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**Editors:**

J. Adey, D. Burke, T. Gaston, A. Perry, P. Wyns.

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Eds: J.Adey@christadelphian-ejbi.org (Text and Language)

D.Burke@christadelphian-ejbi.org (Theology and Apologetics)

T.Gaston@christadelphian-ejbi.org (Church History)

Andrew.Perry@christadelphian-ejbi.org

Paul.Wyns@christadelphian-ejbi.org

Columnists: J.Burke@christadelphian-ejbi.org (Archaeology)

 G.Horwood@christadelphian-ejbi.org (Gender Issues)

 J.Davies@christadelphian-ejbi.org (Exegesis/Analysis)

Cover Design: D. Burke

**Editorial**

This issue begins a sixth year for the EJournal. As there are no costs involved in producing the EJournal for circulation in PDF form by e-mail (except the small charge we bear for web-hosting), it will continue to be a free subscription. Subscribing is easy via the website and any current subscribers who wish to unsubscribe can do so by emailing an editor to have their email address removed from the subscriber list.

Two new columnists have joined: Sis G. Horwood on Gender Issues and Bro. J. Davies on Analysis/Exegesis. Columnists add to the variety of writing in the EJournal, academic and non-academic. Exegesis is central to the EJournal and there are various issues relating to gender that are abroad in the community and these need to be analysed and discussed. This is the rationale for the two new columns. As two join, one has left, and Bro. R. Morgan has vacated his column, which means that we are on the look-out for a new columnist to take on board ‘Intertextuality’.

Disagreeing with one another and putting your head in the sand are forms of behaviour which we ought to correct. Unity is the ideal for which we strive, but the flesh engenders disagreement for of all sorts of reasons. The gospels record disagreement between Jesus and his disciples; Jesus allows his disciples to express their opinions and he offers correction. Facilitating disagreement and correction is therefore important if we are to grow together; hence, the EJournal prints contrary views on topics in the form of ‘Discussions’, ‘Rebuttals’ and ‘Editorial Footnotes’ between the editors and columnists. It is part of searching for truth.

Putting your head in the sand is a form of defence and self-protection. It is an avoidance of what is uncomfortably contrary to your beliefs. If someone challenges your belief, do you walk away or do you work through the challenge? Adam and Eve were challenged and so we cannot expect to avoid challenges; God allowed their challenge as a test of faith. Confronting intellectual challenges is an important objective of the EJournal.

Recording disagreement in print is part of the process of coming to agreement and a permanent record is valuable. If someone disagrees with something that is written in the EJournal, then it is useful for everyone if it is aired in public through correspondence or a subsequent article, a footnote or a rebuttal. If there is no dialogue then there is failure to learn together. We shouldn’t therefore put our head in the sand if we read something we don’t like; we should engage in an open and constructive way with the issue at stake.

The point here is the same if we were talking about relationship problems in the ecclesia. We might ‘have nothing to do with so-and-so’ for some reason, say a perceived sleight, an upset, or a disagreement. But this is clearly not right; there should be reconciliation and forgiveness.

**Today you will be with me in Paradise**

**P. Boyd**

**Introduction**

Luke 23:43 is used by some as a proof-text for heaven-going:

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise. Luke 23:43 (KJV)

In this article, we will present an explanation of Jesus’ words as they are represented in standard versions; it is not our intention to discuss any issues to do with the Greek.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Garden of Eden**

In the Garden of Eden there were two trees. One was appealing – the tree of knowledge – and one seemingly not so – the tree of life. Woman and man chose the tree of knowledge in preference to the tree of life, and so died (with knowledge). They put their quest for knowledge above their desire for life, and then realised too late that they had made the wrong choice. History repeats itself. People today continue to pursue the tree of knowledge above the tree of life. Today they have a lot of knowledge of things that are evil as well as good. The tree of knowledge seems highly appealing in a variety of ways. People today also realize that they have made the wrong choice in their lives, but often too late to do anything about it. From the present global civilization to the civilizations of the past, knowledge has been valued by man more that the way to the tree of life. Nothing has changed – except that the place of living is not as beautiful as the Garden of Eden.

The tree of life is more accurately translated as the ‘tree of the living’ (Gen 2:9; 3:22). The ‘tree of the living’ emphasizes the contrast with the tree of death, which masquerades under the appealing title of ‘tree of knowledge’. There seems to be a choice that all must make. We either choose knowledge or we choose life. One will need wisdom if one is to choose the tree of life.

Proverbs picks up this theme. Wisdom is a tree of life (Prov 3:18) and all should try and grasp it. By this wisdom the righteous produce fruit, which is a tree of life to them (Prov 11:30). One way for this is the right use of the tongue for healing (Prov 15:4). Once the longing of the righteous is fulfilled, this too is like a tree of life (Prov 15:4). The book of Revelation takes up the story. Those who overcome their spiritual challenges will be allowed to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God (Rev 2:7; 22:14, 19). Paradise is evidently to be restored, and the tree of life re-planted. We read of the trees of life on either side of a river (Rev 22:2; Ezek 47:12). This is a time of fellowship with God and Jesus and a time when there will no longer be any curse – the curse that originated in the original garden has been removed.

The Hebrew word for tree means ‘tree, trees or wood’. This indicates we are able to draw links between passages that at first sight are not connected. Take sacrifices. The ingredient of all sacrifices is wood. Wood is the same word as tree. Without a tree (or wood), the sacrifice cannot be offered to God. So the tree enables forgiveness of sins to be achieved and the burnt offering to be dedicated acceptably to God. Cedar wood (the cedar tree) was part of the sacrifice for the healing of those suffering from leprosy (Lev 14:4) and contact with the dead (Num 19:6). We see how a tree is used in the ceremonies of the Law to counter the effects of sin and death. This fits in with the concept of the tree of life.

An incidental example of the theme of ‘trees’ and ‘life’ is found in the story of Rahab who hid the spies under the ‘stalks’ or ‘wood’ of flax (Josh 2:6). We are told that the ‘wood’ of the flax was ‘set in order’ in the roof. This is the same word used to describe the setting in order of the wood on the altar of sacrifice. The presence of the spies among the wood is analogous Rahab making an offering in a sacrifice. The ‘offering’ of the spies resulted in the sparing of the life of Rahab and her family. The tree (or wood) is again associated with life.

**Tabernacle and Temple**

The tabernacle and the temple were made extensively from wood (trees) and both places are about giving life to the people. These were dwelling places for God and they mirror the original fellowship between God and man in Eden.

