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| Christadelphian EJournal |
|  |
| Of Biblical Interpretation |

**Vol. 6, No. 2, Apr 2012**

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**Editorial**

Jesus said that, “A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country and in his own house” (Matt 13:57). We are familiar with the episodes of his rejection at Nazareth (Luke 4) and by his own family (Mark 3). There must be something about familiarity that is the basis for this aphorism. It may be true in our own experience. We may have a family that is not in the truth, or we may suffer some kind of rejection by people at college or work because of what we believe. Such rejection may be born of a lack of understanding, or of pride; mistrust, or an unwillingness to be associated with you and what you stand for and are doing. It can happen in the ecclesia as well. Peter was unwilling to be associated with Paul’s work in the truth at one time and he was withstood by him (Gal 2:10-11). This example shows that you might be rejected by those outside as well as those inside the ecclesia. No doubt Peter had his reasons in separating from Paul, but human nature is very adaptable in its thinking and capable of all sorts of self-justification. Peter was wrong, and we have Paul’s admonition on record. The lesson for us is that we should expect rejection, but that we ought to support each other in the work we do for the ecclesia.

The ‘news’ to highlight from this issue is the new EJournal Book fund which has a small pot of money from the royalties from *Reasons* – this hardship fund is for book grants and it is fully explained at the back of this issue. Rather than give the money to existing charities in the Christadelphian community, it was judged reasonable to address the study needs of young unwaged people unable to buy a Bible Studies book due to hardship.

The other ‘news’ is that a new multi-author book, *One God, the Father*, is being written by fourteen authors, and it is hoped that it will be published in the autumn in the same way that *Reasons* was published last autumn; see the back of this issue.

**Sister-Wife**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

Genesis contains three patriarchal narratives with a similar sister-wife motif (Gen 12:10-20; 20:1-18; and 26:1-11). In each account the patriarch passes of his wife as his sister out of fear for his own life. This article will examine the typology of the narratives and present a holistic approach by demonstrating that they are all inter-dependent.

### The First Account (A)

The three narratives are very similar; indeed they presuppose knowledge of each other and would be unintelligible without this mutual dependence.[[1]](#footnote-1) It is however, the divergences in the different narratives that signal the true intentions of the author. The following table compares the three narratives:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Passage** | **12:10-20** | **20:1-18** | **26:7-11** |
| **Account** | **A** | **B** | **C** |
| **Chronology** | Sarah 65 years old | 24 years later | 76 years later |
| **Couple** | Abraham, Sarah | Abraham, Sarah | Isaac, Rebekah |
| **Locality** | Egypt | Gerar | Gerar |
| **Reason for stay** | Famine | No reason given | Famine |
| **King** | Pharaoh | Abimelech[Phichol v.22] | Abimelech[Phichol v.26] |
| **Offence** | Sarah taken as wife | Sarah entered harem but kept from adultery. | Potential only |
| **King becomes aware** | Not said | Warning dream | Sees Isaac caressing Rebekah. |
| **Reason for deceit** | Abraham’s fear of death. | Abraham’s fear of death. | Isaac’s fear of death. |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Passage** | **12:10-20** | **20:1-18** | **26:7-11** |
| **Account** | **A** | **B** | **C** |
| **Excuse** | None given | “No fear of God in this place.... When God had me wander...” asked favour of Sarah. | “Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her”. |
| **Penalty on King** | Serious diseases on Pharaoh and his household. | Abimelech, his wives and concubines could not beget or bear children. | None. Orders people not to molest either Isaac or Rebekah. |
| **Gifts because of Sarah** | Pharaoh treats Abraham well —sheep, slaves, cattle, donkeys, camels. | None reported | Not applicable |
| **Expiation** | None | 1,000 shekels of silver, plus sheep, cattle, and slaves. | None |
| **Expulsion** | Sent away with wife and possessions. | None. “Live wherever you like” | Not immediately, but finally because of Isaac’s wealth only. |

The first account (A) has long been recognized by scholars as typological. D. L. Peterson remarks:

The analogy with the sojourn of Israel in Egypt is too obvious to require explication. Hence the setting in Egypt interjects an ambiguous tone to the story.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Although the analogy is “too obvious to require explication”, Peterson, and the scholarly community, have done little to realize the wider implications of this observation; not only in the specific case of the patriarchal narratives, but also more generally for their critical interpretive methods.[[3]](#footnote-3) It is perhaps necessary to tabulate these ‘obvious’ connections:

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| **Genesis 12** | **Israel in Egypt** |
| And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land. (v. 10) | And the famine was sore in the land.(Gen 43:1)And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him. (Gen 46:6) |
| And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram’s wife. (v. 17) | I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth.(Exod 9:14) |
| Hagar the Egyptian bondservant (16:1) probably obtained while in Egypt. | And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, even very much cattle. (Exod 12:38) |
| And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.(v.16) | And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians. (Exod 12:35, 36)And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. (Gen 15:14) |

The parallels between Genesis 12 and the exodus are indeed remarkable, with one notable exception – the use of deception. The Pharaoh of the exodus was not deceived as to the true nature of Israel’s calling; rather he is portrayed as wilfully ignorant: “Now there arose a new king over Egypt which knew not Joseph” (Exod 1:8). If anything, it was Joseph (acting as an agent of a previous Pharaoh) that perpetrated a ruse against his brethren and hid his true identity from them. Surprisingly, though, the Joseph narrative represents a **reversal of the sister-wife motif**: Joseph’s brethren (i.e. his ‘wife’) migrate to Egypt because of famine, (Gen 43:1) they fear for their lives (Gen 50:19-21), and are themselves deceived by the one whom they sold into the slavery of another man’s house.

**The Second Account (B)**

If the first account (A) presents a clear type of Israel’s redemptive history, can the second account (B) receive the same treatment? The following tabulation demonstrates that it can:

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|  **Genesis 20** | **1 Samuel** |
| Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. (v. 2) | And the Philistines took the ark of God …they brought it into the house of Dagon (5:1, 2) |
| The [Philistine] men were sore afraid (v.8)  | And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp (4:7) |
| And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram’s wife. (Gen 12:17) | These are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.(4:8) Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? (6:6) |
| For the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham’s wife. (v. 18) | But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them…. his hand is sore upon us (5:6, 7) |
| And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife (v. 14) | Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place (5:11) Return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed (6:3) |
| Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live (v. 7)So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. (v. 17) | And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord. (7:5) |
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In contrast with the Exodus account, the emphasis in 1 Samuel is on the appropriation of the cultic object and setting it in the ‘house’ of the Philistines. Peterson identifies the “fear of Elohim” as one of the major themes in account (B):

The primary theme, I would call “the fear of Elohim.” This theme is…a keystone to the entire Elohistic enterprise. In our text, the theme receives two unusual twists. The patriarch is depicted as one who does not believe that there is fear of Elohim outside the Israelite community, while it is the king, the foreigner, who matter-of-factly acknowledges Elohim’s authority.

In Samuel, the Philistines accord the ark more respect and demonstrate more ‘fear of Elohim’ than the Israelites. Indeed the ark had been captured in the first place because of its use as a talisman in battle (1 Sam 4:3) — the sons of Eli were renowned for their corruption and cultic disrespect (1 Sam 2:12) — and even when the ark was returned, the Israelites could not resist the temptation to look inside it (1 Sam 6:19). The Philistines act with more restraint and respect than the Israelites; they are even aware of the reputation of the Israelite Godand when they return the ark they make restitution.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Significantly, Samuel prays for the Israelites— in contrast with Abraham praying for the Philistines in the Genesis account (B).

The second important theme in (B) highlighted by Peterson is what he terms the “dialectic of sin”:

No one could be singled out as guilty, and yet it is quite clear that Elohim had been seriously affronted.

However, is this analysis correct? Surely Abimelech (like the Philistines in Samuel) was aware of the plagues that *Elohim* brought against Pharaoh for possessing Sarah? Surely Abraham is also partly culpable (willing to sacrifice his wife) and did not need to manipulate the situation (as the Israelites did when they used the ark) for his own protection? It was not necessary for Abraham (or the Israelites) to force God’s hand as he would have delivered them, if only their faith had been sufficient. In contrast the Philistines demonstrated more integrity and courage (in Genesis and Samuel) than the Israelites. Ronning remarks,

The interpretation of these accounts as showing that Abraham and Isaac were really like the first Adam, though spoken of as the new Adam, is corroborated by W. Berg, who calls (A) “The Fall of Abraham,” pointing back to Genesis 3. Among other clues is the recurrent question, “What is this you have done?” in 3:13 (God to Eve), 12:18 (Pharaoh to Abraham), and 26: 10 (Abimelech to Isaac)…In both cases, Abraham’s lapse is a violation of the Edenic ordinance of marriage. Such an analogy with the fall of Adam in Genesis 3 would make the lapse in (B) even more significant, since in that case Abraham and Sarah had been restored to “Eden” (Isa 51:3), yet fell again.[[5]](#footnote-5)

That this analysis is correct can be demonstrated by the use of ‘Edenic language’ in the Patriarchal accounts:

Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye **touch** (*naga`*) it, **lest ye die**. (Gen 3:3)

The Lord **plagued** (*naga`*) Pharaoh because of Sarah. Gen 12:17)

I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to **touch** (*naga`*) her (Gen 20:6)

He that **toucheth** (*naga`*) this man or his wife shall **surely be put to death** (Gen 26:11)

That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not **touched** (*naga`*) thee. (Gen 26:29)

Abimelech’s accusatory question to Abraham confirms that we are dealing with a lack of covenant faithfulness on Abraham’s part: “What sawest(ha'r' – *ra’ah*) thou, that thou hast done this thing?” The *r-h* (hr) combination is integral to the Abraham narrative – always in a positive sense (including renaming Ab**r**a**h**am and Sa**r**a**h**); the sacrifice on Moriah [m-**r-h**]; and Yahweh-Yireh [y-**r-h**]: “Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw (*ra’ah*) the place afar off” (Gen 22:4). Now, however, it is used in a negative, accusatory sense: What sawest (*ra’ah*) thou?

The ‘new Adam’, whether it is Noah, Abraham, Isaac or Jacob, constantly fails to achieve the Messianic ideal; Ronning observes that,

It is also noteworthy that the “Fall of David” (perhaps another “new Adam,” for the promise of fruitfulness and dominion given to Abraham are also found in 2 Samuel 7) is ironically reminiscent of B…since king David did to the foreigner Uriah what Abraham was afraid the foreign king Abimelech would do to him (2 Samuel 11). The irony is not only in the role reversal, but that Abraham’s fears were unfounded. Abimelech the pagan protested his innocence and rebuked Abraham for exposing him to God’s wrath by his subterfuge; Abraham responded that he did it because he was sure there was no fear of God in that (pagan) place (20:9-11). What does that say when such a thing actually did happen in Israel, under its greatest king, the one after God’s own heart, the one who did more to fulfill the Adamic commission than Abraham or Isaac?

This is perhaps particularly relevant as 1 Sam 21:10-15 describes how David feigned madness in the court of Achish, an event that is commemorated in the title of Psalm 34: “A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour **before Abimelech**; who drove him away, and he departed”. This follows the Abraham/Isaac narrative pattern: (a) David in a ‘foreign’ land; (b) He fears for his life; (c) He uses deception to save himself; and (d) He is sent away. This narrative does not have the normal positive resolution and restitution—David is sent away in disgust by the king who states with revulsion that he has enough idiots in his realm without adding to the number. This throws a negative light on David’s actions, and is used (along with Abraham/Sarah) in the NT (1 Pet 3:10-12) as an example to avoid. The irony of the situation is not lost on Alter, for while David feigns madness when he is recognized as ‘king of the land’, Saul, who is ‘king over Israel’ is actually quite mad.[[6]](#footnote-6)

To summarize so far; account (B) parallels the early monarchical and prophetic period – from the exile of the ark in the time of the first prophet Saul to its return and proper restoration under David (the ‘anointed’). The Messianic ideal is however ruined when David, the recipient of a further outworking of the covenant is discovered to have committed the sin that Abimelech did not; namely, acquiring another man’s wife and murdering her husband.

**The Third Account (C)**

According to Peterson, the theme of the third account is “patriarchal success in a foreign context”; he concludes this “on the basis of the consistent emphasis on Isaac’s existence on foreign soil”. This is partially correct as the narrative, if one includes the incidents with the wells,[[7]](#footnote-7) stresses the relationship that Isaac develops with foreigners (strangers), which of course contributes to his success. The unusual twist in this account is the way in which the deception is discovered. Peterson comments that it is after a long time that the ruse is whimsically revealed. Abimelech happens to look out of a window and to see Isaac fondling his wife. The word play used here (Gen 26:8, *yicHäq mecaHëq*; Isaac was “playing with his wife”) suggests the fortuitous character of the revelation.

(1) The word-play on Isaac’s name―*yicHäq/*qx'(c.yI―is a key to understanding the narrative, as the naming of Isaac is associated with the fulfilment of the covenant promise to Abraham (Gen 17:19); Isaac and Rebekah are the first couple ‘born’ into the Abrahamic covenant.

The Hebrew *mecaHëq* carries sexual connotations and can be used in a positive sense—laugh, play, fondle, caress—and negatively as ‘mocked’ or ‘scorned’. In Gen 26:8, their ‘play’ as man and wife may evoke, or the term itself might be a euphemism for, sexual play.[[8]](#footnote-8) Isaac himself is a victim of the negative use of a cognate of his name (and it is in connection with the covenant) when Ishmael mocks Isaac in Gen 21:9.[[9]](#footnote-9) It is also used negatively in the ‘golden calf apostasy’ at the reception of the Siniatic covenant when “they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to **play**” (Exod 32:6). This is particularly relevant to our understanding of the typology of Isaac at play with his wife, as the Siniatic covenant was a marriage covenant where Yahweh had taken the nation to be his bride. Yet, instead of obeying her vows, the bride was busy committing adultery (idolatry) on her wedding day![[10]](#footnote-10) Yahweh was a faithful husband, “For thy maker is thine husband: the Lord of hosts is his name” (Isa 54:5), but the nation was a slut from her youth onwards: “They committed harlotry in Egypt, they committed harlotry in their youth; their breasts were there embraced, their virgin bosom was there pressed” (Ezek 23:3).

The play between Isaac and Rebekah is different to that of the unfaithful Israelites at Sinai, but it illustrates the marriage covenant between man and wife, between Yahweh and his people.

(2) When the ark was brought to Jerusalem we are informed that,

…as the ark of the covenant of the Lord came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul **looking out at a window saw** king David dancing and playing: and she despised him in her heart. 1 Chron 15:29; cf. 1 Sam 6:21

For this act Michal was excluded from being part of the Abrahamic covenant (2 Sam 6:23). Her behaviour mirrors that of Abimelech in *looking out of a window.*David describes his behaviour as “play **before the Lord**” and this makes him a type of the wife responding to the covenant affection displayed by God in the return of the ark.[[11]](#footnote-11)

In (1) and (2) we have a literary convention allowing the reader (like Abimelech) a view into an intimate relationship involving God’s loving-kindness. How the reader reacts determines whether they are included or excluded from that Messianic covenant.

Our investigation so far has led us to the conclusion that Account (A) relates typologically to the Egyptian bondage and account (B) to the early monarchical-prophetic period. What then can be said of account (C)? This article suggests that (C) is analogous with the latter reign of Hezekiah. We might expect this because the Judahites are exhorted to look at Yahweh’s faithfulness towards their ancestors:

Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him. For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden,[[12]](#footnote-12) and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody. Isa 51:2-3

There is no one typological structure to be observed; rather there are several:

(1) **The Sacrificial Death**. There is an obvious resonance between Isaac’s unwillingness to die for his wife and Christ’s sacrifice for his bride. The same contrast can be made with Hezekiah:

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| **Isaac’s Fear of Death** | **Hezekiah’s Sacrificial Death** |
| v.9) Lest I die [*muwth*] for her  | For you shalt die, [*muwth*] and not live (Isa 38:1) |
| v.10) Thou shouldest have brought guiltiness [*'asham*] upon us  | You made his soul an offering for sin [*‘asham*] (Isa 53:10) |

Abimelech accuses Isaac of bringing “guiltiness” upon his people; in contrast the Servant offers his soul (life) for a sin or “guilt offering”.

It was because of Isaac’s unwillingness to risk his life that guilt was a danger for Abimelech. He represents the response of Gentiles to Isaac’s unwillingness; in Isaiah, it is the Judahites who acknowledge Hezekiah’s ‘atonement’.

