

The Cambrian Peshier

A Voice of the Desposyni to the Dispersion

Peshier for the Day of Saint Joseph,
March 19th, 2022

Beloved Friends:

The Lord's Sanhedrin

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

Jesus saith unto her, "Mary." She turned herself, and saith unto him, "Rabboni"; which is to say, "Master."

- John 20:16

The Lord's House & the Messianic Government

The biblical record tells us that Jesus "ordained" twelve disciples to be His apostles. *Apostolos* had a specific legal meaning in the Roman world. Comparable to our "law of agency" or "power of attorney" in modern jurisprudence, Jesus assigned the Twelve who were His menservants by operation of Mosaic Law, to become His "friends" - another term which had a specific legal meaning (John 15:15) - who were now both competent and empowered to speak on His behalf. The law of agency is not self-perpetuating. An apostle cannot ordain a new apostle to succeed him without the express authority of the principal. Consequently, the notion of "apostolic succession" is an illegitimate concept on its face.

Jesus also appointed an additional seventy men as disciples whom He sent to teach and work miracles in His Name among the villages of Israel (Luke 10). An account of the "Seventy" is found only in Luke's Gospel. The early Church Fathers discussed the Seventy further in their writings. Hippolytus, for example, assigns bishoprics to these men and lists them. Some of the names seem to be mixed up. Hippolytus calls them "apostles." A few of the Lord's brethren are named among them. Many of them are named in Paul's Epistles, especially in Romans Chapter 16. Stephen and his six compatriots in Acts 6 are listed as among the Seventy.

The Apostles were never appointed as bishops because, according to the Church Fathers (a term I use to refer to the period of church leadership during the Ecumenical Period: from the New Testament Church to the Great Schism), the bishop was the "throne of Christ" and was an extension of the Davidic monarchy. This fact is important. Only descendants of King David could assume the throne of David. In this scheme, while the Apostles "ordained" in a priestly or prophetic role the first Davidic thrones among the Gentiles, the Seventy, as viceroys and not merely vicegerents of the House of David, could name their own successors.

We would think that the Seventy should have been present among the disciples in the Upper Room in Acts Chapter One. But we are not sure. They are not mentioned as being present - as a distinct group - although the Eleven Apostles (Judas now being dead), the Mother Mary, the "women" (*gune*=wives), and the Lord's "brethren" alone are mentioned. It is curious that Peter felt a replacement for Judas was necessary to fulfill Bible prophecy. His replacement was chosen by a lottery system, not a vote of the disciples. The "casting of lots" became a way of finding the will of Christ.

If none of the Seventy were present in that pre-Pentecostal Church, then we might rightly wonder from what group of disciples Matthias and Barsabbas were nominated as candidates to replace Judas. For reasons discussed at length in *The House of Bethany* and then further developed in *Merlin: High Priest of the Holy Grail*, we believe that the Seventy were indeed among the 120 disciples in the Upper Room and that they were identified by a different name: in that category of the Lord's "brethren." They were among His "kinsmen" and specifically His "acquaintance" identified elsewhere in Luke's Gospel. Church historians called them "the Desposyni." While we do not have difficulty accepting the proposition that these disciples could have actually been the sons of Jesus Christ - who would have been quite young between the ages of 12 and 16 - (for Jesus did describe Himself as the "greater Solomon"), it is more probable that these disciples were simply sons of "the women" "born in His house" who would have been - by action of law - His putative or adopted sons, just as was Jesus to Joseph. More below.

The Jewish Sanhedrin

There is an accepted history of the Jewish Sanhedrin among Rabbinic Jews. The Sanhedrin is supposed to have been a secular court of Jewish elders: first, a Lesser Sanhedrin of 23 elders (a one third Sanhedrin: 3 times 23 is 69) which met in any given locality for local governance, and then there was a Greater Sanhedrin which consisted of 69 elders and the "Nasi" or President which comes to 70. (The symbolic reference to the 70 nations of Genesis 10 must be saved for another time). The Greater Sanhedrin served as an appellate court to the Lesser Sanhedrin. It is not clear if the Lesser Sanhedrin was produced in each locality - which seems to be impossible in the smaller villages - or whether the Lesser Sanhedrin served as a circuit court type of system, but probably a combination of both of these as the need arose. The Sanhedrin was a post-exile institution,

Sanhedrin: *the supreme council and tribunal of the Jews during postexilic times headed by a High Priest and having religious, civil, and criminal jurisdiction.* (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

Even though in the early years, the Aaronic High Priest was the President, Jewish historians claim that the High Priest was later replaced by the *Nasi*, a "prince" from the line of Hillel, who was of the Davidic line.

