

The Cambrian Pesher*

All Hallows Day (November 1st), 2020

Demonic Possession

But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

Paul (1 Corinthians 10:20)

If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

Jesus (Matthew 12:28)

Beloved Friends:

It is remarkable how much Jesus taught about demons, also known in our Bibles as "unclean spirits" and "devils." Some have supposed that demons are the fallen angels, mainly because Satan is identified as their "prince", i.e. Beelzebub (Matthew 12:26-27). *Diabolos* is the Greek word for "devil" but the word for demon is *daimonion* which is almost always mistranslated as "devil" in our old English Bibles. "Daimonion" is defined by the *Concordant Literal New Testament* as "teach," not to be misunderstood in its modern usage for instruction, but in its old etymology, as Noah Webster notes from the Saxon *taecan* "to take"; from the Latin *deachdaim* "to dictate"; the Greek "to show" and the Gaelic *teagham* "to heat" (Webster, 1828).

The word "demon" may be the source for words like "*demonstrate*" which is suggestive of a meaning for the kind of teaching using visual aids or play acting rather than a conceptual development of words through logical thinking. This might explain

why the theater was so important to the Greeks and other ancient religions. It was there that the emotive stories of the gods and goddesses were reenacted to teach the populations about their religion. It was the pagan's form of Sunday School.

In the ancient world, a demon was regarded in a positive light, as the *Concordant Literal* explains further in its Keyword Concordance:

demon, a superhuman spirit being, almost always used in a good sense in previous profane Greek, but in the Septuagint it is used disparagingly of the gods of the nations, an evil spirit which has the power to obsess mankind.

We find here, perhaps, the motivation of translators to use "devil" instead of "demon": to prevent interpreters from seeing anything positive or beneficial about a demon. In the ancient world, demons were also thought to be disincarnate dead people either of ancestors or great men which displayed superhuman abilities, hence, ancestor worship. This will be discussed further below.

Jesus was not unaware of the theater. Nazareth was only four miles away from Sepphoris, the biggest city in Judea outside Jerusalem and was the capital of Galilee. The Herods engaged in an extensive public construction program during the early decades of the 1st Century and it would have been almost certainly the place of employment for all craftsmen from the surrounding encampments and villages, including Jesus and his putative father, Joseph.

Sepphoris was modeled after the Roman pattern with civic gathering places such as public baths and the coliseum. While we cannot imagine that Jesus was ever a customer for either one, he would have had first-hand knowledge about them. Indeed, the very word "hypocrite" for which he perjoratively and frequently labeled the scribes and Pharisees, meant "play actor" and was a word borrowed from the world of theater.

While I do not want the reader to suppose that I am against the human need for storytelling no matter how elaborately done, even with visual aids - Jesus Himself was a great storyteller, after all - it must be remembered that it is emotive, not logical. A story can be told in any way to engender sympathy for the persons depicted. Or it can be told to *demonstrate* life's lessons from the experience of others. But even if it is used in a positive way, it can be destructive if it supplants the normal method by which the human mind is created to process information and form judgments. Jesus commanded His disciples to remember Him in the Eucharist, not a Passion Play. It is in the symbolism of the Bread and the Cup that we find our sacrament, not in reenactments of the Crucifixion.

Furthermore, the use of visual aids need not be sacrilegious, but it does seem that the pagan world was addicted to iconography and ascribed magical powers to the image in the mystic connection of likenesses. Biblical culture did not rely upon the image for education.

The Venue of the Mind

The effects of demon possession as described in the Gospels bear similarities to what we call mental illness today. Most mental illnesses are ascribed to a physical cause: malnutrition, injury, abuse, and so on. Psychological conditions occur from various causes of trauma or conditioning, especially among the young. Phobias and addictions can be created from the reinforcement of repetition developing into involuntary reactions in the subject.

In fact, the biblical record itself suggests that demons or "evil spirits" may simply reflect a mental or emotional state, and not the work of an invisible adversary. The experience of King Saul with an "evil spirit from the Lord" suggests that Saul was experiencing depression which was assuaged by the playing of the harp. The word "spirit" in the Bible is frequently used to describe an emotional state and not a condition of possession. For example, the "spirit of

anger" describes a person who has an angry disposition; the "spirit of fear" is person of a fearful or timid tendency.

