

Commentary — From the Margins *Alpha & Omega*

1.

Under the best of circumstances, absolute proof is elusive, a mirage that isn't what it seems to be when finally captured, measured and weighed. In Volume Four of *APA*, I argued that Matthew's Gospel isn't the biography of the historical Jesus, but the biography of the indwelling Christ Jesus, the "vessel" in which spiritual life is held within the Elect. Thus, Matthew's Gospel is the story of *US*, the Elect. It is the story of me since spiritual birth. But can I prove this claim beyond doubt?

Yes, I can prove that Matthew's Gospel isn't historical, nor does Matthew's Gospel claim to be historical. But no, I cannot prove beyond doubt that Matthew's Gospel is the biography of the indwelling Christ Jesus. That claim really cannot be proved at all; for Matthew's Gospel functions more like prophecy than as historical biography or history, even my history. This particular Gospel is structured in a narrative equivalent to a Hebrew poetic thought-couplet, with the first half of the Gospel serving as the physical portion of a thought-couplet while the latter half functions as the spiritual portion, with this concept expressed by the two Greek letters, Α (*alpha*) and Ω (*omega*), the enclosed beginning and the open (as if female) ending ... in the beginning, no one could enter the enclosed godhead, such were the conditions under which the children of Israel entered the Promised Land of milk and honey, but at the end, birth by the Father is given to many sons of God through Christ Jesus (see Rom 6:23) who says of Himself that He is the Ω (*omega*). Thus, the physical shape of the omega uncial has importance; for the majuscule has the visual appearance of a squatting female figure, one giving birth or able to give birth; so when Christ says in John's vision that He is *the Alpha and the Omega* (Rev 22:13), the actual shape of these two Greek letters convey meaning apart from their position in the Greek alphabet.

In the beginning, spiritual birth was not offered to Israel, the firstborn son of the God of Abraham (Ex 4:22). Spiritual birth and by extension, salvation, wasn't offered to Israel in Egypt. Rather long physical life and physical prosperity in a land of milk and honey were offered to this outwardly circumcised nation (Deut 30:15–20), with long life and prosperity forming the spiritually lifeless shadow and copy of heavenly life possessed by firstborn sons of God the Father here on earth now, and in the future in heaven.

To write a narrative in the structural form of a thought-couplet, the author of the narrative has to satisfy the demands of a thought-couplet: the author of Matthew's Gospel had to include motifs at the beginning of his cipher that form the lifeless shadow and copy of spiritual motifs at the end. The catch is that none

of these motifs need be literally true, but all must be spiritually or symbolically true; for literal or factual truth doesn't have relevance in poetic discourse which makes no claim of "truth." Poetic discourse captures the essence of *truth* without necessarily being literally true.

If a reader enters a text expecting the text to be literally true, the reader will accept as "real" motifs and scenarios that ought to break the reader's suspension of disbelief. The reader will not ask of the text tough questions, such as how does the author of Matthew know what the devil said to Jesus when tempting Jesus? Who reported these dialogues to the author of Matthew? The easy answer is that *the Parakletos* did, but why? And where is that very tall mountain from which all of the kingdoms of the earth can be seen (Matt 4:8)? It isn't in the Middle East or in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas? So the temptation of Jesus as a narrative passage cannot be literally or physically true due simply to the curvature of the earth. It can only be symbolically or spiritually true.

The person who reads Matthew's Gospel needs to keep in mind that very tall mountain from which all of the kingdoms of the earth can be seen, a mountain so tall that no flesh and blood person can ascend it, not even that earthly man Jesus—and if the temptation of Jesus doesn't pertain to a man of flesh and blood, then why have so many Christians for so long been willing to believe that the Bible is literally true, the infallible word of God? What's recorded in Matthew's Gospel is *true*, but symbolically true ... again, where is that very tall mountain in the Middle East from which the kingdom of China can be seen?

While *the Parakletos* [the spirit of truth] probably did give to the author of Matthew the spiritual knowledge needed to write this Gospel, the author of Mark's Gospel gave to this author many words, enough words that where Matthew deviates from Mark, the author of Matthew deliberately calls attention to the deviation.

If Matthew's Gospel, because of its thought-couplet structure, is held to the standards of poetic discourse rather than the standards set for historic discourse, then even the physical portion of the thought-couplet [the first half of the Gospel] need not be literally true, but need only be symbolically true ... again, for those literalists who cannot yet bring themselves to think of Matthew's Gospel as not literally true, read the temptation account:

Then *the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple* and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, *the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory*. And he said to Him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" (Matt 4:5–10 emphasis added)

Was it even possible to sit on the pinnacle of the temple, and when would Jesus sitting on the pinnacle not have been seen by a worshiper coming to offer sacrifice?

The answers (Scripture cited) by Matthew's *Jesus* are the correct responses to temptations, but there is no very high mountain from which the glory of all kingdoms can be seen. So literalists need to disabuse themselves of their literalism. Of course, they are free to remain ignorant, but their ignorance is subject to challenge.

Every scene, every motif in Matthew's Gospel is not necessarily factual, a claim that remains theological quicksand. When the majority of Christendom believes that the Bible is the infallible word of God, literally true in all of its aspects, in all of its declarations; to introduce the possibility that canonized books of the Bible could be factually unsupportable stories, with the Book of Acts definitely being a Sophist novel, a person invites trouble that could be avoided by remaining silent, what Christian pastors have done for at least the past two centuries. As a result generations of Christians have not been taught what their pastors have known: the Bible factually disagrees with itself. Even Sabbatarian pastors that were educated at one of the campuses of Ambassador College know that the Gospels contradict themselves in significant ways: none of these pastors are so poorly educated that he doesn't know the disciple Matthew wasn't present when Jesus delivered His *Sermon on the Mount* (Matt chaps 5–7), that Matthew wasn't called to be a disciple until after the *Sermon on the Mount* was delivered: "As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he rose and followed him" (Matt 9:9).

