

Commentary — From the Margins

Alpha & Omega

Part Two: The Rule of Faith

4.

Basic principles that pertain to inscribed narratives need to be remembered: if the author of a narrative does careful work, the author will revisit a passage many times to get the wording correct, selecting this word as opposed to that word so that the passage does the work that the author intends for the passage to do—and authors intend for their words to do work for them. So authorial intent is always present in a passage, and in a text. The author writes with a purpose in mind. The question is, can that purpose or those purposes be ascertained? And deconstruction of texts is about ascertaining the values and purposes of authors.

If the purposes of the author of Mark's Gospel were the same as the purposes of the author of Matthew's Gospel, Mark's Gospel would include a genealogy of Christ Jesus at its beginning and would include the glorified Jesus meeting with His disciples at its conclusion. Because Mark's Gospel as originally circulated did not include either, the reason why Mark's Gospel was written differs from the reason Matthew's Gospel was written. And an appropriate question to ask of a text is why would its author include a genealogy of Jesus when that author says at the end of the genealogy, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the holy spirit" (Matt 1:18). Why give a genealogy of Joseph when Joseph is not a parent of Jesus as revealed to Joseph by an angel in a dream (*vv.* 20–21)?

Careful authors "teach" readers how to read their work at the beginning of the text—

The author of Matthew apparently intended for his genealogy to do work apart from conveying a biological lineage for Christ Jesus; for this author has the birth of Jesus fulfilling words of Isaiah (*cf.* Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23). So a humanly fatherless child is descended from King David through King Solomon—this is what the author of Matthew asks his reader to believe, and what he writes is spiritually true for salvation is promised to David who shall be the future king of Israel when "Israel" is no longer the physical people biologically descended from the patriarch Jacob.

Because King David died three millennia ago, King David must live again if he is to be king over Israel. That mythical *Key of David* is represented in living once physically (i.e., living as a human person descended from the first Adam through Eve), then living a second time spiritually, doing this second time somewhat the

same things as the person did when physically alive. That mythical *Key of David* undergirds Hebraic poetry composed in thought-couplets that have the first presentation of an idea pertaining to things physical and the second presentation of the same idea pertaining to things spiritual. The Apostle Paul expressed this concept when he wrote that the invisible things of God are clearly perceived in the visible things that have been made (Rom 1:20) and that which is physical precedes what is spiritual (1 Cor 15:46); thus, what is visible precedes and reveals what is invisible. David's humble beginnings as a shepherd then his rise to fame through his mighty deeds and finally his kingship over first Judah then all of Israel are the visible physical things that reveal the invisible spiritual things that will come to the glorified David when he is resurrected from death. And this Hebraic thought-couplet structure represents the true *Key of David* that undergirds all of Scripture.

The glorified Christ Jesus expressed this concept when He declared that He was the *A (alpha)* and the *Ω (omega)*, the beginning and the end; for in Himself, the glorified Jesus represents the creation of all things physical, including the first Adam, and represents the means through which the Father will create spiritual sons of God, with David being numbered among those human persons who will be glorified when Christ Jesus returns as the Messiah, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The author of Matthew in the *A (alpha)* portion of his Gospel has his *Jesus* say when asked for a sign:

An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. (Matt 12:39–42)

The structure of what Matthew's Jesus says about the sign of Jonah in this *A (alpha)* presentation has Jesus placing Jonah being three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish [whale] in the physical portion of a narrative thought-couplet that is then completed by the Son of Man being three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Together, Jonah and Jesus being resurrected from death after three days and three nights forms a concept that is physical: death and rebirth, with pagan presentations of this concept employing the father and son motif, with the son representing the reborn father. So in both Jonah and Jesus being dead for three days and three nights then returned to life isn't literarily remarkable.

There is a second narrative thought-couple present in what Matthew's Jesus says: the men of Nineveh who repented at the preaching of Jonah will rise up in their resurrection to judgment to condemn the men of Judah who ignore one greater than Jonah. And because the men of Nineveh in the judgment are

returned to life after being dead, readers find themselves in the spiritual portion of the narrative thought-couplet that has Jonah and Jesus being returned to life. In this spiritual portion, there is condemnation for refusing to believe the spokesman for God.

But the spiritual portion of this expanded narrative thought-couplet has its own spiritual portion: the queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of Jerusalem, who will not precede in judgment either the men of Nineveh or the female queen of the South, and will condemn the men of Jerusalem for she came from afar to simply hear the wisdom of Solomon ... in the judgment, the outwardly circumcised men of Jerusalem and Judea will be condemned by pagan men and by a woman who did not hear directly uttered words of God, but heard the words of a human king who had been given divine wisdom.

