

The Cambrian Peshier

A Voice of the Desposyni to the Dispersion

Feast of St. Ignatius, 2024

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Beloved Friends:

On The Redaction of Christianity

There are also many other things which Jesus did. John 21:25

I will not leave you comfortless. Jesus, John 14:18

Abstract

The thesis offered in this Peshier is essentially a redefinition of the role of the Holy Spirit from that of merely an internal dwelling or possession of a person by a spiritual power, to that of one which includes a relational bond with a person who is designated as a "paraklete" (i.e. comforter) and who becomes a New Covenant version of the Old Testament office of the Kinsman-Redeemer. In the Hebrew language this office or ministry was called the Ga'al (or go'el). Its New Testament counterpart is distinguishable from that of apostles and other charismatic leaders promoted in the traditional narrative. It is best represented by an untruncated ministry of the presbyter (elder). An "episkopos" (bishop) was a presbyter who could effectively be a "kinsman-redeemer." In the earliest years of Christianity, the bishop was a "messianic" vocation in the sense of being one which symbolized the rule of Christ among His people. In terms of the Davidic Covenant, only the Desposyni could be a royal "episkopos" which can be summarized propositionally as follows:

Proposition #1 - The Procession of the Holy Ghost is the doctrine which confesses the Providential care of Jesus Christ over His people in his physical absence;

Proposition #2 - According to the eternal, spiritual nature of man, the Procession of the Holy Ghost is manifested by the propagation of truth, the Divine Word;

Proposition #3 - According to its counterpart in the physical nature of man, the Procession of the Holy Ghost is manifested by the propagation of the Desposyni, the Word made flesh;

Proposition #4 - The Desposyni are the physical descendants of Jesus Christ;

Proposition #5 - The Procession of the Holy Ghost is perfected in the Office of a Desposynic Episcopacy;

Proposition #6 - A Desposynic Episcopacy requires a priesthood and a lordship: i.e. mediation and dominion over the physical realm;

Proposition #7 - The Desposynic Dominion over the physical realm is what the Fathers always meant by the expression: "the 2nd Coming of Christ."

*Note that in this Peshar "Paraclete" is spelled as "Paraklete" to follow the lexicons.

Chapter One - What was Lost?

As attested by the authors of John's Gospel, twice - once by the original "Beloved Disciple" in John 20:31 and once by the composer of the much later addendum cited above (21:25) - not everything that Jesus taught or did has been passed down to us. From the very beginning, His life and works have been "redacted."

It is not that these other works or "signs" were unimportant; everything that Jesus said and did was important. In the Fourth Gospel, we are told that the pericope of its record was limited to what would produce saving *faith*: "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing [we] might have life through his name" (20:31).

Unpacking this statement reveals five points of emphasis: 1) We are to learn of "Jesus" as a historical person; 2) We are to learn that He is the Messiah ("Christ") of the Older Testament record; 3) That He is "the Son of God"; 4) That "believing" should bring us "life"; and 5) His "name." All that is necessary to understand the meaning of these five points can be found in this Gospel record.

There are other Gospels, of course: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. As records of His ministry, we believe that they represent His teachings from the lost "Book of the Kingdom" which was first composed by Samuel at the inauguration of the monarchy:

*Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book,
and laid it up before the LORD.*

- 1 Samuel 10:25

Scholars usually suppose that this "book" was summarized in 1 Samuel 8:9 *ff*, and perhaps interpolated in Deuteronomy 17, but we can hardly suppose that these short passages should have constituted the sum of it.

As the titular head of the House of David, Jesus would have been privy to this information, as it was an expression of the Divine will for the office of the king. Its provenance would have been kept with the national records preserved in the Ark of the Covenant, with one copy for the king (which presumably would have been passed down through the succession) and one copy as a permanent record in the Temple.

With all of this talk of monarchies and succession, it must not be forgotten that King David was among the most "evangelical" of the ancients. Much of the teachings concerning Christ's Atonement, the way of personal salvation, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and many other doctrines which modern Christians hold dear, find their origins and evangelical expression in the Psalms. He was, after all, "a man after [God's] own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). In many respects, his compositions must be considered a "proto-Gospel."

That was why Jesus could explain to His disciples the purpose of His life and ministry from the Older Testament records: every aspect of His Messianic calling was defined and controlled by Old Testament types and prophecy (Luke 24:44, *et al*). We have discussed this in previous Peshers, and as an aside, it is mystifying to witness the cavils of skeptics who for many generations have complained that either Jesus Christ did not fulfill all of the Old Testament prophecies or of those which He did fulfill, they were contrived. Now that those complaints have been laid to rest by the diligent work of Christian apologists, the skeptics argue that their fulfillment is still too convenient. Instead, they want us to believe that the story of Jesus is merely a literary invention composed "after the fact" from the "midrash" teachings of the prophets. In other words, the Gospel writers invented an imaginary, historical person to fit the Old Testament types and predictions - much like the script for a play. Some people can never be pleased.

Using the Midrash to Complete the Jesus Story

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

- Luke 24:27

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that this "midrash" (or what we call a "pesher") is the doctrinal foundation for the married Jesus, the Messianic family, and the government of the First Christians. What we think we lack in the New Testament records to support this supposition (but there is far more than one might suppose, allowing for doctrinal bias), the balance is clearly provided in the Old Testament records. In other words, "the midrash" of the Old Testament proto-Gospel fills the gaps in our otherwise "redacted" New Testament record.