Using a theological form of Occam's razor, we could approach the Scriptures from a minimalist point of view: meaning that the stories of the Bible should be *first* assumed to be the record of events with God using a normal, natural process to perform His will before we ascribe to them a miraculous or supernatural force. It is not impious to do this. Jesus Himself complained that the world "seeketh after a sign" and followed Him for "the loaves and the fishes." God wants us to find our way from the inner "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12).

As we noted in a previous *Pesher*, we discussed the plagues of Egypt, especially the death of the firstborn in the Tenth, and pointed out very naturalistic causes for them from a cometary flyby. Even though we understand that God initiated the cascade of events as "the first cause," we recognize that God used natural processes rather than supernaturalistic ones.

The parting of the Red Sea is another example. Hollywood wants us to believe that Moses stretched his rod over the sea and it parted in a matter of minutes. The biblical record, however, tells us that God sent a "wind that blew all that night" (Exodus 14:21), a fact which invites us to consider a naturalistic interpretation of the miracle.

Likewise, we can appreciate the notion of "mental illness" as something with a physical cause, at least, sometimes. But we must remember that anything "mental" is something that is affecting the mind, and the mind is the realm of thought. Thus, we think that a sentient being existing in either the noumenal or in the phenomenal realm can be the source of such thoughts. An abusive parent or a vicious dog could be a "demon" upon a small child. If we set our minds upon dark thoughts continuously, we can become our own demons.

The question to be asked, then, in reference to demons, is whether it is possible for sentient beings to exist only in the noumenal or "spirit" realm outside a body which provides its source of energy? I put the word "spirit" in quotes because it is a word that refers to immaterial "stuff." It is a word that describes something or someone that still has a metaphysical existence - one which cannot be perceived by the five senses, but can, theoretically, be identified by instruments which measure a realm of frequencies which cannot be perceived by humans. What I am getting ready to argue is a belief that demonic possession does not *necessarily* refer to an actual physical or metaphysical attachment of a spirit to a person. Rather, it is the effect of *the projection of thought* by an entity into the mind of its victim. We could call it a "mental telepathy."

Or in the alternative, could sentient beings exist latently without the ability of action or movement until awakened by a life-force? This would seem to be the definition of *elemental* demonism.

Whatever power we discover ascribed to angelic beings in the Old Testament, good or bad, in the New Testament such powers, be they angelic or demonic, have been Divinely restricted to lie in the realm of the mind in thoughts, ideas, beliefs and principles. Whatever physical powers we think they have can be posited in the category of *psychosomatic* symptoms.

A Personal Story

To illustrate, many years ago I watched a small child suffer the infliction of "pinch marks" on her arm from an invisible power. She recoiled from every invisible "pinching" and I saw the welts form before my eyes. We later thought her frequent nightmares and the "little person" she saw upon awakening were the result of demonic oppression resulting from her visit to a neighbor's house where she had watched a magician's show on television.

Whatever the case, she being the daughter of Christian parents and benefiting from much prayer was delivered from the attacks after a couple of weeks. I came to believe that her symptoms represented genuine physical results from a psychosomatic event. Her visualization of the "little person" was real enough for her body to react physically as if it had an outward sensation.

The demons which Jesus is described in the Gospels as "casting out" is certainly suggestive of a physical presence, but if we can define a "presence" as something which involves a projection of thought to the level of shared consciousness, then an *in loco* possession is no longer a necessary component.

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

Jesus (Matthew 12:43)

As attractive as such an interpretation might be, we must temper it with the understanding that the demons find "rest" in the actual physical occupation of their victims. We do not know to what extent Jesus was speaking in metaphor when He said that demons "walk" and wander through "dry places." But he does seem to suggest that a demon finds his "rest" in occupying his victim. See discussion below on reincarnation.

We hear of psychosomatic events that occur to people who use hallucinogenic drugs. In fact, the use of drugs by the ancients to create altered states of consciousness (visions) is probably the foundation of their religious beliefs. Occultists mistakenly believe they somehow access a realm of supernatural knowledge and understanding when they are in such mental states. They do not realize that every trance-like experience weakens the rational mind and creates a dependency upon "intuitive" and non-rational knowledge. The rational mind is the crown achievement of the human species. Naked intuition is an operation of instinct and represents a degradation of the mind. It is rational thought which

protects one from emotional over-reactions, mob influence and demonic attack. It should be added that "meditation" for religious adepts can be just as destructive if it involves emptying the mind to prepare for a "spiritual" experience.