Trees are a feature of the temple of Solomon. The rooms of the temple were covered with cedar beams and boards, and planks of fir. There were carved figures of open flowers and palm trees. The doors were of olive trees. There were cedar beams in the court and posts of olive tree (1 Kgs 6:9f), and many trees were used in its construction (2 Chron 2:8, 3:5). In the case of the tabernacle, the boards of the tabernacle are a more abstract representation of the same typology of trees (Exod 26:15f).

The Feast of Tabernacles also seems to draw on the Garden of Eden. During the feast, the people of Israel were told to live in a temporary wooden house constructed of different types of wood (trees) called a ‘booth’. So the feast was literally (in the Hebrew) the Feast of Booths. These booths contained a variety of branches from different types of trees (Lev 23:40; Neh 8:15-16). It was a tree ‘house’ in the sense of being a house of trees, a dwelling among trees. It was a time of rejoicing and a time for eating fruit. All these features remind us of the orchard in Eden. The Feast of Booths pointed forward to God’s kingdom where there would be life, plenty, and enjoyment in Paradise.

**Tree of Life**

All these observations draw us to the fact that the ‘tree’ is associated with life and the living. The tree which was erected outside Jerusalem, to which Jesus was impaled (Acts 5:30; 10:39), was a ‘tree of the living’ (in Greek the word for ‘tree’ is the same as the ‘wood’ derived from it). There were trees either side bearing the bodies of thieves. One robber saw Jesus on a tree of death and, confident of his own knowledge, he ridiculed Jesus as a dead man. The other robber saw Jesus on a tree of life. In his realization, he saw that Jesus did not deserve a tree of death and that Jesus would have a kingdom. He saw a possibility for his own life through Jesus, and he was granted his request.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise. Luke 23:43 (KJV)

The tree of the living in the Garden of Eden was represented in type by the cross and this would shortly make the **place** where Jesus was crucified a type of Eden, i.e. Paradise. The thief took of the tree of life and ate its fruit. He found life everlasting. All who come to Jesus in true faith will not be disappointed. The other thief refused to eat and was associated only with his tree of death.

**Waters**

Man saw a destroyed body on a tree of death. God saw a righteous man, like a tree planted by the waters. God saw what man could not see - a tree of life – of which he could eat and live forever.

The Garden of Eden had two main components[[2]](#footnote-2) – trees, of which the tree of life was the most important, and waters which became rivers flowing from the garden. The significant thing about the rivers was that they had their origin in Eden and flowed outwards. Eden was a source of water which gave life to that which would sprout forth from the earth. In Christ’s death, we have these two components of Eden. We have the tree of life, but there was also the flow of water, which came out of his body as the spear pierced his side (John 19:34; Rev 22:1). This flow of water parallels the flow of water from the garden.

So, in Christ’s death, we have the key components of the Garden of Eden (Paradise). This typology is indicated by Jesus’ own prediction on the cross. He said to the thief “you **will be** with me in paradise”. When Jesus died, the waters of life flowed from his side and thus Eden was then portrayed in type. In his own death, Jesus was showing that Eden would be restored in the kingdom (as shown in Revelation).

The water coming from the side of Jesus is like the water of life. In the prophecies of the future, this water flows from the threshold of the house (Ezek 47:1) and comes from the throne itself (Rev 22:1). In other words, the water comes from the king. This is what we have seen with the water flowing from the Christ. In the prophecies, the water then flows outwards, giving life to the trees and healing from the leaves. This is the work of Christ to provide healing to the nations. A time will be established like the time of the original Eden (or the tabernacle/temple), when there is blessed fellowship with God and a time of bounty. This is the purpose of Eden, for Eden means ‘delight’.

**Conclusion**

In this article, we have offered an explanation of the puzzling words of Christ to the thief on the cross. Rather than explain Christ’s assurance in terms of something said on the day about the thief’s participation in the future kingdom, we have shown how the words are about the day of Christ’s death on which Eden (Paradise) was portrayed in type by the Tree of Life (the cross) and the waters that flowed from Jesus’ side.

**Galatians 3 and Deuteronomy**

**P. Wyns**

For much of Paul, it is necessary to contextualize him within the matrix of the Old Testament, in order to properly understand the complexity of his argument. Many of his sources for Galatians 3 are already known (such as Genesis 15), but the extent to which he refers to Deuteronomy remains largely unrecognized. Firstly, the background of the epistle is not only the status of the Law, but the position of Gentiles with regard to that Law. The Law was being used as an instrument of division by Jewish-Christians, intent on laying the whole burden of Law keeping on the shoulders of their Gentile brethren, and demanding that it was essential to salvation. According to these Jewish-Christians, the keeping of the full Law was still necessary for salvation. Paul is making the point that the Law was never intended to that end—in fact the opposite was true—the law brought death and the Jews themselves could not keep it. Pauline rhetorical strategy focuses on demonstrating that the Promise (and therefore the promised Christ) is superior to the Law and that unlike the Law, the Promise results in unity between Jew and Gentile, reconciliation with God and therefore ultimately in salvation (instead of death).

Paul bases much of his argument on Deuteronomy. The comparison table below is replete with allusions, echoes and sometimes with direct citations from Deuteronomy. Sometimes Paul contrasts the Law with the Promise (such as Gal 3:19/Deut 4:2 – it was forbidden to ‘add’ to the Law but the Promise had the Law ‘added’); at other times his wording echoes Deuteronomy (cf. ‘teacher’ in Gal.3:24-25/Deut.6:7). It can therefore be stated with some confidence that Paul refers to the *Shema* of Deut.6:4 in Gal.3:20 and that it forms the core of his rhetorical strategy concerning mediatorship and the Law.

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| **Deuteronomy** | **Galatians** |
| **32:29** Oh, that they were wise….  | **3:1** O foolish Galatians! |
| **27:26** Cursed *is* the one who does not confirm *all* the words of this law. And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’ | **3:10** …it is written, “Cursed *is* everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” |
| **30:19** I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live. | **3:12** Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them”. |
| **21:23** His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged *is* accursed) | **3:13** Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree”)… |
| **4:2** You shall not add to the word [law] which I command you, nor take from it… | **3:15** Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though *it is* only a man’s covenant, yet *if it is* confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.**3:19** What purpose then *does* the law *serve?* It was added [to the promise] because of transgressions…  |
| **Deuteronomy** | **Galatians** |
| **32:51** …because you [Moses] trespassed against me…you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving to the children of Israel. | **3:18** For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise |
| **7:8** …but because the Lord loves you, and because he would keep the oath which he swore to your fathers… (v. 9) …he *is* God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations…….  | **3:16** Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made.**3:19** ….till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made;  |
| **4:12** And the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire… (v.13) …So he declared to you his covenant …and he wrote them on two tablets of stone.**33:2** And he said: “The Lord came from Sinai…. with ten thousands of saints (angels)… from his right hand *came* a fiery law for them. | **3:19** …*and it was* appointed through angels**3:19** …..by the hand of a mediator. |
| **5:5** I [Moses] stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord… | **3:19** …by the hand of a mediator. |
| **6:4** Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord *is* one! | **3:20** Now a mediator does not *mediate* for one *only,* but God is one. |
| **6:25** Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us.' | **3:21** *Is* the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. |
| **6:7** You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. | **3:24-25** Therefore the law was our teacher *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. |

