Introduction to Early Judaism

Dr. Malka Z. Simkovich
January–February 2023
Community Presbyterian of Clarendon Hills
Class 4: Biblical Interpretation: The Daniel Stories; the Dead Sea Scrolls

1. Daniel 3

King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden statue whose height was sixty cubits and whose width was six cubits; he set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent for the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counsellors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to assemble and come to the dedication of the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. So the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counsellors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, assembled for the dedication of the statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. When they were standing before the statue that Nebuchadnezzar had set up, ‘the herald proclaimed aloud, ‘You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, ‘that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, you are to fall down and worship the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ‘Whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire.’ Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshipped the golden statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

8 Accordingly, at this time certain Chaldeans came forward and denounced the Jews. ‘They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, ‘O king, live for ever! 9 You, O king, have made a decree, that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble, shall fall down and worship the golden statue, 10 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire. 11 There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These pay no heed to you, O king. They do not serve your gods and they do not worship the golden statue that you have set up.’

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought in; so they brought those men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar said to them, ‘Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and you do not worship the golden statue that I have set up? 15 Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble to fall down and worship the statue that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?’

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to present a defence to you in this matter. 17 If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. 18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up.’

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was so filled with rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face was distorted. He ordered the furnace to be heated up seven times more than was customary, 20 and ordered some of the strongest guards in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and to throw them into the furnace of blazing fire. 21 So the men were bound, still wearing their tunics, their trousers, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. 22 Because the king’s command was urgent and the furnace was so overheated, the raging flames killed the men who lifted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. 23 But the three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down, bound, into the furnace of blazing fire.
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24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up quickly. He said to his counsellors, ‘Was it not three men that we threw bound into the fire?’ They answered the king, ‘True, O king.’ 25 He replied, ‘But I see four men unbound, walking in the middle of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the fourth has the appearance of a god.’ 26 Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and said, ‘Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!’ So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire. 27 And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king’s counsellors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men; the hair of their heads was not singed, their tunics were not harmed, and not even the smell of fire came from them. 28 Nebuchadnezzar said, ‘Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants who trusted in him. They disobeyed the king’s command and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. 29 Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that utters blasphemy against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins; for there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way.’ 30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

2. Azariah and the Three Companions

(Additions to Daniel, inserted between 3.23 and 3.24)

1 They walked around in the midst of the flames, singing hymns to God and blessing the Lord. 2 Then Azariah stood still in the fire and prayed aloud:
3 ‘Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our ancestors, and worthy of praise; and glorious is your name for ever!
4 For you are just in all you have done; all your works are true and your ways right, and all your judgements are true.
5 You have executed true judgements in all you have brought upon us and upon Jerusalem, the holy city of our ancestors; by a true judgement you have brought all this upon us because of our sins.
6 For we have sinned and broken your law in turning away from you; in all matters we have sinned grievously.
7 We have not obeyed your commandments, we have not kept them or done what you have commanded us for our own good.
8 So all that you have brought upon us, and all that you have done to us, you have done by a true judgement.
9 You have handed us over to our enemies, lawless and hateful rebels, and to an unjust king, the most wicked in all the world.
10 And now we cannot open our mouths; we, your servants who worship you, have become a shame and a reproach.
11 For your name’s sake do not give us up for ever, and do not annul your covenant.
12 Do not withdraw your mercy from us, for the sake of Abraham your beloved and for the sake of your servant Isaac and Israel your holy one,
to whom you promised
   to multiply their descendants like the stars of heaven
   and like the sand on the shore of the sea.
14 For we, O Lord, have become fewer than any other nation,
   and are brought low this day in all the world because of our sins.
15 In our day we have no ruler, or prophet, or leader,
   no burnt-offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense,
   no place to make an offering before you and to find mercy.
16 Yet with a contrite heart and a humble spirit may we be accepted,
17 as though it were with burnt-offerings of rams and bulls,
   or with tens of thousands of fat lambs;
   such may our sacrifice be in your sight today,
   and may we unreservedly follow you,
   for no shame will come to those who trust in you.
18 And now with all our heart we follow you;
   we fear you and seek your presence.
19 Do not put us to shame,
   but deal with us in your patience
   and in your abundant mercy.
20 Deliver us in accordance with your marvellous works,
   and bring glory to your name, O Lord.
21 Let all who do harm to your servants be put to shame;
   let them be disgraced and deprived of all power,
   and let their strength be broken.
22 Let them know that you alone are the Lord God,
   glorious over the whole world.’

