

Commentary — From the Margins *The Absence of Evidence*

Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And he sprang up and began walking. And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.” Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them. (Acts 14:8–18)

1.

The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men—the crowd that listened to Paul and Barnabas at Lystra heard Paul’s words, but was apparently unable to connect those words to anything meaningful until the man crippled from birth, having never walked, at Paul’s command sprang up and began walking. At that moment, a connection was made: Paul was Hermes (because he was the one

speaking) and Barnabas was Zeus, and nothing that Paul and Barnabas said really dissuaded the crowd that two of the pantheon hadn't come to the city special to Zeus because of the temple at the entrance of the city.

The people of Lystra had no evidence that Zeus or Hermes or any of the pantheon existed; yet without evidence, they faithfully worshiped deities created from the imaginations of men—deities that sprang from the foreheads of mortal men as Athena allegedly sprang from the forehead of Zeus. The people of Lystra were not troubled by the absence of evidence for the pantheon even though Greek literature seems to reveal that no educated Greek believed in the existence of the pantheon after the 5th-Century BCE. The pantheon was for the people as Santa Claus presently is for children. The pantheon became a political tool employed to keep the people toiling fields and a religious class idle, enjoying the labors of the people without doing much themselves to prosper in this world other than propagating myth.

Americans, today, know that Santa Claus is not real, but the marketing of Christmas in all its aspects drives the American economy. So adults play along with their children and grandchildren, suspending disbelief for a couple of months during which roughly half of all annual consumer purchases are made. ... Santa Claus is as important to American culture and the American economy as the pantheon was to Hellenist cultures and economies, and about as *real*.

Meaning is always assigned to signs, to wonders, to miracles, to letters and words. Thus, a thunderclap or the flight of a hawk became signs to which ancients assigned meaning: in a clap of thunder, the gods had spoken, with this seen in Scripture:

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. / Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." (John 12:20–29 emphasis added)

Note that in the above passage, Greeks had come to the feast [the Feast of Unleavened Bread] to worship, and of these Greeks some asked to see Jesus ... Greeks of all sorts, including Hellenist Jews, assigned meaning to thunderclaps; thus, it isn't surprising that in hearing the indistinct (to the crowd) voice of the

Father that some Jews would identify the voice as thunder, and some would hear *thunder* and identify the thunder as the voice of an angel. Meaning was assigned to what was heard. And without the spirit of God, the words of God were not understandable. They could be heard with human ears, but heard only as a clap of thunder. They could not be heard as words. But because of the culture from which they came, Greek Jews would have assigned a particular meaning to what they heard, and that meaning would have the thunder being the voice of an angel. If these Greeks would have been Greek pagans, they would have said that they heard the voice of Zeus so the context [because they had come to worship at Passover and because they said they heard the voice of an angel] discloses that these Greeks were religious Jews even though they remained cultural Greeks.

The concept of religious belief differing from cultural identity is seen when Paul returned to Jerusalem (Acts chap 21). The Christians in Jerusalem remained cultural Jews, a subject to be addressed later in this Commentary.

Signs include more than words, thunder claps, healings, or casting out demons: the amount of the uranium isotope U238 found in lead in the granite forming the crust of the earth is a "sign" used by geologists to date the age of the rock forming the earth, for the assumption is that the lead came from the decay of the uranium at the rate of its known half-life. The assumption is that the granite is hardened scum, crud, that floated to the surface of molten magma when the earth was forming. The assumption is that originally there was no lead of a particular isotope in this surface crud. And the sign, regardless of what it is, has assigned meaning based on plausible assumptions. Thus, to geologists, the earth is of a particular age in billions of year, with this age assigned based upon assumptions anchoring the validity of evidence.

From high on the lava dome formed since Washington State's Mount St. Helens erupted in 1980, ten year old dacite, a lava too thick to flow far, was subjected to potassium-argon analysis and dating, with radioisotope dating the main means for determining the age of igneous rock. Samples ranged in date from 350,000 years old to 2.8 million years. Similar radioisotope dating exists for Mauna Ulu eruptions at Kilauea, with these eruptions occurring between 1969 and 1974.

If a Christian dwells in a culture that values science, the Christian in this culture will accept scientific explanations for natural phenomena while maintaining a profession of faith in Christ Jesus. However, in doing so, the Christian will not believe the Father and the Son; for the scientific explanations that the Christian accepts as true effectively erases belief, leaving only ghost-like images in the person's life of what it means to believe God.

Evidence, or conclusions of evidence hinder faith; i.e., belief in that which is not real, not physical, not tangible, not of this world.

New lava that should have no argon isotopes in it will contain some argon-40: the solidification of magma does not reset the radioisotope clock that gives to new stone great age. Just as wood and bone from the same fire pit do not yield the same carbon-14 dates, new lava varies widely in age when tested, with all ages being inappropriately long ... those Christians who are from academic

cultures—like the Greek Jews who wanted to meet Jesus—will assign the values of their culture to whatever *signs* they encounter; whereas Christians not of academia tend to scoff at evidence that assigns to the earth great age. Ultimately, it doesn't matter what a Christian's cultural values are; for every culture is of the Adversary. And when culture informs the Christian's theology, the Christian's theology is also of the Adversary.

Every argument contains a declarative claim that is supported by evidence based upon shared assumptions. When these assumptions are not shared, regardless of reason, the argument cannot proceed: each side only speaks to its own side. No dialogue occurs. And the position supported by the greatest amount of power prevails. Thus, figuratively, the barrel of a gun wins more arguments than does reason, with this being especially true in academia where future employment is too often based upon agreement with the status quo.

Words are assigned meaning based upon the shared assumptions of a reading community. Healings as signs are assigned meaning based the expectations of those witnessing the healings. Thus, a surgeon able to reattach a severed hand will perform a miracle to one person, but not to his colleagues who know the skill and practice needed to successfully do microsurgery.

In an age before knowledge of radioactivity existed, in an age before electron microscopes or even telescopes, human beings assigned significance to what today has little significance such as the livers of geese and the flight of birds, the roll of dice and the refraction of light. Believing ourselves to be better educated, American culture assigns significance to the dress a particular starlet wore to the Grammy Awards, or to the path of the hurricane Katrina, or to the demise of melodious music in pop culture. Meaning is assigned to the return to production of the Volkswagen Beetle, to the I-phone, to the placement of merchandise in a retail store. Almost any human activity can be *read* as a text when meaning is assigned to various aspects of the activity as meaning is assigned to words. Therefore, how a person lives his or her life becomes an epistle—a letter, a message—written in the Book of Life, with the writing of this epistle continuing until death overtakes the person.

Reverse the above: the non-physical inner self of a person is resurrected from death through the person receiving a second breath of life, the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ], with this now-living inner self temporarily dwelling in a tent of flesh and with the life of this inner self being an epistle written in the equally non-physical heavenly Book of Life—this is what Paul writes in 2 Cor 3:3—with this epistle having no end, but continuing on outside of space-time when the mortal tent of flesh puts on immortality. This is the essence of Christianity and the Christian message: a person is humanly born with a dead inner self, not with an immortal soul as pagan religions teach, and this dead inner self will be raised from death through receipt of the breath of God [again, πνεῦμα θεοῦ]. If the tent of flesh in which the living inner self temporary dwells remains physically alive, the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] must be received in the vessel that is the breath of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ]; thus, by no other name other than Jesus the Nazarene can a person be saved for there is no other vessel that has come from

the supra-dimensional heavenly realm that is able to hold the *bright fire* of non-physical life (i.e., life outside of the creation) in a person who is physical and inside the creation.

There is a boundary between what is non-physical and what is physical. Science is about evidence that is physical. It can be about nothing else. But religion has long been the domain of “nothing,” in that all things which are not physical are to this world as “nothing.” They are not things. They are not even thoughts that occur as electric impulses within the person’s brain. Hence, non-physical things have no evidence of their existence, certainly no observable evidence. And claims about non-physical things cannot, by the very nature of the *thing* about which the claim is made, be supported by evidence. So it was, for the people of Lystra, just as plausible for them to believe that Paul was Hermes made flesh as it was for them to believe that Paul was a minister for Christ Jesus.

There is no observable evidence for either a dead or a living inner self.

The claim most often made by fundamentalist Christians is that the creation is evidence of a Creator, but this is simply not true: the creation is evidence of the creation existing. For the creation is NOT evidence that the creation never existed. To believe that the creation never existed is to believe in *nothing*, which is not a bad thing but is belief not based upon evidence.

In fact, there is scarcely any secular evidence supporting the birth of Christ Jesus. A couple of oblique references to Jesus in secular literature is all that exists outside of Scripture—the greatest evidence for Jesus’ birth and life is in the number of surviving fragments of early Christian scriptures: nearly five thousand. Of the very popular *Canterbury Tales*, dating from about 1400 CE, there are eighty surviving copies. Of the very good narrative, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, from that latter half of the 1300s CE, there is one copy. Thus, in the number of fragments of Scripture dating from the first half of the first millennium is evidence that the man Jesus the Nazarene lived and did those things attributed to Him, but the manuscripts have small scribal variations (they are all handwritten) that disclose they are copies of copies of which the exact wording wasn’t of absolute importance. Rather, the narrative conveyed was of importance. The story was of importance. The details of the story were of importance. But the words used to convey those details were not, themselves, sacred and holy. The words were not relics but “tools” used to perform the task of conveying a narrative about the Creator of everything-that-has-been-made entering His creation as His only Son. The words were *signs* to which meaning must be assigned, with this assignment of meaning for living inner selves not coming from the shared assumptions of a so-called Christian reading community, but from the *parakletos*, the breath of the truth that the world is not able to receive ... until the inner self is raised from death, the inner self of a person is not able to receive knowledge-of, or to comprehend a non-physical realm outside of space-time, a realm for which there must necessarily be an absence of evidence.