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| **Deuteronomy** | **Galatians** |
| **32:36** The Lord will judge his people, and will have mercy on his servants: he shall see that their hand is weakened, and that they who were shut up have also failed, and they that remained are consumed. | **3:23** But before the faith came, we were kept under the law shut up, unto that faith which was to be revealed. |
| **32:20 ……**For they *are* a perverse generation, Children in whom *is* no faith. | KJV**3:26** For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.  |
| **32:43** Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with* His people… | **3:28** …for you are all one in Christ Jesus. |

Justification through the Law was conditional on the whole Law being kept. Therefore the Law could only result in cursing and alienation. Even Christ (who kept the whole Law) was cursed by the Law thus demonstrating that the Law was an inadequate vehicle for salvation. However, the fact that the Law unjustly cursed Christ (the Law keeper), meant that the punishment for disobedience (death) had no hold on him and it has no hold on those who identify with his death - the Law is effectively abolished for them for it has no hold on those who are risen!

**Accounting for Abraham**[[3]](#footnote-3)

**John W. Adey**

The abundance of examples of number, acts of numbering, or of reckoning, associated with Abraham seem unparalleled of an individual elsewhere in The Bible.[[4]](#footnote-4) This article investigates certain examples in Abraham’s life that provide insight into the mind of this prophet (Gen 20:7) and friend of God (2 Chron 20:7; Isa 41:8; Jas 2:23). It should be of significance to Abraham’s seed in Christ (e.g., Gal 3:16).

**The value of numbers**

Numbers measure, or represent, value; they facilitate reckoning. Abraham’s saintly seed, like the stars, are humanly uncountable, yet numbered in God’s heavenly book (Ps 69:28; Dan 12:3; Mal 3:16; Rev 21:27). God’s counting takes in both the stars and the saints (which the stars represent). Both are a heavenly host “which no mancould number” (Rev 7:9). The *many* of this ‘innumerable [saintly] assembly’ (Heb 12:23) are measured on the value of *one*: “thy seed which is Christ” (Gal 3:16).

Here, number accounts for the quantity and quality of the sum of the Godly seed. The many numerically are qualitatively one. This is a plural-unity: “And did not he make **one**? … And wherefore **one**? That he might seek a **seed of gods**” (KJV ‘Godly seed’, Mal. 2:1. Cp. John. 10:34-36).[[5]](#footnote-5) Therefore, number, both literal and symbolic, figures significantly in any account of the Gospel preached to Abraham and subsequently to his seed.

**God counts**

In Genesis 15, Abraham (Abram as he was then called), being old and childless, shows his concern for an heir. For how could God’s promises to him about his seed be fulfilled? God’s response is to ask him to count the stars! It *was* a rational option for God to select such a task for a human. For, beyond what could conceivably be attempted, or measured, lay the significance that met Abraham’s concerns. His limited vision was refocused. A metaphysical horizon appeared, and an eternal reality beyond the astrophysical came into view.

The heavens, the host of humanly uncountable stars, declared Abraham’s future in God’s glory. The stars he looked at were “the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1; 2 Cor. 4:18), signifiers of a seed whom he believed Yahweh would provide. The God of glory who had called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees (Acts 7:2) had foreknowingly ‘seen to’ it.[[6]](#footnote-6) Abraham thereby, came to see his seed “afar off” (Gen 22:4, 14; Heb 11:13) and so rejoiced to “see Christ’s day” (John 8:56). Hence, even in this allegorical way:

The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations through faith, preached before the Gospel to Abraham, *saying,* In thee shall all nations be blessed (Gal 3:8. Cp. Gen 22:16-18).

Abraham goes on to ask and receive further assurances about his seed in the context (see vv. 8-18). But given God’s response to him before this, the substance of his faith, about what he hoped for, is implicit. Abraham reckoned with what was *spiritually* seeable symbolised by the stars, and God became his rewarder (Heb 11:6):

I am thy…exceeding great reward….He believed in Yahweh and he counted it to him for righteousness (Gen 15:1, 6).

Where this text is cited in the New Testament [NT], the King James’ Version [KJV] uses three English terms: ‘counted’ (Rom 4:3), ‘accounted’ (Gal 3:6) and ‘imputed’ (Jas 2:23). However, the Greek NT in these passages simply has one word *elogisthē*. So this Greek term represents the Hebrew word *yaHšübeºhä* (‘he counted it’) used in Gen 15:6.[[7]](#footnote-7) *Elogisthē*, like its Hebrew counterpart, is part of a family of words whose usage is specific to mental acts, reasoning, involving logical processes of thought, or reckoning. Calculating the sum of some experience, reckoning what it means, is analogous to functions associated with number.

If one wanted to identify this NT ‘accounted’ family by a common element then Greek *‘logos’* (or, the stem ‘log–‘) as used in the terms ‘word,’ or ‘logical,’ is most apparent. Romans 4 has much about Abraham’s imputed righteousness, and how this works also for the believer. Therefore, not surprisingly, the text uses this Greek ‘log[os]-based’ term quite densely over verses 3 – 24. The range of English translations for *elogisthē* and its cognates includes: ‘counted’, ‘reckoned’ and ‘impute’ as the table below, based on the KJV, shows.

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|  | Romans | KJV | GNT Transliteration |
| 1 | 4:3 | It was counted unto him for righteousness | elogisthē |
| 2 | 4:4 | is the reward not reckoned of grace, but | logizetai |
| 3 | 4:5 | His faith is counted for righteousness | logizetai |
| 4 | 4:6 | Unto whom God imputeth | logizetai |
| 5 | 4:8 | The Lord will not impute | logisētai |
| 6 |  4:9 | Faith was reckoned | elogisthē |
| 7 |  4:10 | How was it then reckoned? | elogisthē |
|  8 |  4:11 | righteousness might be imputed unto them also | logisthēnai |
| 9 |  4:22 | It was imputed to him for | elogisthē  |
| 10 |  4:23 | That it was imputed to him | elogisthē |
| 11 |  4:24 | To whom it shall be imputed | logizesthai |

### Abraham counts

Hebrews 11:19 comments on Abraham’s concern to reckon with the meaning of the Mount Moriah incident when God tried him (Genesis 22).

