

The Cambrian Peshier

A Voice of the Desposyni to the Dispersion

Peshier of the Presentation, 2022

February 2, 2022

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

which God gave to him.

- Revelation 1:1

Beloved Friends:

It is always a hazard to attempt to interpret the Book of Revelation; for there is no end to scholarly disputation. We offer the discussion below propositionally to call attention to facts and details long forgotten by the historic Church. Sadly, biblical literacy is so diminished in our time that even the most fervent Evangelical is probably ignorant of them. One does not know where to start. The reader would do well to read previous discussions on Isaac Newton's handling of prophetic literature, particularly our previous *Peshier for Thanksgiving, 2021* on "The Liturgy of Malediction" and also "Newton on the Apocalypse" links found on the 2046AD.org website.

Through him, you will appreciate the Historicist School, which values the knowledge of history; for history is but the fulfillment of prophecy. You will learn of the Preterist School, which identifies the prophetic fulfillments which occurred during the time of the New Testament Church. And the Idealist School, which while abused by some sophomoric scholars of the liberal variety, yet in the hands of covenant theologians such as R. J. Rushdoony, demonstrates God's work in the Church which Christ declared that not even the "gates of hell" should "prevail against it."

We think we have improved upon the Idealist View, which I sometimes call "the Soteriological Model" of Bible prophecy, because I use the peshier hermeneutical technique found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Because the Scrolls were so close in time and locality to the New Testament Church, we see their handling of Scripture with striking similarity to that of the New Testament, particularly the Book of Revelation, which some have actually called "Qumranian."

The Antinomy

In the study of logic, there is the inductive kind which relies upon observation and the identification of attributes. The other kind of logic, deductive logic, studies the inferences which can be made from propositions.

One of the many terms used in the teaching of logic - which I might add was one of the great subjects of the *Trivium* upon which Western Civilization has been built - is that of the "antinomy." Antinomy is a word we use to describe the attempt to unite two contradictory concepts or meanings that might be found in a word phrase or a thought function. A standard dictionary definition reads, "a contradiction between two beliefs or conclusions that are in themselves reasonable; a paradox."

For example, in mathematics, 2 plus 2 cannot equal both 4 and 5. They both cannot be the correct answer. It has to be one or the other. But it can only be 5 if 2 means something else other than 1 plus 1. I say this in a crude sort of analogy to what we are actually discovering in quantum physics.

Examples of antinomies in language would include the use of oxymorons, such as "the sober drunk," "the sinful Christian," or the tongue-in-cheek "military intelligence" and "the happy housewife."

In politics, a citizen of the United States is defined as someone who is born or naturalized within its borders. It cannot mean someone who is both born and not born within the United States or naturalized and not naturalized within the borders of the United States. It has to be one or the other, not both.

The Romans tried to build and maintain their civilization upon a changing definition of what it meant to be a Roman. In the beginning, it was easy to tell who a Roman was because he was freeborn within the Roman jurisdiction to parents who were native to the city-state of Rome. The introduction of slavery and the importation of slaves into Rome created an increasingly fuzzy definition of citizenship. The difference between who was a Roman and who was a non-Roman was one of its founding first principles which became increasingly self-contradictory until it was impossible to defend the Empire. It is difficult for a soldier or a tax payer to swear allegiance to an ill-defined sovereign.

Christianity has antinomies within its doctrine. It says there is one God but three Persons. It says that its Savior was "fully God and fully man without mingling or confusion" - two natures yet one person. It says that God has predestined all human actions, yet, He is absolved of any culpability because of man's free will.

When these concepts are correctly defined, they are nothing short of brilliant, but each generation of theologians has had to wrangle over the implications of these antinomies: Are they illogical or pre-logical? Like the seesaw in philosophy, Christian theology swings between one extreme and the other as the generations come and go. One generation arises and says that the doctrine of free will is an affront to God's sovereignty; so they condemn it and preach predestination. Then the next generation is born and is dissatisfied with the suffocation of society because it does not teach free will. It says that predestination makes God the author of sin. The pendulum swings back the other way with a renewed emphasis on human autonomy.

When it comes to the Trinity, obviously, there is a difference in meaning between "Godhood" and "Personhood." Understanding the meanings of these two terms will reconcile the antinomy. Just as there is such a thing as "mankind" and "womankind," there is "Christkind" and "Godkind." Even though men and women are of the same species, they have individual consciousness and moral action. There is a functional distinction between men and women based upon biology, just as there is a functional distinction between the persons of the Trinity based upon the metaphysics of their offices.

Likewise with the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, there is a difference between what we mean by His dual "nature" and His "personhood." We believe that the Divine Logos, the Second Person of the Trinity, joined Himself to the flesh of Christ at His conception in the womb of the Beloved Virgin Mary. The historic faith teaches us that this union occurred without the seed of man, a requirement without which, Christ could not have been "that holy thing" (Luke 1:35).

There are minor sects, such as the Ebionites, and major ones, such as Islam (Mohammed was the son of Nestorian Christians) which have not embraced the full doctrine of the Incarnation. They see Jesus as an ascended prophet (Islam) or as a mere man who received His divine incarnation at His baptism (Ebionites). But each of these views and their variations fail to fully consider both the human condition of sin and the requirements of atonement in God's moral government.

Original Sin

Another antinomy within Christian doctrine is the *sexless Messiah*. On the one hand, we are told that Christ was "tempted in all manner as we are" - that He was an authentic human being - yet in the same breath, it is denied that He was endowed with the sexual function. We are told that Christ had a penis because He was circumcised. He drank water and wine, so we may justly infer that He relieved His bladder like any other man - by "pissing against the wall" (KJV). But in Christian doctrine, we are not allowed to believe that He relieved His scrotum.

The reason Christian doctrine must deny the sexual function to Christ is the problem of nocturnal emissions. Even the most pious of men, who try to ignore and suppress their sexual desires, find that in the course of time their bodies will expel the excess semen. The emissions are often accompanied by erotic dreams and form the hard-wiring the Creator has made to guarantee the perpetuation of the human species. Classical Christian theologians call this condition "original sin." We do not think this is a good definition. The rage of sexual hormones might be a manifestation of "the infirmity of the flesh" which is a consequence of Original Sin, but it cannot be so in itself because seminal production was the necessary endowment in the original, unfallen creation which God ordained for the propagation of the species.

