

The Cambrian Pesher

Thanksgiving, 2021

The Liturgy of Malediction

Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

- 1 Corinthians 10:21-22

The Pesher Hermeneutic

The word "Pesher" is a term found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Some of the books discovered there are "commentaries" on different Old Testament books. The interpreter will quote a line or a phrase, and then he will sometimes say, "and the pesher is this" and then provide an interpretation. Usually, the pesher looks for a symbolic or esoteric meaning in the Old Testament, and then provides a concrete application of that symbolism. Over the course of the centuries, there can be many applications because the actors may change, but their roles remain the same. For example, the Pesher of Deuteronomy 32:33 is this,

Text: *Their wine is the poison of snakes, and the cruel venom of vipers.*

*"The snakes" are the **kings of the Gentiles**, and "their wine" is **their customs** and "the poison of vipers" is the **chief of the kings of Greece**, who comes to wreak vengeance on them.*

- the Damascus Document, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*
(Wise, et al, HarperSanFrancisco), p. 59

Obviously, had the Damascus Document been written during the time of the Romans, "Kittim" would have replaced "Greece" as the pesher (see *The Cambrian Pesher* on Qumran). It should be also be mentioned that "Damascus" is code for Qumran.

Another that has more relevance to the Desposyni and James' ruling in Acts 15 is the Pesher for Amos 5:27,

Text: *"I will exile the tents of your king and the foundation of your images beyond the tents of Damascus."*

The "**books of the Law**" are the tents of the king, as it says "I will re-erect the fallen tent of David" [Amos 9:11]. The king is [**Leader of**] the nation and the "foundation of your images" is the **books of the prophets** whose words Israel despised. The star is the **Interpreter of the Law** who comes to Damascus, as it is written, "A star has left Jacob, a staff has risen from Israel" [Num. 24:17].

-Ibid, p. 57-58

While many Old Testament prophecies concerning Jesus are genuinely telic predictions, yet many are peshers, such as Matthew's application of Hosea 11:1 (cf. 2:15) - "Out of Egypt have I called my son" - a clear reference to the people of Israel as a whole, and not to a single individual and certainly not to Christ. But it is typology and works using the pesher heremenutic.

Strictly speaking, a *pesher* refers to the *interpretation of dreams*. Jacob's son, Joseph, who was sold into Egyptian slavery by his brothers - "Behold, this dreamer cometh" - was an interpreter of dreams. He interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker with whom he shared a prison cell. Their goofy dreams had a meaning. Joseph's interpretations came true. Later, his spiritual gift became known to Pharaoh, and now we know the rest of the story. His interpretations were peshers.

Many of the Old Testament books are compositions based upon the "dreams and visions" of the prophets. Remember, sometimes those dreams seem goofy and incomprehensible to us, but not if you know the pesher. If you study the Dead Sea Scrolls, you can become an adept and learn the pesher technique.

Men of science may question the value of religion for its reliance on intuitive knowledge. Their skepticism is justified. 19th Century philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant, struggled with this problem. Religions based upon beliefs acquired through altered states of consciousness need corroboration from empirical evidence. It is true that many scientists have conceived a concept when their minds were left "free" to wander. But such intuitions are only the beginning of the path of scientific discovery. Shamanism alone is not enough. That is why the Bible contains history: the claim of miracles to corroborate the prophet's message. That is why historical apologetics is so important and why the misuse of science by atheists must be contested. Christianity is more than the inner workings of the mind.

Not all of the books of the Bible lend themselves to a pesher. The histories, the didactic teachings, the laws, the proverbs and so on require something different - often simply accepting a literal interpretation.

This is where some modern scholars have gone astray. Almost the entire Book of Revelation must be interpreted using the pesher technique. The symbolism is drawn from the **visions** of the Apostle John. But books like the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Book of Acts must be interpreted literally. Sometimes, they contain symbolic language, especially our Lord's parables. But those instances are obvious. Scholars, like Barbara

Thiering (*Jesus & the Riddle of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Doubleday, 1992), make a major mistake trying to apply the pesher technique to these books. Straight forward histories should be accepted as they are. Trying to divine an esoteric meaning leads to sometimes ridiculous conclusions, such as the belief that Christ's Crucifixion did not occur in Jerusalem, but at the Essene compound at Qumran. (Don't ask me to explain how this happens. Just take my word for it.) The misapplication of the pesher technique in "symbolizing" literal statements can lead to equal absurdities as the converse of "over-literalizing" symbolic language. We do not believe that when Christ is called the "Lamb of God" that it means He is a four-legged wooly creature. Neither do we believe that when the Book of Acts says "The word of God increased," that it means Jesus had a lot of kids (6:7). [Thiering comes to this conclusion from the belief that every time the New Testament uses the word "Logos," it is referring to Jesus Christ in His humanity.]