Christians believe in *nothing*, not *something*, and I am one of them; for by antidotal evidence I came to believe in *nothing*, but since that time forty years ago, I have *seen* with my eyes adequate physical evidence to confirm the antidotal

evidence. But belief preceded *seeing*. Belief preceded the manifestation of tangible evidence. And maintenance of this belief has required disbelieving evidence originating in assumptions that are not shared.

The above paragraph should provide someone with fuel for an *ad hominem* attack, but belief in what is not physical, not tangible, is necessarily belief in *nothing*; whereas the worship of idols, whether the works of the person's hands or the works of someone else's hands, is belief in *some-thing*. ... Again, everything for which there is evidence is today within the realm of science, with the best assignment of meaning to raw data still open to dispute. However, those things for which there is no evidence fall within the realm of religion. And when *evidence* exists to support a particular religious tenet, that *evidence* actually produces unbelief rather than belief: *evidence* erases the particular religious beliefs of a person, for *evidence* is, by its nature, anti-religion.

The above will take a moment to digest, but is true. Note the example of Jesus:

When Jesus had said these things, He departed and hid Himself from them. *Though He had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in Him*, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“Lord, who has believed what he heard from us,
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

“He has blinded their eyes
and hardened their heart,
lest they see with their eyes,
and understand with their heart, and turn,
and I would heal them.”

Isaiah said these things because he saw His glory and spoke of Him. Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in Him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God. (John 12:36–43 emphasis added)

The reason that Jesus did *so many signs* before the people of Israel was so that they would remain blind, unable to see with their eyes and understand with their hearts; the miracles that Jesus did continued the spiritual blindness that had come over the people of Israel when the Lord took the fathers of Israel by the hand to lead them out from Egypt ... from a human perspective, it would seem that miracles, as evidence of God, would produce belief, but this was not the case. The miracles that were performed in the plagues in Egypt didn't cause the people of Israel to believe the Lord, but did partially erase the religion of the Egyptians from the minds of the people, leaving the minds of the children of Israel blank but still filthy slates upon which the majority of the children of Israel wrote the idolatrous practices of the people of Canaan rather than the ways of the Lord. The

miracles that Jesus did, as evidence that He was from God, didn't produce belief, but continued the unbelief of the people.

However, the miracles Jesus did as evidence He was from God did partially erase unbelief in many of the authorities who, for fear of the Pharisees, did not openly come to Jesus as disciples. So while evidence erases a particular religious belief, evidence by itself isn't sufficient to cleanse unbelief from a person's mind ... as ghostly images of previously written words remain on a chalkboard when those words are hastily erased, ghostly manifestation of unbelief, of a false religion remain when erased by evidence. And it is for this reason that there are seven endtime years of tribulation: evidence of God will partially erase the previous belief paradigm of every person, but persecution and physical-want over time will be necessary to truly cleanse minds, with this evidence of God being the death of only uncovered firstborns at the Second Passover, an artificially that cannot be of this world.

The above is correct: the Most High God will erase humanity's present belief in *nothing* when, at the Second Passover liberation of Israel, all biological firstborns and legal first citizens not covered by the blood of Christ Jesus, taken as the Passover sacraments on the dark portion of the 14th of *Aviv*, are suddenly and supernatural slain, with the selection of only firstborns [natural and legal] representing evidence of a non-physical entity that cannot be seen and cannot be fought. *Nothing* will no longer be *nothing*, and religion will no longer worship *nothing*; for *something* will have selectively slain roughly 2.3 billion human beings in a day, a calamity really beyond the scope of human comprehension.

The Second Passover liberation of Israel is specifically intended to erase how Christendom presently worships God from the minds of Christians. Unfortunately, to that end it will not be successful. As ghostly images of what was previously written on a chalk board remain when the board has been hastily erased, the faint traces of greater Christendom's lawless ways will cause Christians in the Affliction, the first 1260 days of the seven endtime years of tribulation, to mingle the sacred [Christ] with the profane [the day of the invincible sun; the birthday of the invincible sun] and thereby defile themselves, rebelling against God 220 days after the liberation of Israel. If this liberation occurs this year on the second Passover, then the Apostasy about which Paul wrote (2 Thess 2:3) will occur on Sunday, December 25th, Christmas day, and will occur because greater Christendom will insist upon keeping Christmas *for the children who have gone through so much this year*.

2.

In the course of human affairs, religion has afforded a caste of priests and prophetesses lives of relative ease—and ease based on an absence of evidence. What proof did the priest of Zeus have that Barnabas was Zeus? None. A healing occurred, with Luke stating that it was evident to Paul that the lame man had faith; i.e., the belief necessary to be healed. Without that belief, which was not based on personally observed evidence but based upon Paul's claims about Christ Jesus, the man would not have been healed.

Christian ministry today, with very few exceptions, uses an absence of evidence to support lives of relative ease ... when one televangelist a decade ago sought to raise three million dollars to build a hospital in India but raised only a million and a half, the televangelist built a house for himself rather than build less of a hospital than originally intended. Few televangelists suffer from genuine want even though some have had to declare bankruptcy, with one being in arrears on a \$36 million mortgage: the temple of Zeus at Lystra, in comparative worth, probably cost less; for the particular mortgage owed, after thirty years of making payments, was twice the original cost of the facility. And even fewer Christian ministers today preach/teach without asking for support; for in asking for support and in receiving that support, the lack of evidence *supporting* whatever it is that they teach becomes unimportant. Parishioners are bound to parish, laity is bound to denominations, congregations are bound to pastors through cognitive dissonance in a manner similar to how the people of Lystra were bound to the pantheon.

In-text scriptural evidence is solid: in the 1st-Century, the sect of the Nazarenes kept the Sabbaths of God, from weekly Sabbath to annual Sabbaths. Textual evidence is equally solid in showing that at the end of this present age, the holy ones will keep the commandments, with the Sabbath commandment being a facet of keeping the commandments. But keeping the commandments in the present generation causes the Christian to be out of sync with greater Christendom, which without any textual evidence, collectively comes before God in worship on the day after the Sabbath, Sunday, thereby mingling the sacred [Christ] with the profane [the day of the invincible sun] in an adapted form of Mithraism.

Worse than even greater Christendom's open mocking of the Father and the Son by neglecting the Sabbath, which represents entering into the presence of God, is greater Christendom's spurning of Moses ... if a person doesn't believe Moses—the majority of humanity doesn't—the person should not claim to worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Be honest about what it is that the person believes. A Christian should not claim ideological inclusion in the nation of Israel that is now circumcised of heart if the so-called Christian doesn't believe Moses. A Christian shouldn't claim to worship Christ Jesus, the prophet about whom Moses wrote, if the Christian doesn't believe Moses.

For greater Christendom, Christ Jesus is as *real* as Hermes was for the people of Lystra, and the Father is as *real* as Zeus was. Christians believe in both the Father and the Son as the people of Lystra believed in the Greek pantheon, with the educated feigning belief for political or cultural reasons. And the absence of evidence for Christ allows the Christian laity to continue generation after generation in the same theological paradigms held by the Reformed Church of the 16th-Century, held by the Roman Church of the 16th-Century, held by Anabaptists of the 16th and 17th Centuries, or held by the Arian Church of the 19th-Century.

The absence of the golden plates that Joseph Smith allegedly translated and transcribed becomes “proof” of their validity for Latter Days Saints.

The aspect of Latter Day Saint theology that is most intuitive is that without receiving additional revelation, greater Christendom cannot improve upon the textual narrative that has been transmitted generation after generation in a sealed and kept-secret codex; thus, to escape this trap of ideological stagnation, Latter Day Saints maintain an open canon, including in that canon writings by Joseph Smith but also accepting as authoritative the pronouncements of current Apostles and Prophets (i.e., members of the First Presidency). But this open canon really doesn't address the issue of Scripture being a sealed and kept-secret manuscript that cannot be understood by the world, but only by those who have received a second breath of life and then, afterwards, have received the spirit of truth, with those who have first received a second breath of life receiving a second breath of truth, the spirit of prophecy.

The spirit of the truth [τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας] is a holy spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον], but is not the second breath of life that is usually identified as the Holy Spirit [same phrase: πνεῦμα ἅγιον]. The spirit of prophecy [τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας] is a holy spirit but is neither the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] nor the breath of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ] nor the spirit of the truth [τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας].

I have not previously addressed the spirit of prophecy that is “the testimony of Jesus” (cf. Rev 12:17; 19:10) as a second spirit [breath] of truth ... the spirit of prophecy [τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς προφητείας] is not the *parakletos* [ὁ παράκλητος], the spirit of truth [τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας], but is the testimony of Jesus [ἡ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ], with the second spirit or breath [πνεῦμα] being like the Advocate [a common translation for the *parakletos*] but not being the Advocate which comes from the Father. The spirit of prophecy comes from Jesus rather than from the Father, and as a born-of-God Christian has indwelling eternal life through receipt of the breath of God [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] in the breath of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ], an *observant Christian* will receive the spirit of truth in the spirit of prophecy. Rejection of Jesus will always prevent the Sabbatarian from receiving the spirit of prophecy and by extension, the spirit of truth.

