

**Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation Contents**

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**Editorial**

This issue sees a new editor, Bro. D. Burke, who takes on the oversight of “Theology and Apologetics”. The “Section Editor” approach to journals has many advantages and has been well implemented in the UK Testimony magazine which we have copied. The rule of thumb is that authors send articles to the relevant section editor who liaises with the author before sending the article to the publishing editor who collates the journal. In addition, the section editor writes for his or her section and keeps on eye on what is topical in that field. Engaging with church theology and defending the Biblical unitarian and Abrahamic faith is an important brief. Readers familiar with the online world of Christadelphians will know that Bro. Burke has a lot of experience in this field, which he is now able to progress by taking a full-time theology degree.

The EJournal started with two editors and now has five; it takes time to build up an editorial pool. The larger number of editors affords a greater measure of peer review for the articles that are included and more variety in the writing. The aim is to add to the number of section editors in the future and there are obvious areas for new editors, including “Archaeology”, “Old Testament Studies” and “New Testament Studies”. Biblical Studies and Theology are highly specialized so that, for example, scholars become known as specialists in, say, “Paul” or “Apocalyptic”; Second Temple Judaism is also an important specialism. It is hoped that the EJournal will expand its number of sections in some of these areas.

While nothing is set in stone, the EJournal doesn’t presently cover exhortation, devotional writing, sentimental pieces, or prophecy and current affairs. Obviously this material is well covered in other magazines and it could be argued that exhortation and devotional writing is the most important type of Christian writing. Nevertheless, for want of an emphasis, the EJournal has a focus on exposition, analysis and factual writing but this is under review.

Were it not for the Internet, the EJournal would not exist. It takes money to launch a print magazine, and there is no justification for more than one or two print magazines serving the community in a given country. Areas of the world have their own well-established ecclesial magazines. Fortunately, with print-on-demand websites such as www.lulu.com an annual of the four quarterly issues fulfils the need for printed copies for the EJournal. Such is the medium of the Internet that the PDF quarterly issues are bound to go the way of all PDFs; print copies will last a bit longer, but it is as well to recognize that the vast majority of writing is ephemeral and for the moment (albeit less so than speaking).

Readers will have discerned that the ethos of the EJournal is conservative rather than liberal; it tends to be critical of scholarship rather than adoptive of consensus views. This is a tendency and not a rule as there have been plenty of articles that have cited scholars in support of a point of view. Still, a conservative standpoint, and one supportive of the inspiration and integrity of the text does characterize the EJournal. This is not just a Biblical belief but one grounded in a philosophical understanding of language and in an epistemology. (This is a view that will be developed in later issues.) A cautious questioning of scholarship is sound practise for a lay community, rather than an uncritical promotion of what has been read in this or that scholar’s latest popular book. Such uncritical promotion has been the undoing of small independent community magazines in the past and continues as a danger in the present.

**Sennacherib’s Babylonian Problem**

**A. Perry**

**Introduction**

In an article, “Sennacherib’s Southern Front: 704-689 B.C.”, L. D. Levine, observes that in contrast to other Assyrian monarchs, Sennacherib’s military campaigns were conducted mainly in the south in/towards/around Babylonia (six out of eight campaigns).[[1]](#footnote-1) We might ask what was troublesome about the south and Babylon in Sennacherib’s day and how this is of relevance to the Bible.

**Relevance to the Bible**

What Sennacherib was doing in the south in and around Babylon is relevant to how we read Isaiah. First, the importance of Babylon in the days of Hezekiah is mirrored in the troubles the region gave to Sennacherib; over a period of fifteen years it is fair to say that there was a power struggle going on between Sennacherib and his enemies in the south: Babylon, the Chaldean tribes and Elam. The region was important to Sennacherib and worthy of note in the prophecies of Isaiah.

Secondly, Merodach-Baladan was a protagonist in 703 and 700 and he is mentioned as sending ambassadors (princes) to Hezekiah in 700; the involvement of Elam in the struggle for Southern Mesopotamia at this time explains Isaiah’s mention of a “Cyrus” which is a typical Elamite name, and a throne name of the Achaemenids who were in power at the time in Anshan/Parsumash, a province of Elam.

Thirdly, Sennacherib’s fourth campaign of his reign was conducted in 700 in the south against Babylon. His presence and a state of war in the region affects what we can say about the return of any Judahites deported to this area during 701. A state of war tends to produce chaotic conditions, disruption to the local economy, refugees and the movement of population. The opportunity for the return of any Judahites would was being created in this situation by the angel of the Lord. This would not be a happy and peaceful return, but a “fleeing” back to Judah, which is Isaiah’s testimony (Isa 48:20).

Finally, the deportation of some Judahites to Southern Mesopotamia in 701 offers an explanation for Sennacherib’s fourth campaign. Levine poses the question as to **why** Sennacherib had to return to the south to subdue unrest so soon after his successful campaign in the region in 704-703. A reason that Levine does not consider, and the one proposed here, is that the unrest was caused by the deportation of Judahites to the area.

That Sennacherib would have deported some Judahites to border regions such as Babylon and Elam is established by Assyrian policy on deportation which was to populate the borders; they reasoned that foreigners would add to the stability of these areas because they would be loyal to the Assyrian king rather than the indigenous peoples who had a tendency to rebel.

The brief presence of Judahites in the south would have given Merodach-Baladan a catalyst for organising and inciting revolt; it would have given him knowledge of what was happening in the West; and it would have given him something to offer Hezekiah (the return of Judahites) when he sent the princes and ambassadors to Judah.

The devastated condition of Jerusalem and Judah and the presence of deportees in Southern Mesopotamia gave Merodach-Baladan a reason to send a delegation to Hezekiah (a diplomatic contact that is otherwise inexplicable). The dialogue in Isaiah reflects his stance: Yahweh, through his prophet, rejects Merodach-Baladan’s offers to help rebuild Jerusalem, the temple, and the country, and to return the deported captives; it is Yahweh who would do these things.

**Sennacherib’s Fourth Campaign**

Sennacherib’s first and second campaigns[[2]](#footnote-2) (704-703) are not our concern and are covered fully by Levine. Our interest is in what happened after these campaigns in the time between their completion and Sennacherib’s return to the south in 700. This is now Sennacherib’s fourth campaign of his reign (the third having been in the Levant). Levine compares the Bellino Cylinder (702) and the Rassam Cylinder (700) and what they say about the successful conclusion of the first and second campaigns. Levine gives the relevant texts as follows,[[3]](#footnote-3)

Bellino (Month 8, 702)

Bel-ibni, a member of the Rab-Bani class and scion of Babylon who had grown up like a young puppy in my palace, I appointed to the kingship of Akkad and Sumer over them (the Babylonians, Chaldeans, etc.).

Rassam (Month 2, 700)

Bel-ibni, a member of the Rab-Bani class, I placed on his (Merodach-Baladan’s) throne. I made the people of Akkad subject to him. Over all the Chaldean districts, I appointed my officials as governors and imposed on them (the Chaldeans) the yoke of my lordship.

Levine’s comment on the differences is,

This type of revisionism is not unusual in the Sennacherib texts, the most striking example being the way the fate of Ashur-nadin-shumi is treated. But in this case the revisionism contains additional facts. Thus it would appear that in the time between the composition of the Bellino cylinder in viii/702 and the composition of the Rassam cylinder eighteen months later in ii/700, the situation in Chaldea had deteriorated sufficiently that Sennacherib had to reassert direct Assyrian control over the situation.[[4]](#footnote-4)

What Sennacherib is doing during 701 (perhaps in 702) is to send governors into the south because of unrest. The appointment of Bel-ibni to the throne in Babylon in 702 was not enough to secure control. The deportation of Judahites to Babylonia during 701 with accompanying governors would explain the additional detail of the Rassam Cylinder. However, as Levine observes the extra governors had little effect because Sennacherib had to conduct military operations in the region in 700.

For some time during 700, Merodach-Baladan claimed the throne of Babylon; his claim was short-lived. Sennacherib was successful in restoring control over the area. Merodach-Baladan fled to Elam.

**Conclusion**

Accepting the witness of the Bible for the reconstruction of history in Mesopotamia produces a fuller picture of what was happening in 700 and why Sennacherib had to conduct his fourth campaign in the region. Scholars have missed this because they have been misled by the German higher-critical division of the book of Isaiah into three parts with Isaiah 40-48 being assigned to the end of the Babylonian Exile.

**Two Donkeys**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

Biblical contradictions (real or perceived) are used by sceptics to deny the inspiration of Scriptures and the doctrine of inerrancy. Nowhere is this more apparent than with the Gospel narratives, as they cover much of the same ground. Harmonization is used to inter-relate the materials of the Gospels so that they tell a single and continuous story. The first attempt at synchronization was by Tatian (2nd century), called the *Diatessaron.* Harmonisation is used to iron out perceived inconsistencies or contradictions; when appropriately applied it is a valid technique, but sometimes differences are ***meant to stand.*** The fact that we have four different Gospels means that we should first try to understand the differences before explaining them away. Our study will look at one of these “discrepancies”—the triumphal entry of Jerusalem by Jesus on Palm Sunday.

**Two Stories**

Matthew sometimes records two stories that are similar:

|  |
| --- |
| **Matthew** |
| Matt 9:32-34; 12:22-34 – healing a dumb demoniac |
| Matt 9:27-31; 20:29-34 – healing of two blind men |
| Matt 12:38-39; 16:1-4 – request for a sign |

This is not exceptionable and easily accounted for by the fact that Jesus must have said and done very similar things throughout his ministry.

**Two Characters**

Matthew also has stories with two characters where the other gospels have one:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Matthew** | **Mark//Luke** |
| Matt 8:28 – two possessed with devils | Mark 5:2**//**Luke 8:27 |
| Matt 20:30 – two blind men; cf. 9:27-31 | Mark.10:46-52**//**Luke 18:35-43 |
| Matt 21:2 – two animals | Mark.11:2-10**//**Luke 19:30-40**//** John 12:12-15 |

This can lead to problems of harmonization. For example, Matthew has two blind men whereas the other synoptic have Blind Bartimaeus. Various attempts have been made to harmonize the accounts. Among the solutions proposed is that they are an extended account. Bartimaeus appealed to Jesus as he entered the city (Luke) but had no response. Later, when Jesus left Jericho (Matt), Bartimaeus and a fellow sufferer were waiting by the Jerusalem gate and pleaded again to be healed. This is probable and is supported by the Greek verbs ‘passing through’ (diaporeu,omai, Luke 18:36) contrasting with ‘leaving’ (para,gw, Matt 20:30; cf. .9:27). However, although the attempt to harmonize is driven by our need to square the narratives, it is largely irrelevant to the point that Matthew is making. Jesus must have healed hundreds of blind men – but here, only in Matthew’s Gospel – two blind men; ***Jew and Gentile*** at the place where the nation had first entered the kingdom (and where the faithful Gentile woman Rahab had been saved).

**Triumphal Entry**

Jesus entered Jerusalem riding an ass – this was obviously, consciously, done by Jesus in order to fulfill the prophecy in Zech 9:9. The people also understood the significance of the procession against its OT background. Why then does Matthew’s report of the incident differ from that of the other Gospel accounts? Matthew reports Jesus riding on two donkeys (instead of one Matt 21:2-3, 5, 7) – naturally the sceptics have a field day with this, depicting Jesus astride two donkeys (like some sort of circus act). Bad attempts have been made to harmonize the accounts; Clement of Alexander, for example, suggested that an oriental throne was supported by the two animals. Not only is this unlikely, it ignores the fact that Matthew often has duplicate stories and stories with two characters.

The prophecy in Zechariah 9 is in the form of a parallelism, referring to one animal not two:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and (even) upon a colt the foal of an ass. Zech 9:9 (KJV revised)

This prophecy becomes two animals in Matthew’s version:

Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, **and brought the ass, and the colt,** and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon. Matt 21:5-7 (KJV)

The donkey in the OT represents Israel; riding or owning a donkey is a metaphor for sovereignty over Israel, and therefore by extension of the metaphor it symbolizes leadership or royalty.Matthew was obviously aware of the parallelism in the Zechariah prophecy, yet he deliberately mentions two animals. Many scholars believe that Matthew’s urge to duplicate rests on the OT validity of establishing everything on the testimony of two witnesses (Deut 17:6). However, this seems very unlikely; a far more likely motive is that the urge to duplicate rests on the need to represent ***both Jew and Gentile.***

Matthew’s Gospel is at one and the same time the most particular and the most universal. He includes statements in conjunction with his healings and those of his disciples which reserve their miracle working power for Israel (Matt 10:5-6; 15:24). In his healing ministry towards the crowds, he is presenting himself as the healer of Israel, where the nation’s healers have failed. Yet, upon seeing the Canaanite woman’s faith, he is persuaded to heal her daughter (Matt 15:28). The resolution of this apparent tension is to recognize Matthew’s view of salvation-history: God’s call for repentance comes to the Jews first, but after they have had a chance to respond it must go forth into the entire world.

Jesus was presented with the first animal – which refused to move (the Jews rejecting Jesus) and then was brought the foal (the Gentiles) which carried him into Jerusalem. This would be a valid explanation but we cannot know this for sure – the facts are largely irrelevant to Matthews point – the greater Son of David brings salvation to ***both*** ***Jew and Gentile*** and is sovereign over both.

**Conclusion**

Scholars of the Gospels are too quick to dismiss the accounts when there is an apparent inconsistency or contradiction. The differences force the reader to think outside the box and look for an inspired deeper harmony.

**Complementary Difference: Why New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source**[[5]](#footnote-5)

**J. W. Adey**

**Introduction**

On Jesus’ authority (divinely inspired) “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). Yet this perspective may seem difficult to reconcile with New Testament (NT) ‘quotations’[[6]](#footnote-6) of the Old Testament (OT) which differ from the OT as we have it, based on the Hebrew Masoretic text (MT). For example, some may feel that a quotation has to be a verbatim (word-for-word) repetition of something previously expressed. On this view, any variation in quotation fractures expectations about how inspired Scripture should behave. However, not only is this to impose a strict view of ‘quotation’ onto the Bible, but can misdirect unedifyingly into criticism of the text of the Hebrew Bible, as per the MT. Neither reaction (insistence on the verbatim or finding fault with the text) I hope to show is consistent with the nature of Scripture.

There are types of quotation. Some, indeed, are in word-for-word correspondence, but the majority of NT quotations do not exactly match the OT, or the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT)[[7]](#footnote-7) upon which English OT versions are generally based. A well-known example of quotational change is Heb 10:5 from Ps 40:6:

 (KJV) NT Heb 10:5 ... A body hast thou prepared me.[[8]](#footnote-8)

 (KJV) OT Ps 40:6 ...mine earshast thou opened (or ‘prepared’).

When confronted by changes in the language of a NT quotation from the OT, various responses result or resolutions are attempted. Sometimes a strict view of what a quotation should be, e.g., that it is a necessarily verbatim or closely corresponding reproduction, lends weight to positing a faulty MT, favouring conjectural emendation of its text or a quest for alternative OT sources. The alternative sources proposed might be OT Greek translations in the Septuagint (LXX), tradition, fragmentary Hebrew manuscripts from the Judean Desert (some of which occasionally agree with LXX), or hypothesizing about possible temple (and synagogue) scrolls different from MT. E. Würthwein, within a qualified scholarly overview of MT, states:[[9]](#footnote-9)

The earlier tendency to undervalue [the MT] in favor of the Greek [LXX] version or even of modern conjectures has now been almost entirely abandoned, because [MT] has repeatedly been demonstrated to be the best witness to the text. Any deviation from it requires justification.[[10]](#footnote-10)

However, at least English OT versions follow the Hebrew text’s form (as per the MT) and thus any textual differences in a NT quotation are evident for comparison!

**The Argument**

In this article I argue that the NT alone is responsible for changing the form of the OT it re-uses, so there is no point in challenging the textual integrity of MT,[[11]](#footnote-11) or seeking alternative sources which may correspond word-for-word with ‘variant’ NT quotations. The NT’s modified re-use of a fragment of the OT will complement the earlier usage, bringing to the surface an underlying (divinely foreknown) presupposition, or an associated aspect of meaning. Whilst I present ‘complementary difference’ as a phenomenon applicable to quotations, I also take it to be characteristic of Scripture as a whole. We are into issues of authorial intention or handling (manifested) in the Biblical text’s mode of presentation. Hence, if such variations stand, then any theory that endeavours to eliminate them (e.g., opposing such *difference* in principle) is to be rejected; this would only divide Scripture against itself.

From the perspective of this article, and with Jesus, it must be the beginning of wisdom to acknowledge that the text of Scripture cannot be broken and to regard such (e.g., quotational or Synoptic Gospel) differences as a counter-intuitive hallmark of (what it is to be) Divine Revelation:

[God] refuses to be understood merely from within the conceptual framework of our natural thought and language but demands of that framework a logical reconstruction in accordance with His Word.[[12]](#footnote-12)

My thesis, then, is that, concerning variations in quotations (as with the differences between the Gospels), a plurality of minds (divinely inspired agents), under the control of one mind (God’s), and for His purposes exclusively, express such variations consistent with truth.[[13]](#footnote-13) Attempts to smooth out differences create a clash of authority over the Biblical text, ultimately treating Holy Scripture as if it is, or can be, broken.