3. Bel and the Dragon

1 When King Astyages was laid to rest with his ancestors, Cyrus the Persian succeeded to his
   kingdom. Daniel was a companion of the king, and was the most honoured of all his friends. Now the
   Babylonians had an idol called Bel, and every day they provided for it twelve bushels of choice flour and forty
   sheep and six measures of wine. The king revered it and went every day to worship it. But Daniel
   worshipped his own God.

So the king said to him, ‘Why do you not worship Bel?’ He answered, ‘Because I do not revere idols made
   with hands, but the living God, who created heaven and earth and has dominion over all living creatures.’ The
   king said to him, ‘Do you not think that Bel is a living god? Do you not see how much he eats and drinks
   every day?’ And Daniel laughed, and said, ‘Do not be deceived, O king, for this thing is only clay inside and
   bronze outside, and it never ate or drank anything.’

8 Then the king was angry and called the priests of Bel and said to them, ‘If you do not tell me who is eating
   these provisions, you shall die. ‘But if you prove that Bel is eating them, Daniel shall die, because he has
   spoken blasphemy against Bel.’ Daniel said to the king, ‘Let it be done as you have said.’ Now there were
   seventy priests of Bel, besides their wives and children. So the king went with Daniel into the temple of
   Bel. The priests of Bel said, ‘See, we are now going outside; you yourself, O king, set out the food and
prepare the wine, and shut the door and seal it with your signet.  
12. When you return in the morning, if you do not find that Bel has eaten it all, we will die; otherwise Daniel will, who is telling lies about us.  
13. They were unconcerned, for beneath the table they had made a hidden entrance, through which they used to go in regularly and consume the provisions.  
14. After they had gone out, the king set out the food for Bel. Then Daniel ordered his servants to bring ashes, and they scattered them throughout the whole temple in the presence of the king alone. Then they went out, shut the door and sealed it with the king’s signet, and departed.  
15. During the night the priests came as usual, with their wives and children, and they ate and drank everything.

Early in the morning the king rose and came, and Daniel with him.  
17. The king said, ‘Are the seals unbroken, Daniel?’ He answered, ‘They are unbroken, O king.’  
18. As soon as the doors were opened, the king looked at the table, and shouted in a loud voice, ‘You are great, O Bel, and in you there is no deceit at all!’ But Daniel laughed and restrained the king from going in. ‘Look at the floor’, he said, ‘and notice whose footprints these are.’  
19. The king said, ‘I see the footprints of men and women and children.’ Then the king was enraged, and he arrested the priests and their wives and children. They showed him the secret doors through which they used to enter to consume what was on the table.  
20. Therefore the king put them to death, and gave Bel over to Daniel, who destroyed it and its temple.

Now in that place there was a great dragon, which the Babylonians revered.  
22. The king said to Daniel, ‘You cannot deny that this is a living god; so worship him.’  
23. Daniel said, ‘I worship the Lord my God, for he is the living God.  
24. But give me permission, O king, and I will kill the dragon without sword or club.’ The king said, ‘I give you permission.’ Then Daniel took pitch, fat, and hair, and boiled them together and made cakes, which he fed to the dragon. The dragon ate them, and burst open. Then Daniel said, ‘See what you have been worshipping!’

When the Babylonians heard about it, they were very indignant and conspired against the king, saying, ‘The king has become a Jew; he has destroyed Bel, and killed the dragon, and slaughtered the priests.’  
28. Going to the king, they said, ‘Hand Daniel over to us, or else we will kill you and your household.’  
29. The king saw that they were pressing him hard, and under compulsion he handed Daniel over to them. They threw Daniel into the lions’ den, and he was there for six days.  
30. There were seven lions in the den, and every day they had been given two human bodies and two sheep; but now they were given nothing, so that they would devour Daniel.