There was a place in the Temple precincts designated for the meeting of the Sanhedrin called the "Hall of the Hewn Stones." But in the trials recorded in the New Testament for Jesus and later for his disciples, it is not clear whether there ever was a formal gathering of the Sanhedrin for a ruling. In the Gospels, Jesus is taken to the "house of the High Priest" and even though according to Jewish sources, the High Priest was not the President of the Sanhedrin during this time period, we wonder if Jewish accounts are in error or whether the residence of the High Priest represented a "rump" council ruling behind the scenes.

But an even more intriguing revisionist interpretation comes to mind, something along the *genre* of Robert Graves' famous *King Jesus* and Hugh Schonfield's conversely infamous *The Passover Plot*. **What if Jesus, the titular head of the House of David - Jesus *ben Joseph* - was designated to take the President's chair of the Greater Sanhedrin as this *Nasi*, and that the contest described in the Gospels and in code in the Book of Revelation (Chapter 12, *et al*) represented a "cloak and dagger" civil war between the Davidians (Nazoraeans) and the Herodians (High Priests)?** Like a conspiracy of Deep State fake news, the charge of illegitimacy - of Christ's bastard birth - was propagated by the Herodians to keep the Temple priests in power and keep the Davidians out, especially the "Jessians" who were the original followers of Jesus (see Methodius).

If so, then we can explain the exclamation of Mary Magdalene at the Resurrection Tomb: she called Him "Rabboni" which the translation offered in the Fourth Gospel is insufficient - perhaps even redacted. "Rabbi" means "my master"; "rabboni" means "my great master" and was the title reserved among the Jews for the President of the Sanhedrin. In calling Him "Rabboni" Mary was acknowledging Him as the President of the Sanhedrin, not merely as an honorary appellation, but a true acknowledgment of His rightful position in the government of Israel:

Rabboni: *An Aramaic form of a title almost entirely applied to the president of the Sanhedrin, if such was a descendant of Hillel. It was even more respectful than Rabbi, and signified "My great master."*

- *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, p. 504 (emphasis added)

With this interpretation, we can also better appreciate the allusion in Jude's Peshier (the brother of James and Jesus *via Joseph*) of the so-called spiritual battle of "Michael" with the "devil" over the "body of Moses" quoted above.

Review

The various Peshers published over the last two years have been building the case for a different view of Bible prophecy - and indeed Bible "history" - than what is popular in our time today. Not much that we have offered is new. Many of our interpretations, such as of the books of Revelation and Daniel, can be found in the various commentators of different schools of prophetic interpretation from by-gone generations: the Preterists, the Historicists, and the Idealists, in particular. See the previous three Peshers (Peshers for the Presentation - 2022, Peshers for St. Stephen's Day - 2021, and the Peshers for Thanksgiving - 2021) for a fuller discussion of these views, and also the Article excerpt from the Merlin book, "Newton on the Apocalypse." **Isaac Newton is a key figure in our discussions and it is upon his calculations that we have arrived at the year 2046 AD as the year of the Great Eschaton.**

The prevailing prophetic interpretation among Evangelicals in our time is that of Futurism, otherwise known as Dispensationalism or Millenarianism: the belief that most of Bible prophecy awaits some future fulfillment during a time called "The Great Tribulation" and a 1000-year reign of peace called "the Millennium."

[As a side note, for the benefit of those unfamiliar with theological terminology, a recent secular application of the term "postmillennial" has come to mean anyone born after the turn of the millennium from the 1900s to the 2000s. Prior to that new definition, theologians used "postmillennial" as a reference to a doctrinal position on the return of Christ and that is how it is used here.]

Preterists will say the Book of Revelation - which, because of its many visionary episodes, should probably be titled in the plural as "revelations" - was written in symbolic language in direct reference to the historical events of the first Jewish-Roman War from the time-period of AD 63 (and the murder of James the Just) to the fall of Masada in AD 73. The siege and fall of Jerusalem, with the destruction of the Temple, occurred in 70 AD. But the war was not over prophetically until the fall of Masada. The accounts of the Jewish historian, Josephus, as well as several of the early Church Fathers (e.g. Eusebius) have provided descriptions of events, even on a cosmological scale such as earthquakes and eclipses, which seem to have striking features correlating with John's visions in the Apocalypse. R.J. Rushdoony has noted a number of these correlations in his book, *The Kingdom Come*, cited in the last Peshers. David Chilton (*Days of Vengeance*), who has been referenced several times, has, as well. Other hard-to-get authors from the 19th Century, such as Andover's Moses Stuart who was perhaps the single, greatest advocate of the Preterist school, can be referenced by the serious researcher who is not intimidated by the density of 19th Century prose.

