

# More on Matthew

## Chapter One

### 1.

When I wrote about Matthew's Gospel in 2012, I had already realized the author of Matthew's Gospel had written a narrative in the structural form of a thought-couplet verse; he had written in *Hebrew style*, as Bishop Papias of Hierapolis wrote in this explication of the Lord's sayings. What I didn't then realize was the extent this author had copied Mark's Gospel—I knew he had copied Mark's Gospel, but he used Mark's Gospel as the physical presentation for his Gospel, thereby making all of his Gospel *spiritual*, the completing compliment to Mark's Gospel. He wrote a "squared" couplet; for he recognized that Mark's Gospel also has a physical portion and a spiritual portion as a thought-couplet verse has. What this author also recognized is that in all of Mark's Gospel, John Mark tried to faithfully adhere to what Peter taught, not adding to nor subtracting from what Peter taught but merely straightening out by placing in chronological order the teachings of Peter as they pertained to Jesus' earthly ministry.

Paul wrote,

It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit [*pneuma*]. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. (1 Cor 15:44–49)

Elsewhere, Paul by the hand of Tertius wrote,

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. (Rom 1:18–20)

John Mark wrote, without having heard or having met Jesus, a reasonable account of Jesus' earthly ministry—and based on the principle of chirality, which will have the physical things of this world revealing and preceding the invisible things of God (this is the basis for Hebraic narrative and verse), there will be a spiritual ministry of the glorified Christ Jesus that forms the right hand enantiomer of His physical, earthly ministry. And this the author of Matthew's Gospel recognized; for in all likelihood, the author of Matthew's Gospel was born of spirit and was living in himself the reality of this spiritual ministry as I am, one reason (apart from having written fiction) I recognize some of what this author does.

To write a narrative in the structural form of a thought-couplet, the author of the narrative has to satisfy the demands of a thought-couplet, or in the case of Matthew's Gospel, the

demands of a squared couplet: the author of Matthew's Gospel had to include motifs at the beginning of his cipher that were spiritual in nature but spiritual in this world, not in heaven, with these motifs forming the shadow and copy of spiritual motifs at the end the Gospel; at the end of the age. For Matthew's Gospel spans from when a disciple is foreknown and predestined to being glorified as fruit borne out of season, through the disciple being called, justified, and glorified. However, what the author of Matthew's Gospel also realized is that none of these motifs need be literally true, but all must be spiritually or symbolically true.

Literal or factual truth doesn't have relevance in poetic discourse which makes no claim of "truth"—poetic discourse captures the essence of *truth* without necessarily being literally true. And this is no place better illustrated than in Matthew's Temptation of Jesus, where every word the author of Matthew's Gospel places in his *Jesus'* mouth is true, but the scenes themselves are not.

Compare Mark's temptation account with Matthew's:

And immediately the spirit [*to pneuma*] drives Him out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And He was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to Him. (Mark 1:12–13)

Then Jesus was led up by the spirit [*tou pneumatos*] into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But He answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you,' and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.'" Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him. (Matt 4:1–11)

Mark's Gospel says nothing about Jesus fasting for forty days, nor says anything about angels not ministering to Him until after He was tempted by the Adversary. Rather, Mark's Gospel has Jesus being tempted throughout the forty days and has angels ministering to Him throughout these forty days when He was otherwise alone with wild beasts.

Matthew's Gospel "creates" (as in fictionalizing) the three temptation scenes that has Jesus besting the Adversary; yet every answer that Matthew's Jesus gives to the Adversary is spot-on ... who was there to hear or witness the Adversary's tempting Jesus? There was no one present, and Jesus would not have told His disciples what had occurred. If He had, Peter would have preached what Jesus said, and John Mark would have recalled what Peter preached and would have placed the account in his Gospel. So the evidence of the texts—again, based on chirality—has Matthew's temptation account being fiction, composed so a future son of God will "know" how to answer the Adversary when this son of God is tempted in a matter.

Plus, don't you think someone would have observed Jesus sitting or standing on the pinnacle of the temple, and would have sounded an alarm, thereby creating a historical moment when Roman soldiers came to take control of the situation? A person can be assured that from the summit of a very high mountain—from any high mountain—all of the kingdoms of this world and their glory cannot be seen because of the curvature of the earth. So when two of the three scenes couldn't or wouldn't have happened, the third scene [first scene] didn't happen either.