Without possessing the spirit of truth [τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας], no Christian can understand Scripture or understand the things of God. The person can be born of God, as will happen when the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28) when the kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man (Dan 7:9–14; Rev 11:15–18), but the promise of the spirit of the truth is an addition to receipt of indwelling eternal life (what being born-of-spirit represents), and until the person who has suddenly been born of God—i.e., the Christian within greater Christendom at the Second Passover, or the infidel when the kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man—makes a journey of faith sufficient to cleanse the person's heart so that it can be circumcised, the person will not receive the spirit of the truth.

Prior to the Second Passover liberation of Israel, no person will be born of God unless the Father has personally drawn the individual from this world (John 6:44, 65) by giving to the person the earnest of the spirit. The person will then

make a mental or spiritual journey of faith equivalent in length to Abraham's physical journey of faith from Ur of the Chaldeans [spiritual Babylon] to Haran in Assyria [death of the old self] then on to Canaan, the Promised Land [Sabbath observance]. When the individual crosses into Sabbath observance, hearts are circumcised as the foreskins of the children of Israel were circumcised when they crossed the Jordan and camped at Gilgal.

But there is no selection of who receives indwelling eternal life when the spirit is poured out on all flesh. And in type, there is no selection when all of Christendom is liberated from indwelling sin and death at the Second Passover. It becomes imperative that each person *selects* him or herself by undertaking a journey of faith that cleanses the heart. And as the spirit of the truth [τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας] is given to genuinely born-of-God disciples in this era when hearts are circumcised, the spirit of the truth will be given to Christians in the Affliction when hearts are circumcised, not when these Christians are liberated from indwelling sin and death. With the Second Passover, Christians no longer will receive the earnest of the spirit, but will be born of God fully filled-with and empowered by the spirit of God. Therefore, following the Second Passover, Christians cannot be lollygagging on the streets of Babylon: they will have to quickly leave Babylon and cross into Sabbath observance. Only then will they be given the spirit of the truth, and they will receive it in the spirit of prophecy.

Without the spirit of prophecy, no Christian can understand the things of God. And in this present era, the spirit of prophecy has very limited distribution. The spirit of the truth has equally limited distribution. And it is for this reason that evidence of God in the form of the sudden death of firstborns at the Second Passover is necessary to erase belief from even Sabbatarian Christians that do not today possess the spirit of prophecy.

Again, evidence erases belief in *nothing*; therefore the person intent upon hanging onto his or her belief in *nothing* must necessarily reject evidence for or against God ... to write from the perspective of *things* seems odd: for me, God has seemed to have substance for decades, but He really doesn't have substance. He is not a *thing*; He is not a physically tangible entity even when He seems to be. He is not of this creation even though the physicality of the creation reveals His non-physical aspects and attributes. Thus in seeing the physical things of this world, the non-physical things of God are seen as visual metaphors: the breath of a person is like the breath of God, but differs in that the breath of the person is physical whereas the breath of God is not. The life that a person has is like eternal life, but only as a dark shadow is like the bright entity that casts the shadow. So in the things of this world, God is darkly seen. And when pupils have dilated open and there is little ambient light, the night becomes alive in a manner analogous to how the visible things of this world reveal the invisible things of God (Rom 1:20), but reveal those things without color.

3.

Without *improvements* to the textual narrative that is the Bible, Christians would believe what the 1st-Century Church believed; what the sect of the Nazarenes

believed after Calvary. But *improvements* were made throughout the 1st-Century: Paul's epistles are *improvements*, as are Peter's, James' epistle, Luke's writings, John's epistles and Gospel and vision.

Improvements didn't stop when the 1st-Century ended; however, the validity of *improvements* after the 1st-Century did end. The *improvements* of the 2nd and 3rd and 4th and 5th Centuries were not really *improvements*. Likewise, the *improvements* of the 16th and 17th and 18th and 19th and 20th Centuries were not of God.

The history of textual *improvements* to Scripture goes back to the days of Joshua; for Moses did not write of his own death. Hence, Scripture has historically been a periodically opened canon, with what is accepted within this canon being a matter of faith, with *evidence* partially erasing the theological paradigms of earlier beliefs and allowing the inclusion of additional texts. ... The miracles that Jesus did was evidence that He was from God, and this *evidence* opened the biblical canon to the Gospels, just as the miracles Paul did opened the canon to his epistles. And the Second Passover liberation of Israel will be evidence of God that will again erase theological paradigms and open the canon to the narrative of what happens during the ministry of the two witnesses.

The biblical canon when broken open, like a broken bone, calluses over by the addition of new texts, supporting texts, with these texts not coming from temple authorities but from fishermen, a tax collector, even a the persecutor of the Church. But the canon can only be broken open when there is sufficient evidence of God to erase existing belief paradigms.

The miracles that Jesus did were evidence that He had come from heaven, but again, this *evidence* only partially erased the theological paradigms of many Jews in authority positions, Jews who came to believe in Him (see John 12:42) but who lacked faith. Therefore when Paul returned to Jerusalem after being years among the Gentiles of Achaia and Asia Minor, James and the Christian elders present in Jerusalem told Paul,

You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law, and *they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs.* What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law. (Acts 21:20–24 emphasis added)

There were thousands of converts from among the Jews who continued to cling to their culture: they believed in Christ Jesus, but the miracles Jesus did were not enough evidence to erase the previously held beliefs of these Jews. Because the Christian elders, leaders preached Christ Jesus from Scripture, using

the Law and the Prophets to show that the coming of Jesus was prophesied, these converts from Judaism did not need to alter their practices and traditions to believe in Jesus ... for James and the Christian elders in Jerusalem, Christ Jesus did not create a schism between religious belief and culture; for James and these elders used the temple scroll to “prove” Christ to converts who remained Jews—

When Jesus breathed on ten of His first disciples (John 20:22), Jesus instituted a new synagogue that was separate from the temple, a synagogue of which He was High Priest. Therefore, from that moment forward; from the moment He gave to His disciples the Holy Spirit [πνεῦμα ἅγιον], the temple of the Jews was to Christians as the temple of Zeus was to Paul and Barnabas when they were at Lystra. This, however, was not knowledge available to James and the Christian elders at Jerusalem. This would be knowledge late in coming to James, and not knowledge James possessed before he was martyred. For this knowledge is contained in the Gospel of John, which would not be written until two plus decades after the temple at Jerusalem was razed by Roman soldiers in 70 CE.

The Gospel of John is a valid *improvement* to the textual narrative that is the Bible, but because this *improvement* did not come in time to be of value to either James or Paul, the timing for the writing of John’s Gospel suggests that James and Paul at Jerusalem were the shadow and type of Christians in the Affliction, with the martyrdom of Christians in the Affliction coming from their inability to separate their religious belief from the Christian culture in which they have been reared.

The Biblical canon available to James did not include Paul’s epistles or the writings of John or of Peter or of Luke or even of James himself. It was basically the Old Testament and the Gospel of Matthew and the pronouncements of the First Disciples. Thus, in his instructions to Paul, James adds, “But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality” (Acts 21:25). ... This letter does not exist as a separate text, but now only exists as part of Luke’s writings. As a separate text, this letter has been lost.

How many other pronouncements of the First Disciples were lost? Are these pronouncements like the golden plates of Joseph Smith? Does the absence of these pronouncements—the absence of evidence—require that they be believed, a nonsensical position akin to that of some Democratic Senators who claimed that because there was no evidence that the President of the United States was involved in a certain affair of state, the matter must be investigated!

The *Mishnah*, the first major written redaction of the Oral Torah and the first major text composed by rabbinical Judaism, was Judaism’s first attempt to improve upon a closed scriptural canon. Composed around 220 CE by Judah haNasi, the *Mishnah* attempted to preserve the oral traditions of the second temple (from 536 BCE to 70 CE), and the *Mishnah* is for rabbinical Judaism what *Doctrine and Covenants* and the *Pearl of Great Price* are for Latter Day Saints.

Why will Christians believe the epistles of Paul, which they read very poorly, when his own people who are now ensconced in rabbinical Judaism will not? The

evidence demonstrating that Paul was of God was not accepted by his own people, who believed him to be a traitor to Judaism. Therefore, their belief paradigms were not erased but maintained by their rejection of evidence.

Upon James and the Christian elders in Jerusalem's advice, "Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them"(Acts 21:26) ... Paul's attempt to placate those who were seeking to kill him was not successful; for Paul had no business entering the temple. He was no longer of the temple, but was of Christ Jesus. He wasn't laying the foundation for Herod's temple—that foundation was laid before he was born—but as a skilled master builder, he laid the foundation for the spiritual, non-physical temple of God (1 Cor 3:10).

Paul subjugated his religious beliefs to his culture when he undertook to purify himself in the temple. He did not make the connection that in purifying himself, he was doing a similar thing to what he condemned in Peter at Antioch, when Peter subjugated religion to culture and left off eating with uncircumcised converts when the Circumcision Faction came from Jerusalem.

American Christians, especially, are guilty of subjugating Christian beliefs to their culture, with this subjugation most evident in the observance of Christmas ... if a Christian anywhere, even in America, keeps Christmas after the Second Passover liberation of Israel, the Christian will be as Peter was at Antioch, and as Paul and James were at Jerusalem: the Christian will have subjugated obedience to God to the culture of the person, with all cultures—even that of the second temple—originating with the Adversary, the reason why Jesus thrice cleansed the temple. But the Adversary could not be kept out: it was temple authorities that denounced Jesus and demanded His death. And the Christian, following the Second Passover, who keeps Christmas will be condemned to the second death, the lake of fire. No exceptions.

