused Saul to be a different man than he was before, with this “different person” representing the shadow and type of the inner self of a disciple, with this inner self “dead” through being consigned to disobedience as a son of disobedience until raised from death through receipt of the spirit of God the Father [*pneuma Theou*] which gives life to the inner self of the person ... regardless of whether a disciple initially realizes that a change has occurred when the person is born of God as a son, the mind of a born-of-spirit disciple will realize that change has occurred within a couple of years, with this initial unawareness being foreshadowed by a human person not remembering his or her own birth and first year or two of life.

But Saul as a “different person” was still not pleasing to the Lord. However, David as a different person was a man after the Lord’s heart; was a man like the Lord except when fears/passions of the flesh got in the way. In this, David was like Paul when Paul wrote (dictated) Romans chapter seven, only Paul was born of spirit and David was not.

The difference between who David was before he received the spirit of *Yah* and who David was afterwards is masked by David receiving the spirit of the Lord when he was still a youth; i.e., by receiving the spirit before it became evident who he would be naturally other than his slaying of the lion and the bear.

Spiritual immaturity masks who will do what when a son of God approaches his spiritual majority [his receipt of a glorified body]. Thus, in the Affliction and Endurance (collectively, the seven endtime years of tribulation), Christians will be either like Saul or like David, with Saul forming the shadow and type of the man of perdition in the Affliction, and with David forming the shadow and type of the Lamb of God in the Endurance of Christ Jesus. In this present era and until the Second Passover liberation of Israel, Christians will be as Saul was before being anointed or as David was before being anointed—and today’s Christian who isn’t willing to face the spiritual equivalent to a bear or a lion is a coward that will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The character of an immature son of God is revealed in the things this “son” does before this son is called, justified and glorified. Thus, the Christian who is weak in faith but strong in doing good according to the ways of this world will, most likely, mature to also being strong in faith, the point Paul was attempting to make in Romans chapter 14. Therefore, no disciple should harshly judge other disciples of Christ, but should treat the weak as younger brothers until the weak reveal themselves to be enemies of Christ. Then the one who has been weak is marked and shunned; for Christians are to judge those who claim to be brothers:

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. ... I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler--not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."
(1 Cor 5:1–3, 9–13)

Two seemingly different instructions from Paul: in Romans, disciples are not to judge (Rom 14:10), but ignorance of the Law is not an excuse for transgressing the Law (Rom 1:20, 32). However, in 1st Corinthians, disciples are to judge those who claim to be brothers (1 Cor 5:12–13). And I have returned to where I began ...

Can words as linguistic signs be believed? Can words lie? Can Scripture itself be false; be read falsely?

I spent much of the summer and autumn of 2012 writing *A Philadelphia Apologetic*, Volumes Three, Four, and Five, with Volume Five not yet released as an e-book but available as draft sections on my website. Volumes Three and Four are, however, available as e-books from retailers or as pdf files on my website. And in these three volumes that go beyond the basic fundamentals of *Philadelphia* as outlined in Volume One and Volume Two, I argue that the Book of Acts is a Sophist novel, is not factual, and needs to be quarantined, that the author of Luke's Gospel and of Acts writes as a proto-Gnostic, and would have *Theophilus* worship a God that is not the Father, whom Jesus came to reveal to His disciples and whom Jesus did reveal, meaning that the author of Luke and Acts was not a disciple born of God, but was to the Church of God as a Jew or a Greek are (from 1 Cor 10:32).

Nevertheless, a Sophist novel with all of the traditional novelistic motifs employed in these Greek works of fiction, including the mandatory shipwreck scene, made it into canonical New Testament Scripture.

But the problem is larger than just Luke and Acts: Matthew's Gospel is not factually true although it is spiritually true — Matthew's Gospel is a metaphor

that has the earthly man Jesus forming the shadow and type of the indwelling Christ that disciples receive as the vessel that has come from heaven to hold the breath of life that has also come from heaven. In other words, Matthew's Gospel is oddly prophetic, and is a text that is not a Greco-Roman biography as it purports to be. It is a text that really has no precedent; for this Gospel is used to "sneak" information endtime disciples need across the centuries when the Body of Christ would be spiritually dead and defiled.

In a way, Matthew's Gospel is linguistically as computer generated graphics are visually; for if a computer generated graphic doesn't look like something recognizable, the graphic is rejected as nonsensical. Likewise, if Matthew's Gospel doesn't linguistically seem like a Greco-Roman biography of the man Jesus, it would have been rejected before the 2nd-Century CE began. For what it reveals is fantastic.

The leading authorities and the elders of the 20th-Century and now 21st-Century Church of God can be likened to the chief priests and Pharisees of Herod's temple ... in the continuation of what the author of John's Gospel writes is where significance emerges:

So there was a division among the people over Him. Some of them wanted to arrest Him, but no one laid hands on Him. The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" *The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."* Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee." (John 7:43-52 emphasis added)

The temple authorities, most of whom were Pharisees, did not believe the signs/miracles that Jesus did, but believed what they read in Scripture instead, not realizing that they, themselves, assigned meaning to the words of Scripture; that the words of Scripture were actually without meaning, an awareness that spawned a critical revolution in the 20th-Century. For when a reader realizes that he or she assigns meaning to words heard or to words read, then the next step is to realize that the speaker/author also assigned meaning to the words he or she used. And if the author of a text assigned meaning to words, then recovery of the author's meaning through deconstructing his or her text—as if texts were fish and literary critics were biologists counting pyloric caeca—will reveal the author's mindset, values, prejudices, education, all aspects of an otherwise alien culture.