"Before the Time"

One reason that scholars think that "demons" are not always fallen angels is because the Scriptures tell us the fallen angels (*nephilim*) have been cast down to hell, the abyss, and are held in "chains of darkness" (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4). When this occurred is not clear. Some have supposed that this imprisonment happened at the time of Noah's Flood, that it was the judgment imposed for the "pan spermia" apostasy of Genesis 6.

The possibility exists, if Revelation 12:6-9 can be interpreted to apply, that the falling of the "third of the angels" of heaven was a defection which occurred over many centuries, culminating and ending with Christ's Atonement. Thus, the entire Old Testament period represents the setting for this "war in heaven" which was fought by Michael and his angels against Satan and his angels. We can argue that this "binding of the strong man" (Mark 3:27) occurred when Christ died upon the Cross and that the 1000-year imprisonment of Satan has already happened as described in Revelation 20:2. This would be true in the *preterist* interpretation of these Scriptures and an option in the *historicist* school of interpretation. (See Article "Newton on the Apocalypse").

If Satan is bound, then so is his work of deception. Yet, we observe that demonic activity persists. Hence, we must entertain the view that demons are a different type of spiritual being from the angels. They are not the *nephilim* of Genesis 6 or the "Watchers" of Enochian legend (Daniel 4:13, 17 & 23), but rather disincarnate spirits. Are they human? Believers in poltergeists think so. Others, not willing to believe that the spirits of the dead can linger in our world

after death, think that these spirits might be the offspring of the *nephilim*. In other words, the offspring of angels with Earth women were uniquely hybrid beings that neither qualified to ascend to heaven nor yet descend into hell.

This is possible. These demons or disincarnate spirits are awaiting the Day of Judgment to know their destinies, and can, theoretically, still influence their destinies by serving mankind - as do the angels of heaven - or obey Beelzebub in his war against God. That is why they worshipped Jesus while possessing the various demoniacs recorded in the Gospels, and yet complained that He was sending them to hell "before the time" (Matthew 8:29) in casting them out (i.e. a summary judgment without waiting for the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of time). Evidently, they need to inhabit a body in order to prevent sinking into "the abyss." Being disincarnate was, for them, the very definition of hell.

We wonder about their eternal destinies and the possibility of their repentance because of the instances recorded in the Gospels of their confessions of faith in which Jesus seems to have shown them compassion. In the case of the demoniac(s) of the Gadarenes (one or two, depending on which Gospel account you reference), Jesus gives the demons permission to enter the swine as a reprieve from being required to enter the abyss. Why would Jesus have done this?

It might be because they came and worshipped Him. As the Lord Bishop declared, "Even the demons believe and tremble" (James 2:19).

Usually their confessions were considered an annoyance (e.g. Acts 16:18) and all demonic possessions in the Gospel record were evil and produced a tormented victim. But how came it that "demons" acquired a favorable reputation in the ancient world among the pagans? Obviously, some of these demons must have engaged in activities which benefited the human race and the so-called "victims" of their possession. Displays of genius, physical prowess, healing or

unusual virtue were ascribed to "the spirits of the gods." The frequent labeling of demons in the Bible as "unclean spirits" suggest that these were spirits which promoted sinful behavior. But would it have been possible for these beings to have promoted holiness? Were they called "unclean" because they were inherently evil, or excluded from grace because of a ceremonial uncleanness? "Uncleanness" has a precise definition originating in the Book of Leviticus. Were these beings in an unclean status because of an original sin or because they were actively evil?

Testing the Spirits

We are confronted with the litmus test found in 1 John 4:1-3 in which the confession of the Lordship of Christ distinguishes the spirits. As the text reads in full:

*Beloved, believe not **every** spirit, but try the **spirits** whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

*Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: **Every** spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And **every** spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*

Paul concurs, as he tells the Corinthians,

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed, and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

- 1 Corinthians 12:3

"Every spirit" suggests that there is more than one "good" or "holy" spirit. (Don't forget the "sevenfold" plurality of the Holy Spirit in Revelation 3:1 *et al* but compare with 1 Corinthians 12:4). Lest we

follow most commentators who view this text as primarily a reference to human spirits, consider that the antithesis is the "spirit of antichrist," who, if he is the same "son of perdition" identified by Paul, would represent a man possessed by Satan himself (2Thessalonians 2:9).

