

More on Matthew

Chapter Two

1.

Popular Alaskan author Dana Stabenow who grew up on a scow at Seldovia—officially a 75-foot fish tender working the Gulf of Alaska—once said (perhaps more often said) she would not permit facts to ruin a good story ... Stabenow has been guilty of shuffling Alaska geography around to fit the story she tells, thereby stacking up mountains and mountain ranges as if they were chips to be bet when her characters draw their cards from her marked decks. But then, I suppose I too am guilty of playing with Alaskan geography in the novel *Like Rain on Kupreanof*, in which I place Port Adams under the Aleutian Islands that cartographers usually insert in the middle of the Gulf of Alaska. But neither of us have used geography to erase a people from their history, and this is what the author of Matthew's Gospel did when he sent his infant Jesus to Egypt with His parents.

Now when they [the magi] had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

What the Lord had spoken by the prophet Hosea had already been fulfilled physically by Israel's Exodus from Egypt; hence, in creating a squared narrative thought-couplet, the author of Matthew's Gospel did not need to have Mark's Gospel include anything about Joseph and Mary taking Jesus to Egypt. In fact, for the purposes of Matthew's Gospel, Joseph and Mary did not have to go to Egypt; nor did the men of Bethlehem need to have their young sons slaughtered. No complaints needed to be sent to Rome about Herod, and Bethlehem could continue as a sleepy, quiet backwater town in the hectic Roman Empire.

Do I mean what I just wrote and implied? Yes, I do. For the purposes of composing a squared narrative couplet, the physical fulfillment of a prophecy is adequate for the author of Matthew's Gospel to use the spiritual application of the prophecy in his Gospel.

So let us put Hosea's words in their context:

When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
The more they were called,
the more they went away;
they kept sacrificing to the Baals
and burning offerings to idols.
Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk;
I took them up by their arms,
but they did not know that I healed them.
I led them with cords of kindness,
with the bands of love,
and I became to them as one who eases the yoke on their jaws,

and I bent down to them and fed them.
They shall not return to the land of Egypt,
but Assyria shall be their king,
because they have refused to return to me.
The sword shall rage against their cities,
consume the bars of their gates,
and devour them because of their own counsels.
My people are bent on turning away from me,
and though they call out to the Most High,
he shall not raise them up at all. (Hos 11:1–7)

indented lines are spiritual portions of couplets

The Lord, through Hosea, goes on to relent of His intension to make Ephraim and Israel like Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, the four cities destroyed by fire when the two “men” led Lot, his wife, and two daughters out from the city.

What can be seen when the author of Matthew’s Gospel plucks the one line of a long prophecy from the prophecy is that the line is in the spiritual position of a couplet, which would be appropriate for this author’s purpose. But in the next couplet’s spiritual position, the line definitely refers to Ephraim and Israel. So there is an element of dishonesty in what the author of Matthew’s Gospel has done; however, by hard-linking Christ Jesus to the son of the Lord that He called out from Egypt, this author eliminates the entirety of Israel’s history and idolatry from Moses to the birth of Jesus. For in using Hosea’s prophecy as he has, this author—again, probably not the Apostle Matthew because of the lateness of the composition of the Gospel (after Mark’s Gospel, and after the rebellion of the Zealots and Roman destruction of the temple) ...

Before completing the unfinished sentence, a digression is appropriate, unusual but nevertheless appropriate: for as long as the first apostles and early converts expected Jesus to shortly return, there was no need for creating written texts, except as memory aids to help disciples closely recall what Jesus said (*e.g.*, the Gospel of Thomas). Paul’s epistles are primarily corrective in their nature, correcting shortcomings in fellowships he couldn’t immediately attend. His treatise to the holy ones at Rome was his introduction to these saints who hadn’t met him or heard him speak. So there really was no need for a written body of work until after the saints quit believing that Jesus would immediately or shortly return. So when the temple was destroyed and Jesus didn’t come as the Messiah, the Rescuer of the Faith as delivered by Moses, disciples began to realize that they had a long haul before them, and they needed to produce a record of those things Jesus said and did so Jesus wouldn’t be lost to the ebb and flow of history. For this reason, primarily only Paul’s epistles were written prior to the Zealots’ rebellion, with Paul then being off the scene by the time the temple was razed. Many of the first disciples were also no longer among the physically living. So with the exception of John, it was a second generation of converts, men such as John Mark who served a Peter’s interpreter, who wrote the Gospels, with an educated Greek novelist writing Luke’s Gospel and the Book of Acts, which is a historical novel—a Second Sophist novel—that *loosely* follows what Paul wrote about his travels in his epistles.

