Chapter 2: The Tribulation and the Enigmatic Sayings of Jesus

In chapter 3 of JTEE Pitre examines four blocks of tradition to answer the question 'Which, if any, of Jesus teachings refer to the tribulations?' In this chapter we will seek to understand and offer comment and critique on his interpretation of the following,

(1) The Lord's prayer, in particular the meaning of, trial/temptation/πειρασμός (Q:Matt 6:13/Luke 11:4);
(2) Jesus' riddle-like statement about John the Baptist and the kingdom suffering violence (Q:Matt 11:12-13/Luke 16:16)
(3) the cryptic exchange between Jesus and his disciples concerning 'Elijah must come first' (Mark 9:11-13; cf. Matt 11:14);
(4) Jesus' somewhat shocking declaration that he did not come to bring peace but a sword and strife (Q:Matt 10:34-36/Luke 12:51-53; Gos. Thom. 16)

This material has been selected by Pitre for four reasons.

• It covers various form-critical categories (prayer, logion, a riddle-dialogue, a mission statement or prophetic forecast) and from a range of independent literary sources (Mark, Q, and the Gospel of Thomas)

• Two of the blocks of tradition are concerned with the kingdom of God. If we are able to 'determine the expectation of eschatological tribulation is present in sayings of Jesus regarding the kingdom itself' then this would be 'weighty evidence that the tribulation was more integral to Jesus' ministry that many scholars have recognised in the past.'

• The texts are all 'difficult and enigmatic' at first glance. The concept of the tribulation may throw fresh light on them.

• There are good reasons, using Pitre's criteria approach, for saying that all four blocks of tradition originated with the historical Jesus.¹

¹ As mentioned in Chapter One the long sections on the 'criteria of authenticity' will not be the focus of this study.
The Lord's prayer, in particular, the meaning of trial/temptation/πειρασμός (Q:Matt 6:13/Luke 11:4):

Pitre notes that several scholars have interpreted the petition 'καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν' in the Lord's prayer as a petition for deliverance from a time of tribulation, rather than being a petition concerning deliverance from temptation in general. Dunn asks the question,

'The issue here is whether peirasmos signifies any 'test or trial' or looks particularly to the great tribulation widely expected to precede the age to come. In other words, is this a prayer for help in daily trial and tribulation or a plea to be kept from the final and most testing trial of the present age?'

To arrive at a similar conclusion Pitre seeks to analyse the prayer as a whole showing that the prayer finds its unity in themes of 'new exodus' and 'return from exile'. Rather than analysing Matthew and Luke separately, or seeking to uncover, as does Jeremias, a hypothetical scholarly reconstruction, Pitre focuses his attention on 'interpreting only those themes or elements which are present in Matthew and Luke.'

Pitre follows, and strengthens, the work of N.T. Wright who 'convincingly argued that the unifying theme of the Lord's prayer is the ancient Jewish hope of a new Exodus.' by looking intertextually at each petition.

**Father:** Pitre follows Wright in saying that Πάτερ is particularly evocative of the Exodus tradition, in which the Fatherhood of God is connected with the sonship of Israel.

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2 Dunn Jesus Remembered 411  These position are represented by Betz[look this up] and Jeremias. A discussion of this is found in Hagner, Word Biblical Commentary  

6 Pitre 137  

7 JTEE 138
'When you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me.” If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.’ ”

(Exodus 4:22-23)

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

(Hosea 11:1)

Wright draws the conclusion that 'it speaks to all subsequent generations of God as the God of the Exodus, the God who rescues Israel primarily because Israel is God's first-born son.'

Pitre seeks to strengthen Wright's position by calling attention to Hosea 1:10-11, Isaiah 63:10-17, and Jeremiah 31:7-9. Each of these passages mentions God as Father and (a) 'envisions the eschatological restoration of all the tribes of Israel' and (b) in these passages 'the future return is depicted in terms of New Exodus.'  Hence in the old testament prophets, the remarkable imagery of God appears to be distinctly tied to the end of the Assyrian exile and the restoration of all the tribes of Israel in a new exodus. These connections are also found in a later Jewish text (Tob 13:1-5, cf 14:1-7)

Comments and Critique

Several Comments are necessary on Pitre and Wright's understanding of Πάτερ

(a) Throughout his ministry, not just in the prayer he taught his disciples, we find Jesus using the language of 'father' to describe his relationship with God. This means that we do not necessarily have to give it special significance in the Lord's prayer as it was a typical referent for God in Jesus' prayer life and teaching. One wonders whether Pitre would see 'return from exile/exodus' themes in all logions of Jesus which refer to God as father.

(b) James Barr criticised the academic community, particular those behind the magisterial TDNT, for committing the semantic fallacy of 'illegitimate totality transfer'. This is the act in which scholars pack a range of meanings and significance into a single word or phrase. Wright and Pitre need to be careful that they do not fall under a similar critique for the word 'father' is not a n unfamiliar word in general and speaks primarily of relationship rather than 'return from

8 Wright, N. T. The Lord and His Prayer. London: Triangle, 1996.140
9 JTEE 139 Pitre, as we saw in Chapter 1, seeks to distinguish his view of return from exile to that of N.T. Wright
10 JTEE 139
11 JTEE 139
12 A quick search reveals the frequency of the word 'father' in the gospels, the majority of these references refer to God as Father. Matthew 102, Mark 18, Luke 56, John 138.
exile/exodus. One cannot simply move from a word to a concept. A rebuttal of this criticism might be that words do, at times, evoke stories but we may ask whether the connection of father to return from exile/exodus is really behind the use of this word. Instead, we may say that it is only if we see the return from exile/exodus theme in the rest of their prayer that we, using a coherentist approach, can tentatively make any 'father-exodus-return from exile' interpretation historically plausible.