Returning to our topic of the lost "Book of the Kingdom" mentioned above, scholars sometimes think that Jesus and New Testament writers used the Greek "Vulgate" translation of the Old Testament scriptures (commonly known as the Septuagint), which perhaps they did. But more likely they used the Hebrew texts upon which the Septuagint depends. Those manuscripts are lost to us just as the original New Testament manuscripts are lost to us.

We think we have found help from the Dead Sea Scrolls for the Old Testament records, and William Whiston thought that the early Clementine records might have helped in the verification of the New Testament record, as well.

Before the Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars relied upon the *Works of Josephus* to bridge the gaps in the Old Testament record. You will recall that William Whiston, the colleague of Isaac Newton, was a patristic scholar and provided the English translation of Josephus upon which the Christian world has depended since the middle of the 18th Century.

Josephus wrote on "The Wars of the Jews" and the "Antiquities of the Jews." While his record of contemporary events, especially the siege of Jerusalem, was from personal knowledge written from memory - and was sometimes less than satisfactory - his "Antiquities of the Jews" was based upon the records of the Temple which the General Titus presented to him before the edifice was burned to the ground.

In the back of the Whiston's *Works of Josephus* can be found Whiston's *Dissertations*. Scholars usually do not read them. They should. Whiston establishes that Josephus' "Antiquities of the Jews" is a superior record of the Old Testament than either the Septuagint, the Masoretes, or the Samaritan Pentateuch. This is because his "Antiquities" was based upon the unused and untarnished record from the Temple repository: the very text placed into the Temple records chest by the Prophet Nehemiah. If true, Josephus' sources would antedate the Dead Sea Scrolls by as much as five hundred years.

In his *Antiquities*, we learn things like that the reign of King Solomon lasted 80 years, not the 40 years of standard tradition. The patriarchal stories which we think St. Stephen got mixed up in Acts 7, he is vindicated by Josephus. And the references to Daniel's prophecies also impact our understanding of the "Messianic" time clock.

As for the New Testament, Whiston translated the Beza text of the New Testament along with the writings of the Apostolic Fathers (e.g. Ignatius), the Clementine Homilies, Apostolic Constitutions, and numerous other writings which, until his translations, remained inaccessible for the English-speaking world. It is from the Beza text that we learn that there were children present with the believers on the Day of Pentecost (as discussed in our last Peshet).

Curiously, in this version of the New Testament, the order of the Gospels is different: Matthew, *John*, Mark, and Luke. John becomes the second Gospel, not the fourth, and we are challenged with the speculation that the Beza text might have represented the true chronological order.

Whiston was kicked-out of Cambridge for his Arianism and fell out of favor with the monarchy and the academic world. His contributions to Christian scholarship fell down the memory hole of history.

Chapter Two - What is a Prophet?

(Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)

- 1 Samuel 9:9

Everyone thinks he knows what a prophet is. "It's someone who can predict the future, right?" And we would be partially correct. Our modern word descends to us from the Greek language - *prophetes* - and consequently, it originates in the divine oracles of Greek mythology in which people who can "divine" the future from "signs" are said to be closer to the forces which control our destinies.

When we encounter "prophets" in the Older Testament (or the Hebrew writings) we discover that prophets are the counselors of kings. That makes sense because heads of state are important people who must make important decisions and to make those decisions, they must have inside information as a basis for those decisions.

In the beginning, like our example from ancient Greece, Old Testament prophets were known as "seers." These were shaman-type people who relied upon altered states of consciousness as a direct connection to the divine realm by which they could access knowledge which only the gods could see. Balaam in the Book of Numbers is a good example of this, but the Prophet Samuel would be another who could hear God's voice.

[One wonders if the later Greek word for bishop - *episkopos*, which means "overseer" - might be an attempt to connect these "seers" of old with the prophetic component to the spiritual ministry of that ecclesiastical office.]

However, there is an interesting transition after the time of Moses in which the word for prophet changes from that of the "seer" to something else. It becomes from that time onward almost the exclusive word for "prophet" . . . and that is the word "naba" or "nabiy" (*naw-bee*, Strong's #5030).

Now, the lexicons tell us that this word "naba" is derived from "Nebo" and is possibly a reference to Mt. Nebo of biblical history. This would be an interesting connection because in the ancient world, it was believed that the gods dwelt in the high mountains. For the ancient Canaanites, their pantheon was said to dwell in Mt.

Hermon, the highest peak of northern Palestine. Of course, for the Greeks, they had the famous Mt. Olympus.

Anyone who ascended and then descended from such places of divine abode and survived would be assumed to have communed with the gods and would then have had inside knowledge . . . hence, a prophet.

We must consult the biblical narrative to see whether there was anything special about Mt. Nebo, and indeed, there was. We are told that it is Moses' burial place (Deuteronomy 34:1), where he was buried by God Himself. Since no one knew exactly where that burial location was - as it was kept a secret by God - pious Israelites enshrined the entire mountain as belonging to Moses and anyone who was called a "naba" was one who had been to the mountain of Moses.