Clearly, there are instances in the Gospels when demons met the Apostle's confessional muster:

And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

- Mark 3:11 *et al*

Obviously, these confessions are not considered expressions of saving faith in standard Christian doctrine. But why are they not? They are when humans utter them (Matthew 16:16, 17). Usually scholars will mumble things about the profound wickedness of demons or the incorrigible state of their post-incarnate existence and other extraneous developments of the doctrine of reprobation. These all may be true in the specific stories found in the Gospels. But we are arguing from an assumption that all demonic possessions were accounted for in the record. Is it possible that there were any disciples who were "possessed" by demons who were spiritual allies and did not need to "be cast out?"

Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part.

- Mark 9:38-39

There is no Gospel record of a "good" demon. But it might be a matter of nomenclature. Were all the demons called "demons," or could they have been called something else, like "guardian angels?" We assume that the heavenly escort in John's visions in the Book of

Revelations is an angel, but when John offers Him worship - unlike the angels of the Old Testament which did accept homage - this "angel" declares:

See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

- Revelation 21:9

This angel was not a supernatural being but was one of "the prophets." This is a tantalizing suggestion that he was one of the resurrected "saints" recorded in Matthew 27: 52-53:

And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went unto the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Just as we might argue that "devils" are fallen angels and there is no such thing as a "good" devil, we could argue that demons are a different kind of fallen being - one with far lesser power - and that a "good" demon would be called something else: perhaps "a spirit" as in the text found in 1 John quoted above or a "fellowservant" as discovered by John in Revelations.

Pillaging Hell

Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

- Matthew 16:18

Returning to our text of the Lord's reference to "binding the strong man" so that we might pillage "the goods of his house" - what are these goods He speaks of?

No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man: and then he will spoil his house.

- Mark 3:27

Jesus said this in the immediate context of having performed an exorcism. Was he saying that Satan was bound so that Christ could possess hell - the world of spirits? As the Apostle says,

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly triumphing over them in it.

- Colossians 2:15

Skeptical scholars will understandably note that the Greek words for "spoil" are different in these respective texts: the one used by Jesus refers to the idea of plunder while the one by the Apostle refers to stripping-off the clothes of someone. But the meaning is the same in context: the notion of the Apostle's "spoiling of principalities" is being likened to the Imperial parades of conquest on the Appian Way through the Triumphal Gate in Rome in which kings were stripped of their regal robes and marched through the streets to their deaths in front of the celebrating crowds. Satan and his angels have been disrobed and imprisoned. The spirits which they controlled are no longer theirs and are subject unto Christ:

Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

- Ephesians 4:9-11

Jesus told His disciples that dispossessed demons wander in dry waste places. Is this the "hell" or abyss which the demons fear? Or is it possible for them to continue to float in the air awaiting another

potential victim of possession? We don't know what happened to the demons after the swine drowned themselves in the sea. It is none of our business. But in any case, existence in a material state is proven by demonic possession to be the desired state, not the immaterial spiritual realm. Contrary to gnostic teachings, man is not a spirit put in a body to be tormented. The world of matter is not evil. Man's being is an integral whole inclusive of both his spiritual and physical attributes. Disincarnation is not a blessing.

Consequently, the irresistible need of demons to control their victims then means that a benign possession of a human being would be impossible. If it requires a shared consciousness or a human surrender of moral agency by the possessed, then it must be considered an evil event. Most demons behave themselves in order to avoid detection. They try to hide their work of evil because to deface the image of God in their victims.

In terms of the notion of a plurality of "good" spirits, we do not know entirely what is meant by being "baptized" with the Holy Spirit or how the Holy Spirit projects into the consciousness of believers. Obviously, Christian doctrine teaches that, as the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is equally omnipresent and omniscient. And, we do not know how the plurality of the Holy Spirit is manifested or what it means in Scriptures like 1 Corinthians 12-14 which depict a discordant manifestation of the "gifts" of the Spirit that require the Apostle's counsel. Even though the same Spirit is the author of these gifts, somehow, "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1 Corinthians 14:32).

Also, we do not know exactly what the role of guardian angels might be, as Jesus said, who stand in the "presence of God." Are these angels intercessors? Watchers? Teachers? Protectors? All the above? And who directs their mission? Do they act autonomously, symbiotically, or according to the direction of the Holy Spirit?