Now the prophet Habakkuk was in Judea; he had made a stew and had broken bread into a bowl, and was going into the field to take it to the reapers.  
34. But the angel of the Lord said to Habakkuk, ‘Take the food that you have to Babylon, to Daniel, in the lion’s den.’  
35. Habakkuk said, ‘Sir, I have never seen Babylon, and I know nothing about the den.’  
36. Then the angel of the Lord took him by the crown of his head and carried him by his hair; with the speed of the wind he set him down in Babylon, right over the den.  
37. Then Habakkuk shouted, ‘Daniel, Daniel! Take the food that God has sent you.’  
38. Daniel said, ‘You have remembered me, O God, and have not forsaken those who love you.’  
39. So Daniel got up and ate. And the angel of God immediately returned Habakkuk to his own place.

On the seventh day the king came to mourn for Daniel. When he came to the den he looked in, and there sat Daniel!  
41. The king shouted with a loud voice, ‘You are great, O Lord, the God of Daniel, and there is no other besides you!’  
42. Then he pulled Daniel out, and threw into the den those who had attempted his destruction, and they were instantly eaten before his eyes.
4. Susanna

There was a man living in Babylon whose name was Joakim. He married the daughter of Hilkiah, named Susanna, a very beautiful woman and one who feared the Lord. Her parents were righteous, and had trained their daughter according to the law of Moses. Joakim was very rich, and had a fine garden adjoining his house; the Jews used to come to him because he was the most honoured of them all.

That year two elders from the people were appointed as judges. Concerning them the Lord had said: ‘Wickedness came forth from Babylon, from elders who were judges, who were supposed to govern the people.’ These men were frequently at Joakim’s house, and all who had a case to be tried came to them there. When the people left at noon, Susanna would go into her husband’s garden to walk. Every day the two elders used to see her, going in and walking about, and they began to lust for her. They suppressed their consciences and turned away their eyes from looking to Heaven or remembering their duty to administer justice. Both were overwhelmed with passion for her, but they did not tell each other of their distress, for they were ashamed to disclose their lustful desire to seduce her. Day after day they watched eagerly to see her.

One day they said to each other, ‘Let us go home, for it is time for lunch.’ So they both left and parted from each other. But turning back, they met again; and when each pressed the other for the reason, they confessed their lust. Then together they arranged for a time when they could find her alone. Once, while they were watching for an opportune day, she went in as before with only two maids, and wished to bathe in the garden, for it was a hot day. No one was there except the two elders, who had hidden themselves and were watching her. She said to her maids, ‘Bring me olive oil and ointments, and shut the garden doors so that I can bathe.’ They did as she told them: they shut the doors of the garden and went out by the side doors to bring what they had been commanded; they did not see the elders, because they were hiding. When the maids had gone out, the two elders got up and ran to her. They said, ‘Look, the garden doors are shut, and no one can see us. We are burning with desire for you; so give your consent, and lie with us. If you refuse, we will testify against you that a young man was with you, and this was why you sent your maids away.’ Susanna groaned and said, ‘I am completely trapped. For if I do this, it will mean death for me; if I do not, I cannot escape your hands. I choose not to do it; I will fall into your hands, rather than sin in the sight of the Lord.’

Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and the two elders shouted against her. And one of them ran and opened the garden doors. When the people in the house heard the shouting in the garden, they rushed in at the side door to see what had happened to her. And when the elders told their story, the servants felt very much ashamed, for nothing like this had ever been said about Susanna. The next day, when the people gathered at the house of her husband Joakim, the two elders came, full of their wicked plot to have Susanna put to death. In the presence of the people they said, ‘Send for Susanna daughter of Hilkiah, the wife of Joakim.’ So they sent for her. And she came with her parents, her children, and all her relatives. Now Susanna was a woman of great refinement and beautiful in appearance. As she was veiled, the scoundrels ordered her to be unveiled, so that they might feast their eyes on her beauty. Those who were with her and all who saw her were weeping. Then the two elders stood up before the people and laid their hands on her head. Through her tears she looked up towards Heaven, for her heart trusted in the Lord. The elders said, ‘While we were walking in the garden alone, this woman came in with two maids, shut the garden doors, and dismissed the maids. Then a young man, who was hiding there, came to her and lay with her. We were in a corner of the garden, and when we saw this wickedness we ran to them. Although we saw them embracing, we could not hold the man, because he was stronger than we are, and he opened the doors and got away. We did, however, seize this woman and asked who the young man was, but she would not tell us. These things we testify.’ Because they were elders of the people and judges, the assembly believed them and condemned her to death.
Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said, ‘O eternal God, you know what is secret and are aware of all things before they come to be; 43you know that these men have given false evidence against me. And now I am to die, though I have done none of the wicked things that they have charged against me!’ 44 The Lord heard her cry. 45Just as she was being led off to execution, God stirred up the holy spirit of a young lad named Daniel, 46and he shouted with a loud voice, ‘I want no part in shedding this woman’s blood!’ All the people turned to him and asked, ‘What is this you are saying?’ 48Taking his stand among them he said, ‘Are you such fools, O Israelites, as to condemn a daughter of Israel without examination and without learning the facts? 49Return to court, for these men have given false evidence against her.’ So all the people hurried back. And the rest of the elders said to him, ‘Come, sit among us and inform us, for God has given you the standing of an elder.’ 51Daniel said to them, ‘Separate them far from each other, and I will examine them.’ When they were separated from each other, he summoned one of them and said to him, ‘You old relic of wicked days, your sins have now come home, which you have committed in the past, 53pronouncing unjust judgements, condemning the innocent and acquitting the guilty, though the Lord said, “You shall not put an innocent and righteous person to death.”’ 54Now then, if you really saw this woman, tell me this: Under what tree did you see them being intimate with each other?’ He answered, ‘Under a mastic tree.’ 55And Daniel said, ‘Very well! This lie has cost you your head, for the angel of God has received the sentence from God and will immediately cut you in two.’

Then, putting him to one side, he ordered them to bring the other. And he said to him, ‘You offspring of Canaan and not of Judah, beauty has beguiled you and lust has perverted your heart. 57This is how you have been treating the daughters of Israel, and they were intimate with you through fear; but a daughter of Judah would not tolerate your wickedness. 58Now then, tell me: Under what tree did you catch them being intimate with each other?’ He answered, ‘Under an evergreen oak.’ 59Daniel said to him, ‘Very well! This lie has cost you also your head, for the angel of God is waiting with his sword to split you in two, so as to destroy you both.’ Then the whole assembly raised a great shout and blessed God, who saves those who hope in him. 61And they took action against the two elders, because out of their own mouths Daniel had convicted them of bearing false witness; they did to them as they had wickedly planned to do to their neighbour. 62Acting in accordance with the law of Moses, they put them to death. Thus innocent blood was spared that day. Hilkiah and his wife praised God for their daughter Susanna, and so did her husband Joakim and all her relatives, because she was found innocent of a shameful deed. 64And from that day onwards Daniel had a great reputation among the people.

The Dead Sea Scrolls:

**The Genesis Apocryphon**

And I (Abram) departed… and I travelled towards the south… until I came to Hebron [at the time when Hebron] was being built; and I dwelt there [two years]. Now there was a famine in all this land, and hearing that there was prosperity in Egypt I went… to the land of Egypt… I [came to] the river Karmo, one of the branches of the River (Nile)… and I crossed the seven branches of the River… We passed through our land and entered the land of the sons of Ham, the land of Egypt. And on the night of our entry into Egypt, I, Abram, dreamt a dream; [and behold], I saw in my dream a cedar tree and a palm tree… men came and they sought to cut down the cedar tree and to pull up its roots, leaving the palm tree (standing) alone. But the palm tree cried out saying, “Do not cut down this cedar tree, for cursed be he who shall fell [it].” And the cedar tree was spared because of the palm tree and [was] not felled. And during the night I woke from my dream, and I said to Sarai my wife, ‘I have dreamt a dream… [and I am] fearful [because of] this dream.’ She said to me, ‘Tell me your dream that I may know it.’ So I began to
tell her this dream...[the interpretation] of the dream...’...that they will seek to kill me, but will spare you...[Say to them] of me, “He is my brother,” and because of you I shall live, and because of you my life shall be saved...” And Sarai wept that night on account of my words...

Then we journeyed towards Zoan, I and Sarai...by her life that none should see her...

