

Commentary — From the Margins *An Infallible Text* [Part Thirteen]

13.

In *A Philadelphia Apologetic Volume 4*, I use primarily Chronicles and Judges to establish that the genealogy found in Matthew's Gospel (chap 1) is not factual, but is a fictional creation of the Gospel's anonymous author. In the still unpublished manuscript of *A Philadelphia Apologetic Volume 5*, I strive to show that the Book of Acts is a Sophist novel, and that Luke's Gospel has in it a different Jesus than exists in Mark's and Matthew's Gospel, thereby calling into question the reliability of Luke's redacted Gospel and the fictional [historical fiction] Book of Acts. And when I was working on both volumes of *APA*, I was concerned about losing readers, not that I let my concerns hinder my challenge of canonical Scripture ... if the recorded genealogy found in Judges has more than fourteen generations between Abraham and David, and if Chronicles has more than fourteen generations from David to the deportation, and a differing number of generations are recorded between the deportation and the birth of Christ Jesus that Matthew's Gospel records, then the genealogy found in the first seventeen verses of Matthew isn't historically accurate but is a fiction, inscribed for reasons apart from relating history to auditors. For some reason, error exists—as error exists in Matthew chapter two. And if this error is not accidental but intentional, then more is at work in the Gospel than can be taken from its text by assigning literal meanings to the figurative passages. And this "more" isn't that the Gospel is a human text of human origins, but that the author of Matthew's Gospel took Mark's Gospel and did something with it other than simply adding to Mark.

When a person doesn't know what to say about a text or about a cultural phenomenon, the usual place to begin is establishing what is *marked* and what is *unmarked*, with *marking establishing difference*. Hence, there is no *unmarked* woman: regardless of whether the woman covers or does not cover, is a plain dresser or is not a plain dresser, wears spike heels or doesn't, carries a handbag or doesn't, the woman by the fact that she is a woman is *marked* as seen in the *<wo>* addition to *<man>*. She is not a *man*; she is not a defining member of the patriarchal establishment. Rather, she is defined through an addition to *man*; so she can never be the head but can only be the one who is added to the head, something that feminists have fought against since the days of Euripides.

Mark's Gospel is the unmarked Gospel among the Synoptic Gospels; thus every addition the author of Matthew's Gospel made to Mark's Gospel, every change made to Mark's Gospel (such as making the purple robe in Mark 15:17 into a scarlet/red robe in Matthew 27:28) says something about the author of Matthew's Gospel and his intentions for writing. Matthew's Gospel can be deconstructed via these changes as seen in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, which

the author immediately contradicts (*cf.* Matt 1:17 with *v.* 18), establishing that Jesus was of Israel's royal lineage so there was no need for this author to place Jesus in "purple," the color establishing royalty in the nations of the Levant. The author of Matthew's Gospel was therefore "free" to place Jesus in a red robe, with the color "red" emphasizing the blood of Jesus as His establishing claim to Israelite royalty.

But was the robe that Roman soldiers placed on Jesus when they mocked Him red or purple, or was it a purplish red which would certainly not be scarlet ... because Mark's Gospel is the unmarked Gospel, the robe/cloak would have been purple. Logically, the garment would have been purple to mock the claim that Jesus was the "king" of the Jews. So why would the author of Matthew's Gospel change the color—and with close reading of the text and possession of the mind of Christ through being born of spirit, the reason can be determined. But in doing so, the auditor of Matthew's Gospel will have to think as the author of Matthew's Gospel thought, with auditor and author becoming chiral images of each other.