The penalty for James subjugating his belief of God to the culture of the temple was the loss of his physical life. Paul paid with his physical life. And if traditional narratives are correct, so did Peter pay with his life. But John did not; for John had understanding that the others didn't have, understanding inscribed in *improvements* to the historical Christian narrative.

James and the Christian elders at Jerusalem suffered an absence of *revelation by realization*, with this absence resulting in Paul's imprisonment. This is not to say that this absence did not work to the good of Paul and to the good of Christendom, but this is to say that James and the elders at Jerusalem's absence of *revelation by realization* will result in the endtime imprisonment and martyrdom of saints in the Affliction ... the production and acceptance of an additional canonical text, the Gospel of John, if coming half a century earlier should have caused the saints at Jerusalem to abandon worshiping in Herod temple, and this abandonment would have, most likely, kept Paul out of the temple and away from being taken prisoner.

The Nicene Creed (ca 325 CE) was an attempt to *improve* upon the textual narrative that is the Bible—an attempt not accompanied by evidence of God and

an attempt that was rejected in 335 CE by the First Synod of Tyre, and by Roman Emperor Constantius II (337–361 CE) and by Emperor Valens (364–378 CE).

There were attempts made between the end of the 1st-Century and the 4th-Century to *improve* upon the historical narrative, but none of these attempts were valid, nor was the Nicene Creed. Surviving attempts became efforts to separate Christians from Jews ... as Jews banned Christians from synagogues mid 2nd-Century, the majority of Christians were running away from Judaism as fast as they could—on multiple occasions, Jesus said some form of, “Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (John 12:25). But Christian converts never internalized these words.

Long before there was an influential Latin Church, lawless Christians in efforts to save themselves in Judea and throughout the Roman Empire renounced *Judaizing* and ceased keeping the Sabbaths of God ... it is difficult for endtime Christians to imagine the situation that existed in 1st-Century Judea: there were three Roman-Jewish wars between 66 CE and 135 CE. Josephus claims that in the first of these wars, *The Great Revolt* (ca 66–70 CE), 1.1 million were killed in the seige of Jerusalem, with 97,000 captured and enslaved and with many others fleeing to areas around the Mediterranean. Nero gave the assignment of crushing the rebellion to Vespasian, who, following the *year of the four emperors* (68 CE), returned to Rome in 69 CE to claim the throne from the usurper Vitellius, thereby leaving his son Titus to finish conquering the Jewish rebels. The last of the Jewish citadels, Masada, fell in 73 CE, thus ending freedom for Jews.

Christians, who up to the time of the collapse of the northern revolt and the eruption of civil war in Jerusalem (68 CE) had lived as cultural Jews while believing that Jesus the Nazarene was the Messiah, could no longer maintain their Jewish identity and worship of Christ Jesus. With defeat in the north and the escape of Zealots and the fanatical Sicarii [extremist Zealots who served as contract killers] to Jerusalem, and with these Zealots executing anyone not willing to fight Romans, Christians who hadn't already fled Jerusalem were killed within the walls of the city. And many that fled wanted to make sure they were not identified with the rebels; thus, they began to fudge in their observance of the Sabbaths of God, first relaxing Sabbath observance, then outright abandoning the Sabbath.

By the time of the second of the Jewish-Roman wars, Jews were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire, with many of the dispersed Jews being slaves. In 115 CE, Emperor Trajan was engaged in a campaign against the Parthian Empire when revolts by diasporic Jews throughout the Mediterranean region resulted in massive slaughter of Roman citizens and others in what is commonly called the Kitos War (115–117 CE). Jews overran the small garrisons Trajan had left in place around the region as he made war against Parthia. Allegedly, Jews killed 200,000 in Cyrene, and 240,000 in Cyrus, and a great many in Egypt, Syria, Judah, and Mesopotamia. They killed so many that Jews were barred from landing on Cyprus. Even if shipwrecked, they were to be killed.

How, as an *observant Christian*, would you distinguish yourself from a Jew, especially if you were in rough seas off Cyprus and in danger of being shipwrecked? You couldn't, unless you were a Gentile convert and outwardly uncircumcised.

There were large populations of Jews in revolt throughout the cities of Mesopotamia. After making peace with Parthia, Trajan moved north to take command of the ongoing siege of Hatra, which continued through the summer of 117 CE, and there Trajan suffered heatstroke. He died before he could return to Rome, and his successor, Hadrian, became emperor.

Hadrian came to power because of a Jewish insurrection, and though he was a fair-minded ruler by 2nd-Century CE standards, he had no great love for Jews. Thus, when the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–136 CE) broke out after Hadrian had returned to Jews a sense of autonomy, Hadrian moved to ruthlessly crush the revolt. Afterwards Hadrian attempted to root out Judaism from the empire; for he perceived that the presence of Judaism would be cause for continuous rebellion. He banned the Torah and the Hebrew calendar. He executed scholars. He burned the sacred scroll on the temple mount. *Judaea* became *Syria Palaestina* so that even Hebrew place names would cease to be used.

Romans executed ten leading members of the Sanhedrin, torturing them until they died.

Hadrian banned the practice of Judaism. It didn't behoove a Christian to look like a Jew, to act like a Jew, or to keep the Sabbaths of God. But what Hadrian did for *observant Christendom* and for rabbinical Judaism was to make both portable religions, centered around the fellowship. But for the purpose of this paper, what Hadrian did was cause almost all Christians to cease keeping the Sabbath and turn to Sunday observance as a mark of separation from Judaism.

C.S. Mosna in, *Storia della domenica dalle origini fino agli inizi del V secolo* [*History of Sunday from its origins to the early fifth century*] (Rome. Libreria Editrice Gregorian University. 1969), found Sunday observance by Christians in Judea in the 1st-Century, but did not find Sunday observance linked (or at least tightly linked) to the Resurrection earlier than the 4th-Century. ... C.S. Mosna's doctoral dissertation was overseen by Professor P.V. Monachino, S.J., Chairman of the Church History Department of Pontifical Gregorian University, who also oversaw the 1974 doctoral dissertation of Samuele Bacchiocchi: *From Sabbath to Sunday* (1977). In his dissertation, Bacchiocchi found that the origins of Sunday-keeping came during Emperor Hadrian's attempt to suppress and eliminated Judaism from the Empire.

Let it be stated here that with every Roman enslavement of Jewish rebels from 66 CE to 136 CE, some Christians abandoned Sabbath observance and in sincere but misguided attempts to save their lives, began to keep Sunday as the Sabbath. This was the mystery of lawlessness that was already at work while Paul still lived, and the mystery of lawlessness about which Paul wrote (2 Thess 2:7). Thus, abandonment of Sabbath observance began in the middle of the 1st-Century and grew—not because Jesus was resurrected on Sunday, but in attempts to establish *difference* between the Christian convert and Jewish patriots—throughout the

second half of the 1st-Century. The growth of Sunday observance became widespread following Hadrian's crushing of the Bar Kokhba Rebellion, but by then, the Christian Church had been spiritually dead for three decades ... the Church "died" with the death of the Apostle John (ca 100–102 CE).

It is always a spiritual mistake to give the Bishop of Rome credit for changing Christian observance of the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the following week. If anyone deserves credit, it is Titus and his ruthlessness; for from 70 CE on, there was realization within the Christian community that both Jews and Romans were avowed enemies.

4.

Within Sabbatarian Christendom the tendency exists to ascribe every sort of evil imaginable to the Roman Church, giving to the Roman Church blame that it doesn't deserve. Yes, the Roman Church was for the Western World the face of Christendom for more than a thousand years, but it was not the face of Christendom in Asia Minor or in Asia. The Greek Church was. Or the Arian Church was. And all three—the Latin Church, the Greek Church, and the Arian Church—kept and still keep Sunday as the Sabbath. It is always wrong to say that all of Christendom acknowledges the power of the Pope through the day upon which Christendom worships God, with the authority of the Roman Church manifested by the change of the Sabbath to Sunday. Evidence just doesn't exist to support this position. Rather, to accept the Roman Church's claim that it changed the Sabbath day requires the Christian to ignore evidence.

Most of Sabbatarian Christendom has long chosen to ignore evidence; for again, evidence tends to erase belief. Evidence causes most Christians a great deal of discomfort. And evidence of God that comes with the Second Passover liberation of Israel will be especially troublesome for Sabbatarians.

The first translation of Scripture from Greek into German wasn't Martin Luther's 16th-Century translation, but Wulfila's 4th-Century translation into Gothic (East Germanic as opposed to West Germanic). This was an Arian translation. And Arian Christianity was firmly established among the Germanic tribes a century before Arians Christians—the historic barbarians of Western Civilization college courses—sacked Rome.

To the Roman Church, Arian Christians are heathens, barbarians, heretics, but this is really the pot calling the kettle black. There is no textual evidence that any of these three churches—Latin, Greek, or Arian—are of God. Rather, textual evidence will have them not being of God although all three will be liberated from indwelling sin and death at the Second Passover.