Unless a Sabbatarian pastor has scoured from his mind what he learned in his precept-upon-precept Bible studies, the pastor knows that in the matter of calling the disciple Matthew, Mark's Gospel differs from Matthew's Gospel:

He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and He was teaching them. And *as He passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed Him.* And as He reclined at table in His house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and His disciples, for there were many who followed Him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that He was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to His disciples, "Why does He eat with tax collectors and sinners?" And when Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2:13–17 emphasis added)

And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those whom He desired, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles) so that they might be with Him and He might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and *James the son of Alphaeus,*

and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him. (Mark 3:13–19 emphasis added)

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But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He then said to the paralytic—"Rise, pick up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men. As Jesus passed on from there, *he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth*, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when He heard it, He said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt 9:4–13 emphasis added)

And He called to Him His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; *James the son of Alphaeus*, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. (Matt 10:1–4 emphasis added)

It appears that the author of Matthew copies Mark's list of disciples, but in Mark's Gospel, it is Levi the son of Alphaeus that is the tax collector called to be a disciple, not Matthew. So is "Matthew" another name for Levi? That would seem to be the case.

To distinguish between the two men named "James," their fathers are named, but why wouldn't Levi/Matthew be named as the brother of *James son of Alphaeus*, as is the case with John, brother of James the son of Zebedee? So, are two sons of Alphaeus called to be disciples or only one, which would have *James son of Alphaeus* being the tax collector Levi?

The preceding textual problem is a small one, hardly worthy of notice except for the question, how would the disciple Matthew know what Jesus said to His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount? Matthew wasn't there! What Jesus said is expressed in specific utterances, not in general terms—and I go often to the Sermon on the Mount to get Jesus' example of what it means to have the law written on the heart and placed in the mind (the movement from hand to heart; from the Law being written on two tablets of stone to be written on two tablets of flesh). So how trustworthy are Jesus' words as expressed in the Sermon on the Mount?

Of course Sabbatarian pastors educated on the campuses of Ambassador College have noticed the discrepancy between Matthew's Gospel and Mark's;

have known that there is no mountain from which the glory of all kingdoms can be seen; have known that Matthew's genealogy of Jesus is false, that more generations existed between Abraham and Jesus than three sets of fourteen, but sermons about the textual problems found in Matthew, Mark, even John don't contribute to the salvation of disciples so these pastors have been silent about problems, focusing instead on current events ...

It is a prophesy seminar that fills pews and coffers, not sermons about textual criticism.

From pastors of all flavors, precept-upon-precept exegesis has produced pretence-upon-pretence sermons, leaving Christians ignorant and vulnerable, with Christians now losing the on-going cultural war that will end in a last generation of professing Christians dying as lonely old men and women if Christians don't catch fire and scorch the stem of green humanism.

To teach what should have been taught by Sabbatarian pastors a century ago demands walking upon theological quicksand ... in writing a narrative thought-couplet, the author of Matthew had to wrestle with the demands that typological exegesis places upon a historical event. Writing a narrative thought-couplet required that the author of Matthew send his *Jesus* to Egypt if for no other reason than to show that salvation wasn't offered to Israel when Moses led the firstborn son of the God of Abraham out from the land representing sin and into a physical Promised Land.

In Matthew's Gospel Jesus was an infant, a small child when taken by His parents to Egypt; Israel was an infant when taken to Egypt by *YHWH*, Israel's parents, and Israel was still an infant or very young child when the Lord took the fathers of Israel by the hand to lead the nation into a physical Promised Land. Note, the imagery:

Behold, the days are coming, declares [*YHWH*], when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, *not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt*, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares [*YHWH*]. (Jer 31:31-32 emphasis and double emphasis added)

Mixed metaphors are at work, the first being that the fathers of Israel collectively were a small child, and the second being that the Lord married this small child and was *her* husband. So in the mixed metaphors, the fathers of Israel collectively were the child bride of the Lord, a child bride that did not prove faithful when old enough to return love.

The author of Matthew reinforces the "mixed" nature of the metaphor by citing Hosea: "When Israel was a child, I [*YHWH*] loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hos 11:1). But Hosea's quote must be placed in its context:

And [*YHWH*] said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says [*YHWH*], *Israel is my firstborn son*, and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." *If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.*'" (Ex 4:21-23 emphasis added)

Spirit beings are neither male nor female; so biological gender doesn't apply to God or to sons of God except in the role a spirit being plays in the plan of God.

The preceding is a concept that is easily overlooked by disciples: *the Logos* [*ὁ Λόγος* — from John 1:1] was neither male nor female even though He functioned as the Helpmate of *the God* [*τὸν Θεόν*], thus filling the role of *wife*, while simultaneously functioning as the male sky-God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He then entered His creation to which He had given birth (John 1:3) as His unique Son, the man Jesus the Nazarene. The spirit or breath of God the Father visibly entered into Jesus when baptized (Mark 1:10); thus disclosing that God is the Head of Jesus (1 Cor 11:3) as the husband is the Head of his wife. However, Jesus is the Head of His disciples through the indwelling of Christ or the breath of Christ [*pneuma Christou*] (*cf.* Rom 8:9; 6:23), which places the glorified Jesus in the position of being the Bridegroom whereas His disciples will be His Bride, with the glorified Jesus bringing to birth disciples through Him pouring out the spirit of God on all flesh (Matt 3:11; Joel 2:28).