Just how much authority does the Adversary have to attack or to tempt newly baptized sons of God? Probably much less than Christians concede to him. For you as a human parent are protective of your children—and your protectionism forms the shadow and type of God's spiritually protecting His sons. And while this isn't to say that the Adversary won't go after a spiritual lamb that has wandered far from God, it is to say what is seen in the first two chapters of Job: the Adversary has to have permission to go after the person, and will have limits placed on what he can do to the person. So to casually say, *The devil made me do it*, will work for a standup comic, but won't work theologically. The devil didn't make a son of God do anything. The weakness of the flesh will have caused the son of God to mess his pants under the garment of grace, Christ's righteousness.

If a reader enters a text expecting the text to be literally true, the reader will accept as "real" motifs and scenarios that ought to break the reader's suspension of disbelief—and do Christians not expect the Bible and everything between its covers to be literally true?

Do you understand the concept of *the suspension of disbelief*? Sir Philip Sydney wrote in his *Defense of Poesy* that a theatre-goer, upon entering the theatre and seeing a sign over the stage reading "Thebes" doesn't believe the stage is *Thebes* but is willing to suspend his or her disbelief and play along with the acting company and accept that what happens on the stage actually happens in Thebes. Therefore, when an Alaskan author seems to get her Alaskan geography wrong, setting scenes in areas familiar to the Alaskan reader but scenes that cannot happen in the particular location, the Alaskan reader will usually play along with the author, suspend his or her disbelief and read the story as entertainment, not enlightenment. However, if an author gets too much of the familiar wrong—as for me, Ken Kesey did in *Sometimes a Great Notion*, placing gray fox where there are none, having a rattlesnake bite a hound dog when there are no rattlers on the Oregon Coast, and having Hank let Joe Ben drown [long before the tide rose high enough to drown Joe Ben, the log would have been firewood, split and stacked on the beach, if any logger I knew would have been in Hank's place] the reader's suspension of disbelief is broken and the reader rejects the book, the text, Scripture itself.

When a reader has suspended his or her disbelief, the reader will not ask of the text tough questions, such as how does the author of Matthew know what the devil said to Jesus when tempting Jesus? Who reported these dialogues to the author of Matthew? The easy answer is that *the Parakletos* did, but why accept that as an answer? And again, where is that very tall mountain from which all of the kingdoms of the earth can be seen (Matt 4:8)? It isn't in the Middle East or in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas? So the temptation of Jesus as a narrative passage cannot be physically true due simply to the curvature of the earth. It can only be symbolically or spiritually true. And this temptation account occurs in what will be the physical part of the spiritual portion of a squared thought-couplet.

Mark's account of the temptation will be physically true, but Matthew's account will only be symbolically true. And if a reader can accept this difference in accounts without

rejecting Matthew's Gospel as a false narrative that should be banned from the Bible, then hard questions about Matthew's Gospel can be asked—and answered.

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

While *the Parakletos* [the spirit of truth] that Jesus in John's Gospel promised to ask the Father to send to His disciples could have given the author of Matthew's Gospel the spiritual knowledge needed to write this Gospel, the author of Mark's Gospel gave to this author many words, enough words that where Matthew deviates from Mark, the author of Matthew deliberately calls attention to the deviation.

If Matthew's Gospel, because of its squared thought-couplet structure, is held to the standards of poetic discourse rather than the standards set for historic discourse, then even the physical part of this spiritual portion of the cubed couplet [the first half of the Gospel] needs not be literally true, but needs only be symbolically true ...