How much evidence is required to support belief? Surprisingly, the answer is, None! Belief supported by an absence of evidence is routinely seen in various conspiracy theories, with one of the best examples being that President Bush and the American Government brought down the Twin Towers on 9/11. Belief that flies in the face of evidence is seen in those who deny that the Holocaust occurred. In earlier generations, teaching that the earth was flat flew in the face of observable evidence: Greeks had computed the circumference of the earth to

about a thousand miles of accuracy before the people of Lystra sought to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas. So not only did every ship sailing over the horizon refute the concept of a flat earth, but the diameter of the earth and the distance to the sun were reasonably knowable.

Eratosthenes of Cyrene (ca 276–195 BCE) developed a system of latitude and longitude, calculated the circumference of the earth, calculated the tilt of the earth on its axis, and invented the concept of the leap year, all in the 3rd-Century BCE. From the means he used to prove the earth was round, he most likely calculated the distance to the sun: in calculating the circumference of the earth, he established two angles and the length of one side of a right triangle, enough information to determine the length of the other two sides of that triangle, one of which would have been the distance to the sun.

The Medieval Roman Church's need to improve upon the textual narrative that is the Bible—no valid *improvements* had been made since the 1st-Century CE—was apparently at the core of accepting as dogma the *Flat Earth Theory*, an inverted theological heresy, a conspiracy theory of sorts that due to ignorance, gained acceptance within the Latin Church is remarkably similar to how the Sacred Names Heresy is gaining acceptance among Sabbatarian Christians. To believe in a geocentric flat earth required that Psalm 93:1 (“Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved”) and Psalm 96:10 (“Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved”) and 1 Chronicles 16:30 (“yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved”) be read literally; i.e., read in the same way that those Sabbatarian Christians of the Sacred Names Heresy read Acts 4:10–12. And if Christ Jesus doesn't intervene in the near future, Sabbatarian Christendom will succumb to the same sort of ignorance that struck down the Roman Church.

Truly, belief in a geocentric flat earth after Western civilization had known for centuries that the earth was round could only come as a desire to *improve upon the historical narrative*. And as the Western world was coming out from the Dark Age, the Roman Church, the single largest repository of ignorance the world has ever known, needed a means to support the idleness to which its priests had grown accustomed: preserving ignorance (as if ignorance were eggs to be pickled) gave the Catholic clergy the justification it needed to hinder the coming of the Enlightenment, when a little knowledge would slice hardboiled ignorance into thin rubbery collars, each a yoke that shackled Christians to the Roman Church.

Scholars gazed at the stars, but they had to gaze in silence. To speak disturbed the preservation of ignorance. To not speak disturbed the conscience ... what would Paul and Barnabas have done with the thigh bones of the oxen that the priest of Zeus wanted to sacrifice; for it was the thigh bones that went to Zeus. Would they have accepted them as Galileo accepted the authority of the Roman Church? Or would they have boiled them in a pot of soup, pulling from them what little worth they held? The Roman Church, during its series of inquisitions, would have burned Paul and Barnabas as heretics as the priest of Zeus would have burned the thigh bones of the oxen.

The Psalmist wrote, “He [the Lord] set the earth on its foundations, / so that it should never be moved” (104:5), a poetic claim that would seem to support geocentric dogma. But the Psalmist also wrote,

Blessed are those whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the Lord!
Blessed are those who keep his testimonies,
who seek him with their whole heart,
who also do no wrong,
but walk in his ways!
You have commanded your precepts
to be kept diligently.
Oh that my ways may be steadfast
in keeping your statutes!
Then I shall not be put to shame,
having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.
I will praise you with an upright heart,
when I learn your righteous rules.
I will keep your statutes;
do not utterly forsake me!
How can a young man keep his way pure?
By guarding it according to your word.
With my whole heart I seek you;
let me not wander from your commandments!
I have stored up your word in my heart,
that I might not sin against you.
Blessed are you, O Lord;
teach me your statutes!
With my lips I declare
all the rules of your mouth.
In the way of your testimonies I delight
as much as in all riches.
I will meditate on your precepts
and fix my eyes on your ways.
I will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word. (Ps 119:1–16)

If the Psalmist’s poetic claim that the world shall never move is to be read literally—how the Psalmist has to be read to use Scripture to support a geocentric creation—then the Roman Church would have been equally obligated to keep the Sabbath on the seventh day, according to commandments of God. And because intelligent men within the Roman Church understood that they had to account for not keeping the Sabbath on the seventh day, these men inspired the Pope to claim proof that it was the Pope as the vicar of Christ that changed the Christian day of worship from the Sabbath to Sunday, an example followed by Christians everywhere. But this claim simply wasn’t true.

In the Roman Church's need to improve upon the textual narrative that is the Bible, the Pope, as the Bishop of Rome, opted to pick and choose which passages were to be read literally, and which passages were to be figuratively.

The earth, the sun, the moon, the stars are physical signs [works] of God that by their very *physicality* serve—in a perverse way—as an absence of evidence for an invisible, non-physical deity. The physical nature of the universe doesn't suggest a non-physical Creator, but a physical creation and a physical Creator. The fact that *things* possess mass is not evidence of a non-physical Creator, but is, instead, the absence of evidence of a Creator that doesn't also possess mass. The creation as a sign, a work of God, isn't evidence of a Creator. If anything, the creation works against the concept of a non-physical Creator.

Traditionally, Sabbatarian Christendom has taught that the creation is evidence of a Creator; however, a collapsed singularity will produce the characteristic signature of “creation.”

An *ex nihilo* creation exists only the moment after its *creation*, not the moment before. In the moment before an *ex nihilo* creation, there is nothing by definition. The Creator of this *nothing* will become the Creator of all-that-is when the supposed Big Bang occurs. Therefore, because the creation stands as evidence of itself even in the moment of its formation, the creation *erases* belief in a Creator of *nothing*, a nonsensical way of saying the creation is not evidence of a Creator but evidence of itself; for in the moment of creation and in the moment after, the creation exists and could have come from one of a few varying causes such as colliding dimensional strings or collapse of a supersize black hole that regurgitates matter and energy in their elemental forms.

There is no way for physical human beings to make observations in the moment preceding a Big Bang; thus, only a remarkable absence of evidence exists about what preceded the creation of matter. And in this absence of evidence is the *space* needed for belief in a non-physical Creator that must become physical, for a physical creation demands a physical Creator or a physical cause of creation.

The Logos [ὁ λόγος] who was God [θεὸς] and who was with the God [τὸν θεόν] in the beginning (John 1:1), through His act of creating all that has been made, obligated Himself to entering His creation as a physical entity, with the timing for when the Creator must necessarily take upon Himself a physical nature becoming the subject of appropriate inquiry ...

There will be those non-thinking Sabbatarians who contend that, indeed, the creation is evidence for a Creator, that something cannot come from nothing without a Creator working His magic. But this just isn't true! A physical creation is, again, not nothing—it is no longer nothing—but is, rather, evidence of itself, a physical creation created from physical causes or created by a physical Creator. A non-physical creation would be evidence for a non-physical Creator. And therein lays a mystery of God: a non-physical creation is occurring while these words are being read, but because this non-physical creation by an equally non-physical Creator cannot be seen or measured, its very existence doesn't serve as tangible evidence for it.

The physical nature of the creation only serves as evidence that tends to erase belief in a non-physical deity, with this concept actually developed by Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3:11 — “[God] has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end” (Eccl 3:11).

It was necessary for the Creator of all-that-has-been-made to enter His creation as His only Son (John 3:16), the man Jesus the Nazarene (John 1:14), a physical man born of a woman. Without the Creator of a physical creation being *physical*, the creation could have any number of causes, all physical. By the Creator of all-that-has-been-made entering His creation, going from being non-physical as the creation was to being physical as the creation is and then returning to being non-physical as the creation will be, the Creator discloses in Himself the course of the creation and suggests that energy forming matter (i.e., locked by strong and weak force into mass) is actually of Himself; suggests that the creation is of Christ Jesus in a way similar to how a person's breath is of the person, with the moisture in the person's breath observable on cold winter mornings.

Latter Days Saints get around the problems of an *ex nihilo* creation by contending that, indeed, the spirit from which the creation has been made is actually *something*: finely pulverized matter that is too fine to be seen with human eyes and can only be seen with “spiritual” eyes. Latter Day Saints use a form of the analogy of spirit being like breath and the creation being like condensed moisture in a person's breath to justify its Arian dogma that God the Father created the Son; thus, Latter Day Saints, by having the creation come from something physical, can likewise have its Creator come from something physical. So Christ Jesus is not, for them, unbegotten but the only-begotten of the Father, with saints, through exaltation, being raised to share in the glory of the Son.

It is naïve to believe that the creation is evidence for a Creator. The creation when it is still *nothing* (i.e., before any creating has occurred) would, by its absence, be *evidence* for a non-physical Creator—and again, this is a nonsensical claim. The transition from nothing to something is *evidence* for a Creator that was *nothing* [non-physical] becoming something [physical]. Thus, the physicality of an *ex nihilo* creation is evidence that God the Father did not create all that has been made, but that *Yah* who enter His creation as His only Son, Christ Jesus, did, with *Yah* being for Islam *Allah*, the one who created all that has been made. ... By Islam worshipping *Allah*, Islam demonstrates that it does not know God the Father, the Most High God, the Ancient of Days. And by Islam denying that the man Jesus the Nazarene was the only Son of *Yah*, Islam also reveals that it does not know *Allah* but has only heard of *Allah* via rumors and half-truths.