(b) There are passages which speak of God as father in Hebrew Bible and Intertestamental literature which are not explicitly connected with New Exodus. This provides a corrective to Pitre's selection of passages which give the impression, at least in my reading, that it is the only possible way the word 'father' could be understood against its use in biblical and intertestamental texts..

c) Bearing in mind the above criticism, and recognising how tentative it must be put forward, we can add to Pitre's argument by drawing our attention to Malachi 1:6, 2:10. To my knowledge no-one, at least in the major commentaries, has made a case for seeing the Lord's prayer as evoking and echoing the book of Malachi.

A son honors his father, and servants their master. If then I am a father, where is the honor due me? And if I am a master, where is the respect due me? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. You say, “How have we despised your name?”

Malachi 1:6

Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our ancestors? Malachi 2:10

It is possible that Malachi is behind the saying 'father' in the Lord's prayer. I suggest the following reasons..

a) Working with a coherentist epistemology we can say that Jesus, elsewhere in his ministry,


The range of meanings include (1) the immediate biological ancestor, parent (2) one from whom one is descended and generally at least several generations removed, forefather, ancestor, progenitor, forebear: one from whom one is descended and generally at least several generations removed, forefather, ancestor, progenitor, forebear: (3) one who provides moral and intellectual upbringing, father (4) a title of respectful address, father (5) revered deceased persons with whom one shares beliefs or traditions, fathers, ancestors

15 "illegitimate totality transfer. n. The error of taking the conclusions of a word study—observing the various meanings of a word over time and in different contexts—and assuming them all to be present in a single contextual usage of that word. And closely related to this is the etymological fallacy. n. The mistaken notion that the true meaning of a term lies in its primitive meaning (etymology), that the earliest historical occurrence of a term yields the correct definition. It is a fallacy because the meanings of words evolve over time so that some words are quite detached from their origins. Also called root fallacy” DeMoss, Matthew S.: Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek. Downers Grove, Ill. : InterVarsity Press, 2001, S. 70


The people of Israel are [God’s] children, his firstborn, and their king is his son (Deut 14:1; Hos 11:1–3; 2 Sam 7:14). The title [Father] is used of God explicitly when he is considered as creator (Deut 32:6; Mal 2:10), as lord of his chosen people (Jer 3:19; 31:9; Isa 63:16; Tob 13:4), as one sinned against by Israel (Jer 3:4–5; al 1:6), and as the one from whom mercy and forgiveness come (Ps 103:13; Isa 64:7–8 [64:8–9e])… David is to address his as “my Father” (Ps 89:27).
assuming the reliability of the gospel tradition, refers to Malachi.

Mal 2:7-8/Mat 23:3  
Mal 3:1/Mat 11:3;11:10, Mark 1:2; 1:76, 7:19, 7:27  
Mal 4:5/Mat 11:14  
Mal 4:5-6/Matt 17:10-11, Mark 9:11-12, Luke 1:17

Scot McKnight in his book *Jesus and His Death* describes the role of a scripture prophet,

'scripture prophets provide a plausible context for understanding Jesus' mission.' Scripture prophets are those who seek to discover their own 'life and destiny in the pages of the Tanack.'

I suggest that Malachi is, perhaps, given the frequency of its use in the Jesus tradition, a place where Jesus found some of the textual resources, to construct his own narrative-linguistic-theodramatic world and to shape his own ministry. If Jesus saw his own life and ministry, and that of Israel around him, in the text of Malachi then it is possible, or even plausible, that this would show itself in his prayer life.

b) In Malachi the passages which refer to the fatherhood of God are followed by YHWH saying that his name has been despised. If Jesus is seeing the situation of his day as similar to that of the prophet Malachi we may suggest that he wants to address the problem of the abuse of fatherhood, and the despising of YHWH's name by praying that the Father's name be honoured, that God's name may be made known within and outside of Israel.

And if I am a master, where is the respect due me? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. You say, “How have we despised your name?” 7 By offering polluted food on my altar. And you say, “How have we polluted it?” 8 By thinking that the Lord’s table may be despised. 9 When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not wrong? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not wrong? Try presenting that to your governor; will he be pleased with you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts. 9 And now implore the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. The fault is yours. Will he show favor to any of you? says the Lord of hosts. 10 Oh, that someone among you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hands. 11 For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. (Malachi 1)

c) Malachi fits with New-Exodus Theme: The book of Malachi calls attention to the abuses which are taking place in the temple which is a theme which is picked up elsewhere in the ministry of
Jesus, and also, in anticipation of the following pages, the Lord's prayer. The book of Malachi warns of the 'day of the Lord' which is approaching, a day of tribulation and wrath, a day which will be followed by a time of peace and restoration. Does this explain the language of 'trial/temptation' in the Lord's prayer?