If the "gifts" mentioned in our text in Ephesians above represent the demons of hell captured by Christ, then it is suggestive that He has imparted them to us as the "gifts of the Spirit", also known as the "guardian angels." They would not be allowed to dominate our consciousness but would "serve" us as the Scriptures abundantly testify as to their intended role.

The Day of Judgment

Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

- John 12:31-31

Jesus made it clear in this text that Satan was being judged in the pending Crucifixion and would be "cast out." It is not clear if He meant that Satan was cast out of heaven, as it says in Revelation 12, or if this judgment represents the casting out of earth into the bottomless pit (abyss) for the thousand-year reign of Christ (Revelation 20). The text does say "into (*eis*) the earth" in distinction from "onto" (*epi*) the earth.

If the former, then it means we have been living in the Tribulation Period for the last two thousand years. If the latter, then we have been in the Millennium for the last two thousand years. Whichever, we cannot deny that there was a "judgment of this world" and a "casting out" of Satan on the Day of Christ's Atonement because Jesus said it was happening "now" at the time of His death (v. 33).

If we are living in the Tribulation Period, then Satan is still free to exert power in the physical/phenomenal realm: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Revelation 12:12). We think "the angels of heaven" including the fallen ones have the power to operate in both the material and immaterial realms, unlike demons which require possession.

If we are living in the Millennium, then Satan has no power at all, unless he is able to project himself and exert influence upon willing demons which still roam the earth "to deceive the nations" (Revelation 20: 3). Like the scattered remnants of a devastated army that has lost its command structure, the demonic hosts may only be offering a disfunctional, partisan resistance.

But what of the evil in the world? Whether there is a satanic presence or not, the Scriptures testify that mankind is sufficiently capable of being its own source evil. As sentient beings with moral agency, humans really need no help from satanic powers to accomplish the misery in the world.

Person, Place or Thing

*Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent **name** than they.*

- Hebrews 1:4

*Which [God] wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above . . every **name** that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come.*

- Ephesians 1:20-21

When the disciples first saw Jesus after His resurrection, they thought he was a ghost. They believed in ghosts and had mistaken Him for a ghost on previous occasions. He proved Himself not to be a ghost by eating and drinking and allowing them to touch Him.

In the Old Testament, sometimes the angels would eat and drink. Other times, they manifested control over the forces of nature. We surmise from such instances that angels are a higher order of being than disembodied spirits and demons. They can operate in the physical as well as the spiritual dimensions.

We think that the fallen angels have been diminished in power. The expression "imprisonment" and "chains of darkness" suggest restraint and impotence. The nature of Divine judgment upon the fallen angels is one in which they have been deprived of power over the forces of nature. They have been imprisoned in their own minds.

The ability to operate in the material realm we call the world of *phenomena*; the immaterial realm is the *noumenal* realm. The word "noumenal" is not synonymous with "spiritual" because in science "matter" is stored "energy" and released energy might be "spiritual." Just because something cannot be perceived by the five senses does not mean it is not a "thing." It is just stuff beyond the realm of the senses.

When I use the word "noumenal" I mean to emphasize the non-metaphysical aspects of our spirit: the realm of thought and the ability to choose. The idea of "naming" something is a process of classification in terms of attributes and function. The Greek word for "name" as cited in our texts above is *onoma* from which we get words like noumenal, nominal, and noun. The fact that Jesus has a higher "name" than all of God's creatures tells us that He has a higher "rank" in terms of attributes and function. He becomes the point of reference and that which becomes the controlling conceptual principle. That is why He is called "the Divine Logos." That is why He is called God's "Begotten Son." It is the highest rank of classification.

So what we might be describing here is not only power, but the awareness of power. One does not have power unless he becomes aware of it. Otherwise, it remains merely potential power.

Since "angel" is a name or classification which means "messenger," we can now see how the term can be used to apply to a wide range of beings in God's creation. Any being capable of conveying a "message" could be a messenger, an angel.

Reincarnation

And his disciples asked him saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

- Matthew 17:10-13

Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John . . . For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. . . And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

- Matthew 11:7, 10, 12-14

Christians who believe in reincarnation do not do so without some biblical support. The text here concerning John the Baptist as the revived Elijah is suggestive that Jesus was ratifying the commonly held belief in reincarnation among the Pharisees. Of course, we might wonder whom exactly it was who appeared with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Did the Pharisees believe Elijah had been translated, or did he die? Was it Elijah or was it John the Baptist who appeared with Jesus on the sacred mount?