**The Evidence**

That NT quotational variation (a phenomenon which has its precedent in the OT) is a complementary feature of the Biblical text is demonstrated by the case of around forty NT ‘parallel quotations’ (some of which will be discussed below). A ‘parallel quotation’ is where the NT makes repeated use, twice or more, of the same fragment of the OT. It may exhibit the same characteristics (verbatim wording, or free variation) found in the non-parallel variety.

What is of interest here is that a single OT quotation can be differently worded, or treated, within its several NT presentations. This is evidence for showing the NT producing quotational variation. Thus, the NT is responsible for the alterations to the repeated OT passage cited. Therefore, since the NT does this for parallel quotations within the NT, it is quite consistent to accept that it does so for non-parallel quotations (e.g. in Heb 10:5 and Ps 40:6).

Parallel quotations support the view that variation in quotation should be accepted as the way divine revelation works. Such a view can be related to Gospel parallels. Having more than one Gospel and with variations between the Gospels’ accounts of the same moment, *can* be construed (e.g., not as a “Synoptic problem” but) as a mode of presentation with complementary facets of that circumstance. Sometimes they may seem difficult to understand, or to piece together, nevertheless, their different elements combine to expound the moment, or to complete (God’s view of) the picture.

**Gospel Parallels**

A parallel Gospel account is itself like ‘quotation’ of what took place; its variations are informative.[[14]](#footnote-14)

(1) Gospel parallels and their application to quotations

The differences often found in NT quotations from the OT are comparable with the nature and range of differences which exist in the Gospel accounts of the life of Christ. *Nazareth Revisited* is R. Roberts’ portrayal of “Christ’s wonderful life in biographical form”.[[15]](#footnote-15) In his Preface, Roberts confronts the fact of variations of reportage in the Gospels, whilst observing that “there is no profession of a verbatim report”.[[16]](#footnote-16) His words are a useful prelude to this present discussion:

...the Spirit’s union with the apostles in the authorship...imparted a liberty of variation not permissible to a merely human reporter. The Spirit was the author of all the sayings and doings recorded, and could therefore paraphrase or vary the descriptions of His own acts or utterances, with the liberty that any author exercises in reference to his own productions. It is the failure to recognise the all-prevailing presence of the Spirit of God in the production of these writings that creates the difficulties of criticism. Rules applicable to merely human productions are applied to a class of composition which is outside the ordinary literary category altogether. There is no parallel between a human writer who puts down his own thoughts and impressions merely, and one whose mentality is fused for the time being with a guiding mind outside his own, whose servant he is, and under whose influence he may even write things he does not understand.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Roberts’ main thrust is illustrative of an understanding of “verbal inspiration” which lies behind the Christadelphian Statement of Faith. In this particular matter he contrasts the limitations of human literary composition with Divine revelation.

What should count as truth in inspired texts is not determined by narrative expectations based on human creativity, or fallible reportage, hence, “Difficulty only arises when a false assumption is introduced as to what an inspired account ought to be”.[[18]](#footnote-18) This said, he adds:

It is impossible to impute [the apostolic writings] to error if we allow the participation of the Spirit of God in the work...There are variations in the apostolic narratives, but variation is not error. Four men necessarily relate the same matter in different ways...Mental operation is too subtle a thing to be held in stereotyped grooves...their diversities[[19]](#footnote-19) are held in strict subordination to truth. Their narrative was controlled by the Spirit. The Spirit knowing all meanings can secure the exact meaning in a diversity of forms...Hence, the variations are not inconsistent with the Spirit’s guidance.[[20]](#footnote-20)

We rarely relate this kind of phenomenon (textual variation) found in the Synoptic Gospels to Scripture as a whole or to quotations in particular. Yet, the implications of *difference* within a single Testament are similar to those which transpire when the New reuses the Old, as I hope to show in the analysis from the Gospels offered below.

(2) The nature and range of variations in the Gospel parallels

Typically, Gospel narrative parallels, like quotations (parallel, or otherwise), will differ in the addition, omission, changes to the word-order and grammar, of the linguistic material. In the parallel passages shown below (Matt 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35 & Luke 8:19-21), such differences are readily apparent.

Luke 8:19-21

Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him for the crowd.

And he was told,

“Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.”

But he said to them,

“My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

Mark 3:31-35

And his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting about him; and they said to him,

“Your mother and your brothers are outside, asking for you.”

And he replied,

Who are my mother and my brothers?

And looking around on those who sat about him, he said,

“Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

# Matthew 12:46-50

While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him.

But he replied to the man who told him,

“Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?”

And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said,

“Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

To appreciate the scale, or kind, of variations present (above), and to relate them to quotations, I list the following selection.

[1] Omission:

(a)Material found in one Gospel which is missing from the other records:

(i) “while he was still speaking to the people” occurs in Matthew, but not in Mark or in Luke.

(ii) “And stretching out his hand towards his disciples” occurs in Matthew, but not in Mark or Luke. (The nearest gesture to this is in Mark only: “And looking around on those that sat about him.”)

(iii) “a crowd was sitting about him” occurs in Mark, but not in Matthew or Luke.

(b) Particular material found in two Gospels, Matthew and Mark, but missing from Luke:

(i) “Here are my mother and my brothers!”

(ii) “The will of”

(iii) “Sister” (Luke just has: “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”)

[2] Amplifying (or adding to) the sense:

‘Doing’ God’s will, or His word (as Luke puts it), is basic to all three Gospels. Yet, whatever Jesus actually remarked, three different (in two cases extended) modes of presenting God, attend the delivery of this precept. Mark simply uses the term ‘God’ to refer to Him by, whereas Matthew associates Him with Jesus and with heaven, and Luke identifies Him by His word:

Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Mark 3:35 Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Luke 8:21 My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of

 God and do it.

[3] Difference of word order:

Luke 8:21 “My mother and my brothers” appears at the start of the last statement only in this Gospel.

[4] Grammatical change:

In Matthew and Mark, the last sentence has ‘brother’ singular, whereas Luke has ‘brothers’, plural. Further, there is a switch of focus, or reference, to cover various individuals involved with Jesus. Matthew has Jesus replying to “the man” (a single subject), as if he alone had informed Jesus of the arrival of his relations, whereas in Mark, Jesus’ response follows mention of the “crowd” who had told him of this presence outside. Luke also has Jesus responding to “them” (a plural subject).

*Summary*

From the foregoing, it should be clear that differences between the Gospels do not imply: (i) faulty NT manuscripts, (ii) the need for textual reconstruction,[[21]](#footnote-21) (iii) a quest for (or speculation about sources or) an absent ‘original’,[[22]](#footnote-22) or (iv) misrepresentation of the source of the account (what took place, etc.). We are not left to determine which Gospel account is true; each is complementary and satisfies God’s truth conditions. Therefore, this ‘variational’ mode of representation is to be understood as a consistent convention of Divine Revelation.

**NT Quotations**

A particular fragment of the OT may occur many times, distributed over the NT writings. For example, that Ps 110:1 is a significant OT passage is evident from the numerous citations and allusions to it in the NT, around twenty times, easily exceeding the reproduction of any other OT source. The phrase ‘after the order of Melchizedek,’ taken from Ps 110:4, is repeated six times in Heb 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:11, 17, 21, but just once, in 7:15, it is found as ‘after the *similitude* of Melchizedek.’

This variation has occurred within the narrow context of part of one epistle. Since both the terms ‘order’ and ‘similitude’ are presented within a common framework of ‘after the [ ] of Melchizedek,’ this is a strong case for ‘complementary difference’. The concepts associated with ‘order’ and ‘similitude’ both depict integral features of Christ’s priesthood. Significantly, not only do these terms differ from each other in the NT context, but neither word corresponds literally to the Hebrew idiom based on the core semantics of ‘word’ (Hebrew: *dbr*) in the Psalm itself.[[23]](#footnote-23) (Cf. “word of the oath” in Heb 7:28, based on ‘said’ Ps 110:1, ‘sworn’ v. 4, and the association of ‘word’ re Melchizedek.) This adds yet another layer of difference, as I have shown elsewhere.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Quotations themselves, verbatim or variational, whether parallel or not, are readily recognised where they are introduced in some way, like: “it is written,” or “David himself saith”, or “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet”. But, not all reuse of OT language is identifiably prefaced in this way.

Parallel quotations of a piece of the OT are easily identified, however much they vary, by their repetition. Sometimes, one, or more, of the parallel citations of an OT passage may be marked by an introductory phrase, thus combining repetition with introduction. As already mentioned, around forty OT passages are reproduced several times in the NT; some more than twice. Findings from the analysis of what happens in Gospel parallels can now be applied to such parallel quotations. In what follows, I shall be looking at typical examples of parallel usage of the OT in the NT; the two given are associated with the Law.

[A] “Written inyour law”[[25]](#footnote-25)

Matthew 18:16 & 2 Corinthians 13:1 quoting Deuteronomy 19:15.

***OT source cited in the NT*** (modified to match the Hebrew sense and word order)**:**

Deut 19:15: Upon the mouth of two witnesses, or upon the mouth of three

 witnesses, shall stand (up) *the* word.

**Here’s the NT’s use of this source text** (modified to match the Greek sense and word order)**:**

(i) Matt 18:16 upon *the* mouth of two witnesses or three may stand every word.[[26]](#footnote-26)

(ii) 2 Cor 13:1 upon *the* mouth of two witnesses and threeshall stand every word.

*Observations*

* These two NT passages have no introductory formula (like ‘it is written’) to identify an OT source.
* They match Deut 19:15 closely, in almost ‘word-for-word’ correspondence.
* The OT source text repeats ‘upon the mouth of’ but the NT does not. And, the NT has ‘every’ whereas the OT implies ‘the’/’a’ attached to ‘word.’
* In the Greek NT, as can be seen in the English translations above, Matt 18:16 & 2 Cor 13:1 differ only slightly from each other. Matt 18:16 has ‘or’ and ‘may stand,’ and 2 Cor 13:1 has ‘and’ plus ‘shall stand.’ Matt 18:16 with ‘or’ matches the Hebrew of Deut. 19:15.

*Summary*

1. Neither passage has an introduction like ‘it is written’, nor is a source like “your Law” mentioned, as when this passage is used (but differently presented) by Jesus in John 8:17: “It is also written in your law, that the testimonyof two men is true”. However, since these two parallel NT passages (Matt 18:16 & 2 Co 13:1) align with Jesus’ different presentation of this same principle in John 8:17, in effect, this introductory phrase can be applied to them, too. Therefore, this confirms the existence of an OT written source, as identified by “your law”, for this principle.
2. The *form* of ‘quotation’ represented by Matt 18:16 & 2 Cor. 13:1 is comparable to some literal, or closely literal, NT quotations introduced by “it is written” (see [B], below). However, John 8:17 shows that the use of ‘it is written’ does not *guarantee* a literal reproduction of what was written. Although, in their literal form they are not so introduced, nevertheless, so close is their correspondence to Deut 19:15 that they depend (with, or without the confirmation of John 8:17) on what is *written* by inspiration in Deuteronomy.
3. Since Jesus himself has used this near literal reproduction of Deut 19:15 in Matt 18:16, and yet has not introduced it as he has in John 8:17, this shows that the OT can be *recognised*, with or without some introductory phrasing (e.g. “it is written”).
4. The differences between these two NT passages (Matt 18:16 & 2 Cor. 13:1) are informative. For, although in these two parallel cases the differences are small, such, or wider, variations are typical of many NT quotations including other parallel quotations.

The significant point is, that being divergent from each other, and neither being an exact copy of their OT source, nothing doubtful can fairly be attributed to the OT source itself. Inaccuracy, textual error, or misquotation, are not relevant issues. ‘Complementary difference’ is rather the case. This deals with doubtful questions about the Hebrew Bible and whether, where the NT diverges from it, the MT is the source of the quotation. This example does not prove that another Hebrew text, not now extant, is the source cited verbatim by NT. Both NT parallel passages include (simple) differences, and we can ask that if neither is from the MT, which of the texts is drawing on some non-extant Hebrew text? **More extreme NT quotational differences reinforce this kind of evidence and leave objectors to the MT without a credible case. Where are we told quotations have to be verbatim?**

(e) These differences help us to understand, or have access to, how Scriptural meaning operates. With the variation ‘and’ and ‘or’, it is simply that their meaning, or function, is (logically) included. The ‘or’ in Deut 19:15 and Matt 18:16 does not limit the number to two; this is the legal minimum. There is provision for three as well as two. Thus, 2 Cor.13:1’s ‘or’ has an inclusive (‘and’) rather than an exclusive (‘not both’) sense: two must apply, but so also can three (and perhaps more). This is *sense-for-sense*, rather than *word-for-word*, presentation.

The NT’s addition of ‘every’ attached to ‘word’ makes explicit what is implicit in the OT Law. *Each* significant verbal component of the Word, or statement, expressed must contribute to the same truth value. ‘Word’ (OT) is used for that which spoken, ‘every word’ (NT) for each of its total verbal components. The (whole) word stands if every constituent word stands. Thus, these lexical (word) differences do not produce contrary semantic (meaning) differences. Even though these are less divergent parallel quotations, such minor features of variation are, in principle, instances of what can be termed ‘complementary difference’.[[27]](#footnote-27)

[B] “The first, or great, commandment in the law”

Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30 and Luke 10:27 quoting Deuteronomy 6:5

The quotation of Deut. 6:5, below, occurs in a parallel account in Matthew 22 and Mark 12. This OT passage also occurs in Luke 10:27, but not in Luke 20, which appears to be parallel to Matthew 22 and Mark 12.

***OT source cited in the NT***

Deut. 6:5 And thou shalt love the Lord thy Godwith (or ‘in’) all thine heart, and with (or ‘in’) all thy soul, and with (or ‘in’) all thymight.

***NT (Gospel parallel) use made of this source text***

(i) Matt 22:37 Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with (or ‘in’) all thy heart, and with (or ‘in’) all thy soul, and with (or ‘in’) all thy mind.

(ii) Mark 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy Godwith (or ‘out of’) all thyheart, and with (or ‘out of’) all thy soul, and with (or ‘out of’) all thymind, and with (or ‘out of’) all thy strength.

(iii) Luke 10:27 Thou shalt love the Lord thy God out of all thy heart, and with/in all thy soul, and with/in all thy strength, and with/in all thy mind.

*Observations*

These parallel passages in the Gospels exhibit variations of reportage, or presentation, similar to what we saw earlier when we compared Matt 12:46-50, Mark 3:31-35 and Luke 8:19-21. Also, within these parallel Gospels is a parallel quotation taken from Deuteronomy. However, a striking difference is that although Deut. 6:5 occurs in both Gospels, Deut. 6:4 which is inserted prior to Deut. 6:5 in Mark 12:30, as part of “the first of all the commandments” does not appear in the parallel context in Matthew 22. So, these two parallel texts are useful to consider because they contain both variation in reportage *and* variation in quotation. We shall consider how Deut 6:5 is presented in both Gospels.

[1] Omission: Material in one Gospel which is missing from the other:

 Matthew does not have “and with all thy strength” although Mark does.

[2] Omission: Material in the OT which is missing from the NT:

 Matthew does not match the Hebrew text in its omission of “and with all thy strength”.

[3] Addition: Material which is added in the NT:

Both Matthew and Mark have “mind” which is not in the Hebrew text of Deut 6:5.

[4] Word (or semantic) variation:

The Hebrew text of Deut. 6:5 has ‘with’ (or an instrumental ‘in’) attached to each instance of ‘all thy’. Matthew’s Greek [*en*] agrees with this, but Mark on the other hand has [*ek*] ‘out of’.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Matthew 22:37

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God **with/in** all thy heart, and **with/ in** all thy soul, and **with/in** all thy mind.

Mark 12:30

And thoushalt love the Lord thy God **out of** all thy heart, and **out of** all thy soul, and **out of** all thy mind, and **out of** all thy strength.

Luke 10:27

Thou shalt love the Lordthy God **out of** all thy heart, and **with/in** all thy soul, and **with/in** all thy strength, and **with/in** all thy mind.

This important difference exposes what is entailed in the context of Deuteronomy 6. ‘Out of’ (NT Mark), complementing ‘with’/’in’ (OT and NT Matthew), stresses the *result from within.* The outcome of what is ‘in’, or done ‘with’ (‘all thy...’) is: “out of the heart (soul, mind and strength) of man”, transformed by the Gospel, proceeds the love of God. Thereby the commandment is fulfilled.

In Deut 6:6, another level operates. For God’s commandments to be fulfilled they must first be inscribed ‘upon’ the heart (as they were to be ‘upon’ the doorposts). It is ‘out of’ the “fleshy tables of the heart” (KJV 2 Cor 3:3) upon which the Word is written that God can be loved with the totality of one’s being.[[29]](#footnote-29) Thus, Deut 6:6 Hebrew should be rendered:

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thine heart.