Those biblical literalists who cannot yet bring themselves to think of Matthew's Gospel as not being literally true need to consider their favorite verses in all of Scripture:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 5:17–20)

Again, as with the temptation accounts, what Matthew's Jesus says is *true*, but Matthew didn't hear Jesus say any of these words, nor apparently did Peter. But first Matthew: from Mark's Gospel (a lengthy citation so the narrative context for when the calling a tax collector can be seen),

And when He returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that He was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And He was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in His spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive

sins"—He said to the paralytic—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!" He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to Him, and He was teaching them. And as He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed Him. And as He reclined at table in His house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and His disciples, for there were many who followed Him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that He was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to His disciples, "Why does He eat with tax collectors and sinners?" And when Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2:1–17)

Now the same calling from Matthew's Gospel, again a lengthy citation to maintain the context:

And behold, some people brought to Him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He then said to the paralytic—"Rise, pick up your bed and go home." And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men. As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed Him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when He heard it, He said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt 9:2–13)

What was the name of the tax collector? If it truly was *Matthew*, then Matthew wasn't called until after the Sermon on the Mount was given—and this sermon isn't in Mark's Gospel, or in John's Gospel. Therefore, did the Sermon on the Mount actually occur, or are these famous and familiar words of Jesus fictionalized dialogue?

If Peter, being with Jesus from the beginning of His earthly ministry, never mentioned a Sermon on the Mount enough times that John Mark, his interpreter, remembered Peter saying anything about it, then because of the polished rhetoric of this discourse, the Sermon on the Mount didn't happen. Yet, the words of this Sermon are essential for newly born (of spirit) sons of God; for how is a son of God to walk in this world as Christ Jesus walked if the son doesn't know to keep the commandments; if the son doesn't know his righteousness needs to exceed that of the Sadducees and Pharisees.; if the son doesn't know that under the New Covenant, the Law moves from regulating hands [murder] and bodies [adultery] to regulating the desires of the heart and the thoughts of the mind? And how is a genuine son of God to consider other Christians?

Not everyone who says to me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?” And then will I declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.” (Matt 7:21–23)

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

In everything Matthew’s Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount, He is correct. But the possibility that Jesus ever spoke these words is low, almost nonexistent. So biblical literalists need to disabuse themselves of their literalism. Of course, they are free to remain ignorant, but their ignorance is subject to challenge.

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

Unless a Sabbatarian pastor has scoured from his mind what he learned in his precept-upon-precept Bible studies, the pastor knows but isn’t troubled by that in the matter of calling the disciple Matthew, Mark’s Gospel differs from Matthew’s Gospel. However, in naming the disciples Jesus sent out two-by-two, Levi the tax collector, also the son of Alphaeus (Mark 2:14), becomes Matthew:

And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those whom He desired, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve (whom He also named apostles) so that they might be with Him and He might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and *James the son of Alphaeus*, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him. (Mark 3:13–19 emphasis added)

And He called to Him His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; *James the son of Alphaeus*, and Thaddaeus;

Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. (Matt 10:1–4 emphasis added)

It appears that the author of Matthew copies Mark's list of disciples, but backs up to correct what he perceived as a mistake, his correction naming the tax collector Matthew, not Levi, as initially stated in Mark's Gospel.

Is "Matthew" another name for Levi? That could be the case, but probably isn't; for to distinguish between the two men named "James," their fathers are named, and where two brothers are called, the relationship is mentioned. So why wouldn't Levi/Matthew be named as the brother of *James son of Alphaeus*, as is the case with John, brother of James the son of Zebedee? Are two sons of Alphaeus called to be disciples or only one? Endtime readers cannot know.

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

Of course Sabbatarian pastors educated on the campuses of Ambassador College have noticed the discrepancy between Matthew's Gospel and Mark's; have known that there is no mountain from which the glory of all kingdoms can be seen; have known that Matthew's genealogy of Jesus is false, that more generations existed between Abraham and Jesus than three sets of fourteen, but sermons about the textual problems found in Matthew, Mark, even John don't contribute to the salvation of disciples so these pastors have been silent about problems, focusing instead on current events, which does nothing to promote righteousness ...