Our *Cambrian Pesher* is a publication which offers biblical "commentary" in a general sense, but sometimes, it attempts to explain hard to understand biblical texts. In those instances, our efforts reflect a genuine pesher hermeneutic.

Isaac Newton's "Pesher" Hermeneutics

Although in a general, overarching sense, Isaac Newton's *Observations on Daniel and the Apocalypse* represent his Historicist view, his technique represents a pesher, even though he did not know the term at the time, having lived centuries before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Nevertheless, in working with the symbolic language of the Bible, he starts his work establishing his rules of interpretation by citing the methods of Joseph as revealed in the Book of Genesis to illustrate them. Biblical Typology and the Covenant are the guide posts of Newton's method. For example,

*For the Prophets and Apostles have foretold, that as Israel often revolted and brake the covenant, and upon repentance renewed it; so there should be a falling away among the Christians, soon after the days of the Apostles; and that in the latter days God would destroy the impenitent revolters, and make a new covenant with his people. And the giving ear to the Prophets is a fundamental character of the true Church. For God has so ordered the Prophecies, that in the latter days the "the wise may understand, but the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand," Dan. 12:9,10. The authority of Emperors, Kings, and Princes, is human. The authority of Councils, Synods, Bishops, and Presbyters, is human. The authority of Prophets is divine, and comprehends the sum of religion, reckoning Moses and the Apostles among the Prophets; and "if an Angel from Heaven preach any other gospel", than what they have delivered, "let him be accursed." **Their writings contain the covenant between God and his people, with instructions for keeping this covenant; instances of God's judgments upon them that break it: and predictions of things to come. While the people of God keep the covenant, they continue to be his people: when they break it they cease to be his people or church, and become "the***

Syngogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not." And no power on earth is authorized to alter this covenant.

*The prediction of things to come relate to the state of the Church in all ages: and amongst the old Prophets, **Daniel is most distinct in order of time, and easiest to be understood:** and therefore in those things which relate to the last time, he must be made the key to the rest.*

- *Observations*, p. 5 (Anodos Edition, Whithorn, England, 2019) (emphasis added)

See here how grounded Newton's theological thinking is in the doctrine of the covenant. He was a child of the Puritan age in which he lived, and in fact, when he first began his collegiate studies at Cambridge, it was for the purposes of becoming a minister. Continuing now with his "pesher hermeneutic":

Chapter 2 . Of the Prophetic Language

*For understanding the Prophecies, we are, in the first place, **to acquaint ourselves with the figurative language of the Prophets. The language is taken from the analogy between the world natural, and an empire or kingdom considered as a world politic.***

Accordingly, the whole world natural consisting of heaven and earth, signifies the whole world politic, consisting of thrones and people, or so much of it as is considered in the Prophecy: and the things in that world signify the analogous things in this. For the heavens, and the things therein, signify thrones and dignities, and those who enjoy them; and the earth, with the things thereon, the inferior people; and the lowest parts of the earth, called "Hades" or Hell, the lowest or most miserable part of them. Whence ascending towards heaven, and descending to the earth, are put for rising and falling in power and honour: rising out of the earth, or waters, and falling in them, for the rising up to any dignity or dominion, out of the inferior state of the people, or falling down from the same into that inferior state; descending into the lower parts of the earth, for descending to a very low and unhappy estate; speaking with a faint voice out of the dust, for being in a weak and low condition; moving from one place to another, for translation from one office, dignity, or dominion, to another; great earthquakes, and the shaking of heaven and earth, for the shaking of kingdoms, so as to distract or overthrow them; the creating of a new heaven and earth, and the passing away of an old one, or the beginning and end of the world, for the rise and ruin of the body politic signified thereby.