Furthermore, in 2 Maccabees 4:2-7, we are told that the Prophet Jeremiah, sometime during the seige and destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians, took the Ark of the Covenant and hid it in a cave in Mt. Nebo. So with a double affirmation, we could say that anyone who was a "naba" or "nabiy" was one who not only had come down from communing with Moses, but also had been to the Holy Ark of God.

[Again, it is a curious thing to consider that the Prophet Daniel saw an uncarved stone from a sacred "mountain" which falls from Heaven and destroys the polymetallic statue of Nebuchednazzar's vision. Don't forget that Daniel was contemporary with Jeremiah, so the connections of these analogies should not be considered farfetched. He might be referring to Mt. Nebo and the doctrine of the Covenant which was symbolized by both Moses and the Ark. Likewise, the references to the "school of the prophets" and the "sons of the prophets," especially during the time of Elijah and Elisha and in close proximity to this sacred mountain, can take us down too many trails which we cannot address here.]

The Prophet in the New Testament

We lose these distinctions when we get to the Greek of the New Testament. As indicated above, the Greek language has its own word for prophet and it is the one which forms our word for it today. For the most part, the writings of the New Testament refer to "prophets" in terms of the "Law and the Prophets" which form a major part of the Old Testament canon. Other times, there appears to be an "office" of the prophet. John the Baptist was called a "prophet" and anyone who is identified in the New Testament as someone with a special right to speak for God is called a prophet:

*Behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes,
and some of them ye shall kill . . .*

- Jesus, Matthew 23:34

Presumably, the larger body of Christ's disciples would fit into one of these three categories. It is interesting that he said nothing about "apostles." We surmise that they must be subsumed under the "prophet" category.

St. Paul refers to a "gift" of prophecy which belongs to all people who have become Christians and are "filled with the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12-14). He regards all Christians to be recipients of this spiritual grace and a people who enjoy an intimate connection with the mind of God.

However, aside from this general spiritual grace, he does delineate it from an "office" or "ministry" which is prophetic. We encounter New Testament prophets in the book of Acts - such as Agabus, whom Paul ignores - who speak with divine authority. How someone who enjoys the prophetic gift is promoted to becoming one who holds an authoritative position of "prophet" in the Church, Paul never says.

He also delineates between the office of the apostle from that of the prophet. We are never entirely sure which one is more important than the other or who has the greater authority. We naturally assume that they all agree, so the distinction does not matter very much, except in the case of Agabus just cited. But Paul was known to ignore the other apostles, too, so he was an equal opportunity iconoclast.

Paul does rank the apostle first, then the prophet, in his reference to an ecclesiastical "five-fold" ministry in Ephesians (4:11); so there seems to be a precedence for a delineation. But in the same Epistle (2:20), he ranks them as equals in the "foundation" of the Church, with Christ being "the chief cornerstone."

As the New Testament doctrine is developed elsewhere, we surmise that the "apostles" were ranked higher because they were specifically sent by Christ and should have been an office which ended with them. Paul squeezes himself into the group because he claims personal visions in which Christ sent him with an apostolic mission to the Gentiles, and because of that fact, he, too, has apostolic authority. There has been no small controversy over that ingratiation, one which has lasted to this day (and which we

have addressed in previous Peshers) but it is sufficient to say that no one in the New Testament era regarded him as an equal, let alone a superior, to the Twelve.

Regardless, because Paul invented a post-Ascension class of "apostles," the historic church has had to endure through the centuries the rise and fall of numerous charismatic figures who have claimed to be "sent" by Christ, either by vision or by some other kind of miraculous criteria.

Chapter Three - The Paraklete

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. John 14:18

For if he were on earth, he would not be priest. Hebrews 8:4

The reader must appreciate that the Greek word for "comforter" in the Johannine literature is the word "paraklete." It means "advocate," as in a legal consort. It does not mean a fluffy pillow. When Christ tells his disciples that He will send them "another comforter," the word is "paraklete."

Aside from the untold stories of Jesus mentioned above, the other thing which has been lost to us is the physical presence of Jesus among His people. But as He explained to the disciples, that loss was necessary to His priesthood in Heaven and to the replication of the Divine power among His people. In other words, somehow, His physical presence in the Throne Room of Heaven is required for His people to exercise righteous dominion upon the Earth. Their derivative authority depends upon His eternal priesthood which can only be manifested in Heaven (Hebrews 5:6; 7:16,24). This is stated numerous times in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Consequently, the "end times" scenario advocated by Premillennial and Dispensationalist theologians becomes problematic. Should Christ leave His Throne in Heaven, the place where His Atonement makes our entrance to the "throne of grace" possible, then the loss of that advocacy means the loss of dominion for His people upon the Earth. The scenario these schemes require, of course, is the notion of a 2nd Coming of Christ in which His physical presence in modern-day Jerusalem would be required with a restored Temple and a restored Davidic Throne.

It is worth noting that there is no depiction anywhere in the New Testament writings - Paul included - in which Jesus Christ actually descends to the Earth. He is always depicted as "coming" in the "clouds of heaven." In Revelation 19, the most celebrated account where we find Christ "coming" on a White Horse with the armies of Heaven following, no where does He descend to the Earth. He fights his battle from the sky.

In Paul's equally celebrated prediction of the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4, we are "caught up" to be with the Lord "in the air" and "so shall we ever be with the Lord" - in Heaven, not on Earth.

