

Keys of the Psalms: Prayer, Praise and Prophecy ~ Part 3

The Heavenly Assembly

Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” (Luke 24:44)

I kept looking until *thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat*; His vesture was like white snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him’ Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; *The court sat, and the books were opened*. Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; *I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire*. (Daniel 7:9-11, emphasis added)

By the abundance of your trade *you were internally filled with violence*, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. *I cast you to the ground*; I put you before kings that they may see you. By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade, you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore *I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth . . .* You have become terrified, and *you will be no more*. (Ezek. 28:16-18, 19b, emphasis added)

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Deep exploration of the treasury of David will unearth riches revealing that the key of David, seen applied in the psalms, can not only bring forth more profound exegesis of the psalter, but show how the “bible within the bible” – Luther’s term for the psalter – can be used as a key to the entire bible, to reveal by opening a door which no one can shut (cf. Rev. 3:7), but also to conceal by closing a door so that no one can open. Indeed, this is the way the book of Revelation was sealed even while John was told not to seal it (Rev. 22:10) – it was sealed by its linkage to the scroll of Daniel. For the Lord in his function as Lion of Judah has conquered, and upon completing his role as Passover lamb, he will initiate his ‘coming’ earth-shatteringly and open the final week (Dan 9:24-27) by opening the scroll sealed with seven seals (Rev. 5:5-7).

Expanding the theme of the last portion of this series, both the physical and the spiritual portions are able to be fleshed out to reveal greater detail of things to come. Psalm 2 depicted a rebellion both in the Heavens and upon earth, and we see resonances of this picked up and expanded into both a Heavenly Counsel, overheard in psalm 82, where the assembly of God addresses the failure by the *Watchers* to execute His righteous judgment, and in the corresponding conspiracy to eliminate God's people on earth, amplified in the 83rd psalm. The author is Asaph, taking up the mantle of his mentor David and detailing what David painted in broad strokes. Asaph, commissioned to prophesy with the music, and to direct the music for worship, shows his mastery here and brings forth brilliant inspiration which allows us to overhear the divine judgment in the *Assembly of God*, <Aydath El>.

The prophetic word of the psalms saw remarkable flourishing under Asaph, whom David appointed as head or chief <rosh> of the Levites before the ark (1 Chr. 16:4-5). The question of whether Asaph would have been capable of the high degree of prophetic insight is quickly resolved by scripture itself, for “the sons of Asaph were under the direction [lit. ‘hands of’] of Asaph, *who prophesied under the direction* [hands of] *of the king.*” (1 Chr. 25:2, emphasis added) The chief Levite charged with prophetic worship before the ark of the covenant, working very closely with king David, would have carefully studied David's use of Hebraic poetry style, and under the guiding hand of David, he would have been able to pick up themes from the king, and to expand and expound upon those themes. Asaph's name appears at the heading of 12 psalms, first psalm 50 and then numbers 73 through 83 coming together like a discrete collection. In this grouping we find Asaph places particular emphasis on the dialectical struggle between light and darkness, both within the House of Israel, in the inner man within each of God's people, but also in the battle for allegiance in Heaven and on earth. Thus, the themes from the first two psalms are brought into focus here with more specificity, in terms of the heavenly decree on rulers, and also in terms of the execution of that judgment in the spiritual and material realms alike. This installment will deal with the Council in Heaven (Ps. 82). A subsequent installment will treat the supplication of the psalmist to execute that judgment on earth (Ps. 83).

82:1 <Elohim> takes [His] station in the assembly of <El>;
In the midst of <Elohim> He judges. (Ps. 82:1)

The first verse reveals a complexity of thought about the divine reality in the *Assembly* where Elohim (singular in usage) judges the other Elohim (plural), referred to as such at verse 6. It is a congregation or assembly of one God or *El*, literally the House of God, like the place Jacob named “Beth-El.” It is the great *Ay-daw*, the assembly or congregation, the luminous spiritual reality that casts its shadow in the ideal Paul held for the church, that it should be able to judge its affairs. In this example *par excellence* God judges the activities and inner spiritual condition of spiritual beings charged with ruling for the weak and needy, appointed to be stewards of the sons of men, they are the rulers Paul speaks of as the “world rulers of this darkness,” “the spiritual [hosts] of evil in the heavenlies” (Eph 6:12). Jesus expounds this mystery in the parable of the vineyard tenants, including their eventual demise (Lu 20:9-19).

But it is two among the *Elohim* who speak in the council which unfolds like a courtroom scene. At the mouth of two or three witnesses a matter is established (De 19:15). The reader will encounter speech by the Council Head (vv. 2-4), as well as the Beloved, the Logos, who speaks in verses 7-8, addressing the accused and delivering the sentence.