Even though Jesus said that John was Elijah, John himself denied it (John 1:21), contrary to John's own father who was told by the angel Gabriel,

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

- Luke 1:17

"The spirit and power of Elias" can be interpreted three ways: 1) If we believe that Elijah died, then this text would suggest reincarnation; 2) If we believe that Elijah did not die but was translated, then this text would still suggest possession in the noumenal sense that we described earlier - not a physical possession but projection of the thoughts of the mind to a point of shared consciousness; or 3) that this reference to Elijah is meant only in some vague symbolic sense, that John would behave in a manner and speak in a manner which would remind his audience of the ministry and message of Elijah. We could interpret it this way and I think that most traditional commentators do so. They look at "Elijah" as representative of the Old Testament prophets as Moses was of the Law. So, John, coming at the end of the Old Covenant period, would fill the *office* of that "Messenger" (angel) described by Malachi as one to herald the New Covenant.

It should be noted that such a view would best fit the Idealist School of Bible prophecy which interprets these prophecies as history progressing through typological themes. Again, the reader is invited to reference "Newton on the Apocalypse" especially on the discussion related to ecbatic prophecy and historical parallelisms.

Understandably, there are problems with reincarnation and historic Christianity has usually dismissed it as superstition. But, it cannot be forgotten that Paul was a Pharisee. And even though it is the doctrine of a bodily resurrection which he taught rather than the Pharisee (and Herodian) doctrine of spiritual resurrection in the form of reincarnation, the world of spirits still lingers in Paul's world view (Hebrews 12:23).

Consequently, I would offer a fourth view: the idea that it was Elijah's guardian angel who was passed down to John the Baptist. It is not enough to say that John was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41), even though that is an inference because the text actually says it was his mother who was, as was his father later (1:67). In saying that it was "the spirit of Elijah" we must expect a unique attachment to that prophet, so much so that Jesus said that John was actually Elijah.

As was suggested in John the Apostle's experience in Revelations, the "angel" sent to guide him was presumably a resurrected prophet with a glorified body. This is different than a disembodied spirit, but it does not diminish the telepathic powers of this angel to speak into the mind of the Apostle, and to grant him visions: "the angel which shewed me these things" (22:8).

Generational Guardian Angels

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

- Matthew 18:10

Assuming, as Jesus said above, that all "little ones" have a guardian angel - a virtuous one which stands before the presence of God - we wonder if they attend us for life, or if they leave us upon our maturity and become the guardians of another child. Certainly, Scripture supports the attendance of guardian angels upon the Lord's anointed (Psalm 91:11). As Christians, we are encouraged to believe that they are involved in our lives and that we "entertain them unawares" (Hebrews 13:2 cf. Psalm 34:7).

It could be argued that believers in reincarnation have mistaken memories of past lives as their own. If they happen to be authentic memories, it is because they have been assigned an angel, perhaps

from their immediate or distant ancestry, and sensitivity to the angelic presence exposes them to the thoughts, experiences and feelings of their ancestors, *deja vu* and so on.

It cannot be forgotten that reincarnation is a central doctrine in occult religions. Modern occultists have contrived rituals to enable a dying person the ability to be reincarnated immediately upon death. Small children, infants or women late in pregnancy who are targets of this transference will be sent to these death rooms where such rebirth rituals are performed. Again, we do not believe this is possible for the human spirit, but it is possible for the demons. Evidently, proximity is important to enable a demon to transfer its presence. It should be obvious that small children should not occupy the same room of a dying demoniac.

The Witness of the Fathers

God . . . made the whole world for man . . . committed the care of men and of all things under heaven to angels who He appointed over them. But the angels transgressed this appointment, and were captivated by love of women, and begat children who are those that are called demons; and besides, they afterwards subdued the human race to themselves, partly by magical writings, and partly by fears and the punishments they occasioned . . .

Wherefore God delays causing the confusion and destruction of the whole world, by which the wicked angels and demons and men shall cease to exist, because of the seed of the Christians, who know that they are the cause of preservation in nature. Since, if it were not so, it would not have been possible for you to do these things, and to be impelled by evil spirits; but the fire of judgment would descend and utterly dissolve all things, even as formerly the flood left no one but him only with his family who is by us called Noah, and by you Deucalion. . . For so we say that there will be the conflagration. . .