Finally, although Luke 10:27 (above) is not surrounded by the extended issues found in Matthew 22 and in Mark 12, it is also an instance of Deut 6:5. For this reason, Deut 6:5’s mode of presentation in Luke can be related to its use in Matthew and Mark. Noticeably, Luke 10:27 is like a mixture of Mark 12:30 and Matt 22:37, but it also has some agreement, where they do not, with the MT—Deut 6:5 has ‘heart - soul - might (or ‘strength’)’ and this order matches Luke 10:27 (but Deuteronomy does not have the word ‘mind’ which occurs in all three Gospels).

*Summary*

Resulting from this data and analysis it is clear that whilst all three Gospels diverge from the OT, they each have points of contact with the Hebrew text.

None of these Gospel quotational parallels supports the possibility of the use of a Hebrew source other than the MT. Consider the difficulties for such a possibility:

(a) Matthew has ‘with’/’in’ as does MT; Luke has ‘with’/’in’ like Matthew and MT, but also includes one instance of the NT’s ‘out of’ found exclusively in Mark.

So, if Matthew represents inspired support for the MT, in this respect, where does it leave Mark and Luke? They are each a mixture of agreement and variation, both with each other and with the OT. Does it require another source, scrolls of the law which differ from the MT, for Mark and Luke’s presentation? Surely not! These differences are NT derived. Surely, even if one Gospel does give the actual spoken words of Jesus, he would understand any variation from it to be true of what he had in mind.

(b) Luke agrees exactly with MT with ‘heart - soul - might (or ‘strength’),’ so this supports the MT, whereas Matthew and Mark differ in this word order. In which case, this would mean that Matthew agrees with the MT over ‘with’/’in’ but against the MT, unlike Luke, over ‘heart - soul - might (or ‘strength’)’. Yet ‘mind’ which does not occur in the MT is common to all three. Since all three Gospels are inspired and yet differ from each other, and from the MT, divergence is not proof against inspiration, or against the textual reliability of the (consonantal) MT. Inspired variation in the NT’s usage of quotation cannot be offered as evidence that the MT (as the only extant Hebrew copy of the whole OT) is not the inspired quotational source.

**Conclusion**

What these variations tell us is that parallel quotations, like the Gospel narrative parallels, provide interpretative readings selectively ordered by the Holy Spirit. It is the NT which is responsible for the changes which occur in both the parallel and the non-parallel quotations of the OT. Though variations, whether these or other examples, provoke a varied response, or cause difficulty for some, they are part of a mode of presentation designed to promote belief (John 20:30-31). Textual differences are therefore complementary facets of inspired Scripture. Hence being a common feature of The Bible, rather than ‘breaking’ Scripture, such *complementary difference* is its (sophisticated or higher-level) strength.

**Devotional Exposition**

**A. Perry**

**Introduction**

While there is nothing wrong with any type of speaking or writing, the purpose of this article is to argue that the main model for exhortation (written or spoken) should be “devotional exposition”. The letter to the Hebrews states, “And I beseech you, brethren, **suffer the word of** **exhortation**: for I have written a letter unto you in few words” (Heb 13:22). The implications are startling for it describes the letter as a “word of exhortation” and yet it is a difficult letter, full of types and patterns, detail, involved knowledge and exposition.[[30]](#footnote-30) We might doubt whether the letter is devotional, but it is certainly expositional. Is the letter of Hebrews a model for exhortation today?

**Situation Today**

The situation today no doubt varies from culture to culture and so we must describe **a** situation rather than **the** situation. This is one where exhortation is not devotional exposition but rather “homiletical lessons for living”. The BBC runs a program on Sunday morning which is a church service. It features a sermon which could be characterized as “homiletical lessons for living”. It has certain characteristics:

* It will often start with an anecdote from the news or the speaker’s life and experience; it will certainly include these at suitable intervals throughout the talk which is usually about 10-15 minutes at most.
* There will be little Bible content; parables may be used, well-known stories; certainly no exposition or doctrine.
* A modern Bible version will be used and probably a paraphrase version to make any material accessible.
* The point of the sermon will be a moral saying or a lesson for life, something to which the audience can easily relate. It will be unobjectionable inane advice and backed up with illustrative stories.
* Probably, the sermon will have an ecumenical aspect so that non-Christian religious believers who might be listening will not be offended.
* The talk will be rhetorically good—polished.
* The talk may be by any person in society (male or female) who has been arranged to speak to the church on that Sunday.

Is this kind of talk of any value in the Christadelphian community? While exhortations in the community may not be ecumenical, this model is not uncommon among speakers in the UK. Is it a Biblical model? Are there any disadvantages with this spirituality?

**Exhortation**

A review of the word exhortation (para,klhsij) shows that it is **more things than devotional exposition**; our argument is just that this model of exhortation is neglected today in the community. Our reason for making this point is that we ought to “give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine” (1 Tim 4:13).

The lexicon gives a suitably large list of English words for the Greek para,klhsij: exhortation, admonition, comfort, consolation, solace *and so on*. The synagogue pattern was for a word of exhortation after the reading of the Law and the Prophets (Acts 13:15). Hence,

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort (para,klhsij) of the scriptures might have hope. Rom 15:4 (KJV)

The Scriptures are the focus here and learning or teaching (didaskali,a) is a means through which comfort (exhortation) is ministered to people. In NT times, the Spirit gift of prophecy ensured that Christian prophets exhorted the people as their OT counterparts had done (Acts 9:31; 1 Cor 14:3).

What this illustrates is that “exhortation” is **what you do through doing other things**; comfort is given through things like teaching, like telling a person that you mourn with them, or that you desire the return of Christ, or that you are so zealous for the Lord that you run a bookstall each Saturday, *and so on*:

And not by his coming only, but by the consolation (para,klhsij) wherewith he was comforted (parakale,w) in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. 2 Cor 7:7 (KJV)

Comfort is given or received because of something else—words or actions: words of teaching or of assurance, or with practical actions. So, if we rehearse the promises that God has made to the fathers, we comfort one another (Heb 6:18).

If Scripture is at the centre of exhortation, exposition is also at the centre; hence, Paul advises that an individual gives attention to reading Scripture as well as exhortation. This is not to say that what is going on in the daily life of the ecclesia is not a source of exhortation, things such as witness, preaching, baptisms and the blessings of life. It is just to say that teaching and doctrine are essential to exhortation. Hence, the degree to which we neglect Scripture and doctrine—it is to that extent we show that we prefer to talk and hear only about our own lives—to hear anecdotes and stories and consider general moral advice (lessons) for living.

An ecclesia has ears to hear but it may only hear what it wants to hear; it may only appoint speakers of a certain generation, a particular group of friends, or of a known spiritual style. It is easy for a situation to develop over time where teaching and exposition are rare and neglected, and yet this malaise can be totally unrecognised because a form of spirituality is in evidence, viz. the spirituality of what is practical, of what is here and now, of what is useful as a lesson for living, something about **us** rather than about God.

Nevertheless, so as not to become unbalanced in our critique, we ought to say that exhortation is about good works—there are many texts that use the schema “to exhort + to do/be”. But what is overlooked about these texts is that they are in letters to ecclesias and individuals known to the apostles: the exhortation **is directed to known individuals and groups**. The same point applies to Jesus’ exhortations in his preaching. Although we read the exhortation in the NT Scriptures, we should remember that we are not the personally known recipients of the original writings; we have to *apply* the Scriptures to ourselves. Even if our exhortation is not doctrinal in focus but practical, it will involve exposition because the Scriptures are involved.

**Writing and Speaking**

The question arises as to whether written exhortation in the community magazines should be different to exhortation on a Sunday morning. One of the disadvantages with the “visiting speaker” system is that the visitor does not know the ecclesia he is visiting—the state of knowledge, the current difficulties, spiritual problems, emotional needs and spiritual requirements. While there is a place for visiting speakers, the rule should be that an ecclesia is exhorted by **one of its own** (John 1:11). The same point applies to magazine exhortation—it is not personally addressed but generalized.

Generalized exhortation is an ideal vehicle for using exposition of the Scriptures. The Scriptures are what we hold in common. If we exegete the Scriptures and apply their various levels of meaning in an ecclesial context to our lives, then we are engaged in exposition and exhorting one another. Whereas exhortation from the platform by ecclesial members can be direct and relevant, magazine exhortation can only be general and therefore the Scriptures and their meaning should be the preferred model for exhortation in writing.

We can write exhortation that has anecdotes, touching stories, homiletical lessons for living, pithy advice on life, moral aphorisms, sentiment, politically correct values, and such is the stuff of the BBC church service exhortations. However, it is better to place Scripture and some substance at the centre of magazine exhortations. And while spoken exhortation on a Sunday can be more varied, a spiritually balanced ecclesia will also have Scripturally centred exhortation as the main mode in which exhortation is delivered.

The well-known statement of Paul on Scripture is that it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16). In a community where the spirit-gifts are absent, it would seem a first principle that the spirit-word be at the centre of exhortation. The presentation of Christ at the breaking of bread should be through Scripture.

**Devotion**

People might just think of prayer and praise as “devotion” or perhaps meditation and reading. Bible study might not be a person’s first idea about devotion. However, there is no real basis for excluding any of these things from the category of “devotion”. We can define “devotion” to be any spiritual behaviour specifically directed towards God. So, if a person loves the Scriptures, this is an expression of their love for the Father. If s/he loves the Father, s/he will also love the Son. The Son loved the Scriptures as shown by his constant use of them. A person who loves the Scriptures aligns themselves with the values held dear by Jesus. In this arrangement of the mind a person shows that they are faithful followers doing what Jesus commanded.

Exposition is an exercise of love very much as bodily exercise works a person’s joints and limbs. It is part of the devotion of a life towards God; part of the orientation of a life towards God. Its relative absence in a life shows the extent to which a person falls short in their devotion towards God and his Word. All exposition is therefore devotional; it may appear complicated and technical, purely factual, but it is an exercise of devotion because time has been spent with the Word. The amount of time spent with the Word is a measure of the devotion.

Someone might object and say that the time spent with the Word is not an act of devotion because it is just an expression of a person’s intellectual fascination with the material. This is a possible failing but whether it is so can be easily determined by listening to an expositor for the language of devotion in his/her speech rather than the language of intellectual observation. Someone who listens to secular academic treatment of the Bible will readily be able to discern the difference between the devotional expositor and the technician.

**Conclusion**

Whether devotional exposition has been neglected in your ecclesia is a not a matter for this article. If we examine ourselves we need some measures to do so, and there are various ways of specifying such measures but each is about **purpose** and the **achievement of purpose**—the spirit-gifts were purposeful:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Eph 4:11-17 (KJV)

There are several purposes in this text: perfecting, edifying, growing, to name only three. Those who have the oversight in the ecclesia can ask whether the ecclesia is moving positively forward in these ways or whether it is stuck. If devotional exposition is neglected in the ecclesia, then the purpose of “growth in the **knowledge** of the Son of God” will become stultified. In order to move forward and grow, the elders have to think in a joined-up way about the week to week and the year to year. The ecclesia should be growing in its knowledge in an organic way and devotional exposition is the major instrument in this endeavour.

### The Seventy Week Prophecy (1)

### T. Gaston

Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until the anointed prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.

And after the sixty-two weeks the anointed shall be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week’ but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate. Dan 9:24-27 [NKJV adapted]

The Seventy Week Prophecy is one of a handful of prophecies in Scripture that is delineated according to a set time period. The author of this passage not only has a specific event in mind but an event which can be chronologically dated by previous events; the eventful seventieth week is positioned at the end of two previous time periods of seven and sixty-two “weeks” respectively. Given this chronological specificity one might suppose that it is simple to expose the events described by the author in veiled language and that the interpretation of the passage would thus be uncontroversial. However, the interpretation of this passage has been described by one older commentator as “the dismal swamp of OT criticism”,[[31]](#footnote-31) such are the disagreements regarding its intended meaning. The various interpretations of Daniel 9 can generally be divided into two differing positions, though others have been proposed.[[32]](#footnote-32)

The traditional Christian, or “conservative”, interpretation identifies Jesus of Nazareth as “the anointed prince” and states that he was “cut off” at the Crucifixion. The *terminus a quo* (start-date) is taken as one of the decrees made by the Persian kings allowing the Jews to return to the land (Cyrus c.538 [2 Chron 36:23; Ezra 1:14]; Artaxerxes I c.458 [Ezra 7]; Artaxerxes I c.444 [Neh 2:1-8]) and the *terminus ad quem* (end-date)of the seventy-weeks is given variously as the conversion of the Gentile Cornelius (c.33 AD?), the destruction of Jerusalem (c.70 AD) or some point in the future.

The “critical” interpretation, probably the prevailing view amongst scholars today, identifies the culmination of the seventy-weeks with the events surrounding the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanies. The seventy-weeks are seen as a “reinterpretation” of Jeremiah’s prediction of a seventy-year captivity (cf. Jer 29:10) and thus the fall of Jerusalem (587) is seen as the *terminus a quo* for the seventy-weeks.[[33]](#footnote-33) The three periods are divided as follows: seven weeks between the fall of Jerusalem and the fall of Babylon (587-539), sixty-two weeks between the fall of Babylon and the murder of Onias III (539-170) and the final weeks culminating with rededication of the Temple by Judas Maccabaeus (170-164).

Several objections have been raised against the traditional interpretation:

* v. 25 implies that the “anointed one” appears after just seven weeks, not seven **and** sixty-two;
* the proposed gap between the cutting off of the anointed and the destruction of the city is not indicated in the text;
* there has been disagreement about how to show Jesus began his ministry exactly 483 years (sixty-nine “weeks”) after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem[[34]](#footnote-34)

However it is not these objections that generally prompt the critical interpretation. Rather the presupposition that the book of Daniel was written in the second century informs the interpretation, requiring the applicability of the passage to the crisis caused by the actions of Antiochus Epiphanies. Yet throughout this essay we will note that there are some considerable objections to this thesis.

**The Seventy Years**

In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. Dan 9:2 [NKJV]

In the book of Jeremiah it is recorded that Jeremiah sent a letter from Jerusalem to “the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive”. Daniel, as a captive in Babylon, would have been one of the recipients of this letter and it is to be presumed that it is this letter that is referred to in Dan 9:2.

The letter of Jeremiah gives the divine instruction to the people to settle as their captivity is not going to be short. Jeremiah continues:

For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. Jer 29:10 [KJV]

This verse is paralleled in Jeremiah in a passage dated to “the fourth year of Jehoiakim” (605):

‘And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity’, says the Lord, ‘and I will make it a perpetual desolation’ (Jer 25:11-12)

The period seventy-years is used elsewhere in OT for the period of the desolation of Jerusalem and/or the captivity (2 Chron 36:21; Zech 7:5; 1 Esdras 1:58; cf. Isa 23:15-17). Yet from the destruction of Jerusalem and deposition of the last king of Judah (587) to the fall of Babylon (539) is only a period of 48/9 years.

The explanation of the seventy-years has been the subject of some debate amongst scholars. Many have proposed that seventy is a round number, though it does not seem a suitable approximation if a period of only 48 years is intended. C. F. Whitley attempted to explain the calculation of seventy-years by appealing to the Jews focus on the Temple, since there were seventy years between the destruction of the Temple (587) and the completion of the Second Temple (516). He proposes that the period of seventy-years are inserted into the Jeremiah texts by a later writer, who equated the period of the Temple’s desolation with the period of the captivity.[[35]](#footnote-35) It is not clear why seventy years should then also be applied to the desolation of Tyre in the book of Isaiah (Isa 23:15-17).

Several scholars point to the links with a temple-building inscription dated to the second year of Esarhaddon (681-669). The relevant passage reads:

Seventy years as the duration of its [Babylon’s] desolation

he had written [on the tablets of destiny].

But being merciful, Marduk soon

calmed his heart, he reserved

[the numbers he had written]

and ordered it [Babylon] restored in eleven years[[36]](#footnote-36)

This is not an exact parallel of the prophecy in Jeremiah. This inscription was made to legitimize Esarhaddon’s rebuilding of Babylon only eleven years after Sennacherib’s campaign against it; Esarhaddon claims to be acting according to divine instruction. In cuneiform if the symbol for “seventy” is inverted then it is the symbol for “eleven”, so there is some element of literary convenience in the use of the word “seventy”.[[37]](#footnote-37) For the Jews in Babylon there is resonance with a familiar inscription may have added to the weight Jeremiah’s words, but it is improbable that this inscription was the source of Jeremiah’s prediction, not least because there is no evidence Jeremiah ever visited Babylon.

R. J. M. Gurney proposes a different explanation for the seventy years, asserting that this was the length of the Neo-Babylonian ascendancy over the nations of Syro-Palestine, including Judah,

Now although Judah came under the Babylonian heel in 605 BC … Babylon’s ruling of nations actually dated from the overthrow of Assyria a few years earlier. After the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC (to the allied Medes and Babylonians), Ashur-uballit established his government at Harran. This city fell to the Babylonians in 610 BC, and Assyria was finally obliterated when Ashur-uballit failed to recapture it in 609 BC. Seventy years after she had finally conquered and destroyed Assyria, Babylon herself was conquered by Cyrus in 539 BC.[[38]](#footnote-38)

This explanation seems the most plausible because it explains why seventy years are also applied to Tyre. Isaiah states that Tyre will be laid waste by “the Chaldeans” and will be forgotten “seventy years” (Isa 23:13-18); this would seem out of place if seventy years were (only) the period of **Judah’s** captivity but is suitable if it is the period of the Neo-Babylonian dominion over the entire region. This situation is also indicated in the prophecies of Jeremiah, who states “these **nations** shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years” (Jer 25:11) and “after seventy years are completed **for Babylon**” (Jer 29:10 [ESV]).