Together, the resurrection of Jonah and Jesus coupled to the resurrection of the men of Nineveh and the resurrection of the queen of the South and their condemnation of the resurrected to judgment men of Jerusalem and Judea, the author of Matthew has his *Jesus* promise that every person will be resurrected to a judgment in which the person will be comforted or condemned. This judgment occurs in the same moment for pagan and natural Israelite; so natural Israel has no priority over Gentiles. And the author of Matthew presented a doubled narrative thought-couplet that represents the physical or *A (alpha)* portion of that mythical *Key of David*.

In the Ω (*omega*) portion of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is again asked for a sign:

And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him [Jesus] they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." So he left them and departed. When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread." But Jesus, aware of this, said, "O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus

answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. (Matt 16:1–20)

Again, the Greek majuscule Ω (*omega*) doesn't appear to be the mirror image of the Greek majuscule A (*alpha*), but in the *Key of David* as the glorified Jesus uses this key, Ω (*omega*) is the magnified mirror image of one leg of A (*alpha*), the leg that was the Helpmate of *the God* before this Helpmate entered His creation as His unique Son, the man Jesus. Thus, whereas two deities were one deity in a marriage type relationship until the Helpmate at the bequest of *the God* entered His creation, this Helpmate functioned in the human role represented by the wife in marriage. Therefore, it is appropriate for the glorified Son when no longer in the role of the Helpmate or *the Logos* to be represented by the majuscule Ω (*omega*), for He completes the delivery to life of those human sons of God who have been born a second time through receipt of the divine breath of the Father, this breath entering into the person through the indwelling of Christ Jesus. And unlike the men of Nineveh or the queen of the South or the condemned men of Jerusalem and Judea, the human person who has been given life through receipt of the breath of God in the indwelling breath or glory of Christ is presently under judgment; for this person has been resurrected to life ... actually, the dead inner self (soul) of the person was resurrected to life so that this inner self is today as King David will be when he is resurrected to life to again be king over Israel.

In the Ω (*omega*) portion of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus doesn't lead off with the sign of Jonah but with the physical sign of a red sky, which has two distinct meanings that are dependant upon its context. If this sign occurs going into darkness, the sign means fair weather, but if this same sign occurs at dawn, the sign means turbulent weather. Thus, Jesus tells the Pharisees and Sadducees seeking to test Him that signs are context specific, something that even beginning writers today know and are taught. Therefore, when Jesus moves to the spiritual portion of this narrative thought-couplet, He gives no explanation to the Pharisees and Sadducees, but instead warns His disciples against their teachings.

The spiritual presentation of the sign of Jonah in its spiritual context addresses the movement of life-sustaining breath from the nostrils (the front of the face) to the location where the dove—the breath of God [*pneuma Theou*—entered into Jesus when He rose from baptism, this location being analogous to a whale's blowhole that is located behind the head. So in the spiritual portion of the narrative thought-couplet about the sign of Jonah, in its spiritual context, the movement of breath from physical breath to spiritual breath is "explained," and was explained in *APA, Vol. One*.

But of perhaps most interest here is that Matthew's Jesus deliberately didn't give any spiritual explanation of the sign of Jonah to Pharisees or Sadducees, but gave the explanation only to His disciples whom He charged to tell no one that

He was the Christ. The world was not to know who He was. And this is seen in Mark's Gospel when the women tell no one that He had risen from death.

5.

The author of Matthew's Gospel only indirectly tells readers why he writes an outwardly appearing biography of Jesus—and his *why* is in his pre-baptism (of Jesus) motifs; i.e., chapters one and two, the chapters that Christian Ebionites, 2nd-Century Adoptionists, did not recognize as Scripture.

Ebionites were 2nd and 3rd Century Christian literalists, the most likely successors of the Circumcision Faction with whom Paul had a ministry-long dispute; for understanding that with the giving of the spirit of God the surface of things no longer has importance was not easy to grasp in the 1st-Century, nor easy to grasp in the 16th-Century or in the 21st-Century. The seeming solidity of the surface of things may well come from the so-called Higgs boson, but this solidity isn't the essence of the thing that consists of points of energy and space between these points. ... When matter/mass is really nothing but energy bound together by a particle that temporarily exists, then matter is itself temporary, the ideology that undergirds all of Christendom. There will, then, be a day when the creation rolls itself up as a scroll and is no more forever: the rent in the fabric of heaven that permitted the Abyss to come into existence as if this rent were the wound in the side of the crucified Jesus, with the creation formed in this Abyss, will have healed itself. The author of Matthew's Gospel apparently uses the man Jesus as the personification of heaven itself, a subject that will be addressed in greater detail later.