As for the *Ancient of Days* (Dan 7, cited above) who is like Him? He commands the council. Will anyone argue? Consider the words of Moses in his song

*Who is like you among the <Elim> <YHWH>,
Who is like you, majestic in holiness,
fearful in praises,
doing wonders?
You stretched out your right hand
The earth swallowed them. (Ex 15:11-12, emphasis added)*

Establishing the awe-inspiring and singular majesty of the Lord, presiding in His assembly, in His court, lays the groundwork for understanding what Elohim are saying in the council (plural in usage).

In couplet form, applying the Key of David, the structural meaning of Hebraic verse, the first line tells us the physical aspect, viz. that God takes up His station, that of the One who presides, He is the ultimate authority (cf. v. 6b <El Elyon>) taking His stand as “One without a second;” He *alone* commands the Presence that is awe-inspiring. The inner spiritual reality of that physical presentation is a spiritual function of <shâphat> which is to judge or pronounce sentence; to punish, or condemn; to make an ultimate determination with a peculiar outcome. It is this function that is the reality behind His station, which finds future fulfillment at the end of the millennium – and just before the start of it as well – though here we see a supra-historical dimension, and a window into a reality space beyond time itself. It is a moment in eternity, a *locus* of spiritual territory where God convenes the “gods,” Sons of the Most High, <B’nei Elyon>; it is the Court of God. This Heavenly reality is reflected in future time, disclosed in Revelation 20:11-15 as the great white throne judgment and the Lamb’s book of Life as court records.

And if that be the case, then what is determined is already decided, with the outcome much as Daniel described in his vision

And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the end, which was decreed, is poured out on the desolator. (Dan. 9:27, emphasis added)

It is the end which is literally <that which was decreed> that starkly stands out in Daniel’s vision. This is irrevocable. Over and against you, oh New Age Christian, who dares to think that Lucifer will have one more chance when you get to witness to him that he might repent, stands God’s pronouncement which is final and decreed. God is standing in the assembly of gods. He is standing! He is judging. You are not the judge.

The great 20th century fantasy writer J.R.R. Tolkien used this imagery in a divine assembly in *The Silmarillion*, and it transmitted the most serious, fearful, and awe-inspiring picture of the Divine figure who stood up from his throne when he had heard enough and unveiled a vision of what would come to be. Here in psalm 82, the charges are presented (v. 2), the remedy is given as divine imperative (vv. 3-4), a determination of guilt is made (v 5), the guilty are identified (v.6), and the sentence is declared together with the manner in which it will be carried out (v.7). And in the last two verses of the psalm, the reader encounters the vision of what will come to be on earth as in Heaven.

Breaking this out in thought couplets, the reality of Heaven's rebellion, which casts its shadow in earthly affairs, stands in stark contrast with God's perfect justice. And in Asaph's articulation of the Divine Council's 'presentment' lies a strong message for angels and for men, a message that unfolds from here.

- 2 'How long will you judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked? Selah
- 3 Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;
maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.
- 4 Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.'

The thought couplets reveal the physical problem and spiritual reality underlying it; there is a power structure which we see reflected throughout every government on earth that exhibits the nature of the Adversary and shows his inner thoughts, and it has a preference for evil. The Devil's inner spiritual mind-set is partiality for the wicked; partiality for everything that sets itself against God, His Law, and what is good. Physically this means unjust judgment, unrighteous determinations, oppression of the needy and afflicted.

Over against this inversion of good Elohim utters words of divine prescription (vv. 3-4), in form a commandment to keep. Physically exercise justice, be righteous to the weak and those without parental support; spiritually establish and maintain the right of those afflicted by the wicked and those who have nothing; they still have rights. Physical: take action for the disadvantaged; spiritually: deliver them from those oppressing them. This is the summary of the Law and Good governance, straight from the mouth of the Elohim who takes His position at the head of the Council. It is as James says:

If indeed you fulfill the Royal Law according to the scripture 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well. (James 2:8)

And the Logos, the Word of Life, in the world as Jesus of Nazareth, perfectly showed this judgment as he rescued the weak and the needy; and prayed they be delivered from the hand of the wicked. On the spiritual level, Christ is making this judgment a reality, as it will be the substance of His kingdom which will know no end.

- 5 They have not known
And will not understand,
In darkness they walk;
All the foundations of the earth are shaken.