'Your name be hallowed. Your Kingdom Come': The strongest Old testament parallels to Jesus' petitions are found in Ezekial 26:22-28 and Mic 4:5-8, each of which are explicitly 'focused on the hope of the End of the Exile', thus setting 'the Lord's Prayer within the context of the future gathering of the exiles'. This understanding strengthens the 'new exodus' understanding of Father, whilst simultaneously solving the coming of the kingdom puzzle—How can a kingdom be said to come?—by showing that the kingdom does not refer "primarily to a 'place,' much less to an abstract 'reign of God,' but rather to a people."

Comments and Critique

a) Pitre equates the 'return from exile' with the Kingdom of God. However, this is reductionistic for this does not account for the plurality and complexity of the kingdom language in the Gospel tradition. Jesus message of the Kingdom may have evoked other themes such as 'renewed and abundant prosperity', the 'involvement of a particular messianic figure', 'renewed covenant', 'building of a new temple.', 'the return of YHWH to Zion'. triumph/destruction/blessing of the nations, broadening of the sphere of promised land, defeat of Satan' and resurrection.

b) The Lord's prayer bears a resemblance to the Jewish prayer of the Qaddish.

Exalted and hallowed be his great name in the world, 
which he created according to his will. 
May he establish his kingdom in your lifetime and in your days, 
and in the lifetime of the whole household of Israel, speedily and at a near time.

17 JTEE 140
18 JTEE 142
19 Meier, J. A Marginal Jew: Mentor, Message and Miracles v. 2: Rethinking the Historical Jesus: Mentor, Message and Miracles v. 2. Yale University Press, 2007.298 “ When one pauses to consider it, the idea is strange and awkward'.
20 JTEE 143
22 “Another ancient Jewish prayer whose earliest form probably goes back to the time of Jesus, the Qaddish, is of particular interest to Christians, since it may well have been used by Jesus in formulating the Lord’s Prayer.” J. Dunn article on ‘Prayer’ in Green, Joel B. ; McKnight, Scot ; Marshall, I. Howard: Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels. Downers Grove, Ill. : InterVarsity Press, 1992, S. 617
The Lord's prayer and the Qaddish offer a parallelism between the 'hallowing of God's name' and 'your kingdom come'. It is not necessary to explain the coming of the Kingdom as reference to Israel, for the meaning of 'your kingdom come' is closely related to that of 'your will be done'. It is a prayer that God's kingly rule will be established, although the 'return from exile' will, arguably, occur as part of that establishment. Pitre, following Meier, exaggerates the problem of saying 'your kingdom come'.

c) Any account of Jesus praying for the arrival of the kingdom should also take into account the description in the gospels of the kingdom already being present. If 'kingdom equals 'return from exile' then, assuming the authenticity of the Jesus tradition the return has already happened. (e.g. Luke 1:20), for I cannot comprehend how a 'return from exile' could be perceived as 'now and not yet'. Whereas if the 'kingdom' is understood as God's active reign we can see how it can be both present (healings, exorcisms) in part but the fullness is still part of the eschatological promise. 'Give us our daily Bread'. Pitre is convinced that any doubts which one may have concerning 'new exodus' motifs in the Lord's prayer will be laid to rest on a closer look at 'Give us our daily bread'. Wright is correct, according to Pitre, to state that the manna given each day for the sustenance of Israel during the wilderness wanderings (Exodus 16) lies behind the petition for daily bread. This daily bread is 'the food of inaugurated eschatology, the food that is needed because the kingdom has already broken in and because it is not yet consummated.'

Pitre's discussion is brief with the assumption being that the 'exodus motif' is obvious and a plain allusion in the text. One wonders, why, if this is the case, that, as Pitre notes, 'the echo is overlooked with remarkable frequency by commentators of the prayer'. Similar to the exodus motif is the notion that the bread being referred to is the 'blessing of the eschaton'—the eschatological banquet.

The prayer thus asks for the present realization of the blessing of the eschaton. The prayer is nevertheless a prayer for bread. And there is a sense in which the bread (by synecdoche, "food") we partake of daily is an anticipation of the eschatological banquet. This fourth

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23 'The emphasis is on the sovereignty of God, as the parallelism with the first petition indicates. At the same time the phrase is used with particular reference to the blessings that come to men when God is acknowledged as king and his beneficent rule is allowed full sway. God's rule means the end of Satan's rule. The petition is, then, for God to act by setting up his rule. Jewish language is again echoed. The Qaddish prayer cited above continues: 'May he let his kingdom rule in your lifetime and in your days and in the lifetime of the whole house of Israel, speedily and soon'. Outwardly, the two prayers are the same; the Christian prayer is distinguished by the fact that those who pray it have been taught by Jesus that the kingdom of God is at hand. They look forward to the consummation of the promises of God' Marshall, I. Howard: The Gospel of Luke : A Commentary on the Greek Text. Exeter [Eng. : Paternoster Press, 1978 (The New International Greek Testament Commentary), S. 457

24 Wright, N. T. The Lord and His Prayer. London: Triangle, 1996.143

petition, in moving from the cosmic to the particular, does not leave behind eschatological concerns.\textsuperscript{26}

\textbf{'Forgive us our debts/sins as we forgive our debtors':} This petition, whether in Lukan or Matthean form, fits, according to Pitre, the 'new exodus' paradigm of the previous verses on at least two levels.