Christ said His coming would be as "lightning which shineth from the east, even unto the west" in Matthew 24:27 - not to the ground.

In none of these accounts is there actually a physical descent from Heaven. Rather, Heaven is opened up so that all eyes might see the present reality of a Christ who is reigning from Heaven, a kingdom which is currently shrouded from view by the darkened vision of men.

There is a second "coming" in the sense of a "second" appearance which can be seen by the eyes of man. We are told in Hebrews 9:28,

*And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time
without sin unto salvation.*

The Greek word, here, for "appear" is *optomai* - "to be seen" - which is far different than the notion of "coming."

But even this "appearing" occurs *after* death and at the time of judgment, as it says in the previous verse (v. 27). Presumably, this is the Great White Throne judgment at the end of history, long after any millennial kingdom as imagined by these chiliast commentators.

The Paraklete Brigade

*And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted,
The son of consolation) . . .*

- Acts 4:36

Readers of previous Peshers will call to mind our discussions on Barnabas and his entourage of legal advocates. He is introduced to us here as "The son of consolation," which we find in the Greek to be a cognate of "paraklete." The occasion, of course, was his large financial contribution for the living expenses of the new converts who stayed behind after the festal season of Pentecost to learn more about Jesus.

His important role as benefactor of the Church compels a further analysis of this account. Why would the author draw attention to the "interpretation" of this surname?

As we demonstrated above, "Barnabas" is "bar"= son and "naba"= prophet. *Naba* is not the New Testament word for prophet, but rather an Old Testament word (in both the Hebrew and Chaldean, i.e. Aramaic). Luke, who we assume has authored the Book of Acts as attested by the Church Fathers, should have translated "Barnabas" as "son of the prophet," if that is what he meant, not "son of the *paraklete*."

That he has translated it as "paraklete" is an anomaly which requires further consideration.

First, by intentionally making *paraklete* the word equivalent of *naba*, Luke would be telling us that the Old Testament *naba* is now the New Testament *paraklete*.

Second, the New Testament word for prophet, as it originates in the Greek, would not be the same as the Old Testament word for prophet.

Third, if the New Testament was originally composed or taught in Aramaic or Hebrew, then we have a case of "lost in translation" by the Greek rendering of "prophet."

Fourth, the Old Testament role of "advocacy" instead of "prophecy" for the *naba* is set as front and center and should control our understanding of what a New Testament prophet might be.

Finally, "Paraklete" means "advocate," especially in the legal sense. We should begin to look at the role of the New Testament prophet in the same way: as a legal advocate in the courtrooms of God and man.

The Paraklete as Kinsman-Redeemer

We have an Advocate [paraklete] with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

-1 John 2:1 (KJV)

We have a Kinsman-Redeemer with the Father, Jesus Christ the Zadok.

(Targumistic paraphrase)

The Cambrian Church has offered an extensive study on the topic of the "Kinsman-Redeemer" as taught in the Bible which is published to the internet (2046AD.org). The *Ga'al* (or *go'el*) in the Hebrew language does not have a Greek equivalent. However, it is the argument of this Peshier that "paraklete" became that word equivalent, according to apostolic interpretation. In a previous Peshier ("House of Bethany" Peshier), we pointed out how that a primary function of the kinsman-redeemer was that of a legal advocate. What we are arguing here is that the Old Testament word for "naba" or a prophet, is also one of an advocacy.

We are challenged then with the question as to why the name of Barnabas, for example, if it is meant to convey the notion of the Kinsman-Redeemer, was not *Bar-goel* = "son of the kinsman-redeemer." We think that is because "paraklete" acquired that equivalence in the development of legal doctrine in the Intertestamental Period, especially in Roman jurisprudence. The "goel" as described in the Mosaic Law is also translated in our Bibles as "avenger of blood" as part of a warrior culture. "Avengers of blood" no longer existed in the Roman world. It was considered a relic of barbarism. As in our society today in which family feuds are settled in the courts, Roman law required similar civil institutions. Today, attorneys have become what was formerly the knights of a warrior class. Disputes are settled by legal arguments, not physical combat. Likewise, in the Roman world, these *go'els* (avengers of blood) were replaced by the *parakletes*.

In the emergence of the New Testament Church we are witnessing an eschatological event. The Old Testament office of the Kinsman-Redeemer was being transformed into a *prophetic* office. In fulfillment of Moses' plea - "Would God that all

the LORD's people were prophets" (Numbers 11:29) - and certainly the fulfillment of the first Christian Pentecost as was declared by Peter ("Thy sons and thy daughters shall prophesy"), a new age of decentralized spiritual authority had now come.

While the trend throughout the Old Testament was one of centralization, specifically in the Temple and priesthood at Jerusalem, the diffusion of the Holy Spirit now reversed that trend, not in an anarchistic, lawless devolution, but rather one of truly enthroning pre-Mosaic patriarchal institutions with a New Covenant power.

In this case, the Old Testament Kinsman-Redeemer - or what we might call the biblical patriarchy and the landed gentry - was now robed with the judicial authority to speak for God to all those of his respective lineage and estate. His authority cannot be trumped by king or priest, or even a prophet. Because now he, too, was a king, priest, and prophet.