Accounting that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

No *counting*-related terms occur in the relevant part of Genesis 22, but in Heb 11:19, Abraham’s proving involves his ‘accounting’ (or ‘reckoning’) with the implications of his faith and God’s promises to him. (*Logisamenos*, the Greek term for ‘accounting’, is related to the terms found in Romans 4, listed in the table above). He reasoned with the reality of his belief in resurrection and its consequence for Isaac, the promised seed, whom he is preparing to sacrifice. Abraham’s reckoning focused on the need for resurrection, should his child of promise, Isaac, be killed. It is noteworthy that this experience is also parabolic (Heb 11:19, ‘figure’).

In this situation on Mount Moriah, ‘seeing’ is also associated with ‘reckoning’ as it had been in Gen 15:5 (“*Look* now toward heaven, Tell the stars….so shall thy seed be…And he believed in Yahweh and He *reckoned* it to him for righteousness.”) Abraham names the spot in that mount ‘Yahweh Yireh’, meaning: ‘Yahweh (he) shall be seen’. Figuratively, in this place, he received Isaac back from the dead. God had ‘seen to it’ that an animal was offered (typical of the Lamb of God) instead of Isaac. The place is associated with the person previewed: “in the Mount of Yahweh ***he*** shall be seen” (in Gen 22:14, the Hebrew, coupled with Biblical and exegetical perspectives, would centre-stage ‘he’ not the ‘it’ of English versions). The place where Abraham puts God’s name (cp. the language of Deut 12:5ff.) is ultimately where ‘Yahweh’ *will be*: ‘Yahweh shammah’ (Ezek 48:35).[[8]](#footnote-8)

Abraham’s *reckoning* process was set in a circumstance of trial that was atypical in a key respect. No saint, before or since, has had to meet this condition: *to be asked by God to sacrifice his only son; the seed and heir specially provided by God.* This need not, of course, exclude other elements from being typical, or educative, for the believer. What is exclusive is that Abraham was uniquely involved with what God would do with, or in, His Son. The ‘Yahweh Yireh’ narrative echoes down time to Calvary as typical, in preview, of a Father’s sacrificial love (John 3:16) united with a Son’s sacrificial obedience (Heb 5:8). The significance and scope of Christ’s sacrifice and resurrection impacted on Abraham, since his faith (which entails beliefs held about the work of God in Messiah/Christ) reckoned with that hope. The spirit of Christ was in this prophet and his experience (1 Pet 1:11).

Abraham’s service was to do with presenting the body of Isaac as a living sacrifice. Thus both body and mind were involved in his ‘accounting’ (Heb 11:19) what God could do for Isaac.[[9]](#footnote-9) Such was the quality of mind of our father Abraham (Rom 4:16) that his example can still “command his children after him” (Gen 18:19; Rom 4:23-25). He would implicitly have this to say to us (Rom 12:1-2):

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

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

The KJV’s ‘reasonable’ (in Rom 12:1), related in Greek to ‘accounting’, is equivalent to ‘logical’ (Gk. logiken). This is in the context of ‘mind’ and ‘prove.’ Hence, applied to Abraham when God proved him (Gen 22:1; Heb 11:17), his works (or ‘service’) of faith and obedience, sacrificing his son, were ‘logical.’ His *reckoning* was logical. Logical service is effected, or exercised, through a mind being ‘transformed’ (and thus ‘renewed’) in a mortal body, by Divine revelation.[[10]](#footnote-10)

This shows that a true Christian saint, of the seed of Abraham, should combine undivided, or inseparably, the mind, will and body in serving Abraham’s God.

**Counting stars**

Combining the preceding discussion with an earlier one about the stars, number and reckoning, these matters can be extended. It is important to note that Abraham’s inability to count stars was not a negative experience for him. Why it was not so lay in what the host of stars represented to him personally. This positive moment of revelation would increase, not diminish, his interest in numbers, or reckoning, after that. Indeed, as shown in the table below, he put numbers to much use. In this instance, however, in Genesis 15, God had done the calculation. Abraham counts with his knowledge and belief about his Creator and God responds with His spiritual reckoning of Abraham.

Reckoning on this same basis, that nothing was too hard for God (Gen 18:14; Rom 4:19), both Sarah and he, though aged, were rewarded with the (beginning of the) promised seed in Isaac (Rom 9:9; Heb 11:11). God resurrected (‘quickened’ – revived) Sarah’s (dead) womb (Rom 4:17-19), showing that overcoming death is the ultimate hope in the promise of the seed.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable (Heb 11:12).

Or, as Abraham is presented in Romans 4 (I give a literal rendering in **bold** type):

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickens the dead, and **calls the not being, as being**.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. (Rom 4:17-18)

Abraham’s human counting limitations were resolved in terms of his absolute reliance on God’s infinite capacities. The Cosmos *tells* such a story. It did for Abraham, and it also does in the Sarah allegory of the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal 4:24-26; Heb 12:22-23; Rev 3:21; 21:2).

For Abraham, then, the story behind the starry-heavens he attempted to ‘tell’ (‘count’) was of the “the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth” (Gen 14:22) and His handiwork (Psalm 19). For at any time, His creation, manifold and marvellous, offers an evidential measure of “His eternal power and Godhead” (Rom 1:20-21).

Ur, a city of Mesopotamia, from whence he had been ‘called out’, was given over to worship of the heavens. Yet, Abraham saw in the stars his hoped for seed, and beyond the stars, their Creator who should be worshipped. In his gaze heavenward, Abraham would appreciate that his God “tells the number of the stars; he calls them all by *their* names”, and His “understanding is ‘without number’ (Ps 147:4-5). ‘Without number’ (or ‘there is no number’) is the basic sense of the two Hebrew words *’yn mspr* translated aptly by KJV as ‘infinite’.