I) Matthean Form: The 'most obvious biblical image of 'forgiveness of debts' is of course, that of the Jubilee, in which every Israelite in bondage would not only be released from their 'debts' but, perhaps even more significantly, would be allowed to \textit{return to their land.}\textsuperscript{27} (Lev 25:25-28, 39-41)

II) Lukan Form: Pitre follows Wright in saying that 'forgiveness of sins is another way of saying 'return from exile.'\textsuperscript{28} for a great number of texts which refer to 'forgiveness of sins' are set within a 'return from exile' framework.\textsuperscript{29} Pitre lends support to Wright's thesis by calling attention to 1 Kings 8:33-36.

Pitre is led to the conclusion that \textit{there is no reason to doubt that in this petition too Jesus is instructing his disciples to pray the ultimate act of forgiveness of debts and sins which would bring about the return of God's scattered kingdom of Israel to Zion.}'

\textbf{Do not lead us into }\underline{\textit{πειρασμός}}

It comes as no surprise to find that Pitre seeks to understand this petition 'by way of Exodus typology and the ancient hope for the End of Exile.'\textsuperscript{30} He also seeks to link the \underline{πειρασμός} to the eschatological tribulation.

Scholarship is divided on the meaning of \underline{πειρασμός}. Some scholars\textsuperscript{31} reject the eschatological dimension and choose to see this as simply referring to human temptation to sin or non-eschatological trials (See James 1:12-15). If stark contrast to this a number of scholars\textsuperscript{32} reject the view that \underline{πειρασμός} refers simply to 'daily temptation but to the final time of 'testing' for the righteous that will precede the coming of kingdom; in short, the eschatological tribulation.' This

\textsuperscript{26} Hagner, Donald A.: \textit{Word Biblical Commentary : Matthew 1-13}. Dallas : Word, Incorporated, 2002 (Word Biblical Commentary 33A), S. 150
\textsuperscript{27} JTEE 144
\textsuperscript{28} Wright, N. T, and N. T Wright. \textit{Jesus and the Victory of God}. London: SPCK, 1996. 268
\textsuperscript{29} Jer 31:31-34, 33:4-11; Lam 4:22, Ezek 26:24-33; 37:21-23; Isa 40:1-2 etc.
\textsuperscript{30} JTEE 146
\textsuperscript{31} KJV , Gunter Bornkamm, G.R. Beasley Murray, and recently published Gibson
\textsuperscript{32} Shweitzer, Lomeyer, Jeremias and Brown.
view finds support from the New testament in Rev 3:10 and 1 Peter 4:12. Pitre adds to these verses Dan 12:10 LXX which provides strong linguistic parallels to the Lord's prayer. Pitre thus follows Schwietzer, Jeremias, Bown and Meier. Pitre cites Meier approvingly,

'The final petition of the prayer is probably eschatological in its thrust too... In the crucible of suffering God's faithful people would be exposed to one last fearsome testing, and some would fall into apostasy under the pressure of the final crisis... Hence the peirasmos of the greek test refers not everyday 'temptations' but rather to the final 'test' that God in his sovereign control of history will bring upon the world in its last hour.\(^{33}\)

However, Pitre, nuances his clarifies position in light of the following question.

'If the petition in question refers to 'the tribulation,' then why does the text read peirasmin and not ton peirasmon?'

a) 'There is good reason to believe that Jesus believed that the eschatological tribulation had in some sense begun with the persecution and death of John the Baptist. Hence. All trials and tribulations...could be interpreted as manifestations of the eschatological time of trial.\(^{34}\) For Pitre, the eschatological interpretation of peirasmos is able to 'encompass both the traditional application of the Lord's prayer to real temptations and trials of life while at the same time setting these trials in a credible and common ancient eschatological framework.'

b) Pitre sees the 'prayer as a whole' leading to this case. If the 'exodus' and return of exile and kingdom are coming then 'there is good reason to believe that in context peirasmos is referring tot he eschatological tribulation that would precede the end of the age and the coming of the kingdom.\(^{35}\)

Pitre also notes that word also has 'echoes of the Exodus embedded in it' (Deut 7:19, Duet 29:3, Deut 4:27-34) which raises a question which can be asked throughout Pitre's work of when is an

\(^{33}\) JTEE 150, citing Meier A Marginal Jew 2.301 Similar to Jeremias who argued that the term temptation/test does not mean the little temptations or tests of everyday life, but the final great Testing, which stands at the door and will extend over the whole earth—the disclosure of the mystery of evil, the revelation of the Antichrist, the abomination of desolation (when Satan stands in God's place), the final persecution and testing of God's saints by pseudo-prophets and false saviours. What is in danger, is not moral integrity, but faith itself. The final trail at the end is apostasy! Who can escape? Jeremias, Joachim. The Prayers of Jesus. London: SCM, 1967. 105-106

\(^{34}\) JTEE 151

\(^{35}\) JTEE 151 as with Davies and Allison and The Lord's prayer ' is from beginning to end concerned with the last things ... [The petitions] 'Hallowed be thy name' [and] 'thy kingdom come' ... entreat God to reveal his eschatological glory and usher in his everlasting reign. In the petition for bread, ... what is longed after is the heavenly manna, the bread of life, and the morrow is the great tomorrow, the consummation. 'Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors' is prayed in the face of the coming assize, when sins will be judged. And 'do not put us to the test' refers to the coming time of trouble, to the messianic woes... to the final time of tribulation which will precede the renewal [so that here] one prays for preservation from evil or apostasy in the great [end time] tribulation (cf. Rev. 3:10) [594-95]. Davies, W. D. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According To. International critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988.
echo a legitimate exegetical clue, and when is it simply a product of the spectacles of the exegete?