(2) The account also has correspondence with the circumstance where covenant love for God’s people **is openly displayed**:

The Lord hath made bare his holy arm **in the eyes of all the nations**; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Isa 52:10

This is after the deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 and it refers back to that event as well as to the future salvation that God is to bring about in the land. In this typology, Abimelech is like ‘the nations’ looking upon Isaac and Rebekah and the love being openly shown.

The significance of the near death of Hezekiah (which parallels the destruction of the nation) is that Hezekiah had no heir to the throne. This was a virtual disannulment of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. It was only through an open display of covenant loveby *Yahweh* that the promises were upheld.

(3) The **reformation of Hezekiah** (c. 715) was a display of reciprocal affection between Yahweh and his people. Hezekiah urged the people to “return to the God of Abraham and Isaac” (2 Chron 30:6); but the Northern Israelites “laughed him to scorn, and mocked” (2 Chron 30:10; cf. Ishmael mocking Isaac). This is like Saul’s daughter Michal, *looking out of the window* and despising and laughing at the reciprocal covenant affection between Yahweh and his Davidic king.

(4) Finally, there is the **beauty of Rebekah**. This corresponds to the beauty of Zion (Ps 48:2) which was to be restored after 701 (Isa 61:3); the Gentiles and kings (Abimelech) would see this glory (Isa 62:2) and recognize that Zion should not be ‘touched’; this is the inviolability of Zion in the restored kingdom of God (Isa 60:14), partially seen in the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem after 701.

*Typological Structure*

The typological application of a narrative account sometimes works on a larger scale with the elements of a story sequentially matching elements in a later account. Whether this works in the case of “Isaac in Gerar” depends on a reader thinking abstractly.

For example, one structure is tabulated below:

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| **Genesis 26** | **Hezekiah’s Restoration** |
| v.7) Because she (Rebekah) was fair to look upon | Zion was beautiful  |
| v.7) ‘She is my sister’ | Ahaz’ alliance with Assyria; Assyrian altar in the Temple; Assyrian fort on Zion |
| v.8) When he had been there a long time | Assyrian hegemony lasts a long time (since Ahaz, 735) |
| v.8) Isaac sporting with his wife | Hezekiah’s renewal and reformation of the temple; rebellion against Assyria |
| v.8) Abimelech ‘looks’ | Assyria look at Jerusalem; deliverance of Jerusalem |
| v.8) ‘Do not touch’ | Assyria leaves Judah alone |

The problem with this structure is that it is fairly abstract. The aspects of a story, like (1)-(4) picked up above, may have correspondence, but the story as a whole may not apply.

**Conclusion**

The conclusion of this article is that the ‘sister-wife’ accounts function as typological models for Israel’s **pre-exilic** **covenant history**:

(A) The Egyptian bondage and Exodus

(B) The early monarchical-prophetic period

(C) The Hezekiah reformation and deliverance

The sister-wife relationship is the one that is chosen to represent the Abrahamic covenants;*a relationship that the Siniatic covenant did not recognize*. The law could only condemn such a relationship (Lev 18:9, 11; 20:17), but ironically it was only within the confines of such an unusual union that the Abrahamic covenant could flourish. A husband, who was related to his wife *by the same father*; pointing to a fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant by a Messiah who was related both to God *and* to his bride – a bride for whom, unlike Abraham and Isaac, *he was willing to die.*

**Distractions**

**A. Perry**

*How far we have been distracted from Christian life*? It’s a question which we can probably not answer, but it’s my intention to provoke some thought in this area.

My basic premise is a gloomy one: we are sinful creatures with hearts that naturally incline to evil things. Jeremiah said of the human heart that it was desperately wicked and deceitful above all things, and Jesus said of his disciples that they were evil. If we examine ourselves as to whether we are truly faithful or whether we have been distracted, we might soon become pessimistic in our outlook.

Have you noticed how worrying is the Sermon on the Mount? I suppose the popular picture of the Sermon on the Mount is that it is full of Jesus’ practical teaching about life, and that it somehow has a rosy glow. This picture stems from the opening 12 verses, which have a series of blessings. Religious people read these and they slot themselves into one of the categories to be blessed, but beyond these verses the message is very serious.

Here is a quick overview with the emphasis placed on the negative aspects: the disciples are described as evil; false prophets are prophesied and described as ravenous wolves; the rejection of many ‘Christians’ at the judgment seat is predicted, and they are described as workers of iniquity; the religious leaders of the day are described as hypocrites in their worship, devotions and alms giving; the framework of the Mosaic Law was going to pass away; and we could go on. The position that Jesus takes is completely uncompro­mising, and he pulls no punches in his statements: for example, if the disciples lose their ‘salt’, they are good for nothing; if they love only their brethren, they are no better than anybody else; if their right hand offends, they are to cut it off, if their eye offends, they are to pluck it out; he outlines ways in which they would be in danger of the judgment, the synagogue councils and hellfire; he condemns the practice of oath taking in contracts as evil. There are commands which cut against our natural grain concerning resisting evil, cheek turning, and doing good to those who despitefully use us. Perhaps, after all, the Sermon on the Mount is not a rosy sermon! Here are some of the distractions it mentions:

**Distraction 1 - Planning for the Future**

Jesus said, “be not anxious for tomorrow: for tomorrow will be anxious for the things of itself. Sufficient to the day [is] its own evil”. (Matt 6:34), so here is a distraction: we don't just think of the day, but we plan all sorts of things for the future. James has a similar thought and condemnation: “Come now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Though ye know not what [shall be] on the next day. For what [is] your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. Instead of that ye [ought] to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil”. We take pleasure in planning for the future, we look forward in anticipa­tion to doing certain things over long periods of time - careers, houses, homes, holidays, long term hire purchase and loans - all these things consume vast amounts of time. We may not be the businessmen of James’ remark, but we do take for granted that *we will continue to live*. Such an attitude is tantamount to a denial that we are mortal creatures. Of course we know that we shall die, but such is our minds, we push this fact to the back of our, minds, and distract ourselves with the business of life and all its plans.

**Distraction 2 - Money Worries**

A major distraction in life is money: we cannot serve God and money, but a lot of our time is spent talking about money - getting it, keeping it, investing it - and our pre-occupation with money stems from the fact that it is the basis of worldly life. We cannot buy without money, and we need to buy in order to live. The whole fabric of our practical daily life is centred on money. Jesus said, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?” (Matt 6:25).

**Distraction 3 - Broadway**

Give my regards to Broadway, so the song goes, and it’s a nice irony that the main U.S. theatre and cinema complex in New York should be called Broadway. Jesus said this: “Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide [is] the gate, and broad [is] the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in by it: Because small [is] the gate, and narrow [is] the way, which leadeth to life, and few there are that find it” (Matt 7:11ff). We might think that we have found the narrow way, but can we keep on that narrow way? Stacked against us are the distractions of the entertainments that the world offers, including television, cinema, the general media, shopping malls, fun parks, and theme parks. All these things take up our time, until our time is gone.

**Conclusion**

Over time the balance of our life can change little by little, and we can fail to see that the direction has changed. We can devote less and less time to the things of the truth, and more and more time to the things of the world. However, nothing can separate us from the love of the Father, and as his children all we need to do at any time is turn to him and seek his forgiveness for our distractions and resolve to be more single-minded in our devotion to His business.

**Ezekiel and Revelation**

**Richard Dargie**

**Introduction**

The first attempt within the Christadelphian community to systematically detail and examine the intertextuality of the Apocalypse occurred in 1977 with the publication of “701 Quotations in the Apocalypse”.[[13]](#footnote-13) It is of more than passing interest that an analysis of these quotations[[14]](#footnote-14) shows that nearly two thirds of the total comprise 3 major prophets (Ezekiel 16%, Isaiah 15.6%, Daniel 13%), plus Exodus (12%), and Psalms (9%). In addition to this, every book of the OT is quoted, save Ruth, Lamentations, Micah, Haggai and Malachi.

From this we can safely conclude that, (1) the Apocalypse is rooted in the OT; and (2) if we are to understand the Apocalypse at all, then we must look for the clues to its interpretation amongst these quotations. This is not to denigrate other sources of evidence, which have their part to play, but inter-textual links between different books of Scripture have to be the primary source of evidence in determining meaning. The sound principle of interpretation being that the meaning of the later quotation or allusion is determined wholly or in part by the meaning of the earlier corresponding reference within its scriptural usage.

**Revelation and Ezekiel**

Reflecting on the above, the preponderance of quotations from Ezekiel, Isaiah and Daniel should alert us that what is being dealt with in the Apocalypse is about the themes they spoke on, i.e. (1) Judgement of the ungodly; and (2) the exoneration of the spiritual with most of the action centred on the city of Jerusalem standing as a symbol of the nation of Israel.

The presence of the Exodus quotations gives us a strong clue that the Apocalypse must also be about the trials and tribulations of a new and emerging nation or people, which struggles for birth against a powerful set of forces which represent (at the ultimate level) the serpent power of sin in the flesh in both spiritual and military form.

R. Morgan[[15]](#footnote-15) has drawn attention to the importance of the Daniel quotations within the Apocalypse, and linked these to the Daniel 2 image. In this article, I want to focus on the Ezekiel heritage, which as the table below shows has a more than a bit part to play.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Revelation / Ezekiel Touch Points** | **Revelation** | **Ezekiel** |
| 1 | The Throne Vision | 4 | 1 |
| 2 | The Book | 5 | 2-3 |
| 3 | The Four Plagues | 6:1-8 | 5 |
| 4 | The Slain Under The Altar | 6:9-11 | 6 |
| 5 | The Wrath of God | 6:12-17 | 7 |
| 6 | The Seal on the Saints Foreheads | 7 | 9 |
| 7 | The Coals From The Altar | 8 | 10 |
| 8 | No More Delay | 10:1-7 | 12 |
| 9 | The Eating of the Book | 10:8-11 | 2 |
| 10 | The Measuring of the Temple | 11:1-2 | 40-43 |
| 11 | Jerusalem and Sodom | 11:8 | 16 |
| 12 | The Cup of Wrath | 14 | 23 |
| 13 | The Vine of the Land | 14:18-20 | 15 |
| 14 | The Great Harlot | 17-18 | 16 & 23 |
| 15 | The Lament Over the City | 18 | 27 |
| 16 | The Scavengers Feast | 19 | 39 |
|  | **Revelation / Ezekiel Touch Points** | **Revelation** | **Ezekiel** |
| 17 | Resurrection | 20:4-6 | 37 |
| 18 | The Battle with Gog and Magog | 20:7-9 | 38-39 |
| 19 | The New Jerusalem | 21 | 40-48 |
| 20 | The River of Life | 22 | 47 |

On first view, the table above is quite startling; principally because, set out in this way, a number of Christadelphian end time teachings derived from the Apocalypse seem oddly juxtaposed with Ezekiel’s prophetic record. For example,

* **Item 14**: the Harlot (Revelation 17-18), has generally been identified within the community as the Papacy/Rome. Here, juxtaposed to Ezekiel 16 and 23 do we find a scriptural basis for the Harlot being identified with Jerusalem? It would seem so.
* **Item 17**: we find reference in the Apocalypse to the first resurrection with a counterpoint to Ezekiel 37, which deals with the “resurrection” of the Jewish nation under Messiah. But this latter resurrection is a gathering of existing people scattered across the globe rather than an actual resurrection from the death state. So is this a true parallel, perhaps not, but there is certainly a connection of theme.
* **Item 15**: the lament over Tyre. Revelation 18 shows the greatest concentration of Ezekiel references for any one chapter (32 all told out of 118). We know who the Tyre of Ezekiel’s day was and within the prophecy of Ezekiel we also know that Tyre was singled out for special judgment because she was in covenant relation with God through Israel. For Tyre, the judgement would be particularly severe because of her exalted relations to God – hence the “swept bare rock” destruction leaving the ancient site much as it is today (cf. Ezek 26:4). But if we carry this theme of Tyre in covenant relation with God through to the Apocalypse, and use it as an aid to interpretation, how do we square the identification of Tyre with the Papacy/Rome? In what sense have these ever been in covenant relationship with God either through Israel or associated with Israel?

All in all, a perplexing list in some respects, but whatever our reaction may be to the table, the inter-textual links can clearly be seen. And we have to face up to the challenge that this listing poses, and address ourselves to the task of soundly interpreting what we find.

So, (1) how do we account for the strong inter-textual links between these 2 books, separated as they are by more than 600 hundred years or so of history? Moreover, (2) if this analysis is correct, what interpretive impact does the Ezekiel prophetic record have on our current understanding of the Apocalypse?

These are difficult questions to answer, but if we can find the solutions to these questions, then we will surely get to the crux of the true meaning of the Apocalypse.

Suffice to say none of this is new. A. Vanhoye had noted the high level of correspondence between the Apocalypse and Ezekiel (noting up to 130 separate references to Ezekiel in the Apocalypse).[[16]](#footnote-16) More specifically, P. Carrington has said the following,

The Revelation is a Christian rewriting of Ezekiel. Its fundamental structure is the same. Its interpretation depends upon Ezekiel. The first half of both books leads up to the destruction of the earthly Jerusalem; in the second they describe a new and holy Jerusalem. There is one significant difference. Ezekiel’s lament over Tyre is transformed into a lament over Jerusalem…[[17]](#footnote-17)

Whilst there will doubtless be on-going debate about the identity of the Harlot/Tyre, and other challenges to our settled notions of end time matters, it has to be stated that if the table above is a valid analysis, then far from being a bit-part player, Ezekiel sits at the heart of the Apocalypse, and appears to be the basic template or ‘chassis’ from which the Lord Jesus constructed his last message. Quotations from other OT Scriptures must therefore, be re-arranged around the basic ‘chassis’ of the Ezekiel record to form the Apocalypse.

Clearly, more evidence is required to complete the foundations of the thesis being put forward, which is not within the purview of this article; but if the basic thesis is correct, then it means we have an interpretive background from which to work, as we address ourselves to the task of interpretation.

So, having given an outline argument for Ezekiel being the basis for the Apocalypse, we should, for the remainder of this article, try at least to attempt an answer to the questions that were posed above.

(1) How do we account for the strong inter-textual links between these 2 books?

We suggest the Ezekiel template was chosen based on similarity of message and purpose. In other words, the matters which Ezekiel dealt with in his prophecy in the years 600-586 BCE had some resonance or bearing to those to whom the Apostle John was directed to write in the 1c. CE. So what is the crux of Ezekiel’s prophecy, what resonances did the Lord Jesus wish to carry through from Ezekiel into the Apocalypse?

J. Allfree says,[[18]](#footnote-18)

For nearly seven years Ezekiel’s message was one of warning of the impending judgement of Almighty God upon Zedekiah and the people of Israel still in the land.[[19]](#footnote-19)

As anticipated in Leviticus 26, it was because the people had failed to walk in the statutes and judgements that God’s wrath was now about to come upon them.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Even though Israel had refused to co-operate in revealing God to the Gentiles, yet God would still make himself know to the nations through the people that he had chosen – but now in Judgement.[[21]](#footnote-21)

The crux of Ezekiel’s prophecy, as the quotations set out above explain, is

* the Covenant curses visited upon a corrupt and faithless people,
* a highly visible casting out of the nation of Israel from the land of promise and the burning of the temple.

All the covenant curses would be visited upon Jerusalem and her faithless people. Ezekiel 5 has no less than 30 references to the Law with implicit breaches, and in addition contains 17 clear allusions to Leviticus 26,[[22]](#footnote-22) the chapter that details the most chilling covenant curses. As Ezekiel 16 and 23 make clear, Jerusalem had become a wanton Harlot in the eyes of God; so for her, the only fitting punishment was that prescribed in the law – she would be burned with fire (Lev 21:9), which is precisely what Nebuzaradan the military commander of Nebuchadnezzar did in 586 BCE (2 Kings 25:8-9; Jer 52:13).

So, are these the resonances that the Lord Jesus Christ was attempting to capture when choosing Ezekiel as the template for the Apocalypse?

(2) What interpretive impact does the Ezekiel prophetic record have on our current understanding of the Apocalypse?

Our answer to question (2) is that the impact is significant. If the Lord Jesus chooses as his template for the Apocalypse an existing OT prophecy which details the punishment of covenant breakers, details the destruction of their temple, and speaks of the removal of their place and nationhood, he must be doing it for a reason. When we set this consideration against a first century context, then link this interpretive background from Ezekiel with a number of clear references between the Olivet prophecy and the first four seals,[[23]](#footnote-23) then we can see that whatever the Apocalypse is about, there is a certainly a clear AD70 flavour in the early chapters.

Two further observations. If we go back to the table above and look at the points of interconnection, particularly items 4 and 14, we find two interesting features.