The voice changes to third-person, the speaker delivers a solemn finding, like the conclusion of a jury. It describes the physical and spiritual condition that demands the sentence to follow. It is a squared couplet. They do not know the way of life, and thus cannot attain to spiritual understanding. That physical absence of knowledge is the darkness in which they walk; it is physical portion of the physical, with the walk being the physical portion of the spiritual. It is the spiritual consequence of the physical 'darkness' of ignorance. And as darkness equates with iniquity and with death, the physical portion of the spiritual part of the paired couplet reveals their condition and forecasts their destiny. The gods who walk in spiritual darkness will come to an end. Spiritually their foundations will shake and cannot stand. And what are the foundations of the earth, whose god is the Adversary, if not the powers of heaven. This spiritual portion then speaks prophetically, and echoes in the eschatological words of Jesus

But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and *the powers of the heavens will be shaken*. (Matt. 24:29 emphasis added)

In the purification of heaven and earth, the Devil and his angels must be cast down, they are the foundation for a corrupt world that has lost its way, and is walking in darkness. They will perish for lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6), for walking in the way of iniquity, which echoes the judgment of psalm 1:6, "the way of the wicked will perish."

The next verses resound through Heaven and earth with the sentence

6 I said, 'You are gods <Elohim>,
sons of the Most High <Elyon>, all of you;
7 Verily, as <Adam> you shall die,
And as one of the Princes <Sarim> you shall fall.

What a profound reversal of the Adversary's words to Eve, that lie which the serpent told in Eden, and has been repeating to all humanity and deceiving it ever since (Rev. 12:9). "Not to die shall you be dying," (Gen. 3:4, *Concordant version*) usually translated as "Ye surely shall not die." Yes, angels, and Yes, Christians, the rule set is the same for angels, *B'nei Elyon*, and sons of Adam, *B'nei Adam*. So this message can be overheard by angels who have quietly wondered inside – and not talked about it amongst themselves – maybe God is right and Lucifer is wrong. God's evidence: Adam died. And now approximately 1700 years after that death, Asaph is guided to speak to angels and men: It can happen to you. Pharisees: it can happen to you. And if you need another witness beside Asaph speaking of the 'not yet' fall (Rev. 12:9), how about the Logos speaking in the flesh

I beheld Satan as lightning *fall from Heaven*. (Luke 10:18 emphasis added)

And one of His prophets, Ezekiel, in the citation at the top and here

They will bring you down to the pit,

And you will *die the death* of those who are slain. (Ezek 28:8 emphasis added)

With more witnesses waiting behind the bar, but not needed – we are already at two each for the physical and spiritual portion of verse 7. The Logos, now speaking as Elyon’s Attorney General, addresses the accused and delivers the sentence. His prosecution of this case as part of <Elohim> in verse one is essential. This verdict requires two witnesses, and two there are. The Most High laid the charges out in vv. 2-4 and the Beloved confirms them here (vv. 6-7). It is stunning, it is inescapable, it is final. And at the mouth of the 2 witnesses who *both* speak in this psalm, *the matter is established!* These sons of the Most High are to be cast down and physically die the death of Adam – plus the additional sentence of the lake of fire for a second spiritual death, hidden in the spiritual portion of the couplet.

Yes, Asaph launches a brilliant repudiation of the Adversary’s words to Eve, that lie which the serpent told in Eden (Gen. 3:4), and has been repeating to all humanity and deceiving it ever since (Rev. 12:9), and is repeated here for the purpose of pedagogy – “Dying you do not die” (*Young’s literal translation*), again usually translated as “Ye surely shall not die.” These same words that Greek mystery school students brought in to corrupt synagogues of “The Way” and these same words that pollute with profane thought the funeral services of churches from Episcopal to LDS, telling family members that Aunt Maude is up in Heaven smiling down at everyone. It’s a lie. The church has bought it hook, line, and sinker; and now stands with the serpent in the garden telling all of the little Adams and Eves coming to them for a word of salvation: “you shall not die.” Yes, imagine that, without following Christ, you get to go into the sheep pen; without obedience you are home free. Never mind that Satan is cast out of Heaven with his angels for the very same thing. “Don’t worry, it’s in the past” says the monkey Rafiki in *The Lion King*. NOT. Not *this* Lion-King. No, Christian, you DO NOT get a covenant with no promises on your side of the *Ketubah* aka marriage document: free to sin, free to commingle with any profane thing you like. With that lawlessness comes the Writ of Attainder – aka ‘Bill of Pains and Penalties’ as exhibited here – and you shall die the death, perhaps even the second death as the one falling from Heaven will.

And if you think Christ Jesus is coming “in like a lion and out like a lamb” think again. He will be coming as a Lion after completing His “lamb function” and the world will know it. To quote the words of Lowell Blanchard’s country hymn: “Set your house in order, He may be coming soon, He’s gonna hit like an atom bomb when He comes.” And the Second Passover will be many times more devastating than an atom bomb: its reach will be global and instantaneous. And against that day, angels and men are given this word from the Lord that telegraphs what the court has decided and will carry out for all involved in the rebellion, both in Heaven and upon earth. It is the answer to the prayer in Matthew: thy will be done, upon earth, as in Heaven.