Pitre's understanding of πειρασμός can be supported by reading it alongside the work of (I) Scott McKnight and reminding ourselves of the previously discussed (ii) Malachi paradigm

I) Scott McKnight, in his excellent monograph *The death of Jesus*, offers several insights for interpreting 'lead us not into peirasmos'

   a) 'Unlikely that a first century teacher would think that humans can arrive at a stage of moral perfection where they will no longer be tempted.'

   b) God does not tempt humans to sin, but he does test them.

   c) The prayer of b. Berakot 60b provides a 'plausible, non eschatological moral setting for the sixth petition.'

   d) There are numerous texts which speak of 'the final days as the 'messianic woes' and do so with the assumption that they will be a faith challenging test.

McKnight draws the following conclusion that the 'sixth petition most likely meant, in Jesus' context, 'Lord, do not let us succumb in the final ordeal that will utterly test us.'

II) Malachi: As suggested earlier the book of Malachi may be behind the Lord's prayer. We note again the themes of fatherhood, the making known of YHWH's name and the coming 'day of the Lord'.

Concluding Comments

Pitre's interpretation of the Lord's prayer along a return from exile/tribulation is not necessarily, in and of itself, convincing. However, in my opinion, the return from exile theme is not a secondary facet in Jesus ministry but is of utmost significance. If a larger portrait of Jesus can be painted using return from exile textures, then it make a more convincing case if we also use this as a hermeneutical tool in the detail of examining individual logion/pericope. The hermeneutical spiral of historical Jesus research requires that we we look simultaneously at the tree and the forest, allowing each, in a coherency/holistic approach, to mutually support each other.

36 McKnight, Scot. *Jesus and His Death: Historiography, the Historical Jesus, and Atonement Theory*. Baylor University Press, 2005. 114-115
The Kingdom of God Suffers Violence

After a detailed study of the familiar Lord's prayer Pitre turns his attention to Matthew 11:12-13/Luke16:16 which is arguably one of the most obscure and esoteric logion within the Jesus tradition.

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<th>Matthew 11:12-13</th>
<th>Luke 16:16</th>
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<tr>
<td>ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν Ἰωάννου τοῦ βαπτιστοῦ ἕως ἄρτι ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν βιάζεται καὶ βιασταὶ ἁρπάζουσιν αὐτήν.</td>
<td>Ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται μέχρι Ἰωάννου ἀπὸ τότε ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίζεται καὶ πᾶς εἰς αὐτὴν βιάζεται</td>
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<tr>
<td>From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John,</td>
<td>The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it.</td>
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The redactional position in Matthew and Luke, Pitre notes, seems to suggest different interpretations of the passage. On the one hand, Matthew appears to mean that John 'no longer belongs to the old age of prophecy but to the new age of the kingdom'.37, whereas Luke locates this logion in his schema of Salvation-History so that it appears to assert 'that the era of the law somehow ended with the appearance of John'. Treating this passage as a singly attested saying which has been drawn from the Q tradition,38 Pitre seeks, prior to exegesis, to make some comments about the nature of the original. Did Q have the kingdom suffering violence (βιάζεται) or being preached (εὐαγγελίζεται)? Pitre notes that upon close inspection of the Q tradition we find that εὐαγγελίζω occurs elsewhere in Q, and more interestingly is to be found linked with the ministry of John the Baptist (Q:Matt 1:5, Luke 7:22). If it is argued, Pitre claims, that Matthew's βιάζεται is a product of his redactional hand, we can still proceed with the investigation as 'while the versions lack consistent word-for word-correspondences, they appear to be making much the same basic point in similar forms.39

Both passages, irrespective of their redactional position, seem, according to Pitre, to be saying that

(1) The law and the prophets last until John. The appearance of John marked the in-

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37 J.P Meier Matthew 122, Pitre 160
38 Pitre 161
39 Pitre 163
breaking of the kingdom.
(2) The Kingdom currently suffers violence

This passage is interpreted in a plethora of ways which illustrates the 'the complexity of the situation' but Pitre suggests 'that the concept of eschatological tribulation can help us clear a path out of the interpretative jungle that has grown up around the logion'... 'the tribulation is the key to unlocking the meaning of Jesus' riddle.'

Pitre advances the work of previous scholars, by moving the discussion on from simply making a link between violence and the tribulation. In a stroke of creative genius, which comes across time and time again in this book, Pitre blazes a trail through unknown territory.

Firstly, Pitre points out that 'there are several striking parallels that suggest that the language of 'violence' against the kingdom could function as a technical term meant to signal the onset of the tribulation.' In a survey of the Apocalypse of weeks he finds the the tribulation, or the period of woe, is frequently described as violent and oppressive, and as a time when opponents and false teachers 'carry out violence by persecuting and attempting to kill the righteous.' Among other texts his discusses 4QPsalm Pesher which says,

'It's interpretation concerns the violent ones of the covenant who are in the House of Judah, who plot to destroy those who observe the law... Its interpretation concerns the Wicked of Ephraim and Manasseh who will attempt to lay hands on the Priest and the members of his council in the time of Trial which will come upon them.