The pastoral epistles were not written by the Apostle Paul but by an author claiming to be *the Apostle*, an author who didn’t understand spiritual birth or what Paul had taught, an author who had problems with women and who has therefore damaged greater

Christendom more than anyone since. Plus, the pastoral epistles were not composed until about fifty years after Paul was off the scene, a statement based on the language of these epistles.

Because there was a dearth of texts that could be assembled into “Christian literature,” any text accepted by the majority of the Christian churches was considered canonical, or so wrote Augustine in *On Christian Doctrine* (OCD):

In the matter of canonical Scriptures, he [the student of Scripture] should follow the authority of the greater number of catholic Churches, among which are those which have deserved to have apostolic seats and to receive epistles. He will observe this rule concerning canonical Scriptures, that he will prefer those accepted by all catholic Churches to those which some do not accept; among those which are not accepted by all, he should prefer those which are accepted by the largest number of important Churches to those held by a few minor Churches of less authority. If he discovers that some are maintained by the larger number of Churches, other by the Churches of weightiest authority, although this condition is not likely, he should hold them to be of equal value. (OCD. Bk II. section VIII. par 12. Robertson trans.)

Scripture is, according to Augustine, what the majority of the Christian Churches in the 4th-Century said it was: what the majority wanted, it received. And where was God in this majority? This majority had already abandoned the Passover and the Sabbath and the High Sabbaths. This majority had abandoned the Law, and had relegated women to second class status. There really wasn't anything *Christ-like* in this majority; yet it was this majority that determined what you, centuries later, would find in your Bible.

Augustine continued on, as if he truly didn't understand what he had written:

The whole canon of the Scriptures on which we say that this consideration of the step of knowledge should depend is contained in the following books: the five books of Moses, that is Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; one book of Josue, one of Judges, one short book called Ruth which seems rather to pertain to the beginning of Kings; then the four books of Kings and two of Paralipomenon, not in sequence, but as if side by side and running at the same time. These make up the history and are arranged to the sequence of time and the order of things; there are others arranged in a different order which neither follow this order nor connected among themselves, like Job, Tobias, Esther, Judith, two books of Machabees, and two books of Edras. The last two seem to follow the ordered history after the end of Kings or Paralipomenon. Then there are the Prophets, among which are one book of the Psalms of David, and three books of Solomon: Proverbs, the Canticle of Canticles, and Ecclesiastes. For those two books, one of which is called Wisdom and the other Ecclesiasticus, are said to be Solomon's through a certain similitude, since it is consistently said that they were written by Jesus son of Sirach. Nevertheless, since they have merited being received as authoritative, they are numbered among the prophetic books. The remainder are those books called Prophets in a strict sense, containing twelve single books of Prophets joined together. Since they have never been separated, they are thought of as one. The names of the Prophets are Osee, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Micheas, Nahum, Habacue, Sophonias, Aggeus, Zacharias, and Malachias. Then there are four books of the four major Prophets: Isaias, Jeremias, Daniel; Ezekiel. The authority of the Old Testament ends with these forty-four books. The New Testament contains the four evangelical books,

according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the fourteen epistles of Paul the Apostle, to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, two to the Thessalonians, to the Colossians, two to Timothy, to Titus, to Philemon, to the Hebrews; two Epistles of Peter, three of John, one of Jude, and one of James; a book of the Acts of the Apostles, and a book of the Apocalypse of John. (*OCD*. Bk II. section VIII. par 13)

What Christians today do not want to believe is that the spiritual Body of Christ died here on earth with the physical death of John (ca 100–102 CE): what I write is true and is provable by the doctrines accepted into even the most conservative sects after 105 CE. Bart D. Erdman's *Ebonite Christians* were really all that remained of the Sabbatarian Church, and they lacked spiritual understanding as evidenced by their sacred text.