In the heavens, the Sun and Moon are, by interpreters of dreams, put for the persons of Kings and Queens; but in sacred Prophecy, which regards not single persons, the Sun is put for the whole species and race of Kings, in the kingdom or kingdoms of the world politic, shining with regal power and glory; the Moon for

the body of the common people, considered as the King's wife; the Stars for subordinate Princes and great men, or for Bishops and Rulers of the people of God, when the Sun is Christ; light for the glory, truth, and knowledge, wherewith great and good men shine and illuminate others; darkness for obscurity of condition, and for error, blindness and ignorance; darkening, smiting, or setting of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, for the ceasing of a kingdom, or for the desolation thereof, proportional to the darkness; darkning the Sun, turning the Moon into blood, and falling of the Stars, for the same; new Moons for the return of a dispersed people into a body politic, or ecclesiastic.

Fire and meteors refer to both heaven and earth, and signify as follows; burning any thing with fire, is put for the consuming thereof by war; a conflagration of the earth or turning a country into a lake of fire, for the consumption of a kingdom by war; the being in a furnace, for the being in slavery under another nation; the ascending up of the smoke of any burning thing for ever and ever, for the continuation of a conquered people under the misery of perpetual subjection and slavery; the scorching heat of the sun, for vexatious wars, persecutions and troubles inflicted by the King; riding on the clouds, for reigning over much people; covering the sun with a cloud, or with smoke, for oppression of the King by the armies of an enemy; tempestuous winds, or the motions for wars. . .

- *Ibid*, p. 5-6

Newton goes on for several pages with further applications of these rules of interpretation. It is one of the most succinct and clear explanations of symbolic language in the Bible to be found. Our excerpt is already too long; yet, it is entirely sufficient to illustrate his method. As we will discover, Newton sometimes is a Historicist, other times, a Preterist, but more than either one, because of his use of typology and the role of covenant sanctions in prophecy, he subscribes to the "Idealist School" of prophetic interpretation. **Prophecy is a warning to covenant-breakers and has a pedagogical value in understanding God's moral government.**

While for the Fundamentalist, Newton's treatment of symbolic language in the Bible is unsatisfactory - for people who want to believe in a literal antichrist, a fiery hell or the moon turning into blood and other cosmological disasters predicted for the future - we do well to consider what would be God's purpose who inspired the prophets. Why should He warn us of impending doom if there was not room to avoid it through repentance?

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some men count sackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

- 2 Peter 3:9

Consequently, **the Soteriological View of Bible prophecy** emphasizes that sanctions are not inevitable but are founded upon the relational condition between God and His

people. That is why we do not rely too much on the Book of Revelation or the Old Testament prophets to establish our "end of the world" scenario for 2046 AD; for even the plagues of Revelation persist and escalate because of the lack of repentance:

And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

- Revelation 16:9, (11)

We rely on Daniel, as Newton explained that he was the most forthright and plain speaking of all of the prophets. And we rely upon the didactic portions of the New Testament, such as Peter's prediction of a fiery end of the world and Christ's Olivet Discourse. We use these as benchmarks or guideposts to interpret the rest of the prophets.

Because the language of Scripture is often in typology, language which describes a pattern to the order of nature and of human nature with predictable outcomes, we see that history repeats itself. We call these historical parallels or ecbatic prophecy. Natural calamities are not specifically related to human action, because as Jesus said, God "sends his rain on the just and the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). And warned His disciples that apocalyptic "antichrist" forces were the "false" signs of His Coming (Matthew 24:6, "the end is not yet") and were but "the beginning of sorrows" (v. 8). He tells us that natural calamities are inevitable; we must build upon a sure foundation to survive them (Matthew 7:24-27).

Nothing New Under the Sun

Even though Revelation's riddles are difficult to decipher, John provides us with keys in the text. For example, we learn that Jerusalem is Sodom and Egypt in the text (11:8) because it is "where our Lord was crucified." The Harlot is Rome because it was the city of ascendancy during John's lifetime (17:18). And the Mark of the Beast is the name of a man known to his readers by the acronym of 666, the Emperor Nero to Preterist interpreters.

