

Endnote — *The Voice in My Scribbling*

Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said, "'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, / and Israel must go into exile / away from his land.'" / And Amaziah said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, and eat bread there, and prophesy there, but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and *it is a temple of the kingdom.*" Then Amos answered and said to Amaziah, "*I was no prophet, nor a prophet's son, but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore figs. But the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'* Now therefore hear the word of the LORD. "You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel, and do not preach against the house of Isaac.' Now therefore thus says the LORD:

"Your wife shall be a prostitute in the city,
and your sons and your daughters shall fall by
the sword,
and your land shall be divided up with a
measuring line;
you yourself shall die in an unclean land,
and Israel shall surely go into exile away from
its land." (Amos 7:10–17 emphasis added)

1.

There will be a day—yes there will—when critics examine my writings and wonder how a relatively uneducated person could produce so much over so little time. They will have huge resource pools available to them, and they will search public records in this information age. They will find my name with addresses in Fairbanks, McCammon, elsewhere. They will find more, a trial for the collection of debt that I won at Lewiston. They will find that some students thought I was easy, some thought I was the worst instructor they ever had, some thought I was the best. But they won't find as much as they would expect; so I exist as far as the centers for public data are concerned, but barely exist. What's really known about

me is mostly autobiographical: I am an apocalyptic preacher after the order of John the Baptist who allegedly said, “Bear fruits in keeping with repentance ... even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Luke 3:8–9).

Even now—that was two millennia ago. Much has happened since John baptized Jesus, the son of a carpenter. So is there any reason to believe, really believe that this present generation is any different from the generation that came before, or the generations that came before that generation? Hasn't time continued uninterrupted since the days of Moses, of Abraham? Isn't it simply a matter of time being short for me; for the end won't really be the end except for me?

What would I not want known about me? ... Oh, that question about time being short for me: yes, it is growing shorter by the day, but not just for me. For each one of us—less time remains at the end of the day than at its beginning. So how is it that you can squander what you cannot retrieve or restore or recover?

I wrote an essay for a collection that was never submitted for publication that I should include here before engaging the subject I really want to address. The essay has a short piece of verse as its headpiece:

the critic—

over halfframe glasses
the professor said, readers
need a key to understand
your images of rifle & Bible

he said he understood them
but I know he doesn't

Separation

I carve wood. That's not all I do, but it's what I return to when I'm between jobs or when under stress or when I wonder if I've forgotten how. Although my training was in working wood in the European tradition of gouge and chisel, working off the top of my hand, knuckles up, I now carve in the American tradition, with adze and crooked knife, working out of the bottom of my hand, palm up, producing woodware in the Formline style of the Northwest Coast. My work has been in galleries throughout Alaska, and has been purchased by visitors from all over: I know of one bird bowl that went to Scotland. So I sculpt in wood without first drawing designs or making clay models. I start adzing. Chips fly, and I let the wood tell me what it wants to be. And it does talk. Not in words or in language. But in how its grain grew, in how it cuts, in how it effects me.

In times past I hiked coastal hillsides, peeling patches of bark from leaning maples, searching for deep grain compression, which translated into pronounced fiddleback. When I found such a maple, I marked the tree for felling—I haven't always heard what trees were telling me ...

I built muzzleloading rifles, lock, stock and barrel. I ripped maples and apples into planking, which I then cut into my long stock blanks. And I didn't listen to anything a tree said other than if it intended to split as a barberchair. I couldn't hear much over the roar of my Homelite.

I could hear neither tree nor the surf when after coastal storms, I beachcombed windrowed drift looking for the turtleshell-like bark of myrtle logs, which I would then plank where they lay, turning them into gunstocks and coffee tables. I couldn't hear the fall of apples or the whispers of children when I searched abandoned homesteads where, after State Forestry burned houses and barns, little remained except the orchards, almost every orchard with a Baldwin apple, a variety noted for the largeness of its trunk; almost every Baldwin I found became gunstock blanks regardless of whether it still bore fruit. I couldn't hear the robins and jays in the cherries I fell, or bandtail pigeons in the chittams.

But I did hear the smalls groans and soft creaks of fir and hemlock timber I fell in Oregon, and of pine in Idaho and spruce in Alaska. I listened as I glanced at the lean of a tree, looked at where I wanted to bed it, then in the pull of sawchain, felt its decades of growing severed in seconds as I made sure I could escape a kickback or a miscue on my part. I listened as stumps wept, but I never felt guilt as I cut a face in the next tree. I listened, but with my eyes.

My hearing dulled more when I repaired chainsaws for all of those years. It was already bad from working among mountains of woodchips in Georgia-Pacific's pulpmill.

But when, in UAF's Native Arts studio, I heard a half block of birch speak through my hands, I listened, and I listened carefully. It became a halibut; its mate, a whale. Its brothers became other halibut. One became an otter. Another a salmon. And I joked with other carvers about what the wood was telling me. Some few of them listened, but they didn't hear anything as they sketched lines for where they would cut as if their lines were sacred. Both the carver and wood had to obey those lines, which acquired the rigidity of iron bars.