If Christ was fully man, then His testicles would have produced semen. If Christ was fully man, He slept - which implies that He lost consciousness and dreamt - at least in His human nature, obviously. Like any other man, he should have experienced erotic dreams.

Classical theologians will deflect and say that Christ controlled His sexual desires even in His sleep because His Divine nature prevented Him from sinning - i.e. from having nocturnal emissions and erotic dreams - but we have cheated to say so. We have changed the definition of being human from one which is truly biological to a hybrid being involving some supernatural endowment which we were not created with and which we do not have access to. To retain complete control of our sexual natures at all times might seem to be implied by the offer of some sanctifying spiritual grace. This is the view of piety, which is mysticism. Or we might find that sanctifying grace in ascetic practices, disciplines which deprive the masculine organism of testosterone - the quest of medieval monks.

This is a problem of a different sort. Testosterone has been called "the hormone of the gods" because it enables men to think abstractly, to engage in arduous labor, and to act bravely. After a long and trying day at work, the man's body has produced excessive amounts of testosterone that the body converts into semen and consequently, deposits into the woman. Ascetics are hermits who live in caves and are so emaciated that they cannot engage in physical and mental work for long periods of time, let alone sex.

Augustine made the heat of lustful intercourse into the proof of man's depravity. He did not invent that definition on his own. Numerous of the Church fathers before him, going all the way back to Paul and some of the Essenes felt this way, as well.

Theologians might want to pivot and refine the definition of Original Sin to say, not that it is sexual, but that it is the human need to sleep: the loss of God-consciousness. The inability to resist sleep, to prevent a state of unconsciousness, might be a tempting

answer to this problem.

However, the Bible tells us that God "rested on the seventh day." He did this as an example for mankind to follow. Additionally, Adam's deep sleep was necessary for God's creation of Eve. This implies that man's sleep time is not a bad thing, but a time for God to work. It also implies that sleep is associated with the "one flesh" (henosis) experience and that sexuality is inherently a good thing. So we cannot go in that direction, either.

The bottom line is that Christianity has had a problem with sexuality and has failed to incorporate it into its definition of spirituality. It has remained an antinomy without resolution. We think that it is resolved in Grail theology which is discussed at length in *Hierogamy & the Married Messiah* (link found above). I need not repeat it here.

Another Antinomy: Pseudo-Christ or Anti-Christ

Western logical tradition has created a vocabulary that does not always fit the meaning of Scripture. "Antinomy" is not a scriptural term but a word tool to describe a logical function.

In theology, there is a hermeneutical tool called "type/antitype." It is a word correlation to describe the pedagogical value of an Old Testament ceremony, prophecy, historical event or figure of speech. The sacrificing of lambs in atonement for sin is called a "type," a symbol which anticipates the Crucifixion of Christ - the antitype. While in the word "antinomy" the Greek "anti" might mean opposite or against, in the word "*antitype*" it is used in its true and original meaning of "that which replaces something else." It is a thing which displaces or replaces a previous functionality.

In the New Testament, such as in Matthew 24, Jesus talks about "false christs" or "false messiahs." The Jews saw a lot of those in the 1st Century AD. But "false" christs are not the same as *anti*-christs. The Greek word here is "pseudo" which means "false" or "fake." "Pseudo" christs are fake messiahs.

The term "anti-christ" is only used in the Epistles of John. An "antichrist" is something or someone who has taken the place of Christ. He is not a fake christ, but someone who is a substitute for the concept of Christ. There is a difference.

While a pseudo-christ might be someone who seeks to displace or replace the *person* we call "Christ" or Messiah as in an imposter, an antichrist denies the office of Messiahship altogether. That is why 1st John declares doctrinal features which distinguish the antichrist from merely a pseudo christ. The pseudo christ makes the spurious claim that he is the true messiah. An antichrist is anyone who adheres to the "antichrist" doctrine, namely, a twofold denial: 1) a denial of the primogeniture doctrine

of the "father and the son" (which was an inseparable feature of the Davidic Covenant - 2 Samuel 7), and 2) a denial that Jesus Christ "has come in the flesh" (the doctrine that the true Messiah is a recipient of the Cultural Mandate - Genesis 1:26 ff.). While this topic is discussed at length in *The House of Bethany, A Study on Footwashing, the Johannine Community & the Family of Jesus* (Stivers, 2007), because it is not a book available to the general public, but is rather reserved for those who are catechumens in the Cambrian Church, I will offer something of an explanation here.

"Fleshing"

We have shown that the central Messianic doctrine is a chosen seedline that descends in a line of succession from father to son. This occurred throughout the Old Testament with the Patriarchs and then seems to be finalized in the Virgin Mary who to Jesus became His father according to the flesh ("Behold, a woman shall compass a man" - Jeremiah 31:33), just as Adam had become the mother of Eve according to the flesh (See the *Pesher of the Virgin Mary*, 2020).

However, historic Christian doctrine ends the succession with Jesus, and the Church Fathers claimed that because Christ was now an eternal priesthood, there was no longer any need for procreation and the succession of calling.

But this was a false hermeneutic. For in his original creation and as a recipient of the Dominion Covenant, Adam was also immortal until his fall in the Garden of Eden. Consequently, what purpose then did procreation serve, except for that of "replenishing" the Earth: filling it up in a quest of colonization?

On the strength of this interpretation, the Grail Church argues for a continuation and expansion of the sacred bloodline. Jesus Christ becomes, not the end, but the beginning of a holy race.

The Established Church usurped the messianic succession in the ordination of bishops to rule the churches with apostolic succession. *Messianic* succession of the bishoprics lasted through the Bar Kochba rebellion. Afterwards, it became apostolic. The bishops who were of the "house" of Jesus were replaced by men who were not related by blood:

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.