While the metaphorical mixing of gender seems odd to physical human persons that for centuries were confined by gender into particular roles [positions] in human society, the psychological movement from *physical-thinking* to thinking spiritually dictates breaking the link of biological gender to theological role that is nowhere more openly paralyzing than in 1st Timothy:

Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control. (1 Tim 2:11–15)

Among scholars there is near universal consensus that the Apostle Paul did not write the Pastoral Epistles—wrong hand; wrong grammar; wrong understanding of church authority; and no understanding of the gender metaphor that has a wife representing the fleshly body of a person while her husband represents the living inner self [soul]. Whereas the Apostle Paul in his genuine epistles discloses his understanding that the *Israel* of record is no longer the outwardly circumcised nation but since Calvary has become the inner, circumcised-of-heart nation, no such understanding is present in the Pastoral Epistles. If such understanding were present, the author of these epistles would have known that Eve was covered by Adam's obedience, that nothing Eve did could cause sin to enter the world (see Rom 5:12), that Eve could not be a transgressor even if she ate every piece of forbidden fruit on the Tree of Knowledge ... simply move Christ Jesus and His obedience/righteousness into the role of Adam, and disciples into the role of Eve: what can a deceived disciple do in innocence that would not be covered by Christ's righteousness, euphemistically known as "grace"? Can a disciple speak the words of Jesus? Of course a disciple can? So why can't a women born of spirit as a son of God also speak the words of Christ Jesus? See the problem?

When the wife represents the outer self of a person, with the head of the wife, her husband, representing the inner self, the command that the wife is not to

speaking is tantamount to commanding the husband not to speak; so how is the wife to learn if her husband's lips are not to speak, a problem inherent to mixed metaphors and a valid reason for not accepting the Pastoral Epistles as being of the Apostle.

A wife is to speak the words of her head/Head, not her own words as Jesus during His earthly ministry spoke the words of the Father, His Head (again, 1 Cor 11:3), and not His own words. Thus, the Apostle Paul gives to converted wives permission to speak the words of Christ Jesus, meaning that they are to know these words well enough that they can speak them without injecting their own words or human opinions into their public utterances when praying or prophesying with their heads covered. Permit a woman as a son of God to speak. And the "Paul" of the Pastoral Epistles is rejected as an imposter.

Consider what the author of John's Gospel records *Jesus* saying in Jerusalem on the Sabbath before He was crucified:

If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word [*'o logos*] that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has Himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. (John 12:47–49)

The Body of Christ would have no authority to speak "the word" Jesus left with His disciples if the Woman, spiritual Eve, was compelled to remain silent. As it is, the Body of Christ is free to speak the words of its Head, Christ Jesus, which negates any universal application of *women are to remain silent*.

When meaning is taken from Scripture via typological exegesis, the outer self of the person is represented by the woman in marriage; the inner self is represented by the husband. For the reality of one man and one woman—two individuals—forming one flesh (Gen 2:24) is seen in every Christian who has truly been born of God. Marriage can only be between a man and a woman. Any other union identified as *marriage* represents a bastardized usage of the word analogous to demon possession where the spiritual entity inside the fleshly body is not the living inner self as head of the person, but a rebelling angelic being, a rebelling servant ... where one man is the head of another man through penetration, there is no (and can never be) marriage. What there is amounts to slavery.

In the typology of Hebraic thought-couplets, what the Lord tells Moses to say to Pharaoh, followed by what the Lord did by sending the death angel throughout the land of Egypt forms the physical shadow and type of what will be done spiritually; of what has commenced but has not yet been completed. So let us look more closely at what the author of Matthew wrote about going to Egypt:

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of

Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son." (Matt 2:13–15)

Again, in placing Hosea's words in context, we find:

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and *out of Egypt I called my son. The more they were called, the more they went away; they kept sacrificing to the Baals and burning offerings to idols. Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk; I took them up by their arms, but they did not know that I healed them.* I led them with cords of kindness, with the bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws, and I bent down to them and fed them. ***They shall not return to the land of Egypt, but Assyria shall be their king,*** because they have refused to return to me. (Hos 11:1–5 emphasis and double emphasis added)

In citing Hosea with his reference to Moses' words (i.e., Ex 4:22), the author of Matthew's Gospel hard-links Jesus to *Israel* as being the son/Son that was called out from Egypt, again the representation of sin. But *Israel* is not to return to sin, to Egypt, but is to be delivered into the hand of Death, represented physically by the land of Assyria, because of its sinning ways in the Promised Land.

Israel doesn't return to sin once the children of Israel, behind Joshua, crossed the Jordan because *Israel* never left behind the idols of Egypt:

On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most glorious of all lands. And I said to them, Cast away the detestable things your eyes feast on, every one of you, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am [YHWH] your [Elohim]. But they rebelled against me and were not willing to listen to me. None of them cast away the detestable things their eyes feasted on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. ... So I led them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. I gave them my statutes and made known to them my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live. Moreover, I gave them my Sabbaths, as a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am [YHWH] who sanctifies them. But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. They did not walk in my statutes but rejected my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; and my Sabbaths they greatly profaned. ... And I said to their children in the wilderness, Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor keep their rules, nor defile yourselves with their idols. I am [YHWH] your [Elohim]; walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules, and keep my Sabbaths holy that they may be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am [YHWH] your [Elohim]. But the children rebelled against me. They did not walk in my statutes and were not careful to obey my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; they profaned my Sabbaths. (Ezek 20:6–8, 10–13, 18–21)

What the author of Matthew does is "erase" the entirety of outwardly circumcised Israel's history in the Promised Land, denying to outwardly circumcised Israel legitimacy as the firstborn son of the Lord because of both the fathers of Israel and their children's lawlessness and idolatry.

