

# More on Matthew

## Chapter Three

### 1.

Since Papias of Hierapolis (modern Pamukkale, Turkey), fourteen miles from Laodicea and near Colossae, wrote, *For Matthew composed the logia [sayings] in Hebrew style [Ébraidi dialekto], but every one interpreted them as he was able*, debate about what Papias meant has existed. The phrase <Ébraidi dialekto> differs from the usually used Greek term for language, *glossa*, and the phrase <Ébraidi dialekto> appears often in differing sources and contexts, in which it consistently refers to “style” or the dialect of the language spoken. Early Christian writers assumed the term referred to a dialect of Aramaic Hebrew that the author of Matthew spoke; for Matthew’s Gospel has been assumed for centuries to be the most “Hebrew” of the Gospels. But the end of Papias’ sentence, regardless of whether translated as, *each recorded them [Matthew’s logia] as he was able*, or translated as, *every one interpreted them as he was able*, the implication is that the style in which Matthew wrote was not readily accessible to Greek speakers.

The style in which the author of Matthew’s Gospel wrote has not been understood by English translators either.

To understand the potential of non-phonetic Hebraic thought-couplets used as the structure for a narrative work is to understand the mythical *Key of David*, with David being a very good poet. But to take this *Key of David* to where the glorified Christ elevated it, we need to return to those two Greek characters, the <A> (*alpha*) and the <Ω> (*omega*), understanding how these characters form mirror images of each other when they appear very different ... when Jesus sends out the Twelve (Matt chap 10; Mark 3:16–19), in Matthew’s Gospel He commands His disciples not to go to Gentiles or to Samaritans (Matt 10:5), but to go to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (v. 6). Mark’s Gospel is silent about what instructions, if any, Jesus gave His disciples. And again, in chirality, Mark’s Gospel forms the physical or natural left hand to Matthew’s Gospel, the spiritual right hand. So it would seem that the author of Matthew’s Gospel used a “natural” motif (Jesus sending out the Twelve) from Mark’s Gospel to deliver a spiritual message, all that He said to the Twelve in Matthew chapter ten—

Salvation was to come first to Israel, not to Gentiles. And when Jesus sends out the Twelve salvation had not yet come to the lost sheep of Israel, again the reality of what the author of Matthew’s Gospel revealed by sending the infant Jesus to Egypt, then bringing Him back when He was still a very small child. Spiritually a son of God, having the mind of Christ as a human infant has the mind of man, remains a spiritual infant until this son can walk away from sin as a biped, that is, walk uprightly and be blameless, what the Lord told Abraham (Gen 17:1).

If a human son of God will walk as a biped, this son of God can be represented by the majuscule <A> [*alpha*], which brings Jesus saying that He was *the Alpha and the Omega* (Rev 22:13) back into discussion.

Salvation is only offered to physical adults, to persons old enough and mature enough to choose to do what is right, to choose righteousness, and to then act upon their choice. This doesn't mean that a physical adult when born of spirit through the indwelling of the spirit of Christ isn't a spiritual infant. Indeed, the person is a spiritual infant, and can remain so for decades. Remember what Paul wrote to the holy ones at Corinth:

But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? (1 Cor 1:1–3)

What Christians apparently do not realize is that everything Paul wrote to the holy ones at Corinth in his first epistle was spiritual milk, not meat, not solid food, for they were still not ready for solid food. He would not have had to rebuke them for tolerating in fellowship the man who was with his father's wife if they were ready for solid food. He would not have had to correct them on how they were keeping the Passover if they were ready for solid food. Even in his second epistle [his second epistle is probably a morphed letter that begins with a third epistle and concludes with a portion of a second epistle], when he wrote,

I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. (2 Cor 11:2–4)

So yes, a human adult who should be physically mature enough to do what is right and be blameless in all of his or her ways, when born of spirit as a son of God will be a spiritual infant in that their thoughts and desires are not under the same discipline as their physical hands and bodies. However, the spiritual maturation of an infant son isn't time-dependent. The development of the mind of Christ in a son of God isn't time-dependent. Just because a person has truly been drawn from this world by the Father, predestined to be glorified as fruit born out of season, called, justified, and glorified [the inner self], and baptized somewhere between being called and glorified, doesn't mean that this son of God is anything more than a spiritual infant, regardless of whether this person has been studying the Bible for fifty years or more or is someone like one of my forefathers, able to cite Scripture—word for word—from memory into his eighties, or whether the person knows nothing of Scripture and is a biblical blank-slate.