- 1 John 4:3

Most interpreters do not know how to interpret this scripture; they suppose that it is some vague reference to the Docetist heresy. That is a clumsy and inadequate interpretation because Docetism was a 2nd Century phenomenon.

English has two voices, the active (“I testify”) and the passive (“It is testified”). Greek has three voices, the active (“I testify”), the passive (“It is testified”) and the middle (“I am attesting” or “It is I who am attesting”). In the middle voice the subject is affected by the action. Its voice varies greatly and is seldom given a satisfactory English equivalent. In this case in 1 John 4:3, it can be translated as “is come in the flesh” or “is coming in the flesh.” If the former, it favors the notion of a completed Incarnation in the past. If the latter, it supports the above interpretation of an on-going manifestation of the Incarnation. In Catholic tradition, the Incarnation continues in the Eucharist. In Protestant doctrine, it continues in the printed Bible. In the Bethany Community, it continues in the Messianic office.

The word “flesh” is sometimes used in the Bible as a euphemism for a man’s penis and his emission which produces offspring. In saying that Jesus Christ is “come in the flesh” we could truthfully say this is a direct reference to His sexuality and success in producing offspring. Thus, as awkward as it sounds, a better rendering would be to say, *Jesus Christ is fleshing . . .* meaning He is propagating His seed on the Earth, now covenantally in His descendants and liturgically in the Eucharist. The apostolic church says this happens in the transubstantiation of the Eucharist alone. The Grail Church says Christ's flesh is propagated in a growing web of kinship.

While Old Testament messiahs were simply kings and priests who were anointed to hold their sacred offices, the New Testament messiahs follow Christ in the Order of Melchisedec.

The Messianic Office

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

- Luke 24:27

Scholars claim that there are over 300 Old Testament Messianic prophecies, including several important ones in the Apocryphal writings, books written during the Intertestamental Period which have historically held a deuterocanonical status. While there are some prophecies which are telic in the sense of anticipating the man Jesus as a historical person, most prophecies are of the typological (ecbatic) kind.

Because most people think of prophecy in a telic sense, it is hard for them to understand the true nature of prophetic fulfillment. Messianic prophecy was not so much a description of a particular person as it was one for the Messianic *office*. In other

words, much like a job description, the person who aspired to be the Messiah had to be the one who could fulfill all of the elements of that job description. **Messianic prophecy was God's gauntlet for qualification.**

For example, from the list of 35 key prophecies found below, many men could have fulfilled any number if not many of these criteria for the Messianic office. There were many who could fulfill the prophecy that the Messiah would be a descendant of David, for example. Perhaps, there were a significant number of Davidic descendants who were crucified under the rule of the Romans. But how many died without their legs being broken, etc? Jesus Christ could lay claim to the office of Messiahship because He fulfilled **all** of the prophecies, not just some of them or even most of them - but all of them.

1. The seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15, cf. Galatians 4:4) - eliminates the angels
2. A descendant of Abraham (Genesis 12:2, cf. Matthew 1:1) - eliminates all Semites except Abrahamic
3. A descendant of Isaac (Genesis 17:19, cf. Luke 3:34) - eliminates all Ishmaelite Arabs, etc.
4. A descendant of Jacob (Numbers 24:17, cf. Matthew 1:2) - eliminates all Edomites, etc.
5. From the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10, cf. Luke 3:33) - eliminates all other Israelites
6. Heir to the throne of David (Isaiah 9:7, cf. Luke 1:32, 33) - eliminates all other Jews
7. Anointed and Eternal (Psalm 45:6,7; 102:25-27, cf. Hebrews 1:8-12) - eliminates unanointed Davidians
8. Hated without reason (Psalm 35:19; John 15:24, 25) - eliminates anointed Davidians who were not hated
9. Spat on and struck (Psalm 50:6; Matthew 26:67) - eliminates the hated who were not abused
10. Vicarious sacrifice (Isaiah 53:5, cf. John 18:14; Romans 5:6,8) - eliminates those who were abused but not killed for the people
11. Crucified with malefactors (Isaiah 53:12, cf. Mark 15:27, 28) - eliminates those who were not crucified like a criminal

12. Pierced through hands and feet (Zechariah 12:10, cf. John 20:27) - eliminates those who were not crucified this way
13. Sneered and mocked (Psalm 22:7,8, cf. Luke 23:35) - eliminates those who were not mocked in this way
14. He was reproached (Psalm 69:9, cf. Romans 15:3) - eliminates those who were not reproached
15. Prayer for His enemies (Psalm 109:4, cf. Luke 23:24) - eliminates those who did not pray for their enemies
16. Soldiers gambled for His clothing (Psalm 22:17, 18, cf. Luke 23:34) - eliminates those who did not have their garments divided
17. Forsaken by God (Psalm 22:1, cf. Matthew 27:46) - eliminates those who did not experience abandonment
18. Born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2, cf. Luke 2:4,5,7) - eliminates all those who were not born in Bethlehem
19. Time of His birth (Daniel 9:25, cf. Luke 2:1,2) - eliminates all those who were not born in the 70th week of Daniel's vision
20. Born of a Virgin (Isaiah 7:14, cf. Luke 1:26-31) - eliminates all those who were not born of a Virgin
21. Slaughter of the children (Jeremiah 31:15, cf. Matthew 2:16-18) - eliminates all children born without a genocidal slaughter
22. Flight to Egypt (Hosea 11:1, cf. Matthew 2:14,15) - eliminates all children who did not flee to Egypt
23. A Forerunner (Isaiah 40:3-5; Malachi 3:1, cf. Luke 3:3-6; 7:24,27) - eliminates all claimants without a forerunner
24. Preceded by Elijah (Malachi 4:5,6, cf. Matthew 11:13, 14) - eliminates all claimants without the Elijah forerunner
25. Declared the Son of God (Psalm 2:7, cf. Matthew 3:17) - eliminates all claimants without that affirmation
26. Galilean ministry (Isaiah 9:1,2, cf. Matthew 4:13-16) - eliminates all claimants who did not have a Galilean ministry