But I was then as I am now, free to listen to what the wood tells me about itself. And why shouldn't I listen? We are partners in a joint venture, one in which I stand to profit most. So I have come to respect trees as living entities—I wasn't surprised to learn that young Douglas firs communicate with one another within a stand in ways we don't yet fully understand. When an insect species attack a fir, the tree begins emitting a sequence of esters until it finds one that repels those particular insects. Then every fir within the stand emits that effective ester without going through the sequence, even though the other trees aren't under attack. So if firs can talk to one another, why shouldn't they talk to me? Perhaps, it isn't as silly to apologize to a tree for cutting it as my grandfather would've thought.

I will keep on cutting trees for they are the continuation of life for me. I will continue to listen to them. But what the trees say isn't nearly as interesting as what I say they say as we talk about their resurrection.

Before being drafted into the Body of Christ [1972] and called to read prophecy thirty years later [2002], I was a workman, a laborer: my Georgia-Pacific time clock number from Sept 1965 through January 2, 1973 was 5331. ... It has been almost forty years since I walked away from the pulpmill there at Toledo, not then realizing that seven years had passed between when Dad died in 1958 when I was eleven, and when I married in 1965 when I was eighteen; that for seven

years I punched that time clock; that seven years later [1979] I would begin writing; that another seven years later I would apply to enter University of Alaska Fairbank's graduate writing program—things have a way of restarting every seven years or so. I traded my time clock number for a computer number issued by the former Worldwide Church of God in December 1972, a number that I do not remember.

Yes, exactly seven years later, while tied to the old Sub Dock at Dutch Harbor, I began writing—I had been fishing a 29-foot double-end Bartender rigged as a lobster boat with which I longlined halibut when the Bering Sea quota was reached in late August 1979. I was still in Dutch in December, scratch fishing for whatever I could catch when I began writing ... my intention was to write a novel. I thought I could tell a better story than Ken Follett had in *Triple*, and I started work on book titled *Shelikof* when it was accepted by Alaska Nature Press and supposedly released in 1986. But it was never released. A vehicle accident severely injured the owner of the press who, while recovering, sold his press to Alaska Pacific University, which did not publish fiction. The press was sold before the novel was really released.

What happened to *Shelikof* began a pattern that didn't seem right: in the years between an auto accident in 1984 that left me without a functioning right knee and the present, numerous manuscripts have been accepted for publication, but something always happened—usually the press went broke. The essayist Rick Bass nominated my 109-stanza sonnet cycle *At Abby Creek* for a Pushcart Award, which goes to be published book. The sonnet cycle had been accepted by Breitenbush Press just before the press went broke. Apparently Rick Bass thought the cycle would appear in print when that was not to happen.

What I didn't understand for the years when manuscripts were accepted and the press failed (even *Alaska Outdoor* magazine and *Fly Tyer* magazine were not immune: both magazines published a number of my articles before going broke in that mid-1980s period when my writing was going nowhere and I was beginning to wonder if I should continue); what I didn't understand was, I wasn't supposed to be writing for commercial reasons, an odd thing to realize—and not a realization I had before being called to *reread prophecy* in January 2002, the calling a little less dramatic than Paul's calling but similar.

But how is it that an unlettered person such as myself in 1965 (I still have no letters behind my name), someone like, say, John, or Peter, sons of allegedly illiterate 1st-Century CE Aramaic-speaking fishermen from Galilee, the armpit of the Roman world in a paraphrasing of what Madonna called where I now live and work—how is it that I now write relatively sophisticated Christian apologetics? And truly, what I write is relatively sophisticated : I understand what I write, and why I write, and even the importance of the apocalyptic preaching. But I have no undergraduate degree from any college or university. Yes, I have a degree, taken at midlife, but I can't use it to teach in any high school or grade school in America since the *No Student Left Behind* policy was implemented by President Bush. And I have never taken a so-called *Bible course* from any college or university; I have not even taken a Bible Correspondence Course from anyone. So you who

practice historical criticism, tell me how it isn't possible for the Apostle John, thought by your peers to be illiterate as a young man, an Aramaic-speaking "fisherman from the time he was old enough to help haul in a net" (Ehrman 107) to write both a gospel and Revelations when an old man, and write in reasonably fluent Greek. For it is John who reaches across time as my brother and partner (Rev 1:9) in an endtime work. It is through John that the glorified Christ Jesus reveals the existence of a previously unknown period, the Endurance of Jesus, the 1260 day long period that immediately follows the transference of the single kingdom of this world to the Son of Man, Head and Body. It is John who connects the dots for what is not the Christianity of this world but is the revelation of the Father and the Son. It is John, writing after the others are dead, who preserves a message that wasn't to be known by the world until the time of the end, when visions would be unsealed through the production of a hypertext in the minds of the Elect.

If John is correct—my contention is that he is—then no person can come to Christ Jesus without first being drawn by the Father through being born from above, born of spirit, a loan word from Latin [*spīritus*] meaning *breath* or the *breath of a god*, and raised from death ... it isn't the fleshly body of a living person that is raised from death, but the lifeless inner self that has been consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) as a son of disobedience. It will be the Son, not the Father, that gives life to the perishable fleshly body of the person whose inner self was raised from death by the Father. Therefore, a disciple cannot make additional disciples of Christ Jesus, not a reality that needed to be disclosed until there was enough of a *Christian Movement* in place to assure the continuance of the message, the word [ὁ λόγος] of Jesus that judges unbelievers.

