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Commentary—From the Margins

The Boy Christ

Part One

I have written for the past year or more that no scriptural narrative of the human person, Jesus of Nazareth, should predate the beginning of His ministry. This means that the narratives in Matthew's Gospel and in Luke's Gospel and in the Qur'an shouldn't exist ... in Matthew's Gospel, the pre-baptism narratives have theological justification for the "Jesus" of Matthew's Gospel is the glorified Christ dwelling in His spiritual Body, us, all who are truly born of spirit; for as a born-of-spirit son of God, we are "Christ" albeit not the uncovered Head. We are, again, the covered [garmented] by grace Body of Christ, with Paul writing, "Now you are the Body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Cor 12:27).

If a disciple is truly born of spirit, the disciple will walk in this world as Jesus walked (1 John 2:6). But most Christians who claim to be "born again" do not walk as Jesus, an Observant Jew, walked—they do not have the indwelling of the spirit of God, said based on the Law not being written on their hearts nor placed within them so that all *Know the Lord*, from great to least (Heb 8:10–11). For how does John's Jesus pray: "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given Him authority over the flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:1–3) ... knowing the Father and the Son comes from being born of spirit as a son of God. And if born of spirit, then the glorified Jesus dwells inside the disciple—and if the glorified Jesus dwells inside a son of God, will the glorified Jesus cause the son of God to walk in this world as a lawless Gentile? NO! Absolutely not. Oh, a newly born son of God might cling to the world as a human infant learning to walk clings to chairs or couches to steady wobbly legs; an infant son of God may cling to the world because of the weakness of the flesh. But by the time the son of God takes a second Passover, the son will have strengthened the inner self through growth in grace and knowledge so that the son will strive to walk as Jesus walked, even if the son is far from perfection.

Therefore, do not let it be said that Christians have to be perfect by any human standard to be members of the Body of Christ. Rather, the Christian who is of the Body will desire to walk as Jesus walked, and will be closer to that goal every time the Christian examines him or herself before taking the Passover sacraments—and there in a thimble is what separates disciples genuinely born of spirit from pretenders: genuine disciples keep the Passover as the "Passover," even if they get the day wrong because they follow a false prophet, a false teacher (the false teacher will pay the penalty for a genuine disciple taking the Passover sacraments on the wrong day; the false teacher will take the

disciple's sins upon him or herself).

Because there has been some Internet chatter that has come *Philadelphia's* way concerning the year in which Jesus was born, with the chatter using Luke's Gospel as a creditable source, I would like to take a paragraph or two to squelch that chatter, not that the person who is "right" in his or her own eyes will suddenly become quiet.

In the possible years for when Jesus could have been crucified, endtime disciples have only one hard "day-to-date" connection: if [and it is true] Jesus was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth [the grave], and if He was gone from the grave before sunrise on the day after the Sabbath [*te mia ton sabbaton* — the first day of the week], then Jesus entered the grave at the end of the 14th day/beginning of the 15th day of the first month, the High Sabbath. He would have been in the grave all day on the 15th day; all day on the 16th day; and all day on the 17th day; then gone from the grave before dawn on the 18th day (gone at the beginning of the 18th day, the first day of the new week). This will now have the 17th day of the first month being the weekly Sabbath; the 16th day being Friday, the sixth day of the week; and the 15th day being the High Sabbath, a Thursday, the fifth day of the week. Jesus would now have been crucified on the daylight portion of the 14th day, the fourth day of the week, a Wednesday.

Remember, there was no calculated calendar prior to the destruction of the temple. The setting of the calendar involved the sighting of the first new moon following the "sign," which apparently was the spring equinox. However, if the roads into Jerusalem were too muddy or if barley wasn't near being ripe [no ripe sheaf], the beginning of the year was delayed a month—and this is apparently what happened in 31 CE ... in the possible years for when Jesus could have been crucified, there is only one year that has the day-to-date correspondence of the 18th day of the first month being on the first day of that week, and that occurs on the second month [*Iyyar*] of the calculated calendar for 31 CE, with the first month of the calculated calendar for 31 CE beginning before the equinox, thereby denying legitimacy to first month.

The actual first month of the calendar as set by observation in 31 CE began in April and seems to be accurately observed as *Iyyar* 1st on Judaism's calculated calendar when this calendar is projected backwards before its creation ... because the calculated calendar is set by calculations, not observations, it can be projected into years before its initial creation in 71 CE. Thus, day-to-date correspondences between 28 CE and 34 CE can be calculated when compared to the Julian calendar, and what's seen is that near year of 30 CE would have the new year begin before the equinox to get the 18th day on Sunday; thus, this cannot be the year on which Jesus was crucified. The commonly accepted year for Jesus' crucifixion of 33 CE isn't even close. So again, the only year on which Jesus could have been crucified was 31 CE if Jesus was truly three days and three nights in the grave.