Isaac Newton follows this Preterist view somewhat, especially in his use of Revelation's typology in reference to the Temple and the Temple service. But Newton is known also as a Historicist because he was able to find historical correlations extending

well into the medieval period. We have offered a specific example of the Seven Churches of Asia as representative of church "ages," which in Newton's calculations, carried through to the time of the later Roman Emperors.

As a Historicist, Newton correlates the "ten-year" persecution of Diocletian of the early 4th Century (*circa.* 305 AD) to a church age represented by the Church of Smyrna, in which Christ tells them that they would be persecuted for "ten days" (Revelation 2:10) - which was exactly how long that persecution lasted, using "a day equals a year" in prophetic chronology. In contrast, a Preterist can find another ten-year period of persecution in the Jewish rebellion described above: of the time from the death of James (*circa.* 63 AD) to the fall of Masada (73 AD) as a fulfillment of this prophecy. However, a Preterist would find difficulty in identifying an actual historical account which would apply literally to the experience of Gentile Christians in Smyrna. In this case, the Idealist School helps us by using the targumist hermeneutic, because we can say that "Smyrna," as is all of the Seven Churches, is a code-word for the Jerusalem Church - or the *Church of the Holy "Eretz."* Each of the Seven Churches is a different vantage point of the same Mother Church of the New Testament era.

Returning now to Revelation 2:13, at that time, early in the history of the New Testament Church - especially for "Pergamous," the church of the Messianic [*term redacted*] of Mount Zion - Stephen was the only "faithful martyr" known to have been "slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." "Satan's seat" could be found among "them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

Since Revelation tells us elsewhere that "Egypt" and "Sodom" were code for Jerusalem, we can now say that the "synagogue of Satan" was the Idumean Jewish leadership represented by the Herodian partisans of the Temple and that "the seat of Satan" was the office of the High Priest. Remember that "satan" is a word which means "accuser." These fake Jews had supplanted the heirs of David to the city of Jerusalem which he acquired through right of conquest as his private inheritance in Israel. The false heirs of the Temple religion had rejected the true heirs and had seized the Davidic family estate: the citadel of Zion.

The Edomites as the Circumcision

We noted in the last Peshier that during the Jewish Revolt cited above, the Edomites overran the city. Through Herod, it had always been under Edomite control, in spite of the growing dissent from the Qumranians which we have shown elsewhere to have been the Jewish faction of the Jerusalem Church led by James the brother of Jesus. The Christians outnumbered the Herodian partisans two to one. Edomite radicals were imported into the city to drive out the Christians during the period following the death of James. This period, according to the Preterist view, was known as "the Great Tribulation."

The Edomites were a tribe descended from Esau, the son of Isaac and the brother of Jacob. As descendants of the Abrahamic Covenant, the Edomites were a tribe that practiced circumcision. There is no historical account which can deny it. Thus - as Paul argued in Galatians and elsewhere - it was impossible to reduce the definition of a Jew to the rite of circumcision, for it would have been necessary to include the Edomites. Three generations of obedience to the Mosaic Law were necessary before an Edomite could "enter into the congregation of the LORD" (Deuteronomy 23:8).

This filial generosity notwithstanding, the Edomites, as a people, were the adversaries of Israel and of the post-exile regathering (Ezra & Nehemiah). The entire Book of Obadiah the Prophet is about Edom's role in "the last days." According to Josephus, the Herodians tried to create a messianic doctrine which would have made Herod the Great into the Jewish Messiah. We can see, then, that this usurpation against the House of David was the exact point of contention when Jesus appeared on the scene in Bethlehem.

The Herodians were antinomians. The Qumranian sect called them "the sons of Belial" which at the time was the most insulting epithet that could be imagined.

Predictably, to the Herodians, the Law of Moses was a law for Jacob's descendants, not Esau's. The Edomites lived under a different law which reflected Esau's "blessing" received from his father Isaac: "by thy sword shalt thou live" (Genesis 27:40), obviously, a reference to the warrior culture.

Like Nimrod, Esau was a hunter, while Jacob was a "plain man" and "dweller of tents" (Genesis 25:27). Without getting too deep into a psychological profile of these two men, it is enough to say that here we have a quintessential rivalry of the alpha male (Esau) and the beta male (Jacob). "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" was God's pronouncement. Jacob greets his brother with women and children; Esau greets him with 400 warriors.