In the *Heavenly Assembly* we see the model for justice and righteousness, the maquette for our own congregations, if indeed we would gather in holiness and do justice. It gives us a template for how to live and treat each other, loving neighbor as self, and how to judge *within our assemblies* (cf. 1 Cor 5:12). That it is *the* assembly of God, *El*, the Most High, who will actually judge on earth as in Heaven, is clear from the final verse.

V. 8 Arise, O <Elohim>, judge the earth;
for you shall inherit *among* all the nations.

Indeed, then, the Son of Man will sit down on His throne of glory (cf. I Enoch 46)

But when the son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His throne of glory. And *all the nations* will be gathered before Him; and *He will separate them from one another*, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. (Matt. 25:31-33, 46 emphasis added)

The words of Jesus in Matthew, speaking to the great white throne judgment, show the unity of God, Father and Son, with the Beloved now returned to the glory He had before the foundation of the world. He is seen now as Judge. He is the part of *Elohim*, who is to inherit the nations, who is to judge the earth.

But there is a big caveat – expressed in one single letter <א> lost in translation, almost never rendered in this passage, but carrying with it a world of difference in meaning. The “wrongness” of Christianity is theologically reflected in the incorrect translation seen in the citation above. *Young’s literal translation* stands as the principal exception to the herd of lemmings who rush headlong toward the abyss of “universal salvation.” It is the missing א which is a preposition that takes the meaning <among> when used “of presence in the midst of a multitude” (*Brown, Driver, Briggs lexicon*, p. 88). This puts Christendom in a whole world of hurt, when they must contend with the Lord’s own words, viz. there will be a judgment, I will sit down on my throne of glory and judge, and my inheritance will be found *among the nations*. Psalm 82 gives us that prophetic edge, Asaph’s understanding from the Word of God, the *Logos*, that the coming judgment will bring an inheritance from *among* the nations. The rest will go the way of chaff, blown away by the Spirit, into the punishment for the ages (Matt. 25:46).

Do you, Christian, believe that all who claim the name of Jesus Christ will be saved? Then how is it that the Lord Himself told disciples

Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy *in Your name*, and *in Your name* cast out demons, and *in Your name* perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; *depart from me you workers of lawlessness.*’ (Matt 7:22-23 emphasis added)

The lawless nature will not be re-admitted to Heaven. And isn’t that just the point of this psalm? Here the theodicy question – that is, God’s goodness in view of the existence of evil, and thus how evil is removed – is resolved, and *in Court* at that. Seminary professors debate theodicy with a line upon line, precept upon precept analysis, and never get anywhere. They settle for ‘the traditions of men,’ preferring to be popular with young seminarians, than to love the truth; than to believe the words of their Lord, the Messiah. Who should know better than He? Isn’t He seen in this psalm standing in the

Council of Elohim, delivering the sentence? Theodicy is settled. In fact vv. 2-4 provide the exact criteria for judgment which Jesus articulates in Matthew 25. As we treat our neighbor, so we treat the Lord, and if one cannot lift up the needy and afflicted, then one is a goat, destined to take his or her place with the goat-shaped demons (Lev 17:7; Is. 13:21) and goat-like leaders of the earth (Is 14:9, Zech 10:3).

Asaph's masterful psalm prophesies the eschatology portrayed by the prophets and apostles. God will arise and judge the nations, and Christians know that this judging is given unto the Son, and so when there is a judgment of the nations, some will enter into His Kingdom and some will not. There are sheep and goats, and these are separated, making Christ Jesus' inheritance as something that is *among* the nations. The goats simply are not part of the inheritance of His Kingdom.

The sum of the matter is this: in essence this psalm is really a palm branch offered to the heavenly sons of *Elyon*, the Most High, who have not drunk so much Kool-aid that they are beyond help; this offers them the opportunity for repentance and cleansing unbelief from their hearts; to know God, and to walk in His ways. There is still time to be good stewards of His creation. And to the Church, the same message, there is still time to love God, Father and Son, and to walk like Christ, and to feed his little sheep, loving neighbor as one's self. What has occurred in Heaven is recorded that it not be visited upon God's people on earth. These things that have occurred on earth have also been played out as an example to the congregation, His body

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into <Hades> and committed them to pits of darkness reserved for judgment; and He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, *having made them an example* to those who would live ungodly thereafter; and He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men, (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), then *the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation*, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.

This psalm of Asaph makes an example for both righteous and unrighteous, using a 'fallen prince' and Adam himself as examples to stem the tide of evil. There is still time for angels and for men. "Rescue the weak and the needy, rescue them from the hand of the wicked one." Jesus reprised it in the model prayer: "Deliver us from the evil one." Amen

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"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, translated by author, unless otherwise noted"