27. Speaks in parables (Psalm 78:2-4, cf. Matthew 13:34, 35) - eliminates all claimants who were not teachers
28. A Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15, cf. Acts 3:20, 22) - eliminates all claimants who were not prophets
29. Proclaimed the Jubilee (Isaiah 61:1-2, cf. Luke 4:18-19) - eliminates all claimants who did not proclaim the Jubilee
30. Rejected by His own people, the Jews (Isaiah 53:3, cf. John 1:11; Luke 23:18) - eliminates all claimants who were accepted by the Jews
31. No bones broken (Psalm 34:20, cf. John 19:32-36) - eliminates all claimants whose bones were broken
32. His side pierced (Zechariah 12:10, cf. John 19:34) - eliminates all claimants whose sides were not pierced
33. Buried with the rich (Isaiah 53:9, cf. Matthew 27:57-60) - eliminates all claimants who were not buried in a rich man's tomb
34. To be resurrected (Psalm 16:10; 49:15, cf. Mark 16:6,7) - eliminates all claimants who were not raised from the dead
35. His ascension to God's right hand (Psalm 68:18, cf. Mark 16:19, et al) - eliminates all claimants who did not visibly ascend to heaven.

While skeptics will claim that a number of these prophecies were contrived in their application or were self-fulfilled prophecies - it does not change anything. We would expect that they were contrived and of course, they were self-fulfilled. That is what a job applicant does: he seeks to qualify for the position in every way imaginable to get the job. Jesus fulfilled prophecies that everyone acknowledged were Messianic, and He also fulfilled prophecies that no one ever thought of as Messianic.

Some prophecies were within His power to fulfill; others depended upon the obedience of other people: the parents of John the Baptist, the Virgin Mary, and so on.

And there are other prophecies which we think Christ fulfilled that are not recorded in the Gospels. One of those prophecies is the use of a royal [*redacted term*] to propagate the Messianic government throughout the world: Psalm 45 *cf.* This is the foundation for Grail theology: the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Whether their fulfillment is recorded in the New Testament or not, we have assurances from a number of texts that Jesus fulfilled them all. In terms of prophecies of a married Messiah

such as Psalm 45, we have allusions in the New Testament record which point to it. In fact, so strong are those allusions that the Early Fathers had to "spiritualize" the texts to make Christ fulfill these prophecies strictly in His Divine Nature, but not His human nature, contrary to the Ecumenical Creeds.

St. Stephen as Antipas

I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

- Revelation 2:13

There are only three people in the New Testament who were called the "faithful witness" or "martyr" (*martus*: witness): our Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:5), St. Stephen of the Book of Acts chapters 6-8 and 22:20 and then this mysterious "Antipas" in Revelation Chapter 2 who is unknown elsewhere in the New Testament.

In Acts 22:20, the Apostle Paul says that Stephen's blood "was shed" which seems to be a word play on the blood-letting of sacrifices. This is not said of any of the other martyrs of the New Testament, including the Apostle James in Acts 12 who was "killed with the sword." The other martyrs are not distinguished as "witnesses" in a Divine judicial proceeding, but Stephen was and so was Jesus. The blood of Jesus was shed upon the Cross; Paul says Stephen's blood was shed, also, even though death by stoning - by the impact of blunt force - does not usually result in the "shedding of blood" as required of a clean kill in a blood sacrifice.

It should be noted that the Messianic prophecy of "the gnashing with their teeth" (Psalm 35:16; 37:12) is not said of any of Christ's persecutors, but it is of Stephen's (Acts 7:54) - a fact which suggests Stephen's special relationship with Jesus in terms of Old Testament prophecy. The case for his status as a blood relation to Jesus is discussed at length in *The House of Bethany* but is a study currently reserved for catechumens in the Cambrian Church. However, the topic is developed further in our *Pesher for Thanksgiving, 2020: "Obdience to the House of Bethany"* and is anticipated in the book on *Hierogamy & the Married Messiah* (Stivers, 2004).

Why did not John the Revelator just simply say "Stephen" instead of this mysterious and mythical "Antipas"? The answer is simple: Revelation was written in code as well as symbolic language. Even though Stephen was dead and no longer needed the protection of anonymity, as will be shown later in this study, it was a book written in the crisis of the Nero persecution. Stephen had associates who were still alive and had to be protected. Likewise, other references, even of the "Seven Churches of Asia" had to be mythical. If there were a true church in Pergamos, for example, a house-to-house search by bands of Inquisitors would have been expected. (The pagan temple of

Pergamos alleged by scholars to be a "literal" fulfillment of John's vision really represents a later invention by Christian commentators, just as the establishment of the "city" of Nazareth was created centuries later to provide a place of pilgrimage for pious worshippers. "Nazareth" was an encampment in the time of Jesus and did not exist on Roman maps from that time period).

If we follow a "targumist" hermeneutic to find our peshar, we would look to the meaning of the name "Antipas." The lexicons tell us that it is a shortened version of "Antipater" which means "in the place of the father." That is why I prefaced our discussion above with one on the various meanings for the Greek prefix: *anti*. Some scholars translate it as "against the father" which would be a very odd meaning in this context. There was the Herod *Antipas* of Jesus' time who succeeded his father Herod I. As paranoid as Herod was, we cannot imagine that he would have named his son as a designated rival and opponent. Most fathers hope their sons will follow in their footsteps.

Consequently, we favor "in the place of the father" as the true definition for this name and knowing that there was no Herodian Antipas who was a Christian martyr, it remains a mystery as to who this "Antipas" might have been.

But the context helps us interpret the code, because this Antipas was "slain where Satan dwelleth." Obviously, the reference to Satan is code. In Christian angelology, Satan is in Hell, so the notion that Antipas was slain in Hell is absurd. There must be some earthly dwelling known to John's audience that could be identified as Satan's "dwelling" and Satan's "seat."

In the previous Epistle to the Smyrneans, Jesus declares that they personally knew Him as the one who "was dead, and is alive" (v. 8). The Smyrneans are experiencing poverty (v. 9) and now must contend with the "blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

"The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried and ye shall have tribulation ten days" (v. 10). If they are faithful they shall be granted a "**stephanos**" - a crown.