Isaac Newton would later identify these psychological and cultural distinctions with the "antichrist" or "the Mahuzzim" doctrine as he would call it. By extension, we could remind Social Darwinists that a preference for the alpha male as some kind of foundation for civilization is both delusional and perverse. Women who admire and desire the alpha male while holding contempt for the beta male are indulging their fallen, sinful natures, as well.

The Peshier of the Seven Churches

On this point and others, Newton sometimes propounds the Idealist View. This is because the Idealist relies upon the doctrine of the covenant and its expression through Old Testament typology. Newton was a Puritan in his theological understanding and valued the prophetic value of covenant sanctions, as delineated in previous Peshiers.

In some respects, this view is somewhat startling. Newton, for example, tells us that the "Woman Clothed with the Sun" in Revelation 12 - the Mother Zion (and as a symbol of the Virgin Mary in our view, but not Newton's) and mother of the Messiah - becomes the "Whore of Babylon" in Revelation 17. We want to believe that the figures represented in Revelation are true throughout. But Newton recognizes the reality of apostasy and emphasizes that in his interpretations.

We are not to believe that the Virgin Mary herself apostasized, because by the time of the writing of this Vision, she was likely already dead or so old that she was no longer a public figure. But some of her successors in the Order of Widows (Acts 6) and the Church of Pergamos - who the Fathers would later call "the Altar of God" and the "Ark of the Sanctuary" (e.g. Ignatius, *et al*) - could have and in fact did embrace various heterodoxies, heresies, and ultimately, apostasies. Of the Seven Churches, Newton identified only two as pure of doctrine: Smyrna ("the Church of the Anointers") and Philadelphia ("the Church of Brotherly Love") of the Johannine Community.

Revisiting our "targumist" interpretation of the Seven Churches from earlier Peshers:

- 1) The Church of Ephesus would be the Church of the First Love: the Church during Christ's earthly ministry;
- 2) The Church of Smyrna would be the Church of the Anointers and the *Ebion*: the Church of the mothers of the Desposyni (the Seventy) who with the Apostles ordained the first Christian leaders;
- 3) The Church of Pergamos would be the Church of the Jerusalem persecutions: the Church of the Jamesian bishopric ending in the fall of the Temple - Zion widowed and deprived of her King;
- 4) The Church of Thyatira would be the Church of the Expansion and the Dispersion - the Daughters of Zion: the Churches of the Levant who struggled with various heterodoxies and heresies;
- 5) The Church of Sardis would be the Church of the Jewish Christians in the Gentile world: the Churches of the Synagogues which have not yet separated from the Church of the Circumcision;
- 6) The Church of Philadelphia would be the Desposynic Church in Exile: the Churches in Rome with the leadership en route to the West;
- 7) The Church of Laodicea would be the Church of the Rich Aristocracy: the Gentile and metropolitan Churches which have not yet experienced persecution.

The "Whore of Babylon," Newton, along with many others from the Reformation Era, would identify as the apostate church endowed with temporal power. While there are Historicist elements in this point of view, it finds its origin in the Idealist school because the moral pronouncements made by Christ to the Seven Churches is predicated upon

their level of faithfulness to the Covenant. As Newton says,

The prediction of things to come relate to the state of the Church in all ages.

- Observations, p. 5

Michael as a Messianic Theophany

In the last Peshier, St. Stephen was identified as the Antipas of Revelation 2. The High Priest of the Sanhedrin was identified as the peshier for "Satan" and "Satan's seat." The peshier was taken up again in Revelation 12, in which the Dragon is "Satan" because of the High Priest's connection with the Herodians. The archangel "Michael" becomes a representation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the starry host, of which a third is taken by the Dragon, represents the members of the Sanhedrin or perhaps a "lesser Sanhedrin" as explained above.

We anticipate the various challenges to this interpretation. We can suggest that just as John the Baptist was likened to Elijah the Prophet, and "Antipas" becomes code for Stephen, likewise, "Michael" - who is called in Daniel's visions: "the prince of your people" - becomes code for Jesus.

In the New Testament and in Christian soteriology, the Archangel Michael becomes a superfluous actor, because the Messiah's warrior status (Revelation 19) seems to overshadow him. "Michael" means "the God who is" and corresponds to our understanding of "I AM THAT I AM" and Christ's testimony at His trial to being the "I AM." We would simply say that the Michael of the Old Testament was a pre-Incarnate theophany of Christ who was the "Captain of the LORD's Host" (Joshua 5:13-15) and as was said of Him by the angel Gabriel, "the Prince of your People" (Daniel 10:13, 21).