(1) In item 4 we have a scene reversal. In the Apocalypse, the righteous slain of the 5th seal are gathered together and protected under the altar. They are crying out to God for vengeance and asking how long until they be avenged (Rev 6:9-11). The corresponding chapter in Ezekiel has a completely different picture with God telling the unrighteous of Ezekiel’s day that he will scatter the bones of the unrighteous around the altar of their false Gods (Ezek 6:13). So we have 2 very different scenes, but a common point of connection in that both scenes revolve around altars, the one holy with true believers and the other very profane and associated with the corrupt practices of idol worship.

(2) We have already commented on item 14 the Harlot of Revelation 17-18. In Ezekiel 24:15-22, the 6th century BCE destruction of the temple is likened to the death of Ezekiel’s wife. This seems to be paralleled in Revelation 17-18 with the death of the harlot Babylon. Prior to her death, the harlot claims she is still a wife (“I sit a Queen and am no widow”, Rev 18:7). And yet the would-be husband who had come to her to turn her from her harlotry, she had rejected and murdered. In the final week of his life, the Lord Jesus prophesied to his disciples that with respect to the temple “there shall not be left here one stone upon another” (Matt 24:2). The fate of the harlot had been predicted a generation before the consummation of the judgement took place. So again, we have common points of connection (the death of a wife/harlot, and the destruction of two temples) between the two books, but with details applicable to 586 BCE, and AD 70 respectively.

**Conclusion**

The publication of the “701 Quotations in the Apocalypse” has given us a rich scriptural resource with which we can dig and delve to derive meaning for the Apocalypse.

We have looked into this resource briefly in this article, and considered the close inter-textual relations of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse. It has been argued in outline that Ezekiel is the template for the Apocalypse, with a summary of evidence given in the table above. It is accepted that the subject requires much further analysis.

On the supposition that the argument put forward here is correct, the Ezekiel template for the Apocalypse should serve as an interpretive aid when we come to expound the Apocalypse.[[24]](#footnote-24)

**The Word became Flesh**

**A. Perry**

**Introduction**

John 1:1, 14 has been much studied for its background, and different proposals have held their sway in the history of scholarship.[[25]](#footnote-25) Rather than discuss these contextualization theories, we will put aside the question of the relationship of the prologue to its cultural environment for the moment and consider the intertextual links it has within the Bible. The pecking order of what is relevant to the interpretation of John 1 starts with the Johannine writings, then includes other NT writings, followed by those writings held to be authoritative Scripture (now the OT), or *vice versa*; only after this, should the cultural environment be included.

**Not ‘The Word made flesh’**

The use of Genesis 1 in John 1 is well known; ‘In the beginning’ is an obvious allusion, but the reference to ‘all things’, ‘the light’, and ‘darkness’ are confirming pointers to the reader that s/he should look for a Genesis background to the Prologue. In our text, “And the Word was made flesh” (v. 14, KJV), we have the same past tense form of the verb ‘to become’ (evge,neto) that is used in the LXX for the ‘was’ statements of Genesis 1: ‘and there **was** light’ (v. 3); ‘**was** the evening’, ‘**was** the morning’ (vv. 5, 8, 11, 19, 23); ‘it **was** so’ (vv. 6, 9, 11, 14-15, 20, 24, 29-30). The LXX is giving a literal translation of the Perfect form of the Hebrew verb ‘to be/become’ and it is unexceptionable. The translation of John 1:14 above, however, is interpretative; and so some translations render the Greek as “And the Word **became** flesh” (NASB, RSV), rather than “And the Word **was made** flesh”, and this is better.

The particular past tense form of the verb ‘to become’ is variously translated. In John 1 we have it as “There **was** a man sent from God” (v. 6); this is like the Hebraic “And it came to pass” (e.g. Gen 6:1; 27:1; Jud 1:14; 2 Chron 34:19). We also have it in “**were made** by him” (v. 3); “**was made** by him” (v. 10); and “grace and truth **came** by Jesus Christ” (v. 17). We can see that the form of the verb ‘to become’ is treated flexibly by translators. The normal Greek verbs for ‘to make’ (poie,w) or ‘to come’ (e;rcomai) are not in vv. 3, 10 or 17; just the simple verb ‘to become’. It is our reading assumption as translators/interpreters if we render v. 14 as “And the Word **was** **made** flesh”; but it is better rendered as “And the Word **became** flesh”.

The use of the verb ‘to become’ in Genesis 1 is to state what has happened or come about—there has been a change. We noted above that there is an ‘it was so’ refrain in Genesis 1, and this is part of the pattern, “And God said…and it was so”. God spoke to the effect that such and such should happen or come about and it was so. Following this pattern, when we read that the Word became flesh, our assumption should be that the model for understanding the Word becoming flesh is, for example, “God said, ‘Let there be light’, and the word became light”. This is why the correct translation of the Greek verb in v. 14 is, “And the Word became flesh”.[[26]](#footnote-26)

John 1:14 is not positing that some *particular* words were spoken and they became flesh,[[27]](#footnote-27) but this does not detract from the model being used in John 1:14, which is affirming that Jesus was begotten of God. A precedent for ‘the Word becoming flesh’ would be Gen 1:26, where we do have the words, ‘Let us make man in our image and after our likeness’, which do lead to a becoming flesh. Genesis presents God speaking and what he spoke coming into being, but the scope of ‘the Word’ is broader than a particular utterance.

When we use Genesis as a background for John 1:14, we do not get a doctrine of incarnation. To **say** that something should be thus and so and then for that to come about is not for something or someone to become incarnate. This would only be the case if there was something or someone pre-existent as ‘the Word’—then we would get a doctrine of incarnation with the statement, “And the Word became flesh”. If all we have as a model is **speech** (as in Genesis 1), we cannot infer incarnation.

**The Word of Prophecy**

Putting the first chapter of John to one side, the use of the word *logos* in the Gospel everywhere else is for what is said or spoken, a saying or a word (35x, e.g. John 2:22; 10:35).[[28]](#footnote-28) There is no text in John’s Gospel which uses *logos* for something abstract, a personification or hypostatization, or for an individual. If we were to extend our word search to include all the occurrences of *logos* in the NT we would come to the same conclusion; the only individual anywhere called ‘the Word’ is Jesus.

Calling Jesus ‘the Word’ is rare in the NT;[[29]](#footnote-29) the phrases, ‘word of God’, ‘word of the Lord’ and ‘the word’ are most often used of the message delivered by OT prophets to the people (John 10:35; cf. Acts 17:13; 2 Cor 4:2), or for the message being preached by Jesus and the apostles. Taking the OT as our background for John 1:14, both individual examples of prophecy (e.g. 1 Kgs 12:22; 1 Chron 17:3), and the whole message (enshrined in Scripture) of God to man is described as ‘the word’ (e.g. Ps 119:9, 105). Our conclusion therefore is that it was the **prophetic word about the messiah-deliverer that became flesh** in the person of Jesus.

Various OT prophecies about the messiah-deliverer could be cited as relevant, for instance, the virgin birth (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:23). This prophecy specifically predicts that the name of the child of sign will signify ‘God is with us’, which resonates with John 1. Or again, there is the word of prophecy that predicts ‘Unto us a child is born’ (Isa 9:6) which ascribes the title ‘The Mighty God’ to the Davidic king. Micah prophesies that the ruler of Israel would be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2; Matt 2:6), but he also records that ‘his goings forth had been of old’ which is a reference to the earlier foreshadowing of this king in Scriptural prophecy and narrative. This means, for example, that the various barren birth stories of the OT should be taken as prophetic of the birth of a child of promise who would be the Son of God (e.g. Isaac; Joseph). And we could broaden our selection of prophecies to include those that predict a deliverer (Isa 11:1); a Suffering Servant (Isa 53:1-12); a Davidic king (Ps 2:7; 110:1); or a Melchizedek priest (Heb 5:6); *and so on*. Types, patterns and specific prophecies are ‘the Word’ that became flesh in Jesus Christ.

The Word becoming flesh is a natural enough idiom for a claim of fulfilled prophecy, especially if you also want to emphasize that Jesus came *in the flesh* (1 John 4:2-3; 2 John v. 7). There is no ‘incarnation’ here; the word of prophecy remains the word in the Scriptures—we can see instead that it is manifested in the person and the life of Jesus. The Word that became flesh is made up of all the prophecies about Jesus. In a sense they detail the fact that the purpose of God revolves around Christ.

The Hebrew Scriptures do not know of a being called ‘the Word’. What we do have in these Scriptures is an *occasional* linguistic hypostatization of the Word of God:

He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered *them* from their destructions. Ps 107:20; cf. 147:15, 20 (KJV)

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it. Isa 55:11; cf. 9:8; 45:23 (KJV)[[30]](#footnote-30)

Such hypostatization is rare; generally the Word of God or the Word of the Lord is that prophetic word that comes to a prophet (218x, e.g. 1 Kgs 12:22; Isa 38:4). We should follow this majority usage for our background and see in John 1:14 the simple statement that *this* Word (of prophecy) became flesh.

**Conclusion**

We have argued that the majority usage of ‘the Word’, or very similar expressions in the OT, is for ‘the word of prophecy’. The assertion that ‘the Word became flesh’ is a natural idiom for the fulfilment of prophecies (types and patterns) that relate to Jesus. Church commentary does not follow this line of exegesis, not so much because of John 1:14, but because of John 1:1.

Church commentary reads John 1:1 as a reference to the primeval beginning and it reads the prologue of John as a progressive chronological sequence affirming that the Word was in such a beginning and then it/he was made flesh in the 1c. It is outside the remit of this article to show where and how this reading of John 1:1 and the prologue is wrong; this may form the subject of a subsequent article.

**The Philippians Hymn and Translational Bias**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

This article will examine the tendentious translations offered by some of the modern versions of Phil 2:6. There is no doubt that linguists approach a text with certain assumptions and preconceptions. It is virtually impossible for anyone to approach a task such as this completely objectively. Normally, these preconceptions do not influence the translation unduly—but if the text is ambiguous, then translator’s assumptions do come into play.

**Res rapta or Res rapienda?**

Generally speaking, two different types of translation are offered forPhil 2:6—termed from the Latin Vulgate the *res rapta* (by right) or *res rapienda* (by force). With *res rapta* it means that Jesus was faced with the temptation to hold tightly the equality that he already possessed. He did not look upon his equality with God as a prize to be clutched (i.e. held onto or retained). In contrast, *res rapienda* expresses the view that he was tempted to seize what he did not actually possess, namely, equality with his Father (it implies violent seizure); he did not try to snatch at an equality with God.

Translations offer the following options (other versions could be cited):

He counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God(RV)

He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped (RSV)

(He) did not consider equality with God something to be grasped (NIV)

He did not think to snatch at equality with God (NEB)

He did not set store upon equality with God (Moffat)

…thought it not robbery to be equal with God (KJV)

He did not cling to his prerogatives as God’s equal (Phillips)

He did not cling to his equality with God (Jerusalem Bible)

It can be seen that the renderings divide themselves into two opposite tendencies. Phillips and the Jerusalem Bible treat the passage much as the KJV: Equality with God, these translations suggest, belonged to Christ, but he was prepared to forgo its privileges in order to ‘become a man’. On the other hand, the RV, RSV, NIV, NEB, and perhaps Moffat, regard equality with God as a tempting goal which Jesus (v. 5) refused to seek. For this latter group, Jesus did not forgo a pre-existent equality, but rejected the opportunity of taking such a quality improperly.

In view of the strong temptation which Trinitarians would have towards the former meaning, there is good ground for thinking that the translations which regard Jesus as refusing to seek equality with God are right, for they must in the main have been going against their own inclinations in choosing their rendering.

D. R. Burk has written on the linguistics of Phil 2:6 in which he honestly states his Trinitarian bias. Despite this, he concludes in favour of the *res rapienda* option, but then perversely presents a convoluted Trinitarian exegesis:

Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, did not try to snatch at an equality with God which properly belongs only to the first Person of the Trinity.[[31]](#footnote-31)

In the 1950s, E. Stauffer thought that the question had been definitely settled (and we are inclined to agree) in favour of *Res rapienda*:

So the old contention about *harpagmos* is over: equality with God is not a *res rapta* ... a position which the pre-existent Christ had and gave up, but it is a *res rapienda*, a possibility of advancement which he declined.[[32]](#footnote-32)

**Being in the Form of God**

Another stumbling block is the phrase in v. 6 translated as follows:[[33]](#footnote-33)

Being in the form of God (KJV, RV)

Though He was in the form of God (RSV)

Being in very nature God (NIV)

Though He existed in the form of God (NASB)

He always had the nature of God (GNB)

For the divine nature was his from the first (NEB)

The first word at stake here is the participle form of the verbu`pa,rcw (*uparchō*), and our translations have gone with ‘being’, ‘was’, ‘existed’, and ‘had’. A look at the representative use of this verb elsewhere and translations in uncontentious texts reveals ‘being’ is the best translation of the Greek.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Luke 16:33 | **being** in torments (KJV) |
| Luke 9:48 | for he that **is** least among you all (KJV) |
| Luke 23:50 | He **was** a member of the council (RSV) |
| Acts 2:30 | Therefore **being** a prophet (KJV); And so, because he was a prophet (NASB) |
| Acts 7:55 | Stephen, **being** full of the Holy Spirit  |
| Acts 17:24  | **being** Lord of heaven and earth (RSV); he is Lord of heaven and earth (NASB) |
| Acts 22:3 | **being** zealous for God (NASB); was zealous toward God (KJV) |
| Rom 4 : 19  | he **was** about an hundred years old (KJV) |
| 1 Cor 11:7  | since he **is** the image and glory of God (RSV) |
| 2 Cor 8:17 | but **being** more forward (KJV) |
| 2 Cor 12:16 | **being** crafty (KJV) |
| Gal 1:14 | **being** more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions (NASB) |
| Gal 2:14 | If thou, **being** a Jew (KJV) |

This presents an overwhelming case against using in Phil 2:6 the verb ‘to have’ (GNB) which imports ideas of possession to the clause, or the verb ‘to exist’ (NASB) which imports overtones of pre-existence to the text. What the present participle of u`pa,rcw actually does in this table of texts is suggest that the ones referred to in all these passages **were** what is said of them, and legitimately so, but by no means necessarily eternally, either as to past or future. The ‘translations’ of the GNB (‘always’), NEB (‘from the first’) are therefore interpretative doctrinal paraphrases.

It is, of course, quite true that the use of the participle for ‘being’ implies much more than ‘this being so’, but this does not imply something intrinsic, and by no means implies something without beginning or end. In what sense, then, was Jesus in the form of God?

**Form**

It is not warranted to replace the word ‘form’ by ‘nature’, as is done by some versions. The word morfh**,** (*morphē*) is only found three times in the NT, two of them in the present passage. They are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mark 16:12 | After these things He was manifested in another **form** to two of them |
| Phil 2:6 | Being in **the form** of God |
| Phil 2:7  | He emptied Himself taking **the form** of a bondservant |

The first of these cannot refer to the very nature of Christ, which was unchanged throughout his resurrection appearances. This is nearly as clear in the third: Jesus voluntarily undertook to behave like a bondservant rather than claim equality with God.

A little more light is thrown on this matter by considering the related verb morfo,w (*morphoō*)*,* which occurs once only in the NT:

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you… Gal 4:19 (KJV)

As well as the cognate noun mo,rfwsij (*morphōsis*), which occurs twice:

An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Rom 2:20 (KJV)

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 2 Tm 3:5 (KJV)

And the composite and cognate verb metamorfo,w (*metamorphoō*),

And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light. Matt 17:2 (RSV); cf. Mark 9:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Rom 12:2 (KJV)

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor 3:13 (KJV)

Taking this database of texts, it is plain that *morphoō* has to do with what is seen or apparent to view; the verb does not imply anything about nature or an identity of nature. The ‘form of servant’ denotes something about the role of an individual and ‘form of God’ is put in apposition to that role and should likewise be taken as denoting a role Jesus manifested. The point of Paul’s argument is that Jesus was, (and the rest of us are not) the subject of a direct divine begettal, so that God alone was his Father. Having this intimate relationship with God, he was tried as to whether he would be content with the position of a servant or whether he would covet equality with God. That he might be himself God (equal to God) is no part of the argument, and would in fact frustrate the argument should it be entertained as a premise.