The transition was supposed to begin in the Desposynic Episcopacy. The Davidic succession was also a priesthood "after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). Becoming a Christian was meant to convey the idea of becoming a member of the household of Jesus Christ. The sacraments of the Church and the establishment of presbyters and bishops (who were, at first, the literal descendants of Jesus Christ) were meant to create a process of adoption and integration. Governed by such domestic laws as found in Exodus 21, the journey of "discipleship" as Jesus commanded His disciples in the Great Commission, was to incorporate His laws: "teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). These included the laws of the monarchy as explained above in Samuel's "Book of the Kingdom" which we find summarized (or perhaps truncated) in 1 Samuel 8 and Deuteronomy 17, but further expounded in the teachings of Jesus as found in the Gospels. His teaching on the Good Shepherd in John 10 is foundational to our understanding of the royal episcopal office.

With Barnabas in Acts 4, he very literally becomes a redeemer for the Church by providing funds for sustenance. If, as we argue, this Barnabas was Lazarus who was the Beloved Disciple, he was then Christ's designated successor in the care of His mother, and with her, all who were His "acquaintance" of the House of David (Luke 23:49; John 19:26-27).

The description of the role of the bishop in the epistles of St. Ignatius is also that of benefactor, champion, and judicial coverture.

This process of discipleship of "the nations" got mired down in the apostasy that was "Rome" - the Fourth iteration of the Babylonian heresy which was revealed in the prophecies of Daniel. The Kinsman-Redeemer required a structure that was familial and ran contrary to the urban/slave culture of Rome. An economic decentralization is required, which Europe saw during the Middle Ages, but failed to exploit because Daniel's visions still needed to play themselves out. "The times of the gentiles" represented by the 10 Kingdoms and their alliance with the "Whore of Babylon" had yet to run its course.

Chapter Four: A Paraklete as Author of the Book of Revelation

And I John . . . was in the spirit on the Lord's Day.

- Revelation 1:9-10

The Book of Revelation is organized as a covenant lawsuit. Jesus Christ as the *Ga'al* - both as Kinsman-Redeemer and as Avenger of Blood - after sufficient warning from His prophets, must now enforce covenant sanctions against a wicked society (See David Chilton's, *Days of Vengeance*, Dominion Press, 1987).

As it is a word which means "apocalypse," *Revelation* then is the "unveiling" or the "revealing" of the reality of Christ's Kingdom.

It begins as a "revelation" given by God to Jesus Christ which was passed on to "John" who, as will be shown, is a "Prophet" (not an "apostle") in the context of the Revelation narrative.

In Revelation, there is a distinction between "apostles" and "prophets." "Apostles" are limited to the Twelve because they constitute the "foundation" of the New Jerusalem. It excludes Paul and any transient apostles which might come later after the Twelve. If the Apostle John were the author of this book, his angelic escorts would have acknowledged it. But instead, this "John" the Revelator is classified with a "fellow servant" among the "prophets":

And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am they fellow servant and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

- Revelation 22:8-9 (emphasis added)

The first time John did this in Chapter 19:10, the angel identified himself as "thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren." But here, the angel adds a specific class of "brethren": "the prophets." If the scholar chooses to source this text in the Aramaic, he will find confirmation: "prophet" reads "naba." This John was not an apostle; he was a "naba": a *paraklete*.

Unlike the apostles who form the twelve foundation stones of the New Jerusalem, the number of the "prophets" is indeterminate in the Book of Revelation. We cannot presume that this terminology is a reference to the Old Testament writings, as in the classification of "the Law and the Prophets." If we are looking at merely a literary classification of Divine revelation with "the Prophets" as referring to the Old Testament and "the Apostles" referring to the New Testament, that would be an unwarranted assumption here. We have already demonstrated in previous Peshers that the New Testament was not composed by the Apostles, but rather by the Desposyni.

In Ephesians, Paul may have used these classifications in terms of the Old Covenant (prophets) and the New Covenant (apostles) which together make the completed cosmic church. But in discussing the Book of Revelation, we do not see such a classification. Here, these "prophets" are a New Covenant institution as are the apostles.

Unless we want to believe that John of the Apocalypse was practicing necromancy, we must believe that the "angel" which is his escort in Chapters 19:10 and 22:9, is a living human messenger. The texts tell us here explicitly that they are not supernatural beings (angels). These messengers are "fellow servants", "of thy brethren", "of the prophets", who "keep these sayings." "These sayings" would be the same teachings of Jesus. Such a prophet, as this angel and of John the Revelator, would have been post-Ascension actors. For

The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

- Revelation 19:10

If not heavenly beings, some commentators have supposed that these "angels" might be the spirits of human martyrs. In such case, they would have been poltergeists. It would have been necromancy. John would have admitted to a flagrant violation of the Mosaic Law and would have discredited the entire book as the work of an apostate of demonic origins:

*There shall not be found among you any one that . . . [is] a necromancer.
For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD*

- Deuteronomy 18:10-12

In exploring other explanations, we must revisit the nature of prophetic language. Does the Apocalypse represent true visions in an alternate reality or does it represent the author's **use of allegory**, much like John Bunyan's famous "Pilgrim's Progress"? And if it represents a literary art-form, what kind of "coded language" was it that it could be deciphered?