The author of Luke's Gospel tells his reader why and to whom he wrote:

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

The author of Luke wrote to confirm that those things *Theophilus* [Lover of God] had been taught were true, but what was *Theophilus* taught and by whom? Certainly, *Theophilus* was not taught the same things that the author of Matthew taught his readers; for the author of Matthew “taught” his readers that Jesus was descended from David through King Solomon whereas the author of Luke reassured *Theophilus* that Jesus was descended from David through Nathan—and while it has traditionally been taught that Matthew's genealogy of Jesus was the genealogy of Joseph, husband of Mary, while Luke's genealogy was of Mary, that is not what either texts claims. Both claim to be the presumed genealogy of Jesus through Joseph, husband of Mary. Only John's Gospel claims a different paternity for Jesus, with the author of John showing descent of Jesus from the Logos, who was God [*Theos* — no definite article] and who was with the God [*ton Theon*] in primacy before the Logos entered His creation as His unique

Son, the man Jesus. And where Paul in his epistles shows Jesus' paternity, Paul agrees with the author of John:

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.* Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:3–11 emphasis added)

In Paul's epistle and in John's Gospel, the man Jesus had no human father: His physical Father was the Logos, who had the form of God—was God—but did not count equality with God of such importance that He would not enter His creation and die for human persons that the Father wanted as firstborn sons. Understand, eternal life is to know the Father and Christ Jesus whom the Father sent into the world to bridge the gulf between heaven and earth (John 17:3).

Again, in the Greek majuscule *A* (*alpha*) two are visually one as a man and a woman are one in marriage, but with the entry of 'o *Logos* who was *Theos* and who was with *ton Theon* in primacy (John 1:1)—what the letter *A* (*alpha*) reveals—into His creation as His unique Son, the man Jesus, *the Logos* temporarily separated Himself from *the God* (*ton Theon*) until Jesus' baptism and entry into Him of the breath [glory] of *the God* in the visible form of a dove. The relationship that had two-being-one in the Hebrew Tetragrammaton *YHWH*, a figuratively side-by-side relationship as in marriage, became a figuratively vertical relationship as in a father and his eldest son. It is here where complications arise: when the breath or glory of the Father entered the man Jesus, *this One* became the bridge by which many human persons could be born of *the God* as His firstborn sons. Thus, the man Jesus became the Son through whom birth is given to other sons of the Father, thereby placing the glorified Jesus simultaneously in the role of Mother and Elder Brother of human sons of God who, when glorified, He will marry as His Bride. And this gender confusion is addressed by the Apostle Paul:

But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:25–29)

The above citation from Paul will be used again in a short while, but it is used here to reinforce the concept that there is neither male nor female in heaven: the First of the firstborn sons of God delivers His younger siblings as a woman delivers a child, the reality expressed in the Ω (*omega*) uncial.

There are no images, portraits or busts, of how Jesus appeared when He lived as a typical Jew of His day, a man who could disappear into a crowd by simply merging with the crowd, said in 21st-Century language, morphing into the crowd. Because the Gospels are literarily true as opposed to literally true, when Jesus disappears into a crowd, Jesus literarily becomes the crowd, His face being seen in the faces of every Jew.

Thus, when Medieval artists with their ant-Semitic biases painted their conception of Jesus, they picked up the concept of Jesus being simultaneously male and female and portrayed Jesus as an effeminate man, not at all typical of a 1st-Century male Jew. They didn't understand Scripture—couldn't understand—and they missed the significance of Jesus disappearing into the crowd by simply morphing into being the crowd, His face being Everyman's face. There is no way that the effeminate Nordic face in so-called portraits of Jesus can be the face of Everyman. That effeminate face, if of anyone, most likely is the face of the Adversary.