Under the New Covenant that is not yet implemented, the Law will be written on hearts and placed in minds as a condition of the covenant so that all *know the Lord* and there is no need to teach neighbor and brother to *know the Lord*—there will be no need for Christian ministry. And if this reality, this reading of Jeremiah had been widely known in the first decades after Calvary, there would have been no *Christian Movement*. Christ Jesus would have disappeared into the historical flotsam of the 1st-Century CE. Hence, the timed release of knowledge and understanding in the 1st-Century was of much greater importance than historical criticism and critics realize.

As a fisherman, sport and commercial, I understand the importance of timing. As a gunmaker, I understand the importance of timing. As a mechanic, I get it: an engine has to fire so many degrees before the piston reaches top dead center. And the Father and the Son had to release knowledge to the Body of Christ in a delayed manner until critic mass was achieved before going on to the next phase of the master plan for which the Genesis "P" creation account is the abstract. And this next phase was the death of the Body of Christ until the end of the age.

Christ Jesus is the light of Day One (2 Cor 4:6) ... when speaking or writing about this "P" creation account, critics need to be careful to maintain the distinction between *day one* and the *second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh* days; for in Hebrew, separate words are used for *one* and for *first*, or for

two and for *second*. And the *day one* is separated from the other six days; *day one* is special in a way that the other days are not, with this specialness coming from the Creator-of-all-that-has-been-made entering His creation as His only Son, thereby giving up divinity for the *light* portion of this *day one*.

We, humanity, are presently in the dark portion of the *third day*, with the light portion to come when the single kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man halfway through seven years of tribulation. The greater and lesser lights of the fourth day will be the resurrection to glory of the saints, with the great light that rules the day being those saints who will be called great (Matt 5:19) and with the lesser light that rules the darkness [the creation] being those saints who will be called least, those saints who didn't break a commandment but relaxed a commandment (also Matt 5:19).

2.

The assumption of critics and of *higher criticism* for more than a century is that because Paul doesn't mention his congregations having a copy of any gospel, that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke were not written during Paul's ministry, roughly 50 to 60 CE. And this might be the case although there are as many reasons not to believe these critics as to believe them; for Paul wasn't out and about all that much once he delivered a collection of foodstuffs to the holy ones at Jerusalem. He foolishly entered Herod's temple when he knew that the assembly of saints was the temple of God (see 1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16); thus, in innocence Paul worshiped in an idol's temple—and that is exactly what Herod's temple was—when “he purified himself along with [the four men under a vow] and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled” (Acts 21:26) ...

How can I dare to say that Herod's temple was an idol's temple? Didn't Jesus thrice cleanse this temple? Didn't Jesus call the temple His Father's house (Luke 2:49)? But consider, was the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies in Herod's temple? It wasn't, was it? The Ark was never returned from Babylon. So what was the high priest doing on *Yom Kipporim*? Was he simply pretending that he was smearing the blood of a bull on the Ark, smearing the blood of the goat (Israel's sin offering) on the Ark? Or was he wiping the blood on the inside of the curtain?

Critics tend to want Jesus to only cleanse the temple once. After all, how could He get away with overturning tables and driving out the livestock? ... Who was going to stop Him? How many times did temple authorities send officers to arrest Jesus? Yet they never arrested Him until it was time for Him to be taken.

In a not-directly-related analogy, during my high school years Marlboro crushproof cigarette packs were popular, and were regularly rolled up in T-shirt sleeves ala the James Dean image. I don't smoke, never have, and have never liked smoking. I used to reach over and crush packs rolled up in T-shirt sleeves. What I did was a challenge, an affront, and not once did any fellow go so far as to take a swing at me: I was a little too ready to fight ... I started high school when twelve, the biggest kid in the freshman class—and as a freshman, I think I fought every boy in the junior class (seniors weren't interested in freshmen, and I was in

high school because of a fight that had taken place a year earlier). Although I didn't decisively win every fight, no one wanted a second go-around. So when audacity of the sort Jesus displayed in overturning the tables of the moneychangers takes place, the other side usually whimpers and doesn't fight back. So yes, it is certainly probable that Jesus thrice cleansed the temple without the temple officials doing more than plotting to kill Him.

Regardless of what the high priest was doing on *Yom Kipporim*, he wasn't practicing what Moses commanded. He was doing something different, and whether a little different or a lot different doesn't matter: the temple at Jerusalem was not the house of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of the living. Nor was Herod's temple the house of the God of the dead ones; i.e., the Father. If it had once been the house of the Father of youthful Jesus, it lost that distinction when the spirit was given. So why did Paul worship in it? Was it because James told him that doing so would be a good idea? Paul already had problems with men who had come from James (Gal 2:12). Was Paul simply not thinking when he entered the temple, or did Luke get this whole story wrong as critics might assume considering how little stock they place in Luke being a reliable correspondent?

If Paul didn't understand the significance of his own admonishment of the holy ones at Corinth, then is the most *Pauline* of the *Pauline corpus* not of Paul, or is a more human thing occurring: does Paul write under the inspiration of the *parakletos*, the spirit or breath of truth, a holy spirit, without fully comprehending what it is that he has written? Does Paul write not realizing that his writing was for him also? Or did Paul write not for the Corinthians but for a later period?

If Paul writes as moved by an urging, a groaning inside him (in modern parlance, *from his gut*), then it would be probable that Paul didn't understand everything he wrote. It would be probable that Paul did the same sort of thing that Peter did when certain men came to Antioch from Jerusalem, only Paul paid with his life for his mistake.