The OT background to Jesus being a servant is Isaiah’s prophecies of the Suffering Servant (Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-52:12). There is in these prophecies a visual aspect of ‘form’ which explains why Paul should use the expression ‘form of a servant’:

Look, my Servant… Isa 52:13 (KJV revised); cf. Isa 42:1

As many were astonished at you; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men… Isa 52:14 (KJV revised)

…he has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. Isa 53:2 (KJV revised)

Paul is constructing a play on the words of Isaiah using ‘form’ and ‘servant’ while conveying the point that Jesus chose the role of God’s servant. The reason why Paul juxtaposes ‘form of God’ with ‘form of a servant’ relates to Hezekiah and the promise made in his accession hymn of Isa 9:6-7. Here, he is described as ‘the mighty God’, an epithet for his future kingship. As a type of Jesus, Hezekiah suffered on behalf of the people, and through his suffering, the people were delivered and had peace (Isa 38:17); i.e. though Hezekiah was in the form of God, he took on himself the form a servant.

**Conclusion**

Jesus’ choosing to be a servant functioned as an example to the disciples—Paul exhorts the brethren to have the same attitude as Christ—**he does not say**: “Though some of you are equal to—if indeed not even superior to—many of your brothers, yet keep Jesus’ attitude in mind: he was in the form of God but he did not consider his equality with God to be a prize”. Rather, **he says**: “Jesus refused to snatch at equality with God—instead, he chose the path of self-sacrifice and service”.

The argument had to be relevant to first century Christians—the ordinary believer did not have a ‘pre-existent form of God’ that they could chose to voluntarily relinquish and neither did Christ. All men are made in the form (image) of God (only Jesus more so) but not in virtue of any pre-existence. The question is not one of pre-existence but of privilege. The believer now shares in the same privileges as Christ as they become transformed into *his* image (of obedient sons and daughters). We conclude with a quote by J. Murphy-O’Connor:

The common belief that Phil. 2:6-11 starts by speaking of Christ’s pre-existent state and status and then his incarnation is, in almost every case, a presupposition rather than a conclusion, a presupposition which again and again proves decisive in determining how disputed terms within the Philippians hymn should be understood.[[34]](#footnote-34)

Jewish Historiography and Luke-Acts

**A. Perry**

**Introduction**

Jewish historiographical work that has survived from the Second Temple period includes (among other things) the Maccabean books, *Jubilees*, *Pseudo-Philo*, the *Genesis Apocryphon*, Philo’s biographies and Josephus. In addition, fragments of Jewish historians have survived, for example, Aristobulus and Eupolemus. In this essay, we will take these works to be representative of Jewish Historiography and consider whether Luke-Acts is such Jewish history writing.

**Genre**

The notion of genre is dependent upon the analytical template that is laid across a book. A different genre classification is achieved if a template pertaining to *form* is applied, than if a template identifying an aspect of *content* is applied, and again a different result may be obtained if questions of *use* are given priority. If Luke and Acts are considered separately a case can be made for different genre classifications—Luke would be ‘biography’ and Acts would be ‘history’; but if Luke-Acts is considered as a two-volume work, the issue becomes one of privilege: should the different features of Acts have privilege over those of Luke in an overarching classification. Because of the broader scope of the genre of ‘history’, privilege has been tacitly given by scholars to the features of Acts in a determination of genre for Luke-Acts. To take the two leading candidates for genre, whereas it looks as if ‘history’ could fit Luke, it is less plausible that ‘biography’ could fit Acts. In this way, ‘history’ has become the consensus classification of Luke-Acts.

This ‘either/or’ choice for Luke-Acts can be avoided if the level of analysis is restricted to questions of **intended use**. Luke and Acts have a Scriptural feel (when compared to Jewish Scripture) and a genre classification of ‘Jewish Scripture’ circumvents issues of history or biography. [[35]](#footnote-35)

Without taking into account the principle of inspiration, a classification of ‘Scripture’ is an appropriate genre for a writer working within a religious tradition, and an appropriate response for readers in that tradition to offer (or not) in agreement.[[36]](#footnote-36) It is here that the genre of Luke-Acts and its history need to be placed. When we factor back in the principle of inspiration, the case for Luke-Acts as ‘Scripture’ is secured. Of course, Luke and Acts may have miscellaneous connections with secular literary conventions, because a human being was involved in the process of them being written (*sic*)—but this does not negate the argument for Luke-Acts being classified as ‘Scripture’.

**Jewish History Writing**

Scholars have traditionally argued about whether Luke-Acts is ‘history’ or ‘biography’. Our ‘either/or’ question is different: is Luke-Acts a kind of Jewish history writing or is it Scripture? Our case here is (negatively) that Luke-Acts is **not** the same as the examples of Jewish history writing that have come down to us; the positive argument that Luke-Acts is Scripture, we have made elsewhere.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Luke-Acts does not share a common kind of concern (content) with Greco-Roman Hellenistic histories, but there is some commonality in terms of shared literary forms and methods. Ahead of any investigation, we might think that *Jewish* histories are more likely to have common concerns (content) with Luke-Acts, along with common literary forms and methods. Is this the case?

Older Jewish history-writing, such as Samuel-Kings or Chronicles, had Scriptural status for Luke, but such writing lacks points of contact with Classical and Hellenistic histories, such as a concern for method, prefaces, evaluation of sources,[[38]](#footnote-38) and the structural use of speeches. We can distinguish Jewish Scriptural history from Jewish Second Temple history writing to the extent that Second Temple writing uses Classical and Hellenistic methods. Our question therefore becomes: Is Luke-Acts more like Scriptural history or Second Temple history? Our discussion will revolve around the **content and function** of these Second Temple histories rather than any aspects of form and method.

R. T. France offers a useful classification of later Jewish historiographical writing into, i) writings that retell the Scriptural story; ii) writings that apply Scripture to contemporary history; and iii) writings that record Second Temple history.[[39]](#footnote-39) In addition to France’s categories, (iv) Jewish biographical writing and (v) historical novels should also be considered for their affinities to Luke and Acts.

Of these five categories, it is the application of Scripture to contemporary history and the recording of Second-Temple history, which would seem to offer the greater prospect of locating the genre of Luke-Acts, since these writings might share literary forms, methods, and a content-space with Luke-Acts. Nevertheless, there are problems in linking Luke-Acts with each of these five categories.

We will discuss historical works and leave aside Jewish biographies and novels. This leaves Jewish history-writing for our attention; this writing shares common ethnographic content with Luke-Acts and therefore offers the prospect of being the natural literary home for Luke’s works.

### Re-telling Scriptural Stories

The Jewish Scriptures were retold in a variety of ways. The Targums[[40]](#footnote-40) retell Jewish history insofar as they expand Scriptural stories. For our purposes, the genre of the Targums is unrelated to Luke-Acts, because the Targums seek to translate (paraphrase sometimes) the Hebrew text of the Jewish Scriptures and present it for common consumption. *Jubilees*, *Pseudo-Philo* and Josephus’ *Antiquities*, represent further examples of retelling Scriptural stories with expansive additions motivated by theological and/or apologetic aims; and the *Genesis Apocryphon* incorporates aspects of popular story telling into its retelling of the Jewish Scriptural story: dramatic enhancements, incorporation of legends, journeys and further geographical and ethnographical details.

Luke shows that he is aware of the practise of retelling the Jewish story in Stephen’s speech; however, Luke-Acts is not to be classified alongside these writings because of the difference in content; Luke-Acts is *recent* *history*.

### Applications of Scripture

While the idea of ‘political commentary’ is anachronistic, it is a useful analogy for those Jewish writings that ‘comment’ upon contemporary scene from a religious perspective informed by the Jewish Scriptures. The Qumran *Pesharim* comment upon Scripture but do so with an eye on the contemporary relevance of that Scripture.[[41]](#footnote-41) The typical commentary alludes to recent events and relies on an already informed audience to pick up on such cues and how they fit into the Scriptural framework that is being read from the prophetic text. Apocalyptic writings also comment upon contemporary events and predict the future course of events. They incorporate large-scale overviews of history as a backdrop to the more detailed specification of the events that lead up to the eschatological age.

Luke-Acts contains predictions, and recounts events that are to lead up to the inauguration of the eschatological age, but Luke does not include symbolic overviews of Israel’s history in the manner of Jewish Apocalypses. Further, while Luke and Acts apply Jewish Scriptural texts to the events that are being narrated, Luke is not commenting upon those Scriptures *per se*; the purpose in the writing is the narration of the events.

### Second-Temple History

The most obvious group of writings to link with Luke-Acts is comprised of those that relate the events of the time. The principle examples are the Maccabean Histories, Josephus, and some of the Philonic corpus; also, fragments from various Hellenistic Jewish histories have been preserved in other writings.[[42]](#footnote-42) Several points of comparison might be made between these writings and Luke-Acts:

**Josephus**

Later Jewish historiographical writings share literary forms with Hellenistic models. The obvious example is Josephus, who works with Scriptural materials, other Second Temple Jewish histories, and with a Hellenistic education.

Josephus’ *Antiquities* and his *War* illustrate principles of Hellenistic history-writing, albeit with different emphases.[[43]](#footnote-43) The *War* is a pragmatic military and political history similar to Polybius; the *Antiquities* is more rhetorical and modelled upon Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Scholars have noted several points of contact between Josephus’ works and Luke-Acts:

1) Josephus uses the convention of a preface to outline his aims and objectives and mentions the patron (Epaphroditus) for his works (*Antiquities*, *Life* and *Contra Apion*), and these conventions are illustrated in Luke. Thus, *Contra Apion* has a main prologue to the first book and a second prologue at the beginning of the second volume. However, as L. C. A. Alexander observes, the “habit of dedicating a treatise to a named individual was not at all common in historical writing”, and Josephus is the first surviving work to have this feature.[[44]](#footnote-44)

2) Josephus uses sources and investigative methods; in *War* I.15 he states, “…the industrious writer is not one who merely remodels the scheme and arrangement of another’s work, but one who uses fresh materials and makes the framework of the history his own”. This remark is set within the context of a discussion of ancient historians and their methods, and it supports the observation that Josephus conceived of his writing as history. This bears comparison with Luke’s stated method, “having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out” (parakolouqe,w,Luke 1:3), and scholars have compared the use of sources by Luke and Josephus.[[45]](#footnote-45) Here, Josephus identifies a genre and offers a characterization of that genre, and implicitly claims to participate in that genre; Luke’s shared methodology involves him in that same genre.

3) Josephus’ justification for writing rests on an evaluation of former writers that have covered the same topics; he states, “…the writers in question presume to give their works the title of histories, yet throughout them, apart from the utter lack of sound information, they seem, in my opinion, to miss the mark” (*War* I.7). This bears comparison with Luke’s juxtaposition of a mention of previous accounts (dih,ghsij) with a claim to perfect understanding (Luke 1:1, 3).

4) Josephus identifies with the history that he narrates as events that took place “among us” and of which he was a participant (*War* I.1, “wars of our own time”, I.15 “the history of one’s own time”, *Apion* I.47, “having been present in person at all the events”). This bears comparison with Luke’s credentials, to “to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us” (Luke 1:1).

5) Josephus states that he is concerned with “the origin of the war” (*War* I.6) as well as its progress, and this compares with Luke’s concern to offer an account “from the beginning” (a;nwqen, Luke 1:3).

6) Josephus’ objective for his readership is couched in terms of dispelling ignorance and making his readers acquainted with the origin, causes and course of the war (*War* I.6). The same objective is advertised by Luke, “that you may know the truth” (Luke 1:4).

7) Josephus has a clear apologetic purpose in writing *War*, and this is conveyed in his incorporation of set-piece speeches. Luke’s structural use of speeches in Acts bears comparison in that they also illustrate his programmatic message of showing the forward progress of the movement from its beginnings in Jerusalem to the “ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

8) Josephus shares common motifs and elements with Luke such as prophecies, the miraculous and divine providence. For example, Josephus’ account of Moses’ birth and infancy bears comparison. There are predictions of the birth, dreams from God about his destiny (*Ant*. II.206, 217), a genealogy (*Ant*. II.229), theophanies (*Ant*. II.265-270), and a reference to his “growth in understanding” as exceptional (“wondrous”, *Ant*. II.230-231). These elements have parallels in Luke (Luke 2:52; 3:23-38).

These similarities are significant and they constitute the case for classifying Luke-Acts as Jewish Hellenistic historiography. Given the paucity of surviving historiographical works, the closer parallels between Luke’s prefaces and Josephus may point to colloquial Palestinian Hellenistic literary customs.

The counter-argument to such a classification is that it ignores the use of Luke-Acts in the early church. Further, the content of Luke-Acts is very different to any of Josephus’ works. Josephus is concerned with matters to do with the nation and the state; he is apologetic and seeks to present the Jews favourably to the Romans. Luke-Acts is concerned with life and work of a prophet and those who established communities in his name. It is a social history; not a history of nation or state. In terms of deciding what genre Luke-Acts is, we should weight any shared methods and literary forms less than the use made of the two-volume work and the nature of its content.

**Maccabean Histories**

Scholars have identified parallels between Luke-Acts and the Maccabean Histories:

1) The preface to 2 Maccabees (2:19-32) bears some comparison to Luke’s prefaces: i) it refers to other writings (v. 23); ii) it summarises its scope; and iii) it points up inadequacies in other writings and their failure to meet the needs of readers (v. 24). However, it also advertises its objective which is “that they that will read will have delight”, which differs from Luke’s objective.

2) Scholars have observed[[46]](#footnote-46) that 1 Maccabees is heavily influenced by Jewish Scriptural phraseology, whereas 2 Maccabees is more like Hellenistic story-telling. The Scriptural style of 1 Maccabees forms a precedent for Luke’s acknowledged Scriptural style.

3) D. E. Aune suggests that the 1 Maccabees might have been intended as a sequel to the Chronicler’s history.[[47]](#footnote-47) Although it commences with the significant events in the reign of Antiochus IV, rather than continue the Chronicler’s history, it does have an opening summary of history from Alexander the Great to Antiochus. This bears comparison with Luke-Acts insofar as Luke continues the Jewish story in his account. However, the basis of continuation is different: 1 Maccabees relives the days of Joshua with battles up and down the land; Luke-Acts continues the story of Israel from the prophetic perspective.

4) 1 Maccabees also illustrates the device of imitating Scriptural episodes. For example, Mattathias kills in a public display like Phinehas (1 Macc 2:23-26; Num 25:7-11), he delivers a death-bed exhortation to faithfulness in the face of adversity like Moses (1 Macc 2:49-65; Deut 33:1-29), the succession from Matthias to Judas Maccabeus resembles the succession of Joshua (1 Macc 3:1-2; Deut 34:9), Judas Maccabeus exploits are summarised in similar terms to Joshua’s conquest of the land (1 Macc 3:3-9), he reduces the size of his army in the same manner as Gideon (1 Macc 3:56, Jud 7:5-6). This practise is similar to Luke’s evocation of Scriptural story details in his narrative.

5) H. W. Attridge comments that the history in both 1 and 2 Maccabees serves a theological purpose. The apologetic aim in 1 Maccabees is one of justifying the Hasmonean dynasty, and this is secured by affirming that they are God’s representatives (e.g. 1 Macc 5:62), functioning in traditional ways as priests and judges over Israel. Attridge also notes that 1 Maccabees portrays the Hasmoneans as fulfilling “the traditional expectations of Israel” and thus inaugurating “a period of eschatological bliss”.[[48]](#footnote-48) This characterization bears some similarity to Luke-Acts in the portrayal of the apostles as ‘judges’ and in conflict with the Jerusalem Priests, representing an alternative authoritative source of teaching as representatives of God through the holy Spirit. However, whereas 1 Maccabees is political and military in its story, Luke-Acts is a story of proclamation and discipleship.

6) However, the speeches in 1 Maccabees are generally shorter and more in the nature of discourse; they are not set piece speeches in a rhetorical style. In keeping with Scriptural style in Samuel-Kings, the narrative is dominated by discourse and battle narrative. This contrasts with Luke-Acts where the speeches are discursive (Acts) or aphoristic (Luke and Acts).

We can see from (1)-(6) above that 1 Maccabees is quite different from Josephus’ works. We might say that whereas Josephus is a secular writer, the author(s) of 1 Maccabees is doing something religious. Given that the Catholic Church regards 1 Maccabees as Deutero-canonical, there is some argument to be had about whether it is ‘Scripture’. The upshot of this is that we cannot include Luke-Acts or 1 Maccabees in the category of secular Jewish Hellenistic history writing.

### Conclusion

In the above review of Jewish historiographical works, our argument is leading towards a classification of Luke-Acts as ‘Scripture’ on the basis of its **intended use**. If we put this classification to one side, then we might classify it as the ‘religious Jewish history’ of a founder and his subsequent movement. It is not like the Jewish Hellenistic histories of nation and state, and a comparable history of another movement has not survived for us to compare with Luke-Acts.

The subject-matter is a Jewish social history and the location is primarily Palestine. As Aune observes of Jewish Historiography, “…events in Israel (centering in Jerusalem) occupy centre stage…In spite of Israel’s extensive experience in exile after 721 B.C., no historical work seriously treats experience outside of Palestine”.[[49]](#footnote-49) This comparison is valid for Luke and the early part of Acts, but from Stephen’s speech onwards, the history shifts to the Diaspora.