We can now proceed: any New Testament message that doesn't acknowledge the plurality of deities that was concealed from ancient Israel by the single verbs assigned to the Tetragrammaton *YHWH* and to the linguistic icon *Elohim*, the regular plural of *Eloah*, is not of Christ; is not of God. The author of Luke's Gospel and presumably of the Book of Acts fails this test of genuineness, with his most obvious failure showing in what his *Paul* says on Mars Hill:

Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, "To the unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ***The God who made the world and everything in it***, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring." Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. *The times of ignorance God overlooked*, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ***because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.*** (Acts 17:22–31 emphasis and double emphasis added)

First, the *Paul* of his epistles says that God did not and does not overlook the ignorance of idolaters, that idolaters are without excuse (Rom 1:18–20); plus the author of John's Gospel emphatically declared that the Logos, not the Most High God, made the world and everything in it (John 1:3). Therefore by what the author of Acts writes—that God made the world and will judge it through the Son,

whom He raised from death—this author reveals that he does not have spiritual understanding that comes through having indwelling eternal life. Rather, this author is a spiritual bastard, a son of the Adversary posing as a son of God.

But how does a person know that he or she is a son of God as opposed to being a son of the Adversary? After all, the person was humanly born as a son of disobedience (Eph 2:2–3), consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) and thereby a slave of the Adversary—what is it that causes a slave of the Adversary to become a son of the Adversary, or worse, the Adversary’s willing servant who has disguised him or herself as a minister of righteousness (2 Cor 11:15)? And by extension, how is a person to know that he or she has not yet been born of God when the person wants to serve God and do those things that “Christians” do? How was *Theophilus* to know that he had been falsely taught?

Far too many Christians have been deceived by other Christians ... the opening lines of Robert Services’ poem, “The Cremation of Sam McGee,” tell us that,

There are strange things done in the midnight sun
By the men who toil for gold;
The Arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold ...

There were equally strange things done that would make a Christian’s blood run cold in most every Sabbatarian fellowship that has its roots in the former Worldwide Church of God. These fellowships have their secret tales that really need told to protect spiritual babes from longtime con men who pose as *brothers in Christ* when they are jackals ...

After the death of Herbert Armstrong (January 1986), Armstrong’s worldwide ministry failed miserably, disintegrating into numerous splinters that continued to self-destruct until a few hundred slivers remain. Why? Because Armstrong’s ministers baptized converts, expecting that with the laying-on-of-hands after baptism, these converts would receive the spirit of God and thus be able to walk in this world as Jesus walked—there was no discerning of spirits. Instead, the surface of a convert’s life was used to evaluate the convert: if God was prospering the convert through an abundance of the world’s goods, then the convert must necessarily have the spirit of God when there was no evidence of spiritual understanding other than adherence to Armstrong’s *rule of faith*, with the *rule of faith* the means by which every ecclesiastical authority maintains order within its ranks ... to be a Roman Catholic, the person must adhere to the *rule of faith* that covers the beliefs and creeds of the Roman Church. To be a Lutheran, the person must adhere to the *rule of faith* that Martin Luther established in his teachings. To be a Mennonite, the person must adhere to the *rule of faith* that Menno Simon established in his teachings. And when a person adheres to a *rule of faith* from the past, the person becomes a theological fossil, spiritually lifeless and imbedded in stone.

Periodically, I have someone contact me to challenge a particular teaching, something that happened more often before 2004 than since. Most who have contacted to challenge have done so because I stepped on Herbert Armstrong’s *rule of faith*, the means he used to maintain top-down control of a budding

ecclesiastical empire that permitted him to jet around the world, visiting despots and minor dictators and allegedly taking the Gospel of Christ to them. He apparently sincerely believed that in him going before the kings of this world, he was fulfilling prophesy.

None of those who have challenged have been able to support from Scripture Armstrong's *rule of faith*: all have become entangled in their reasoning and have tripped themselves. I almost never hear from them again, which is sad; for Armstrong on numerous occasions proudly said of himself that he wasn't a biblical scholar—and he truly wasn't. He was a very good advertising man with an excellent radio voice. He was a salesman, and he *sold* a great many people on the idea that time was short, that (citing a December 8, 1947 Co-worker letter) America would be destroyed by a resurrected Nazi-Germany in the decade of the 1950s. A paragraph from Armstrong's Co-worker letter will give the flavor of his scare ad-campaign:

YOU, dear Co-Worker, are not going to be permitted to enjoy your home, your freedom, your present privileges and pursuits, many more years. Just a few more years---perhaps six or seven---perhaps twelve or fifteen---and a re-united Fascist-Nazi Europe will STRIKE---America's great cities will be blown out of existence in one night without warning---we shall see such tremendous atomic destruction as the world has never even dreamed ---more than 40 MILLION Americans will perish in the horrifying blasts! At the same time drought and famine will strike dead another THIRD of our entire population---men, women, and children ---thru starvation and disease! And our second great commission ---our divine calling from Almighty God---is to WARN our beloved nation, and other Israelitish nations, before it is too late! Every individual who HEEDS this warning, turns to God, is WATCHING and PRAYING ALWAYS, being filled with God's Spirit, living by every Word of God, with a life consecrated to Him, will be given special divine protection---taken beforehand to a place of SAFETY--- preserved thru the final horrifying tribulation, time of plagues and human anguish soon to visit this earth! (Armstrong, 8 Dec 1947, Co-worker letter, 9th paragraph)