**Daniel and the Seventy Years**

The conclusion that OT references to seventy years do have a historical referent considerably weakens the “critical” view that the author of Daniel sought to re-interpret the prophecy of Jeremiah. In fact, because the captivity of Daniel himself is dated to 605 (Dan 1:1), the context of Daniel 9 (c.539/8) the seventy years have a very personal significance to Daniel himself. Daniel would have read the words of Jeremiah and calculated, from his own experiences, that the seventy years were nearly complete.

The prayer of Daniel, and its resonances with the letter of Jeremiah, indicates that he was looking to the fulfillment of the seventy years. In his letter to the captives, Jeremiah writes:

After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you … Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity (Jer 29:10-14)

Daniel’s prayer is intended as a fulfillment of these words. He prays, confessing the sins of the people and asks for mercy for the people. He prays for “the men of Judah … those near and those far off in all countries to which you have driven them” (Dan 9:7), mirroring the words of Jeremiah “I will gather you form all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you” (Jer 29:14).

The picture given in Daniel 9 is of a Jewish exile looking for the restoration of Jerusalem and the return of the Jews to their land. The fall of Babylon to the Medo-Persian army would have brought him hope that the captivity of his brethren might be at an end. The chapter describes how on reading the words of Jeremiah he discovers that the dominion of Babylon was meant to last seventy years. By his own calculations this Jewish exile would have concluded that he had spent nearly seventy years in captivity. He thus takes it upon himself to pray, as prophesied by Jeremiah, and petition God for the end of the captivity. This prayer is dated to within a year of Cyrus’ edict allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem. This then is a picture of a Jew who looked for the imminent fulfillment of Jeremiah’s words; he would not have been disappointed.

**The First Seven Weeks**

Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Dan 9:25a [ESV]

It is universally assumed that “weeks” are weeks-of-years. This is nowhere stated explicitly but must be accepted since only in this way to arrive at meaningful time periods. This enigmatic approach to issuing predictions is in keeping with the established prophetic tradition. The “seven weeks” is therefore a period of forty-nine years.

The *terminus a quo* for the “seven weeks” is often taken to be 587, the fall of Jerusalem, based upon two propositions. Firstly, it is asserted that because this prophecy is a reinterpretation of Jeremiah’s, the *terminus a quo* of this prophecy must be the same as that supposed for Jeremiah’s (i.e. the fall of Jerusalem). Secondly, the period between 587-539 is so nearly forty-nine years it is assumed that this must be the referent. The latter proposition seems persuasive, but is entirely undermined by the testimony of both Jeremiah and Daniel. As we have seen, the *terminus a quo* for Jeremiah’s prophecy was not 587, but the beginning of the Neo-Babylonian ascendency in the region. Daniel 9:25 states explicitly the *terminus a quo* of the seven weeks as “the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem …”

**The Sixty-Two Weeks**

The calculation of the sixty-two weeks may be the weakest element of the “critical” interpretation and perhaps betrays the *a priori* emphasis on the Maccabean period. The *terminus ad quem* is predetermined as 170 by the supposition that Onias III, the high priest, is the “anointed prince” who is “cut off” (see below). The *terminus a quo* is likewise predetermined, as we have seen, to 539. Thus the period proposed for the sixty-two weeks is 539-170. However this proposal has to face the glaring objection that this period is not 434 years long (62 x 7 = 434) but only 369 (539 – 170 = 369), short by 65 years.

Many scholars attempt to answer this objection by claiming that it is the author of Daniel who is in error. For instance, A. Montgomery is forced to admit “we can meet this objection only by surmising a chronological miscalculation on part of the author”.[[39]](#footnote-39) The reason for this miscalculation is the (assumed) “absence of a known chronology”. N. W. Porteous comments: “as the historical memory which the Jews retained of the period in question was very dim as regards facts, it may well be that they were equally vague as to the actual length of time that had elapsed since the return from exile”.[[40]](#footnote-40) Several commentators attempt to call into question the knowledge of historical facts by citing Dan 11:2, which prophesizes that there would be four Persian kings before “the realm of Greece” is “stirred up”.[[41]](#footnote-41) However, this verse does not state there were only four Persian kings in total but that it would be the fourth Persian king who would stir up Greek aggression. This statement fits well with the history of the period as it was the Persian attacks on Greek territories at Marathon (490), Thermopylae (480), Salamis (480), and Plataea (479) which were contributing factors in the unification of the Greek states against the Persian Empire.[[42]](#footnote-42) In any case, had the author limited the Persian succession to only four kings this would have shortened, and not lengthened, his chronology.

If the author’s knowledge of chronology were truly “vague” it is seems unlikely that he would have ventured such a specific chronological prophecy, particularly as *vaticinium ex eventu.* Rather, a chronologically delineated prophecy is only meaningful against the context of an established chronology. Therefore it has been proposed that the author based his calculations upon faulty chronological data. This proposition has been often been defended by reference to E. Schürer’s comment that ancient Jewish historians have a corresponding inaccuracy in their chronologies.[[43]](#footnote-43) Schürer cites four examples; three from Josephus (1st century AD) and one from Demetrius (3rd century BC). Our conclusion must be that we have no consistent basis for reconstructing the chronology that might have been used by a second century Jewish writer. The chronological data provided by Demetrius has a -27 discrepancy compared with known history. The chronological data provided by Josephus contains varying discrepancies of +32, +40 and +48, with a possible set of variants indicating -68, -60, and -52 discrepancies. None of these are equal to the +65 discrepancy required by the critical interpretation of Daniel. The proposition that a Jewish chronology with such a discrepancy ever is existed is entirely without evidence. The regnal years of the High Priests recorded by Josephus provide a fair approximation for the periods 164-105 and 105-70. If a second century Jewish writer had access to the regnal-data for the period 539-164 then it is likely that his chronology would have been reasonably accurate. There is, therefore, no comfort for the “critical” interpretation in the inaccuracies of individual historians.

*Onias III*

The selection of Onias III as the *terminus ad quem* has two positive features: firstly Onias was a high priest of the line of Zadok (i.e. ‘anointed one’), and secondly 2 Macc 4:34 records that he was murdered (i.e. ‘cut off’). It must be conceded that Onias was not high priest at the time of his death, having been deposed five year before, yet it might be argued that a pious Jew might have continued to regard him as the true high priest, discounting the usurpers Jason and Menelaus. However, there are several objections to this identification.

There is not complete consensus regarding the historicity of 2 Macc 4:34.[[44]](#footnote-44) The incident is not recorded in 1 Maccabees. Josephus ascribes a different fate to Onias III, recording that Onias went to Egypt and there received permission from Ptolemy to build a temple to rival that in Jerusalem. Rabbinic literature also records that Onias fled to Egypt. It is also significant that the 4c. AD Christian theologian, Theodore of Mopsuestia, follows 2 Maccabees when writing his own history, except regarding the death of Onias. There is also a papyrus addressing an “Onias” in Egypt, which dates to c.164 which, if it could be unequivocally associated with Onias III, would provide definitive proof that Onias was not murdered around c.170.[[45]](#footnote-45)

There are also difficulties with the account of Onias’ murder. 2 Maccabees describes how when Antiochus Epiphanes heard of the death he wept for Onias and had his murderer, Andronicus, executed. It must be considered highly improbable that Antiochus, antagonistic to all Jewish customs, would have wept or even felt any sympathy for, a Jewish priest, particularly one who is depicted as obstructing Hellenistic innovations. It also appears that this account has been created by adapting real historical events. Greek historians record that Antiochus did have Andronicus executed, not for the murder of Onias (who is not mentioned), but for the murder of the son of Seleucus IV, Philopater.[[46]](#footnote-46) Given these difficulties, and the lack of corroboration, it seems more probable that 2 Macc 4:34 is a fictional account created to give legitimacy to the Maccabean revolt. The later account of Onias appearing in a vision to Judas Maccabeus (2 Macc 15:12ff) would seem to support this idea.

There is also an interpretative objection to identifying Onias III as the “anointed one”. Daniel 9 gives the impression that the cutting off of the anointed one is an event of seismic proportions, ushering in the destruction of the city and the sanctuary. However, 1 Maccabees fails to even mention the death of Onias. The murder of Onias, assuming it took place, happened five years after Onias had been deposed but still three years before Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the sanctuary. In fact, 2 Maccabees records that when Antiochus heard of the death of Onias he was “moved to pity and wept” and commanded that his murderer be executed (2 Macc 4:37-38).

The final objection is that Antiochus Epiphanes did not destroy the city or the sanctuary as prophesied.

**Conclusion**

We have seen that there are substantial difficulties with the critical interpretation of Daniel 9. There is no reason to suppose that the author of Daniel regarded Jeremiah’s seventy-year prophecy as unfulfilled. On the contrary, there is explicit evidence that the author regarded the prophecy as having personal significance in his life. There is no reason to take 587 as the *terminus ad quo* of the seventy-weeks, in direct contradiction of the explicit statement of the text. There is no reason to suppose that the author was aware of a chronology containing a +65 discrepancy. There is no justification for equating the period 539-170 with the sixty-two weeks. There are reasons to doubt the historicity of the murder of Onias III recorded in 2 Macc 4:34. The murder of Onias III appears to be entirely irrelevant to the fulfillment of the seventy-weeks. In the face of such difficulties as these it is difficult to justify the critical interpretation in its present form. The fact that scholars have accepted this interpretation *against* the text suggests that their interpretation is directed *a priori* by the acceptance of certain assumptions.

**Arius (1)**

**D. Burke**

**Introduction**

During the years AD 318 and 319, a Libyan presbyter was found to profess a controversial definition of the pre-existent Christ and his relation to God the Father. His name was Arius, a priest whose theological formation had been obtained not at the school of Alexandria but in Syrian Antioch, under the Antiochene priest Lucian. While Arius’ ideas met with immediate opposition by contemporary theologians, he did succeed in obtaining a considerable following among laity and clergy alike. Indeed, it is estimated that at one point Arianism was confessed by at least thirty percent of the church.

Contrary to popular belief, the ensuing debate was not the result of an official position being challenged (for the church of Arius’ day had no definitive doctrine of Christ); instead, it was the result of an older Christology fighting to keep itself alive against the innovative thinking of powerful and influential churchmen.

In AD 325, the emperor Constantine presided over the Council of Nicaea, at which Arianism was rejected and an authoritative Christological creed (known today as the Nicene Creed) agreed upon by the majority. But this was not the end of the controversy, nor even the beginning of the end; it was merely the end of the beginning. In the years which followed, Arianism continued to spread. It was still alive in AD 381, when the Council of Constantinople attempted to plug the theological gaps which Nicaea had left open, and would remain the normative belief among the Gothic tribes for several centuries to come.

In the words of H. Chadwick:

It was the misfortune of the fourth-century church that it became engrossed in a theological controversy at the same time as it was working out its institutional organisation. The doctrinal disagreements quickly became inextricably associated with matters of order, discipline, and authority. Above all, they became bound up with the gradually growing tension between the Greek East and the Latin West.

During the first half of the century the Arian leaders in the East were able to use this tension to build a considerable united front among the Greek churches, and they had the support of a tolerant emperor, first Constantius II (337-61) and then Valens (364-78). Moreover, the manner in which Arianism was finally overcome in the East was as such to ensure that even after the controversy was over the tension between East and West was continued.

How this came about will be clear from the story.[[47]](#footnote-47)

**Arian Controversy**

The Arian controversy is important on two levels: theological and historical. Theological because it reveals the increasingly formal processes under which doctrine was formulated in the post-Apostolic era and explains why so much of this doctrine was patently unbiblical; political because it helps us to understand how and why the church changed so radically after the conversion of Constantine.

It is not easy to determine the precise nature of Arius’ heresy. S. G. Hall explains why:

The true nature of the original issue is clouded. Modern theologians have read into Arianism whatever views they themselves particularly abominate. Our ancient sources reveal other problems. First, what we have of Arius’ own writing is meagre, and even these documents are preserved by his critics, and selected to be damaging, if not actually misquoted or misconstrued.
Secondly, his critics often attribute to him views which he never stated: the most famous is, ‘There was once when he [the Son] was not.’ There can be no doubt that if he had ever written that, he would have been quoted direct.

Thirdly, the dispute about Arius led to divisions between churchmen over many other issues, both ecclesiastical (such as the alleged episcopal tyranny of Athanasius) and theological (such as whether the Son is like the Father or unlike him), and much of this is called the “Arian controversy”, even though Arius had nothing directly to do with the issues. Arius is not Arianism, as generally understood.

His surviving letters, and the poem called Thalia, show that he thought of himself as a conservative, treading in the footsteps of pious teachers, and following the doctrine of his bishop. He held that there is “one God, alone unbegotten, alone everlasting, alone unbegun...” (*Letter to Alexander*, *New Eusebius* 326) and that the Son of God makes his father known by being different: “We call him [the Father] Unbegotten because of the one in nature begotten; we raise hymns to him as Unbegun because of the one born in time.” (*Thalia*, II 3-5 [*New Eusebius* 330.][[48]](#footnote-48)

Hall’s analysis is confirmed by J. C. McDowell. In an otherwise cogently argued essay, McDowell struggles (with limited success) to clarify the Arian position:

Over a century ago Newman innovatively argued that Arius stood in a tradition stretching back to Paul of Samosata through Lucian of Antioch. Arius was thus an adoptionist, as indeed he was accused of being by several 4th century critics, entertaining a ‘low view’ of a Christ “exalted into a God”, and reading the title ‘son of God’ in the Old Testament sense of one specially chosen by God to perform some task...

By virtue of an obedient life, lived by grace, Jesus, as the proto-typical human being and or representative creature, received divine grace and favour, and was thus exalted at his resurrection, becoming a Son. The Son was one with the Father, then, not in essence but in will. Hence Christ was ontologically a creature and not God, and it was for this reason that the Arians stressed his mutability. When Arius and his companions spoke of the Christ, they thought of a being called into existence by the divine will, a creature finite in knowledge and morally changeable...

This was no blatant adoptionism, however, for Arius taught a pre-existent Logos.[[49]](#footnote-49)

McDowell’s use of the term “adoptionism” needs clarification. Adoptionism requires that Jesus’ Sonship is purely symbolic, being no longer predicated upon a special act of creation (as Arius actually believed) or a miraculous conception (as the Bible teaches). This doctrine was categorically rejected by a vital clause in the 6th Arian Creed of AD 351:

(**27.**) And in accurate delineation of the idea of Christianity we say this again; Whosoever shall not say that Christ is God, Son of God, as being before ages, and having subserved the Father in the framing of the Universe, but that from the time that He was born of Mary, from thence He was called Christ and Son, and took an origin of being God, be he anathema.[[50]](#footnote-50)

According to the Arians, then, Christ is God’s Son by virtue of the fact that he was begotten “before all ages”; he is “God, Son of God” because he has his being directly from the Father. Those who reject this idea (claiming instead that Christ’s Sonship began with his birth by Mary, or at some later date) are uncompromisingly anathematised.

McDowell concedes that the Arian Christ was pre-existent, but attempts to mitigate the fact by insisting that,

…this was more out of necessity since it played no important theological role.

Yet the Arians conceived of Christ as a sublime creature born outside time, who was – by the Father’s delegation – responsible for the creation of all that exists, including time itself.

Contrary to McDowell’s claim, therefore, the pre-existence of Christ was an absolute necessity for the Arian school of thought and played a major theological role. For, like Philo, Justin, and many others, the Arians required a Christian equivalent to the Hellenic Demiurge in order that the Supreme Being might be kept at a comfortable distance from His creation.

The precise definition of Arianism has been further obscured by J. Pelikan, who claims unequivocally that the Arians prayed to Christ and worshipped him:

The Arians found prayer to the Logos an unavoidable element of Christian worship... From the attacks of orthodox writers like Ambrose it is clear that the Arians refused to abandon the practice of worshiping Christ; ‘else, if they do not worship the Son, let them admit it, and the case is settled, so that they do not deceive anyone by their professions of religion’.[[51]](#footnote-51)

But this is not sufficient to prove Pelikan’s point. In fact, the ambiguity of the situation is clearly demonstrated by the quote from Ambrose, who *questions* whether they worship the Son or not. This becomes even more obvious when we examine Ambrose’ words in context:

**69.** But if the Arians believe Him to be a strange God, why do they worship Him, when it is written: “Thou shall worship no strange God”? Else, if they do not worship the Son, let them confess thereto, and the case is at an end, that they deceive no one by their professions of religion. This, then, we see, is the witness of the Scriptures. If you have any others to produce, it will be your business to do so.[[52]](#footnote-52)

Ambrose is clearly struggling to define the Arian position. He thinks that they *might* worship the Son, but he cannot be sure. Thus, he requests that they clarify the point. His primary concern,

Else, if they do not worship the Son, let them confess thereto, and the case is at an end--that they deceive no one by their professions of religion.

is that they have not actually confessed to worshipping the Son. (Hence his keen desire for an answer.) Ambrose has no solid evidence that they worship the Son – all he has at this stage is their “professions of religion”, which (by his own admission) tell him little. In a later section he writes:

**103.** But in any case let our private judgment pass: let us enquire of Paul, who, filled with the Spirit of God, and so foreseeing these questionings, hath given sentence against pagans in general and Arians in particular, saying that they were by God’s judgment condemned, who served the creature rather than the Creator.