Could Peter, again an allegedly illiterate fisherman, the son of a fisherman—as an aside, who taught Amos to write—have learned to write while he dwelt with Simon the tanner? What exactly was Peter doing with his days when he wasn't fishing? And didn't President Abraham Lincoln teach himself not only how to read and write, but also the law? What would cause critics to think that the first disciples were stupid men, not able to learn Greek in midlife?

As a double aside, the person who examines my writings on line will find that they all come from Carolyn Smith-Kizer, my wife, and on whose hand-me-down computers I write. After all, I use the computer only to write, and word-processing programs do not use much RAM. I have no microphones, no speakers, no printer attached to the computer I use. So for the past decade, her hand-me-downs have served me well. But I never altered any of the imbedded codes that will have her writing these pieces; so from the perspective of a future critic, this is all her work, not mine. I don't exist at all. Sobeit.

If men were going to Paul's congregations from Jerusalem mid-century, would these men bring with them scrolls or codices beyond the Septuagint? No, not likely. They would presume to speak as either personal witnesses to the things that happened in Jerusalem, or they would lecture from the Septuagint. It's unreasonable to assume that Paul would mention anything about texts these men brought or didn't bring, or about texts the congregation already had. Thus, in epistles in the so-called *Pauline corpus* Paul addresses problems in the congregations that he cannot immediately rectify in person—and these problems are not texts that congregations read but the men who come bringing another gospel, preaching another Christ, teaching another way to salvation. Paul writes his treatise to the holy ones at Rome because he hasn't yet gone there to preach in person.

There is an issue in Paul's epistles that is not easily seen, an issue for greater Christendom that is analogous to Paul entering Herod's temple to worship, an issue I have already introduced: Christians can preach the good news that Christ Jesus is the Lord, but they cannot give anyone a second breath of life, the breath of God [πνεῦμα Θεοῦ] in the breath of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ]. Only the Father, the God of the dead, can raise the inner self of a person from death—there is no universal calling of holy ones in this present era. Thus, the evangelical efforts of the first disciples were misplaced, except to create critical mass. The evangelical efforts of greater Christendom since the days of Paul have been misplaced. Hence, Paul doesn't emphasize keeping the commandments although that is what he teaches—yes! it is what he taught—rather, Paul emphasizes having love for neighbor and brother, something every person alive can do.

Paul writes in his treatise to the Romans,

Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. *He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.* 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.*** 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. But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law; and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." *For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by spirit, not by the letter.* His praise is not from man but from God. (Rom 2:1–29 emphasis and double emphasis added)

The citation is long, but when there is almost universal consensus among critics that Paul preached against keeping the Law, Paul's gospel in context needs to be examined: his gospel is found in vv 12–16. And for Paul, sin is unbelief (see Rom 14:23), which is the root of outward transgression of the commandments. Hence, for Paul, regardless of whether the person knows what the Law says, the person who transgresses the Law will perish. His gospel is just this simple. And for Paul, circumcision has nothing to do with the Law, for circumcision came before the Law. Animal sacrifices have nothing to do with the Law for they were added because of Israel's unbelief:

These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me [Moses]. (Deut 5:22)

For Paul, the Law was the Decalogue, nothing more. It was what had been written on two stone tablets and what would be written on two tablets of flesh under the New Covenant. For James, the *royal law* (Jas 2:8) was the Decalogue. For John, the Law was the commandments (1 John 3:4), the Decalogue. For Jesus, the Law was the commandments (*cf.* Luke 10:25; 18:20), and again, under the New Covenant, the law is the Decalogue written on hearts and placed in minds, two tablets of flesh rather than stone, so that all *know the Lord* from the smallest to the greatest ... but the New Covenant has not yet been implemented. That is what scholars and critics do not and cannot understand. That is what was hidden from most of the first disciples, especially those who placed importance on the surface of things; i.e., on the flesh.

Again, timing is everything, but there are no inconsistencies in the messaging of salvation. However, understanding and knowledge was not given before its time. Paul didn't know how much time would pass between when he wrote,

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For *this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.* For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then *we who are alive, who are left,* will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thess 4:13–17)

Clearly Paul expected that Jesus would return in his lifetime, but Paul had not yet made a second journey of faith, a subject about which he had little understanding—as was the case with worshiping in Herod's temple. And this second journey of faith, akin to Abraham's journey to the land of Moriah (Gen chap 22), would require him to walk through the dark wilderness of unbelief, of doubts, of questions and second-guessing oneself, and to arrive on the other side without getting lost in the wilderness.

If Paul had known that Jesus would not return for two millennia, would Paul have been as willing to suffer as much and work as hard as he did? Perhaps. But we'll never know because Paul wasn't given that option, that doubt until he was a prisoner in Rome, preaching to his guards and trying to put the best face, the best spin he could on a difficult situation. Perhaps before Paul was slain, he understood what John's Gospel would reveal:

No one can come to me [Jesus] unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, "And they will all be taught by God." Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—not that anyone has seen the Father except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. (John 6:44–47 emphasis added)

Jesus' quotation is from Isaiah 54:13, but appears in a slightly different form in Jeremiah 31:33 in reference to the New Covenant, with both Matthew and the author of Hebrews understanding the reference as pertaining to a time in the future when the world would be baptized in the divine breath of God—and this is what critics have not well grasped although they come close when they realize that Jesus speaks of the Messiah in third person, not first person. This trait of speaking of the Messiah as if the Messiah were another person other than Himself is understandable; for if I knew that I were one of the two witnesses, not a claim I am here making, I would not write about the two witnesses in first person but in third for it wouldn't now be time to disclose who these two are. While Jesus lived, it wasn't time for Him to disclose to the crowds who He was; hence He warns His disciples to tell no one that He was the Christ (Matt 16:20).