What Armstrong never realized is that his co-workers needed to fear the deconstruction of their beloved Bibles more than a resurrected Germany, that there was no Bible as we know the book even into the 5th-Century CE ... the Body of Christ had been dead for two plus centuries before 1st-Century texts were gathered together and discussion of canonization began. Any person can do the research and discover when and how the New Testament was canonized. I have cited the following passage from Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine* before, but it would be useful to remind readers of what was written by an icon of the Catholic faith in 396 CE (D.W. Robertson, Jr. translation), with the book finished some thirty years later:

But let us turn our attention to the third step which I have decided to treat as the Lord may direct my discourse. He will be the most expert investigator of the Holy Scriptures who has first read all of them and has some knowledge of them, at least through reading them if not through understanding them. That is, he should read those that are said to be

canonical. For he may read the other more securely when he has been instructed in the truth of the faith so that they may not preoccupy a weak mind nor, deceiving it with vain lies and fantasies, prejudice it with something contrary to sane understanding. In the matter of canonical Scriptures he should follow the authority of the greater number of catholic Churches, among which are those which have deserved to have apostolic seats and to receive epistles. He will observe this rule concerning canonical Scriptures, that he prefer those accepted by all catholic Churches to those which some do not accept; among those which are not accepted by all, he should prefer those which are accepted by the largest number of important Churches to those held by a few minor Churches of less authority. If he discovers that some are maintained by the larger number of Churches, others by the Churches of weightiest authority, although this condition is not likely, he should hold them to be of equal value. (Book II, sec. VIII, par. 12)

The biblical canon was not a fixed document at the end of the 4th-Century CE, but was still somewhat fluid. But Augustine's exegesis principle discloses much about how even canonical scripture was read. And again from Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine* (D.W. Robertson, Jr. translation):

When words used literally cause ambiguity in Scripture, we must first determine whether we have mispunctuated or misconstrued [with reference to Latin, "mispronounced"] them. When investigation reveals an uncertainty as to how a locution should be pointed or construed, the rule of faith should be consulted as it is found in the more open places of the Scriptures and in the authority of the Church. We explained this sufficiently when we spoke of things in the first book. But if both meaning, or all of them, in the event that there are several, remain ambiguous after the faith has been consulted, then it is necessary to examine the context of the preceding and following parts surrounding the ambiguous place, so that we may determine which of the meanings among those which suggest themselves it would allow to be consistent.

Now, consider some examples. This heretical punctuation does not allow that the Word is God: "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was," so that the sense of what follows is different: "This Word was in the beginning with God." But this is refuted according to the rule of faith which teaches us the equality of the trinity, so that we say: And the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." (Book III, sec. II, pars. 2-3)

By the 4th-Century CE, biblical exegesis was via the "rule of faith," not by what texts said grammatically. Thus, if a Christian was supposed to believe in the Trinity, the Christian interpreted Scripture to confirm the existence of the Trinity, not to disprove a mythical Trinity that has assigned personhood to the breath of God. Therefore, the *rule of faith* prevented readings of Scripture contrary to existing dogmas and creeds. If the *rule of faith* held that the Adversary took Jesus to the top of a very tall mountain from which Jesus could see the glory of all kingdoms of this world, then there is somewhere that very tall mountain from which a person can look over the curvature of the earth and see

what is on the other side of the sphere. The Christian ate magic mushrooms and put his or her brain to sleep for the remainder of the person's natural life.

During Armstrong's ministry, his *rule of faith* held that Great Britain and the United States of America (the English-speaking nations of this world) represented the endtime descendants of the ancient House of Israel, the northern kingdom of Samaria that was carried away in its entirety by Assyria in 721 BCE, who actually took some 27,000 Israelites prisoners when overrunning Samaria. He held that Germany was the modern descendants of ancient Assyria, and the Jews were the modern descendants of the ancient House of Judah that was carried away by the army of King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BCE. Thus, all of the Bible had to be read by this *rule of faith* if a convert were to remain in good standing in the former Worldwide Church of God.