As an aside, the day-to-date correspondence of Thursday being the 15th day of the second month on the calculated calendar [Sabbath being the 17th day; Sunday being the 18th day] comes into play for the Second Passover liberation of Israel. So while Judaism's calculated calendar misrepresents when the first month of the sacred year began in 31

CE, the fact that Jesus was crucified on what it identifies as the second month of the sacred year has significance for disciples in the near future.

The Internet chatter that raised questions about when Jesus was born and when He was crucified originated from trying to straighten out a time line introduced by Luke's Gospel in relationship to Matthew's Gospel: "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town" (Luke 2:1–3).

There are several factual problems in what the author of Luke's Gospel writes: it was Roman citizens that were registered or taxed by Rome, not non-citizens. And no census of Judea seems to have been taken prior to about 6 CE. Plus, Rome wanted to know where people were, not where their ancestors had lived. So the author of Luke's Gospel, writing near the end of 1st-Century CE about what had happened 80 or 90 years earlier, simply has his facts wrong. But then, this author doesn't make a claim for inspiration:

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's Gospel writes a redaction of the oral gospel [*just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us*], using Mark's Gospel to establish a narrative timeline. Luke's Gospel is truly uninspired—and its author acknowledges that he writes *because it seemed good to him to do so*, not because he was an eyewitness; not because he was called to do so as Paul was called; not because he had been commissioned by God to write a biography of Jesus. He writes as a wannabe teacher, confirming to Theophilus [*Lover of God*] that the things taught him—what things, Paul's *mystery of lawlessness* (from 2 Thess 2:7)—are valid.

Again, what if Theophilus had been falsely taught? Does the author of Luke's Gospel write to confirm false teachings? That hasn't been a question asked by enough teachers of Israel: too many have embraced the Gospel because it said seemingly important and spiritual truisms.

What does the author of Luke's Gospel have his angel "Gabriel" tell Mary?

Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end. (Luke 1:30–33)

Did Luke's "Gabriel" give Mary reliable information? Will the glorified Christ sit on David's throne, or will the glorified David sit on his throne?

The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man [Adam], take a stick and write on

it, 'For Judah, and the people of Israel associated with him'; then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with him.' And join them one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand. And when your people say to you, 'Will you not tell us what you mean by these?' say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am about to take the stick of Joseph (that is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with him. And I will join with it the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, that they may be one in my hand. ... My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince [*sar* – king] forever. I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. (Ezek 37:15–19, 24–26)

The glorified David will reign over the house of Jacob, with the glorified Christ being King of kings, and Lord of lords. David will be a king under Christ, but over Israel. David will sit on his own throne. Christ Jesus will sit on the throne presently occupied by the Adversary, the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air.

The author of Luke's Gospel only has token familiarity with the "Old Testament": he doesn't know the Prophets, so he has his "Gabriel" (as Mohammad had his "Gabriel") say what isn't true. Plus, the author of Luke's Gospel apparently doesn't know what the prophet Isaiah records about the Messiah:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
And His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.
He shall not judge by what His eyes see,
or decide disputes by what His ears hear,
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,
and with the breath of His lips He shall kill the wicked.
Righteousness shall be the belt of His waist,
And faithfulness the belt of His loins. (Isa 11:1–5)

Indented line are spiritual portions of couplets

It is commonly believed that Christ Jesus was a descendant of King David: in both Matthew's and Luke's Gospels, Jesus' legal father, Joseph, is descended from David, but through differing sons of David. However, if the Messiah grows as a root sucker [root shoot] from the stump of Jesse, the Messiah is not of David, but of Obed, Boaz, David's

ancestors; for David is the youngest son of Jesse. As such, David is of Jesse as a branch of the tree that is “Jesse”; the Messiah will “grow” from the roots of the stump of Jesse, meaning that Jesse and his lineage have been cut-down, felled.

The natural line of kings that comes from David is cut off, felled, with Jerusalem and Judah’s deportation to Babylon. That line of kings would never again exist, David and Josiah forming the cornerstone and capstone of David’s kingly line. But this isn’t something most Christians today realize; it wasn’t something that the author of Luke’s Gospel apparently knew. However, it is something the angel Gabriel would have known.

Now, a simple question: did the angel Gabriel have a tape recorder tucked under his wing when he spoke to Mary? Did Mary have a tape recorder so that she could record Gabriel’s words? Luke’s Gospel gives exact words spoken, so who was the scribe that wrote these words down, and when did this scribe write? Before Jesus was born? That doesn’t seem likely. After Jesus was born but before His ministry began? That also doesn’t seem likely? After Jesus was crucified, with Mary being a woman in her late 40s or early 50s, and the words spoken by Gabriel having been spoken 34 or more years earlier ... it’s one thing to remember a couple of words, or a few words spoken three decades earlier, but it’s quite a different thing to remember a complete speech from so many years earlier, especially one spoken to Zechariah, who would have been dead for a long time.