In earlier eras, the existence of the creation necessitated worship of quasi-physical gods and goddesses, deities that possessed both physical and non-physical attributes. The superstition of these earlier eras is continued by Catholic Christendom teaching that the man Jesus was both fully man and fully God when He was born of Mary. He wasn't. He was fully man. He would not again be God until He was glorified. During His earthly ministry, He was as Paul was (only with

a Father who was not descended from the first Adam) when Paul commanded the man at Lystra to stand. And Catholic Christendom, like the people of Lystra who believed Paul was Hermes in the form of a fleshly man, has been unwilling or unable to accept the reality that the man Jesus, before the spirit of the Father [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] descended upon Him in the visible form of a dove, was without indwelling eternal life just as all human beings born of the first Adam are without indwelling eternal life at human birth; that after receiving a second breath of life in the visible form of the dove, the man Jesus was filled-with and empowered by the spirit of God and became like Christians will be after the second Passover liberation of Israel and like all of humankind will be after the spirit has been poured out on all flesh. It is for this reason that it is recorded that Jesus was tempted as all men are ... the difference between Jesus and every other person who has lived is that the father of every other person is the first Adam, not the Logos who was God and was with the God in the beginning

Western cultures have long maintained tension between Apollonian-like sky deities and Dionysian-like gods of bowers, fluids, the underworld, with sky-deities traditionally being male and the gods of grottos being female. Even the ancient peoples of Israel were unable to long support worship of an invisible sky deity; so they turned to open worship of sticks and stones and the works of their hands, and secretive worship of female genitalia, offering the first to open wombs to Molech in a perversion of the Lord commanding Israel to redeem its firstborns. The practice of sacrificing firstborn sons and daughters was an abomination the children of Israel *borrowed* from their Canaanite neighbors, but this practice fits into belief paradigms that hold in tension Apollo and Dionysus, a tension unsupported by evidence ... no people that defile themselves by burning their firstborns will long survive. The loss of these firstborns seriously weakened the people of Israel, and seriously weakened the Proto-Hebrew speakers of ancient Carthage, with this weakening being evidence that should have caused Israelites to quickly abandon the practice. But this isn't what happened.

To believe that in the flight of birds the gods are present pushes rational human thought outside of reality and beyond the domain of evidence; yet, no evidence is needed in the production of belief and even of ideologies.

6.

In the spring of 1983, while photographing incoming flights to Anchorage's International Airport, I climbed down the bluff to the mud flats below. The area was part of Earthquake Park, formed from unstable lands subject to liquefaction, lands deemed uninhabitable since the 1964 quake had destroyed homes built on the west side of a stress line identified in the 1920s, a line across which construction was to be avoided. After the stress line was identified in the early 1920s, approximately three decades passed without an earthquake striking Anchorage. The city grew in those decades. Land for homes was needed. And construction began on the hardened silt of the south side of Knik Arm in the area at the end of Northern Lights Boulevard; in the area west of the identified stress line. The land seemed firm enough, but the area was *new land*, recently formed

and recently vegetated. And when the massive Good Friday earthquake struck, homes built in the area were destroyed ... a decade later, Tom Smith, then the owner of the Soldotna golf course, said that he was in one of those home when the quake struck, and the ground shook so hard that from the chair on which he was sitting in his kitchen, he could see as far south as Lake Hood before the kitchen's south wall returned to the floor, that the walls of the house separated from the floor and the floor from the foundation: there was little to salvage afterwards.

But when I walked on the mudflats of Knik Arm on an April day in 1983, nineteen years after the quake, what struck me was the clay *stones* produced by tidal action along the bluff, *stones* produced in less than two decades, *stones* similar in size and shape to the sedimentary stones in Oregon and Washington streams beds, but *stones* not yet stone although they were very *hard*.

How long does it take for sedimentary rock to form? Geologists answer that question with lengths of time based in millions of years; yet geologists will also say that top soil forms at a rate of about one-eighth inch per century ... in the 1980s, there was a three foot deep layer of top soil covering the nearly foot-deep layer of volcanic ash that had blanketed Kodiak Island following the 1912 Katmai eruption. Photographic evidence exists of the ash depth at the time of the eruption, and in the river valleys of the east side of the island, this ash layer can still be found by removing a yard of organic top soil.

There are so-called creationist scientists—most of whom are Evangelical Christians—who argue that fossilization can occur much more quickly than any establishment geologist is willing to admit, that dinosaurs and human beings coexisted. But if dinosaurs and human beings truly coexisted, then human bones should be found along with dinosaur bones in fossil beds if there was human occupation of the lands accounting for the fossil beds.

If Scripture is true—the contention of *Philadelphia* is that it is—then Adam was the first of all living creatures, with Adam predating the creation of even plants and dinosaurs, the first of the works [ways] of the Lord (Job 40:19). But to believe that Scripture is true requires faith, not contorted science, the fruit of the so-called creation scientists. And this faith leads to obedience. Contorted science produces disobedience and the continuance of lawlessness ... if a so-called creation scientist can justify his or her belief in God through disproving a tenet of academically accepted science, then this creation scientist will not change what he or she believes even after God again intervenes in the affairs of men at the Second Passover. This creation scientist will be like the Latter Day Saint who, today, has on hand a year's worth of everything he or she will consume: the Latter Day Saint will not repent, will not rethink how he or she worships God following the Second Passover, but will continue in his or her present belief paradigm until the promise of entering into God's rest no longer stands after day 220. The food stores that Latter Day Saints have on hand will almost guarantee their rebellion against God in the Affliction. Likewise, a creation scientist debunking an accepted scientific truth will almost guarantee that this scientist rebels against God on day 220 of the Affliction.

Faith that is belief of God was fairly easy to possess in an age of ignorance, but with knowledge comes doubts, comes questioning, comes accepting someone else's *truth* as true. Naïve faith is maligned. And godly faith becomes like the skin of Job when the Adversary afflicted this righteous man with boils (Job 2:7): this faith is subjected to rashes of ongoing doubts, with these doubts coming from the Adversary who remains the prince of the power of the air, the prince of this world.

The “P” creation account of Genesis chapter one would seem to present an ordered creation somewhat in agreement with tiered evolution and Hinduism: this creation account seems to have plants being created on the third day, the sun and moon on the fourth day, fish and fowl on the fifth day, and mammals on the sixth day. But in poetic discourse—the “P” creation account is tightly crafted poetic discourse—a *seed bearing tree* need not be a tree that an arborist would prune. A linguistic icon can represent any linguistic object that the poet wants the icon to represent. And the “P” creation account isn't about the physical creation, but about the spiritual creation of the sons of God. For the light of Day One is Christ Jesus (2 Cor 4:6); so the light [day] portion of Day One and all of the second through sixth days occur after the Logos who was God and who was with the God in the beginning (John 1:1) entered His creation (*v.* 3) as His only Son (John 3:16) ... Day One of the “P” creation account ended at Calvary. The third day ends at the Second Advent. The fifth day ends after the Thousand Years. The sixth day ends at the conclusion of the great White Throne Judgment. In chronological years, Day One and the third day and the fifth day are long, and the second day and the fourth day and sixth day are short. The fifth day is roughly half as long as third day, and from historical narratives, the third day is also roughly half as long as Day One. This ratio, though, doesn't hold for the second and fourth days, so the length of the sixth day cannot be approximated in advance.

In the 1st-Century, Jews—biological descendants of the patriarchs—in Judea were confronted with a Galilean (a person of the nations) coming as the prophet about whom Moses spoke (*cf.* Deut 18:15–19; John 5:45–47), but as Pharisees noted, Scripture is silent about a prophet coming from Galilee:

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 7:47–52 emphasis added)

Even seeing the miracles worked by Jesus, Pharisees did not believe that Jesus was of God. Rather, Pharisees chose to believe Scripture *as they read it* over the witness of their eyes ... *Scripture as they read it*—can Scripture be read

in more than one way? Exegesis [ἐξήγησις] draws meaning from a text, taking from the text both a literal sense of what the text says plus a symbolic or metaphoric reading of the text, whereas eisegesis reads meaning into a text, adding to the text what wasn't previously there. In this sense, the entirety of the New Testament is the production of eisegetes, men who added not just new readings to existing scriptural passages, but additional text, with an example from Matthew's Gospel addressing the scriptural claim made by Pharisees that no prophet arises from Galilee (the following is here being repeated from earlier in this Commentary):

Now when He heard that John had been arrested, He withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth He went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the
Gentiles—
the people dwelling in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death,
on them a light has dawned.”

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt 4:12–17)

According to Matthew, Jesus understood Isaiah 9:1 to mean that the light of God—the prophet like Moses—would come from the land of Zebulun, the way of the sea, Galilee of the Gentiles. Thus, Matthew, like Jesus, read Isaiah differently than did Pharisees, with this difference coming from Matthew being with Jesus and receiving the spirit of the truth after the glorified Jesus breathed on ten of His disciples (John 20:22), thereby establishing a new synagogue in Israel.

Pharisees knew that Jesus came from Galilee ... what prevented them from realizing that the territory of Zebulun was in Galilee, and the light that came to darkness was the Lord? If the preceding question can be answered, then answer the following, does not “and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that [spiritually] is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified” (Rev 11:8) work in a similar way to prevent understanding?