Armstrong had no prophetic understanding even though he built and briefly maintained a worldwide ministry based upon prophecy. He literally scared people into accepting his *rule of faith* as binding upon the person—but this is only partially true for God was drawing a few persons out from this world by giving to the person a second breath of life, the spirit/breath of God in the spirit/breath of Christ. And the best place for the Father and Son to “warehouse” His sons was in the former Worldwide Church of God, where they could safely keep the Sabbaths of God, including the annual high Sabbaths.

But not much growth occurs in a warehouse. Not much spiritual growth occurred in the Elect during the decades when they were warehoused in Armstrong's ministry and kept from challenging the integrity of the Bible by Armstrong's *rule of faith*.

Although the Roman Church's *rule of faith* dominated biblical exegesis for a millennium and didn't give way to rationalism until after the Protestant Reformation broke the hard link between Church and State that prevented thought, the Catholic *rule of faith* gave way to a Reformed *rule of faith* that has been equally destructive, effectively preventing the development of rational reasoning for nearly five centuries within the Protestant faith. But with the Protestant Reformation the way was laid for the deconstruction of the Bible and reexamination of texts that purport to be true while actually contradicting themselves and the principles expressed in that mythical *Key of David* which, again, has the visible physical things of this world revealing and preceding the invisible spiritual things of God.

Now, if a Christian cannot effectively determine whether a *brother in Christ* is genuine, how can a Christian determine what New Testament texts are to be read as literally true? None are literally true, said with a caveat.

Consider a simple comparison between Luke's Gospel and Matthew's Gospel, remembering that very high mountain from which the Adversary showed Jesus the glory of all the kingdoms of this world was the third of three temptation attempts:

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this

stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" And *the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."* And Jesus answered him, "It is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'" And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" (Luke 4:1–12 emphasis added)

Matthew's Gospel begins with a genealogy of Jesus that links Jesus to the kings of Israel from David through Solomon to the Deportation; hence the author of Matthew places importance upon governance of Israel, upon Jesus being the king that shall govern all of the world through the expansion of Israel. Therefore, in Matthew's temptation of Jesus, **the Adversary offering to Jesus premature authority over the kingdoms of this world** becomes the most important of the three temptations.

The author of Luke consistently places importance on Herod's temple, and doesn't ever seem to understand that disciples as the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27) are the temple of God (1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16), that Jesus in His flesh was the temple of God (John 2:19–21) ... when a critic doesn't know how to take apart a literary work, the critic can always fall back to a determination of what is "marked" and what is "unmarked"; for *marking* denotes difference. As an example, there is no *unmarked* woman. Regardless of what she wears, her attire marks her. If she wears little, she will be marked in a certain way. If she wears modest attire, she will be marked in a different way. If she has closely cropped hair, a masculine haircut, she will be marked as a lesbian. If she covers her hair, she will be marked as religious, with her hair covering further marking. Truly, there is no way for a woman to escape being marked when biologically, she is the unmarked gender; for it is males that are marked by the presence of a penis (both males and females have nipples) that creates difference.

British and American writers when setting stories in North Africa mark their narratives with the presence of camels as a common background element; whereas a North African writing a similar story neglects to mention camels that are not unusual to him or her and not worth mentioning. I ran into a similar situation when, as an Alaskan, I wrote Alaskan hunting and fishing articles for Lower Forty-Eight magazines in the early 1980s: the editor of a major fly fishing magazine told me that he didn't buy articles from Alaskan writers for they didn't have the same values and sense of excitement as his readers had. Alaskan didn't fish for salmon once the fish were on their spawning beds. And later that summer, he sent me a photo of himself with a 55-pound fly-caught king salmon, a soreback. He was correct: if I had accidentally hooked that spawning king, I would have broken it off immediately. A soreback is never a trophy, regardless of how

large the salmon is, and I wouldn't have fished or permitted others to fish a spawning bed. So in a narrative is what is unusual to the writer, with the unusual *marked* through the author mentioning the thing.

To the author of Luke, the temple is what's unusual and therefore fascinating. For the author of Luke, the temple is analogous to camels in the narratives of early 20th-Century British writers who have set their stories in North Africa. For this author, the temple is analogous to sorebacks for Lower Forty-Eight outdoor writers thirty years ago. Therefore, in deconstructing Luke and Acts, a close reader can state with reasonable certainty that this author was not an outwardly circumcised convert, but was a Greek, a Gentile.