Following this same hermeneutic, we can revisit Jude's reference to Michael's contest with "the devil" over "the body of Moses" (v. 9 - the Book of Jude is a litany of peshiers). Most interpreters assume that somekind of celestial battle over Moses' corpse is here in view, as if such a struggle would mean anything. But following our peshier further, "the body of Moses" would be better understood as a reference to the Jewish Sanhedrin, which was a "body" of the high elders of the people of Israel "who sat in Moses' seat" (Matthew 23:2). Just as the New Testament calls the Church "the body of Christ," so here "the body of Moses" should mean the covenant community of the Old Testament Church specifically represented in the Sanhedrin. The contention between Michael and "the devil" is of a judicial nature, not one of a physical contest. Consequently, it is relevant that Jesus would say to Satan: "the Lord rebuke thee" and judge him by the sword of His mouth (Revelation 19:15).

For those who want to still believe in ghosts and goblins, such an interpretation is no doubt troubling. Unfortunately, their belief in the existence of God has come to depend upon a belief in the devil. If the devil is deprived of his various supernatural attributes, the superstitious mind is offended.

While Jesus' teachings as recorded in the Gospels clearly side with the belief in supernatural beings we know as angels, spirits, demons, and so on, we do not know their metaphysics. Are they phenomenal beings or noumenal beings? Do they have a separate and autonomous existence? Or do they exist only in the realm of thought? These kinds of questions were discussed in our Peshier for All Hallows, 2020 and need not be repeated here.

Evangelical churches irrationally cling to their Dispensationalist dogma. They must have their Devil, Antichrist, and Rapture. A different point of view is not allowed. Readers who may find this discussion enlightening and invigorating should consider that most Christians in most denominations would be horrified. So enmeshed is evangelicalism with satanism, Evangelicals are more offended if you don't believe in their Devil than if you deny the existence of God. For them, atheism is more forgivable. They use the existence of Satan as a backdoor to prove the existence of God. It is a perversity which has produced a species of "woke" derangement that will lead sadly to their destruction.

The Day of Saint Joseph

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man . . . Matthew 1:19

Today, we remember and celebrate the life and testimony of Joseph, the putative father of Jesus. He was a Zadokite as the Scripture here in Matthew tells us. The word "man" as in "just *man*" is supplied by the translators and does not appear in the original text. A better rendering would be "then Joseph her husband, being a *zadok*" as read in the Aramaic. The Zadokites were interpreters of the Mosaic Law and commanded moral authority, even to the point of receiving tithes of the people (see the "Gospel of Nicodemus"). The Dead Sea Scrolls identified the office of "The Teacher of Righteousness," *morahazedek*, a position held, we believe, by Joseph, John the Baptist, our Lord Jesus Christ, and His brother, James the Just (Zadok). There are several men in the New Testament identified as "zadoks." It is not entirely clear whether these men were simply partisans on behalf of the Zadokites, or whether they were actual leaders. More on that another time.

It is also not always clear if the Zadokite Party - at least in the Scrolls - were descended from the High Priest of King David's time or some one else. The Scrolls ascribe a role to Melchisedek, for example, and seem to cite him as a founder of the priestly role of the House of David (Psalm 110:4). The entire book of Hebrews is written to tell us that the "Christian" Zadoks are Davidic and are of the House of Jesus.

The ancient rulers of Jerusalem (Salem) were "Zedeks," as in Melchi-*zedek*. But we are also told of an "Adoni-zedek" who was killed by Joshua in the Canaanite Wars. Adonizedek was also the king of Jerusalem and probably a descendant of the original Melchisedek.

Jerusalem was never conquered by the Israelites until David took the city and made it his own inheritance in the land, independent of any inheritance he might have gotten from his father, Jesse. Jerusalem became David's private estate and all the Jebusite inhabitants which he spared. They were his by right of conquest.

We theorize that is why there are two genealogies for Christ's ancestry: one for the bloodline through Mary, and the other for the conveyance of title through Joseph. Title was conferred as a sovereign act, not by natural descent. Consequently, we argue that Joseph was the titular head of the House of David in his day, and Jesus was his successor.

We will save for another time a discussion of James the brother of Jesus and why it was he who became in so many ways the founder of our Christian faith. Until then, read Isabel Hill Elder's study published on this website.

God bless you.

A servant of Jesus,

James

Collect for the Day

O God, who from the family of your servant David raised up Joseph to be the guardian of your incarnate Son and the spouse of his virgin mother: Give us grace to imitate his uprightness of life and his obedience to your commands; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and 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 Episcopal Church for liturgical guidance. We are not an affiliate of any denomination.

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