Thus, in fact, you may read: “God gave them over to the lusts of their own heart, that they might one with another dishonour their bodies, they who changed God’s truth into a lie, and worshipped and served the thing created rather than the Creator, Who is God, blessed forever.”

**104.** Thus Paul forbids me to worship a creature, and admonishes me of my duty to serve Christ. It follows, then, that Christ is not a created being.[[53]](#footnote-53) The Apostle calls himself “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ,” and this good servant, who acknowledges his Lord, will likewise have us not worship that which is created.

How, then, could he have been himself a servant of Christ, if he thought that Christ was a created person? Let these heretics, then, cease either to worship Him Whom they call a created being, or to call Him a creature, Whom they feign to worship, lest under colour of being worshippers they fall into worse impiety. For a domestic is worse than a foreign foe, and that these men should use the Name of Christ to Christ’s dishonour increaseth their guilt.[[54]](#footnote-54)

Here again we see Ambrose’ confusion as he attempts to define the Arian position. Do they believe that Christ is a creature (apparently so)? Do they worship him (that is less clear)? It would seem that *some* Arians did (or at least, allowed others to believe that they did so; probably for the sake of avoiding excommunication), but Ambrose is highly sceptical, dismissing their alleged worship as “feigned”.

What he wants to see is open, unashamed worship of the Son as Deity—and yet, that is precisely what the Arians are not doing. It is also interesting to note that although Ambrose frequently compares the Arians with pagans (implying that they are really polytheists and not Christians at all), he has no concrete evidence for such a claim, and so does not press it. Indeed, when Arius was first excommunicated, he was condemned as an “atheist” and not as a polytheist – a charge which would certainly have been laid if he and his fellows had actually worshipped Christ.[[55]](#footnote-55)

It should also be noted that second or third-hand accounts of various religious practices, by those who did not subscribe to those practices, are frequently inaccurate. Pliny, for example, wrote that the early Christians “sang hymns to Christ as to a god”—but this was merely his interpretation of events, and not an accurate description of what transpired at Christian meetings. In like manner, Tertullian records that many pagans of his day believed the Christians to be sun-worshippers because they met on Sunday and prayed towards the east.

Lacking a substantial argument, Ambrose employs the expedient of ridiculing Arius with misquoted Scripture. To this end he misappropriates Rom 1:25 (“They exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator”).

Arius’ Christology may be summarised in the following points:

* Jesus is created by God via an incomprehensible generation. While he exists as a superlative divine being, he is unquestionably not God Himself.
* Jesus occupies a unique place between the Deity and the rest of creation. He is a created, yet somehow much more than a creature (“a perfect creature, yet not as one among other creatures; a begotten being, yet not as one among other begotten beings”).[[56]](#footnote-56) This paradox would later be exploited by the Arians’ opponents.
* Jesus is immortal, but not eternal; he exists by the will of the Father. While on Earth, as a man, he was subject to the weaknesses of mortal men.

Though known today as “Arianism”, we shall see (next time) that this Christology had previously been taught by a number of early church fathers, using language which was usually similar and often identical.

**Marginal Notes**

**2 Pet 1:21 – AP**

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Pet 1:21 (KJV)

Some time ago an email correspondent wrote to me, “I believe most of the OT was rewritten under inspiration and I don't see that God only raised up specific prophets to give His word—the Pentateuch was evidently edited in places, those redactions are still inspired, so those who did them were in that sense prophets”.

Is this view consistent with 2 Pet 1:21? The correspondent, who had read modern Bible scholarship, was aware of the view that OT books are the result of authors and editors, and sometimes, many editorial layers are identified in a book by scholars. Would such hypothetical editors be “holy men” or is the view of the apostle Peter different to that of the correspondent?

The hand of copyists and/or editors (in addition to that of an original author) can be identified in the OT text at well known points. These are not many, but they are not the basis for the scholarly view which is rather based on a differential analysis of the text of a book.

Some OT books have no authorship superscriptions, and so we can be more flexible and hypothetical in our appraisal of, say, the authorship of Kings and Chronicles. However, the observation in 2 Peter is clearly applied at least to the books that have ascribed authors such as Isaiah or Jeremiah—i.e. The Prophets. In respect of these books, Second Temple writers do not know about the existence of multiple editors. So, is our correspondent right to follow the modern critical approach in hypothesizing about editors for “most of the OT”? S/he allows that the OT books are inspired, but is this the right way to harmonize the doctrine of inspiration with Biblical Criticism?

The challenge that 2 Pet 1:21 lays down is this: if editors existed for the prophetic books and if they had the substantial role that OT scholars give them, why do Second Temple writers know nothing of them? Why does Peter instead regard prophecy as coming from an individual who had the status of a **holy man**?

Or again, we might cite,

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 1 Pet 1:10-11 (KJV)

Peter here states his view about prophets in a different way. He recognizes a group of individuals who saw things and wrote them down and then studied and prayed about the things that they had prophesied. They had the Spirit of Christ. He doesn’t have much of a place here for the concept of an editor or a redactor of the prophetic books. Such hypothetical individuals are not said to have the Spirit of Christ.

**Discussion**

These articles present two points of view about the date of the deliverance of Jerusalem wrought by the Angel of the Lord in the days of Hezekiah. The first argues for Passover deliverance in March/April of 701 (Nissan); the second argues for deliverance in the autumn of 701 (six months later). The articles assume the modern harmonisation of Assyrian and Biblical chronology; if this wrong, the articles will be wrong in their assignment of the deliverance to 701, although what they say about the Passover allusions of the deliverance will still be of value.

**Passover Deliverance in 701**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

The deliverance of Jerusalem from the hand of Assyria and the recovery of Hezekiah coincided with the feast of Passover. This possibility is not considered in scholarly circles because it is regarded as too specific. E. T. Mullen describes the chapters recounting Sennacherib’s campaign against Hezekiah as “one of the most complex and confusing narrations of events contained in the Hebrew Bible”.[[57]](#footnote-57) The extra-biblical evidence for this campaign, mainly from Assyrian sources, is inconclusive,[[58]](#footnote-58) and this is compounded by the fact that the Assyrian accounts are not always arranged chronologically.[[59]](#footnote-59) Although Assyrian annalistic history records the campaign in the Levant, there is not enough data to describe (except in the broadest terms) when the last phase[[60]](#footnote-60) (invasion of Judah) commenced, or the duration of this stage of the campaign, or when it concluded. The intention of this article is to put forward the biblical evidence for a winter campaign that ended in Passover deliverance.

**Biblical Records**

The vagueness of the time frame in the biblical narratives leads to confusion between sequential and synchronic events:

In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. (Isa 38:1)

I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city. (Isa 38:6)

This indicates that Hezekiah’s illness coincided with the Assyrian crisis.[[61]](#footnote-61) It is suggested that Hezekiah’s incapacity offered opportunity for ambitious functionaries (like Shebna)[[62]](#footnote-62) to pursue a duplicitous policy ostensibly on Hezekiah’s behalf (Isa 28:14-15; cf. the ‘treacherous dealers’ Isa 24:16; 33:1) – paying tribute to Sennacherib and at the same time appealing to Egypto-Nubian diplomats for help.

It would be completely out of character for Hezekiah to pay tribute. Hezekiah made hasty preparations for a long siege and fortified the city (2 Chron. 32:2-8). Hezekiah was probably the leader of the revolt against Sennacherib as the nobles and peoples of Ekron delivered up their own king, named Padi,[[63]](#footnote-63) an Assyrian loyalist, in iron fetters to Hezekiah to keep in confinement. Moreover, it is inconceivable that Hezekiah would deface the Temple (2 Kgs 18:16) that he had so recently restored (2 Chon 29:3).

Sennacherib obviously had resource to good counter-intelligence[[64]](#footnote-64) and realised that Hezekiah was ill and that the payment of tribute was a stalling tactic. He sent his generals to Jerusalem with a warning and disengaged from the siege at Libnah to confront the rumoured Egypto-Nubian threat which he neutralized.

A chronology of the events might look something like this (2 Kgs18-19):

1. Sennacherib besieges Lachish
2. Rab-shakeh sent to Jerusalem from Lachish with an army (18:17)
3. Rab-shakeh negotiates with Shebna and delegation (18:18)
4. Sennacherib proceeds to Libnah
5. Jerusalem is now isolated
6. Rab-shakeh ’s offer of peace in exchange for tribute (18:31)
7. Hezekiah enters Temple receives reassurance from Yahweh (19:7)
8. Rumour of Egypto-Nubian intervention (19:9)
9. Rab-shakeh ’s host withdraws from Jerusalem and head to Libnah
10. Reunited Assyrian army prepares for Egypto-Nubian threat
11. Warning letter sent to Jerusalem
12. Hezekiah presents letter in the Temple and receives reassurance
13. Hezekiah becomes ill
14. Tribute paid to Assyria (messengers sent to Egypto-Nubian diplomats)
15. No Egypto-Nubian support forthcoming
16. Sennacherib learns of the double-cross
17. Sennacherib prepares to besiege Jerusalem
18. Hezekiah’s condition deteriorates – near death he cries to Yahweh
19. Hezekiah delivered at Passover – Assyrian camp destroyed by angel

The above incidents/events cover a period of three to four months.

**Add year to year; let feasts come around**

In Isa 29:1 we have a prediction of impending doom with words that note the passing of the Jerusalem feasts:

Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city *where* David dwelt! Add year to year; Let feasts come around. (Isa 29:1)

The mention of the anticipated Assyrian siege (v. 3) suggests that v. 1 should be understood as a chronological marker rather than a proverbial saying. The phrase “add year to year” speaks of the cyclical year change, but is this from Nissan to Nissan or from Tishri to Tishri?

The mention of feasts would seem to indicate the festal calendar which begins in Nissan,[[65]](#footnote-65) but this is not decisive as the agricultural and civil year, including the announcement of the Jubilee year, occurred in Tishri. It was in the autumn ( cf. Isa 33:9) when Isaiah gave the prophecy of “adding year to year”, and the current civil year was reckoned from one autumnal equinox to the other, as, for example, in Exod 23:16, where the feast of tabernacles or harvest festival is said to fall at the close of the year. The later New Year began with trumpet blowing followed ten days later by the Day of Atonement. Moreover, the Jubilee year was announced by blowing the ram’s horn on the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:9).

The Jubilee year was the year of release and features as a sign of the impending release of the prisoners of war:

So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; they will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, and they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem. (Isa 27:3)

The prophecy of Isa 37:30 anticipates this release:

This *shall be* a sign to you: You shall eat this year such as grows of itself, And the second year what springs from the same; Also in the third year sow and reap, Plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.

It follows then that Isa 29:1 is **counting the years from the Day of Atonement** as this marked the start of the Jubilee year and the commencement of the agricultural year. [[66]](#footnote-66)

There is, however, something unusual about the mention of two consecutive Sabbatical years. Sabbatical years occurred every seventh year and the Jubilee every forty ninth year. There is no other occasion in the Hebrew calendar when two years of scheduled non-planting occur back-to-back. If the Assyrian campaign lasted until after planting time in the autumn of 701 BC, and they had consumed/destroyed the yearly harvest only “such as grows of itself”would remain to be gleaned from the fields.

In the next year, the people were to eat “what springs from the same”. Since this phrase occurs only in Isaiah and in the parallel passage in 2 Kgs 19:29, there is some uncertainty about its exact meaning. If it is the same as the “sabbath produce of the land”that was permitted to be eaten in a Sabbatical year in Lev 25:6, then there is a ready explanation why there was no harvest: the second year, i.e. the year starting in the autumn of 701 BC was a Sabbatical year, after which normal sowing and reaping resumed in the third year, as stated in the text.

The “sign” or token that is given to Hezekiah in Isa 37:30 is by way of reassurance that the slaughter of the Assyrians would be the end of the matter. Yahweh would cause Sennacherib to be dragged back to Assyria “with a hook in his nose” (v. 30). There would be no further reprisals from Assyria. Assyria would never again mount a campaign against Jerusalem. Yahweh would ensure the continuity of the nation – spontaneous growth years would compensate for the year of Assyrian destruction *and* for the fallow Jubilee year. Yahweh would also release the captives in a second Exodus (Isa 52:11-12; 63:15)[[67]](#footnote-67) – the “zeal” of Yahweh would perform this (Isa 51:5 -“on my arm shall they trust” Isa 42:13- “The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man”) not the strength of man.

The returning Jubilee captives would plant crops and receive an abundant blessing to make up for the lost years. The people would be permitted to live in peace; it would be a sign to them that the Assyrian was finally and entirely withdrawn, and that they might return in the third year to the cultivation of their land with the assurance that this much-dreaded invasion was not again to be feared. It required an act of faith on the behalf of the remnant not to immediately replant the ravaged land but to allow it to remain fallow during the Jubilee. As a consequence they would be abundantly blessed:

Also in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.” (Isa 37:30)

Even though vineyards take years to cultivate, the Judahites would be able to enjoy the fruit of their labour almost immediately in direct contrast to the taunts of Rab-shakeh:

Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: ‘Make *peace* with me *by a* present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own vine and everyone from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern’ ” (Isa.36:16).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Month** | **Season** | **Feast** | **Event** |
| **702** | Nisan | Spring |  |  |
| Tammuz | Summer |  | Assyrian campaign in the Levant - Phoenicia, Philistia and a battle with Egypt on the coast |
| **701**14th year of Hezekiah | Tishri | Autumn (barley and wheat planted) | **Atonement** | **Add year to year** – Isaiah delivers prophecy of 29:1 |
| Tebeth(January) | Winter | **Invasion of Judea** | Final phase – Judah attacked….winter siege in Palestine cities of Judah destroyed, prisoners deported siege established at Lachish and the blockade of Jerusalem in anticipation of spring offensive - **No crops planted**  - Jerusalem completely isolated  |
| Nissan | Spring (harvest) | **Passover****Deliverance** | **Sign of Isaiah 37:30** given marking **Tishri 702** **as** **Year One** (“This Year”) of the three year prophecy. **Assyrian Defeat** **No harvest** |
| Tammuz | Summer |  |  |
| **700** | Tishri | Autumn (barley and wheat planted) | **Atonement****Jubilee Year** | **Year Two…** No planting of crops in the Jubilee year but captives released (Isa 27:3) |
| Tebeth(January) | Winter |  |  |
| Nissan | Spring (harvesting) | Passover | **No harvest** |
| Tammuz | Summer |  |  |
| **699** | Tishri | Autumn (barley and wheat planted) | Atonement | **Year Three****Plant and sow** |
| Tebeth(January) | Winter |  |  |
| Nissan | Spring (harvesting) | Passover |  |
| Tammuz | Summer |  | **Huge harvest** |

The agricultural blessing was therefore a “sign” or token of the absolute defeat of the enemy and just as the fields would enjoy the blessing of “fruit” (cf. the desert blooming in Isa 35) so also the remnant would “take root downward, And bear fruit upward” (Isa 37:31). The Lord would preserve a people for Himself from among the Jerusalemites. This would include the Davidic line of kings, as He had promised (2 Sam 7:16; cf. Isa 9:6). His own zeal to remain true to His word and to bless His people would perform this (cf. 9:7; 59:17). It would not depend on the faithfulness of His people (Isa 37:32).

**Assyrian Records**

I contend that a **Passover deliverance in 701** fits the historical data in the Assyrian annals as far as this can be ascertained. The Assyriologist L. D. Levine has analysed the Assyrian records and concluded that Sennacherib’s campaigning in Mesopotamia (known as his first and second campaigns) ended at the latest around August 702. This means the campaign in the Levant could in theory have started around September/October (Tishri) 702 after a month or two of rest. Most probably the campaign began in the October of 702 (autumn) with the “final phase” (invasion of Judah) occurring in the winter (thus giving an 8-9 month campaign).

Sennacherib’s records show that he was an all-year campaigner in his early years and did not respect the usual “fighting season of the kings”. The final phase of the Levant campaign happened in Judah in the autumn/winter of **702-701** and ended in the early spring of **701**. Strategically this makes sense because the battle with Egypt at El-Tekeh would have employed chariots which are difficult to operate in the winter months. The establishment of siege works does not necessitate the same manoeuvrability as cavalry engagements and this could be done in autumn or in winter. Assyrian camps outside of garrison cities would ensure restriction of movement in the countryside and the destruction/requisition of the harvest coupled with the prevention of sowing winter crops would effectively isolate the city of Jerusalem.