The peshar is this: Satan is the High Priest of the Jewish Sanhedrin. His living quarters is near the Temple and is where his "seat" of judgment is to be found. "Satan" should be understood in its meaning as "the accuser." The Smyrneans are the "poor" *Ebion* Christians - the poor saints of Jerusalem - for whom Paul collected offerings among the Gentile Churches (Galatians 2:10 *et al*). These "Satanists" claim they are Jews but are not. Rather, they pursue the believers with an "adversary" (a *devil* or prosecutor as Paul was many years before), arresting them, putting them on trial before the Sanhedrin and being imprisoned.

Smyrna refers to myrrh and is the "Church of the Anointers." These Christians will be persecuted for "ten days" = "ten years" (e.g. on the "day equals a year" hermeneutic see Ezekiel 4:5-6). We will come back to this in another Peshier.

The "poor" are the Christians who sold all their possessions in Acts 2-4 to finance the church expansion. With no resources, a generation later, they had no where to go and were easy prey for attack from the "synagogue of Satan."

The Satanists were not Jews. According to Josephus, Jerusalem was overrun by radical Edomite converts, 20,000 of them in fact. The Herodians were Edomites and so were many of the Jewish leaders. Not only were they not true Jews religiously, but ethnically, they were of a rival tribe.

By the 60s AD, the Temple priesthood had become a rogue priesthood. Zacharias was the last of the pure Aaronic line who was murdered in the Temple (Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51), "between the *oikos* [priestly dwelling] and the altar." John the Baptist, his son, was the last scion who could have revived the Aaronic priesthood. But upon his death, it was done, and the Melchisedekal priesthood took its place.

There are Jews today who claim to be descendants of Aaron based upon their private genealogies. Herod destroyed the public records to hide the corruption of the line, not only of the priesthood, but the Davidic lineage, as well. The genealogy of Jesus is based upon private genealogies. While we believe that it is possible to identify the Desposyni today, we do not believe it is enough to establish a bishopric, just as we do not believe it is possible to restore the Aaronic priesthood. Not even the sacrifice of the sacred red heifer can overcome the deficiencies.

John the Revelator identifies the "Church of the Anointers" as succeeded by the "Church of the Royal [*term redacted*]" (Pergamos), the Widows of the Church (Acts 6). Stephen was haled before the High Priest - "Satan's seat." The Pergamos Christians of Jerusalem must now purge the apostates (Balaam and the Nicolaitines) so they may "eat of the hidden manna" and receive "a new name" (v. 17).

The peshier is revisited in Revelation 12 with the Woman Clothed with the Sun (the Virgin Mary) and who is in danger from the "Dragon" (who, in the Bethlehem story was Herod, the true power behind the priestly throne) as she gives birth to the Messiah. John explains who the Dragon is; he is "Satan" - the Herodian High Priest of the corrupted Judaism which has "deceived the whole world" (12:9). We cannot use the Book of Revelation to build a doctrine of angelology. Whatever spiritual entities might influence mankind, in Revelation, these beings are human. The High Priest draws a third of the Sanhedrin. The Archangel Michael is Jesus Christ, who draws two thirds of the Sanhedrin to wage war against the usurpers.

The followers of the apostate High Priest of the Temple either kill the Christians or drive them out of the city with the help of the Edomites. The Dragon is cast out of Heaven - out of the Holy *Eretz* (land) - and has been driven into the city of Jerusalem by the Roman armies. The Temple sacrifices have ceased because of the Roman seige. The Dragon is filled with great wrath because he knows the seige will soon end and his Holy Place will be destroyed.

There are astrological allusions to this contest between Michael and the Dragon: "And there appeared another wonder in heaven" (12:3), but they are a part of the esoteric tradition.

The rejection of Antipas (the successor - specifically Stephen as the crown prince) in taking leadership of the Jerusalem Church for his father, Jesus Christ - this was the doctrine of the antichrist.

The Other John the Revelator

I John, who also am your brother . . . Revelation 1:9

The writings of the early Church Fathers are useful and informative. They are also the source of traditions which may or may not be accurate. We have already demonstrated that it was not John the Apostle who was the author of the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John. Elsewhere (*Obedience to the House of Bethany, The House of Bethany, etc.*), it has been noted that the Apostle John disappears from the Acts of the Apostles Chapter 12, in the account of the martyrdom of James, his brother. We are told that Herod kills him with the sword; we are not told what has happened to John.

Until this incident, Peter and John are always mentioned together. Afterwards, it is Peter alone who is imprisoned by Herod. There is no mention of John being imprisoned. He does not even appear at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, even though Paul cites him as one of the three pillars of the Jerusalem Church (Galatians 2:9). Presumably, another James emerges as the leader of Christianity at this council. Acts does not tell us who this James is. It is only later and also from the Pauline Epistles, that we learn that this is not the other Apostle James - James the Less - but rather James, the brother of Jesus.

According to the ancient Syriac tradition, John was killed with his brother James. Why Acts does not tell us this, we don't know. But then again, most of the other Apostles are not mentioned by name either, after their honorable mention in Acts Chapter One. Other men take their place. There is a new Philip, the Deacon, to take the place of Philip the Apostle, just as James the brother of Jesus has taken the place of James the Apostle. Matthias, the replacement for Judas the Betrayer also seems to take the place of Matthew the Apostle, who was known elsewhere as Levi.

And there is a new John - John Mark. Even though most of the New Testament references to John Mark mention that "Mark" is his surname, Acts 13, the chapter immediately following the martyrdom of James in Chapter 12, mentions him simply as "John" without the surname, suggesting that, from here on out, he is now the only "John" of consequence in the New Testament Church.

We are told by some of the early Fathers that John the Apostle lived to the end of the first century as a very old man, after having survived the persecutions under Nero and Domitian. But this is based solely upon Polycarp's claim that a "John the Evangelist" was the author of the Book of Revelation.