Counting stars in Genesis 15 led Abraham to see that “the heavens ***declared*** the glory of God” (Ps 19:1). The Hebrew for ‘tell’ (“*Tell* the stars, if you be able…”) in Gen 15:5 is a cognate of ‘declared’ (or ‘number’, in the plural form: *m****spr****ym*) in Ps 19:1. These terms connect with the Hebrew for ‘number’ - *m****spr*** - as used in the rendering: ‘without number’ or ‘infinite’ of Ps 147:5. So the sense of the original, in Ps 19:1, is that the heavens ‘number’ (or ‘number-out’) the glory of God. The future manifestation of the glory of God, in sons brought to glory in Christ (Heb 2:10), is *computed* by the uncountable stars that shine in the brightness of the firmament (Dan 12:3).[[13]](#footnote-13)

A significant contrast impacts on the narrative in Genesis 15, through the common element of ‘counting’. God’s ‘counting’ of Abraham transposes the issue from one in which finite objects, like stars, are to be numbered. The Hebrew word for ‘number’, ‘tell’ or ‘declare’, based on the stem/root ‘s-p-r’, is used of the act which Abraham was asked to engage in. But ‘counted’ (cf. Hebrew: *Hšb*), used of God’s act, transforms numbering into ‘reckoning,’ not of quantities, but of a quality: *belief in* Yahweh.

In sum: this extra-terrestrial allegory, experienced by Abraham as written aforetime of him, declares for all time that:

For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts (reckonings) than your thoughts (reckonings) (Isa 55:9). [Both instances of KJV ‘thoughts’ are from the familiar Hebrew *Hšb*, used of God’s ‘reckoning’ of Abram in Gen 15:6.]

For us, as for Abraham, God’s friend, there is infinite value in God’s thoughts revealed in the Scriptures. As the Psalmist aptly puts it:

Many, Yahweh my God, *are* thy wonderful works *which* thou hast done, and thy thoughts [‘reckonings’ Hebr. *Hšb*] *which are* to us-ward: they cannot be ranked (or, ‘ordered’) unto thee: *if* I would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered [Hebr. *mspr*]. (Ps 40:5).

To have the mind of Christ, *the* seed of Abraham, is to be the beneficiary of a wonderful work: a work of calling through revelation. God’s reckonings are higher than our reckonings or He is not God. To counter our lower thoughts, or to transpose them God-ward, are the infinite and effectual resources of the Holy Scriptures. Without God’s condescended thoughts in His word to effect righteousness in us, we could not be saved.

**Numbers in the life of Abraham**

Abraham counts, or is associated with number, in a variety of circumstances in his life:

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Genesis** | **Numerological features of the Genesis text concerning Abraham** |
| 1 | 12:4 | Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran |
| 2 | 13:16 | And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, *then* shall thy seed also be numbered. |
| 3 | 14:14 | And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained *servants*, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued *them* unto Dan. (In context, the scene is set with Elamite Chedorlaomer’s reign of 12 years, mention of a rebellion against him in 13th by five kings in Abraham’s region, and in 14th year there’s a war of four kings including Chedorlaomer against the five. The four take Lot captive with others from Sodom.) |
| 4 | 14:20 | And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes [tenths] of all. [Hebrews 7:2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenthpart of all….] |
| 5 | 15:5 | And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if you be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. |
| 6 | 15:6 | And he believed in Yahweh; and he counted it to him for righteousness. |
| 7 | 15:9 | And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. |
| 8 | 15:13 | And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years |
| 9 | 15:16 | But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again |
| 10 | 16:3 | Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in…Canaan |
| 11 | 16:10 | And the angel of Yahweh said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude |

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|  | **Genesis** | **Numerological features of the Genesis text concerning Abraham** |
| 12 | 16:16 | And Abram *was* fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram. |
| 13 | 17:1 | And when Abram was ninetyyears old and nine, Yahweh appeared to Abram, and said… |
| 14 | 17:12 | And he that is eightdays old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations |
| 15 | 17:17 | Abraham …said, Shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninetyyears old, bear? |
| 16 | 17:20 | And as for Ishmael…twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. |
| 17 | 17:24 | And Abraham *was* ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. |
| 18 | 17:25 | And Ishmael his son *was* thirteenyears old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. |
| 19 | 18:2 | And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him  |
| 20 | 18:6 | Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal |
| 21 | 18:24 -32 | Peradventure there be fifty… forty five… forty… thirty… twenty… ten righteous within the city: wilt you also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein…? |
| 22 | 21:4 | And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eightdays old, as God had commanded him. |
| 23 | 21:5 | And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. |
| 24 | 21:28 | And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. (‘Seven’ is also the Hebrew for ‘oath’ or ‘sware’. The name ‘Beer-sheba’ is ‘the well of the seven/oath.’) See the section ‘A well numbered seven.’ |
| 25 | 22:4 | Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. (Cp. Hebrews 11:13 re. ‘afar off,’ and 11:19 re. ‘accounting.’ ) |
| 26 | 22:17 | …I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore. |
| 27 | 23:1 | And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: *these were* the years of the life of Sarah.  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Genesis** | **Numerological features of the Genesis text concerning Abraham** |
| 28 | 23:2, 19 | And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same *is* Hebron.Hebron was also where Abraham buried her (v. 19). ‘Kirjath’ (KJV) is Hebrew for ‘city.’ The name ’arba‘ is Hebrew for the number ‘four’.[[14]](#footnote-14)  |
| 29 | 23:15 | My lord, hearken unto me: the land *is worth* four hundredshekels of silver; what *is* that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. |

**A well numbered seven**

The life of Abraham has encouraged interpreters to work on the numerical values of the Hebrew alphabet. This interest connects with the insertion of the 5th letter of the alphabet ‘h’ (Hebrew: hē) into his former name 'Abram' to create the name ‘Abraham’. Also, Abram’s selection of a band of 318 trained servants to secure the rescue of Lot, and not “some round figure like 300 or 350”,[[15]](#footnote-15) has provoked much speculation.[[16]](#footnote-16) However, this article now turns to look, finally, at Abraham’s deliberate use of the number seven, a highly significant number in Scripture. The table, above, listing instances of number in his life can be a starting point for other investigations.

In the text of Gen 21:22-34, Abimelek and Abraham make a covenant, which was Abimelek’s way, perceiving God to be with Abraham (v. 22), of his being sure that Abraham would not “deal falsely” with him (v. 23). Abraham reproves Abimelek because his servants had violently seized a well from Abraham. However, Abimelek requests an oath for confirmation of the end of this strife (Heb 6:16).

In Abraham’s act of covenant, he makes a deliberate play on the linguistic relation between ‘oath’ (‘swearing’) and ‘seven’ in Hebrew. The evident pun is encoded in his naming of Beersheba. This place, meaningfully named, witnessed to the pact between them.

‘Beersheba’ is composed of two Hebrew words. The word ‘Beer’ transliterates into English letters the Hebrew for a ‘well’. However, the word ‘sheba’ [Hebr. *šb`* ] is used by Abraham with two senses in mind. Both senses relate to what is taking place. One sense is ‘seven’ the other is ‘swear’ (cp. ‘oath’).