Simply put, the words of the angel Gabriel as the author of Luke’s Gospel records them in his opening passages are the words of the author, not the words of the angel.

The words of an angel of the Lord to Joseph (Matt 1:18–23) are more succinct and might be words that Joseph would have remembered hearing in a dream; they are also not literary rhetoric as seen in Gabriel saying to Zechariah, “And he [John] will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared” (Luke 1:16–17).

The structure and parallelism of the passage comes from Malachi: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction” (Mal 4:5–6).

Luke’s “Gabriel” cites the first line of a narrative couplet, but transforms the spiritual line from, *and the hearts of children to their fathers*, to, *and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just* ... the “children” become the “disobedient,” and “their fathers” become “the just”—and parallelism works in a literary manner, but not as something that would likely be remembered decades later, unless Zechariah wrote down what he heard in that period when he couldn’t speak. And if he wrote in this period, a record of what he wrote would have been known to many.

I have used the word “likely” quite a few times because two millennia after the fact, conclusive records don’t exist ... Jesus lived, but He had a small ministry in a backwater region of the world. He did not have a large following when He was crucified—and it couldn’t be any other way, for it wasn’t then time to take dominion of the single

kingdom of this world away from the Adversary. It wasn't then time to disrupt the ongoing demonstration showing that the Adversary's governance of this world would not work. It was, however, the appropriate time for Jesus to get Himself killed by crucifixion as a shadow and type of what would happen at the end of the age. So let it here be clearly stated: the secular evidence for the existence of Jesus is thin but adequate to support the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth early in the 1st-Century CE. The non-secular evidence [theological] evidence to support Jesus' ministry is stronger, but not absolutely conclusive. However, the inner evidence that comes with truly being born of spirit is more than adequate to assuage questions of authenticity.

The Apostle Paul had the Septuagint as his copy of the Hebrew Scriptures. He wrote his epistles without considering them as Scripture. In fact, we do not have his epistle to the Laodiceans (Col 4:16). We have a cobbled-together second letter to the Corinthians, with 2 Corinthians chapters 1 through 9 seeming to be from a third letter while chapters 10 through 12 seem to be from the original second letter. We have a Second Sophist novel [Acts] posing as genuine history, and we have the Pastoral Epistles, written some years after Paul's ministry was over. It is small wonder that Islam contends that neither Jews were faithful in keeping the Scriptures, nor were Christians faithful ... Islam doesn't do any better. So it falls to the genuine Church of God, a small Sabbatarian theology, to pare away the spurious texts accepted as worthy of canonization by the "major catholic Churches" in the 4th-Century CE, and return Christendom to the time of the first apostles who were eye-witnesses to what happened at Calvary. And that can be done because of the indwelling of the glorified Jesus in His Body, the Body of Christ that died seventy years after Calvary and that will be resurrected to life at the Second Passover liberation of a second Israel. Until then, only a few—only those disciples needed to proclaim the endtime gospel that *all who endure to the end shall be saved*—will be called by God and born of spirit through the indwelling of Christ Jesus.

Now, why shouldn't any written narrative about the man Jesus (from conception to baptism) exist?

Because Christianity really isn't about the physical man Jesus, but about the Son of God, born of spirit when the breath of the Father [*pneuma Theou*] bodily descended upon and entered into [*eis* — from Mark 1:10] the physical man, thereby bringing spiritual life to a new creature, a new man, the Son of the Father.

Christianity isn't about the Son of the Logos [*o Logos*] who entered His creation as His unique Son, the man Jesus (John 3:16; 1:14); rather, Christianity is about the root-shoot from the stump of Jesse, not the legal son of Joseph, descendant of ancient King David. So it is an evil and adulterous generation that wishes to worship the infant Son of the Logos, who in a manger, presents no threatening persona. The glorified Christ Jesus appears pretty scary:

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around His chest. The hairs of His head were white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of

fire, His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and His voice was like the roar of many waters. In His right hand he held seven stars, from His mouth came a sharp two-edged [double lipped] sword, and His face was like the sun shining in full strength. (Rev 1:12–16)

If you were in the position of either the Father or the Son, which image of Christ would you want your sons to have in their minds, that of *sweet Jesus* as the infant Son of the Logos, or that of the mature Son of God Almighty, this mature Son being the *A* and *Ω* who gives spiritual birth to sons of God and who then brings them to their majority [glorification]? I know which one I would want, and it isn't that of a human baby. Because this Commentary is only the first of several on this subject, I'll end it here rather than engage Matthew's Gospel right now ...

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