It would be helpful for the reader to know that an ecbatic or typological view of Bible prophecy requires the admission that there may be more than one fulfillment of Scripture, perhaps many fulfillments. **There can be more than one antitype.** Biblical typology lends itself to the Idealist School of Bible prophecy: one scenario unfolds for covenant keeping (the blessings) and another unfolds for covenant breaking (the curses). Each generation must be tested.

For example, Revelation never uses the word "Antichrist." In fact, only in the First Epistle of John will you find that word, and it is in the context of an admonishment, because the writer tells us,

Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. (2:18)

Obviously, the writer objects to the notion that there is only one Antichrist; so the "son of perdition" of Paul's Epistles might have been real in his generation, but we get the sense that there are "sons of perdition" in every age. Today, there is a fuss made about the "Mark of the Beast" and endless speculation as to what that might be. But slaveholders have been branding, tattooing and otherwise marking their slaves for thousands of years. The scale described in Revelation might be greater, but the notion of a "mark" to enable you to engage in commerce is nothing new to the human experience. The Idealist is not expecting a one and only antitype.

Another example is the Epistles to the Seven Churches in the first three chapters of Revelation. They have nothing to do with the cities identified. These are "ghost" letters which are not really addressed to any literal church. Nor do these letters represent church ages, although such an interpretation is on the right track. Following Newton's peshier hermeneutic, these respective cities represent *hypothetical* churches or factions within churches with a particular spiritual condition and experience. This view properly belongs to the Idealist interpretation. And while that is Newton's primary emphasis as will be illustrated below, he does also try to make it fit into an Historicist view:

This was the state of the Church just before the subversion of the Churches in the beginning of Dioclesian's persecution: and to this state of the Church agrees the first of the seven Epistles . . . to the Church of Ephesus . . .

The persecution of Dioclesian began in the year of Christ 302, and lasted ten years [10 days] . . . To this state of the Church the second Epistle, to the Church of Smyrna, agrees . . .

He holds that the Third, Fourth and Fifth Epistles to Pergamus, Thyatira, and Sardis were fulfilled during the reigns of Constantine, Licinius, Constantius, and Magnentius, respectively.

The Sixth Epistle to the Church in Philadelphia was fulfilled during the successive reigns of Julian the Apostate through Valens and Valentinian and the Seventh to the Laodicians which represented the condition of the Church following Gratian during the reign of Theodosius *circa*. 395 AD (See *Observations* p. 89-92). As a Historicist, he would see these church ages as something which reached their final fulfillment at the end of the 4th Century.

A Targumist Interpretation of the Seven Churches

Yet, Isaac Newton follows the Preterist school and dates the composition of the Book of Revelation to the Apostolic period prior to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. He uses internal evidence to show that the book influenced the other writers of

the New Testament. The legends which argue for a later date during the reign of Domitian would take away the prophetic value of much of the book: "Surely, I come quickly," and the "things which *must shortly* come to pass . . ." (Revelation 22:20; 1:1):

*Write the things which thou hast seen, and **the things which are**, and the things which shall be hereafter. (1:19)*

The setting for most of the imagery and sequence is the Temple and the Temple service. Newton spends much time describing the Temple liturgy and how it relates to John's prophetic visions. Such imagery would be irrelevant to a later generation, if as some believe Revelation was written at the end of the 1st Century, many years after the destruction of the Temple. A more modern and readable interpreter who follows the Preterist view here would be David Chilton (*The Days of Vengeance*, Dominion Press, Ft. Worth, 1987).

A literalist would look at the "Seven Churches of Asia" as real churches receiving copies of the Book of Revelation, but to what end for us today, it would not be clear. Statements in the text, such as 2:23 in reference to "all the churches," suggests that these Seven Churches are representative of the different spiritual states of the various churches in general at that time and throughout Church history - "if the shoe fits, wear it" kind of view. This would be suggestive of a typological interpretation subscribed by the Idealist School: that these letters are meant to teach a moral lesson. As for the Historicists, it was shown above how Newton tried to fit the events of early Church history into its interpretation. Many theologians of the Futurist School borrow from the Idealist view and also believe that each of the churches represent a "church age" with that of our own today being the "lukewarm" Christianity of the Laodiceans.