Now, back to that uncompleted sentence: For in using Hosea's prophecy as he has, the author of Matthew's Gospel removes from consideration natural Israel as the *son of God* called out from Egypt, from Sin. But this author faced the theological problem of how to get Jesus into and out of Egypt without Jesus being "contaminated" by sin as Abram was when he told Pharaoh that Sari was his sister, a half-truth that was a full lie. Of course, Abram prospered in Egypt from his half-truth ... the person who prospers in this world usually does so from being blessed by the prince of this world, the Adversary, meaning that the person has drifted away from God. And again, Egypt and the King of the South serve as the geographical and spiritual representation of Sin; whereas Assyria and the King of the North serve as the geographical and spiritual representation of Death. So when the Lord says through Hosea,

They shall not return to the land of Egypt,
but Assyria shall be their king,
because they have refused to return to me. (Hos 11:5)

again, indented lines are the spiritual portion of the couplet

the Lord says that Ephraim and the house of Israel shall not return to Sin, but shall be ruled by Death because this people would not return to the Lord. And the history of Ephraim and the house of Israel since the days of its kings has been the story of the long, protracted death of this physical firstborn son (Ex 4:22) of the Lord, with members of the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan identifying themselves as Israelites of the Lost Tribes.

The author of Matthew's Gospel, creating the spiritual portion of the squared couplet, doesn't need to do more than insert Christ Jesus as the Son called from Egypt by the Lord, for with the indwelling of Christ in every son of God, every son of God will be called out from Sin; drawn out from Sin, carried out from Sin by the son of God's parent, God the Father.

There is no historical evidence for any of Matthew's second chapter, including for the visit of the magi, members of Parthia's ruling body that was equivalent to Britain's House of Commons ... the child Jesus of Nazareth is not *the Christ* until after the spirit of God [*pneuma Theou*] descends upon Him and enters into Him when John raises Him from the waters of the Jordan. Hence, Mark's Gospel begins where it should. As the physical portion of the squared narrative couplet, there would not be a history of Christ before His earthly ministry began. No record of Jesus' birth or infancy or adolescence should exist; for the human person Jesus was without sin. He always believed God; so theologically, He was without a shadow, which is what a historical record represents.

But I wasn't without sin, without a shadow (my unbelief blocked the light of God for years) when I was figuratively called out from Egypt by being drafted into the Body of Christ in 1972. Then a year and a half after I was called to reread prophecy (2003), I was truly called from "Little Egypt," how the southernmost counties of Illinois identify themselves—I left to preach in the church at Old Bedford Village, Bedford, Pennsylvania, where I preached one sermon before a retired pastor on the Village's board of directors said, *This will never do for he's likely to convert someone*. Yes, this is correct. Apparently the local pastors were hard pressed for members and didn't want competition. The historic Village opened its church by agreeing that the Village's church wouldn't start a new fellowship or congregation. If I were to "convert" someone, there would become a Village fellowship ... I carved wood for the remainder of the year we were at Bedford.

When I realized that by going to Bedford by invitation of the director, I had been called out from *Little Egypt*, I wrote a commentary that caused problems within the fellowship that remained in southern Illinois, the fellowship not liking the link between Egypt and Sin. I didn't withdraw the [Commentary](#).

So, the author of Matthew's Gospel would have inappropriately linked Jesus to sin if the child in Egypt were more than an infant; so this author had to get Jesus into Egypt and back out of Egypt in infancy. For—in the analogy in play—the spiritual maturation of a son of God, a younger sibling of Christ Jesus, is not time linked, and until this son of God leaves sin, unbelief, and begins keeping the Commandments, walking in this world as Jesus walked, the son of God is a spiritual infant. So regardless of how many chronological years old the person is when called, the person is a spiritual babe, who will grow spiritually by choosing to do right as the person knows to do right until the infant becomes a spiritual toddler, striving to walk uprightly before God and be blameless in all his ways. So when the toddler can walk uprightly, the spiritual toddler will "walk" out from Egypt/Sin by keeping the Commandments. And this is what the author of Matthew's Gospel, using his creative license, does in chapter two.