For Paul, the flesh was no longer of importance: Israel was no longer an outwardly circumcised nation (see Rom 2:28–29, cited previously), but the

nation that was [is to be] circumcised of heart, with this nation of Israel to be based on “the righteousness based on faith” (Rom 10:6), the Moab covenant, the covenant made with the outwardly circumcised and the outwardly uncircumcised [as the children of Israel were] that is in addition to the covenant made at Horeb/Sinai (Deut 29:1) that was ratified by blood as an earthly shadow and copy of a heavenly thing (see Heb 9:23). The Moab covenant was/is a heavenly or eternal covenant as noted by its ratification by a song (Deut chap 32), and for Paul what occurred at Calvary was the changing of the mediator of this Moab covenant from Moses, an earthly man, to the glorified Christ Jesus, a man of heaven, of God, a priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Why is it that scholars and critics cannot understand so simple a message ... President Obama continually blames the messaging for independently minded Americans rejecting him and everything he is attempting to do. But President Obama really has no messaging problem—his problem is what he believes. Paul, however, had a messaging problem as evidenced by critics mistaking the *works of the Law* (i.e., what hands and bodies do) for the *Law*, the Decalogue that under the New Covenant will be written on hearts and placed in minds and under which the living will be judged regardless of whether the Decalogue is actually written on the person’s heart before he or she dies physically.

The contention of critics is that for Paul, salvation came through believing in Christ and Christ crucified ... simple question, can a person truly believe in Christ and not keep the commandments? No, he or she cannot! This is correct! For to believe in Christ requires—absolutely mandates—that the person walks in this world as Jesus walked, and Jesus walked as an observant Jew. Therefore, regardless of whether the person is or isn’t outwardly circumcised, according to Paul in the epistles critics accept as being genuinely part of the Pauline corpus, the person should,

“I urge you, then, be imitators of me” (1 Cor 4:16);

“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1);

“Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us” (Phil 3:17);

“And you became imitators of us and of the Lord” (1 Thess 1:6);

“For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea” (1 Thess 2:14).

How is a Christian going to imitate Paul who imitated Jesus in His walk if the person doesn’t keep the commandments? How is a Christian going to imitate the churches of God in Judea and not keep the commandments, the Decalogue? Can’t happen! So where in what Paul writes is there any disagreement with what Matthew records in his Gospel:

Do not think that I [Jesus] 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.

You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment." But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ... You have heard that it was said, "You shall not commit adultery." But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matt 5:17–28 emphasis added)

What Matthew records is Jesus moving the commandments from two tablets of stone—the two tablets upon which the Lord wrote the Ten Living Words and that Moses lugged down from atop Sinai—to the heart and mind of the Israelite so that his [her] righteousness will exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. There is no disagreement between Matthew and Paul. The scholar or critic who finds disagreement simply isn't a close reader of Holy Writ, but is an extremely sloppy reader, permitting cultural biases to dictate his or her assignment of meanings [signifieds] to the words [signifiers] of Holy Writ.

The critic who finds a difference in what Paul writes and what Matthew's Gospel reveals has swallowed the Evangelical poison of, say, Moody Bible Institute.

Actually, as I read the scribbling of men such as Bart D. Ehrman in *Jesus, Interrupted*, I feel an anger inside me that wants to settle disputes in the way of loggers, commercial fishermen, mill workers of fifty-plus years ago when as a teenager I avoided walking past the tavern at Rose Lodge [Lincoln County, Oregon] on Saturday nights because of the fights that spilled out into the parking lot. How can someone as educated as Ehrman be as dumb as he is? And I return to Paul entering Herod's temple and worshiping inside it: how could Paul do that? Did he not write that the saints individually and collectively were the Body of Christ, and as such the temple of Christ, thereby linking John's gospel (2:13–22) which hadn't been written to his own epistle to the Corinthians?

Actually, I know that scholars and critics such as Ehrman aren't stupid men even if they believe stupid things. They are simply without understanding that only comes through being born from above; they cannot help their idiocy.

But in me, a change has occurred: the anger I feel toward critics such as Ehrman that would have fueled escalating levels of adrenaline fifty years ago, with this elevated adrenaline production being *sensed* by the person I was confronting, now turns into pity for such critics fairly quickly; for Paul's gospel is to be believed. The sinner without the Law [such as Professor Ehrman is] will perish without the Law. What matters is whether a person has genuine love for neighbor and brother, love to the degree that the person is willing to lay down his

or her life for the other person. And it is sad to realize just how many *Christians*, most good people by this world's standard, have rebelled against God and will continue to rebel against God when filled with the divine breath of God. Perhaps an agnostic such as Professor Ehrman has a better chance of repenting and turning to God than other Christian pastors and scholars trained in the theology programs of major academic institutions have; for these pastors that preach lawlessness from their pulpits are truly hypocrites with their righteousness not exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees.

3.