Another view in line with the Idealist School would ask if the names of these churches were chosen *in a code or a peshet* and if their etymologies would point to factions or groups within the Christian movement. The Dead Sea Scrolls did this as noted above in reference to "Damascus." Of the New Testament books, Revelation is the most Qumranian in style and content. We have noted that it, too, later uses "Sodom" and "Egypt" as code for Jerusalem.

The Targumists of the Old Testament were Aramaic-speaking interpreters from the Intertestamental Period who supplied some paraphrased content from Jewish oral tradition in their translations of the Old Testament. The Targumists were also fond of elaborating on the meaning of names to supply an additional layer of interpretation. Consequently, we sometimes see a "targumist" method used in the New Testament, such as the Epistle of Hebrews' elaboration on the meaning of the name "Melchisedec" (Hebrews 7:1-2). Reading the content of the Seven Epistles to the Seven Churches in Revelation invites just such a consideration because the etymological meaning of the names of these seven cities seem to correspond with a "spiritual profile" described by their respective epistles. A Peshet would require that we view "the Church of Ephesus," for example, as a reference to the church of all ages which might fit that profile, much like in our day, we might call someone a "Bohemian" or "Bolshivek," not because of any

historical or geographical proximity to the origin of those words, but simply because of their beliefs or behavior.

Now, the writer of Revelation was living in a Greek-speaking culture, but the names of at least some of the cities in Asia Minor would have been created during the age when Aramaic was the *lingua-franca* of that part of the world. So, deriving the meanings of these names - which would have been bowdlerized between Greek and Aramaic by the time of the Apostle - cannot be so easily done. The following list is offered propositionally and the meanings are suggestive only, at this point, pending further research:

"**Ephesus**" is a "thing desired" with a sense of exclusivity.

"**Smyrna**" would refer to its chief export: "myrrh."

"**Pergamous**" would be derived from "perga, a citadel" or if the "gamous" is referring to what was usually in a city's citadel - the royal harem - it would be the Greek word for "marriage."

"**Thyatira**" is thought to be derived from *thugutera*; it would mean "daughter."

"**Sardis**" is suggestive of the Hebrew and Aramaic (*saris*) for prince or sprout and of course the gem by that same name.

"**Philadelphia**" is an easy one referring to "brotherly love."

"**Laodicea**" is *laos* (people) and *krata* (rule). *Laos* is used of people as a mass group like a mob.

Of the seven, Smyrna and Philadelphia were not "spoken against" by Christ in the vision. Even though he had words of commendation for most of the churches, and certainly acknowledged the righteous remnant in each one, it was only Smyrna and Philadelphia that were left unremoved from the menorah and continued in their role of lighting the Temple. Newton makes them the Olive trees of Zechariah's vision (chapter 4) and also the two Witnesses of Revelation 11 :

The two Witnesses are not new Churches: they are the posterity of the primitive Church, the posterity of the two wings of the woman, and so are fitly represented by two of the primitive candlesticks.

- *Observations*, p. 88

He does not indulge the speculation, nor do we, that these two witnesses represent a resurrected Moses or the Prophet Elijah, or Enoch, or any other literal person.

Corresponding with these city names are the actual epistles with interesting correlations:

1) *Ephesus*: Jesus complains that "thou hast left thy first love" (2:5).

2) *Smyrna*: the faithful church with myrrh - the burial oil foretelling Christ's Resurrection - is promised to "not be hurt of the second death" (2:11).

3) *Pergamos*: Christ accuses them of the doctrine of Baalam, to teach "the children of Israel . . . to commit fornication" (2:14), the antithesis of marriage and the high calling of the royal women of the citadel.

4) *Thyatira*: Jezebel's adulterous ways will result in "I will kill her children" (2:23) to end the cycle of depravity.

5) *Sardis*: "Thou hast a name," *onoma* in the sense of renown (3:1) which is the aspiration of princes and great men.

6) *Philadelphia*: "I will make them [of the synagogue of Satan] to come and worship before thy feet" (3:9). This recalls Joseph's dream of his brethren bowing down to him.

7) *Laodicea*: "Thou art lukewarm" is a characteristic of peer driven societies where conformity becomes the dominant motivation to please "the mob."

It would require another study to exegete this section of Revelation, but certainly the above is suggestive, and illustrates how the Idealist School would interpret it.