And when those five years had passed, three men from among the princes of Egypt [came at the command] of Pharoah of Zoan to inquire after [my] business and after my wife and they gave...goodness, wisdom, and truth. And I exclaimed before them...because of the famine...And they came to ascertain...with much food and drink...the wine... (During the party, the Egyptians must have seen Sarai, and on their return they praised her to the king).

‘...and beautiful is her face! How...fine are the hairs of her head! How lovely are her eyes! How desirable her nose and all the radiance of her countenance...How fair are her breasts and how beautiful all her whiteness! How pleasing are her arms and how perfect her hands, and how [desirable] all the appearance of her hands! How fair are her palms and how long and slender are her fingers! How comely are her feet, how perfect her thighs! No virgin or bride led into the marriage chamber is more beautiful than she; she is fairer than all other women. Truly, her beauty is greater than theirs. Yet together with all this grace she possessed abundant wisdom, so that whatever she does is perfect (?).’ When the king heard the words of Harkenosh and his two companions, for all three spoke as with one voice, he desired her greatly and sent out at once to take her. And seeing her, he was amazed by all her beauty and took her to be his wife, but me he sought to kill.

Sarai said to the king, “He is my brother,” that I might benefit from her, and I, Abram, was spared because of her and I was not slain. And I, Abram, wept aloud that night, I and my nephew Lot, because Sarai had been taken from me by force. I prayed that night and I begged and implored, and I said in my sorrow while my tears ran down: “Blessed art Thou, O Most High God, Lord of all the worlds, Thou who art Lord and king of all the kings of the earth and judgest them all! I cry now before Thee, my Lord, against Pharoah of Zoan the king of Egypt, because of my wife who has been taken from me by force. Judge him for me that I may see Thy mighty hand raised against him and against all his household, and that he may not be able to defile my wife this night (separating her) from me, and that they may know Three, my Lord, that Thou art Lord of all the kings of the earth. And I wept and was sorrowful.”

**Pesher Habbakuk:**

*Moreover, the arrogant man seizes wealth without bailing. He widens his gullet like Hell and like Death he has never enough. All the nations are gathered to him and all the peoples are assembled to him. Will they not all of them taunt him and jeer at him saying, ‘Woe to him who amasses that which is not his! How long will he load himself up with pledges?’ (2.5–6)*

Interpreted, this concerns the Wicked Priest who was called by the name of truth when he first arose. But when he ruled over Israel his heart became proud, and he forsook God and betrayed the precepts for the sake of riches. He robbed and amassed the riches of the men of violence who rebelled against God, and he took the wealth of the peoples, heaping sinful iniquity upon himself. And he lived in the ways of abominations amidst every unclean defilement.

*Shall not your oppressors suddenly arise and your torturers awaken; and shall you not become their prey? Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you. (2.7–8a)*

[Interpreted, this concerns] the Priest who rebelled [and violated] the precepts [of God...to command] his chastisement by means of the judgments of wickedness. And they inflicted horrors of evil diseases and took vengeance upon his body of flesh. And as for that which He said, *Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the peoples shall plunder you;* interpreted this concerns the last Priests of Jerusalem, who shall amass money and wealth by plundering the people. But in the last days, their riches and booty shall be delivered into the hands of the army of the Kittim, for it is they who shall be the remnant of the peoples.

*Because of the blood of men and the violence done to the land, to the city, and to all its inhabitants (2.8b)*
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Interpreted, this concerns the Wicked Priest whom God delivered into the hands of his enemies because of the iniquity committed against the Teacher of Righteousness, and the men of his Council, that he might be humbled by means of a destroying scourge, in bitterness of soul, because he had done wickedly to his elect.

Woe to him who gets evil profit for his house; who perches his nest high to be safe from the hand of evil! You have devised shame to your house; by cutting off many peoples you have forfeited your own soul. For the [stone] cries out [from] the wall [and] the beam from the woodwork replies (2.9–11)

[Interpreted, this] concerns the [Priest] who…that its stones might be laid in oppression and the beam of its woodwork in robbery. And as for that which He said, By cutting off many peoples you have forfeited your own soul: Interpreted this concerns the condemned House whose judgment God will pronounce in the midst of many peoples. He will bring him thence for judgment and will declare him guilty in the midst of them, and will chastise him with fore of brimstone.