Biblical knowledge is a lot less important than Sabbatarian Christians would like to believe; for most of what a Christian knows—even Sabbatarian Christians—is

false. For the Adversary doesn't deceive the whole world except for Christians, or except for Sabbatarian Christians, or except for Christians attending one of the Sabbatarian Church of God fellowships.

Even the Elect, the chosen ones, will be deceived by the Adversary; so growing in grace and knowledge is never ending growth for as long as the person is physically alive. For once the person no longer has a physical presence in this world, the son of God's growth stops. In heaven, what is must be compatible with what was and what will be. So the type of physical maturation seen in human persons and in the beasts of the field cannot occur. Likewise, the type of spiritual maturation exemplified by human maturation cannot occur in heaven. How spiritually mature you are when you die physically will be how spiritually mature you are forever as a son of God. And for this reason, a son of God needs to be quickly learning to walk as a spiritual biped and be blameless before God.

Understanding that a Christian needed to be physically mature before he or she was baptized separated 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Radical Reformers from Protestant Reformers, with my ancestors being numbered among the Radicals ... perhaps it should surprise no one that I, too, am a *radical reformer*, far enough away from mainstream Christianity that not even satellite telephone connections can be maintained.

I “jumped” many concepts in going from thought-couplets to Radical Reformers, the Anabaptist leaders of the 16<sup>th</sup>-Century. For right now, it is enough to visually *fold* the end of the age over the beginning of the Reform Period when Jesus initially laid over the dead Body of Christ to breathe His breath and spiritual life into this corpse in figurative mouth-to-mouth resuscitation as the first Elijah laid over the dead body of the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17–23).

In *folding* the end of the age over [superimposing] the ministries of early Anabaptists—of, say, Andreas Fischer—not all of the edges will exactly align, but the general appearance of both will be similar enough that the end of the age (the age ending with the fall of spiritual Babylon) will seem to be the reality of the beginning of the Radical Reform movement that would have toppled greater Christendom if it would have been allowed to continue. But so many Radical Reformers were murdered in such a short period that none had the time to spiritually mature in knowledge. There was plenty of growth in grace, but the first Radical Reformers were true spiritual infants—and there were no spiritual infants in either the Reform Church or the Roman Church. There were only bones and the shadow of the Adversary.

Permit me to revisit a point: in the Affliction, the first 1260 days of the seven endtime years of tribulation, a spiritual Cain will slay his righteous spiritual brother. In Matthew's Gospel, there is a listing of bad news, followed by one glimmer of hope:

All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation [bad news] and put you to death [bad news], and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake [bad news]. And then many will fall away [bad news] and betray one another [bad news] and hate one another [bad news]. And many false prophets will arise [bad news] and

lead many astray [bad news]. And because lawlessness will be increased [bad news], the love of many will grow cold [bad news]. But the one who endures to the end will be saved [good news]. And this gospel [good news] of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matt 24:8–14)

Faithful Christians in the Affliction (21<sup>st</sup>-Century) will be hunted as Radical Reformers were hunted, murdered, and had their bodies mutilated in the 16<sup>th</sup>-Century. So the concept of folding the end over the beginning and aligning witness marks produces the narrative thought-couplet structure of Matthew's Gospel; produces the *Key of David* that has  $\Omega$  (*omega*) superimposed over *A* (*alpha*), not the other way around.

Again, the concept of “Believers’ Baptism” divided Reform Christendom into two schisms that could not then and to this day cannot be reconciled one to the other; for the theological assumptions of each differ to the extent that Radical Reformers did not and do not believe that God was/is trying to save the world. For Radical Reformers, salvation came from righteousness that is voluntarily and consciously produced ... if God were attempting to save everyone, He is losing to the Adversary, and this will never be the case. So falling back on what is actually seen, we find that only those individuals whom the Father draws from this world by giving to them the earnest of His spirit can today come to Christ Jesus (John 6:44) and thereby be saved. God could, if He so chose, save everyone, but that has never been His intention. His share of a person's increase is a tithe (10%), and His share of the increase of humanity from Adam to the present—what He will take as His glorified sons—is a tithe of humanity, which isn't what ninety percent of humanity wants to believe. This is, however, the reality that's seen if an unbiased observer were to look across greater humankind, searching for those individuals who have genuine love for neighbor and brother.