Sennacherib has “form” for employing the unorthodox strategy of conducting campaigns in winter rather than in the spring. In his first campaign against Babylonia he committed his troops in Jan/Feb on 20 Shebatu (expeditions at this time of year are unknown). The first campaign of Sennacherib is recorded in fullest detail on BM 113203 and its duplicates.[[68]](#footnote-68) Levine notes the fact that Sennacherib commenced his campaign on 20 Shebatu (Jan/Feb).[[69]](#footnote-69) During his campaign of 694-693 Sennacherib attempted to attack Madaktu in the month of Tebet (Dec/Jan), Levine notes that, “unusually severe weather forced him to retreat. The campaign of 694-693 ended as it had begun, with the weather playing a critical role”.[[70]](#footnote-70) It is therefore not out of character to propose the placement of winter siege camps in the Levant as it seems to have formed part of Sennacherib’s overall military strategy to deny his opponents time to regroup (during the winter) and the disruption of the agricultural cycle probably also factored in this strategy. It is unlikely that besieged cities could survive for more than six months on their reserves, especially if the next harvest was non-existent. The Assyrians would either burn (or eat) the standing crops (in spring) and prevent the sowing of the winter crop. Even if reserve stores allowed for a six month siege, the besieged would emerge into a countryside that was devoid of food, depopulated and unproductive for at least another six months – this would ensure that a city like Jerusalem would not survive a second spring offensive.

**The Passover Deliverance in Isaiah 26**

The background to Isaiah 26 is the Passover deliverance during the Assyrian crisis. The reference in the opening verses of the chapter is to a “song that will be sung in the land of Judah (praise)” and v. 2 is virtually a quote of Ps 118:19-20:

Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, *and* I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter. (Ps 118:19-20)

Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in. (Isa.26:2)

Psalms 113-118 constitute the Hallel (Psalms of Praise) **sung at the Jewish Passover**.[[71]](#footnote-71) Isaiah 30:29 also refers to singing on the Passover night; “You shall have a song **as** in the night *when* a holy festival is kept, And gladness of heart as when one goes with a flute, To come into the mountain of the Lord, To the Mighty One of Israel”. No longer would they only sing the “song of Moses” (Ex.15:1) on Passover but they would now also sing a “new song” (cf. Isa 42:10) composed to commemorate the latest Passover deliverance (cf. Ps 118:14). In a similar fashion the redeemed in Christ also sing a “new song” (Rev 14:3),which is also an adaptation (**like/as** a song in the night) of the Passover song as this future version is designated “the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb” (Rev 15:3). Psalm 118 celebrates the fact of Hezekiah’s reprieve “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord” (v. 17), and that he (together with the faithful) would enter into the gates of the temple and “sing my songs (i.e. Psalm 118) with stringed instruments all the days of our life, in the house of the Lord” (Isa 38:20). On the *third day* after being told of his recovery (2 Kgs 20:5, 8) Hezekiah arose from his sickbed and entered the Temple through the doors that he had unsealed at the beginning of his reformation (2 Chron 29:3).

Hezekiah had been vindicated because he trusted in Yahweh in contrast to the lofty city (Nineveh) that had been “brought low” by the defeat of her armies (Isa 26:3-4) trodden down under the feet of the “poor and needy” (v. 5) the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 and another reference from the Passover Halel Psalms:

He raises the poor out of the dust, a*nd* lifts the needy out of the ash heap (Ps 113:7)

Hezekiah was the Passover victim brought “as a lamb to the slaughter” (Isa 53:7), but his hope was focused on Passover deliverance:

Yes, in the way of your judgments, O Lord, we have waited for You; The desire of *our* soul *is* for your name And for the remembrance (rkz) of You. (Isa 26:8)

The last phrase is a reference to the burning bush revelation in Exod 3:15,

This *is* my name forever, and this *is* my memorial (rkz) to all generations. (Exod 3:15)

The revelation given to Moses concerned the **Passover deliverance** from Egypt (v. 7). The Hebrew *zēker* (rkz) refers either to remembrance when it is associated with death (the fate of not being remembered, e.g. Isa 26:14), or as a parallel or synonym of “name” or “fame” particularly when used of God (Exod 3:15; Isa 26:8) in Ps 111:4 the *zēker* that God established for his wonders denotes proclamation of the Exodus.[[72]](#footnote-72) Interestingly, both uses of *zēker* are found in Isaiah 26, probably by way of contrast;

O Lord our God, masters besides You Have had dominion over us; *But* by you only we make mention (rkz)of your name. *They are* dead, they will not live; *they are* deceased, they will not rise. Therefore you have punished and destroyed them, and made all their memory (rkz)to perish. (Isa 26:13-14)

The contrast is between the memorial of *Yahweh* which lives on in the resurrected Hezekiah and the memory of Ashur who is destroyed together with his worshippers. The nominative form of *zēker* is *zikkārôn* (!wrkz) and is translated as “memorial” in Exodus 12 in reference to the Passover:

So this day shall be to you a memorial (!Arkz); and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. (Exod 12:14)

Just as **the name** was a memorial “to all generations” so also **this day** (Passover) was a memorial “throughout your generations”, thereby linking the name of Yahweh indelibly with the Passover feast. Hezekiah was waiting (hoping) for Yahweh’s “judgements” against Assyria just as Yahweh had wrought “great judgements” (Exod 6:6) against Egypt.[[73]](#footnote-73)

The children of Israel were instructed to keep the Passover memorial and instruct their children as to its significance (2 Cor 11:24). The *desire* of Hezekiah’s soul (life) was to the Yahweh name and the keeping of the memorial. As the Hezekiah Psalm declares,

Shall your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? *Or* your faithfulness in the place of destruction? (Ps 88:11)

In the same manner it was Jesus’ desire to praise the name and keep the memorial: “With *fervent desire* I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” (Luke 22:15).

With my soul I have desired You in the night, Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; For when Your judgments *are* in the earth, The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. (Isa 26:9)

This is the Passover night; God’s judgements against the enemy become apparent early in the morning (Hezekiah raised/the Assyrians destroyed):

And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses -- all dead. (2 Kgs 19:35)

Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. (Luke 24:1-2)

As a woman with child is in pain and cries out in her pangs, When she draws near the time of her delivery, So have we been in Your sight, O Lord. We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind; We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, Nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen. Your dead shall live; *Together with* my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs, And the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter your chambers, And shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, Until the indignation is past. (Isa 26:17-20)

The woman who died in childbirth is Rachel giving birth to the son-of-sorrow renamed the son-of-the-right-hand. The delivery of the “child” happened despite (not because of) the nation’s best efforts.

Thus says Hezekiah: ‘This day *is* a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but *there is* no strength to bring them forth’. (Isa 37:3)

The “resurrection” of Hezekiah (my dead body) heralded the resurrection of the faithful remnant (your dead shall live). The inhabitants of Jerusalem “hid in their chambers” (And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning; cf. Exod 12:22) “until the indignation is over past” (KJV) – denoting the angel of death – the “destroyer” who acted as the avenger of blood on behalf of the slain (Isa 26:21).

For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike *you.*” (Exod 12:23)

**Conclusion**

Isaiah 26 is not the only chapter that has the Passover as backdrop to Hezekiah’s deliverance.[[74]](#footnote-74) Rabbinical tradition dates Hezekiah’s deliverance to the Passover: “When Rab-shakeh heard the singing of the Hallel he counselled Sennacherib to withdraw from Jerusalem, as on this night-the first night of Passover-many miracles were wrought for Israel”. [[75]](#footnote-75) Although the tradition is undoubtedly late and legendary it supports the biblical evidence that deliverance actually occurred on the Passover night. The biblical data supports Passover deliverance and this does not contradict Assyrian sources or the *modus operandi* of Sennacherib. At the commencement of his reign Hezekiah had re-instituted the feast of Passover and invited the northern tribes to celebrate the feast in Jerusalem. It is fitting that Hezekiah, together with the faithful who responded to his call, had been delivered on Passover.

**Dating the Deliverance of Jerusalem**

**A. Perry**

**Introduction**

The scholarly consensus is that the third campaign of Sennacherib’s reign (in Phoenicia, Philistia and Judah) happened in 701 and that he left after a successful campaign towards the end of the year. What is the evidence and does the Bible agree or disagree with this date?

**Assyrian Records**

The Assyrian records do not actually date the invasion of the Levant to 701 although some campaigns of the Assyrian kings are dated. The reasoning that leads scholars to assign the campaign to 701 is fourfold: first, Sennacherib’s second campaign in the north of Mesopotamia needs enough time to have completed in 702; secondly, he needs to have enough time back in Nineveh in 702 for diplomacy with the Medes to take place and to oversee some civil building work; thirdly, the normal time for beginning a campaign in Palestine was the spring and this means Sennacherib would have planned his military action to start after the winter of 702-701; and finally, the first written record of the third campaign is dated to 700, thereby making 701 the obvious year to allocate to the campaign.

*First Campaign*

Sennacherib ascended the throne on 18th Ab (July/August) 705. The earliest record of the first campaign against Babylonia (written early in 702, BM 113203) dates the first campaign to the “beginning of his reign” which is unlikely to refer to 703 and more likely to refer to his accession year 705 or his first regnal year 704.[[76]](#footnote-76) This record of the campaign refers to a date when Sennacherib left Nineveh, the 20th of Shabâtu which is best identified as Jan/Feb 704.

Without listing all of the details of the first campaign, it came to an end with the installation of the puppet Bel-ibni upon the throne of Babylon. The extensive nature of the campaign requires Sennacherib to be active against Babylon and the south of Mesopotamia during 704 and 703. Babylonian records identify Bel-ibni’s first regnal year to be 702-701 which means he was placed on the throne in 703 or at least before Nissan (Mar/Apr) 702.

*Second Campaign*

The second campaign could have started as early as late in 703 and it was in the north of Mesopotamia. It was certainly in full swing in 702 because it was an extensive campaign and our first written record of the campaign along with a further record of the first campaign is from Tishri (Sep/Oct) 702 (BM 123412).

The scope of the campaign covers the following:

* Against the land of the Kassites and the Yasubigallains; in the mountains of the north, in difficult terrain.
* Capital city, Bît-kilamzah besieged and then captured.
* Large deportation of the populace – resettled in other lands.
* Countless small cities destroyed.
* Overran the land of Elippi; destroyed Marubishti and Akkuddu, the royal cities and 34 other strong cities and small cities.
* Subdued the district of Bît-Barrû, their strong cities and small cities; annexed the district to Assyria.

In addition to this action, the record states that Sennacherib returned to Nineveh and entered into diplomatic negotiations with the Medes and engaged in some building work.[[77]](#footnote-77)

*Third Campaign*

Sennacherib’s campaign in the Levant could have started late in 702 but scholars have tended to opt for 701, allowing Sennacherib and his elite troops some slack and rest time over the winter of 702-701. The first written record of the campaign is the Rassam Cylinder from 700, which has further encouraged scholars to date the invasion to 701.

A campaign in the West would have involved different locally mobilised divisions;[[78]](#footnote-78) Sennacherib and his elite contingents would have joined such forces in the West. Locally based forces may well have been conducting softening-up operations in 702.[[79]](#footnote-79) When Sennacherib joined the army is not noted, nor is the progress of the subsequent campaign dated, but it was extensive taking in Phoenicia, Philistia, a battle with Egypt on the coast, as well as the siege of Lachish, the blockade of Jerusalem and the overrun and deportation of Judah. As far as the Assyrian records go, and allowing for a winter of rest, the best reconstruction is that the campaign began proper in the spring of 701 and lasted through the summer into autumn.

**Biblical Records**

The invasion of Judah is dated in two Biblical texts in Isaiah:

Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city *where* David dwelt! add ye year upon year; let the feasts run their round. Isa 29:1 (KJV revised)

And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat *this* year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof. Isa 37:30 (KJV)

The first text reflects the turning of the year when Passover was celebrated. The tone is that of a warning to the people: trouble was coming whether or not they observed their feasts. The trouble is further specified in Isa 29:3,

And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee. Isa 29:3 (KJV)

This is a reference to the siege (blockade) of Jerusalem and it is as yet future to the Passover of 701 (Nissan). The proposal that the prophecy was uttered around Passover 702 is unlikely because Sennacherib is in the east and in the middle of what we know as his second campaign. The language of Isaiah 29 is of an imminent threat and fulfilment: the Assyrian army is already active in the area.

What sort of considerations supports this reading? First, is the phrase “add ye year to year” indicative of the Nissan-Nissan calendar or the Tishri-Tishri calendar? We can adduce the following:

* Nissan was to be the beginning of months in the year, established by the Law (Exod 12:2); we have no reason to suppose that this **religious calendar** was not operative in Hezekiah’s day. He sought to be faithful to the Law.
* The phrase refers to “adding” the years; it is addressed to the people rather than the king, and so it is unlikely to be about the king adding the years in respect of his reign, i.e. incrementing the total from the thirteenth to the fourteenth year in Hezekiah’s case. It is **not a regnal count**.
* The **agricultural year**[[80]](#footnote-80) ran from Tishri to Tishri and this was demarcated in groups of seven (the sabbatical system). The refrain “year upon year (hnv l[ hnv)” doesn’t suggest a relatively short seven year counting system but rather the system that stretched back to Moses.
* The first feast of the year was Passover (Exod 12:14; “and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations”). The harvest feast was at the end of the agricultural year but in the seventh month of the religious year ((Lev 23:39). The comment about adding years is therefore unlikely to be made at the end of the agricultural year but at the beginning of the **religious year** (Nissan) when the annual feasts began (cf. Deut 16;16).
* The phrase “let the feasts run their round” (RSV) suggests the beginning of the cycle of feasts and not the seventh month in that cycle.

We can be certain that Isaiah 29 is from the turn of the year (Nissan). Can we be sure that it is from Nissan 701 or it is it earlier from Nissan 702? The following considerations support a date for the prophecy around Nissan 701:

* The sequence of Isaiah’s chapters shows a progression of events. Isaiah 28:15 indexes that chapter to a time when there is the imminent threat of an overflowing scourge passing through the land; in response the rulers of Jerusalem had made treaty agreements. The tenor of the oracles in Isaiah 28 is prospective, for instance, *when* the county is overrun it will be a vexation to read the daily reports (v. 19), and God has *yet* to bring to pass his strange act (v. 21). This fits a time when the Assyrian army is building its forces and supplies in the north ready for attack. Given that Sennacherib and his elite guard are in the east in Nissan 702, this suggests that Isa 29:1 is from Nissan 701.
* Jerusalem is under threat but not yet under siege; she has a multitude of nations against her (Isa 29:7). This reflects the standard Assyrian practice of conscripting soldiers from loyal vassals in the area of campaigning. The opportunity for this happening was a peace conference that Sennacherib held after he had subdued Phoenicia. Moab, Edom and Phoenicia were participants in the conference, and Sennacherib’s own records mention the involvement of foreign troops in his campaign. Again, the natural date for an oracle pronouncement like Isa 29:7 would be after this conference which took place at the conclusion of the first phase of Sennacherib’s campaign in Phoenicia.
* The second phase of Sennacherib’s campaign involved a march down the coastal plain against various Philistine cities. It was at this juncture that he meets and defeats an Egyptian army at Eltekeh. The involvement of Egypt reflects Judahite treaty overtures and hopes which Isaiah condemns (Isa 30:7). This diplomacy can be dated before the second phase of Sennacherib’s campaign, which in turn dates Isa 29:1 to before this action and therefore to Nissan 701.
* The third and last phase of the Assyrian campaign turned its attention to Judah; 46 cities were taken, a siege conducted against Lachish, and Jerusalem blockaded with forts. Given that Isa 29:3 predicts the construction of forts around Jerusalem and Sennacherib details such forts in the third phase of his campaign, we need to date Isa 29:1 earlier rather than later—again, Nissan 701.

Assyrian records do not date the phases of Sennacherib’s campaign; Isa 29:1 is the only dateable piece of information. We can rule out Nissan 702 because Sennacherib is in the east; we can rule out Tishri 702 because Sennacherib has yet to rest at the end of his second campaign, travel to the west and then complete phase 1 of his campaign; this leaves Nissan 701 as the natural date for the “add ye year to year” oracle. The harmony of the Biblical record with the Assyrian chronology is to be noted.

*The Sabbatical and Jubilee Year*

This second text refers to a Sabbatical year and a Jubilee year and the after growth of such years that was to sustain the people. The start of these years is linked to the seventh month,

And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat *this* year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof. Isa 37:30 (KJV)

This is the beginning of the agricultural year when the sowing of crops for the next year was undertaken. One of the points of a Sabbatical and a Jubilee year was to give the land rest from sowing. The verb “grows of itself” is rare and used only in relation to the Sabbatical year and the Jubilee year that followed (Lev 25:5, 11).[[81]](#footnote-81)

But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. Lev 25:4-5 (KJV)

It makes sense for Isaiah to have spoken the words recorded in Isa 37:30 **at the beginning of the agricultural year with the prospect of a Sabbatical and then a Jubilee year in view**. Hezekiah is being told that he can rely on the Lord for produce from the land rather than undertake the autumn sowing. Isaiah’s words of assurance are spoken as the Angel of the Lord is about to decimate the Assyrian army. We can therefore date the deliverance of Jerusalem to the autumn of 701 thus making Sennacherib’s campaign occupy the spring and summer of 701 regardless of when we place its start.[[82]](#footnote-82)

The utterance of Isa 37:30 reverses the command of Lev 25:4-5; they were not meant to reap the aftergrowth in a sabbatical year but now Yahweh was instructing them to live on this aftergrowth. If this was spoken at Passover in the middle of a Sabbatical year which began in Tishri 702, it makes no sense as a sign. The aftergrowth is *already in place* and ready to be reaped. On the other hand, if it is spoken in the autumn, then it is a sign because they are being asked to depend on God for a good aftergrowth in the forthcoming agricultural year.