Justin Martyr, from *The Second Apology* chapter 5 & chapter 7, (ANF, vol. 1, Schaff, p. 190)

Justin Martyr is an Ante-Nicene Father (ANF) from the early second century. The world view of the earliest Christians was still vivid in Justin's understanding of the past and of the Christian message. His views expressed above were dominant but not universal. It must be remembered that the use of heavenly or spiritual language was used as code by the authors of the Qumran Community in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Scroll scholars, such as Robert Eisenman, have competently demonstrated that James, the brother of Jesus and the first "Lord Bishop" of the Jerusalem Church was the leader of the Qumran Community as "The Teacher of Righteousness." The Qumran Community was the Judaistic wing of the earliest Church: Christians who believed that Jesus was Israel's Messiah but insisted that the rites of Judaism had to be practiced by Christians to be saved. Although this was not true of James (Acts 15), it was a faction he was trying to hold on to as an apostle to "the circumcision."

The minority opinion in 1st Century Judaism was that of the Sadducees which did not believe in the resurrection or in spirits. The root word for "Sadducee" is "zadok" or "the just" and several prominent figures in the New Testament Church, including Jesus, were called "Zadoks." If these men were called "Zadoks" because they were in some way connected to the Qumran Community, then they would not have embraced the superstitions of the Pharisees but would have dismissed them as pagan. Their view of demons would have been as I have described them above: a noumenal concept or "logos," a classification of thought, much like a program within a computer that only functions when activated. The "Zadoks" would not have propounded the literalistic naivete of Justin and numerous other interpreters in the Gentile Churches.

Diehold, Rapture, Evacuation or Translation?

Hollywood has done its part in warning us about the coming catastrophe in its various disaster movies. Some of them involve the idea of evacuation. Most recently, the movie *Knowing*, starring Nicholas Cage as a college professor, encounters space aliens who come as benefactors of the human race to evacuate some of the children from Earth just prior to a solar super-nova.

Douglas Vogt seems to have conflated the Old Testament stories about Noah and the Exodus event as a mythology about Earth's most recent nova and how some survived it. Noah built a boat and Moses led the Israelites into an inter-dimensional reality called *the Diehold* until the catastrophe was passed.

Evangelical Christians, too, indulge in an escape strategy which calls for faith in a coming Rapture which will rescue them just prior to these Earth-destroying events. Viewed as a rescue which is followed by the Great Tribulation, the Pre-Trib rapture doctrine is dominant in Evangelical churches and explains their lack of interest in developing a plan of survival. They teach that the Rapture is a combination of **translation for evacuation**: the living are "changed" into bodies comparable to the resurrected saints, and together rise up to heaven in these new bodies.

However, this interpretation embraces the "literalistic naivette" mentioned above of Christian interpreters from the ancient Gentile Churches. Followers of the Zadokite Community of Qumran and others would have seen it as something else: **the Chariots of Fire**.

This is the fourth option: the one of **translation through kopher - covering**. As explained in an earlier Peshar, the thing which causes the destruction is the thing which also saves us. Noah was "saved by the waters" which also destroyed the world. But he was told to make a vessel of gopher (*kopher*) wood. So likewise, in the conflagration to come, the fire will destroy the world, but it will also be the thing which saves us - if we have the right *kopher*.

Day of All Hallows

Today, we celebrate the memory of “all saints,” the multitude of the faithful who have no name of record left to us but persevered in a life of holiness and won the crown of eternal life. The day is lost to us because the pagans are more charmed by “All Hallows Eve” – Halloween – in which they celebrate the demonic hosts.

Not only does this represent a perversion of values, but it also represents folly – for in the conflagration to come, it will be the “wisdom of the saints” which will be the key to our survival, not the darkened counsel of hell. As Daniel testifies,

Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried, but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

- Daniel 12:10

A servant of Jesus,

James

Collect for the Day

Almighty God, you have knit together your elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord: Give us grace so to follow your blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those ineffable joys that you have prepared for those who truly love you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

**Cambrian Peshier* is the pastoral epistle of the Cambrian Episcopal Church of the Grail, a fellowship and abbey adhering to a spiritual tradition from ancient Wales. We use the Authorized Version of the Bible (King James Version) as our default translation and the Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopalian Church for liturgical guidance. We are not an affiliate of any denomination.

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