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

Whereas Protestant Reformers sought to *reform* and *repair* the “old Christian Church” [the Roman Church] and through this quickened *old Church* save the world (the entirety of humankind) even if conversion came at the point of a sword, Radical Reformers were determined to step behind the 4<sup>th</sup>-Century creation of the *Old Church* and return Christianity to its 1<sup>st</sup>-Century roots, with these roots severed from civil authority of any and all kinds—

Jesus wasn't crucified by His disciples, but by civil and ecclesiastical authorities. And who murdered his righteous brother because his sacrifice wasn't accepted? Was it not Cain?

What Radical Reformers advocated meant that there were no genuine Christians from the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century until these Radical Reformers theologically emerged, and the majority of Reform Christendom could not accept the premise that they were not *genuine*; so the Radical Reformers were hunted as if vermin by both Roman Church officials and Reform Church leaders until they became the *quiet folk*,

where they remain to this day ... the spiritual growth of Anabaptists was suspended before the end of the 17<sup>th</sup>-Century.

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

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

However, my introduction of narrative trickster figures here suggests a linkage between Matthew's *Jesus* and John's *Jesus* as the cultural figure <*Jesus*> that has reached mythological status and as such can be imported into narratives to permit discussion of hypothetical situations in oral and inscribed cultures where referents must be named. But the character *Jesus* as He appears in the Gospels eliminates most discussion of the hypothetical through inserting absolutes initially introduced by Moses; so by an endtime Christian asking the simple question, *What would Jesus do*, the character *Jesus* eliminates the need for discussion of hypothetical situations. We know what *Jesus* would do; so we as sons of God are to do the same, thereby becoming fractals of *Jesus*.

Did I just sail the preceding over the heads of everyone?

In oral cultures, trickster figures such as Raven in Alaska or Coyote on America's West Coast permit exploration of hypothetical situations, such as what happens if you eat too much when you are a guest at your neighbor's house. With the trickster figure, nothing good happens to the figure, nor does anything bad. But in the story, the neighbor goes hungry because the neighbor no longer has enough food to feed himself and his family. However, outside of the story, no one has to go hungry because those who hear the story will not, out of respect or love for their neighbor, eat too much.

There is an umbrella *Christian culture* that has developed in Western Europe and the Americas over the past 1,900 years, a Christian culture that is under attack because it hasn't been able to transcend literalist or absolutist readings of the

Bible. Whereas the oral cultures of First Nation peoples were able to understand Coyote or Raven stories as simultaneously real and not real, the greater Christian culture has never been able to *walk as Jesus walked* (1 John 2:6 *et al*) without inserting literalism into biblical birth narratives that on their surface are false. Christians are not good at believing in Christ Jesus as their personal savior while walking in the world as Jesus walked. The concept that Jesus will save a person *just as the person is* contradicts what the Apostle Paul wrote:

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

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

But, someone will quickly point out, Raven isn't real ...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Initial regional unfamiliarity with Jesus’ name is seen in surviving secular records: in the century following Calvary there are only four mentions of *Jesus*, two late in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century and two early in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-Century. That’s it, except for texts that have become part of canonized New Testament scripture. However, by the end of the following century, few in the Roman world had not heard the name of *Jesus*, such was the spread of various forms of Christendom vying for

acceptance. The only problem, the *Jesus* known to the masses was the conscious creation of talented authors and not necessarily the man from Nazareth.

Once Herod's temple was razed when Jerusalem was captured (ca 70 CE), it was evident to all that *Jesus* would not return to a physical temple or to an outwardly circumcised people. It would have been equally evident that the movement from Israel being an outwardly circumcised nation to *Israel* being an inwardly circumcised nation could not be sustained through teaching Moses and the Prophets to converts. Jewish scholars were quietly amending texts to eliminate possible readings linking the suffering Righteous One to the Messiah—and where texts are in a partially alphabetized language [Hebrew], the written consonants do not have to be altered. Changing unwritten vowel pointing was enough to subtly change meanings.

But the solution to the problem of Christendom possibly disappearing all together was in the developing mythology surrounding the name *Jesus*. The Elect—what few of them remained alive physically—could attach the theology that was in trouble because of the lawlessness of Gentile converts and because of Judaism's seeking a human deliverer from Roman oppression, to this developing mythology: this is what the author of Matthew's Gospel was about. However, the theology of the Elect wasn't about God saving the world, or saving human persons in the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century. This theology primarily focused on a one-time future harvest of humanity at the end of the present age, with Christ Jesus functioning as a second Adam, a second Noah, a second Abraham, a second Moses, a second David, a second Elijah, a second John the Baptist.