The author of Matthew in what is traditionally regarded as the most *Jewish* of the Gospels is perhaps the most anti-Jewish; for this author removes the physically circumcised nation from history ...

Israel as the son of the Lord was called out from Egypt in the days of Moses, but this firstborn son, in the prophecy of Hosea, is condemned to death—to being ruled by the king of Assyria ... when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the second Sinai covenant, Moses denied to Israel spiritual life through the command against kindling a fire on the Sabbath (Ex 35:3). Hosea denied to the House of Israel physical life, not that every biological Israelite will be exterminated by the king of Assyria, but Israel would never again be a free people organized into its own nation.

For the author of Matthew to hard link Jesus to *Israel* as the son/Son called out of Egypt, this author has to step behind the children of Israel crossing the Jordan and entering into the Promised Land on the 10th day of the first month (Josh 4:19) as the penned Passover lamb of God. This author figuratively erases Israel from history, replacing *Israel* as an outwardly circumcised people with *Israel* as an inwardly circumcised people, Christian converts who have truly been born of spirit as sons of God.

The hard linkage of Jesus to Israel is seen in the children of Israel crossing the Jordan and entering the Promise Land on the 10th day of the first month (Josh 4:19) as a type of the chosen Passover lamb (Ex 12:3, 6), and in Jesus entering Jerusalem (the physical type of heavenly Jerusalem) on the 10th day of the first month and crucified on the 14th day (cf. John 12:1, 12; 19:31), but the symbolism was never completed by *Israel* for the children of Israel as the Passover lamb was blemished when it entered the Promised Land; thus this people was collectively sacrificed to cover their own sinfulness in this world. Their sacrifice couldn't cover the sins of others.

The hard link between Jesus and Israel that the author of Matthew sought to exploit is most evident in the Greek name <'Jesus>, which has been written since the invention of the printing press as *Jesus*, with 'Jesus being the direct Greek translation of the Hebrew name of *Joshua*. ... The transliteration of *Joshua* to *Jesus* is directional (from Hebrew to Greek), because of Greek-speakers' inability to hear and utter the Hebrew <'Ayin> consonant or character.

Greek is a fully alphabetized language that needs not be pronounced to be read whereas Hebrew is only a partially alphabetized language that requires learned knowledge of what vowel sounds to insert between consonants of a consonant-cluster to transform the cluster into a word.. Thus, when a Semitic sound cannot be heard by Greek, Latin, German, or English speakers, the sound is eliminated from the word/name: the Greek name 'Jesus doesn't translate back into Hebrew as [using modern English characters] *Joshua*; for Occidentals are unable to hear or to reproduce the Hebrew <'Ayin> consonant. This particular letter can, by English speakers (or by native Greek speakers), be seen with eyes, but cannot be truly heard with ears for no mental sound template was formed for it when native English speakers (or Greek speakers) were first learning language. Hence, juvenile Sabbatarian disciples as if playing dress-up “pretend” to hear

what they cannot when they succumb to the Sacred Names Heresy, thereby publicly making fools of themselves when they utter Jesus' name in bastardized Hebrew.

But back to the author of Matthew's Hosea reference: the author of Matthew needs a vehicle to get Jesus from His birth location in Bethlehem to Nazareth in a culture where families didn't voluntarily move often or far. The author of Luke's Gospel creates a problematic and not historically supportable (time-wise) taxing situation to get Jesus born in Bethlehem then back to Nazareth. But the solution to the problem of relocation used by the author of Luke—besides not being able to withstand critical scrutiny—doesn't fit the narrative structure the author of Matthew chose for conveying spiritual truth. And that is what's occurring: the author of Matthew has a message he wants to convey to endtime disciples, with this author not knowing how far away the end was but apparently realizing (because Jesus hadn't yet returned as promised) that the end would occur in a different culture with different values, that the culture of the second temple was over. Thus, to solve his narrative problem of getting the infant Jesus and His parents from a house in Bethlehem where the Magi found the child (Matt 2:5–8, 11) to permanent residence in Nazareth where Jesus apparently grew to maturity, the author of Matthew's Gospel manually linked Jesus to Israel, and Jesus to the selected Passover lamb that the children of Israel in the Promised Land were supposed to represent. This author had previously manually linked Jesus to King David through fudging Jesus' genealogy as seen in Volume Four of *APA*; so another open manual linking could be expected—Jesus to Israel and to the children of Israel—with this author raising Jesus to glorious heights by producing the Sermon of the Mount (Matt chaps 5–7) that links Jesus to Moses on Mount Sinai, with Jesus being in the role of the Lord and His disciples representing Moses.

Does it historically or theologically matter that Joseph and Mary might not have taken the infant Jesus to Egypt; for there is absolutely no historical evidence that Herod ordered the killing of all male children of two years old or less in Bethlehem? If Herod had ordered such a mass murder of male offspring, an uproar would have occurred that would've left its mark in history. And neither Jewish historians and secular historians reference any such killing of young male children, which doesn't preclude Herod from having issued an order to kill but does strongly suggest that no such order was executed.

Unless many male children were killed in Bethlehem when Jesus was an infant, how would the author of Matthew's Gospel know—three quarters of a century later—that such an order was given? What would be his source? Local knowledge that has since been lost? Would Jesus have told His disciples about a trip His parents made to Egypt when He would have been too young to have remembered the trip? Joseph, husband of Mary, apparently died when Jesus was a teenager; so it is unlikely that Joseph said anything to Jesus' disciples about a trip to Egypt. Mary may have talked about the trip, but in all likelihood, once Jesus' ministry began there were more important subjects to discuss. And how

long did it take for Joseph and Mary, with an infant son, to journey to Egypt? A month, two months, three months. Why didn't Herod send soldiers after them?