Backing up to the Magi, every son of God has been "born" into a royal priesthood, as Peter by the hand of Silvanus wrote:

But you are a chosen race, *a royal priesthood*, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Pet 2:9–10 emphasis added)

But the author of Matthew's Gospel had an immediate narrative problem at hand: how were Joseph and Mary to pay their way to Egypt and support themselves while there? Therefore, before he could send them to Egypt, he had to create the means for them to go there and to live there—and the magi were his solution:

After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, *they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh*. (Matt 2:9–11 emphasis added)

Matthew's Gospel has Jesus being in Bethlehem, going to Egypt, then returning to the Galilee. Mark's Gospel is silent when it comes to Jesus being in Bethlehem. Luke's Gospel

uses a differing scenario from Matthew's Gospel to get Jesus from Galilee to Bethlehem—a scenario that did not happen for Rome taxed its citizens—but it is John's Gospel that has the most definitive word on whether Jesus was born in Bethlehem:

When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" So there was a division among the people over him. (John 7:40–43)

No one spoke up and said, *But he was born in Bethlehem*, nor should anyone have made that claim. Except in Matthew's Gospel and in Luke's Gospel, Jesus is from the Galilee, which was to the residents of Jerusalem and Judea like an American being from Pocatello, Idaho, to residents of the corridor from Boston to Washington, D.C. And Matthew's Gospel and Luke's Gospel differ on how and why Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

The Scripture cited in Matthew's Gospel is Micah 5:2,

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

Therefore He shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of his brothers shall return
to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth.

And he shall be their peace. ...

And in that day, declares the Lord,

I will cut off your horses from among you
and will destroy your chariots;
and I will cut off the cities of your land
and throw down all your strongholds;
and I will cut off sorceries from your hand,
and you shall have no more tellers of fortunes;
and I will cut off your carved images
and your pillars from among you,
and you shall bow down no more
to the work of your hands;
and I will root out your Asherah images from among you
and destroy your cities.

And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance
on the nations that did not obey. (Mic 5:2–5, 10–15)
indented lines are spiritual portions of couplets

Who shall be the ruler of Israel *in that Day*? The glorified King David (see Ezek 37:24–25). So who comes from Bethlehem Ephrathah who is to be ruler of Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days? The glorified King David, not the Christ. Yes, the glorified Jesus' origins are from before there were "ancient days," but is the Messiah [Christ] the subject of Micah's verse? Or is the God of Abraham the one who cuts off horses, destroys chariots, throws down strongholds, destroys cities?

The one who "shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord" isn't the Lord. There is a qualitative difference between the One who "shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth" (see Isa 66:7–8) and the one who *shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord; in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God*. And it is not surprising that the Greek author of Luke's Gospel didn't know Scripture well enough to understand this difference. It would be surprising if the author of Matthew's Gospel didn't understand this difference, which is probably why Matthew's quotation from Micah is truncated. Regardless, it isn't the Christ who is to come from Bethlehem, but the glorified King David.

From whom does the Christ descend? From the rootstock of Jesse, this rootstock being Obed, son of Boaz and Ruth:

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

The rootstock of Obed would come from before Israel asked for a king so this chosen nation could be like the nations around them, common fodder for the Adversary.

Because sons of God are to be a royal priesthood—to be kings and priests (Rev 1:6) or kingly priests—the author of Matthew's Gospel needs to retain a hard-link between David and Christ Jesus for as long as he can. This link will fail, but before it does, this author needs to have planted the link in the minds of converts and to have permitted the link to grow roots there. It doesn't serve his narrative purpose to have the Christ being a root shoot growing from the stump of Jesse.

Yes, the author of Matthew's Gospel had a story to tell, one that had to be told, and he wasn't about to let inconvenient facts keep him from telling this most important story, and tell it in a way that he could sneak it past censors of all flavors. So whether the infant Jesus went to Egypt really doesn't matter. The symbolism of Jesus going to Egypt and then being called out of Egypt was too important to be bound by facts; for again, in the person of *Jesus*, all of the history of *Israel* in the Promised Land, including the deportation, is erased. *Israel* in the person of *Jesus* gets to again cross the Jordan and camp at Gilgal where the uncircumcised children of Israel were circumcised. Only this time, this second nation of Israel is a spiritual nation, and circumcision is of the heart, not the foreskin.

In erasing the entirety of Israel's history in the Promised Land, the author of Matthew's Gospel denies outwardly circumcised Israel legitimacy as the firstborn son of the Lord because of both the fathers of Israel and their children's lawlessness and idolatry. So while

Matthew's Gospel has traditionally been regarded as the most *Jewish* of the Gospels, it is, in reality, perhaps the most anti-Jewish; for this author in one seemingly inconsequential chapter removes the physically circumcised nation from history ...