The intertextual relationship between the Hebrew Scriptures and Luke-Acts places it within a ‘Scriptural’ genre. Its target audience and intended use is not that of a Greco-Roman or Jewish Hellenistic history. The apologetic aims of Jewish Hellenistic histories serve to present the Jews in a positive light and persuade Gentiles of the value of the Jewish faith. Thus, variously, Eupolemus presents Moses as the genius behind Egyptian culture,[[50]](#footnote-50) as does Philo in his *Life of Moses*. Philo illustrates God’s providential care for the Jews in *Flaccus* and in *On the Embassy to Gaius*.

Luke is looking **inside the nation not outside**; he is presenting Jesus and the church in an evangelistic light as the remnant of Israel with a mission to the Gentiles. Luke-Acts cannot be considered a re-telling of Jewish historical traditions, nor can it be considered a history of the Jews in recent times. Rather, we should assign it to the same genre as the Hebrew Scriptures.

**Reviews**

**One God, One Lord, L. W. Hurtado, 2nd Ed., T&T Clark, 1998.**

‘Binatarian’ is a theological term akin to ‘Trinitarian’; it is used when a theologian wants to speak of ‘two’ as opposed to ‘three’ in matters to do with God; its purpose is to place Jesus and the Father on an equal footing in some respect; and the goal is to make the development of Trinitarianism reasonable and plausible in the history of the church. If you can prove an equality between two, you are a step nearer to establishing an equality among three. The word ‘binatarian’ is used a lot in L. W. Hurtado’s book, *One God, One Lord*.

Hurtado’s thesis is that there was a ‘binatarian shape’ to early Christian devotion, as evidenced in the NT. The argument is that this was a ‘mutation’ in Jewish monotheistic devotion such that Jesus was *included* within that devotion. Because Jesus and the Father were worshipped together, Christian views about Christ were at the same time monotheistic and binatarian.

The innovation was in modifying more characteristic Jewish cultic practice by accommodating Jesus into their devotional pattern, joining him with God as a recipient of their cultic devotion (p. xii)

...already in the earliest decades we have a genuinely ‘binatarian’ pattern of worship that included Jesus as recipient along with God. (p. xiii)

At the heart of Hurtado’s analysis is a view of monotheism:

I suggest that in the interests of historical accuracy and clear communication the term ‘monotheism’ should be used only to describe devotion to one god and the rejection of the pantheon of deities such as were reverenced throughout the Greco-Roman world. p. 129, n. 1

This defines monotheism in **devotional** terms rather than metaphysical terms (*what there is* – one God) or epistemological terms (what Christians *believed*). This definition allows Hurtado to argue that Jesus be included within what we now define as monotheism. It is a self-serving assumption.

Instead, we should follow G. F. Moore and affirm,

The exclusive worship of one God, whether by the choice of individuals or by the law of national religion, is not monotheism at all in the proper and usual meaning of the word, namely, the theory, doctrine, or belief that there is but one God.[[51]](#footnote-51)

Monotheism is about *what there is* – one God – from which flows devotional practice. Accordingly, early Christian devotion was not ‘monotheistic’ (or polytheistic; or henotheistic) precisely because they included Jesus in their devotions, but rather, Christian beliefs about gods *were* monotheistic because they believed, like the Jews, that there was only one God, the Father.

Hurtado’s book therefore fails in its attempt to get Trinitarianism started through a devotional route (a popular tactic with NT scholars). It is an important book in recent theology, cited often, and a short version of his magnum opus, *The Lord Jesus Christ* (Eerdmans, 2003). Is it worth buying? If you are researching modern arguments supporting church views about Christ, yes, but if you are interested in researching Biblical Monotheism, then, no; it is not of any particular value. However, it will supply a list of first century and later Jewish texts expressing Jewish monotheism, but these should be taken without Hurtado’s accompanying analysis.

**A. Perry**

**The Restitution of Jesus Christ, Kermit Zarley, (600pp**; **Scottsdale, AZ; Triangle Book, 2008; available from: http://servetustheevangelical.com)**

Most books on the nature and identity of Jesus Christ fall into one of two categories: polemic or apologetic. Kermit Zarley’s *The Restitution of Jesus Christ* (hereafter “TRJC”) is a rare exception, challenging mainstream Christian readers without insisting that they accept his views.

In his preface, Zarley says,

My primary purpose in writing this book has *not* been to convince readers of
my christological convictions. That is secondary. Rather, my primary purpose is to persuade readers that the Bible does not require that people believe in the traditional doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation, and thus the deity of Christ, in order to become a true believer in Jesus.[[52]](#footnote-52)

TRJC is a culmination of Zarley’s personal quest for the Biblical Jesus, which led him to reject Trinitarian Christology in favour of Biblical Unitarianism (hereafter “Unitarianism”). It reflects a combination of high quality research, systematic theology, and scrupulous intellectual honesty.

The book is divided into three sections:

Part One: History of Church Christology

Part Two: Messianism in the Old Testament

Part Three: Christology in the New Testament

My review follows this pattern.

Part One summarises the evolution of Christology from the first millennium to the second. Key figures include Ignatius, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Arius, Athanasius and the three Hierarchs. Early creeds and teaching documents (e.g. Didache; Apostles’ Creed) are noted approvingly, albeit briefly. Zarley provides a fair review of pre- and post-Nicene Christology, highlighting differences between the various Christological models.

His accounts of the ecumenical councils are accurate and succinct, demonstrating a sound grasp of their theological consequences.

Moving on to the second millennium, Zarley covers prominent figures of the Unitarian movement from the medieval period to Reformation, Enlightenment, and beyond. These include Michael Servetus, Faustus Socinus, John Locke, and Isaac Newton. A large section is devoted to the higher criticism of the Tübingen School and its role in the “quest for the historical Jesus”.

In the final section Zarley provides examples of 20th Century theologians who have rejected the deity of Christ on various grounds, and a brief foray into Christian/Jewish/Islamic Christological dialogue. The following points from his closing summary merit serious consideration:

Traditional two-nature Christology is incompatible with the modern
disciplines of anthropology and psychology, and is employed as a forced grid in NT gospel exegesis. Traditional Christology has always tended towards
Docetism; recent Jesus Research increasingly resists this tendency and insists
on a more human Jesus.[[53]](#footnote-53)

*Critique of Part One*

Zarley’s account of the Ebionites requires additional detail and greater clarity.
While correctly noting that Ebionism was not a homogeneous movement, he misidentifies its primary subgroups as ‘Judaistic and Gnostic.’[[54]](#footnote-54) This is impossible for two reasons: (a) Gnosticism was a 2nd Century heresy, and (b) the Ebionites betray no Gnostic tendencies.

The two main Ebionite groups are more accurately defined as Judaistic and Christian, being essentially divided by their respective views of the Law. Within the Christian group, some accepted the virgin birth, resurrection and ascension of Christ; others only accepted the resurrection and ascension; still others appear to have accepted even less. Zarley refers to some degree of variation, but not enough to demonstrate the full range of Ebionite theology. A few citations from early church fathers would have been useful here.[[55]](#footnote-55)

Regrettably, Zarley paints Ignatius of Antioch as a heretical, authoritarian church leader with an unhealthy passion for martyrdom. But the case he presents is subjective, and ultimately unconvincing. It appears his opposition to Ignatius is motivated entirely by the objectionable Christology he finds in the Ignatian epistles.

Unable to tolerate the idea of a proto-Trinitarian Christian at such an early date, Zarley contrives to dismiss Ignatius as an unreliable witness to normative Christian belief. Yet there is no need to do this. My own brief study of the Ignatian epistles[[56]](#footnote-56) argues that we have good reason for accepting Ignatius as a bona fide Unitarian in the apostolic tradition.

A closer examination of the seven genuine epistles reveals only nine clauses which might give Unitarians cause for concern. None of these are distinctly Trinitarian, all are compatible with Arianism or Binitarianism, and seven can be dispatched by reference to (a) an alternative recension, (b) the common standard of NT language about God and Christ, and/or (c) mainstream commentators, leaving only two problematic references. It is therefore entirely possible to read the epistles as the work of an early Unitarian Christian. At the very least, we cannot reject Ignatius as heretical; there is simply not enough evidence against him.

Zarley makes no reference to Clement of Alexandria, which is unfortunate because Clement’s work sheds light on the Christological dilemmas confronting 3rd Century theologians. Clement’s own Christology is dangerously Docetic, reflecting an early attempt to emphasise the deity of Christ at the expense of his humanity. This was a recurring problem throughout subsequent centuries, and some theologians have suggested it was never adequately resolved.[[57]](#footnote-57)

Zarley’s discussion of the Nicene and Chalcedonian Creeds is adequate, but would benefit from a discussion of the *filioque*,[[58]](#footnote-58) its perceived theological necessity, and its role in the eventual breach between East and West. Much more should have been said about the three Cappadocians (who were not as united in their theology as Trinitarians would have us believe[[59]](#footnote-59)) and the Pneumatomachi,[[60]](#footnote-60) who played a significant part in the disputes of this era.

My final criticism is that Zarley’s review of early Christianity omits many Unitarians for whom we have reliable attestation. They include:

* Polycarp of Smyrna (1st-2nd Century)
* Papias of Hierapolis (1st-2nd Century)
* Beryllus of Bostra (2nd-3rd Century)
* Theodotus of Byzantium (2nd Century)
* Theodotus the Banker (2nd Century)
* Artemon (3rd Century)
* Heraclides (3rd Century)

These men were not mere fringe-dwelling heretics: all enjoyed widespread esteem and a prominent role in public life.

Papias, Polycarp, Beryllus and Heraclides were highly regarded bishops in good standing,[[61]](#footnote-61) and each presided over a considerable population. Theodotus of Byzantium[[62]](#footnote-62) was the leader of a popular Unitarian movement which persisted until at least the 4th Century. Artemon led his own Unitarian sect, and is still regarded as one of Rome’s finest 3rd Century Christian teachers. According to Eusebius, he had claimed Unitarianism was the normative belief until Zephyrinus succeeded Victor as the Bishop of Rome at the end of the 2nd Century.[[63]](#footnote-63) Eusebius denies this, listing four theologians whom he says predated Victor and professed the deity of Christ: Justin Martyr, Tatian, Miltiades, and Clement of Alexandria.

However, none of the names on Eusebius’ list are true Trinitarians,[[64]](#footnote-64) one of them (Miltiades) lived long after the death of Victor (d. 199), one was an eastern bishop who had never been to Rome (Clement of Alexandria) and the remaining two only lived in Rome for a brief period (Justin and Tatian), during which time they taught their own idiosyncratic theology, which was distinctly non-Trinitarian. Moreover, Tatian lapsed into heresy, joining the Encratite sect, a radical Gnostic group, while Julian had admitted knowing Unitarian Christians, and conceded theirs was the older Christology. Eusebius also mentions Irenaeus of Lyons (2-3c.) and Melito of Sardis (2c.). Yet these men were not Trinitarians[[65]](#footnote-65) and did not live in Rome, so their Christology is irrelevant to Victor’s and it is unlikely he was familiar with them.

Irenaeus’ Christology was loosely Binatarian, teaching that Jesus’ existence had a literal starting point in time[[66]](#footnote-66) and drawing on Prov 8:22 for his subordinationist Christology. Melito’s Christology is confusing: very little remains of his writings, making it difficult to contextualise what is left. His *Homily on the Passover* implies Jesus only received deity upon his resurrection (consistent with some forms of Adoptionism).[[67]](#footnote-67) Another section conflates Father and Son in classic Sabellian (Modalist) style.[[68]](#footnote-68) Melito never describes the Spirit as God (or even a divine person) and even if he believes the Son is God in some way, he also appears to believe the Father is the Son.

My few criticisms notwithstanding, the first section of Zarley’s book is extremely well written. It offers a concise overview of historic Christology, the theological developments which have shaped it over the years, and the modern interpretations which have arisen in recent decades. There can be no doubt that Zarley has an excellent grasp of the subject and knows how to present his material in a highly readable format.

**D. Burke**

**The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity, (2 vols; ed. Lloyd P. Gerson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).**

The hefty price tag, along with the philosophic content, will mean that *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity* will escape the attention of most readers. Yet, though it will never be bedtime reading, this two volume compilation witnesses to some significant shifts in the history of philosophy.

This work was designed to be the successor of *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (ed. A. H. Armstrong), a stable of students of the history of philosophy. The present work makes some interesting departures from its predecessor. First is the inclusion of an essay on Gnosticism, covering both Sethian Gnosticism and so-called “Christian Gnosticism” (such as the systems of Basilides and Valentinus). The inclusion of such an essay points to the shift in the study of Gnosticism that has occurred over the last few decades. Gnosticism, whilst previously regarded as a largely mythologically based religious grouping, has now been recognised to be heavily involved in metaphysics, engaging particularly with Platonic philosophy (if in a more colourful way). Modern understandings of the phenomenon of Gnosticism will require acknowledgement of the breadth over which Gnostics cast their net in gathering sources for their ideas. This only heightens the challenge faced by those early Christians who sought to base their faith on Scripture alone, and so were rightly concerned by the excesses of Gnostic speculations.

The inclusion of another essay underscores the difficulty of trying to separate philosophy and religion in this period. Justin Martyr has sometimes been regarded as only casually acquainted with philosophy – a Christian with pretensions of grandeur. In this compilation, Justin takes his place as one of the first Christian philosophers. In his essay, Denis Minns restores Justin’s philosophic credentials, asserting that his knowledge of Plato comes from engagement with the texts, not only handbooks (2:259). The two “hats” of Justin – both Christian and Platonic – are important to understand his writings. It is Justin who for the first time enumerates God, Jesus and the Spirit as first, second and third. His precedents for this enumeration are [pseudo-]Plato’s Second Epistle and Numenius (2:265).

All in all, a worthy reference work, but perhaps the two essays noted are the only ones of immediate value to readers of EJ.

**T. Gaston**

**Rightly Dividing the Word (Published by the Author; J. Burke, 2011, on www.lulu.com/spotlight/Fortigurn, 326 pages)**

In 2007, Brother Ian and Sister Averil McHaffie published the booklet ‘All One in Christ Jesus’ (hereafter ‘All One’), a consideration of Biblical teaching regarding the role of sisters in the service of Christ.[[69]](#footnote-69) Their conclusion was that the Scriptures support the full participation of both genders in all aspects of ecclesial life. The most recent edition of ‘All One’ was issued in October 2010, after some additions and revisions to the text. It has become the most well-known publication within the Christadelphian community advocating an egalitarian position.

In ‘Rightly Dividing the Word’, Brother Jonathan Burke critically examines twenty-eight of the claims made in ‘All One’. The claims examined touch on many key issues in the debate. These include, among others, the interpretation of passages such as Gal 3:28, 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-15, the historical evidence concerning first century Greek, Roman and Jewish attitudes towards women, the historical background regarding Gnosticism, the meaning and usage of words such as *adelphoi* and *kephale*, the alleged corruption of the New Testament texts by misogynist translators, and the Bible’s teaching on slavery.

In addition, Burke explains misleading methods of argument used in ‘All One’, addresses several other issues relevant to the subject, cites egalitarian scholars who agree with complementarians regarding the claims examined, and provides evidence to counter the suggestion (‘All One’ is not referenced in this section) that complementarian views increase the likelihood of domestic abuse.

As noted in his ‘Introduction’, Burke has not included his own exposition or personal views, nor does he insist that readers must hold a certain view in order to be consistent with Scriptural teaching. Rather, he presents the reader with evidence relevant to certain claims, and then leaves the reader to assess the evidence and decide for themselves. Though all of the claims selected from ‘All One’ for examination are refuted by the evidence provided, Burke avoids drawing any conclusions on the issue overall. As he points out, many notable egalitarians do not accept these claims either, proposing alternative approaches to promoting the egalitarian cause.

Burke has taken pains to minimise the possibility of bias against the egalitarian position. Where commentators are quoted, he notes whether the commentator’s personal views are complementarian, egalitarian or neutral; and the great majority of commentaries used are by egalitarians. Of English Bible translations, only those dating from 1970 onwards have been used, and a broad spectrum of translation styles is represented.

Burke necessarily quotes extensively from the latest scholarly commentary in the relevant fields. However, his book has evidently been designed with accessibility to the non-scholar in mind. The language used is clear and simple, the body of the examination of each claim is succinct, and definitions and explanations are included wherever potentially unfamiliar terminology or concepts are referenced. The last section of the book, ‘Sources used in this work’, will also be helpful to the non-scholar as it includes brief descriptions of all the translations, lexicons, journals, commentaries, early Christian writings, historical documents and other works from which evidence has been sourced.