Again, from what very high mountain can the glory of all kingdoms be seen? There isn't such a mountain, but that didn't prevent the author of Matthew from having the Adversary take Jesus to this mountain's summit.

The Alaskan author Dana Stabenow who grew up on a scow at Seldovia—officially a 75 foot fish tender working the Gulf of Alaska—once said (perhaps more often) that she would not permit facts to ruin a good story. This has been true for most authors throughout history, and apparently this was true for the author of Matthew's Gospel: he had a story to tell, one that had to be told, and he wasn't about to let inconvenient facts keep him from telling this most important story. So whether the infant Jesus went to Egypt really doesn't matter. The symbolism of Jesus going to Egypt and then being called out of Egypt is too important to be bound by facts; for in the person of *Jesus*, all of the history of *Israel* in the Promised Land, including the deportation, is erased. *Israel* in the person of Jesus gets to again cross the Jordan and camp at Gilgal where the uncircumcised children of Israel were circumcised.

In the symbolism the author of Matthew employs, the outward circumcision of the children of Israel with flint knives and the three days of healing that followed before these children of Israel kept their first Passover at even on the 14th day of the first month (Josh 5:2–10) represents the rolling away of the reproach of Sin [Egypt] that clung to outwardly circumcised *Israel* from Joshua (Greek: *'Jesus*) to Jesus ... on the day after that first Passover in Canaan, manna ceased (v. 12).

Manna as the shadow and copy of Christ Jesus, the true bread from heaven, ceased with the Wave Sheaf Offering, following which the people of *Israel* could eat the produce of the land, the new harvest of that year (also v. 12). In symbolism, the children of Israel no longer feed on the Passover Lamb of God that had sustained them for forty years, but ate Cain's offering, symbolically meaning that if they did well, overcame sin, they would be accepted by the Lord (see Gen 4:6–7).

But back to the Christian who believes that the New Testament is the infallible word of God: the Christian who believes the birth narrative told by the author of Matthew will attempt to reconcile Matthew's birth narrative with the birth narrative told by the author of Luke when these two birth narratives cannot be honestly reconciled. This Christian is naïve enough to believe that Dana Stabenow sets her Alaskan stories in real locations, none of which I was able to visit during my long residence in Alaska for she hasn't let geographical facts hinder her storytelling. But then, I know someone else, actually several *someones* who do the same.

From the perspective of demands that a thought-couplet would place upon a biography of Jesus, the very best visual representation of Jesus being without sin—the geography of Egypt representing sin as the geography of Assyria represents death—would be for the young Jesus to leave Egypt before He lost the innocence of infancy ... by leaving Egypt as a very small child, Jesus would

physically be without sin, with His status of being without sin not disturbed in the Matthew-cipher before baptism, leaving Jesus to be baptized without sin, the reason John the Baptist in Matthew's Gospel hesitates before baptizing Jesus.

Remember that very tall mountain ... Jesus doesn't have to actually go to Egypt to be without sin, but there is no better way to show Jesus being without sin while simultaneously replacing the children of Israel as the selected Passover Lamb of God than for God to call Jesus as His Son out from Egypt.

Does the above begin to make sense? It really doesn't matter whether Jesus literally went to Egypt. What matters is that Jesus was without sin when He was baptized. The task that the author of Matthew set for himself was to visually [physically] get Jesus to baptism without Jesus having sinned. The imagery that would have best conveyed this concept to his audience and to future audiences would be to send Jesus as an infant down to Egypt, and to then bring Him back while still a very small, innocent child. This imagery will transcend language translations and cultural shifts—and by incorporating the concept into a readable motif, the concept would always be available to disciples genuinely born of God.

Does this mean that Jesus didn't go down to Egypt when an infant? The question will certainly be raised, but it misses the mark: it doesn't matter whether Jesus went to Egypt. Jesus represented the reality that the children of Israel were supposed to represent when this nation entered into the Promised Land where it was slain by unbelief and disobedience. The children of Israel were to be the Passover lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of all humanity. However, the children of Israel were never without ideological blemish so their sacrifice was not accepted. They were Cain's offering, the fruit of the ground: the children of Israel made themselves into Cain's offering. It remained for Christ Jesus fifteen hundred years later to represent in Himself the children of Israel, thereby erasing history by rewriting history. Thus, by where [near the beginning] in his cipher the author of Matthew places the motif of Jesus going to Egypt and returning, the author welds the child Jesus to the children of Israel in a way that permits Jesus to be the stand-in for the entire nation of Israel in the spiritual portion of the narrative thought-couplet. This concept is implied in Matthew, but expressed in John's Gospel: "It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people" (John 18:14). Jesus was this one man; so instead of all Israel perishing, Jesus was sacrificed.

2.

To understand the potential of non-phonetic Hebrew thought-couplets used as narrative structure is to understand the mythical *Key of David*, with David being a very good poet. But to take this *Key of David* to where the glorified Christ elevated it, we need to return to those two Greek characters, A (*alpha*) and Ω (*omega*), understanding how these characters form mirror images of each other when they appear very different ... when Jesus sends out the Twelve (Matt chap 10), He commands His disciples not to go to Gentiles or to Samaritans, but to go to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (*v.* 6). Salvation was to come first to Israel, not to Gentiles. And salvation had not yet come to the lost sheep of Israel,

again the reality that the author of Matthew's Gospel revealed by sending the infant Jesus to Egypt, then bringing Him back when He was still a very small child—for salvation is only offered to physical adults, to persons old enough and mature enough to choose to do what is right, to choose righteousness. And it is this understanding that separated Radical Reformers from Protestant Reformers in the 16th-Century, with my ancestors being numbered among the Radicals.