Isaac Newton accepts that this John the Evangelist is the Apostle John, but still argues for an authorship during the reign of Nero:

In the opinion of the first Commentators agrees the tradition of the Churches of Syria, preserved to this day in the title of the Syriac Version of the Apocalypse, which title is: "The Revelation which was made to John the Evangelist by God in the Island Patmos, into which he was banished by Nero the Caesar." Observations, p. 73

However, if as we have argued elsewhere, John the Apostle was not the author of the Fourth Gospel, then he would not have been this "John the Evangelist." There would have been only one "John the Evangelist": John Mark, the author of the "Gospel according to Mark." While the witness of the Fathers ought not to be summarily dismissed and ought to be given the benefit of the doubt, if we can trace the source of a tradition to a misinterpretation, an error, or an unwarranted assumption, then we are justified in questioning it. In this case, because the early Fathers assume that John the Apostle wrote the Fourth Gospel, they then assume that he also authored the Johannine Epistles and the Book of Revelation. But as will be shown - the "I, John" the Revelator was John Mark who was the only "John the Evangelist" known to the 1st Century Christians.

In the Grail Church, the timeline for the books of the New Testament has been modified to reflect this new information. It is known that John Mark was with Timothy in Ephesus (2 Timothy 4:11), at some point during Nero's persecution when Paul was arrested the second time. But it appears that John Mark remained in Rome with the Bethany family after Paul's first release. No doubt, it was from there that he served as an amanuensis to Peter to write his first Epistle and to compose the "Gospel according to Mark" which all the Fathers declare were his edited notes from Peter's reminiscences.

Paul had a reputation for being a "ringleader" of the "sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5), a specific reference to the Davidians. The Nazaraeans were a sect within the Essene movement that consisted of descendants of King David. They often had to hide

their true identities because of various pogroms which rulers engaged to eliminate potential rivals to their rule.

The Romans did not care about the accusation of blasphemy leveled by the Sanhedrin at the time of Paul's first imprisonment. But his second arrest was for the charge of sedition of which Paul acknowledges:

Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel: wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds . . . (2 Timothy 2:8-9).

The Romans did not care about Paul's belief in the Resurrection, either. What they were concerned about was his claim that Jesus was of the lineage of David, a rival claimant to the Jewish throne, and that He was still alive. The Romans and Jewish rulers feared a Davidic conspiracy within the Empire. The Parthians, a rival empire within the old boundaries of the Persian Empire, were a constant menace to Roman hegemony. In fact, it has been argued that the Magi who came to do homage to Jesus at His Birth, were Parthian kings, and explains why the Herodians were alarmed: they were afraid that the Parthians were sponsoring someone to depose Herod as King of the Jews (*Parthia: The Forgotten Ancient Superpower and its Role in Biblical History*, Steven Collins, Artisan Publishers).

Since John Mark was not an apostle, it appears a lesser penalty was imposed for reasons cited below. From Rome, Mark composed at least two books mentioned above and was banished to Patmos. In fact, his banishment might have happened because he wrote them. In time, Peter and Paul were executed. John was banished to Patmos and Timothy was imprisoned. Consequently, not only did John Mark compose the "Gospel of Mark" from the notes he took from Peter's final sermons in Rome (65 AD), he also wrote the the Book of Revelation (67 AD) and may have written the Epistle to the Hebrews (70 AD). The Fourth Gospel was the work of the Bethany family and Lazarus in particular because it was his eyewitness account that was recorded when he and John Mark parted company with Paul and went to Cyprus (50-56AD). The 22nd Chapter of John was added after Peter's martyrdom became known (66 AD).

It should not be forgotten that John Mark was also a junior member of the Bethany household. He was Mary's son and Lazarus' (Barnabas') nephew. Mary was in Rome (Romans 16:6) and evidently, so was the author of 2 John, who we believe was Lazarus writing to Martha ("lady": *martha* in Aramaic). In taking up residence in Rome, he was simply joining his mother. The fact that he remained with his mother after Paul's release is understandable. With Peter's arrival, it was natural for him to put his scribal talents to good use.

Having read recent Peshers, you will now be familiar with the case that Revelation was written before the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. You will also know that it had to have been written early enough to influence other writings of the New Testament, according to Newton. Even though Newton provides a convincing argument for the Nero persecution, an argument could be made for an even earlier date, and he cites the imitation Apocalypses which were composed by rival apostles during the period after Claudius (*Observations*, p.74). Newton surmises that they could not have been copy cats if they were written before the real Apocalypse.

If it must be insisted that the Apostle John was the author, he could not have been in Jerusalem when his brother was executed. As noted above, he disappears from Luke's record in Acts 11. He could have been smuggled out of the city and ended up in Rome when Claudius expelled the Jews from the city and would have been exiled to Patmos. As farfetched as that sounds, there were Christians among the Jewish communities in Italy *before* Paul went to Rome the first time. Who preached to those communities?

We wonder why John would have been exiled to a penal colony rather than executed. If he suffered under Nero or Domitian, he would have been executed, not exiled, as was the case with virtually all of the other surviving Apostles at that time. There is a legend which claims that John survived his execution of being boiled in oil, which Newton considers mythical. But John was not a Roman. Consequently, having failed to execute him by one grizzly method, a centurion could have easily dispatched him with the sword to make good the sentence.

Gog & Magog

It is worth noting that Newton does not follow the Preterist School in identifying the gematria of the number "666" specifically with Nero. Instead, he follows the Historicist interpretation and translates the gematria as "Latinos." Consequently, in Newton's view, every Roman Emperor and every king in succession to the post-Imperial era (the 10 kings/*doms* of the Beast) - including the Papacy after it acquired temporal power at the Donation of Pepin in 756 AD - were fulfillments of this prophecy. Newton does not dwell on the implications of this view, but it did and does have bearing on the current role of the European monarchies, especially the British.

If we follow the Preterist School, we still can accommodate the other views. Because the Idealist School uses the "pesher" hermeneutic, it can take a Preterist fulfillment and include subsequent fulfillments and even a final fulfillment of its prophecies. Thus, in the Idealist School the Futurists can find validity, except that they ignore history and its relevance to repeated prophetic fulfillments.