Because the Pharisees did not recognize that *the people dwelling in darkness* was all of humanity, including themselves, these Pharisees did not realize that *have seen a great light* was a reference to the Messiah. And because Christians expect the two witnesses to come from earthly Jerusalem, where Christ Jesus was crucified, Christians will not realize that all of humankind today dwells in darkness and the dawn of the great light that is of Christ Jesus will come by the way of the sea, will come from fishermen, from the fishers for whom the Lord sends (Jer 16:16), that the two witnesses will descend from those who left Amsterdam in the 17th-Century, from those who left Sin (Sodom and Egypt) as Anabaptists, and the street where the dead bodies of the two witnesses will lie will be in heavenly Jerusalem, the Christian Church. But the entirety of the preceding

reading of Revelation 11:8 is as difficult for today's Christians to grasp as it was for Pharisees to grasp that Isaiah 9:1–2 pertained to Christ Jesus.

From a post-Calvary perspective, it is fairly easy to see that Jesus relocated to Capernaum to fulfill prophecy, and that Jesus came from Nazareth, the heart of the Galilee, to hide His coming from Pharisees, from scholars and temple officials. If the stone of offence, the rock of stumbling (Isa 8:14) comes from a location without scriptural importance, then the stone will not be seen before Pharisees and Sadducees stumble over it. No one would be looking for this stone to come from the Galilee. No one today is looking for the two witnesses to come from 17th-Century Separatists and Anabaptists.

Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in Him—a few had, but these few were respecters of persons and fearful of being put out of the temple.

Again, Scripture wasn't as easily understood as Pharisees thought ... the prophet Isaiah wrote,

For the Lord spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying: "*Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. But the Lord of hosts, Him you shall honor as holy. Let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.*"

Bind up the testimony; seal the teaching among my disciples. *I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him.* Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. And when they say to you, "Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter," should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living? To the teaching and to the testimony! *If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.* They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry. And when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will speak contemptuously against their king and their God, and turn their faces upward. And they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish. And they will be thrust into thick darkness.

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time He brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but *in the latter time He has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.* (Isa 8:11–9:1 emphasis added)

The Lord warned Isaiah not to call conspiracy, not to call heresy, what the house of Israel and the house of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem called

conspiracy and heresy. By extension, endtime Christians are not to call heresy what greater Christendom calls heresy. *Observant Christians* are to speak according to the Word of the Lord received by the prophet Isaiah, but the words Isaiah received were not understood by Pharisees and Sadducees and are not understood today by rabbinical Judaism or by greater Christendom; for earthly Jerusalem forms the shadow and type of heavenly or spiritual Jerusalem—and Christ Jesus was a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem just as *precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little* Bible study is a pit trap and snare into which Israel, outwardly and inwardly circumcised, has fallen and has fallen backwards, been broken and taken (Isa 28:13).

Any Christian pastor or teacher who advocates *precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little* Bible study is as the drunken priests of Ephraim were: this pastor or teacher will be trodden underfoot in the soon-coming Affliction, for this pastor or teacher does not teach according to the word Isaiah received. This pastor or teacher has no real understanding of the words Isaiah recorded.

John the Baptist came preaching repentance and baptizing with water for the death of the person's former ways. John the Baptist came preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:2) ... in the personage of Jesus the Nazarene, the kingdom of heaven was at hand, but John's words had an additional meaning: baptism by water was symbolic death of the sort that came upon humankind in the days of Noah, when all *nephesh* drowned in the flood of water that covered the high mountains under the whole heaven (Gen 7:19). "Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died" (v. 22).

In the 1st-Century, it did not take great faith to believe that a universal flood had occurred, but in the 21st-Century, very few educated Western Europeans or North Americans believe in a universal flood although considerable evidence exists showing that now dry lands were once covered with water—

But geologists' explanations for why ancient sea beds are found high in the Rocky Mountains involve plate tectonics, uplift, and the folding of ancient sea beds, with no mention of a universal flood; therefore, to believe in the Flood of Noah's day requires that evidence [marine fossils high in the Rockies] be given a differing meaning from the meanings that are based upon the assumptions of the scientific community.

The link between the Flood of Noah's day and baptism being a type of this Flood is theologically sound: Noah was a preacher of righteousness and was upright and blameless. His sons were sons of righteousness. Thus, to be as Noah and his sons were, a person must repent of all unbelief and turn to the Lord and believe and live by "every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt 4:4). To survive death by drowning, a person must be raised from death by righteousness and carried by righteousness to dry land as the Ark carried Noah and his sons from one side of death [the Flood] to the other side of death.

Therefore, John the Baptist coming to preach repentance and to baptize with water was a type of Noah, a preacher of righteousness, building the Ark and crossing from the Antediluvian world into this present age: those Israelites who

did not repent and were not baptized by John remained as Noah's pre-Flood neighbors were ... Noah's pre-Flood neighbors were all dead as of the 17th day of the second month in the year of the Flood. Thus, those Pharisees and Sadducees who remained in the temple and did not go out to where John baptized were as those who ate and drank, married and gave in marriage, until the day Noah entered the Ark (Matt 24:37–38): they were as endtime Christians will be when the Second Passover liberation of Israel occurs.

In warning greater Christendom to cover its transgressions of the commandments by repenting and then taking the Passover sacraments of bread and wine on the dark portion of the 14th day of *Aviv* as Jesus left His example with His disciples, *Philadelphia* does a work like that of John the Baptist ... I do a work like that of John the Baptist; for in putting to death the old self, a person's old ways, the person's natural ways of worshiping God—which in the days of the prophet Isaiah had Israel inquiring of mediums and necromancers—the endtime Christian will repent of how he or she presently worships God, or he or she will perish as Noah's neighbors perished when the foundations of the deep broke forth, with these foundations most likely creating volcanic eruptions that transformed the shape of the earth while creating thunderstorms the likes of which modern men cannot imagine (for atmospheric water droplets form around microscopic dust particles: a tremendous increase in dust particles would produce an increase in atmospheric water droplets.)

If the fountains of the deep that burst forth (Gen 7:11) were not aquifers of fossilized water but were foundations of magma, then the remainder of the passage works: “and the windows of the heavens were opened.” Now there is the introduction of an element that academia does not consider: when lava is suddenly quenched in water, radioisotope dating of the solidified lava is worthless.

7.

There will not be another Flood, but the foundations of the deep that will again erupt will be the coming of the four kings, the four beasts of Daniel chapters seven and eight, the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, plus the little horn that is the Adversary possessing a human being, the man of perdition. As the foundations of the deep erupted on the 17th day of the second month, seven days after Noah entered the Ark on the 10th day of the second month (see Gen 7:4, 11), the day on which the lamb is chosen for the second Passover, the four horsemen of the Apocalypse on the 17th day of *Iyyar* in the year of the Second Passover liberation of Israel will emerge from the sea of humanity, one after another. If the Second Passover liberation of Israel were to occur this year, that day would be the Sabbath, May 21st, with the selection of the paschal lamb being made the previous Sabbath: those *observant Christians* that keep the Sabbath on May 14th this year and who will cover their transgressions by repentance and by taking the Passover sacraments [either on the first Passover, or if not possible, on the second Passover] would compose the selected and chosen Body of the paschal Lamb of God. These *observant Christians* will be the oil and the wine that Sin, the third

horsemen, cannot harm (Rev 6:6), and these *observant Christians* will be few in number, with most of them—all who do not have the spirit of prophecy—being sacrificed early into the Affliction, the first 1260 days of the seven endtime years.

It cannot be known with absolute certainty that the Second Passover liberation of Israel will occur on any particular year until it actually occurs, but with the coming insurrection—also the title of a small book for radical revolutionaries—that represents the spiritual king of Greece’s trampling and stomping of the demonic king of Persia and the triumph of Greek ideology [in particular, democracy] over the status quo, the events that have occurred in Egypt and that are beginning to occur throughout the Near East and Middle East, when coupled to numerous seemingly coincidental dating, suggests that this year, 2011, is the best possible candidate for the Second Passover liberation of Israel within the next two decades.

There will be no second Flood of water that baptizes the world into death. The coming baptism will be in the breath of God in Christ [πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐν πνεύμα Χριστοῦ], and will be into life, and will not be seen by human eyes; therefore, the Lord “will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood” (Joel 2:30–31). This baptism in spirit [πνεῦμα] will occur when the kingdom of this world is taken from the four kings and the little horn and given to the Son of Man (cf. Dan 7:9–14; Rev 11:15–18). There will then, after the great White Throne Judgment concludes, be a third baptism of the world, and this one will be in fire and into glory, with this third baptism seen in the coming of a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21:1).

I have drifted away from *faith*: no computer model has been developed for what would happen if volcanic eruptions occur everywhere at once. In such a scenario, could water cover the mountains, thereby absorbing the heat, so that the earth’s surface would again be inhabitable by those animals that were with Noah on the Ark? Certainly, rotational torque would cause tectonic plate movement until rotational stability was again achieved, and would cause fairly rapid tectonic plate movement.

The present scientific community challenges belief in God in a different but similar way to how the Lord permitted Satan to challenge Job’s belief-in and belief of God. *Observant Christians* lose children to the ways of this world as Job lost his children to death. *Observant Christians* lose employment, lose business opportunities, lose ownership of the things of this world in a manner analogous to how Job lost all he had in this world except for his life. *Observant Christians* lose spouses as Job’s wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die” (Job 2:9). And *observant Christians* have their garment of Christ’s righteousness attacked by doubts as the Adversary “struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head” (v. 7).