If it was a literary invention, we could surmise that these "angels" represent a literary personification of martyrs in a symbolic encounter. Much like Jesus' cannibal speech in John 6, to avoid a literalism which would suggest something profane, Christ said His words were "spirit" and "the flesh profiteth nothing," dissuading his listeners from making a literal interpretation of His analogy.

John, likewise, was "in the spirit" at the start of his narrative. In other words, these angelic beings would not have constituted conjured spirits as was the case of Samuel by King Saul's "Witch of Endor." They would have been literary fictions created to teach a moral in the narrative.

We think this should be the case because in the beginning of the Apocalypse and also later (17:3; 21:10) John is "in the spirit" "and is caught up" to Heaven which we have shown is an expression which means that all that is to follow is symbolic. It does not mean that the prophet was in an altered state of consciousness or in a trance. If he were in a trance, the text would have said so. "In the spirit" or "opening the eyes" does not mean a loss of consciousness or an entry into a different plane of existence.

Also, John's cryptic saying "for the testimony of Jesus" introduced in 1:2 and explained in 19:10 as quoted above, should mean **that the "testimony," as in the witness of a legal testator in a judicial proceeding, is the "language" of prophecy**, because prophecy should not be interpreted to refer to "predicting the future" but rather as a warning of sanctions for violating the Covenant. Our view is that the Apocalypse represents a covenant lawsuit against the apostate nation of the Jews and a declaration of the triumph of our Lord's Messianic kingdom.

[Previous Peshers have invoked the writings of George Lamsa, Moses Stuart, Isaac Newton and others which may be consulted for sources.]

We could interpret this expression to mean that John's heavenly escorts were real human beings. But the "visions" involve experiences which are beyond physical capabilities. They occur in John's visionary mind and are internal projections. We would want to know what kind of magician is capable of such telepathic powers.

It is better to surmise that these angels are John's *literary creations*, although perhaps based upon real people.

Did he really see Jesus in Chapter 1 fully wielding a two-edged sword proceeding from His mouth? The absurdity of some of these images compels us to believe that John has made them up as props to his theatrical homily.

Who then were the New Covenant prophets and of whom might John be identifying as this angel?

The New Testament prophets were the *parakletes*. John here would be saying that he was a "barnabas," a *paraklete*, and that his escort was one, as well.

The *parakletes* were the Desposyni and John would be saying here that he was Desposyni and that the fraternity of the Desposyni would have been the true guardians of the Jesus movement.

There are three people in the New Testament for whom "the heavens were opened": Jesus, Stephen, and John of the Apocalypse.

Chapter Five: The Paraklete in the Johannine Community

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth . . .

- 1 John 2:25

Theologians have debated whether there was ever a distinct branch of the Early Church which can be called "Johannine." We side with the belief that there was such a branch but it was known by a different name and by different actors.

That such a community existed seems certain because the very existence of the Johannine literary corpus presupposes an audience for its writings. In other words, the Fourth Gospel, the Johannine Epistles and even the Book of Revelation (e.g. "the Seven Churches") are addressed to a select group of Christians, and not to the Church at large.

A critical doctrine in the Johannine Community is that of Jesus Christ as the pre-existent Divine Logos. Unlike the other Gospels, the role of the Davidic royal covenant in this Gospel narrative is non-existent. In fact, in the controversy surrounding Christ's "living waters" pronouncement in the Temple precincts (John 7:41-42), the rulers made the presumption that He was not of the Davidic line nor born in Bethlehem, a thing which does not solicit a correction from the Gospel writer, who does so in other places in the text. Nicodemus pleads for a hearing at an impromptu gathering of the Sanhedrin: to which they smugly and summarily dismiss the request with, "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet" (v.52). Nicodemus, who should have known of Jesus' origins, offers no contradiction.

Christ's Messianic claims are based upon His pre-existence: "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58). If we classify the Lord's brethren as "the Desposyni" as some of the later historians did, then the author of the Fourth Gospel is anti-Desposynic and anti-apostolic. He diminishes the role of the Lord's brethren (which would have included James: John 7:5) and the apostles (especially Peter: John 21:22 *et al*).

[Another reason to believe "John" was the First Gospel and not the Fourth is precisely because it lacks a genealogy. Later Gospels (Matthew and Luke) would incorporate genealogies and birth stories to refute these contraindications of Messianic provenance.]

While the other Gospels emphasize Christ as “the Son of God” in the Greco-Roman sense as one with supernatural origins, John’s Gospel, lacking a birth story, emphasizes an “incarnation” by “possession,” which could have happened at any stage of human development. The “Divine Logos” or the pre-existent “Word” was “made flesh” in the person of Jesus Christ. This Gospel does not say when, although it is hinted that it might have occurred at his baptism (John 1:32-34), although it could have been at conception when from gestation in the womb the Word “was made flesh” (John 1:14) – because it is in the womb that we all are made.

The historic church believes that this incarnation happened at conception but it did not require *causa formalis* in the reception of a Divine “seed” in the stead of human seed. Likewise, for purposes of the royal covenant, Jesus Christ *could* have been the Davidic Messiah by patrimony only (being sired by Joseph, the Ebionite view) or by matrimony only (through the Virgin Mary, the Creedal view). In the Creeds, Christ’s Divine origins do not follow in the Greco-Roman tradition of a divine being mating with an Earth woman: *coitus more ferarum* (sex in the way of beasts). But none of these views matter in John’s Gospel. Even when He is accused of being born of a harlot (John 4:8), Jesus does not bother with a defense of His mother’s honor. The Incarnation is completely an act of Divine Sovereignty. It comes by “possession” as indicated above by the dwelling of the Holy Spirit and was proved by Christ’s miraculous powers.