When, in verse 24, Abraham proceeds to formalise the pact, pronouncing an oath as Abimelek requested, he says, “I will swear”. In the Hebrew this is (an ‘Imperfect’/Future form) related to ‘sheba’. So, this word is about ‘oath’ making (‘seven-ing’!).

Abraham now gives Abimelek an unspecified number of sheep and oxen, for the purpose of making a covenant (v. 27), which they then enact. Next (in v. 28), Abraham sets aside ‘seven’ ewe lambs by themselves, prompting Abimelek (v. 29) to enquire what this signifies. If we were following the Hebrew text we would observe at this point that (a form of) ‘sheba’ (as in Beer-*sheba*) is actually ‘seven’ for the number of ewe lambs.

Abraham explains (v. 30):

For *these* seven [ *sheba`* ] ewe lambs shall you take of my hand in order that it shall be to me for a witness that I have digged this well [ ‘beer’ ].

The narrative records (v. 31):

Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba; because there they sware [ cf. *sheba`* ] both of them.

In short, whereas ‘seven’ and ‘well’ were put together (i.e. in ‘Beer-sheba’), now the place, duly named, links ‘well’ with ‘oath’ ( *sheba`* ). Textually, as it has been shown, the term ‘well’ ( ‘Beer’ ) has ‘seven’ and ‘oath’ in a before and after relation, marking the literal *number* sense first, then the transposition into the figurative ‘seven’, that is ‘oath’, last. The choice of ‘seven’ for the collective number of ewe lambs intends a physical representation of the oath: they are ‘oath’ ewe lambs.

‘Seven’, therefore, and ‘oath’, equally name the place Beersheba: it is ‘well of (the) seven’; or, ‘well of (the) oath’. The name Beersheba marks an instance of numbering with a pointed significance. Numbering is linked to naming; the name embodies ‘number’ in its subtly contrived meaning. So, this record of Abraham’s judgment provides a relevant perspective on faith, number and meaning in the Bible. This incident, with many others, depicts a consciousness of the significance of number in a prophet of Yahweh.

So, the representation within the Bible of Abraham’s faith and works (e.g. Heb 11:17; Jas 2:21, 22), and the relation of covenant ‘oaths’ to inheritance perspectives (Exod 6:8; Heb 6:13-20; 7:1-4, 21-22, 28), serve as a basis for this circumstantial deployment of the number ‘seven’.

‘Seven’ (as in ‘seventh day’ - Gen 2:2-3) is also associated with ‘rest’, as in the ‘sabbath(-rest)’ [Gk. *sabbatismos*] that lies ahead (Heb 4:1-11). In this context, and apocalyptic ones, ‘seven’ symbolises the end of a sequence (of events, or a process). So, although it connects to the numbers that precede it, it represents a state of affairs discontinuous with them. In other words, the symbolic and ordering roles of ‘seven’ show that it marks a transition from one phase to another different and final one. Such a view of this number is consistent with Abraham resolving the dispute with Abimelek.

The number ‘seven’ is quite dominant in the composition of The Apocalypse. Also, in this last Biblical book it is regarded as wisdom to have the understanding to *count the number* of the beast (Rev 13:18). Abraham, in the first Biblical book, engaged in counting and uses number symbolism, including the use of the number ‘seven’, with advanced spiritual understanding.

His *numerological* behaviour is construable as (true) Christian faith in action. Abraham’s reckoning approach is typical of the mind of Christ, a necessity for the seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16, 29).

**Arius (5)**

**D. Burke**

The task of defending the Nicene Creed fell to Athanasius, successor to Alexander of Alexandria. Controversially appointed as Bishop of Alexandria in AD 328, whilst still less than thirty years old,[[17]](#footnote-17) he was influenced by Western theologians he had met whilst in Rome during a politically advantageous flight from his diocese.

Infamous for his use of violence and intimidation against opponents, Athanasius became leader of the Nicene faction, openly defying Constantine and mocking the Arians as 'Ariomaniacs.' Exiled five times over 17 years (largely for political reasons), he was supported by the desert monks of Egypt and numerous firebrands among the Alexandrian clergy. Although despised for his unscrupulous methods, Athanasius was never accused of heresy.

Athanasius began the attack on Arius in his famous book On the Incarnation, which deals with the fall of man and his need of a saviour. Instead of arguing the proof-texts of Arius (which he found too difficult) Athanasius sought to demonstrate that the logic of the Scriptures as a whole made the incarnation of the Word inevitable.

Athanasius was not as concerned with the expression of theology so as the preservation of its principles. He defended the Nicene Creed because in his mind the alternative − Arianism − constituted an unintelligible attempt to explain the reconciliation of God to man. According to Arius the Logos was simply manifested in Christ the Son, but Athanasius was convinced that unless the Son was considered co-eternal and co-equal with the Father, he could have no personal relationship with the beings he came to save. It was under Athanasius’ leadership that the battle for Christ's deity became irrevocably politicised.

Following their victory in AD 325, the Nicenes found it difficult to maintain consistent imperial support. Constantine's favour swung back and forth between Arian and Nicene parties as he struggled to contain their destructive influences. Constantine himself cared little for the debate (which he could not understand anyway) and his unstable temper led to frequent changes of mind.

Both sides were adept at persuading Constantine to their cause, but carelessness and overconfidence occasionally caused them to overstep the mark, bringing imperial recrimination. Sometimes, the Emperor’s favour could be won back by heavy lobbying; at other times the punishment had to be borne until Constantine softened, as he invariably did.

At some point Constantine must have realised that the Council of Nicaea had failed. Its consensus was a sham and the divisions he had hoped to repair were even deeper than before. In AD 332 he attempted reparations with Arius, swinging away from the uncompromising bishops who had been so vocal at Nicaea and embracing a revised version of Arianism himself.

We also know that Arius’ own beliefs were under revision, for he modifies and qualifies his “official” statements from time to time. Athanasius followed each new twist and turn with an unflinching gaze, carefully recording the development of Arian Christology in a series of letters that survives to this day.

By AD 336, four councils had declared Arius orthodox, and preparations were made to receive him into the church. Unfortunately, he died on the night before his formal reconciliation, leaving Athanasius to crow over his corpse with snide allusions to Judas.[[18]](#footnote-18) Many Nicenes hoped this would bring an end to the heresy, but Arius was no longer central to Arianism, and his Christology had become a movement which rumbled on under its own momentum.

The debate continued to rage even after Constantine's own death in AD 337. He was survived by his three sons: Constantine II (A Nicene Christian), Constantius II (An Arian), and Constans (Another Nicene). Each had been granted a third of the empire, in which their favoured Christology was upheld as orthodox. Local councils were convened in different regions, all condemning their own definition of heresy while affirming idiosyncratic definitions of orthodoxy.