‘Rightly Dividing the Word’ contains a wealth of information which is not found in ‘All One’, and which many readers would find it difficult to locate and access otherwise. Although not likely to put an end to the debate, this is arguably the most thoroughly researched and authoritative contribution produced within our community to date. As such it merits the attention of all those who are seeking to make a balanced assessment of the differing claims made on this issue.

**G. Horwood**

**Columnists**

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**Analysis**

**J. Davies**

1 Samuel 4-7 is the inspired text with the greatest concentration of references to ‘the ark’ in Scripture (37x). In these chapters, God is clearly teaching us something very significant about the ark (cf. Gen 41:32). The narrative starts with the ark in Israel and follows the ark on its travels through Philistine territory before its eventual return to Israel.

Israel suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of the Philistines, with the loss of 30,000 footmen (1 Sam 4:10), and at this point, the inspired writer records that ‘the ark of God was taken’ (1 Sam 4:11).

Before examining the episode, we need to consider why the ark of God is allowed to pass into the hands of the Philistines. The context aligns the ark of God being taken with the death of Hophni and Phinehas (1 Sam 4:11). This indicates that *one reason* for bringing the ark of God into the camp was to bring Hophni and Phinehas to the battle to ensure their death *on that same day*, as prophesied earlier to Eli:

And this [*shall be*] a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; **in one day they shall die both of them**. 1 Sam 2:34 (KJV)

Yet this does not explain why the ark of God was *allowed to pass into Philistine possession*; it simply gives us one reason why the ark was brought to the camp. We need to examine another Scripture which provides an enlightening commentary on Israel’s history, to investigate this question more fully.

**‘he was wroth and greatly abhorred Israel’**

Psalm 78 is a chronological commentary on Israel’s history from the exodus through to the reign of David. Vv. 56-69 are contextually placed after the division of the land (Ps 78:55; cf. Josh 23:4) and before David becomes king (Ps 78:70; cf. 1 Sam 16:11, 12); they are therefore historically positioned between Judges and 1 Samuel 16.[[70]](#footnote-70)

In Ps 78:56, the nation is described as ‘tempting’[[71]](#footnote-71) and ‘provoking’ God and acting just like their ‘fathers’ (Ps 78:56, 57; cf. vv. 17,18[[72]](#footnote-72)). The text continues by describing that Israel served **idols** (Ps 78:58), and on hearing this, God acted:

For they provoked him to anger with their *high places*, and moved him to jealousy with their *graven images*.When God heard [*this*], he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent [*which*] he placed among men;and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, [*and*] like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach. Ps 78:58-66 (KJV)

By comparing the Psalm and 1 Samuel, we can illustrate that the inspired Psalmist is referring to 1 Samuel 4–7, and it is interesting to note that the Psalm provides us with historical information not supplied in 1 Samuel. For example, we learn that it was *at this point* that Shiloh was forsaken (Ps 78:60; cf. Jer 7:12) and we learn that loss of life was due to fire as well as the battle (Ps 78:63).

Returning to the question in hand, the Psalm reveals that God allowed the ark to leave Israel because of their **idolatry**.

For they provoked him to anger with their *high places*, and moved him to jealousy with their *graven images*. Ps 78:58 (KJV)

**‘Dagon was fallen upon his face’**

Psalm 78 has illustrated that underlying this whole history is the hidden *idolatry* of Israel. With this in mind, it is notable that God executes judgement on Dagon – an *idol* – in 1 Samuel 5.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Psalm 78 | 1 Samuel |
| “he was wroth and greatly abhorred Israel” (v. 59) | Not mentioned in Samuel. |
| “he forsook the tabernacle at Shiloh” (v. 60) | Not explicitly mentioned in Samuel, implied by 1 Sam 2:30-36; also see Jer 7:12. |
| “delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy’s hand” (v. 61; cf. Ps 132:8 “strength”)  | “the glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken” (1 Sam 4:22) |
| “He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance” (v. 62) | “they slew...four thousand...very great slaughter: for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen” (1 Sam 4:2, 10) |
| “The fire consumed their young men: and their maidens were not given to marriage” (v. 63) | Not explicitly mentioned in Samuel. |
| “their priests fell by the sword” (v. 64a) | “Hophni and Phinehas were slain” (1 Sam 4:11) |
| “their widows made no lamentation” (v. 64b) | “she [Phinehas widow] answered not, neither did regard it” (1 Sam 4:20) |
| “Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. And he smote his enemies in hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach” (vv. 65-66) | “hand of Yahweh was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel” (7:13) |

In this incident, the ‘**hand** of Yahweh’ is highlighted (1 Sam 5:6, 7, 9, 11; 6:3, 5, and 9) to show His supremacy (cf. 1 Sam 4:8). To highlight this, Dagon’s *hands* are pointedly shown to be futile:

And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon [*was*] fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and **both the palms of his hands [*were*] cut off** upon the threshold; only [*the stump of*] Dagon was left to him. 1 Sam 5:5; cf. Ps 97:7 (KJV)

Further, there is a marked irony placed in the record between 1 Samuel 4 and then 1 Samuel 5 and 6. When the ark was brought into the camp by Israel it did nothing (1 Sam 4:4), but in 1 Samuel 5 and 6 it wreaks havoc in the Philistine cities. The point being driven home to the people was that they needed to look beyond the ark as a physical box and see the *hand* of Yahweh behind it!

As the ark of God is passed from city to city, leaving a trail of destruction behind it, the Philistines are progressively brought low as the ‘hand of God was very heavy there’ (1 Sam 5:11). They convene a conference of the lords of the Philistines where they decide to ‘send away’ the ark (1 Sam 5:11) and ‘cry’ (1 Sam 5:12). As we shall illustrate shortly, these phrases are placed in the record to point us to another period in Israel’s history.

Prior to examining these connections, it is worth highlighting some details within the text. Firstly, it becomes apparent that in these events the Philistines are being educated. Initially, they refer to the ark as the ‘ark of God (*elohim*)’ (1 Sam 5:7, 8, 10, 11), but after seven months the Philistines appreciate that it is the ‘ark of the Lord (*yhwh*)’ (1 Sam 6:2); they have come to know that Yahweh is God.

Further, during this time, we learn that the Philistines have suffered a severe loss of life from the ‘deadly destruction’ (1 Sam 5:11; cf. 5:6) and from the emerods (1 Sam 5:6, 12). Not only this, but the land was overrun by a ‘plague’ of mice who ‘mar the land’ (1 Sam 6:5).

**‘as the Egyptians’**

In 1 Samuel 6, the Philistines’ priests and diviners are called to advise on what they should do with the ark. They describe their situation as a ‘plague’ (1 Sam 6:4), explain that the mice ‘mar the land’ (1 Sam 6:5), and highlight that the God of Israel was punishing their ‘gods’ (1 Sam 6:5) in these incidents. This language is reminiscent of the punishments God inflicted on Egypt:

And the Lord did so; and there came a grievous swarm [*of flies*] into the house of Pharaoh, and [*into*] his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt: **the land was corrupted**[[73]](#footnote-73) by reason of the swarm [*of flies*]. Exod 8:24 (KJV)

For I will at this time send all my **plagues** upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that [*there is*] none like me in all the earth. Exod 9:14 (KJV)

For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and **against all the gods** of Egypt I will execute judgment: I [*am*] the Lord. Exod 12:12 (KJV)

In Egypt, God brought plagues upon the Egyptians to highlight the futility of their ‘gods’, in particular, animals were used to mar the land. Using the same method, God punishes Philistia in 1 Samuel 5 and 6. As a result, the Gentile nation sends away Israel/the ark to alleviate their misery. When we examine these two texts, more verbal connections become visible:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 Samuel 5–6  | Exodus |
| “Dagon was *fallen upon his face* to the earth” (1 Sam 5:3, 4) | “against all the **gods** of Egypt will I execute judgment” (Exod 12:12) |
| “hand of Yahweh was heavy upon them” (1 Sam 5:6, 9, 12 etc.) | “I stretch forth mine **hand** upon Egypt” (Exod 7:5) |
| “smote them with emerods” (1 Sam 5:6 etc.) | “I may **smite** thee...” (Exod 9:15 etc.) |
| “send away the ark of the God of Israel” (1 Sam 5:11) | “the Egyptians were urgent on them, that they might **send** them out of the land in haste” (Exod 12:33) |
| “slay us not, and our people” (1 Sam 5:11) | “that I might smite **thee** and **thy people**” (Exod 9:15) |
| “deadly destruction” (1 Sam 5:11) | “we be all **dead**” (Exod 12:33) |
| “*cry* of the city went up to heaven” (1 Sam 5:12) | “there was a great ***cry*** in Egypt” (Exod 12:30 |
| “what shall we do to the ark of Yahweh?” (1 Sam 6:2, contrast 5:7, 10, 11) | “the Egyptians shall know that I am **Yahweh**” (Exod 7:5) |
| “for one plague was on you all” (1 Sam 6:4) | “all my **plagues** upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth” (Exod 9:14) |
| “on your lords” (6:4) | “from the firstborn of **Pharaoh**” (12:29) |
| “mice which mar the land” (6:5) | “**the land was corrupted** by reason of the swarm” (8:24) |
| “from off your gods” (6:5) | “against all the **gods** of Egypt” (12:12) |

By using strikingly similar language, the inspired text allies the judgment on Egypt with the judgment on the Philistines. Both Egypt and Philistia were holding onto God’s property. To release his property, Yahweh’s hand brings plagues upon the Gentile nations to bring them low. Death is inflicted and animals are used to mar the land. The punishment is not selective, affecting all classes of society. In so doing, the God of Israel highlights His supremacy above all gods and teaches the nations that he is Yahweh. Consequentially, the Gentile nation sends away God’s property.

These parallels highlight that the Philistines were as deserving of punishment as Egypt. Yet, credit where credit is due, the Philistine priests and diviners seem to notice the parallels:

Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, **as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts**? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? 1 Sam 6:6 (KJV)

Further, the Philistines’ comments back in 1 Sam 4:8 take on a whole new meaning:

Woe unto us! Who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? These [*are*] the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. 1 Sam 4:8 (KJV)

In the seemingly strange events on 1 Samuel 4–6, we see the God of Israel simply acting in the same way as He did before in Egypt.

**‘if ye do return’**

In 1 Samuel 7, a familiar figure, whose absence is telling, is reintroduced into the record. Samuel the prophet, last mentioned in 1 Sam 4:1, reappears. His message to the people solidifies our conclusions:

And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, [*then*] **put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you**, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only. 1 Sam 7:3, 4 (KJV)

Samuel exhorts the house of Israel to serve Yahweh only, and to put away the idols from among them. The implication from the text is that Israel served Yahweh *alongside* other gods (cf. 2 Kgs 17:41). However, in contrast to their earlier false view of salvation, where they believed that the ark would **save** (1 Sam 4:3), their appreciation of the one true God impacts their understanding of salvation:

And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will **save** us out of the hand of the Philistines.” 1 Sam 7:8; cf. 1 Sam 4:3 (KJV)

In this simple incident we learn that a correct understanding of God is a prerequisite for salvation.

**Archaeology**

**J. Burke**

**Hezekiah’s Tunnel**[[74]](#footnote-74)

Discovery of the tunnel built by King Hezekiah to provide water to Jerusalem in time of siege (2 Kings 22:20; 2 Chron 32:30), was confirmed by an accompanying inscription which dates to the reign of Hezekiah. Parker says,

Discovered by some boys at play in 1880, the Siloam Inscription commemorates the dramatic meeting of two teams of tunnelers, digging from opposite directions, during the construction of the tunnel in the reign of Hezekiah. The text, written in paleo-Hebrew, offers an unusual contrast to the Biblical account (2 Kings 22:20 and 2 Chronicles 32:30). Like most ancient commemorative texts, the Biblical account gives the royal perspective, whereas the Siloam Inscription features the style and content of a man who witnessed and participated.[[75]](#footnote-75)

**Minimalist views**

Minimalist scholars[[76]](#footnote-76) J. Rogerson and P. Davies claimed that the inscription does not date to the reign of Hezekiah, but to the Hasmonean era (less than two centuries before the birth of Christ), a claim used to cast doubt on the date of the tunnel itself, and to argue that it was not built by Hezekiah.

Of the proposal by Rogerson and Davies, R. S. Hendel states,

They acknowledge that specialists in palaeography unanimously date the inscription to the last quarter of the eighth century BCE, but they maintain that the palaeographers are mistaken, apparently deluded by circular reasoning and professional *hubris*. This is a remarkable claim and deserves some consideration.[[77]](#footnote-77)

Rogerson and Davies' chief contention is that palaeographic analysis of ancient Hebrew inscriptions is extremely imprecise.[[78]](#footnote-78)

Although acknowledging that their view is contradicted by the unanimous consent of palaeographers, Rogerson and Davies claim that palaeography is insufficiently precise to differentiate between 8th century and 2nd century texts.

**Scholarly Dissension**

E. Eshel (renowned epigraphist), and J. A. Hackett (Harvard Professor of Biblical Hebrew and Northwest Semitic epigraphy), have both rejected the claim that palaeographer is too imprecise to date the inscription reliably.

Eshel states,

These examples, as well as many others, show that palaeography stands on a strong and stable foundation. Today palaeography can date documents to within half a century. It is true that palaeography alone can only tell us that the Siloam Inscription may have been written at the end of the eighth century or in the seventh century B.C.E., but palaeography can tell us with certainty that the inscription was not written in the second century B.C.E., as Rogerson and Davies “strongly suggest.[[79]](#footnote-79)

Hackett states,

The science of palaeography—the dating of scripts by the shape, form, stance, stroke order, and direction, as well as by other tell-tale diagnostic indications—can now date these scripts within a century and sometimes even closer. Contrary to Rogerson and Davies, palaeographers can distinguish between pre-Exilic Old Hebrew and post-Exilic paleo-Hebrew. Rogerson and Davies admit, in fact, that the Siloam Inscription’s waw, yod, kap and qop do not fit well into a second-century B.C.E. script chart, and this should have been enough to tip them off to the problem with their argument.[[80]](#footnote-80)

A. Hurvitz (Professor of Bible and Hebrew Linguistics), observed that the claims of Rogerson and Davies had been rejected by the leading epigraphists, and disproved their linguistic arguments. He states,[[81]](#footnote-81)

I am not surprised that some of the leading palaeographical authorities in our field have so severely criticized the effort of Rogerson and Davies to place the Siloam Inscription in the Hasmonean period.

In sum, it is the Biblical and inscriptional evidence adduced by Rogerson and Davies in support of their claim that undermines it. I would strongly suggest, therefore, that if they insist on their theory regarding the late dating of the Siloam tunnel, they should drop the linguistic argumentation from their discussion—which for them is unfamiliar territory.

The Hebrew of the Siloam Inscription is worlds apart from the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls or the Hebrew of the apocryphal book known as Ben Sira (also known as Ecclesiasticus or “The Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sira”). To anyone versed in Hebrew linguistics, the Siloam Inscription clearly does fall under the heading of classical Hebrew, as manifested in classical Biblical literature.

It is true that the linguistic tools at our disposal cannot tell us whether the Siloam Inscription specifically reflects the time of Hezekiah’s rule (727–698 B.C.E.). On the basis of both the Biblical and post-Biblical evidence, however, we can conclude that—linguistically—the inscription must be dated to the classical phase of ancient Hebrew, that is, to the pre-Exilic period (before 586 B.C.E.).

Leading palaeographer Ada Yardeni likewise dismissed the claim that the inscription shows evidence of a Hasmonean dating,

If the Siloam Inscription were inscribed in the Hasmonean period, its script would reveal a late stage of evolution (like the palaeo-Hebrew scrolls) or artificial archaized characteristics (like the Hasmonean coins). It displays neither.[[82]](#footnote-82)

**Scholarly consensus**

R. Hendel (a professional epigrapher specializing in Semitic languages), has responded strongly to the following claims made by Rogerson and Davies, demonstrating that they are in error.

He rejects the clam that some of the letters in the text have no parallels in Iron Age inscriptions, casting doubt on the idea that they were written during the Iron Age; ‘The problem with this statement is that there are plenty of parallels to these four letters in Hebrew inscriptions from the late Iron Age, a number of which are datable by their archaeological context.[[83]](#footnote-83)

A review of the relevant evidence, however, shows that Rogerson and Davies' palaeographic arguments are deeply flawed. It is in fact quite easy to tell that the script of the Siloam Inscription belongs to the eighth-seventh century sequence and not to the paleo-Hebrew sequence of the Hasmonean era and later.[[84]](#footnote-84)

F. M. Cross, (Professor of Hebrew and Other Oriental Languages at Harvard University), observed that Rogerson and Davies were unqualified to make judgments on the text.