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

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

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

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

Behold, the days are coming, declares [*YHWH*], when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, *not like the covenant that I made*

*with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares [YHWH]. (Jer 31:31–32 emphasis and double emphasis added)*

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

The author of Matthew reinforces the “mixed” nature of the metaphor by citing Hosea:

When Israel was a child, I loved him,

and out of Egypt I called my son. (Hos 11:1)

*indented line is the spiritual portion of the couplet*

Hosea’s quote, however, must be placed in its context:

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

If the God of Abraham wanted Pharaoh to let Israel go, He would not have hardened Pharaoh’s heart. But embedded in the release of Israel from physical slavery was the destruction of Egypt—and we need to momentarily return to what the Lord tells Abram about his seed:

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then He said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the Lord, and He counted it to him as righteousness. And He said to him, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." And he brought Him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. Then the Lord said to Abram, "*Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for yourself, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.*" (Gen 15:1–16 emphasis added)



It was God's intention to destroy Egypt; to bring judgment upon Egypt from before Ishmael's birth, but He wasn't going to act until the iniquity of the Amorites was complete, meaning that He intended to take out, at the same time, both Egypt and the Amorites.

But archeological digs reveal that people from the Levant were not afflicted in Egypt for four hundred years, but for a couple of generations even though these people from the Levant were indeed in Egypt for centuries. And this would agree with the Book of Exodus:

All the descendants of Jacob were seventy persons; Joseph was already in Egypt. *Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation.* But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them. Now *there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.* And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. (Ex 1:5–11)

There is a fundamental problem with the text of Exodus: in the redaction of Moses that occurred after the long lost Book of Covenant was found in the dilapidated temple by Hilkiah, the high priest under King Josiah, the perpetual drift of the language was significant enough that Imperial Hebrew scribes needed to update the texts of now historical writings, with Moses having written in a proto-Semitic script borrowed from Phoenicians. Because Moses wrote in a Semitic language at the beginning of inscription, he wrote without vowels. In order to read what he wrote, readers needed to have heard what vowel sounds (streams) to place between consonants in the inscribed consonant clusters. Hence, the Lord tells Moses, "Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword. Then the Lord said to Moses, *'Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua,* that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven'" (Ex 17:13–14 emphasis added)

For Joshua to know what vowels to put between the consonants Moses inscribed, Joshua needed to hear what vowel sounds Moses had placed between these consonants. So with Semitic languages, each generation *teaches* the following generation what vowels to insert between inscribed consonants. If, then, a significant passage of time occurs when a Semitic text is not read, the unscripted vowel sounds are lost. A break in the text occurs. And a future reader, by using the context of a passage, can only approximate what vowel sounds and by extension what meaning should be assigned to the inscribed consonant clusters. And in the days of Josiah, there was a lengthy break in the oral transmission of the Book of the Covenant.

The king commanded all the people, "Keep the Passover to the Lord 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 the Lord in Jerusalem. (2 Kings 23:21–23)

If no Passover as prescribed by Moses was kept by Israel since the days of the judges, approximately four hundred years earlier, then the vowels Moses had placed between inscribed consonants could only be approximated. No one in Jerusalem or in the land of

Judah could say with certainty what vowels should be placed between consonants even if the text could be *sort-of* read. The nuances could never be retrieved.

The evidence for a redaction of Moses is in the name, Ramses, for archeological evidence is strong for a people from the Levant leaving Egypt mid 15<sup>th</sup>-Century BCE (approximately 1450 BCE), a period that saw the collapse of two dynasties and the correct timeframe for the Exodus. One problem, though: Ramses II was more than two centuries in the future, and it was Ramses II that built the city of Rameses. Yet Imperial Hebrew scribes, who give us the basis for the text we have, wrote,

And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves. (Ex 12:37–39)

These scribes have messed with the heads of generations of scholars: the people from the Levant that left Egypt suddenly, leaving behind a failed dynasty, two failed dynasties, left from Avaris, then a principle if not a capital city in Egypt. But after these people from the Levant left, Avaris itself failed. Two centuries later, the city of Rameses was built partially on the ruins of Avaris. So an Imperial Hebrew scribe, in redacting and bringing the language of Moses up to date, apparently assumed readers would know where the more modern city of Rameses was located versus knowing where the ruins of Avaris were. Hence, the name of the city from which Israel left Egypt was changed. The geographical location wasn't changed ... no harm, no foul? No, the name change has caused Israel harm; for no evidence for an exodus can be found from the city of Rameses or from the time of Ramses II. Therefore, the Exodus has been relegated to myth status.