I “jumped” several concepts in going from thought-couplets to Radical Reformers, the Anabaptist leaders of the 16th-Century. For right now, it is enough to visually *fold* the end of the age over the beginning of the Reform Period when Jesus initially laid over the dead Body of Christ to breathe His breath and spiritual life into this corpse in figurative mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. In other words, I am asking that you, as the reader, spread before you as if an open page the ministries of early Anabaptists—of, say, Andreas Fischer—and to then take the ministry of endtime Sabbatarian Anabaptists and superimpose it over these early ministries that saw the premature death of so many.

Not all of the edges will exactly align, but the general appearance of both will be similar enough that the end of the age (the age ending with the fall of spiritual Babylon) will seem to be the reality of the beginning of the Radical Reform movement. And this concept of folding the end over the beginning and aligning witness marks produces *the Key of David* that has Ω (*omega*) superimposed over A (*alpha*), not the other way around.

The concept of “Believers’ Baptism” divided Reform Christendom into two schisms that could not and to this day cannot be reconciled one to the other; for the theological assumptions of each differ to such an extent that Radical Reformers did not and do not believe that God was/is trying to save the world. For Radical Reformers, salvation came from righteousness that was voluntarily and consciously produced ...

If God were attempting to save everyone, He is losing to the Adversary—and this will never be the case. So falling back on what is actually seen, we find that only those individuals whom the Father draws from this world by giving to them the earnest of His spirit can today come to Christ Jesus (John 6:44) and thereby be saved. God could, if He so chose, save everyone, but that has never been His intention. His share of a person's increase is a tithe (10%), and He will take as His glorified sons a tithe of humanity, which isn't what ninety percent of humanity wants to believe. This is, however, the reality that's seen if an unbiased observer were to look across greater humankind, searching for those individuals who have genuine love for neighbor and brother.

The premise underpinning *Believers' Baptism* is that not everyone will be saved; not everyone is a *Believer*. Not everyone is willing to walk away from the glamour of this world and voluntarily choose to be different. It is actually the rare person that is truly willing to walk in this world as Jesus walked.

Whereas Protestant Reformers sought to *reform* and *repair* the “old Christian Church” [the Roman Church] and through this quickened *old Church* save the world (the entirety of humankind) even if conversion was at the point of a sword, Radical Reformers were determined to step behind the 4th-Century creation of

the *Old Church* and return Christianity to its 1st-Century roots, with these roots severed from civil authority of any kind ... Jesus wasn't crucified by His disciples, but by civil and ecclesiastical authorities. But what Radical Reformers advocated meant that there were no genuine Christians prior to these Radical Reformers, and the majority of Reform Christendom could not accept the premise that they were not *genuine*; so the Radical Reformers were hunted as if vermin by both Roman Church officials and Reform Church leaders until they became the *quiet folk*, where they remain to this day.

So many of the Radical Reformers were martyred before they could grow past spiritual infancy that the entire movement ran out of energy, losing its zeal for publically explicating the Word of God. Thus, what should have been realized in the 16th-Century and certainly by the end of the 17th-Century had to await realization until the 20th and now 21st Centuries, with the vast majority of Anabaptists having become fossilized skeletons of their forefathers.

In folding the end over its beginning, endtime disciples will come to realize the reality of John's Gospel and of Matthew's Gospel (and of Mark's Gospel as will be argued) is that God, prior to the beginning of the seven endtime years of tribulation, is not trying to save the world but has delivered the world into the hand of the Adversary for the destruction of fleshly humanity. This is not, however, a reality that the condemned world can easily accept; therefore, in order for this reality to be transmitted from the latter half of the 1st-Century to endtime disciples in an unknown future, the authors of Matthew's Gospel and of John's Gospel had to write texts that would be valued by every generation in between, but not necessarily understood by any of these in-between generations. And as modern writers have discovered when attempting to move Native American or West African trickster figures into American narratives, there is no Western figure other than Christ Jesus that is "large enough" to absorb the amoral demands placed upon trickster figures, not that "Jesus" in either Matthew's or John's Gospel represents a traditional trickster figure.

However, my introduction of narrative trickster figures here suggests a linkage between Matthew's *Jesus* and John's *Jesus* as a cultural figure that has reached mythological status and the trickster figure that permits discussion of hypothetical situations in oral cultures where every referent must be named. The character *Jesus* as He appears in the Gospels eliminates most discussion of the hypothetical through inserting absolutes initially introduced by Moses; so by an endtime Christian asking the simple question, *What would Jesus do*, the character *Jesus* eliminates the need for discussion of hypothetical situations.

There is an umbrella *Christian culture* that has developed in Western Europe and the Americas over the past 1,900 years, a culture that is under attack because it hasn't been able to transcend literalist or absolutist readings of the Bible. Whereas the oral cultures of First Nation peoples were able to understand Coyote or Raven stories as simultaneously real and not real, the greater Christian culture has never been able to *walk as Jesus walked* (1 John 2:6 *et al*) without inserting literalism in birth narratives that on their surface are false. Christians are not good at believing in Christ Jesus as their personal savior while walking in the

world as Jesus walked. The concept that Jesus will save a person *just as the person is* contradicts what the Apostle Paul wrote:

For God shows no partiality. For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. (Rom 2:11–13)

A Christian is really without choice: he or she will walk in this world as Jesus walked, or the Christian will perish as a sinner without coming under the Law. Thus, the record of how Jesus walked in this world forms a narrative that functions for the Christian culture in a similar but reversed manner to how Raven narratives functioned for pre-contact Tlingit peoples.