During this period, Arianism was increasingly refined. The 4th Arian Confession (AD 341) rejects the idea that there was a time when Christ did not exist and affirms the Son as a direct product of the Father’s own subsistence:

But those who say, that the Son was from nothing, or from other subsistence and not from God, and, there was time when He was not, the Catholic Church regards as aliens.[[19]](#footnote-19)

The 5th Arian Confession (AD 344) goes further:

But those who say,

(1) that the Son was from nothing, or from other subsistence and not from God;

(2) and that there was a time or age when He was not, the Catholic and Holy Church regards as aliens.

Likewise those who say,

(3) that there are three Gods:

(4) or that Christ is not God;

(5) or that before the ages He was neither Christ nor Son of God;

(6) or that Father and Son, or Holy Ghost, are the same;

(7) or that the Son is Ingenerate; or that the Father begat the Son, not by choice or will; the Holy and Catholic Church anathematizes.

For neither is safe to say that the Son is from nothing, (since this is no where spoken of Him in divinely inspired Scripture,) nor again of any other subsistence before existing beside the Father, but from God alone do we define Him genuinely to be generated...

Nor may we, adopting the hazardous position, 'There was once when He was not,' from unscriptural sources, imagine any interval of time before Him, but only the God who has generated Him apart from time; for through Him both times and ages came to be...[[20]](#footnote-20)

We see here that that the Arians tried hard to define their Christology in terms acceptable to both sides of the debate. They were not entirely successful (sometimes gaining the support of liberal Nicenes at the expense of the more conservative Arians) but although the language was subject to variation, the essential lineaments of Arian Christology never really changed.

Clearer still is the growing Arian preference for unambiguous Scriptural statements and the rejection of unbiblical terminology. This enabled them to avoid being drawn into speculative debates about aspects of the Godhead not explicitly revealed in Scripture. Consequently, Arian confessions became shorter while Nicene confessions became longer.

The divided empire gave Arianism some breathing space to redefine itself and prepare for the next great battle against Nicene Christology. This was made easier by the deaths of the Nicene emperors. Constantine II had been killed in battle against Constans in AD 340 while Constans was murdered by Magentius, a former bodyguard, in AD 350. Having outlived his brothers, Constantius II established Arianism as official Christology[[21]](#footnote-21) but was killed en route to fight his half-uncle, Julian the Apostate, in AD 361.

Julian reigned for less than 10 years, during which time he promoted paganism and undermined Christianity. He introduced sweeping changes to eliminate corruption, reduce bureaucracy and reverse Constantine’s reforms. An edict of ‘religious tolerance’ (similar to Constantine's Edict of Milan) restored paganism to its former position as a privileged faith.

Additional legislation reopened pagan temples and restored property to pagans. Exiled bishops were recalled in the hope that their return would spark new disputes and revitalise the old ones.[[22]](#footnote-22) But although dampened, the Arian/Nicene controversy continued to smoulder beneath the surface of a repressed Christian community. Three Cappadocian churchmen − Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, and his brother, Basil of Caesarea − emerged as champions of the Athanasian legacy.

Following almost two decades of political unrest, Theodosius I came to power as co-Augustus of the East in AD 378. With the assent of his fellow rulers he declared Trinitarianism the only orthodox position of the church[[23]](#footnote-23) and convened a new ecumenical council in AD 381: the Council of Constantinople. The latter decision was necessitated by longstanding inadequacies in the Nicene Creed, which had established the deity of Christ without elaborating on the nature of the Holy Spirit or defining an explicit Trinity.

R. E. Rubenstein observes that a lack of definitive vocabulary made it difficult to work through these issues and establish consensus:

Even great theologians such as Athanasius still used terms like ‘essence’ (*ousia*) and ‘being’ (*hypostasis*) interchangeably, sometimes exchanging these words with other terms like ‘person’ (*prosopon*.) The Nicene Creed itself anathematised not only those who denied that the Father and son were ‘one in essence’ but those who denied that the Father and son were one in ‘being’.[[24]](#footnote-24)

The Cappadocians proposed a delineation between *ousia* and *hypostasis*; essence and being. Under their definition, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three separate beings, each with his own individual characteristics − they are three hypostases. But they are one and the same in essence − they are *homoousios.*

Adopting an idea of Origen, that easterners would appreciate, Basil of Caesarea described Jesus as a “sharer of [God's] nature, not created by fiat, but shining out continuously from his *ousia*”.[[25]](#footnote-25) The Holy Spirit, which the Arians and some Nicenes considered a principle or person lower down the scale of divinity than either the Father or Son, was said to share the same divine essence. The Holy Spirit is a third individual being (or Person) ‘consubstantial’ with the Father and the Son.

In other words, lest any should suggest that he was degrading the third member of the Trinity, Basil reassured his contemporaries that the Holy Spirit shared the same divine *ousia* possessed by the Father and Son. While all three are separate *hypostases* (‘person’ or ‘being’), together they constituted the Godhead, melded into a consubstantial ‘one’ by virtue of their shared *ousia* (‘essence’ or ‘substance’)*.*

Despite this, Basil was not prepared to deify the Holy Spirit and his formula above is intended to satisfy readers without inviting closer scrutiny:

It is therefore notable that, while adopting formulae and language which plainly imply the substantial Trinity, Basil does not write of the Holy Spirit as 'God' or as ‘consubstantial with the Father’. So in a letter asserting the one essence, he concludes ‘God the Father’ and ‘God the Son’ (Gk *theon huion*), but ‘the divine Holy Spirit’ (Gk to *theion pneuma to hagion*). He does not want to expose his case to the retort that it adds unbiblical titles to the Spirit, though there can be no doubt about what he believes.[[26]](#footnote-26)

Basil's reticence invited charges of heresy from more progressive bishops but he was defended by the now aging Athanasius, who had made great strides in the reconciliation of Nicene and Semi-Arian factions. Yet his conservative views were widespread among the laity, as Gregory Nazianzen admitted:

But, they go on, what have you to say about the Holy Ghost? From whence are you bringing in upon us this strange God, of Whom Scripture is silent? And even they who keep within bounds as to the Son speak thus. And just as we find in the case of roads and rivers, that they split off from one another and join again, so it happens also in this case, through the superabundance of impiety, that people who differ in all other respects have here some points of agreement, so that you never can tell for certain either where they are of one mind, or where they are in conflict.