Woe to him who builds a city with blood and founds a town upon falsehood! Behold, is it not from the Lord of hosts that the peoples shall labor for fire and the nations shall strive for naught? (2.12–13)

Interpreted, this concerns the Spouter of Lies who led many astray that he might build his city of vanity with blood and raise a congregation on deceit, causing many thereby to perform a service of vanity for the sake of its glory, and to be pregnant with [works] of deceit, that their labor might be for nothing and that they might be punished with fire who vilified and outraged the elect of God.

For as the waters cover the sea, so shall the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord (2.14).

Interpreted, [this means that] when they return…the lies. And afterwards, knowledge shall be revealed to them abundantly, like the waters of the sea.

Woe to him who causes his neighbors to drink; who pours out his venom to make them drunk that he may gaze on their feasts (2.15).

Interpreted, this concerns the Wicked Priest who pursued the Teacher of Righteousness to the house of his exile that he might confuse him with his venomous fury. And at the time appointed for rest, for the Day of Atonement, he appeared before them to confuse them, and to cause them to stumble on the Day of Fasting, their Sabbath of repose.

You have filled yourself with ignominy more than with glory. Drink also, and stagger! The cup of the Lord’s right hand shall come round to you and shame shall come on your glory (2.16).

Interpreted, this concerns the Priest whose ignominy was greater than his glory. For he did not circumcise the foreskin of his heart, and he walked in the ways of drunkenness that he might quench his thirst. But the cup of the wrath of God shall confuse him, multiplying his…and the pain of…

[For the violence done to Lebanon shall overwhelm you, and the destruction of the beasts] shall terrify you, because of the blood of men and the violence done to the land, the city, and all its inhabitants (2.17).

Interpreted, this saying concerns the Wicked Priest, inasmuch as he shall be paid the reward which he himself tendered to the Poor. For Lebanon is the Council of the Community, and the beasts are the simple of Judah who keep the Law. As he himself plotted the destruction of the Poor, so will God condemn him to destruction. And as for that which He said, Because of the blood of the city and the violence done to the land: interpreted, the city is Jerusalem where the Wicked Priest committed abominable deeds and defiled the Temple of God. The violence done to the land: these are the cities of Judah where he robbed the Poor of their possessions.

The Community Rule

The Master shall instruct all the sons of light and shall teach them the nature of all the children of men according to the kind of spirit which they possess, the signs identifying their works during their lifetime, their visitation for chastisement, and the time of their reward. From the God of Knowledge comes all that is and shall be. Before ever they existed He established their whole design, and when, as ordained for them, they
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come into being, it is in accord with His glorious design that they accomplish their task without change. The laws of all things are in His hand and He provides them with all their needs…

All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of injustice are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness. The Angel of Darkness leads all the children of righteousness astray, and until his end, all their sin, iniquity, wickedness, and all their unlawful deeds are caused by his dominion in accordance with the mysteries of God. Every one of their chastisements, and every one of the seasons of their distress, shall be brought about by the rule of his persecution; for all his allotted spirits seek the overthrow of the sons of light.

But the God of Israel and His Angel of Truth will succour all the sons of light. For it is He who created the spirits of Light and Darkness and founded every action upon them…These are the ways in which all of them shall walk, each man with his companion, wherever they dwell. The man of lesser rank shall obey the greater in matters of work and money. They shall eat in common and bless in common and deliberate in common.

Wherever there are ten men of the Council of the Community there shall not lack a Priest among them. And they shall sit before him according to their rank and shall be asked their counsel in all things in that order. And when the table has been prepared for eating, and the new wine for drinking, the Priest shall be the first to stretch out his hand to bless the firstfruits of the bread and new wine. And where the ten are, there shall never lack a man among them who shall study the Law continually, day and night, concerning the right conduct of a man with his companion…

No man shall interrupt a companion before his speech has ended, nor speak before a man of higher rank; each man shall speak in his turn. And in an Assembly of the Congregation no man shall speak without the consent of the Congregation, nor indeed of the Guardian of the Congregation. Should any man wish to speak to the Congregation, yet not be in a position to question the Council of the Community, let him rise to his feet and say: “I have something to say to the Congregation.” If they command him to speak, he shall speak.