In an age when the U.S. Post Office's *snail mail* would have seemed terribly fast, how much communication would have occurred between the congregations of Paul and presumably the congregations that had Mark's Gospel, or the mysterious *Quelle* gospel? Not much, if any. Remember, men had to earn livings; they had to labor with hands for six days a week. I had to labor with my hands for six days a week and still labor with my hands although not to the same extent as I did for forty plus years. And six days of labor was not, is not enough to do more than eke out a living. Thus, it isn't likely that any person who truly believed God would have been traveling far in the 1st-Century CE: there would be no running to and fro as there is in this present era when a Christian pastor from Kenya can jet his way to Michigan on a fundraising excursion to America ... he wanted me to help support his ministry, not realizing until he got here that I am much poorer than himself.

If a Christian pastor doesn't ask for support but works as Paul worked, as I work, the person doesn't receive much support for disciples within the congregation are used to pastors in other fellowships begging for money as if they were trained dogs wanting treats. Plus, the non-authoritarian organization of Paul's congregations—of *Philadelphia* today—doesn't establish the need to support the one who teaches. So Paul worked with his hands; I work with mine. And handwork isn't particularly valued in this world.

In the late 1st-Century there were men who went out preaching Christ, some with understanding, most without understanding, with Paul being one of the men who had understanding, and other than the first apostles, the only one called specifically to give testimony about the things of God. An example of one without understanding was whomever taught the holy ones in Galatia to circumcise themselves (Gal 5:7–12) ... truly, I understand Paul wanting to mutilate the person who would have the Gentile converts throughout Galatia circumcise themselves, which isn't exactly what Paul wrote: he wanted the person to mutilate himself instead of Gentile converts. Nevertheless, there is a zeal for revealing what has been concealed that simmers inside me in a manner not present prior to being called to *reread prophecy*, and it is this zeal that takes offense at the willful ignorance of Christian pastors and theologians.

There is no contradiction between Matthew's Gospel and Paul's epistles, regardless of what scholars and critics contend. For what is important for followers of Jesus is the inner self, formerly dead (Matt 8:22) through Adam

having been driven from the Garden of Eden before he ate of the Tree of Life, thereby causing the dead inner self of every humanly born person to spread laterally from Adam to all of his descendants (Rom 5:12–14). Death reigned until Moses entered into the presence of God to become the mediator of a second Sinai covenant (Ex chap 34) that was not ratified by blood but by the glory that shown from Moses' face (Ex 34:29–35), with Moses forming the shadow and copy [i.e., the type] of the Elect, human persons who have been born from above through receipt of a second breath of life.

What's so hard to understand about there being a first Sinai covenant, ratified by blood (Ex 24:5–8), a temporary covenant even though it was intended to last until this present era, and there being a second, heavenly Sinai covenant that was ratified by a better sacrifice, Moses being separated from the people of Israel by the veil with which he covered his face, with Moses having entered into the presence of the Lord but with the people of Israel permanently prevented from entering into His presence through the prohibition against kindling a fire on the Sabbath (Ex 35:3), with fire sustaining life, the *dark fire* of inner cellular oxidation of simple carbohydrates sustaining physical life and the *bright fire* that is the glory of God (see Ezek 1:26–28) sustaining indwelling eternal life, and with the Sabbath representing entering into God's presence (*cf.* Heb 3:16–4:11; Ps 95:10–11; Num chap 14) ... is this sentence a long enough sentence to break the length pattern? Huh? (Have I written a *Huh* within the past decade? I don't remember doing so.)

What's difficult to understand? The man Adam in the Garden serves as a symbol of, or model for the inner self that is the head of the woman, Eve, who serves as the symbol of the outer self, the tent of flesh that the world sees and identifies as *the person*—and the man and the woman were driven from the Garden of God before either ate of the Tree of Life; hence, neither the man nor the woman have indwelling eternal life. Neither the person's inner self, ψυχη [soul], nor the person's outer self have indwelling eternal life, with the person's inner self, soul, being the head of the outer self as Christ Jesus is the Head of the Church and as the Father is the Head of Christ Jesus (1 Cor 11:3) ... what's difficult to understand here? The inner self of a humanly born person—any person, Jew or Greek—is born dead and born under condemnation through being consigned to disobedience (Rom 11:32) as a son of disobedience (Eph 2:2–3). This dead and never-having-life inner self must be raised from death by the God of the dead, the Father, who will raise this dead inner self to life because Christ Jesus has paid the death penalty for the person.

A dead outer self that was mud/dust until *Elohim* [singular in usage] breathed the breath of physical life into the nostrils of this corpse (Gen 2:7) and a dead inner self—with the physical preceding the spiritual (1 Cor 15:46)—until the glorified Jesus, a life-giving spirit (*v.* 45), breathed on ten of His disciples and said, *Receive the holy breath* [πνεῦμα ἅγιον] (John 20:22) — an outer and an inner self, with both having to be raised from death, with the last being first and the first being last ... what is difficult to understand? Where has the messaging gone wrong?