Further, because the author of Luke never truly believes that disciples are the temple of God, this author places the Adversary taking Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple as the third temptation, the most important temptation, thereby reversing the order of the second and third temptations from that found in Matthew's Gospel. Whereas for the author of Matthew governance of Israel and by extension of the world is of foremost importance (because that is the unfamiliar to this author, apparently a Jewish convert with spiritual understanding), for the author of Luke the temple, its elegance and its majesty, is the unfamiliar about which he knows a little but not enough to keep his converted characters away from the temple since they are the temple.

Once the spirit was given and disciples became the Body of Christ and the temple of God, there was never again a reason for disciples to enter Herod's temple. And nowhere in New Testament texts other than in the writings of the author of Luke and Acts do disciples enter the temple. However, the author of Luke and Acts seemed to have a fetish of unfamiliarity with the temple and focused on the temple where a charade was enacted on *Yom Kipporim* for there was no Ark of the Covenant in the temple: the Holy of Holies was empty. The Ark of the Covenant never returned from Babylon. And the high priest on *Yom Kipporim* wasn't smearing the blood of the bull and of the sacred goat on the Mercy Seat to cover his sins and the sins of the people of Israel as commanded by Moses:

And he [Aaron as high priest] shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side, and in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. (Lev 16:14-15)

It's one thing for a child to play *Pretend*, dressing up in his or her parents' clothes, serving imaginary tea or cookies, talking to imaginary friends, but it quite another thing for adults to play *theological pretend*, praying to demons, worshiping idols, transforming a minister into God's essential endtime man while the Father watches, determined to deliver the entirety of Christendom into the hand of the Adversary for the immediate destruction of the flesh, doing to Christians what the God of Abraham did to earthly Jerusalem when He brought Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, as His servant against the holy city because of

the city's idolatry. Why shouldn't the Most High God again bring the earthly descendants of Babylon against His firstborn son, greater Christendom? The Chaldeans would not have prevailed against Israel in the days of David, but three centuries of idolatry later, the siege of Jerusalem lasted a while, but Jerusalem was doomed from before the Chaldeans surrounded the city. Jerusalem was doomed because this physical people of God made no distinction between the left and right hands. To them, the physical looked like the spiritual so they worshiped sticks and stones while sincerely believing their were worshiping the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Today, Sabbatarian Christians cannot distinguish their left hands from their right: Sabbatarians are not able to distinguish the physical [their left hand] from the spiritual, and small wonder for within their core ideology lays a Greek Sophist novel that reinforces what it was that *Theophilus* had been taught.

When was that moment about which the author of Luke writes when the Adversary showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world? Can this moment be found atop a very tall mountain? Or did the author of Luke realize that there wasn't a mountain tall enough in Judea to even see the glory of Egypt, let alone the glory of the Parthian Empire, so did this author take the flesh and blood man Jesus somewhere outside of time so that all kingdoms could be seen?

As with the temptation account in Matthew's Gospel, the temptation account in Luke cannot be read literally but must be read figuratively or literarily, meaning that those things about which the author of Luke wrote didn't happen as he described their happening: this author's rearrangement of event order to place the temptation at the temple last, the farthest from physical hunger, is consistent with this author placing the boy Jesus in the temple prior to the beginning of His ministry and consistent with this author in Acts having Paul go to the temple when he returns to Jerusalem. But it makes no sense for Paul to go to the temple when Paul declares disciples to be the temple of God. It makes no sense for Paul to go to the temple when Paul combats the Circumcision Faction because these Christian converts continued to place importance on the surface of things, on the flesh rather than on the spirit, the inner self of the person. Thus, only someone who doesn't understand the movement from physical to spiritual—who figuratively eats with the person's left hand—would have his *Paul* go to the temple when returning to Jerusalem.

Jesus said He would give only one sign, that of the prophet Jonah, a subject about which I wrote considerably in *APA Vol. One*, but a portion of the Book of Jonah has been neglected:

When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" And he said, "Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die." And [YHWH] said, "***You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand***

from their left, and also much cattle?" (John 4:8–11 double emphasis added)

1. The plant that gave Jonah shade and comfort was in comparison to Jonah as the great city of Nineveh was to the Lord, which introduces the concept that the Lord did nothing to cause Nineveh to grow and become great, but that because Nineveh existed, the Lord had compassion and concern for the city and did not want to see it perish even though the people of Nineveh were unable to distinguish the physical from the spiritual, represented by these people eating with the same hand they used to wipe themselves.