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| **Western Calendar** | **Judah’s Calendar** | **Normal Agricultural Year** | **What Happened** |
| 701 | Deliverance of Jerusalem |  | Utterance of Isa 37:30 |
| October New Year “701-700” | Former rains in the Autumn soften ground for 2 months of sowing cereals | Sabbatical Year |
| 2 months of sowing legumes and vegetables. |
| 700 | 1 month of hoeing weeds for hay. |
| Spring, end of March. Latter rains before harvest maturing crops. 1 month of harvesting barley then Passover. |
| 1 month of harvesting wheat, followed by Pentecost |
| 2 months of grape harvesting. |
| 1 month of ingathering of summer fruit. |
| 2 months of ingathering of olives. |
| October New Year “700-699” | Former rains in the Autumn soften ground for 2 months of sowing cereals | Jubilee Year |
| 2 months of sowing legumes and vegetables. |
| 699 | 1 month of hoeing weeds for hay. |

The Biblical record is that Sennacherib invaded in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:13). Since the work of E. R. Thiele, the fourteenth year of Hezekiah has been dated to 701[[83]](#footnote-83) and Biblical chronology has been harmonized with Assyrian chronology. Given that Judah reckoned regnal years from Tishri to Tishri,[[84]](#footnote-84) the fifteenth and sixteenth years of Hezekiah would have been Sabbatical and Jubilee years.

**Passover Deliverance?**

It follows from the above analysis that Jerusalem was not delivered **at** Passover. However, this does not prevent the Spirit from **comparing** the deliverance of Jerusalem to the Passover deliverance of the exodus. Passover was celebrated on the 14th/15th Nissan and there is no evidence that this was the date of the destruction of the Assyrian army.

The story of the exodus is a source of types and patterns. Thus, we can see in Isaiah the typological use of the wilderness journey as well as the crossing of the Red Sea. These two types, although part of the exodus story, are distinct from any typology based upon the Passover Night. The application of these types in Isaiah varies depending upon where we are in the story of the times. For example,

* The Crossing of the Red Sea is a type for the redeemed of the Lord (Sennacherib’s deportees) to return to Jerusalem in 701-700 (Isa 52:9-11). It is also used in a comparison with the return of captives from Edom (Isa 63:11-12) in 700-699.
* The confidence of Passover Night (Exod 14:19) is appealed to in Isa 52:12 to encourage the Judahite army to go out from Jerusalem and engage Edom in 700-699.
* Safety during the Wilderness Journey is the type appealed to in Isa 43:2-4 to encourage deportees in Babylon to return in 700 during Sennacherib’s campaign against Babylonia in that year.

These examples use different types but we should distinguish the Crossing of the Red Sea from the Wilderness Journey and these again from the Passover Night. Israel was delivered from the Angel of Death on Passover Night; they were delivered again from the Egyptian army at the Red Sea; and during the Wilderness Journey, they were delivered from enemies like the Amalekites. There are multiple deliverances which can serve as types, but they are not collectively an “ancient Passover experience”.[[85]](#footnote-85) Isaiah has no strong emphasis “on the Passover deliverance of Israel under Moses”;[[86]](#footnote-86) instead, he has an emphasis upon a **new exodus** of deportees returning to Judah.

Instead, what we have is the **language of comparison** between deliverance from Sennacherib’s army and deliverance at Passover:

Ye shall have a song, as in the night *when* the holy feast is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel. Isa 30:29 (KJV revised)

The point here is that the people would sing **as** (k) they do when they keep the holy solemnity (and **as** (k) when there were processions to Zion). The comparative particle “as” is important—the night in which they would be delivered is not actually the night of Passover but it will be **like** Passover for its singing afterwards.[[87]](#footnote-87)

Hence, a song celebrating the deliverance of Jerusalem can be prophesied and it can contain echoes of the Passover deliverance. Such a song is contained in Isaiah 26 which was to be sung in the land of Judah after the deliverance of Jerusalem (v. 1) and at a time in the restoration of Judah when the land had expanded and the nation had increased (v. 15).

**Conclusion**

There is a three year sequence to note in later Isaiah that starts in the autumn of 701 which is when the Assyrian army was decimated outside the walls of Jerusalem. During the invasion, the land had been ravaged; agricultural labourers had been deported, fled or sought refuge in cities; and stores and stocks taken to feed the Assyrian confederacy. The autumn of 701 would signal deliverance but also the need for much work to be done in any land that the Judahite army could protect. But instead of taking up the work of sowing and planting, Hezekiah was commanded to observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years. There would be two years in which the people would eat “that which grew of itself”—during this time the Judahite army would liberate the people and retake the land—the land would abundantly bring forth its sustenance naturally and this would be a sign to the people that Yahweh was with them in their work of vengeance on the surrounding nations.

**News- eReaders - AP**

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**News – SOTS Winter 2011**

The Society of Old Testament Studies (SOTS) met in Collingwood College, Durham University from Jan 4th to Jan 6th; about a hundred and fifty persons listened to lectures and presentations on various topics. SOTS is the premier Old Testament society in the UK, and it is comprised of the UK academic community, their current doctoral students, past students who have migrated abroad and others who have pursued work in the churches. It is a very collegiate group of friends who have been meeting twice a year for many years; it is mainly comprised of men, older men, but there is probably a roughly 70/30 split in the sexes.

The talks this time were of little value to the Bible student, and on my sampling of the twice-yearly conference, I would say that a Bible student of the Abrahamic monotheistic Christian faith should look for a relatively low return in insights into the Biblical text from attendance – perhaps a 10-20% return. The reasons for this are: some talks (like this time) will be on non-Biblical books or tangential historical topics, for example this year, the Wisdom of Ben Sira and the names of pottery inscribed on pots; some talks will be focussed on peripheral areas in Biblical Studies, for example, this time we had talks on the interpretation of the Bible in the eighteenth century and the cultural penetration of the Bible in the modern age. Another reason for the low return for understanding the Bible text is the predominance of the historico-critical approach with its materialist presumptions and rejection of the Bible as inspired. This milieu acts as deadweight dragging an individual back from advancing his or her understanding of the text. A relative outsider can see this malaise but insiders are unaware of the situation.

Nevertheless, in the talks that are centred on the Biblical text, there are usually some things of value, and some can be outstanding. This time the only talk of value was by J. W. A Sawyer on the “Here *am* I” (ynnh) of Isa 6:8; the expression could be rendered, “Behold, me”—it is the ordinary Hebrew for “Behold/Look” with a first person suffix. Sawyer’s observations were two: first, the expression is used in a service and subordinate context; and secondly, Isaiah is the only book to have the expression used by Yahweh—Isa 52:6, 58:9 and 65:1.

What does it mean for God to say, “Behold, *it is* I” (Isa 52:6); “Here I *am*” (Isa 58:9) and “Behold me, behold me” (Isa 65:1)? This use of ynnh is not unusual but it is not the most common. Samuel is the classic example when he replies to Yahweh, “Here *am* I” (1 Sam 3:4f). However, the Hebrew is mostly used for stress with a verb “Behold I/me...[verb]”. The uses in Isaiah in which we are interested are concerned with the presentation of self.

Although Sawyer is a conventional critical scholar and wouldn’t say this, this unique aspect of Isaiah—the use of ynnh in the presentation of Yahweh himself as well as Isaiah—binds the book as the work of a single author rather than multiple authors (the critical view). There are many such common aspects of style across the book. The use of ynnh by Yahweh echoes Isaiah’s use and puts Yahweh in a complementary position of service—it illustrates the condescending grace of Yahweh and makes him like Isaiah or Samuel or any servant who presents himself for work: God will *do* for those of faith who call and ask (Isa 58:9), in particular what he will do is to *speak* (Isa 52:6).

Yahweh’s presentation of himself uses *hinneh* (hnh) with the first person; a related use is *hen* (!h) with the third person, “Behold, my servant” (Isa 42:1)—the servant is presented to the people upon his victorious return from the east (the other side of Jordan). This presentation will be used ironically by Pilate when he says “Behold, the man” (John 19:5) but also as an unintentional allusion to Isaiah.

One good talk is not a good return on a £22 attendance fee and SOTS is usually better; but there was the consolation of the 50% discount on books on the bookstalls.

**Postscript – T. Gaston**

I think it would be fair to say that many Christadelphians, probably the majority, are sceptical and wary of academic study, particularly within the field of Biblical Studies. It has been my own experience, and the experience of other young Christadelphians, that the suggestion of pursuing a degree in Biblical Studies or Theology has been met with a sense of alarm in certain quarters. And alarm is not restricted to these fields, but also to Philosophy, Psychology, and Geology to name but a few. The reason for this concern is not hard to determine – many of the conclusions of scholars in these fields are inconsistent with biblical teaching, whether it be claims of pseudonymity of biblical texts or the explaining away of religious belief in Freudian psychoanalysis. Upon this analysis Christadelphians would do well to avoid all such pursuits.

However, one might sound a note of caution because such an attitude might appear to be akin to sticking one’s head in the sand. The Dawkins of this world would turn this into fuel for the cliché that religion is based on ignorance alone. Of course, the fallacy with such an argument is that academics are not unanimously atheist nor are they free from bias on such matters. Just because one zoologist (formerly) at Oxford University says that the findings of science are incompatible with belief in God (i.e. Dawkins) does not mean that all zoologists at Oxford University are of the same opinion (as a matter of fact, they’re not). The same is true of all disciplines. If one studied biblical studies at Sheffield or Copenhagen one would be told that the Bible is a myth without any relation to history (despite the inconvenient historical correspondence). But a similar course taken at a number of other universities would have a radically different approach to the Bible. Unfortunately the veil of intellectual respectability obscures the fact that academics are as open to bias as the rest of us.

And this is the real problem with the Academy: the unwary might take its conclusions as definitive when actually they are matters of open dispute. On the topic of modern biblical scholarship H. A. Whittaker rightly urges “a postponement of a consideration of any critical approach to the Bible until you are better equipped to assess its value”.[[88]](#footnote-88) This does not mean, however, that Christadelphians should ignore or remain separate from the Academy. Indeed the need could not be more pressing for some at least to engage with modern scholarship to as aid believers in assessing its value. If a believer read, for instance, the claim that Colossians and Philippians were written long after Paul’s death and heard no dissenting voices he might conclude that this was a matter of historical fact rather than, at best, a conjecture based upon outdated assessments of doctrinal development. In a modest way this is the purpose of the *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation.*

**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 paper-back 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. L. D Levine, “Sennacherib’s Southern Front: 704-689 B.C.” *JCS* 34 (1982): 28-58 (29). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Levine merges the first and second campaigns on the basis that the first is in the south and the second is about consolidating what has been won in the south. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The full text is given in D. D. Luckenbill, *The Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylon* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1926). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Levine, “Sennacherib’s Southern Front: 704-689 B.C.”, 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This essay, written in the mid-1990s, is reproduced here with little revision (just a few tweaks and a light edit), in response both to enquiries and to visit issues of inspiration and the Biblical text. Although this essay is a preliminary statement, a basis for further research and refinement, the author still holds to the principles, argument and conclusions presented. A revision would *include* bringing some of the material found in the footnotes, or further material of the same (more technical) sort, into the main text. The original version of this essay was published by the UK magazine, *The New Bible Student* (*ca*. 1997); this magazine took over the mantle of publishing more advanced Bible Studies in the UK in the 1990s. The essay was also privately circulated, in booklet form. The original publication included an appendix listing instances of Old Testament passages reproduced two or more times in the New Testament. Since these are the subject of current research I have not included them here. A related paper of mine is available at <http://www.christadelphian-ejbi.org/extracts/Body.pdf> [cited December 2010]. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. I use ‘quotation’ since this is a familiar term. For the purpose of this present article, I define ‘quotation’ as an earlier fragment of Scripture identified, whether introduced or not, in a later reuse. This can be applied to the OT quoting itself, the NT quoting itself or to OT material reproduced in the NT, which is the concern of this article, looking especially at those which undergo change, e.g., grammatical or semantic. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The standard view is that where the NT and the Septuagint (LXX), or Old Greek, are in agreement against the Hebrew Bible this is seen as evidence that the NT is quoting from the (*sic*) LXX. Before the impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 20th century, from the mid-19th century, in practice scholars preferred the LXX over the MT as a (better) witness to a supposed original OT, or proto-MT. Cases of NT quotations agreeing with LXX against MT, and particularly the greater antiquity of the LXX (e.g., 4th century Vaticanus 1209) compared with the MT (1008/1009 A.D. Leningrad codex), assisted this preferential view. With the NT and LXX both being in Greek, the NT interfacing with LXX (as a representative of the OT) is readily assumed; and that the LXX was itself Holy Scripture for writers of the NT still has its advocates. (LXX is the OT of the Eastern Orthodox Church.)

 The implications of this article question the need for any NT dependence on LXX, especially in regard to quotations. This article is a work in progress. However, even to the extent I argue herein, if it is the NT that makes the textual changes to the OT being quoted, then the Septuagint is not the source of such change. A neglected take-up in research is the extent to which scribal editing in the early post-NT era conformed LXX to NT quotations, e.g., during recensional activity.

 From the Scriptural viewpoint, God is involved in a ‘fellowship of revelation’ with His mediating agents, by whom the spirit-word of God is inscripted (as ‘original autographs’). Therefore, there is no proof that Jesus, or the *spirit-guided* NT writers, would (need to) have used, or deemed “unbreakable” scripture (John 10:35), any *uninspired* heterogeneous Greek OT translation. (“The Seventy”, according to legend or tradition, translated only the Torah, or Pentateuch, *ca*.250 B.C. Other OT books, plus the Apocrypha, were added over subsequent centuries.) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See n. 1, above. In http://www.christadelphian-ejbi.org/extracts/Body.pdf, I argued that Biblical textual perspectives suggest that Heb. 10:5’s ‘body’ has slipped into the LXX now extant. What is called ‘the LXX’ in which ‘body’ is found is not an original manuscript of the pre-Christian era, but a fourth century Christian codex (e.g. Vaticanus 1209). As Septuagintalists affirm, there is really no such thing as ‘the’ Septuagint. What came to be called ‘the Septuagint’ in the Second Century A.D. was a compilation of Greek translations of the Hebrew Text produced over a few hundred years. Editorial re-workings must be factored into its present form, including Christian insertions derived from the NT (cf. K. Jobes and M. Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* [Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000]: 195-198). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. E. Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament: Introduction to Biblia Hebraica* (2nd Ed; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Particularly, it has been part of an established scholarly textual industry to use the heterogeneous LXX or its internally variable representatives to emend the MT, using the LXX to infer or produce an original Hebrew text-type (an ‘*ur*-text’ or a proto-MT). However, attempted reconstructions of a Hebrew textual form (‘retroverted’) on the basis of the LXX, or other (e.g., Qumran) sources, inevitably remain speculative. Only if the LXX were a consistent translational witness, or more Hebrew MSS with variant (e.g., LXX aligning) readings existed, would it be less secure to regard MT as a faithful descendant of the OT in Hebrew (and some parts Aramaic) originally revealed.