When academics show students that the Bible is a human book of human origins, the faith of students tends to dissipate as fog burned off by the morning sun—this should never be the case. The words of God that the Father spoke and that Jesus heard as words were heard as thunder claps by the crowd that followed Jesus:

[Jesus speaking] "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." ***Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.*** The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." (John 12:27–32 double emphasis added)

Did anyone hear the words, *I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again*, other than Jesus? And note, two glorifications, not one, with the glory of God seen in Ezekiel 1:26–28 ... the internal bright fire that sustains heavenly life is the glory of God. Whereas the dark fire of cellular oxidation sustains physical life, the bright non-oxidizing fire Moses saw in the burning bush, that the prophet Ezekiel saw in the living creature that appeared like a man is the "fire" that sustains spiritual life—and Jesus had already received this glory of God when the breath of God [*pneuma Theou*] descended in the bodily form of a dove and entered [*eis*] into Him. Thus, because the inner self of Jesus was "alive" through receipt of the spirit of God [*pneuma Theou*], the man Jesus was able to hear the words of the Father while the crowd, not born of spirit [*pneuma*], heard what sounded like a thunder clap.

God the Father would again glorify Jesus when He raised Jesus' dead body from the grave. Two glorifications. What the Father told Jesus. What Jesus heard. What disciples with the mind of Christ now hear. What disciples who do not yet

have the mind of Christ fail to hear. What academics do not hear. And what swells the ranks of intelligent but carnal agnostics.

In John's Gospel, Jesus told Jews seeking to kill Him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (John 5:24). But hearing Jesus' voice is as hearing the voice of the Father: without being born of spirit, which will glorify the inner self of the disciple, the person simply cannot hear the voice of Jesus; simply cannot truly believe the writings of Moses (vv. 46–47); simply cannot become a personification of the word of Him that Jesus left with His disciples (John 12:48).

I don't write to lose audience. It is not my intention to chase readers away, but I have found that my readers struggled with what I proclaim for an average of two years before they contact me, suggesting that readers have difficulty accepting a *Christianity* differing from any found in long established denominations—and also suggesting that many gave up on what I proclaim before they were able to accept what is the 21st-Century radical equivalent to the teachings of 16th-Century Radical Reformers, my physical ancestors on both my mother's and my father's side.

I didn't set out to be a radical. I set out to be honest with Scripture; for no salvation can be found in dishonesty. Yet, I didn't set out seeking salvation, which wasn't even in my thoughts when I finally began to keep the Sabbath, a dozen years after knowing to do so. I began to keep the Sabbath because I knew it was the right thing to do. I also knew that I didn't want to keep the Sabbath: doing so would figuratively cost me my life, which was centered around hunting, shooting, building guns, fishing. Keeping the Sabbath would force me to give up what was most dear to me. Nevertheless, I was without choice in 1972, when drafted into the Body of Christ to begin walking in this world as Christ walked. Thus, occasions when I screwed up since then—and I have—in business or in personal life continue to trouble me; for these are times when I didn't walk as Jesus walked, but as Jacob walked with goatskin covering hands and neck. And one thing about having the mind of Christ in this era, I don't forget my screw-ups. They are as if they just happened even though decades have passed since most of them occurred.

If a disciple doesn't hear Jesus' voice as Jesus heard the Father's voice when the crowd heard a thunder clap, the disciple is to Christ Jesus as the crowd was to the man Jesus. This does not mean that the disciple will not be saved; this means that the disciple is not yet saved, is not yet glorified, has not yet passed from death to life without coming under judgment.

In being called to *reread prophecy*, I began to hear Jesus' voice, but hear as an infant hears, knowing more than I could yet express ... a human infant does not speak when born because his or her mouth—the vocal resonance chamber—isn't yet long enough for human utterance to be formed; thus, the infant *goos* and *gaas* while attempting to mimic the utterances of parents, with human infancy forming the chiral image of spiritual infancy. The newly born son of God attempts to utter the words of the Father, but inevitably makes cute but

unintelligible sound such as saying *Elohim* is a uniplural noun such as “family” is in English. That is nonsense: *Elohim* is the regular plural of *Eloah*, which deconstructs to the Semitic word for God, *<El>*, plus aspiration, *<ah>*. So in *Eloah* is God and His breath (His holy spirit). And in the Tetragrammaton *YHWH* are two deities plus their two breaths that together form one deity as a man and his wife are one flesh; thus, in the beginning, there was no dissolving of marriages via divorce. Two were one, with *man* being the head of *wo-man* as the Most High God was the Head of the God of Abraham, a reality seen until unfaithful Jews redacted the writings of Moses in Babylon, thereby regulating ideology/theology so that never again would the God of Abraham send His firstborn son (see Ex 4:22) into captivity.