The Historicists have a much higher historiographical literacy and are aware of patterns in world events which fit Bible prophecy. George Lamsa, for example, (the translator of the Peshitta in the Lamsa Bible) has reiterated a view of the "Church of the East" that Ezekiel's prophecy concerning Gog and Magog (Chapters 38 & 39 as repeated in John's visions - Revelation 2:8) was fulfilled in the 12th Century AD in a pivotal battle which resulted in massive slaughter of the forces of Kublai Khan near Jerusalem (*Old Testament Light*, Harper, p. 834-836. He cites this historical event more than once in his writings).

Such an interpretation is incomprehensible for modern dispensationalists who embrace the Futuristic interpretation. These events described in Ezekiel and Revelation, they consider to be the end of the world - the end of history - kind of things which occur *after* the Millennium according to their rigid chronology. But Historicists are able to make these interpretations because they too borrow from the Idealist School which views history according to typology and ecbatic fulfillment.

When it comes to Gog and Magog, as Rushdoony has pointed out (who I consider to be an Idealist in the Puritan tradition, *The Kingdom Come, Studies in Daniel and Revelation*, Thoburn Press, 1971), Ezekiel's battle occurs *before* the Millenium (there may be two) while John's occurs after it. Rushdoony believes the purpose of Revelation is to teach doctrine and not chronology. This belief separates Rushdoony from the Historicists. Consequently, the Idealists would argue there is more than one "Gog and Magog" battle - more than one antitype.

In the current state of world affairs, if history is any guide, there is a push for the dissolution of the Russian Federation using NATO as China's proxy. While Futurists (Dispensationalists) believe that a Russia-China Alliance constitutes the Gog & Magog of the last battle in an invasion of the Middle East at the end of the Millennium or perhaps the great Battle of Armageddon, the Idealist would argue that any national group could fulfill this prophecy under the right circumstances. Ironically, the only explicitly Christian country in the world is the Russian Federation which has rejected its Communist experiment with atheism and the secular state. In contrast, the Anglo-American Imperial Power has now become the proxy of Chinese globalist schemes. CCP propaganda is so sophisticated, the Anglo-American Deep State is in confusion. But the reality of a predominately male population from the "one-child" policy of many decades will catch-up to CCP social planners and will require an invasion of neighboring countries - perhaps India - to steal women and then invade Eastern Russia (after it has been weakened with a war with the West) to settle the vast empty steppes. This is speculative, of course, but is simply offered to illustrate the hermeneutical method.

Furthermore, following a "postmillennial" perspective, rather than an "amillennial" one, the Idealist would argue that each subsequent fulfillment of these prophecies

manifests a "weaker" antitype than the one before. The principle of Daniel's vision of the "clay mingled with iron" suggests that the antichrists of our time are not as powerful as the one's of earlier times in Church history because God's Messianic Kingdom is advancing and growing stronger against "the gates of hell" (Matthew 16:17). This incrementalism has already been noted in Newton's interpretations elsewhere.

A Suggested Timeline

The interpretation of Revelation must be disciplined by historical facts. The Futurists can get away from history for a while. They look at the "Church Age" as a parenthetical period of no real prophetic significance. Some adherents of the Idealist School can treat biblical symbolism so obtusely as to also escape the discipline of historical reality. But for those of the Historicist and Preterist schools, history has to fit. If we propose peshers with specific meaning, those definitions must work throughout the time period in question.

We have already pointed out Newton's historicism and how he has correlated various prophecies to fit historical events clear up to our own time. Our year of 2046 AD is based upon his calculations.

Likewise with the Seven Churches of Asia, a "church age" interpretation is possible in the Idealist School which can accommodate the Historicist's View (Newton) and Futurists. However, we ask the question as to how it would fit the Preterist's View?

If David Chilton is any guide, Preterists simply look at the churches as literal recipients of the the Book of Revelation. This might be the easy way out, but there are problems with this view. If Revelation was written before the fall of Jerusalem and John's banishment occurred during the reign of Claudius or even Nero, then the churches identified in Revelation chapters one through three would either not have been in existence or were in such neophyte development that the letters and the visions would not have been relevant.

Pergamous, Thyatira, Sardis, Smyrna, Laodicia, and probably Philadelphia were churches which were the result of Paul's Third - and last -Missionary Journey (53AD - 57AD). Only Ephesus was evangelized by Paul on his Second Missionary Journey (49-52AD).

In the case of Ephesus, it wasn't until late in Paul's Second Tour that they became recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, because "they had not heard that there be any Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:2). This is a puzzling admission for a church that had supposedly benefited from a previous Pauline visit (Acts 18), the ministry of an enlightened Apollos, and the "house church" ministry of Aquilla and Priscilla. Obviously, the Seven Epistles of Revelation were addressed to congregations which

had a history of growth, persecution, and in part, apostasy. All of these stages of development in social institutions take time, often much time - even generational. Paul's Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, etc. *circa.* 60-62 AD) address critical doctrinal issues in the Asian Churches, but none of them display the alarmism of his earlier Epistles (e.g. Galatians, Thessalonians, Corinthians). They represent a pastoral and philosophical perspective of a triumphant Christ, even though a distant eschaton requires continued vigilance.

By the time of 2 Timothy, of course, all of that has changed and Paul is facing the prospects of martyrdom. We think this happened late in 68 AD, because as a Herodian, he would have been required to "brief" Nero and perhaps accompany the Roman General Vespasian for tactical assistance in the invasion of Judea. Once his usefulness to Rome was over, he was dispatched by the sword of the executioner (Nero's madness and paranoia are well attested by historians). 1st Timothy suggests an incarceration in Rome, but 2 Timothy suggests that Paul had been somewhere in the East ("I have left Trophimus in Miletum sick") and that he was on his way back to Rome, yet again. We must appreciate the arduousness and slow methods of travel in those times. But Paul was under the guard of a Roman escort, double-quick.