In the United States and in this present campaign season, we can easily see how the messaging has gone wrong: neither a person nor a nation can borrow its way out of debt as President Obama's administration and Democratic Senators and some Republicans are attempting to do. The *hope & change* of four years ago concealed an intended usurpation of power and authority that would *fundamentally transform America* into a second-rate socialistic power in which the producers are hobbled by taxes and regulations and an ever-increasing dependent class suckles the teats of the Federal Treasury ... does President Obama have a messaging problem in this election season? He certainly does. But the Apostle Paul's problem remains greater; for how can a Christian walk as Paul walked and still eat crayfish, lobster, shrimp, clams, catfish, pork—most everything that a Christian in America's Bible Belt eats? Can't, simply can't. To the Gentile, all of these things are appropriate food, but not to the person who would walk in this world as Jesus walked.

Those foods that go into a person's stomach do not defile the person. It is what occurs inside the mind and in the heart that defiles the person—and lust for bacon bits that contain no pork will defile the Christian just as surely as lust for a relationship, whether consummated or not, with a person other than the Christian's spouse will defile the Christian.

As an additional aside: the Christian who has truly been born of God and who engages in an inappropriate relationship—assuming in advance that this relationship will never descended to physical adultery—inevitably condemns the other person to death, for that is Christ Jesus' most common means of ending a threat to the son of God, His younger sibling. And this should be enough said to end close personal relationships between a son of God and another person's spouse, male or female.

Paul's messaging problem stems from Judaism's idolatry; stems from Judaism having transformed the always unpronounced determinative sign, the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*, into an idol singular in personhood. Gentiles—pantheistic Greeks—were more inclined to deconstruct the Tetragrammaton than were Jews who would rather kill Paul than entertain the idea of Jesus' preexistence as the God of the living, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt 22:32). And scholars and critics seem unable to find in their *Pauline corpus* the same Jesus that's found in John's Gospel:

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation

with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. (Phil 2:5–13)

But He's there—

If messaging is Paul's problem, then the real problem is the timing of the message; for the Jew who keeps the commandments through having returned to the Lord when in a far land (Deut 30:1–2), an act of faith and Paul's righteousness based on faith (Rom 10:6), who then professes with his or her mouth that Jesus is Lord and who believes that the Father raised Jesus from death (*v.* 9)—two deities, not one—stands on the same theological ground as the Gentile who professes that Jesus is Lord and believes that God raised Jesus from death and who keeps the commandments by faith (Rom 2:28–29) ... but no Jew in 1st-Century CE Judea had been a captive in a far land: their ancestors had been more than four centuries earlier, but not Paul, not John the Baptist, not any of the first disciples, not any Pharisee or Sadducee. There was no faith involved in the rich young ruler telling Jesus, “All these [commandments] I have kept from my youth” (Luke 18:21). But if he gave away what was precious to him, his wealth, his proof of his righteousness, and followed Jesus, he would engage in an act of faith comparable to his ancestors turning to the Lord when in a far land and beginning to keep the commandments and to love the Lord with heart and mind; for in publically following Jesus he would profess that Jesus was Lord.

As Israel, a nation of outer selves, had to be in Egypt for long enough to adopt the ways and beliefs of Egyptians, which they did, before they were liberated from physical slavery, the Jews of Judea had to have been enslaved in idolatry for an approximately equal length of time before their inner selves could be liberated through being born of spirit; i.e., through receiving a second breath of life, the breath of God in the breath of Christ.

When Israel returned from Babylon, the nation returned with a phonetic-based inscribed language, except for one silent determinative leftover from the language of Moses, the always unpronounced Tetragrammaton for which Judaism used *Adoni* as its pronunciation. And because the remnant that returned from Babylon were determined not to make the idolatrous mistakes of their ancestors that caused the Lord to bring upon the people of Israel calamity and captivity, the people in their zeal not to repeat their former idolatry, transformed the linguistic determinative, the Tetragrammaton, into an idol, with their newly found *monotheism* preventing them from ever accepting Jesus as Lord.

Paul preached a certain resurrection of the dead in Christ at a specific moment, the coming of the Messiah. But when Romans chapter six is read more closely than most scholars and critics read it, Paul speaks about a resurrection of the inner self through the Father giving eternal life in Christ Jesus to the ones who have died with Christ. It isn't the outer self that presents its members—critics need to remember the third person distinction they recognize when Jesus speaks of the Son of Man—to either sin or righteousness (Rom 6:13, 16), but the inner self; for the outer self doesn't *own* its members but *is* its members. As the man is the head of his wife and as Christ is the Head of the Church (1 Cor 11:3), the inner self is the head of the outer self: it is the inner self about which Paul write when he says,

For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For *I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members*. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, *I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin*. (Rom 7:15–25 emphasis added)

Paul recognizes that there is an inner self that is the person, and an outer self that is the fleshly body of the person—and this in the context of the inner self being resurrected from death from the free gift of God, indwelling eternal life. And to read Paul in any other way is heresy!

The inner person raised from death through the indwelling of Christ Jesus in the form of His breath [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ] will still have to put on immortality when Christ Jesus comes as the Messiah, with the outer self [the tent of flesh] of those who have died physically having to be raised from physical death and instantly transformed into a tent of immortal spirit at the Second Advent.

4.

When the gospel of Matthew and the gospel of Luke contain identical passages as found in the gospel of Mark, the possibility of plagiarism is certainly present—as is the possibility that the *parakletos* gave the same words to all three. But scholars and critics cannot dwell in the realm of the supernatural, the realm of the *parakletos* which they lack, but must seek *natural* explanations for what is by definition not of this world, not *natural*.