The Bible: A Book of Dooms

And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

*And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, **and cast it into the earth**: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.*

- Revelation 8:3-5 (emphasis added)

Biblical scholars have called attention to the Plagues described in Revelation and have noted their similarity to the Ten Plagues of Egypt. So much of the imagery is drawn from that historical event that John the Revelator calls attention to the "Song of Moses:"

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark and over the

number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb . . .

- 15:1-3

Now, it should be noted that whenever the Apostle uses an expression similar to this one in which he calls attention to a "sign in heaven," he is making an astrological observation. He does this in Revelation 12:1 in which he uses the astrological sign of Virgo to relate the day and time of Christ's Birth. But here, he does not give any astrological coordinates, unless we are to suppose that the "seven angels" would correspond to a constellation with "seven stars" and the "sea of glass mingled with fire" would correspond with a natural phenomenon. Initially, we might think of the constellation Pleiades - the constellation of the seven sisters - and the "sea of glass" which could refer to the effects of an inundation of melting tektites, crystalline beads said to come with cometary encounters or solar novas. This might be a direct allusion to a prophecy of Enoch. But we cannot be sure.

The subsequent verses (v. 3-4) constitute the "Song of the Lamb"; there are two songs ascribed to Moses. The first is found in Exodus 15 when the Israelites rejoice at the demise of Pharaoh's army: "The horse and the rider are thrown into the sea. . ."

The second is found in Deuteronomy 32 which is largely a negative prediction of Israel's eventual apostasy and God's intervention on behalf of a remnant:

For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left. v. 36

Regardless, the context in Revelation is clearly connecting the apocalyptic visions of John with the story of Moses' confrontation with Pharaoh: and specifically, its liturgical and judicial aspects. It follows the process of formalizing a finding of guilt and decreeing a sentence. In the case of Moses, the "cry" of the children of Israel has ascended to God's hearing in Heaven. In Revelation, it consists in the prayers of the saints.

God responds by sending a prophet to confront the guilty. In Exodus it is Moses; in Revelation, it is Jesus Christ. And it should not be forgotten that the full title of the book is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:1).

In Revelation, the plagues are announced by the blowing of trumpets and the pronouncement of "Woes" which are words of malediction. Corresponding to the "Curses and Blessings" found in the Book of Deuteronomy (chapters 27 & 28), Jesus offered His own Blessings & Cursings in the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5) and His "Woes" pronounced upon the Pharisees and Saducees in Matthew 23, culminating with His malediction upon the city of Jerusalem:

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. - v.38

When Moses confronted Pharaoh he pronounced words of warning and then "stretched forth his rod" before each of the plagues. The angelic messengers in the Book of Revelation do the same: they warn and then blow the trumpet. It is these invocations which distinguishes the various disasters from merely bad luck or bad magic. As Pharaoh's sorcerers were very finally compelled to admit,

This is the finger of God.

- Exodus 8:19

The Imprecatory Prayer

Sorcery works through spells and curses and the belief in the magical power of words. Likewise, as Moses demonstrated in his confrontation with the sorcerers of Egypt, he destroyed them with "Thus saith the Lord."

Imprecatory prayers are pleas for Divine intervention against the enemies of God's people. The Book of Psalms is filled with them.

The saints are given the right to speak God's words after Him in judgment upon the world and even the heavenly host:

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?

- Paul, 1 Corinthians 6:2-3

But it must be God's way:

Yet Michael the archangel when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said "The Lord rebuke thee."

- Jude 9

And by the Holy Spirit:

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

- Jesus to the Pharisees, Matthew 12:28

Thanksgiving, 2021

Some have taken it upon themselves to call for a holy convocation and engage in spiritual warfare against the kingdom of evil through the imprecatory prayer. It is our right and destiny to do so:

*Let **the saints** be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them **the judgment written**: this honor have all his **saints**. Praise ye the LORD.*

- Psalm 149:5-9 (emphasis added)

However, I'm afraid that we do not have "saints" yet, and we do not know the "judgment written." We are still little children wandering in the Wilderness around Mount Sinai. But we will learn.

A Servant of Jesus,

James

Collect for the Day

Almighty and gracious Father, we give thee thanks for the fruits of the earth in their season and for the labors of those who harvest them. Make us, we beseech thee, faithful stewards of thy great bounty, for the provision of our necessities and the relief of all who are in need, to the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. 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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