You ask if I can “prove” the above claim: yes, I can, but why should I do so here? You have already made up your mind whether to believe me or not believe me, with both belief and faith being represented by the Greek linguistic icon *pisteos*. You either have faith that in my writings you can hear the voice of Christ Jesus, or you do have such faith. And where does it say, *Prove all things?*

Do not quench the spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but *test everything*; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.
(1 Thess 5:19–22 emphasis added)

Can the spirit be quenched? Can you put out the bright fire that represents eternal life? How would you go about putting out this bright fire? How would you go about quenching the spirit that is the breath of God [*pneuma Theou*] in the breath of Christ [*pneuma Christou*]? Can you take yourself away from God? when Jesus said,

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. *I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.* My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one. (John 10:27–30)

Now, back to the question, can you quench the spirit that gives to you eternal life through the indwelling of Christ Jesus in the form of His spirit [*pneuma Christou*]? Can you shake off Christ, who dies for you while you are/were still a sinner (Rom 5:8)? Can you through bad behavior—say, adultery, or even murdering an unborn child [abortion]—quench the spirit that is the indwelling breath of Christ that gives to you eternal life? And the answer is no, an emphatic NO! You can certainly screw your life up, making your way in this world needlessly difficult, but you cannot shake off Christ. He will not quit on you. If the Father draws you from this world, you have been purchased from the Adversary by the blood of Jesus. He no longer has any claim on your mental topography. You don't belong to him, and you cannot escape from the one who now owns your mental landscape; who purchased you for a price.

The Apostle Paul, early in his ministry—when his first epistle to the Thessalonians was written—didn't understand what he would come to understand. He wasn't given all spiritual knowledge in one supersize download:

he, too, had to grow in grace and knowledge, this growth seen through those things he wrote as my growth is seen in those things that I have written.

If you, one of the Elect—foreknown and predestined by the Father, called, justified, and glorified by the Son—really cannot quench the spirit and thereby take yourself out from the hand of the Father, then are you really to *test everything* (1 Thess 5:21), which implies that you will not accept anything you cannot prove ... what if you cannot prove that unfaithful Jews in Babylon regularized Scripture, thereby transforming a linguistic determinative into a regular noun [naming icon]? Are you not going to believe me because I don't give you the information necessary to allow you to prove what I know? What if you are too spiritually immature to receive this information? Do not parents tell children to do something *because I told you to do it?* Does not God tell us to do things because He said to do the thing, with cleans meats being a prime example? Do faithful disciples not eat pork because they can prove ingestion of pork is harmful, the position of Seventh Day Adventists, or do faithful disciples not eat pork because they are to be holy as God is holy (*cf.* 1 Pet 1:14–16; Lev 11:44–45)? Do faithful disciples not eat clams because of PSP [paralytic shellfish poisoning], or because the God of Abraham said that Israel was not to eat them so that Israel would be holy as He is holy? Exactly what role does faith play in the lives of the Elect?

There are disciples who faithfully supported the ministry of Herbert W. Armstrong, and who, today, will not faithfully support any ministry. They were theologically burned, and in their healing process, they poured an awful lot of water on the spirit within them, thereby drowning the spirit; quenching the spirit. But they were never born of spirit. Just ask them; ask Armstrong—now dead so one would have to ask by consulting his writings—if his disciples were born of spirit, and he will tell you that those who supported his ministry, to the person, were not born of spirit. And in this, he doesn't lie.

A Christian is still a spiritual milk drinker if the person cannot hear the voice of Jesus in the writings of Moses. A Christian is still a milk drinker if he or she, after initially proving that Jesus' voice can be heard in my writings, continues to have to prove everything I write is true ... I'm not going to deliberately mislead. I'm not trying to make disciples for myself. I'm not even trying to get along with anyone. I'm doing the task for which I was called—and that's enough for me to do. Thus, the person who must continually prove that what I write is correct will find that in the future I'm not going to permit that to happen: I will deliberately express things I know that others simply cannot prove, and I will do so because faith has long been neglected within Sabbatarian Christendom. It is time to return faith to active duty.