But, someone will quickly point out, Raven isn't real ... does Raven's lack of literalness give a person permission to be a glutton, or to not support his family? The lessons of trickster figure narratives answer questions of how should a person behave in a particular situation, such as when visiting a neighbor: should a person be a glutton, devouring the neighbor's store of foodstuffs because they are not the person's own? No, not at all. Good behavior is negatively seen in Raven stories and expected in First Nation cultures regardless of whether Raven is real—and here I should cite the remainder of what Paul wrote about the sinner perishing:

For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (Rom 2:14–16 emphasis added)

According to Paul, salvation is dependent upon doing what the Law requires regardless of whether the person is under the Law. This is consistent with what the author of Matthew has his *Jesus* declare:

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. Before Him will be gathered all the nations, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And He will place the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?" And the King will answer them, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." Then He will say to those on His left, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was

hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” Then they also will answer, saying, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?” Then He will answer them, saying, “Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Matt 25:31–46)

The sheep (those to the King’s right hand) did not profess that Jesus was Lord, or even know who Jesus was. Rather, they showed that the work of the Law was written on their hearts—and it is the juxtaposition between what Paul wrote about Gentiles who do what the Law requires without knowledge of the Law and what the author of Matthew has his *Jesus* say to His disciples that permits a mystery of God to be unsealed: both Paul’s and Matthew’s Jesus addresses the great White Throne Judgment, not the resurrection of firstfruits. And by extension, it can be argued that the author of Matthew’s Gospel believed that those disciples who would be resurrected as firstfruits were already (or nearly so) sealed in death, that those who would henceforth be resurrected to glory would come through the White Throne Judgment although this term was not yet available to disciples.

By late 1st-Century, the spread of Christianity as a new religion had created the necessary interest (critical mass) that the name “Jesus of Nazareth” had achieved historical permanency: the name *Jesus* would not disappear into nothingness as the names of most men do. *Jesus* had become a mythical figure, and therein is where problems originate. Will the real “Jesus” please stand up? And none of the men name *Jesus* in the Gospels stand. Each of them wants to stand, but none do; for the real Jesus came to do a job, did that job, and returned to heaven from where He came without much fanfare, without accolades, without turning the world upside down. He came to overturn the Adversary’s reign over humanity, and this is the job He did. But in overturning the Adversary, He couldn’t undercut Satan the devil who remained and remains the prince of this world. He couldn’t upend the Adversary, doing to Satan what Satan had done to God. All He could do was quietly defeat the Adversary by living in obedience to the commandments. And that was all He had to do.

Initial regional unfamiliarity with Jesus’ name is seen in surviving secular records: in the century following Calvary there are only four mentions of *Jesus*, two late in the 1st-Century and two early in the 2nd-Century. That’s it, except for texts that have become part of canonized New Testament scripture. However, by the end of the following century, few in the Roman world had not heard the name of *Jesus*, such was the spread of various forms of Christendom vying for acceptance. The only problem, the *Jesus* known to the masses was the conscious creation of talented authors and not necessarily the man born in Bethlehem.

Once Herod’s temple was razed when Jerusalem was captured (ca 70 CE), it was evident to all that *Jesus* would not return to a physical temple or to an outwardly circumcised people. It would have been equally evident that the movement from *Israel* being an outwardly circumcised nation to *Israel* being an

inwardly circumcised nation could not be sustained through teaching Moses and the Prophets to converts. Scholars were quietly amending texts to eliminate possible readings linking the suffering Righteous One to the Messiah—and where texts are in a partially alphabetized language [Hebrew], the written consonants do not have to be altered. Changing unwritten vowel pointing was enough to subtly change meanings.

But the solution to the problem of Christendom possibly disappearing all together was also at hand. To the developing mythology surrounding the name *Jesus*, the Elect could attach the ideology that was about to disappear because of the lawlessness of Gentile converts and because of Judaism's seeking a human deliverer from Roman oppression. However, the ideology of the Elect wasn't about God saving the world, or saving human persons in the 1st-Century. This ideology primarily focused on a one-time future harvest of humanity at the end of the present age, with Christ Jesus functioning as a second Adam, a second Noah, a second Abraham, a second Moses, a second David, a second Elijah, a second John the Baptist ... note who is missing from this list: *Yah*, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The introduction to John's Gospel was/is about establishing the hard link holding that Christ Jesus isn't simply the spiritual reality foreshadowed by, say, Moses, but is the Creator God who had entered His creation as His unique Son, a one-time only entry that can never again be repeated.

The ideology that could not be openly declared in Judea prior to the razing of the temple; the ideology that the Jesus born in Bethlehem came to bring held that the God of Israel, *YHWH* [*Y^aH^{d-n}W^{ai}H*], could be likened to the Greek majuscule *A* (*alpha*) that has two-being-one, the two lines joined to represented an enclosed godhead, with One of these two having entered His creation as His unique Son which the Other of the two raised from death, thereby changing the relationship that had functioned as a marriage should function but would henceforth function as a man and his firstborn son. This ideology would hold that the Creator of all things physical was not the Most High God, but was the God of the living (Matt 22:32), *Yah*, or *the Logos*. The Most High God was the God of dead ones, including the dead inner selves [souls] of human persons. But the dead know nothing (Eccl 9:5), including their God. Only when the dead have been raised from death will the formerly dead inner self of a person know the Father and Christ Jesus whom He sent into this world (John 17:3).

But the above was not a reality that would transcend time unless it was misinterpreted and misapplied—and the Adversary, apparently not realizing he was being “used,” assisted in misinterpreting a message that was about his demise and eventual death.