Pitre concludes that 'Jesus is interpreting John's rejection and execution as the inauguration of the period of violence that would characterise the final tribulation.'

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40 JTEE 165 Pitre offers a quick tour-de-force overview of contrasting view of this passage
   • Albert Schweitzer: The 'logion affirms that since the time of John Jewish penitents are attempting to force the kingdom to come'
   • T.W Manson: The saying states the law and the prophets have been fulfilled in the kingdom of God and that people should now 'take every risk and make every sacrifice in order to have tehir share in the kingdom'
   • Joachim Jeremais: This saying places John at the beginning of the age of salvation and it is the disciples who seek to force their way into the kingdom'
   • N.T. Wright: This logion is a 'critically and politically loaded' critique of Zealots and Jewish Revolutionaries who are trying to bring in the Kingdom.
41 JTEE 165 Pitre is not alone in the eschatological understanding of this passage and shares company with Martin Dibelius, Norman Perrin, Paul Hoffman, George R. Beasley Murray. However, Pitre advances the discussion significantly
42 JTEE 167 Pitre looks at Apocalypse of Weeks, Dead Sea Scrolls
43 JTEE 168
Secondly, Pitre, puts forward a link between ‘the law and the prophets were until John’ and the time of ‘messianic woe’. The eschatological tribulation is often understood as featuring the following two characteristics (1) the onset of lawlessness and (2) the rise of false prophecy. The roots of this expectation are found in Old Testament and continue throughout intertestamental literature, and are also to be found elsewhere in the Jesus tradition. As in the warnings of Matt 7:15,

15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.... 21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?’ 23 Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.’

Of particular interest is Matthew 24:11-12 which, in the redactional context, is linked with the great tribulation.

11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold.

Pitre confidently pulls together his exegesis of Matthew 11:12-13/Luke 16:16,

'To summarize the interpretation once more: up until the time of John, the law and the prophets were in force—that is, the law was observed, and true prophecy was being proclaimed. But, with the appearance of John, the eschatological period of lawlessness and false prophecy has now begun. This period of tribulation is characterised by the persecution of the righteous representatives of the kingdom—here embodied in the figure of John- and so represents an attack on the kingdom of God itself. Thus, John marks the turning point and the arrival of the kingdom because his persecution signals the onset of the tribulation that would precede the arrival of the kingdom.'

'Elijah Has Come' and Died in the Tribulation (Mark 9:11-13)

Then they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” 12 He said to them, “Elijah is indeed coming first to restore all things. How then is it written about the Son of Man, that he is to go through many sufferings and be treated with contempt? 13 But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written about

125-129
45 Pitre 169
47 (Lawlessness: Enoch 93:9-11,14; Jub 23:19,21, Psalms of Solomon 17:11-14, etc; Lack of Prophecy T. Jud 21:9, IQH 12:9-11, etc).
48 Pitre 176
him.” Mark 9:11-13

Pitre contends that in Mark 11:1-13 'we are confronted with a saying of Jesus that can be greatly illuminated by bringing the eschatological tribulation into the discussion. This passage, as with the last, has been the focus point of serious scholarly debate. with a whole sway of scholars following an Elijah/Messiah paradigm in which it was believed that Jesus was tapping into a contemporary view within at least some streams of second temple Judaism that Elijah would return prior to the advent of the Messiah. However, Pitre, disagrees with the Elijah/Messiah paradigm, and offers a different interpretation. He says that 'while Elijah may not have been expected to precede the coming of the Messiah, several Old Testament and early Jewish texts do suggest that his coming was almost certainly linked with the eschatological tribulation,' in particular Mal 4:5-6.

Further support is found in 4 Ezra 6:24-26, Sira 48:10-11, 4Q521, 4Q558, and also to a text dated later than Jesus, further illustrating the Elijah before Tribulation timeline. The upshot of this, for

| Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse (NRSV) | καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω ύμῖν Ἡλιαν τὸν Θεσβίτην πρὶν ἐλθεῖν ἡμέραν κυρίου τὴν μεγάλην καὶ ἐπιφανή, 23 ὃς ἀποκαταστήσει καρδιὰν πατρὸς πρὸς ὑίον καὶ καρδιὰν ἀνθρώπου πρὸς τὸν πληρόσιον αὐτοῦ, μὴ ἐλθὼ καὶ πατάξω τὴν γῆν ἀρδῆν Septuaginta : With morphology. Stuttgart : Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996, c1979, S. Mal 3:22-23 |
| And, behold, I will send to you Elias the Thesbite, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes; who shall turn again the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man to his neighbour, lest I come and smite the earth grievously. (Engl. Trans of LXX) | And, behold, I will send to you Elias the Thesbite, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes; who shall turn again the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man to his neighbour, lest I come and smite the earth grievously. (Engl. Trans of LXX) |

49 JTEE 178
50 Article by Faierstein JBL Dale C. Allison, Jr. Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 103, No. 2 (Jun., 1984), pp. 256-258
51 JTEE 181 Faierstein challenges the Elijah/Messiah paradigm reachign the conclusion that 'This survey has shown that, contrary to the accepted scholarly consensus, almost no evidence has been preserved which indicates that the concept of Elijah as forerunner of the Messiah was widely known or accepted in the first century C.E. The accepted consensus must be seriously questioned and revised in light of the lack of evidence to substantiate this theory.'