I know what will happen throughout the Millennium: that knowledge came with the calling to reread prophecy. But as Paul withheld knowledge; as John the Revelator withheld knowledge, I have withheld knowledge—and I will continue to do so except as needful to bring faith alive, thereby giving to faith both personality and form [substance].

The problem with a disciple, a believer going into academia to study historical Christianity is the lack of knowledge the disciple has when initially confronted by the reality that the Bible as the imprisoned shadow of words God uttered is a human book, compiled by human authors. What the believing disciple inevitably does is one of two things, walk away before acquiring the knowledge needed to push past where academia stands, or join with academia to become an agnostic ... what happened to this disciple's faith that seemed so alive before classes began? What happened to the faith of disciples who supported the ministry of Herbert Armstrong? Why did my faith not take a similar hit when I returned to the university at midlife to take a graduate degree? Was it because my faith wasn't evidence of things not seen—"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1)?

While falling timber in the Bitterroots; while fishing in the Gulf of Alaska, in the Bering Sea, I saw evidence of a co-existing dimension besides the four unfurled dimensions. I experienced supernatural phenomenon for which there was no logical explanation. So when I returned to the university at midlife, I wasn't a typical student; I wasn't a typical Christian. And though there was much that I didn't know—my first degree is a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing; I have no undergraduate degree—there was no challenge to my faith other than sitting on my hands until I truly had something to say.

I have two younger brothers, both of whom have done everything that society expected of them, with the younger having been identified as one of the top 100 in healthcare in the world ... when it comes to healthcare, I believe as Amish do. I hold that since God is my healer, if I live or die will be a determination made by God; for I should have died decades ago. I would have died decades ago if not for miraculous interventions [plural]. So I have been living since at least 1975 by the will of God, a reality I saw happen and understood, and a reality that would not permit me to become an agnostic when I returned to the university.

The physical creation that is completed in the dark portion of day one—"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1) so what is not completed—is the same creation completed on the same dark portion of the day as is found in Genesis 2:4 ...

These are the generations
of the heavens and the earth when they were created,
in the day that [YHWH] God made the earth and the heavens.

Note that redaction has occurred of both the creation account and of Moses' writings, with the evidence of redaction being in the transformation of a previous linguistic determinative [YHWH] into a singular naming icon. Now, how do I know when this redaction occurred? How did I, without any undergraduate English coursework beyond the Freshman Comp sequence, know how to deconstruct texts when entering the university? When is a non-sequitur not a non-sequitur? And when does faith come alive and walk as a man walks, talk as a man talks, and fight as a man fights? Is today not a good day for faith to live as a man lives?

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Paul wrote, "Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means!" (Rom 3:1–4) ... well, what if those entrusted with the oracles of God were unfaithful? How were they unfaithful? In what ways were they not unfaithful? Certainly when it came to maintenance of the temple scroll they were unfaithful; for what is it that has been recorded?

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jezidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. And he did what was right in the eyes of [YHWH] and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left. In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, the secretary, to the house of [YHWH], saying, "Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may count the money that has been brought into the house of [YHWH], which the keepers of the threshold have collected from the people. And let it be given into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of [YHWH], and let them give it to the workmen who are at the house of [YHWH], repairing the house (that is, to the carpenters, and to the builders, and to the masons), and let them use it for buying timber and quarried stone to repair the house. But no accounting shall be asked from them for the money that is delivered into their hand, for they deal honestly." And Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of [YHWH]." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and reported to the king, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of [YHWH]." Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes. (2 Kings 22:1–11)

And,

And the king commanded all the people, "Keep the Passover to [YHWH] your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant." For no such Passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah. But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was kept to [YHWH] in Jerusalem. (2 Kings 23:21–23)

Because of the principle of narrative economy and the ancient practice of putting words in characters' mouths to *tell a better story*, those things said by King Josiah and by Shaphan the secretary ought to have been said by each but probably were not said—nor need to have been said for these things to be “true.”