The list of significant features differentiating Old Hebrew from paleo-Hebrew can be extended to most, if not all, letters of the alphabet. To identify them requires an eye and memory for form, gifts that make the palaeographer. Without such gifts, a scholar is in the same straits as the tone-deaf musician who wishes to conduct an orchestra.[[85]](#footnote-85)

Professional epigraphist P. Kyle McCarter Jr. has made a similar statement:

No epigraphist trained in the scripts of these periods would confuse second-century B.C.E. paleo-Hebrew with sixth-century B.C.E. Hebrew, much less with eighth-century B.C.E. Hebrew.[[86]](#footnote-86)

The scholarly consensus of leading epigraphers has concluded that the inscription in Hezekiah’s Tunnel does indeed date to the 8th century BCE.

Because all Hebrew epigraphers now date the Siloam Inscription to the eighth century B.C.E., Rogerson and Davies are obliged to go back nearly a century for authority.† Of course, this earlier generation of scholars could not have been aware of the numerous Hebrew inscriptions from the First Temple period discovered since then.[[87]](#footnote-87)

**The Image of God**

**G. Horwood**

The Bible’s first mention of human gender is in Gen 1:26-27:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth”. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

The word ‘man’ (Hebrew *'adam*) in this passage is generic,[[88]](#footnote-88) as indicated by the use of the pronoun ‘them’. That is, both the man and the woman were made in the image and likeness of God. This is not a controversial point – it is one on which complementarians and egalitarians generally agree – but it does provide an important foundation for our study of gender in the Bible.

The word ‘image’ is the Hebrew *ts*elem,meaning a ‘representation’ or ‘likeness’. This word is often used in the Old Testament to refer to a carved idol or statue. The word ‘likeness’ is the Hebrew *demuth*, meaning ‘similarity’ or ‘resemblance’. The terms ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ are probably not describing different aspects of God, as they are similar in meaning and are used interchangeably throughout Scripture. It is more likely that the two words are used together for emphasis. The man and woman, therefore, were in some way or to some degree like God.

A significant aspect of ‘image and likeness’ is the implication of *sonship*. Old Testament scholar Meredith Kline saw ‘image of God’ and ‘son **`**of God’ as twin concepts. Kline interpreted ‘image and likeness of God’ as a reference to familial resemblance between a father and son, rather than as a description of what it means to be human, or of representative status. Adam’s son Seth is described as being born in Adam’s image and likeness (Gen 5:3). Thus he says,

The father-son relationship of Adam and Seth is presented as a proper analogue for understanding the Creator-man relationship.[[89]](#footnote-89)

God is king over the earth (Ps 47:7); and a king’s son inherits authority in his father’s realm. In Gen 1:26, image and likeness is immediately followed by dominion. The word ‘dominion’ is the Hebrew *rada* meaning to rule, to dominate or to tread under foot. The word ‘subdue’ in v. 28, Hebrew *kabas,* means to capture or conquer a hostile party by force. In the natural sense mankind was to cultivate the earth, use its resources and domesticate animals. However the violent nature of the terms used has more to do with the spiritual application.

Humans rise above the level of animals by having dominion over the desires of their flesh (Gal 5:17, Ps 119:133). The diverse range of human desires is represented metaphorically in the Bible by different kinds of animals. People who are ruled by their fleshly desires are like ‘irrational animals; creatures of instinct’ (2 Pet 2:12) which bite and devour one another (Gal 5:15). Influenced by God’s ways, fruits such as love, kindness and gentleness are produced, and formerly fierce predators behave in an unnaturally docile manner (Isa 11:6-9).

God made man upright (Ecc 7:29). His upright posture distinguished him from the other animals and symbolised integrity and moral superiority. But as Micah lamented, “There is no one upright among mankind; they all lie in wait for blood, and each hunts the other with a net” (Mic 7:2).

Psalm 72:8 says that God’s son will have dominion (*rada*) over the earth, and describes what dominion looks like when exercised by him. The ‘royal son’ is just and righteous (Ps 72:1). He does not use his position of power to exploit others or promote self, but to defend the defenseless, the needy, the poor and the vulnerable, whose blood is precious in his sight (Ps 72:12-14).

After Jesus was baptised and received power without measure (John 3:34), he was driven into the wilderness where he was ‘with the wild animals’ (Mark 1:13). Psalm 72:9 predicts his triumph - “They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust”. The Hebrew translated as ‘they that dwell in the wilderness’ can be applied to animals or people and is translated on three other occasions as ‘wild beasts of the desert’. ‘His enemies shall lick the dust’ echoes the shaming of the serpent in Gen 3:14.

Jesus was the only person who successfully had dominion over all the various desires of his nature. All others have sinned and fallen short of the glory, or likeness, of God. God extends to all the invitation to be born again as sons of God and to be conformed to the image of Jesus (Rom 8:29). A son of God exercises dominion by no longer making a practice of sinning (1 John 3:9-10, 5:18), practicing righteousness (1 John 2:29), and loving others (1 Peter 1:22-23). This is “the new man, which is created after the *likeness* of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:24).

With the status of son of God, comes the status of heir (Rom 8:17, 29). In contrast with inheritance customs in most ancient societies, gender, social class and race make no difference to eligibility as an heir of God (Gal 3:26-29). In Christ male and female are ‘heirs together of the grace of life’ (1 Pet 3:7).

Gender difference is a popular field of study nowadays, and whilst some differences do exist, Genesis 1 reminds us to keep these in perspective. When Adam first saw Eve, he was overjoyed to at last have somebody *like* himself.[[90]](#footnote-90) The Bible makes no explicit mention of inherent differences between male and female (except that females are physically weaker, 1 Pet 3:7), nor does it refer to ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ characteristics. Exactly the same fruit of the spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22-23) - is to be developed in all children of God, regardless of gender.

Male and female then have much in common. Both were created in the image and likeness of God. Both share the same humanity, the same intellectual, moral and spiritual capacity, the same fallibility and the same opportunity to become God’s children. All children of God share the same calling - to exercise godly dominion, and to be fruitful in creating new children of God.

**Marginal Notes**

**Phil 4:5 - AP**

In Phil 4:5, the expression, ‘The Lord is at hand’, quotes ‘at hand’ from ‘The Day of the Lord is at hand’ (Joel 1:15; 2:1; 3:14; Obad 1:15; Zeph 1:7, 14; Isa 13:6; and Ezek 30:3), but in respect of these prophets, the Lord (Yahweh) did not come in person in the Day that came upon the people (or nations) at that time; it was a Day of Judgment upon people. So there isn’t a problem of a delayed coming of Christ in Phil 4:5; rather, ‘The Lord’ is a metonym for ‘the Day of the Lord’ because he is the one that is going to execute the judgment: there is no metaphorical ‘coming’ of the Lord in this ‘Day of Judgment’ just an execution of judgment.

The Olivet Prophecy makes it clear that what would be ‘at hand’ is the Jewish War of AD 66-73 (Matt 24:32-33; Mark 13:28-29; Luke 21:30). Hence, in allusions to the that prophecy, we read that that which was bearing thorns and thistles was ‘at hand’ to be burned (Heb 6:8), and that which ‘waxed old’ was at hand to ‘vanish away’ (Heb 8:13). (Against this context it is also worth reading Rev 1:3 and 22:10.)

While there may be texts which express an anticipation of the imminent coming of Jesus in the NT writings, Phil 4:5 is not one of them.

**Acts 2:36 – AP**

Why is Jesus ‘Lord’? Why do Christians have a lord as well as a god? What would Christians lose if they constantly read, “Grace be to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ” instead of “and fromthe Lord Jesus Christ”? (e.g. 1 Cor 1:3). Whenever we see the term ‘lord’ used of Christ in the NT is it the same kind of meaning? Is it sometimes just ‘master’? When is it more?

Acts 2:36 states that Jesus was *made* lord; it says that it was a ‘crucified’ Jesus that was made lord rather than a newly baptised Jesus or an infant Jesus. It follows statements about Jesus’ resurrection and exaltation and it relies on Ps 110:1 as a proof text, “The Lord said to my lord”.

Jesus sits by[[91]](#footnote-91) the right hand of the Father and, hence, there are many couplings of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in NT fellowship language: how could it be any other way? However, the point we are noting here is that *this* kind of lordship in Ps 110:1 is that of the Davidic kingship which has been given to Christ, even though God has yet to make his enemies his footstool. This is different to the lordship of a master and disciple.

Much, and maybe most, of the lordship language in the NT that attaches to Christ is about his exalted position as a king awaiting his regency and not about his being a master with disciples or, again, servants. When we use ‘lord’ of Christ it is easy to be mono-tracked and think only of ‘master’ but the better balance is to think more of ‘king’ because by this we affirm the Judahite character of an Abrahamic Christian faith, which can only be pleasing to someone who was of that royal tribe.

**Rev 2:13 – PW**

Revelation 2:13 mentions the martyrdom of Antipas at Pergamum – the city where “Satan dwells”. This mention is sometimes employed to date Revelation to the reign of Domitian (81-96 AD) as Antipas is said to have been ordained as bishop by John the Apostle and is supposed to have been martyred in ca.92 AD. However, two problems exist with this interpretation.

Firstly, historical evidence falls short of confirming any organized program of Christian persecution under Domitian’s reign (in contrast we have strong evidence of Christian persecution under Nero). Secondly, the martyrdom of Antipas is not recorded in respectable historical sources but is only known from the Eastern Orthodox Church where it appears for the first time in the work of Symeon the Metaphrast,[[92]](#footnote-92) who compiled a collection of saint’s lives in around 1,000 AD. His mention of the martyrdom of “Saint” Antipas should therefore be regarded as orthodox fiction - a legendary story, unknown to the early Fathers.

The mention of a single martyr is neither proof of nor evidence for any particular persecution without corroboration. Large numbers of Christians were martyred by Nero in Rome but not in the Asian provinces. A single martyr does not necessarily attest to a wide-spread phenomenon and it could be an exception local to Pergamum before or after the persecution of Nero (and, for that matter, whatever happened under Domitian). As we cannot be certain of the reasons behind the death of Antipas it has no evidential value for dating Revelation.

**Isa 42:6 – AP**

I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles… Isa 42:6-7 (KJV); cf. Isa 49:6

This is an important assurance and promise as seen by its use in the NT. The terms of its first fulfillment centre on Hezekiah. The ‘light for the Gentiles’ is the ‘judgment to the Gentiles’ of Isa 42:1. The NT typological application is the dissemination of the Gospel around the Mediterranean and this can mislead the exegete if s/he anachronistically thinks of, say, the nations of the Middle East. Rather, as a consequence of Assyrian deportation policies, the nations *had already come* to the territory of Northern Israel. Galilee was known as ‘Galilee of the Nations’ (Isa 9:1). Therefore the nations to which the Servant would be a light are those very near to Jerusalem—the peoples (including Babylonians) that had been deported to Northern Israel.

**News**

**Christadelphian EJournal Book Fund**

The book **Reasons**, sponsored by the EJournal and published by Willow through LULU has sold well (350+) and generated a small amount of money in royalties (a few hundred pounds (GBP)) after expenses (mailshot etc.). It continues to sell in a steady way and a fund has been set up to hold the royalties; and outgoings from the fund will be allocated by the trustees, A. Perry and T. Gaston.

Rather than give the money to existing Christadelphian charities or missionary organisations, it has been decided to use the money to support the study of the Scriptures, which is the principal objective of the EJournal. Accordingly, the fund will distribute the said funds in **book grants** according to the following rules:

* Grants will be up to £30 payable on a once-only-for-an-applicant basis directly to the bookshop nominated below on behalf of the applicant by the trustees. Exceptions to the limit and source would only be for Greek and Hebrew grammars and reference books, which tend to have a higher price.
* Grants will be used for purchase of Biblical Studies book(s) through the bookshop of *The Christadelphian Office* and cover the cost of the book(s) and postage. The bookshop can and does supply Christadelphian and non-Christadelphian authored books from various sources. Books that are not available through this bookshop are not eligible for grants.
* Those eligible for grants will satisfy all the following criteria:
	+ Baptised Christadelphians, young people under the age of 25
	+ Unwaged and otherwise unable to fund the book purchase.
	+ Looking to further their understanding of Scripture through secondary reading.
	+ Fall outside the support framework of Christadelphian missionary organisations.

Notwithstanding the use of the fund for book grants, monies will also be used to supply *Reasons* and future multi-authored books sponsored by the EJournal to publically accessible libraries at the discretion of the trustees.

Notwithstanding also, donations from third parties to the fund are not excluded.

Applicants can submit an application for a grant (details on the Christadelphian EJournal website). On request and acceptance, monies from the fund will be paid in variable amounts up to the sum of £30 (or more in exceptionable cases) for books, the ordering of which will be handled by the trustees.

**Forthcoming Book**

**One God, the Father (Autumn 2012)**

Following the success of the book ***Reasons*** in the Christadelphian community, it was felt that there is a need for a follow-up multi-authored book to present the case in a series of essays for believing in the monotheism of the Bible rather than the Trinitarianism of mainstream Christianity. There are some well-known books that are apologetic and attack Trinitarianism; the ethos of this book is to give a positive presentation of Biblical Monotheism.

The concept for the book is to cover the history of Biblical Monotheism and show how it was replaced by Trinitarianism and how Biblical Unitarianism has been represented and revived down the ages until modern times. So, although the book will necessarily critique Trinitarianism, its main purpose is to demonstrate the truth that there is one God, the Father, and show how this doctrine has been and is defended as an essential part of the apostolic Christian faith. Nevertheless, because Trinitarianism did not develop without deeply held spiritual motivations and concerns, it will also contain material spread throughout the essays that deals with why the church became Trinitarian.

The book will be a compilation of essays by various authors. Some essays will present exegesis (Bible); others will present the history of Biblical Monotheism; and others will consider the practice of this monotheism today.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction | Thomas Gaston |
| One God: The Shema in the Old and New Testaments | John Adey |
| Jewish Monotheism in the First Century | Andrew Perry |
| Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels | Peter Heavyside |
| Jesus in John's Writings | Paul Wyns |
| Paul and Jesus | John Thorpe |
| The Holy Spirit | Mark Allfree |
| What happened in the Second and Third Centuries? | Thomas Gaston |
| The Development of Trinitarianism in the Fourth Century | David Burke |
| Pre-Reformation Trinitarianism  | Kate Stewart |
| Monotheism in the Reformation and Radical Reformation | James Andrews |
| Biblical Monotheism in the Nineteenth Century | Andrew Wilson |
| Biblical Monotheism Today | Rob Hyndman |
| Manifestation or Incarnation? | Andrew Perry |
| Worship, Prayer and Jesus | Mark Morris |
| Monotheism and the Atonement | Richard Benson |
| Epilogue: One God and One Lord | TBA |

It is intended that this work will fill a further gap in the writings of our community. It will do this by addressing the reading need of those seeking to understand the reasons for believing in the one God, the Father, in a separate environment to the mainstream churches; it will support a faith based upon truth rather than sentiment, emotion and feeling.

**Postscript**

**Bible Study**

The Bible is a wonderful book. The study of the Bible is an exceedingly rewarding experience. The Psalmist says,

O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than my enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. Ps 119:97-100 (KJV)

I wonder how many of us can say that the Law is our meditation (study) all the day. But this is not the point I wish to make. The question I want to pose as a challenge is this:

Do we think that the study of the Bible is important at all? A startling question, but consider the ‘evidence’ that might lead to such a question being asked in the first place:

* What ecclesia has not seen dwindling interest in midweek Bible classes? Isn’t the word ‘class’ itself often objected to as ‘off-putting’?
* What individual brother and sister has not felt that the study of the Scriptures (as presented in talks) has become blander, dumbed down, more peppered with familiar clichés, with less substance and more platitudes?
* Hasn’t there been an irreversible decline in Biblical conversations amongst us at fraternals and after meetings, and in our own homes?
* Isn’t there a complete lack of voices talking about the detail of the Prophets, the Psalms and the Law? When was the last time anyone actually discussed details as opposed to generalities?

The list of questions could go on. They are rhetorical questions, of course, each brother and sister will answer them in his or her own way. But even to pose these questions is not my point. My challenge is this: is there anybody who thinks that study is not important as part of what it is to be saved by God?

Paul says this:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Tim 3:16 (KJV)

This is a familiar verse; but it does say ‘all’ Scripture is profitable, and it does mention doctrine (teaching). Nobody doubts intellectually a first principle such as the inspiration of Scripture, but do they deny it in practice by neglecting the study of the Scriptures?