Again, *Israel* as the son of the Lord was called out from Egypt in the days of Moses, but this firstborn son, in the prophecy of Hosea, is condemned to death, that is, to being ruled by the king of Assyria, with Hosea now forming a second witness to Moses, who, when he came down from Mount Sinai with the second Sinai covenant, denied to Israel spiritual life through the command against kindling a fire on the Sabbath (Ex 35:3). Hosea denied to the House of Israel physical life, not that every biological Israelite will be exterminated by the king of Assyria, but Ephraim and the house of Israel would never again be a free people organized into its own nation.

But for the author of Matthew to hard link Jesus to *Israel* as the son/Son called out of Egypt, this author has to step behind the children of Israel crossing the Jordan and entering into the Promised Land on the 10th day of the first month (Josh 4:19) as the penned Passover lamb of God, and has to get Jesus penned in Jerusalem on the 10th day of the first month as the selected Passover Lamb of God—and in this, John helps him; for the hard linkage of Jesus to Israel is seen in Jesus entering Jerusalem (the physical type of heavenly Jerusalem) on the 10th day of the first month and crucified on the 14th day (cf. John 12:1, 12; 19:31).

But, a major caveat, the symbolism was never completed by *Israel* for the children of Israel; for as the Passover lamb of God, Israel was blemished when it entered the Promised Land. Thus this people was collectively sacrificed to cover their own sinfulness in this world. Their sacrifice couldn't cover the sins of others.

The hard link between Jesus and Israel that the author of Matthew sought to exploit is most evident in the Greek name <'Jesus>, which has been written since the invention of the printing press as *Jesus*, with 'Jesus being the direct Greek translation of the Hebrew name of *Joshua*.

The transliteration of *Joshua* to *Jesus* is directional (from Hebrew to Greek), because of Greek-speakers inability to hear and utter the Hebrew <'Ayin> consonant or character. And again, Greek is a fully alphabetized language that needs not be pronounced to be read whereas Hebrew is only a partially alphabetized language that requires learned knowledge of what vowel sounds to insert between consonants of a consonant-cluster to transform the cluster into a word. Thus, when a Semitic sound cannot be heard by Greek, Latin, German, or English speakers, the sound is eliminated from the word/name: the Greek name 'Jesus doesn't translate back into Hebrew as [using modern English characters] *Joshua*; for Occidentals are unable to hear or to reproduce the Hebrew <'Ayin> consonant. This particular letter can, by English speakers (or by native Greek speakers), be seen with eyes, but cannot be truly heard with ears for no mental sound template was formed for it when native English speakers (or Greek speakers) were first learning language. Hence, juvenile Sabbatarian disciples as if children playing dress-up "pretend" to hear what they cannot when they succumb to the Sacred Names Heresy, thereby publicly making fools of themselves when they utter Jesus' name in bastardized Hebrew.

But back to the author of Matthew's Hosea reference: the author of Matthew needed a vehicle to get Jesus from His birth location in Bethlehem to Nazareth in a culture where families didn't voluntarily move often or far. The author of Luke's Gospel creates a problematic and not historically supportable (time-wise) taxing situation to get Jesus born

in Bethlehem then back to Nazareth. But the solution to the problem of relocation used by the author of Luke—besides not being able to withstand critical scrutiny—doesn't fit the narrative structure the author of Matthew chose for conveying spiritual truth. And that is what's occurring: the author of Matthew has a message he wants to convey to endtime disciples, with this author not knowing how far away the end was but apparently realizing (because Jesus hadn't yet returned as promised) that the end would occur in a different culture with different values, that the culture of the second temple was over. Thus, to solve his narrative problem of getting the infant Jesus and His parents from a house in Bethlehem where the Magi found the child (Matt 2:5–8, 11) to permanent residence in Nazareth where Jesus apparently grew to maturity, the author of Matthew's Gospel manually linked Jesus to Israel, and Jesus to the selected Passover lamb that the children of Israel in the Promised Land were supposed to represent. This author had previously manually linked Jesus to King David through fudging Jesus' genealogy as seen in Volume Four of *APA*; so another open manual linking could be expected—Jesus to Israel and to the children of Israel—with this author raising Jesus to glorious heights by producing the Sermon of the Mount (Matt chaps 5–7) that links Jesus to Moses on Mount Sinai, with Jesus being in the role of the Lord and His disciples representing Moses.