In defense of the Creedal position, we must remember that the Adamic Covenant required the seed of the woman should preclude the seed of the man (Genesis 3:15) and that Christ, to be the Savior of the world, could not undo the damage caused by Adam’s Fall as federal head, unless Christ was not burdened by the judicial imputation of the guilt of Original Sin, hence, the Virgin Birth.

John’s Gospel does not contradict the Virgin Birth; the doctrine simply does not exist as a matter of concern or pertinence to its message.

Things change in the Johannine Epistles which come later, however. The writer is worried about an “anti-messianic” doctrine (antichrist) which denies the Incarnation and the propagation of the Incarnation in “the father and the son.” Although, a Davidic lineage does not surface in these Epistles, the notion of one “who comes by water and by blood” suggests a dual component to Messianic provenance: baptism and a bloodline (1 John 5:6, cf. John 1:13).

Furthermore, as cited above, 1 John 2:25 indicates an exclusively "royal anointing" enjoyed by the Johannine Community, in particular, the children of Martha and her son, Ignatius. We believe that this Epistle was written to the Community in Cyprus, the See of St. Barnabas/St. Lazarus where the Fourth Gospel was composed many years before. The writer, now in Rome, is exhorting Ignatius not to be intimidated by the charismatic leaders which were then dominant (e.g. Paul and his associates). Unlike the other biblical texts which describe an anointing, the anointing here is the "rubbing in" kind which was the unique practice of midwives. *Chrisma* is used only three times in the New Testament: all three are here in 1 John (2:20, 25). While all other anointings in both the Old and New Testaments may be by pouring or smearing on (as with a paddle, branch or brush), "rubbing *in*" requires the use of the hand. Ignatius received his anointing at birth from the hands of the midwife. Midwives gave legal attestation of births and in this case proof of birth in the Messianic household of Jesus Christ (see *Biblical Midwifery*, Stivers, 1997, <https://2046AD.org>) **Ignatius needed no other credentials to qualify for the episcopal throne. It was his by birthright.**

The Johannine Community did not reject the ontological Trinity, nor did it reject the Christology of the Creeds, rather its scope of emphasis was upon the function of the Divine Logos as it operated within the person of the Messiah and in His household as the Paraklete. **The Doctrine of the "Paraklete" (i.e. the Procession of the Holy Ghost) is the thing which makes the Messianic Community possible. The Johannine Community is "Chrismatic," not "Charismatic."**

Why Do the Desposyni Appear to be Arian?

In Christian theology, there is a distinction made between what is called the "economical Trinity" and the "ontological Trinity." Roughly speaking, the economical Trinity refers to a relational theology between the persons of the Trinity and a subordination of the Son to the Father and the Holy Spirit to the Son and the Father (in the Western tradition, i.e. the *Filioque*).

The ontological Trinity refers to mystical attributes of Being ("mystical" to us) by which we affirm a co-equality and unity of the Divine essence while also affirming the plurality of the persons. The Creeds of the Church have elucidated these doctrines probably to the best that human language can achieve.

The notion of a "Messiah" in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament represent a revivification of the House of David to rule over a regathered kingdom of Israel in a

restored patrimony in the Holy Land. As per the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7, et al), God adopts the royal heirs of David as uniquely His Divine “sons.” Consequently, these “sons of David” are putatively “the sons of God” and are, for all practical purposes, Divine beings in terms of the Covenant.

In Christian theology, this would represent an expression of the *economical* Trinity. A Davidic “son of God” or “messiah” (which as the Lord’s anointed, David surely was) is not one in essence but rather one by adoption. This is not hard to comprehend. David was a human being and cannot be said to be divine.

However, when it comes to the historical person we know as “Jesus Christ,” we have sufficient witness in the Old Testament writings and in the Gospel accounts to the effect that He was more than a “putative” Son of God. He was so in His essence as the 2nd Person of the Trinity.

Unlike the other descendants of King David, Jesus had a pre-existence and possessed attributes which can only be manifested by a deity. We ask, “Why should this have been necessary?”

The short answer: the line of David itself required redemption to qualify, in turn, for a ministry of redemption. Because King David was under the failed federal headship of a fallen race - i.e. Adam - the Incarnation became necessary to create a new federal headship. Per our discussion above, the Johannine literature does not try to resolve those theological problems; it simply transcends them with the appearance of the “Word made flesh” as the founder of a new, redeemed race. Jesus Christ is the Kinsman-Redeemer for the line of David, who in turn, per James’ ruling in Acts 15, “raises up the tabernacle of David,” to provide a new host of “kinsman-redeemers” for the rest of mankind.

The Desposynic Church vs. the Apostolic Church

We have documented that the doctrine of apostolic succession was contrived to supplant the messianic succession of the descendants of Jesus Christ (Peshier of the Lord's Sanhedrin). The control of the church eventually devolved into a function of the Roman civil service which claimed apostolic provenance.