... There were no tape recorders to get exact quotes, nor notebooks to get words heard by reporters *on the record*. The production of written text was not easy, nor lightly undertaken. So Shaphan the secretary wrote when there were few chances for him to produce an errant text; he wrote as part of his official duties, and he would have inscribed the essence of what the king said, not necessarily what the king said. And the person undertaking the redaction of the kingly chronicles would have further “cleaned up” what was officially recorded so that a king’s life was reduced to a few hundred words.

If your life were to be reduced to a few hundred words, how many of your uttered words would be excluded and how many of your deeds could be summarized by placing a few words in your mouth, words that you never really spoke, but words that are true in that they convey those things you did and thought, the essence of who you were? I know that as a writer working at my craft since 1979, I have placed words in the mouth of real people as I attempted to mimetically represent what happened in a particular situation. These words might have been said, certainly they could have been said, but I have no record (notes or recordings) of them being said.

At times, I have written exact words that were said in a particular situation, these words imprinting on my memory because of their unusualness or unexpectedness; e.g., a Japanese fish buyer sitting beside me on a flight to Dutch Harbor emphatically said, *The only cure for Stupid is Kill!*

To this day, I don’t know if the fish buyer realized how his words came across in English ... his exact words were a summarization of a three hour long conversion about packing salmon roe for the Japanese market, and his words didn’t mean the fish buyer intended to kill anyone at Pan Alaska (although he would have been hard pressed to prove otherwise). What his word conveyed was his frustration in instructing supervisory personnel at the cannery to pay particular attention to detail as roe was being packed for the Japanese market. The buyer was angry that three times in one season he had to make a trip to Dutch to correct a problem that should never have existed. The buyer was frustrated by how the same problem kept reoccurring. And the buyer intended to correct the problem even if that meant jerking a contract from Pan Alaska—killing the business arrangement. However, again, I wasn’t fully convinced that the buyer didn’t mean exactly what he said when it came to individuals on the packing line.

Most utterance recorded in Scripture is much more mundane, with King Josiah serving as an example ...

For certain, King Josiah never said, *Keep the Passover to YHWH your God*, for Josiah would not have pronounced the linguistic determinative *YHWH*, and this before the Tetragrammaton became *too holy* to be pronounced—again, it was never pronounced because it was a determinative, not a name. Thus, the inscribed utterance of King Josiah is necessarily a fictional utterance, but one that is *true* without being true. It is the production of a scribe who was pretty good at accomplishing the task set before him of being a chronicler of kings.

You, too, would remember the words of a stranger saying to you, *The only cure for Stupid is Kill*, but you probably would not remember the exact words you said if you told a subordinate to buy a new computer system for your local pastor. If your subordinate said that you [whatever your name is] “authorized me to purchase a replacement computer system for the Church,” you wouldn’t quibble because your subordinate changed a word or two as long as the essence of the message was correct. You said what your subordinate said you said even if you didn’t use the words your subordinate used. And so it is and was with ancient characters in redacted Old Testament narratives.

Now, are the uttered passages in Scripture the exact words said, recorded and received as infallible utterance? If you answer in the affirmative, you haven’t closely read Scripture and truly do not know what is in the Bible; for no autographs exist, nor do apographs exist. The *vorlagen* from which the books of the Bible as presently received have been translated are not ancient texts, but are relatively new texts, and these *vorlagen* have their own set of problems, not the least of which is contradiction.

If words spoken by Old Testament characters—if the words spoken by King Josiah—cannot truly have been spoken by the character, then what is seen/read is utterance being used as a literary devise to make more efficient storytelling. And this does not make the recorded utterance/dialogue either true or false, especially not in a narrative constructed in *Hebrew style*.

Faith will either walk as a man within every Sabbatarian Christian, or the Sabbatarian will perish in unbelief when the Second Passover liberation of Israel occurs. And whether you live or die is your choice, not mine, with me being a person you will either believe by faith or reject by exactly the same faith, with your faith living or dying by whether you breathe life into this creature.

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