For temple officials, how they read Scripture trumped what their eyes saw and their ears heard. They were "repeaters" [*Tannaim*], endlessly repeating orally what they had been taught orally by their teachers in, allegedly, an unbroken chain going back to Moses—unbroken only if the reforms of King Josiah are ignored. And while there was little dissent among the *repeaters* [repeat offenders], none thinking for themselves, the teaching of first John the Baptist

then of Christ Jesus broke with the *repeaters*; for the author of Matthew's Gospel writes,

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." So He left them and departed. When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread." But Jesus, aware of this, said, "O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matt 16:1–12)

Again, a word is a sign, a linguistic icon. And Jesus said to the Pharisees and Sadducees that they couldn't read signs, words, in particular the words of Moses. For in one sign—a red sky—are two meanings found, with the context for the sign determining the meaning of the sign, something that is taught to first-year Composition students in probably every university in America.

Meaning of any sign, including words, is context-specific: a 12-gauge shotgun carried in the Alaskan bush has a different meaning than a 12-gauge shotgun carried in pine timber in Georgia. In Alaska, the person carrying a short barreled 12-gauge probably isn't hunting either birds or deer, but is carrying the shotgun as a bear protection; for the carrying of a firearm changes a person's body chemistry in a way that is detected by wildlife. The outdoor photographer who carries a firearm can never get as close to game as a person without a firearm. Likewise, the fisherman carrying a firearm will never see as many bears as the fisherman without a firearm. And if an animal can sense the change in a person's aura that carrying a firearm makes, so can urban predators.

Now back to where I began: a sign takes its meaning from the context in which it appears, but a sign also determines to a large degree its own context (the shotgun or rifle an Alaska fisherman carries). A red sky isn't seen all day unless there are forest fires or a volcanic eruption to the west of the observer, but is seen at dawn or at dusk when the light of the sun takes a long angle through the earth's atmosphere, thereby filtering short-wave-length blue light from the visible spectrum. The long angle at dusk and dawn is approximately the same, with the rising sun giving to objects more of a pink hue than the orange-red hue of the setting sun. So it isn't dawn or dusk in isolation of other factors that give differing meanings to the same sign: it is the history of weather coming in from the west (the direction of the setting sun) that adds to the context of a red sky—a clear

sky—at dusk that produces the meaning of fair weather. Whereas a red sky in morning shouldn't be seen because of the land mass to the east of the Mediterranean Sea will require the morning sun to be high enough in the sky that the visible spectrum is no longer taking a long angle through the atmosphere, meaning that for the visible light spectrum to be without blue light, there is a filtering agent [storm clouds] sliding down from the north to bring fierce weather onto the eastern Mediterranean.

It is the absence of westerly clouds at sunset that reveals that the night will be fair sailing, and it will be the presence of easterly clouds (these clouds disclosing the presence of a storm front having butted up against the Eurasian landmass and slipping south to get around the mountains) that produce the morning red sky and stormy weather. So while the sign of a red sky—one sign—can have two meanings, depending upon its context (dusk or dawn), the meanings themselves are shorthand expressions for a more detailed analysis of Mediterranean weather patterns, with these patterns then inserted in New Testament Scripture where they are applied to contexts where they do not hold true, such as the Aleutians Islands, where I sailed a small vessel for a period of time.

In the Aleutians, a red sky at dusk meant a storm was on its way. The alpenglow of the morning sun meant fair weather for at least a few hours. But it was the “feel” of the water that disclosed incoming storms; for as wind passed over the surface of the Bering Sea, it transferred energy to the water, which being more dense than the atmosphere, pushed that energy ahead of the storm by as much as a day or two. So when you saw the red sky at dusk, you knew the storm was finally upon you—and I sought places to hide behind islands where the wind had to blow straight down to get at me.

What Jesus said about the red sky is apparently true for the Mediterranean, but not true for the Bearing Sea—and again, the sign is doubly context specific.

It was leading temple officials and Pharisees that did not believe the signs/miracles Jesus did, but believed how they read Scripture—and we have a modern example of this that comes from Paul:

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For *there is no authority except from God*, and those that exist have been instituted by God. *Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed*, and those who resist will incur judgment. For *rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad*. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then *do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good*. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. (Rom 13:1–6 emphasis added)

What wrong did a Jew do in Nazi Germany that he or she, adult or child, should be condemned to gas chambers and cremation? Answer if you can. Stand upright before God and ask Him, *Did you appoint Hitler as your ruling*

authority in Nazi Germany? How about Stalin in the Soviet Union, or Pol Pot in Cambodia? And you know that He did not. Yes, He permitted what happened to happen; for He delivered this world into the hand of the Adversary for a certain period of time. But it wasn't God that gassed infants.

So will you be as the leading temple authorities and the Pharisees were, believing Scripture rather than the evidence of your eyes, pictures of Holocaust victims and survivors?

I want to pick this subject up right here in the next Commentary.

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