The name “Jesus the Nazarene” would not have been carried across cultures and generations if there were not an implied benefit to believing that Jesus was the Messiah—

Again, the *A* (*alpha*) portion of a narrative cipher visually possesses two [legs] that form one character, with no opening by which or through which Israel could enter into the godhead; so the natural firstborn son of the Lord (Ex 4:22) could not inherit the *glory of God* or true *godliness*, but could only inherit physically, a

reality revealed by the prohibition against Israel kindling a fire on the Sabbath (Ex 35:3), symbolism revealing that Israel could not have life in the presence of God. ... In John's vision, Jesus said He was the *A* and the Ω , with the Ω majuscule having female singleness characteristic of childbirth (the woman alone bears the child; the man does not share her pain).

Where two were one in the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*; in the *A* (*alpha*) majuscule, only one of the two—*Yah*, *the Logos* who entered His creation as His unique Son—gives birth to a nation and to a people in a day (Isa 66:7–8). Only one, the glorified Jesus, is represented by the Ω (*omega*) majuscule. The other deity invisibility comforts while awaiting the birth of a spiritual Abel, a spiritual Seth, which in the case of Zion, precedes the pain of childbirth ... the Father in Christ, and Christ in the disciple's inner self, and the disciple's now-living inner self in a fleshly body—all function as one to give birth to a spiritual Abel when every self-professed Christian is filled with spirit and thereby liberated from indwelling sin and death at the reality of the Second Passover. Unfortunately, 220 days later the Apostasy occurs and most of Christendom will rebel against God and return to sin, thereby committing blasphemy against the spirit of God. And with the Apostasy, Zion will give birth to a spiritual Cain who will pursue and kill his brother, Christians who keep the commandments.

At the end of this present age, only one, the glorified Jesus, of the two represented by the *A* (*alpha*) majuscule is represented by the Ω (*omega*) majuscule, something that could not be known if the glorified Christ had not revealed this to His disciples (again, see Rev 22:13).

3.

Numerous Herbert Armstrong wannabes contend that the mythical *Key of David* is realization that the English speaking peoples of this world are endtime *Israel*, the nation and peoples to whom so many biblical prophecies apply. These wannabes huff and puff and threaten to blow the world down on their small market television programs, with David Pack being one of the worst. Watching them is as watching bantam roosters strut their might ... a story I have told before: in spring 1960 (I was 13 years old), while sitting in the kitchen of my stepfather's Grande Ronde, Oregon (Polk County), house, I saw a red-tail hawk swoop down and grab hold of my stepfather's banty rooster. I was the only one home at the time, and the hawk had grabbed the rooster through a sheepwire fence. The hawk could kill the rooster that was fighting for his life, but the hawk couldn't carry the rooster away because of the fence between them.

I had no attachment to the rooster but I couldn't stand by and let the hawk kill it; so I ran into my mom and stepfather's bedroom, grabbed a 12 gauge shotgun, one shell, and stepped out the back door, aimed at the hawk and rooster and fired ... the hawk and rooster were more than sixty yards away. The shell I fired was a low-base load of #8 shot, and all I did was scare the hawk away—the hawk flew to the roof of the chicken house, and I hurried back into the bedroom to get my stepfather's .257 Roberts.

The banty rooster thought he had whipped that hawk. He strutted around all afternoon, his feet seeming not to touch the ground. In fact, I have never seen such strutting except from pastors thumping their Bibles during sermons in which they proclaim what they don't know and don't understand. And calling out these pastors and pastor-generals for the phonies they are is usually a waste of time; for they never know enough to intellectually support the claims they make. Inevitably they fall back on the opinions of other men like themselves, with Armstrong wannabes claiming that Herbert Armstrong was *God's essential endtime man*, the last Elijah, when nothing could be farther from the truth.

Armstrong's wannabes preach without being called by God to preach. They practice *here a little, there a little* exegesis, using Isaiah to support this approach to Bible study. But what did Isaiah actually say where they go to get their method of study:

“To whom will he [YHWH] teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, those taken from the breast? For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little.” For by people of strange lips and with a foreign tongue [YHWH] will speak to this people, to whom he has said, “This is rest; give rest to the weary; and this is repose”; yet they would not hear. And *the word of [YHWH] will be to them precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little, that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.* (Isa 28:9–13 emphasis and double emphasis)

Drunk priests and prophets reeling from strong drink and swallowed by wine practice *line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little* exegesis so that they may fall backwards, be broken, snared, and taken by the Adversary ... permit these Armstrong wannabes—if they will—to leave behind their strutting and come and learn while there remains time to learn before they are devoured at the Second Passover liberation of Israel because they are legal firstborns, first citizens, their standing before God because they dare call themselves *pastor generals* or some other like-title when they are but men who see their natural faces in mirrors yet continue to believe they are what they are not.

This year, 2013, these Armstrong wannabes steadfastly refused to take the Passover sacraments on the night that Jesus was betrayed—may they perish eternally in their unbelief. They deserve no better, considering the damage they do and have done to infant sons of God.

More will be said about them, about others, about the fat sheep that “push with side and shoulder” against the lean sheep, that thrust at all the weak with their horns, till they have scattered them abroad (Ezek 34:21), but I want to leave this section of what will be a long work with the following:

For thus says the Lord [YHWH]: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own

land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord [YHWH]. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and *the fat and the strong I will destroy*. I will feed them in justice. (Ezek 34:11–16 emphasis added)

Since Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11), there has been no other shepherd over Israel, the nation circumcised of heart. All those pastors who claim to be shepherds of God’s flock are liars, hirelings devoted to devouring the sheep. They are merely the fat sheep, the strong that muddies the water the lean drink and tramples the good pasture that the lean eat. They know all that I have revealed, but they will not teach difficult things to those whom they regard as *dumb sheep*. Why? Because they are without faith. They fear wolves, bears, lions—and they need to begin fearing the Good Shepherd who has already condemned them to the lake of fire.

* * *

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