While Athanasius would charge that Arianism was a “heresy of eunuchs” in denying that God could have a Son (Peshier for the Day of Transfiguration, 2020, “The Bible as Medieval Dissident Literature”), the roles soon flipped, as the Established

Church of the Apostolic Succession - now run by these very "eunuchs" of the Imperial civil service - embraced the doctrine of the Trinity, while it was the Arianism in the peripheral kingdoms outside of the Roman Empire, which promoted the old monarchical succession through blood descent. The Arians used these monarchies to resist the Imperial Church of the Apostolic See. Closer analysis of the situation reveals that these kingdoms were Desposynic.

Consequently, the war of the Established Church with Arianism, we believe, was a cover story for its war against the Desposynic Church. In the East, the Desposyni were among the Ebion and the Parthians. In the West, the Arians were among the barbaric tribes of northern Europe. Thus, it became a war of priest against king, the church of the apostolic succession against the church of the messianic succession.

As descendants of the Parthians, the Goths and the other barbaric tribes would have had rulers of Davidic descent, if not that of Christ Himself. The records are not clear, but certainly, they would have viewed their kings as a true vicegerency under God in the Davidic tradition.

On the other hand, the Merovingians of the Franks claimed a different origin for their royal founder: he claimed to be the offspring of a Divine copulation. This legend has become the ground for much speculation among Grail aficionados, such as that popularized by Lincoln, Baigent, and Leigh in *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, 1982. It must be remembered that "Mero" and "Mary" share the same cognate. It is a play on the Latin for "sea" and can in part explain why the early Christians used a fish as a symbol for their faith. They would have been claiming to be descendants of "Mary" - either the Blessed Virgin and Mother of Christ - or as in the case of Merovi, a descendant of Mary Magdalene, who we know settled with her brother Lazarus/Barnabas in the Pyrenees region in flight from the Nero persecutions. We expect to find the Johannine Community there. More another time.

Conclusion: The Day of St. Ignatius, the Courier of God

[Of the Desposyni in the time of Domitian], they came, then, and took the presidency of every church . . . and after profound peace had been established in every church, they remained down to the reign of Trajan Caesar . . .

- Hegesippus, circa. AD 170, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, V. 8,
(Roberts & Donaldson, Ed., Hendrickson Publ. 1994), p.764

Seeing that the church which is in Antioch of Syria hath peace . . . It becometh thee, most blessed Polycarp, to call together a godly council and to elect some one among you who is very dear to you . . . who shall be fit to bear the name of God's courier . . .

- Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp, c. 117AD,
(*Apostolic Fathers*, Lightfoot, 2020 Edition,
Christian Publishing House), p. 72

We introduced Ignatius in our last Peshier. One must remember that all his epistles which have come down to us were composed on his journey from Syria to a martyrdom in Rome. He was under military escort and under the watchful eye of the Emperor's officers, lest his writings could be used to incite a revolt. This explains why they should be read in code.

Hegesippus tells us that the Desposyni took the bishop's chair ("the presidency") of "every church." This would have certainly included Antioch over which Ignatius served from the time of Domitian until his martyrdom under Trajan. This attestation would be another proof that Ignatius was Desposyni and that he certainly understood the Davidic nature of ecclesiastical government for the earliest Christians.

In another place, he said he was "last of the faithful," and desired that Polycarp, as quoted above, should convene a "council" to choose a successor. But the candidate had to "be fit to bear the name of God's courier."

This is a curiously veiled reference to the task of the bishop. The Greek here is "dromos" and really does not square exactly with the notion of a "courier" who would otherwise be a postman or messenger (i.e. an angel). It has the stronger meaning of an

"escort," as in Greek mythology in which those trapped in a labyrinth are in need of a guide to find a passageway to safety.

This was the role of the angels of the Seven Churches of the Book of Revelation who were to be couriers of the letters from John (Mark). But there was an angel who was John's escort and guided him through his visionary journey. As John's guide through the prophetic unveiling of Jesus Christ, we must remember that the angel denied being a supernatural being, but as explained above would have been a human actor - a *paraklete*, "of your brethren, the prophets."

Consequently, Ignatius tells Polycarp that they must, likewise, choose a Desposynic leader who is able to serve as that Church's *paraklete*.

Obviously, he could not specifically reveal the company of men who would qualify to be his successor; otherwise, they too would have been targeted for arrest and martyrdom.

Hegesippus closes his account with the specter of apostasy:

But, when the sacred band of apostles [the first historians classified the Desposyni and the Seventy as "apostles", cf. Hippolytus] had in various ways closed their lives [about the time of the Bar Kochba rebellion, circa, 134 AD], and that generation of men to whom it had been vouchsafed to listen to the Godlike Wisdom with their own ears had passed away, then did the confederacy of godless error take its rise through the treachery of false teachers, who, seeing that none of the apostles any longer survived, at length attempted with bare and uplifted head to oppose the preaching of the truth by preaching "knowledge falsely so called."

We still live under this pall, but a new day dawns.

A Servant of Jesus,

James

Collect for the Day: The Benediction of Ignatius

In the name of Jesus Christ, and in His flesh and blood, in His passion and resurrection, which was both carnal and spiritual, in the unity of God and of yourselves. Grace to you, mercy, peace, patience, always. I bid you farewell in the power of the Father. Amen.

The 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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