2. The people of Nineveh were as livestock when compared to Israel; yet they repented at the preaching of Jonah whereas Sadducees and Pharisees in Jerusalem did not repent at the preaching of Christ Jesus, but continued in their spiritually defiled ways. The temple continued to represent what was wrong with Israel, not what was right; for the existence of the temple with its Holy Place and Holy of holies disclosed that the way to God was not yet open to all:

These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. *By this the holy spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing* (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation. (Heb 9:6–10 emphasis added)

Gifts and sacrifices made to the temple and at the temple pertain to the surface of things, the *A (alpha)* portion of Christ Jesus being *A (alpha)* and Ω (*omega*); for the conscience of the worshiper is spiritual, is of the inner self, the soul [*psuche*].

The Apostle Paul dictates in his treatise to the Romans:

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the spirit set their minds on the things of the spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.* Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. (Rom 8:8–8 emphasis added)

The things that pertain to the flesh, to the earthly body of the person, to the physical temple are of the physical creation and are not of God the Father, again the reality of which John's reminds disciples:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions--is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15–17)

Herod's temple was of this world, but the author of Luke has the youthful Jesus tell Joseph and Mary,

Now his [Jesus'] parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover [they should have been going three times a year]. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. (Luke 2:41-50)

There are several problems evident in the preceding passage: first devout Jews, males by command, would have gone to Jerusalem three seasons a year, Passover, Feast of Weeks, and Tabernacles, with the devout Jew remaining in Jerusalem for all of the Passover season (from the 10th day of the first month to the 23rd day) and for all of the Feast of Booths (from a minimum of the 10th day of the seventh month, *Yom Kipporim*, through the 23rd day). But the three days in which the youthful Jesus was in the temple following Passover—from the structure of Luke's Gospel—doesn't seem to be the 24th, 25th, and 26th of the first month, but the 15th or 16th, the 17th day, and possibly the 18th day, the day on which the crucified Jesus rose from death, thereby making the three days when Joseph and Mary searched for Jesus, who said that *He was in His Father's house*, analogous to the three days and three nights that Jesus was in the heart of the earth. And this will now have the lad Jesus in type representing the living inner self of Jesus about which Peter wrote,

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, *being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison*, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. (1 Pet 3:18-20 emphasis added)

Because the glorified inner self of Jesus in a glorified body did not ascend to the Father until about 9:00 am on the morning of the 18th day of the first month, the day after the Sabbath, the day of the Wave Sheaf Offering, the glorified inner self of Jesus that did not die at Calvary had to "go" somewhere for the three days that the earthly body of Jesus was in the tomb. Peter says this glorified inner self preached to imprisoned spirits condemned to death. However, in type, the author of Luke has Jesus in the house of the Father (i.e., in heaven) for these three days, thereby linking the earthly temple to the house of God in heavenly Jerusalem, a

link that falls apart when glorified disciples as the temple of God are New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ. This distinction is subtle, but telling; for the temple was never the house of God the Father, but stood in the way of Israelites coming to God. Hence, only as Jesus being the unique Son of *the Logos* can the youthful Jesus be in His Father's house, with His Father, pre-baptism, being only *the Logos*.

The author of Luke may realize that when Jesus was twelve, the Father of Jesus was *the Logos*, not God the Father, but if this author has that awareness, this author doesn't disclose such awareness. Rather, it would seem that this author believes the temple is of God the Father. It is as if this author has Augustine's *rule of faith* firmly in mind when he writes.

The existence of the earthly temple with its Holy Place and Most Holy Place revealed that the way to God was not yet open to all peoples, or even to Israel; for only the high priest of Israel on one day a year, *Yom Kipporim*, could enter into the Holy of holies that represented entering into God's presence. The lad Jesus could not enter into the Holy of holies just as the inner self of the crucified Jesus could not enter into God's presence until, in a glorified body, the resurrected Jesus was accepted by the Father as the reality of Israel Wave Sheaf Offering. Thus, in type, Jesus in the temple represents the inner self of the crucified Jesus preaching to imprisoned spirits for three days and three nights, both prevented from entering into the presence of God by the structure of the temple. But this in-type representation will have the temple being Tartaroo, the farthest reaches of the Greek concept of the underworld. And this would seem to be an odd representation for an author fascinated by the temple—unless the author is without spiritual understanding.

By having a family entourage journeying from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the Passover as was the custom of Jesus' parents, the author of Luke maximizes the importance of the Law and performing "everything according to the Law of the Lord" (Luke 2:39), which is in keeping with the emphasis that this author places on the birth and ministry of John the Baptist. However, John's ministry was outside of the temple and in the wilderness through which the Jordan River flowed. If John was of a Levitical family, he would have preached in the temple.

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