Although there is no contradiction between what Matthew writes and what Paul writes even though scholars and critics choose to find contradiction through deliberate or extremely careless misreading of their *Pauline corpus* in which Paul tells new converts to walk in this world as Jesus an observant Jew walked, thereby keeping the Decalogue and abstaining from unclean meats, the problem of which came first—the Gospels or Paul’s epistles—isn’t resolved on the basis of messaging. Matthew would have Christians abstaining from unclean meats whereas critics would have Paul knocking down dietary laws that made Israel special to the Lord. But if both are read closer, what will be found is that it isn’t eating hog that’s the problem, but the disciple’s desire to be *common*, to eat what isn’t food for a person of Israel that’s the problem. Thus, it’s lust for a juicy pork chop that is sin, that represents unbelief, not the actual eating of the pork chop, which passes through the person and is flushed away in this modern world, for the flesh is of no importance. It is the inner self that is to be circumcised of heart, with *the heart* being a euphemistic expression for this inner self that is not

physical and does not bleed and whose life is not sustained by the cellular oxidation of carbohydrates but by the indwelling of the breath of God in the breath of Christ.

If a Christian walks by an advertisement for a bacon topped cheeseburger and never stops to buy one but inwardly wishes he or she could have one, the Christian commits sin and has defiled the inner self. And it is this movement of sin from outside to inside that the writers of the gospels understood; that Paul understood; that Pharisees and modern critics did not and do not understand—if modern critics do understand, they do an excellent job of concealing their understanding.

But the writers of the gospels as well as Paul were born of God, or born from above, not something that can be said for modern scholars and critics ... how can a Christian know whether he or she has actually been born from above, born of God as a son? How can the person who has not been born of God understand and appreciate what it means to be truly be born of spirit? After all, Amos wasn't born of spirit even though he would have been filled with spirit—and here is where things do become difficult.

Paul writes in an epistle universally recognized as being of him,

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to spirit [πνεῦμα] set their minds on the things of the spirit [τοῦ πνεύματος]. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. For *the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.* Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the spirit [πνεύματι] if in fact spirit of God [πνεῦμα Θεοῦ] dwells in you. Anyone who does not have spirit of Christ [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ] does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit [πνεῦμα] is life because of righteousness. If the spirit [τὸ πνεῦμα] of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His spirit [αὐτοῦ πνεύματος] in you. (Rom 8:5–11 emphasis added)

Remember, the Greek linguistic icon <πνεῦμα — *pneuma*> is reasonably well translated into Latin by the icon <*spīritus*> which enters English as the loan word <*spirit*>. But the meaning [linguistic object] given the English word *spirit* differs substantially from either the linguistic object for the Greek icon *pneuma*, the root for *pneumonia* (a sickness of the lungs) and for *pneumatic tools* (tools powered by moving air), or for the Latin icon *spīritus*, meaning *breath* or the *breath of a god*. In English theological explications, the Greek signifier *pneuma* should always be translated or perceived as being *breath*, the *breath of God* [πνεῦμα Θεοῦ] or the *breath of Christ* [πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ] or a *holy breath* [πνεῦμα ἅγιον] as in either the breath of God or the breath of Christ or the *parakletos* (usually translated into English as the *Comforter*, or the *Advocate*).

Returning to my question: how does a disciple know if he or she has been truly born of God? The disciple will want to keep the commandments and will have love for neighbor and brother (1 John 3:4–10). Keeping the commandments will not be burdensome (1 John 5:3). And the disciple will realize that inwardly he or she has changed ... I didn't grow up being a pacifist, and when I'm truly angry, the old urges of the flesh return, but they don't stay long. They don't stay long enough for me to act upon them. And Paul was in the middle of this spiritual maturation process when he wrote his treatise to the saints at Rome. If he would have written another decade later, he would have understood why he did the very things he hated.

The Apostle John whom I will contend wrote the Gospel of John, a premise I will adequately defend if challenged, lived physically long enough to both master Greek as a written language and to acquire the sort of spiritual maturity Paul's epistles anticipate ... what's truly surprising is the uniformity of doctrine and understanding that runs through the gospels and epistles if meaning is taken from Holy Writ via typological exegesis.

Two spirits: πνεῦμα Θεοῦ, and πνεῦμα Χριστοῦ. Two breaths of life: physical breath received from Adam, and spiritual breath received from the last Adam. Two selves, an outer and an inner. Two resurrections: one of the inner self by the Father without the inner self coming under judgment, one of the outer self that comes under judgment by the Son (see John 5:21). And two deities that did function as a man and his wife and that were represented in the determinative Tetragrammaton *YHWH*, and that now function as the living inner self in the living outer self as the Father is in His Son and is the Head of His Son (again 1 Cor 11:3).

The light of Day One came in the form of Christ Jesus, the light and life of men (John 1:4). But the light of the second day brought about the death of the Body of Christ; hence there was nothing good about this second day. Thus, in the present long period of darkness of the third day, work is being done and fruit is being borne in darkness and when it isn't the season for fruit. There is a gathering together occurring, and the work of this gathering will be—has already been—called *good*. For what more can a person ask; for what more can I ask ... I am satisfied even though I'm far from the Aleutians, the only geographical location where I have felt a sense of *home* as I looked into tomorrow.

*

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

Ehrman, Bart D., *Jesus Interrupted*. First edition. New York: HarperCollins, 2009.

[\[Home\]](#)