Eusebius of Caesarea held Bishop Papias in low esteem because of Papias' belief in a millennial reign of Christ Jesus, with Eusebius calling Papias a man of small mental capacity who mistook the figurative language of apostolic traditions ... it was Eusebius who was in the wrong; for Papias' millennial belief, as understood by Anastasius of Sinai, Clement of Alexandria, and Ammonius, held that the Six Days and the account of Paradise [the Genesis "P" creation account] referred to Christ and His Church, and in this reading of Genesis, Papias was close to what greater Christianity before the Apostolic Age believed.

It has taken a long time to return to the 1<sup>st</sup>-Century, a long time. The Radical Reformers were on their way there, but were murdered on sight until, in order to survive, not a word could be said.

The introduction to John's Gospel is about establishing the hard link holding that Christ Jesus isn't simply the spiritual reality foreshadowed by, say, Moses, but is the Creator God who had entered His creation as His unique Son, a one-time only entry that can never again be repeated.

And as stated in the "Introduction," the theology that could not be openly declared in Judea prior to the razing of the temple; the theology that Jesus the Nazarene came into this world to bring to men the knowledge that the God of Israel, *YHWH* [ $Y^{\alpha}H^{d-n}W^{ai}H$ ], could be likened to the Greek majuscule *A* (*alpha*) — this theology that has two-being-one, the two lines joined to represented an enclosed godhead, also has One of these two having entered His creation as His unique Son which the Other of the two raised from death, thereby changing the



relationship that had functioned as a marriage should function but henceforth would function as a man and his firstborn son. This theology would hold that the Creator of all things physical was the God of the living (Matt 22:32), *Yah*, or *ó Logos*. The Other was the God of dead ones, including the dead inner selves [souls] of human persons. But the dead know nothing (Eccl 9:5), including their God. Only when the dead have been raised from death will the formerly dead inner self of a person know the Father and Christ Jesus whom He sent into this world (John 17:3).

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

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

Again, the *A (alpha)* portion of a narrative cipher visually possesses two [legs] that form one character, *YHWH*. The cipher has no opening by which or through which Israel could enter into the godhead; so the natural firstborn son of the Lord (Ex 4:22) could not inherit the *glory of God* or true *godliness*, but could only inherit physically, a reality revealed by the prohibition against Israel kindling a fire on the Sabbath (Ex 35:3), symbolism revealing that Israel could not have life in the presence of God.

In John’s vision, Jesus said He was the *A* and the  $\Omega$ , with the  $\Omega$  majuscule having female singleness characteristic of childbirth (the woman alone bears the child; the man does not share her pain — Gen 3:16).

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

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

Numerous Sabbatarian Christians contend that the mythical *Key of David* is realization that the English speaking peoples of this world are endtime *Israel*, the

nation and peoples to whom so many biblical prophecies apply. These Christians huff and puff and threaten to blow the world down on their small market television programs: watching them is as watching bantam roosters strut their might. And perhaps here I can tell a story I have told before: in spring 1960 (I was 13 years old), while sitting in the kitchen of my stepfather's Grande Ronde, Oregon (Polk County), house, I saw a red-tail hawk swoop down and grab hold of my stepfather's bantam rooster. I was the only one home at the time, and the hawk had grabbed the rooster through a sheep-wire fence. The hawk could kill the rooster that was fighting for his life, but the hawk couldn't carry the rooster away because of the fence between them.

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

The bantam rooster thought he had whipped that hawk. He strutted around all afternoon, his feet seeming not to touch the ground. In fact, I have never seen such strutting except from pastors thumping their Bibles during sermons in which they proclaim what they don't know and don't understand. And calling out these pastors and pastor-generals for the phonies they are is usually a waste of time; for they never know enough to intellectually support the claims they make. Inevitably they fall back on the opinions of other men like themselves.

Too many pastors preach without being called by God to preach. They practice *here a little, there a little* exegesis, using Isaiah to support this approach to Bible study. But what did Isaiah actually say in that passage where they go to get their method of study:

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

Drunken priests and prophets reeling from strong drink and swallowed by wine practice *line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little* exegesis so that they may fall backwards, be broken, snared, and taken by the Adversary ... permit Sabbatarian pastors—if they will—to leave behind their strutting and come and learn while there remains time to learn before they are devoured at the Second Passover liberation of Israel because they are legal firstborns, first citizens, their standing before God because they dare call themselves *pastors* or

*pastor generals* or some other like-title when they are but men who see their natural faces in mirrors yet continue to believe they are what they are not.

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

For thus says *YHWH*: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares *YHWH*. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and *the fat and the strong I will destroy*. I will feed them in justice. (Ezek 34:11–16 emphasis added)

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

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