Again, does it historically or theologically matter that Joseph and Mary might not have taken the infant Jesus to Egypt; for there is absolutely no historical evidence that Herod ordered the killing of all male children of two years old or less in Bethlehem? If Herod had ordered such a mass murder of male offspring, an uproar would have occurred that would've left its mark in history. And neither Jewish historians nor secular historians reference any such killing of young male children, which doesn't preclude Herod from having issued an order to kill but does strongly suggest that no such order was executed.

Unless many male children were killed in Bethlehem when Jesus was an infant, how would the author of Matthew's Gospel know—three quarters of a century later—that such an order was given? What would be his source? Local knowledge that has since been lost? Would Jesus have told His disciples about a trip His parents made to Egypt when He would have been too young to have remembered the trip? Joseph, husband of Mary, apparently died when Jesus was a teenager; so it is unlikely that Joseph said anything to Jesus' disciples about a trip to Egypt. Mary may have talked about the trip, but in all likeliness, once Jesus' ministry began there were more important subjects to discuss. And how long did it take for Joseph and Mary, with an infant son, to journey to Egypt? A month, two months, three months. Why didn't Herod send soldiers after them?

Again, from what very high mountain can the glory of all kingdoms be seen? There isn't such a mountain, but that didn't prevent the author of Matthew from having the Adversary take Jesus to this mountain's summit.

The symbolism of Jesus going to Egypt and then being called out of Egypt is too important to be bound by facts; for in the person of *Jesus*, a second nation of Israel gets to again cross the Jordan and camp at Gilgal where the uncircumcised children of Israel were circumcised. In the symbolism the author of Matthew employs, the outward circumcision of the children of Israel with flint knives and the three days of healing that followed before these children of Israel kept their first Passover at even on the 14th day of the first month (Josh 5:2–10) represents the rolling away of the reproach of Sin [Egypt] that clung to outwardly circumcised *Israel* from Joshua (Greek: *Jesus*) to Jesus ... on the day after that first Passover in Canaan, manna ceased (v. 12).

Manna as the shadow and copy of Christ Jesus, the true bread from heaven, ceased with the Wave Sheaf Offering, after when it was waved, the people of *Israel* could eat the produce of the land, the new harvest of that year. In symbolism, the children of Israel no longer fed on the Passover Lamb of God [Jesus as the reality of manna] that had sustained them for forty years, but ate Cain's offering, symbolically meaning that if they did well, overcame sin, they would be accepted by the Lord (see Gen 4:6–7).

Because I intend to keep chapters shorter than on previous books, I shall quit here ... as a novelist myself; as a literary critic with a M.F.A. degree in Creative Writing, I have had to address the question of whether I will let facts ruin a good story, for a good story teaches far better than an historical text or a sermon. Is the point I want to make best presented through a fictional story, through a non-fictional story, through a lecture? And the lecture is usually the least effective and most forgettable way I can make a point. How can I better get across the point that we should not prejudge others than to relay the story of the Ledbetter boy coming home from a Boy Scout national camp with a pocketful of dollars that his dad wanted to know how he got. The boy said, *Those Yankee boys were making fun of how I talked until I started selling them porcupine eggs*. His dad looked at him, and the boy said, *You know, cockleburs*.

I was in a hunting camp on Oregon's Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, and an old fellow started telling stories about when he was a camp push (boss). In the middle of seemingly hours of stories, he told about two fellows showing up in camp wearing bib-overalls. There were some snickers and they were given a worn out crosscut saw that offended them. So they boarded (used springboards) up eighty feet in a fir, topped the tree, left the saw on their cut, then boarded back down and quit, walking off the job ... to board up sixteen feet in a tree is difficult as the logger has to jump the springboard from one chopped hole to the next. Eighty feet is unimaginable.

A minister now in Eagle River told in a hunting camp on Kodiak of when he was a teen and wrangling horses for a New Mexico outfitter, three clients came in, two very well dressed and outfitted, the third in old clothes without much gear. He said he was talking to the two about making money, and the two said they had made plenty, then they pointed to the older third fellow and said, "But he can buy and sell both of us." The minister said he didn't think the old fellow had anything.

Matthew's Gospel has a purpose—to get spiritual infants to their maturity without losing any—and to accomplish this purpose, the author of Matthew's Gospel needs you, as a son of God, to imitate Christ Jesus, what Paul wrote many times. And how better to get you to imitate Jesus than to present a story that is absolutely believable by the spiritual infant. And this is where I will pause, before resuming in Chapter Three.

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