The reason for Josiah instituting a copying and redaction of the Book of the Covenant, written by Moses eight centuries earlier, can be seen by reading a short passage from an English romance, *Havelok the Dane*, from eight centuries ago:

Harknet to me, godemen,  
Wiues, maydnes, and alle men,  
Of a tale þat ich you wile telle,  
Wo-so it wile here and þ-to duelle.  
þe tale is of Hauelok imaked;  
Wil he was litel, he yede ful naked.  
Hauelok was a ful god gome:  
He was ful god in eueri trome;  
He was þe wicteste man at nede  
þat þurte riden on ani stede.

If the passage is read phonetically, most words are familiar—and these words include their vowels so they are easy to read compared to texts with which Imperial Hebrew scribes had to wrestle ... reading these introductory lines of *Havelok the Dane*, a person takes from them that when Havelok was little, he went about naked. He was a fully good man, fully good even from his youth in every company or situation in which he found himself. He was the noblest man in duty or honor that might ride any stead or horse. Havelok's nakedness now suggests that he needed no covering for sin, even from when he was little.

The greatest disservice Hebrew scribes did to those who came behind them was in their redaction of Moses, they transformed the linguistic determinative *YHWH* into a naming noun that translators haven't well handled in either Greek or English. However, the author of Matthew's Gospel gives endtime disciples the means to get past the theological damage done by these scribes: in two passages, Matthew's Jesus slips a "note" as if he were a schoolboy to those disciples who will and who have come behind him:

Jesus answered them, "You [Sadducees] are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? He is not God of the dead, but of the living. (Matt 22:29–32)

And,

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David, in spirit, calls him Lord, saying,

'The Lord said to my Lord,  
Sit at my right hand,

until I put your enemies under your feet'?

If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask Him any more questions. (Matt 22:41–46)

The Greek from which the English is translated uses in both places in the first line of Psalm 110, the Greek icon for <Lord>, but the Hebrew does not:

*YHWH* says to my *Adoni*:

"Sit at my right hand,

until I make your enemies your footstool. (Ps 110:1)

*indented line is the spiritual portion of the couplet—note, what is spiritual in Psalm 110 differs from Matthew's Gospel*

Who says what and to whom? In Psalm 110, both entities of the conjoined deity [*YHWH*] didn't speak to David. And is David being told to sit at the right hand of God? No, David is not, this reality evident by the structure of the thought-couplet.

Only one deity spoke to David; spoke to the other deity, which is what Pharisees would have understood. And the question of which one is answered as the corollary to the Sadducees' question: Sadducees were told that the God of living ones was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Pharisees were indirectly humbled by Jesus telling them that they too didn't know Scripture, for it was the God of dead ones who told David's Lord, *Yah*, to, *Sit in heaven at my right hand /until I make your enemies your footstool.*

Now the author of Matthew's Gospel is subtle. From Peter's first epistle,

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of *Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God*, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him. (1 Pet 3:21–22 emphasis added)

And from Mark's Gospel,

But He remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see *the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power*, and coming with the clouds of heaven." (Mark 14:61–62 emphasis added)

Because of the lateness of probable composition, the author of Matthew's Gospel would have been very familiar with Mark's Gospel, and probably familiar with Peter's first epistle. Therefore, by having his *Jesus* go to one of the places where Imperial Hebrew scribes had not edited out the plurality of deity that existed, the author of Matthew was able to use the Pharisees as a punching bag as he delivered a *note* across centuries, pointing endtime disciples to where they need to look to refute the strict monotheism which had come to characterize post-Deportation Judaism.

Judaism had made its monotheism the idol they worship, past and present; the idol for which they would kill the Son of Man.

Now, did the confrontation between Sadducees and Jesus, and Pharisees and Jesus occur? A second witness is needed, and there is one—Mark's Gospel—for Jesus' confrontation with the Sadducees. The second witness for Jesus having a confrontation with Pharisees isn't quite as clear, for whom was Jesus teaching in the temple (Mark 13:35–37)? Probably the crowd that followed Him, and probably not unteachable Pharisees. Nevertheless, as endtime sons of God, we benefit from the attention that the author of Matthew's Gospel draws to David's Psalm.

This chapter is long enough. I will pickup from here.

\* \* \*

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