Pitre, is that 'Elijah will return during a final period of interfamilial and interpersonal strife\(^5\)....'in order to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury.\(^5\)

This is significant for two reasons. The first is that it 'explains why Jesus may have linked the coming of Elijah with persecution and suffering'.\(^5\) The second reason is that Elijah arrives during a period of interfamilial strife which is not to be seen as the result of 'societal breakdown in human relations' but as 'a very common sign of the the arrival of the eschatological tribulation.'\(^5\) See Jub 23:16-19, 1 En 56:7;70:7;99:5; 100:1-2. A view which continues after the time of Jesus in rabbinic literature.

For Jesus, according to the evangelist, had come to restore all things (Mark 9:12) which could be referring to the 'restoration of Israel'. Jesus make the link between 'Elijah' and the 'Son of Mans' suffering and Pitre notes that both texts (Mal 4:5-6, Daniel 7) 'both contain references to the eschatological tribulation.' Pitre also draws reference to Sir 48:10 and m.Sotah 9:15 who expect Elijah to come before the resurrection, which adds to the case as it was known that tribulation would occur before resurrection. (Daniel 12:1-2, Isa 26:17-19).

**Comments and Critique**

Assuming the reliability of this dialogue (Mark 9:11-13) we may say that it is entirely plausible that Jesus is alluding, in his reply to the disciples, to Malachi 4:5-6. This is made more clear with reference to the LXX as it shares similar wording. Not only do both passages mention Elijah but there is also similar vocabulary. For Jesus, Elijah has come to restore all things ἀποκαθιστάνει πάντα which bears resemblance to the Septuagint translation of Malachi where Elijah will restore broken families LXX ἀποκαταστάσει. Contrary to much scholarship we cannot say it is clear that Elijah will precede the Messiah, but from Malachi we can only say that the Elijah will precede the 'great and awesome day', which we can legitimately be read as the 'great tribulation' when read alongside Sirach 48:10-11.

How terrible wast thou, Elijah!
And he who is like thee shall be glorified.
5 Who didst raise up a dead man from death,
And from Sheol, according to the good pleasure of Jahveh;
6 Who broughtest down kings to the Pit,
And them that were honored from their beds [of sickness];
7 Who hearest rebukes in Sinai,
And judgments of vengeance in Horeb;
8 Who anointedst kings for retribution,

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52 JTEE 183
53 JTEE 183
54 JTEE 183
55 JTEE 184
And a prophet as successor in thy place.

9 Who wast taken upwards in a whirlwind,
And by fiery troops to the heavens.

10 iWho art ready for the time, as it is written, kTo still wrath before the fierce anger of God. To turn the heart of the fathers unto the children,
And to restore the tribes of Israel.

11 oBlessed is he that seeth thee, and dieth,

Exegesis allows us to accept the possibility of the Elijah/Tribulation paradigm, which when used with a holistic method of hypothesis/verification gains greater plausibility. N.T. Wright says that a good hypothesis includes all the data and proves fruitful in other areas. It seems that this understanding of the kingdom and violence fulfils these requirements.

I Did not come to Bring Peace: Matt 10:34-36/Luke 12:51-53; Gos. Thom. 16

Pitre seeks to explain these difficult words of Jesus against in a eschatological and tribulation framework. This is the first time that Pitre has interacted with a part of the Jesus tradition which is found outside the canon.

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<td>“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household. T”</td>
<td>Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! 52 From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; 53 they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”</td>
<td>Jesus said, “Men think, perhaps, that it is peace which I have come to cast upon the world. They do not know that it is dissension which I have come to cast 35 upon the earth: fire, sword, and war. For there will be five 36 in a house: three will be against one, two, and two against three, the father against the son, and the son against the father. And they will stand solitary.” 5</td>
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Pitre establishes the literary independence of the Gospel of Thomas from the Q tradition, focusing attention on the two elements which are common to both. The Q tradition cannot be reconstructed by ‘the fact that they do not exhibit exact grammatical correspondence.’

56 JTEE 200-207
57 JTEE 201 It seems to me that this logion, due to minimal word for word parallels, cannot be assumed to have come from a common literary source.
(1) 'Jesus' mission statement that he did not come to bring peace but rather a period of strife\textsuperscript{58}

(2) 'his ominous forecast of a imminent period of interfamilial strife\textsuperscript{59}

Pitre does not follow the approach of S.G.F Barndon, nor Bart Ehrman, the former who think that Jesus is peaking of violent political revolution\textsuperscript{60}, and the latter who think Jesus is 'antifamily'\textsuperscript{61}.