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. Matt 15:8 (KJV)

Am I getting out of balance with this quotation? I don’t think so. With our lips we may affirm our belief in the inspiration of Scripture. But in practice our heart may deny this, for our heart does not meditate upon the Scriptures. When it does meditate, it selects only some parts, it ignores very large parts, it prefers the easy, and the accessible, the general and the devotional, but it neglects the deep, the difficult and the detail—and so the teaching we derive is limited.

**Editorial Policies**: The **Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation** seeks to fulfil the following objectives: offer analytical and expositional articles on biblical texts; engage with academic biblical studies that originate in other Christian confessions; defend the biblical principles summarised in the common Christadelphian statements of faith; and subject the published articles to retrospective peer review and amendment.

**Submission of Articles**: Authors should submit articles to the editors. Presentation should follow *Society of Biblical Literature* guidelines (www.sbl.org).

**Publication**: E-mailed quarterly on the last Thursday of January, April, July, and October; published as a collected annual paperback obtainable from: www.lulu.com/willowpublications.

**Subscriptions**: This is a “free” EJournal to communities and individuals whose statement of faith is broadly consistent with the Christadelphian common statements.

1. T. D. Alexander, *Abraham in the Negev* (Carlisle: Paternoster press, 1997), 51; *From Paradise to the Promised Land* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002), 22-23; J. Ronning “The Naming of Isaac: The Role of the Wife/Sister Episodes in the Redaction of Genesis” *WTJ* (1991): 1-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. D. L. Petersen, “A Thrice-Told Tale”; [cited Jan 2012, and to be found online at fontes.lstc.edu/~rklein/documents/petersen.htm]; references are to this document, which has no pagination. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ronning, “The Naming of Isaac: The Role of the Wife/Sister Episodes in the Redaction of Genesis”, 29: “It was well known to the ancients that Gen. 12:10-20 is typologically related to the account of the Exodus, a fact that has not been dealt with by most moderns”. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. R. Alter observes that cognates of the Hebrew verb form *mšlHym* (1 Sam 6:3), used for sending back the ark, are repeatedly used for Pharaoh’s sending Israel out of Egypt, and thus sustains the network of allusions to the Exodus story. *The David Story, A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ronning, “The Naming of Isaac: The Role of the Wife/Sister Episodes in the Redaction of Genesis”, 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Alter, *The David Story*, 133. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Peterson admits that it is difficult to designate where the sister- wife narrative ends: “I am unable to designate a clear terminus to the tale which begins in 26:1. The wife-sister motif has been assimilated into a series of incidents concerning Isaac's sojourn in Gerar - a series which continues through Gen. 26:16 when Isaac moves to the valley of Gerar”. However, the narrative concerning the wells forms an integral part of the proceeding tale, without which it cannot be properly understood. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [ED: JWA] It is important to observe that a *sexual sense* is not an inherent feature of the term *mecaHëq* (nor its related: Isaac) in any of its instances. The Hebrew *mecaHëq* or its cognates range from (positive) ‘laugh’ (whence ‘Isaac’ = ‘he will laugh’, Sarah acknowledging God has caused her this outcome: Gen 18:13, 15; 21:6) and ‘sport’ (‘play’) as Isaac with Rebecca, to (negative) ‘sport’ (‘play’) as ‘mock’ (Gen 19:14; 21:9; 39:14; Judges 16:25; Ezek 23:32). Likewise, there is no inherent sexual play sense in any instance of the cognate verb-forms and nouns of the rarer spelling of ‘Isaac’ as *yiSHaq*/qx;f.yI (with a letter ‘*sin*’ [f] instead of a ‘*cade*’ [c]), as in Jer 33:26. Indeed, God laughs (*yiSHaq*) at the futile attempts of man to counter His will, in Pss 2:4 and 37:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The question of the legitimacy of Isaac is part of Genesis 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The nation faced the punishment for an unfaithful wife – compare Exod 32:20 with Num 5:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. [Ed. AP]: the word for ‘play’ (qxf) is different to that in Genesis (qxc) but not unrelated. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. ‘*Eden*’ is a play on Sarah’s words: “After I have become old, shall I have pleasure [*cedna*], my lord being old also?” (Gen 18: 12). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. A. Gibson, “701 Quotations in the Apocalypse” *The Testimony* 47 (1977): 17-24, 57-64. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The reader is encouraged to review the Testimony articles particularly to derive an understanding of what the term ‘quotation’ means in the context of the Apocalypse. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. R. Morgan, “Intertextuality” *CeJBI* 5/4 (2011): 57-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. A. Vanhoye, “L’Utilisation du Livre d’Ezechiel dans L’Apocalypse” *Biblia* 43 (1962): 436-76 (473-76). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. P. Carrington, *The Meaning of the Revelation* (London: SPCK, 1931), 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. J. Allfree, *Ezekiel An Exposition of Chapters 1-39* (CSSS, 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Allfree, *Ezekiel An Exposition of Chapters 1-39*, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Allfree, *Ezekiel An Exposition of Chapters 1-39*, 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Allfree, *Ezekiel An Exposition of Chapters 1-39*, 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Allfree, *Ezekiel An Exposition of Chapters 1-39*, 76-77. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. H. A. Whittaker, *Revelation: A Biblical Approach* (Cannock: Biblia, 1969), chap. 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. It should be noted that this article is not arguing for a Preterist interpretation of the whole of Revelation. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. C. A. Evans, *Word and Glory*: *On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John’s Prologue* (JSNTS 89; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Similarly, it would be wrong to translate v. 14 as “And the Word **was** flesh”—a simple statement of fact, because this loses the sense of ‘becoming’ in the verb and fails to reflect Genesis. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. We do not know any from John but we do have the utterance of Luke 1:35. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. For a study of the thematic links between the prologue and the rest of John see S. R. Valentine, “The Johannine Prologue—A Microcosm of the Gospel” *EQ* 68:3 (1996): 291-304. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The exact form of words (o` lo,goj tou/ qeou/) are definitely applied to Jesus in Rev 19:13, but elsewhere (Heb 4:12 and 1 John 2:14) it is not certain that they refer to Christ. The shorter phrase ‘the Word’ may be applied to Christ in Luke 1:2. The title ‘the word of life’ (tou/ lo,gou th/j zwh/j) is used of Jesus in 1 John 1:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. This text may underlie some of John’s language of Jesus being sent; see J. V. Dahms, “Isaiah 55:11 and the Gospel of John” *EQ* 53.2 (1981): 78-88. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Dennis R. Burk, Jr., “The Meaning of *Harpagmos* in Philippians 2:6 - An Overlooked Datum for Functional Inequality within the Godhead”, available online at http://bible.org [cited 22/03/2010]. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. E. Stauffer, *New Testament Theology* London: SCM, 1955), 284, note 369. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. A. D. Norris, *Acts and Epistles* (London: Aletheia Books, 1989), 529-535, provides a large part of the linguistic analysis that follows. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Cited in J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making* (2nd ed.; London: SCM Press, 1989, 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. We use the expression ‘Jewish Scriptures’ to cover both Hebrew/Aramaic and the Old Greek. See R. T. McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 5-9, for the terminological background. It is beyond the scope of this essay to consider whether Luke personally used Hebrew/Aramaic or Greek texts in any particular case. However, any decisions on that question do not affect the theological argument that the Spirit quotes, alludes and echoes the Hebrew/Aramaic original that was inspired. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. The Pseudepigrapha and Apocryphal works, as well as the Gnostic gospels, are attempts to write ‘Scripture’. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. A. Perry, *Biblical Investigations* (Sunderland: Willow Publications, 2011), 82-104. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Thus, T. E. Duff observes in his treatment of Herodotus, the “father” of classical historical writing, “…neither in Homer, nor in the narratives of the Hebrew Bible, some of which were being written roughly at the same time, is any acknowledgement given to the problem of sources and bias”, *The Greek and Roman Historians* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 2003), 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. R. T. France, “Jewish Historiography” in *Gospel Perspectives: Studies in Midrash and Historiography: Volume III* (eds. R. T. France & D. Wenham; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), 99-127. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. For an overall introduction to the Targums, see P. S. Alexander, “Jewish Aramaic Translations” in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. M. J. Mulder; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 217-254. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. For an introduction see J. H. Charlesworth, *The Pesharim and Qumran History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. For a list see H. W. Attridge, “Jewish Historiography” in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters* (eds. R. A. Kraft and G. W. Nickelsburg; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 311-43 (311-316). Attridge comments that these histories were ‘apologetic’ in that they reinforced a “sense of identity and worth in communities confronted with the challenge of Hellenic culture” (316). As such, they had missiological value in converting Gentiles to Judaism. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. See H. J. Thackeray, “Introduction” to his translation of *Josephus*, (Loeb; Cambridge, MT: Harvard Univ. Press, 1957), ix-xix. All citations are from this edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. L. C. A. Alexander, “The Preface to Acts and the Historians” in *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts* (ed. B. Witherington III; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 73-103 (85). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. G. Downing, “Redaction Criticism: Josephus’ *Antiquities* and the Synoptic Gospels (I)”, *JSNT* 8 (1980), 46-65 and “Redaction Criticism: Josephus’ *Antiquities* and the Synoptic Gospels (II)”, *JSNT* 9 (1980), 29-48. Downing’s main argument is that Josephus’ treatment of sources is comparable to the Synoptists in that they modify sources for similar reasons. He affirms that Luke is following “procedures similar to those discernible in Josephus” (II, 30). Through a comparison of Josephus’ treatment of the *Letter to Aristeas* and the Jewish Scriptures, Downing shows that Josephus doesn’t make up stories even if he modifies his sources. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. D. E. Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment*, 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Attridge, “Jewish Historiography”, 318. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Aune, *The New Testament in its Literary Environment*, 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Attridge, “Jewish Historiography”, 322. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (2 vols; Reprinted—Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 1:222-223. Moore is writing in 1927 what would become a standard handbook about Judaism, and so he could go on and say then of ‘monotheism’ that, “This is the only sense in which the term has hitherto been used of Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism”. Hurtado, writing in 1998, is introducing ‘religious practices’ (worship) as the defining context for ‘monotheism’ so that he can retain the *kudos* of this term for orthodox Trinitarian Christianity. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. K. Zarley, *The Restitution of Jesus Christ*, xix. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Zarley, *The Restitution of Jesus Christ*, 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Zarley, *The Restitution of Jesus Christ*, 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Justin Martyr is a case in point; he was familiar with Ebionite teaching, and accepted at least one branch of the sect as legitimately Christian. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Available online: http://bit.ly/fWshP7. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. “It is deeply paradoxical that true Christianity should be saved by a theologian for whom the historical humanity of Jesus is of no interest at all; Athanasius salvages the gospel at a very high price − ultimately, as Harnack evidently believed, an unacceptably high price”—R. Williams, *Arius: Heresy & Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI; Eerdmans, 2002), 7-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. A term added to the Latin version of the Nicene Creed, denoting that the Holy Spirit ‘proceeds’ from the Father and the Son. The Orthodox Church rejects this, insisting that the Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Basil refused to accept that the Holy Spirit was of the same essence as the Father and Son; his writings also reflect a deep reluctance to describe the Holy Spirit as ‘God.’ Basil’s Cappadocian colleagues downplayed these idiosyncrasies, privately making allowance for his reticence while publicly condemning others with equal or similar views. Despite this, Basil was reproached as early as AD 371 by conservative elements within the Eastern Church, who had begun to recognise his heterodox theology. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. A semi-Arian faction which strongly resisted the deity of the Holy Spirit; they enjoyed the patronage of Constantius II. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Sadly, Beryllus and Heraclides were eventually reconverted by Origen. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Sometimes known as Theodotus the Cobbler, after his trade. Theodotus the Banker was one of his chief followers. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. The implication is that Zephyrinus himself was partly responsible for corrupting true Christianity. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. They all profess some form of Binitarianism or Logos Christology. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Very little of Melito’s writings have come down to us, and none shed any light on his Christology. The closest we get is a footnote from Origen, who claims Melito believed the Father was corporeal and had preserved His image in the human body (a possible reference to Gen 1:26). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. “As he was born of Mary in the last days, so did he also proceed from God as the first-begotten of every creature” ANF 1.576. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. “For the one who was born as Son, and led to slaughter as a lamb, sacrificed as a sheep, and buried as a man, rose up from the dead as God, since he is by nature both God and man” (*On the Passover*, 8). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. “He is everything: in that he judges he is law, in that he teaches he is gospel, in that he saves he is grace, in that he begets he is Father, in that he is begotten he is Son, in that he suffers he is sheep, in that he is buried he is man, in that he comes to life again he is God” (*On the Passover*, 9). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. See review by J. Burke published previously in *Christadelphian E-Journal of Biblical Interpretation*, Vol. 5, No. 4, October 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. [Ed. AP]: This depends on how the Perfect tense is rendered in v. 56—it could be a reference back to the wilderness journey provocation. The KJV ‘For’ of v. 58 is a simple conjunction rather than the normal Hebrew for a logical ‘For’ thereby allowing us to say that v. 58 is a new (later) period in Israel’s history connected to vv. 59-60. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. The Hebrew word translated ‘tempted’ is interestingly used in a different form in Jud 3:1, 4 ‘prove’ when describing why the Philistines (amongst others) had been left in the land. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. The same Hebrew words are used in vv. 17, 18 “by **provoking** him...and they **tempted** him” when describing their fathers. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. This is the same Hebrew phrase as ‘mar the land’ in 1 Sam 5:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. First appeared on bibleapologetics.wordpress.com. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. S. B. Parker, “Jerusalem’s Underground Water Systems Siloam Inscription Memorializes Engineering Achievement” *BAR* 20/04 (1994), 36-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. The ‘minimalist’ view is that archaeology provides little or no support for the Biblical history, the ‘maximalist’ view is that archaeology overwhelmingly supports the Biblical history, and the moderate view is that archaeology substantially supports the Biblical history but that not all of it can be supported directly from archaeology. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. R. S. Hendel, “The Date of the Siloam Inscription: A Rejoinder to Rogerson and Davies” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 59/4 (1996): 233-237 (233). [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Hendel, “The Date of the Siloam Inscription”, 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. E. Eshel, “Some Paleographic Success Stories” *BAR* 23/02 (1997): 48-49. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. J. A. Hackett, “Spelling Differences and Letter Shapes Are Telltale Signs” *BAR* 23/02 (1997): 42-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. A. Hurvitz, “Philology Recapitulates Paleography” *BAR* 23/02 (1997): 49-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. A. Yardeni, “They Would Change the Dates of Clearly Stratified Inscriptions—Impossible!” *BAR* 23/02 (1997): 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Hendel, “The Date of the Siloam Inscription: A Rejoinder to Rogerson and Davies”, 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Hendel, “The Date of the Siloam Inscription: A Rejoinder to Rogerson and Davies”, 233. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. F. M. Cross, “Because They Can’t See a Difference, They Assert No One Can” *BAR* 23/02 (1997): 44-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. P. Kyle McCarter Jr., “No Trained Epigraphist Would Confuse the Two” *BAR* 23/02 (1997): 45-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. A. Lemaire, “Are We Prepared to Raze the Edifice?” *BAR* 23/02 (1997): 47-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. [Ed. AP]: This is a contested point. The first occurrence of *adam* is without the article, while the second comes with the article and the definite object marker and is referenced by a masculine pronoun ‘him’. Further, the last clause of v. 27, ‘male and female created he them’ is linked with v. 28 rather than v. 27ab in some scholarly readings of the Hebrew syntax. The issue here is important because Paul quotes Gen 1:27 in 1 Cor 11:7 in a non-generic way. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. M. G. Kline,“Creation in the Image of the Glory-Spirit” *Westminster Theological Journal* 39 (1976/77): 250-272. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. [Ed AP]: If Eve is like Adam and Adam is like God then imaging is transitive, and the separate creation of Eve is teaching something about role. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. [Ed: JWA]: The “many couplings of” God and His Son, and thus a measure of what Jesus’ ‘lordship’ uniquely comprehends, is reflected in the prepositional change from “sit thou ‘at’/‘on’” based on Greek ‘*ek’* to ‘in’ based on ‘*en*’. This Divinely foreseen entailment of Ps 110:1 extends to a marking by ‘in’ of the profound reciprocal ‘*in*-ness’ of fellowship of Father and Son now, reflected in Jesus’ prayer in John 17, and his use of ‘in’ and ‘one’. See this *ek* to *en* shift in the NT in my schematic on Ps 110:1 in the English versions(*CeJBI Annual 2008*, 166-170), as I note, tend to obscure this significant transition. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. F. Wheeler, “Antipas” *ABD* 1:272. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)