But in John preaching repentance, with the justification for his preaching repentance being that the kingdom of the heavens [the plural is correct] was at hand, then what John preached as *the voice of one crying in the wilderness: / Prepare the way of the Lord; / make his paths straight* (Matt 3:3) wasn’t Christ

Jesus, who lived but wasn't really at hand, but a change from the old ways, the natural ways of worshiping God, to worshiping God with a pure heart, cleansed by repentance, cleansed by faith, thereby putting to death the former ways of Israel, the ways practiced by the Pharisees in the temple. Christ Jesus was the one coming after John who was mightier than John, and whose sandals John knew he wasn't worthy to carry (v. 11) —

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. (Matt 3:13–15 emphasis added)

And again,

Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the
Gentiles—
the people dwelling in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death,
on them a light has dawned."

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt 4:12–17 emphasis added)

If Jesus were the *kingdom of heaven* that was at hand and that was the reason for John to preach repentance, then it makes no sense for Jesus to preach exactly the same message—*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*—when He hears that John had been arrested. Plus, the importance of Jesus being from Galilee was sufficient for Him to relocate his residence from Nazareth, near the heart of the Galilee, to Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so as to fulfill in type the prophecy of Isaiah (see 9:1). The reality of this fulfillment will have the *light of God* dawning from Holland in the 16th-Century, with *sons of light* emigrating a century later from Holland to North America, where they remain in the 21st-Century, with the patriarch Jacob suggesting the link between Zebulun and Holland (see Gen 49:13), and with the historical Christian narrative confirming this link.

It is common for Christians to claim that Jesus represents the kingdom of the heavens, and He does: He remains the sole representative of the Most High God, for salvation comes by no other name. And that is what the kingdom of heaven represents: salvation, or life outside of time, or better, life outside of space-time. But the word of the Lord came to the prophet Ezekiel, saying, "Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it and break its supply of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast, even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would

deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord God” (Ezek 14:13–14), and, “Or if I send a pestilence into that land and pour out my wrath upon it with blood, to cut off from it man and beast, even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, declares the Lord God, they would deliver neither son nor daughter. They would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness” (vv. 19–20).

The righteousness of the godly men and women of old shall deliver them from death ... Job records, “If a man dies, shall he live again? / All the days of my service I would wait, / till my renewal [*relief or change*] should come” (14:14), and, “For I know that my Redeemer lives, / and at the last he will stand upon the earth. / And after my skin has been thus destroyed, / yet [without] my flesh I shall see God” (19:25–26).

Job did not know *Jesus* as Jesus the Nazarene, but as the Word of the Lord, who emptied Himself of His divinity and made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men (Phil 2:7), thereby entering His creation as His only Son. ... Job was not of Israel; however, Jesus was of Israel but denied by much of Israel because of the circumstances of His birth. Galilee wasn't Judea, as Job wasn't of Israel. Jesus was to the Pharisees of the temple as Job would have been. The circumstances of their births cast suspicion on them. Yet, the Lord thought enough of Job to challenge the Adversary with him.

To the Lord, the man Job said, “I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, / but now my eye sees you; / therefore I despise myself, / and repent in dust and ashes” (42:5–6). ... The way to the kingdom of God requires repentance and rethinking how the person has worshiped God, regardless of whether the person has walked upright and blameless before the Lord, or whether the person has been a genuine scalawag. Pharisees that had strived to walk uprightly needed to repent and reconsider how they worshiped God. Even John the Baptist had to rethink what he believed:

Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “*Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?*” And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.” (Matt 11:2–6 emphasis added)

Apparently John, like others, expected the Messiah to come and restore Israel to power in this world, not realizing that Jesus, in causing the blind to see and the deaf to hear, the lame to walk and the defiled to be clean, was preparing Israel for the coming of the Messiah, who would not come in power as a man but as God. The common assumption of Israel was that the Messiah would be a super-size King David, physically slaying Israel's enemies and thereby removing the hand of Roman [Edomite] oppression from Israel. In reality, the Messiah will rule over Israel and over the kingdom of this world as the present prince of this world reigns over the mental topography of living creatures. The Messiah will rule by

controlling the mental landscape from which thoughts of the mind and desires of the heart sprout and grow as wheat and weeds sprouted and grew from the soil of ancient Judean hillsides. The weeds came from the Adversary. And when a field is filled with darnel (tares; false grain) that looks like wheat when young but bears worthless, tiny black seeds—and that field is greater Christendom—how is the disciple to bear the fruit of the spirit if the disciple mimics the tares? The disciple must repent, must rethink how he or she worships God. The disciple must reconsider his or her expectations of how Christendom looks physically and what the disciple believes spiritually.

The Lord waved Job before the Adversary as if the man Job were a matador's red cape, saying that Job was perfect in all his ways—nevertheless Job did not fully comprehend the ways of the Lord for Job said,

This is the portion of a wicked man with God,
and the heritage that oppressors receive from the Almighty:
If his children are multiplied, it is for the sword [i.e., his
children are born to be killed],
and his descendants have not enough bread.
Those who survive him the pestilence buries,
and his widows do not weep.
Though he heap up silver like dust,
and pile up clothing like clay,
he may pile it up, but the righteous will wear it [i.e., the
unrighteous cannot benefit from his wicked ways],
and the innocent will divide the silver.
He builds his house like a moth's,
like a booth that a watchman makes.
He goes to bed rich, but will do so no more;
he opens his eyes, and his wealth is gone.
Terrors overtake him like a flood;
in the night a whirlwind carries him off.
The east wind lifts him up and he is gone;
it sweeps him out of his place.
It hurls at him without pity;
he flees from its power in headlong flight.
It claps its hands at him
and hisses at him from its place. (Job 27:13–23)

And,

Is not calamity for the unrighteous,
and disaster for the workers of iniquity? (Job 31:3)

To Job, the righteous are rewarded in this world, and the unrighteous are cursed—this is the simplistic position of Calvinist Christians. However, the Psalmist contradicts this allegedly true premise:

Truly God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled,

my steps had nearly slipped.
 For *I was envious of the arrogant*
 when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
 For *they have no pangs until death;*
 their bodies are fat and sleek.
They are not in trouble as others are;
 they are not stricken like the rest of mankind.
 Therefore pride is their necklace;
 violence covers them as a garment.
 Their eyes swell out through fatness;
 their hearts overflow with follies.
 They scoff and speak with malice;
 loftily they threaten oppression.
 They set their mouths against the heavens,
 and their tongue struts through the earth.
 Therefore his people turn back to them,
 and find no fault in them.
 And they say, “How can God know?
 Is there knowledge in the Most High?”
 Behold, *these are the wicked;*
 always at ease, they increase in riches.
All in vain have I kept my heart clean
and washed my hands in innocence.
For all the day long I have been stricken
 and rebuked every morning. (Ps 73:1–14 emphasis added)

History shows that the wicked prosper in this world, that the wicked do not have the troubles that the righteous have, that the wicked can slander God and nothing seems to come to them; whereas the righteous are stricken, rebuked, insulted, and maligned in every way imaginable. So long ago, the Psalmist through observation—what Jesus told John the Baptist’s disciples to consider—argued against what was commonly believed about God.

Now, treading softly on hallowed ground: Jesus, without sin and with ultimate belief of God, also had to rethink what He knew of God:

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*” that is, “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.” And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” And *Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.* (Matt 27:45–50 emphasis added)

Jesus did not know that when He took on the sins of Israel as the paschal Lamb of God, He would die alone because those sins caused the Father to turn

His back to Christ Jesus. Even He had to—in His dying throes—rethink what He knew of the Father and about Himself, and he turned to a psalm of David:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? (Ps 22:1 emphasis added)

In crying out, *Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani*, the remainder of the thought-couplet is implied: Jesus asked His Father and our Father why He was so far from saving Him, from the words of His groaning. And in crying out, Jesus audibly challenged what He believed about Himself and about the Father just as Job was challenged by his so-called friends, then by the Lord Himself about what Job believed, with Job ultimately saying, “I despise myself, / and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:6).

After the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite: “*My anger burns against you and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.* Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves. And my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly. For you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.” So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did what the Lord had told them, and the Lord accepted Job's prayer. (Job 42:7–9 emphasis added)

Job spoke correctly; John spoke correctly; Jesus spoke correctly. Yet each of these men who were upright in all their ways had to reconsider what each knew and believed about the Most High God, with the man Jesus obviously doing much less reconsidering than the other two, but nonetheless being surprised when the Father hid His face.

Every Christian will reconsider what he or she thinks the person knows about God before the person dies, or is changed in the twinkling of an eye at the Second Advent. It would certainly be easier on the Christian to begin reconsidering what the person believes before the Second Passover is upon the Christian. Therefore, there is no escape from repentance.

Faith [πίστεως] is belief of God, nothing more, nothing less, with this faith always being manifested in works, in obedience to the commandments of God. It is **not** the works of the Law that do anything for a Christian. Rather, it is the Christian's belief of God that causes the Christian to produce the works of the Law that matters; for as Paul wrote, οἱ ποιηταὶ νόμου δικαιοθήσονται — *the doers of law will be justified* (Rom 2:13). Faith is not knowledge; it is not understanding the mysteries of God; it is not even love for God. It is, again, belief of God that is sufficient to cause a person to act upon that belief, thereby doing those things that are pleasing to God, with having love for neighbor and brother high on the list of those things that are pleasing to God, with loving the Lord with heart and mind standing atop that list.

The Adversary is less interested in whether a person worships sticks and stones or worships the Creator as *Yah*, or as Allah, or as Jesus Christ, just so long as the person doesn't believe the Most High God. And the Most High God apparently is less interested in what the person worships than in the person doing what the person knows is right and good; for the Most High can work with the person who practices no hypocrisy.

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