'In short, all of these attempted explanations ultimately miss the mark because they do not adequately take into account the Old Testament roots and eschatological connotations of the second half of the logion. ie. The description of interfamilial strife.'\textsuperscript{62}

This logion in all versions (Matt, Luke, Thomas), as other scholars have widely noted, is rooted in the prophecy of Micah 7:5-6, a point which is made explicit in Matthew 10:36. On close inspection of Micah, reading the allusion in its wider context, we see 'the prophet is not only describing a future period of eschatological strife between family members; he is also tying this future period to the return of an eschatological remnant of scattered Israel.'\textsuperscript{63}

Prior to the 'return from exile' there will be a time of of interfamilial strife, a theme which is picked in other Jewish literature texts. (Jub 23:19, 1 Enoch 100:1-2, CD 19:15-18, 1 Enoch 56:7), and is developed in Mishnah (m.Sotah 9:15)

In the light of Micah and other intertestamental texts Pitre draws the conclusion that

'Jesus is expressly declaring that a primary goal of his mission is to unleash the final period of strife that will mark the beginning of the tribulations of the latter-days and the final stage before the eschatological restoration of Israel. This is the clearest, simplest, and most historically grounded explanation of his words.'\textsuperscript{64}

Comment

Essentially I think Pitre is right to read this logion as referring to tribulation. Pitre's case can be further strengthened by seeing these passages as being independent tradition. If this is accepted then it is appropriate to look at the context of these logion, using their surrounding verses to further draw out the meaning of this logion. Matthews gospel places this in a larger context of persecution of

\begin{flushright}
58 JTEE 207  
59 JTEE 207  
60 Brandon, S.G.F. Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity. First Edition. Charles Scribner, 1967. The relationship between Jesus and the Zealots is discussed in Meier, J. A Marginal Jew: Companions and Competitors v. 3: Rethinking the Historical Jesus: Companions and Competitors v. 3. Yale University Press, 2007. pp 565-569. He writes 'If we take Zealot to mean what Josephus almost always takes it to mean, i.e., an organised and armed group of revolutionaries rebelling against Roman rule in Palestine, then it is beside the point to ask whether Jesus interacted with the Zealots. The Zealots in this sense of the word did not emerge as a distinct group until the First Jewish Revolt (AD66-70), more specifically during the winter of AD 67-68 in Jerusalem, as various political groups jostled and manoeuvred for control of the revolt. By definition, therefore, it is hopelessly anachronistic to talk about Jesus being a Zealot or even being sympathetic to the Zealots, understood in the narrow sense of the word.' 565  
61 Ehrman, Bart D. Jesus, Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium. OUP USA, 2001, 171. Pitre cites F.F. Bruce approvingly who says 'he [Jesus] meant this would be the effect of his coming, not that it was the purpose of his coming' F.F Bruce Hard Sayings of Jesus. 2nd ed. Trafalgar Square Publishing, 1995, 131 cited in JTEE 208  
62 JTEE 208  
63 JTEE 209  
64 JTEE 211
\end{flushright}
sheep before wolves, whilst Luke situates this saying as following on directly from the Jesus saying which talks of 'fire on the earth' and 'Baptism, each of which can arguably linked with the tribulation.

'I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how it great is my distress until it is accomplished!'

We may also see that Pitre's understanding of this verse may make sense of another 'shocking' saying of Jesus in which tells his disciples to sell their cloaks and buy a sword in Luke 22:36. In this saying the Jesus shows that his ministry fulfills Is 53:12 whose larger context is one of judgment, return from exile and the suffering servant. Jesus is saying, in other words, that the time of eschatological strife is here, which will bring the end of exile. This time of strife will tear families apart and Jesus prepares his disciples for this event. They are to get a cloak, a bag and a sword, for like the flight from Egypt, the disciples are to those who are ready to move with haste and perhaps fight in the future eschatological battle.  

I am suggesting that Jesus was a zealot or encouraged his disciples to violent acts, for any hypothesis which explains Jesus encouragement for his disciples to buy swords, must cohere with Jesus teaching about loving ones enemy, turning the other cheek, etc.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have followed Pitre's interpretation of 4 passages within the gospels. The Lord's prayer can be read in a 'return from exile'/tribulation type way. The question is whether it should be read in this way, was this was Jesus meant? The plausibility of this reading is enhanced when one is able to see aspects of 'return from exile/tribulation in other facets of Jesus ministry. This, I believe is the case. The question remains though as whether Jesus thought that his own death is part of this return from exile/tribulation interpretation. This will be explored in Chapter 4 but, following the

65 Despite Marshall's interpretation, included below, it would be potentially useful to create a hypothesis which allows Jesus to be warning his disciples of coming eschatological conflict, which may have been seen by Jesus at one point in his ministry, as bringing his disciples into potential physical conflict. The potential for eschatological tribulation is on the cards to such a degree that Jesus encourages his disciples to pray that they do not enter it, that is the πειρασμός (Luke 11:4, Luke 22:40).

"The saying brings out the extreme plight of the disciples. A garment for wear at night was an utter necessity; to give it up for a sword implies that dire circumstances are at hand. A reference to preparation for an anticipated eschatological or messianic conflict is highly improbable, since this idea plays no part in the thinking of Jesus or the early church (except in a non-literal sense). Nor is it likely that Jesus is contemplating armed resistance in the manner of the Zealots (see the decisive criticism of this view by Hahn, 167-170). Nor again is it likely that the saying is primarily designed to explain why the disciples had the use of a sword in Gethsemane, and to show that in so doing they were disobedient to the will of Jesus (for this view see P. S. Minear*; Wilson, 65f.). Rather the saying is a call to be ready for hardship and self-sacrifice [Emphasis My Own]."

structure of JTEE, we need to spend some time, in the next chapter, looking at the Mark 13.