According to Newton, the New Testament books influenced by the book of Revelation were Hebrews, 2 Peter, and Jude and perhaps the Johannine Epistles. We could add 1 Timothy, as no other place in the New Testament do we find Christ referred to as the "king of kings and lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15), but we think Newton's allusions are overspun. Christian terminology originated in the teachings of Jesus Christ who claimed that "All power has been given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18-20): "king of kings" was a fairly common title to emperors. Certainly, references to Christ as "the Lamb of God" originated early with John the Baptist in John's Gospel, which was argued above to have been written by Lazarus (Barnabas) in the mid-50s AD from Cyprus.

Regardless, they all had to have been written just prior to the Roman invasion in 68 AD. The rest of the Apostles had already fled Judea and were passing through Asia Minor, some on their way east, and others - such as Peter, as said above - west to Rome. The "abomination which causes desolation" was probably the persecution arising from the martyrdom of James the Just (63 AD), an event that even Josephus saw with foreboding. Revelation does not talk about any such "abomination" except in code. During the early years of this first Jewish-Roman War, the Jews were successful and set up a theocracy roughly equivalent in size to the original territories of the Twelve Tribes. They were overconfident. Vespasian was delayed by the turmoil following Nero's assassination (a decade later blamed on Epaphroditus by Domitian) - four Emperors in one year - but Vespasian was finally made Emperor and his son Titus was left to finish the siege of Jerusalem.

If the Apostle John was not banished to Patmos during the time of Claudius, then that strengthens our argument that the true author of Revelation was "John the Evangelist," our John Mark. If during the reign of Nero, probably when Nero set up court in Corinth for an extended stay - first for debauched entertainment and then to supervise the response to the Judean rebellion - it was *Circa*, 64 AD. This crisis would have resulted in an inundation of Christian refugees from Judea, Samaria, and Galilee into Asia Minor, along with whatever heresies had been developing in those areas.

Here is our suggested timeline: Paul is released from his first imprisonment in the late 62 AD and he travels west to Spain, and perhaps Britain. On his way back east, perhaps to Rome again, he arrives at the beginning of Nero's persecution just after the city's conflagration (64/65 AD) that he blames on the Christians. Paul writes 1 Timothy, and perhaps Titus. Peter is crucified in 66 AD. John Mark has been his amanuensis, but has fled the city with "the parchments" (2 Timothy 4:13) and knowing he is pursued, has them smuggled to Timothy in Ephesus just prior to his own arrest *en route*. [The parchments would have been evidence]. Paul is spared, temporarily, because of Epaphroditus but also because he is a relative of the Herodians, who had an intergenerational loyalty to Rome going all the way back to the Triumvirate. Still, he is arrested and held in custody. He is sent later to Corinth (early 67 AD) to brief Nero and Vespasian and to actually accompany him for the Galilean campaign as the *Saulus* of Josephus' convoluted accounts (see Eisenman's works). Vespasian's defeat of the Jews in Galilee convinces him that he now has the upper hand. He has captured the formidable Galilean general - Josephus. He does not need Paul anymore for logistical support. Paul is sent back to Rome, passing through Miletus, and is executed shortly after (68 AD). Meanwhile, John Mark is banished to Patmos in 66-67 AD instead of being executed, perhaps in response to pleas to the Emperor from Paul and lacking implicating evidence [the parchments!]. He writes Revelation and then, when released (68 AD), distributes it by circuit riders (the seven angels) from Ephesus, where he meets up again with Timothy. Timothy is called by Paul to Rome and is asked to bring John Mark "before winter" (2 Timothy 4:11). They do not make it in time. Paul acknowledges the Silurian family who were the hostages taken to Rome from the British royal family of Caractacus (Pudens, Linus, Claudia: Linus becomes the first bishop of Rome - 4:21). Now in Rome, Timothy is arrested (early 69 AD) because he came to see Paul. John Mark, as a member of the Bethany family (the others having fled from Rome to Spain, Gaul and Britain) writes Hebrews in Rome in 70 AD and sends it to the Jewish Christians in Asia Minor who have fled Palestine as refugees. Timothy is quickly released because Nero is now dead (June, 68 AD) and Vespasian, out of deference to Paul's memory, has no quarrel with him. Hebrews is the last book of the New Testament and announces Timothy's release. (The reason why we say this is because

no other book in the New Testament cites the Epistle's discussion of the Melchisedekal priesthood - a major new development in Christain theology in anticipation of the destruction of the Temple and the end of the Aaronic priesthood). More another time.

The Feast of the Presentation

And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

- Luke 2:22-23

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

- Galatians 4:4

The doctrine of federal headship is a uniquely Pauline doctrine (Romans 5:12-21). Notwithstanding this doctrine of headship, it is quite clear from multiple authors in the Scriptures that Original Sin descends through the woman and not the man:

- *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me* (Psalms 51:5; 58:3; Job 14:1,4; John 3:6).
- *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* Genesis 3:15
- *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing.* 1 Timothy 2:15

Sorry, ladies - you need a Savior just like the men do.

The Feast of the Presentation occurs 40 days after Christmas because Christ was presented to the Temple at the end of His mother's period of purification as required by the Law of Moses. It was not when He was circumcised, as is often mistakenly supposed. The Presentation will be celebrated February 2nd by the Western Church and February 14th by the Eastern Church, each having their own days designated as the Birth of Christ.

When my Peshers have fully vetted the Calendar of the Established Church, I will begin to work on the Holy Days unique to the Celtic Church. Remember that the purpose of the Christian calendar is pedagogical and represents the Procession of the Holy Spirit.

The significance of the Presentation lies at the very foundation of Christianity: “thus, to fulfill all righteousness.” Mary was a Virgin Bride and a Virgin Mother of the Great Cosmic Star Child: Jesus Christ our Lord. She stands as the Mother of Zion in its specific meaning as the Messianic progenitor: “a woman shall compass a man.”

A Servant of Jesus,

James

Collect for the Day

Almighty and everliving God, we humbly pray that, as your only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple, so we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts by Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**Cambrian Peshes* 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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