 S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 320-321, in a section entitled, “The Hebrew Text and the Septuagint”, discusses the earlier practice of scholars to criticise and emend the MT on the basis of the LXX, and mentions a different approach in his day. This, of course, tells us much about the revisable nature of scholarly theory. He states: “To what extent may the LXX be legitimately used to reconstruct the Hebrew? In the first place it should be observed that there is a growing caution on the part of commentators in having recourse to emendation at all. This is due to an increased respect for the Masoretic text, which had been commonly accepted, with the general support of Aquila, Origen, and the Vulgate, as going back to the time of Rabbi Akiba, *ca.* A.D. 100. The evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls has not only substantially confirmed this hypothesis, but is widely held to establish the existence of this text antedating in essentials the Christian era...Formerly when the intrinsic trustworthiness of Masoretic text was held in lesser esteem, it was the practice of commentators copiously to emend their text on ‘the authority of the Septuagint’ as preserving an earlier and more reliable reading...translation involves interpretation, and this may in some cases suggest *prima facie* a different Hebrew text, a supposition which further investigation fails to support”. See also: A. R. Millard, “In Praise of Ancient Scribes” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 45 (1982): 143–54. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Providential preservation of the Hebrew Bible’s consonantal text from the time of Ezra appears to be the case. Likewise, divine care also applies to the Greek NT witnessed in thousands of MSS from close to the time of the apostles. History is regulated by God’s concerns. Ironically, among the Jews and institutionalised Christians, both of whom are indicted by the Scriptures, there were those whose veneration (*etc.*) for the Biblical text ensured its preservation. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. T. F. Torrance, *Theological Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 280. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Cf. R. Roberts, *Nazareth Revisited* (Repr. of the original 1890 edition; Nottingham: The Dawn Book Supply, 1953), vii. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. A Gospel parallel account is like ‘quotation’; it is a representative portion, a divinely focused treatment of what Jesus both did and taught (John 20:30-31). Like quotations from the OT, the Greek NT will involve “translation” into Greek of what was undertaken largely in Hebrew in Jesus’ ministry. Although Greek is the mono-lingual form for the NT text, translation from Hebrew (vernacular) is at least evident where the Greek text says of a transliterated Hebrew term “which being interpreted is” (Matt 1:23; John 1:41). To preclude this possibility would be to suppose that Jesus and the Apostles only spoke Greek. The Holy Spirit gifts (Acts 2:4-11) would enable what was brought to remembrance to be expressed directly in Greek, though what was remembered would have occurred in the Hebrew language, (or milieu). This is quite different from the assumption sometimes made that the original Gospels were written in Hebrew (or even Aramaic), and not in Greek as we have them. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Roberts, *Nazareth Revisited*, iii. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Roberts, *Nazareth Revisited*, vii. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Roberts, *Nazareth Revisited*, viii-ix. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Roberts, *Nazareth Revisited*, vii. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. “Their diversities”, if that means what they differently record, are not **their** diversities. ‘Their’ is merely our (or a) way of referring to the Gospel carrying their name, but it is not ‘theirs’, nor ‘of them’, but ‘of God’ (1 Thess 2:13). As Roberts adds “Their narrative was controlled by the Spirit”. Diversity in revelation, or God’s manifestation in different believing agents, mediates His one (authorial) spirit. Like the prophets in whom was ‘the spirit of Christ’, or like David himself (cf. Mark 12:36 with Luke 20:42), a Messianic type, the apostles also ‘speak’ (in their writing) being “moved” concerning Christ “by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:21; 3:2). Christ said that the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, would both “**teach** them all things, and bring all things **to** **their remembrance**” (John 14:26; Acts 11:16). Though eyewitnesses (“chosen before of God” Acts 10:41), who could give a personal account (Luke 1:2; 1 Cor 15:5-8; 2 Pet 1:16; 2 Pet 1:20), citing Roberts, this would be “in strict subordination to [the needs of] truth.” [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Roberts, *Nazareth Revisited*, vi. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. That is not to say that the often marginally disputable textual details (as found in the critical apparatus of eclectic editions) do not sometimes require scrutiny or resolution. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. See n. 1 on p. 22 below. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. In fact, Aquila and Symmachus both have kata. lo,gon/‘according to the word of Melchizedek’. Origen/LXX presumably follow the NT’s kata. th.n ta,xin/’according to the order of Melchizedek’. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. See J. W. Adey, “The Similitude of the Word” in *The Testimony* (March-May 1980). Presumably, English versions have adopted ‘order’ in Ps 110:4, influenced by its frequent repetition in Hebrews. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. A similar expression “Is it not written in your law...?” occurs in John 10:34, where ‘your law’ is applied to words derived from a Psalm (82:6) and not Sinai. What are we to make of this? It seems to violate our accepted categories! Surely, like quotational adjustments of OT words in the NT, we are being informed about how to ‘read’ Scripture. It may be that Jesus had in mind a precedent in the Law which the Psalm is citing. Alternatively, he may be offering us a new way of looking at the function of the Psalms. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. For ease of comparison I have translated the original word as ‘stand’ in all three passages (Deut 19:15; Matt 18:16 and 2 Cor 13:1). The Hebrew *yaqum* (whence *cumi* in “*Talitha cumi*”) has the sense of ‘stand up’ (as in resurrectional passages: e.g. Job 19:25). In Deut 19:15 *yaqum* occurs twice, the first time translated with the sense of ‘rise up’. Hence, what ‘stands,’ or ‘stands up’ to, scrutiny, is what is ‘established.’ In the NT the Greek forms of *histemi* have the nuance ‘may stand’ in Matt 18:16 and ‘shall stand’ in 2 Cor 13:1. These NT citations complementarily adjust Deut 19:15 to state what is implicit in theory, or in practice. Another sense given to this same Hebrew term *yaqum* is the Greek term *menei* which is variously rendered by KJV: ‘endureth’/’abideth’/’remaineth’ which relate to the idea of ‘that which (over time, or despite circumstance) continues to stand’. Cf. Isa. 40:8 in 1 Pet. 1:24-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. In John 8:17, Jesus’ style is to make ‘allusive reference’ to this principle in Deut. 19:15: “And it is written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.” Interestingly, Jesus’ use of ‘true’, here, makes it equivalent to his use of ‘stand’ in Matt 18:16. Other examples of ‘allusive reference’ involving this ‘witnessing’ principle: “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before **two or three witnesses**” (1Tim 5:19); or, Heb 10:28: “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under **two or three witnesses**”. (Cf. Deut 17:6 “At Mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; [but] at Mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death”.) [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. (i) A relevant question to ask of those who suppose the NT uses ‘the’ (*sic.*) LXX here is, ‘How is it that the LXX has departed from the Hebrew? MT has ‘in’ prefixed repeatedly to ‘all thy’, whereas the LXX has the ‘out of’ [Gk. *ek* ] form of Mark (and one instance in Luke 10:27). If someone replies that both Mark and the LXX use an original Hebrew text which differs from MT, then it should be asked, What Hebrew text did *Matthew* use? Since Matthew’s quotation has ‘*in* all thy...’ and agrees with MT, is not this inspired comment on the originality of the Hebrew of MT? Who is trying to break Scripture, here? (Cf. Luke 10:27 which combines more variation in the use of these prepositions.)

(ii) My suggestion, with other data, is that since *both* Mark 12: 30 *and* Luke 10:27 have ‘out of’, this easily convinced a Christian LXX editor to adopt this NT originated change. Agreement between LXX and NT is limited, and in many cases clearly contrived. Scholars accept that many of the unexpected textual deviations in the LXX reflect later editorial revisions rather than necessarily being ascribed to the original translators. (See Barnes’ “concluding observation” in (iii), below.)

(iii) Cf. n. 1 on p. 12 above, and see S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 322. In the section, ‘The Hebrew Text and the Septuagint,’ he underlines the point I make in his last paragraph. Jellicoe states, having considered a particular case: “We have taken this particular reading as affording an example of the extreme care which must be exercised in deciding against M in what would seem, quite plausibly, to be in favour of LXX. But when it is recognised, though too often overlooked, that the Greek version was made initially for Jews by Jews - a fact continually underlined by H. M. Orlinsky and constituting Rahlfs’ opening statement in his ‘History of the Septuagint Text’ [*Septuaginta,* Stuttgart: Privileg. Württenbergische Bibelanstalt, 1935, Vol. I, XXIII-XXIV] we must take into full consideration Barnes’ concluding observation: ‘In weighing readings we must use all the knowledge we can gain of Jewish exegesis and of Haggadic (or Halachic) comment. Some LXX readings which sound strange to Gentiles ears will prove to be right: while some readings **(due to Christian modifications of the text, intentional or accidental)** will have to be rejected as too definitely Christian’ ”. [My bold type.] [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. In Heb. 8:10 & 10:16, cf. Jer 31:33: ‘upon’ [Gk., *epi*] the heart and mind occurs paralleling the Hebrew of Deut. 6:6-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. 1 Peter is another “exhortation” letter (1 Pet 5:12). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. J. A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1927), 400. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. For instance R. Pierce proposes that culmination of the prophecy was in the days of the Hasmonean kings of Judea. The “anointed one” of v. 25 is Aristobulus I, whose reign marks the reestablishment of the kingdom of Judah, and the “anointed one” of v. 26 is his half-brother Alexander Jannaeus, who made a covenant with Greek mercenaries to fight against his own people resulting in the cessation of the daily sacrifices. Pierce admits that the six stated purposes in v. 24 were not fulfilled at this time, but this he explains as divine postponement due to the wickedness of the people. See R. W. Pierce, “Spiritual Failure, Postponement, and Daniel 9” *Trinity Journal* 10:2 (1989): 211-222. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. N. W. Porteous, *Daniel* (London: SCM Press, 1965), 133-5, 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. For instance, the decree of Cyrus (the same year to which Daniel 9 is dated) cannot be shown to be 483 years prior to the appearance of Jesus of Nazareth without calling into question established history. (In fact, several inerrantists have attempted such an adjustment, e.g. J. Milner, “The Seventy Weeks of Daniel and Persian Chronology” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1877): 298-303, and M. Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1913). Sir Robert Anderson achieved a seemingly precise solution taking 444 BC as the *terminus a quo* and calculating the 483 years as years of only 360 days (thus only 476 solar years), appealing to the idea that, what he calls, “a prophetic year” was only 360 days long. The assumptions underlying Anderson’s solution have more recently been called into question (see V. S. Poythress, “Hermeneutical Factors in Determining the Beginning of the Seventy Weeks (Daniel 9:25)” *Trinity Journal* 6/2 (1985): 131-149. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. C. F. Whitley, “The Term Seventy Years Captivity” *VT* 4/1 (1954): 60-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. H. Avalos, “Daniel 9:24-26 and Mesopotamian Temple Rededications” *JBL* 117/3 (1998): 507-511 (507); M. Leuchter, “Jeremiah’s 70-year Prophecy and the ששך/לב קמי Atbash Codes” *Biblica* 85 (2004): 503-522 (509). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Leuchter, “Jeremiah’s 70-year Prophecy”, 510. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. R. J. M. Gurney, “The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9:24-27” *Evangelical Quarterly* 53 (1981): 29-36 (30). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. A. Montgomery, *Daniel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 393. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Porteous, *Daniel*, 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. K. Koch, *Das Buch Daniel* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980), 149. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. A. Laato, “The Seventy Yearweeks in the Book of Daniel” *ZAW* 102/2 (1990): 212-22 (215-216). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüduschen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi* (Dritter Band, Vierte Auflage, 1909), 266f; cited Montgomery, *Daniel,* 393. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. T. E. Gaston, *Historical Issues in the Book of Daniel* (Oxford: Taanathshiloh, 2009), 140-143. Also see F. Parente, “Onias III’ Death and the Foundation of the Temple of Leontopolis” in *Josephus and the history of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory Morton Smith* (F. Parente & J. Sieves eds.; Leiden: Brill, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Parente, “Onias III”, 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. *Diodorus* 30.7.2-3; (trans. C. H. Oldfather; Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958). [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. H. Chadwick, The Early Church (London: Pelican Books 1984), 133. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. S. G. Hall, Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church (London: SPCK, 1991), 121-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. J. C. McDowell, “Arius: A Theological Conservative Persecuted?” [Cited Online, January 1st 2010] http://www.geocities.ws/johnnymcdowell/papers/Arius.doc. McDowell’s essay is a presentation of an undergraduate dissertation. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Athanasius, De Synodis, 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, Vol. 1: *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 100–600, (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1971), 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. De Fide, I.II.69. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ambrose’s argument runs thus: “Paul forbids me to worship a creature and insists that I must serve Christ. Christ is therefore not a creature.” Astute readers will observe that the conclusion does not follow logically from the premise. In the language of logic, this is known as a non sequiter. Ambrose also falsely equates “serve” with “worship” (without even addressing the question of whether or not Christ is God at all), then tosses in the quote from Paul as if this clinches the argument (which it doesn’t). He would have done better to present an argument in favour of Christ’s deity first (on the basis of which he could then claim that Jesus is worthy of worship) followed by the quote from Paul (forbidding us to worship that which is created). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. De Fide, I.II.69. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Some later Arians did worship Christ but this was exceptional. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. A. E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 275. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. E. T. Mullen, “Crime and Punishment: ‘The Sins of the King and the Despoliation of the Treasuries’ ” *CBQ* 54 (1992): 231-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. B. S. Childs remarks that, “In terms of the specific historical problem of 701, it seems unlikely that a satisfactory historical solution will be forthcoming without fresh extra-biblical evidence” Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (SBT 2/3; London: SCM, 1967), 120, and L. L. Honor, asserts, “none of the hypotheses is so strongly substantiated by the facts available in the sources, that it may claim greater credence than the others” L. L. Honor, *Sennacherib’s Invasion of Palestine: A Critical Source Study* (COHP 12; New York: Columbia,1926), xiv-xv. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. For example, W. R. Gallagher admits that the Assyrian annals are not always arranged chronologically but sometimes thematically in *Sennacherib’s Campaign to Judah. New Studies* (Leiden: E J Brill, 1999), 123-125. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. There is consensus on this phase of the campaign occurring in 701-700 BC (the fourteenth year of Hezekiah). [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. The expression “in those days” refers to an unspecified point and length of time when a certain event or chain of events was happening, and although it can denote an extended period (cf. Judg 18:1; Gen 6:4; Exod 2:11), it is qualified by the statement in Isa 38:6 indicating that the illness and the Assyrian crisis are parallel events. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Isaiah 22:15-19 condemns the behaviour of Shebna; note the mention of Hezekiah’s fortifications vv.9-11 and the attitude of some of the people (drunken celebration v. 2, v. 13). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. This is only obliquely referred to in 2 Kgs 18:8 the details are given in Sennacherib’s report of the rebellion. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Rab-shakeh’s propaganda makes use of the Isaiah prophecy and demonstrates awareness of Hezekiah’s policy of cult centralization. This indicates organized intelligence gathering. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. (Exod 12:2) [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. For the linked themes of Jubilee/trumpets/Atonement see Isaiah 58:1-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Isa 52:11-12 is based on the Exodus from Egypt (pillar of cloud and fire protecting and leading them i.e. the captives from Egypt/Assyria) Isa 63:15 is again in the context of the Exodus (v. 12, Moses dividing the water (v. 13) and then leading through the wilderness). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. S. Smith, *The First Campaign of Sennacherib* (London: Luzac & Co., 1921). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. L. D. Levine, “Sennacherib’s Southern Front 704-689 B.C.” *JCS* 34 1/2 (1982): 28-58 (32-34). [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Levine, “Sennacherib’s Southern Front 704-689 B.C.”, 45-46. See also, D.D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylon* (2 Vols; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), 2:351. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. It appears that during the Jewish Passover meal of the first century, Psalms 113-114 were sung before the final meal blessing and Psalms 115-118 were sung after the final blessing. These were most probably the hymns that Jesus and his disciples sang in the context of their Passover (cf. Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26). [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. B. S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (SBT; London: SCM Press, 1962), 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. The Hebrew employs different terms for “judgement” in Isa 26:8 and Exod 6:6 and so the connection is conceptual. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. See the chapters, “Israel’s ancient Passover experience” and “Jerusalem delivered at Passover” in H.A. Whittaker, *Isaiah* (Cannock: Biblia, 1988), 50-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. #  Cited in L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews: From Moses to Esther: Notes for Volumes 3 and 4* (eds., H. Szold, P. Radin; Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 363.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. L. D. Levine, “Sennacherib’s Southern Front 704-689 B.C.” *JCS* 34 1/2 (1982): 28-58 (30). Levine places no evidential significance on the phrase but this is bizarre, even though he dates the start of the first campaign to 704. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. *Annals of Sennacherib*, (ed. D. D. Luckenbill; repr. Wipf & Stock; Eugene, Oregon: 2005), 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. H. W. F. Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1984), 243-268. See also W. Mayer, “Sennacherib’s Campaign of 701 B.C.E: The Assyrian View” in *Like a Bird in a Cage: The Invasion of Sennacherib in 701 B.C.E.* (ed. L. L. Grabbe; JSOTSup 363; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 168-200 (175); Mayer notes the contemporary record which details Sennacherib raising troops from local vassal states. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Mayer, “Sennacherib’s Campaign of 701 B.C.E: The Assyrian View”, 174. Mayer shows that preparations and logistics in the north (Israel, Syria) would have been undertaken prior to the campaign. Hezekiah would have known an invasion was coming from as early as 702; it was no surprise. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. See O. Borowski, “Agriculture” *ABD* 1:95-98; F. S. Frick, “Rain” *ABD* 5:612; “Palestine, Climate of” *ABD* 5:119-126; and C. J. H. Wright, “Sabbatical Year” *ABD* 5:857-861. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. The only other use is Job 14:19 which may be an allusion to the Sabbatical/Jubilee aftergrowth. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Ironically, Assyriologists do not use this evidence. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1983). Thiele published his work in 1951 and older commentaries may not date Sennacherib’s invasion to 701. This has been the standard date since Thiele and the fixing of Assyrian chronology. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, chap. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. *Contra*, H. A. Whittaker, *Isaiah* (Cannock: Biblia, 1988), chap 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Whittaker, *Isaiah*, 52. The deliverance of Passover Night was the work of the Angel of the Lord rather than Moses. Moses led the people the next day. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. [Ed. PW] The comparative particle does not express the similarity between this night and the Passover night. The preposition expresses the similarity between the singing of Passover song and the “new song” that Judah would henceforth sing (You shall have a song). [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. H. A. Whittaker, *Exploring the Bible* (3rd Ed; Wigan: Biblia, 1992) 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)