Now the subject of the Holy Spirit presents a special difficulty, not only because when these men have become weary in their disputations concerning the Son, they struggle with greater heat against the Spirit…[[27]](#footnote-27)

But of the wise men amongst ourselves, some have conceived of [the Holy Spirit] as an Activity, some as a Creature, some as God; and some have been uncertain which to call Him, out of reverence for Scripture, they say, as though it did not make the matter clear either way. And therefore they neither worship Him nor treat Him with dishonour, but take up a neutral position, or rather a very miserable one, with respect to Him. And of those who consider Him to be God, some are orthodox in mind only, while others venture to be so with the lips also.[[28]](#footnote-28)

In AD 451, the Council of Chalcedon finally hammered the Trinity into its current shape: three distinct persons sharing one divine essence, following the Cappadocians’ formulae. It had taken three and a half centuries to achieve a definitive post-apostolic Christology.

J. C. McDowell concludes:

Brought into the open were tensions that had lain underneath the theological surface for years, and it is as the catalyst of this situation Arius is known in hindsight. Therefore, in this sense the popular ecclesial description of Arius as ‘arch-heretic’, or as the founder of archetypal Christian deviation, something aimed at the heart of the Christian confession, is not a wholly fair one...In A.D. 318 there was no universally recognised orthodox answer as to the question of how divine Christ is (e.g., Origen and Tertullian). The frontiers of orthodoxy were not so rigidly demarcated as they later became, and important currents of thought flowed outside the main channel. This is one of the reasons why the controversy lasted for so long.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Orthodoxy has chosen to paint Arius as a dangerous radical; the proponent of novel and heretical ideas. But the truth is that he proposed nothing new. His only ‘crime’ was an outdated Christology which, though orthodox in its day, had been rapidly overtaken by new developments.

**Concluded**

**Reviews**

**En-Roeh**

‘En-Roeh’ is the title of a 512 page commentary on Isaiah, Habakkuk and Nahum by W. A. Wordsworth published in 1939 by T&T Clark of Edinburgh and now only available through second-hand sources such as www.abebooks.co.uk. It is mainly a commentary on Isaiah (477 pages), but the two minor prophets are included as Wordsworth dates them to the eighth century. The principal interest in the book is the commentary on Isaiah, which may be familiar from the occasional quotation by H. A. Whittaker in his commentary on Isaiah.

Wordsworth states in the preface that he worked alone on the commentary for fourteen years and it is not a conventional approach. Wordsworth was an Anglican vicar, not an academic scholar, and his approach is allegorical in the sense that he sees in Isaiah a story of Immanuel an eighth century counterpart to Christ. The fact that he worked alone is evident on every page because the commentary bristles with originality (a rare thing in scholarly commentary).

In a nutshell, for Wordsworth, the book of Isaiah is from Isaiah of Jerusalem and he prophesies for the kings noted in 1:1; he charts the life story among other things of an eighth century messiah who becomes prominent in various oracles throughout the book. Broadly speaking the life story is similar to that of Christ. This figure is Immanuel, the Wonderful Counsellor, The Rod of Jesse, the Suffering Servant and the Anonymous Conqueror, all rolled into one.

Although it can be shown that Wordsworth’s allegory is incorrect, this does not render his commentary valueless. Every now and then he has an insight into the text apart from the allegory that is worth clocking and filing away for use in a more measured eighth century reading.

The main criticism to be levelled against the book is not the Immanuel story it constructs but in the approach taken to the Hebrew text (MT) which is to emend it freely according to the intuitions of the author about rhythm (p. 1). Emendation is quite extensive and sometimes it seems motivated by the need to see the allegory in the text. Nevertheless, the reader with Hebrew should mark a difference with Wordsworth’s emendations; they seem to be part of a reverential regard for the original text that he thinks he is recovering and a high estimate for the work of the Masoretes. In this he is somewhat different to the rather cold and critical approach of the scholar who emends the text according to his preferred readings.

Wordsworth is ignored by other commentaries first, because he treats the later chapters of the book as a commentary on Isaiah’s times rather than exilic and post-exilic period; and secondly, because his approach is allegorical and too imaginative with the text.

The commentary is not a ‘must-have’ but it has some value for the independent Bible student who works with the Hebrew text, provided s/he has a filter mechanism to ignore the speculative emendations and extract the insights that Wordsworth has on the MT. If you are happy with standard church commentaries such as the Tyndale series (Motyer is the relevant author of the Isaiah volume), then the commentary will seem so ‘out-of-box’ that it is just plain wrong-headed. But if you are looking to discover what Isaiah is really about, then Wordsworth will add something to that process.

**AP**

**Did the first Christians worship Jesus?**

(J. D. G. Dunn; London: SPCK, 2010)

J. D. G. Dunn dedicates his book to R. Bauckham and L. Hurtado, “partners in dialogue”, and his book should be seen as a response to their works.[[30]](#footnote-30) The title question is particularly pertinent because both Bauckham and Hurtado have argued that the worship of Jesus is witness that Jesus was identified as God: “for Jewish monotheists [the worship of Jesus] is recognition of the unique divine identity”.[[31]](#footnote-31) The intention of this line of argument is to demonstrate that, despite the absence of explicit statements identifying Jesus as God, Jesus was *de facto* included within the identity of the God of Israel.[[32]](#footnote-32)

The first two chapters of the book cover the language and practice of worship. Dunn reviews the worship-words of the NT and reveals that those words used of Jesus in the NT are those also used of the reverence of mortal dignitaries (*proskynein, charin, doxa*), whilst those words reserved for exclusive worship of YHWH are not used of Jesus in the NT (*latreia, sebein, ainein, eucharistein*). Even though there are a few verses where Dunn is undecided, the pattern is clear: the worship of God is separate from the reverence of Jesus. His review of the practice of worship reaches a similar conclusion. Prayer (*proseuche*) is exclusively offered to God, though there are instances of appeals (*parakalein*) to Jesus and calling upon (*epikaleisthai*) his name. Hymns are sung **about** Jesus, rarely to Jesus (the exceptions are shouts of praise to the Lamb in Revelation). Whilst some cultic elements (sacred times, sacred meals) are dedicated to Christ, in Christian worship it is Jesus who functions as priest, as sacrifice, even as temple. The conclusion is that worship is offered **to** God **through** Jesus.

Having exhausted the NT resources on the language and practice of worship, Dunn embarks down an apparent tangent to examine the role of intermediaries in Second Temple Judaism (chapter 3). The significance of this examination is that Bauckham had sought to downplay the role of intermediaries; for Bauckham there is a sharp disjunction between the unique divine identity and creation. Bauckham, of course, wants to argue that it was impossible for a Jewish monotheist to recognise something or someone as divine and not also be God. Actually, as Dunn reveals, divine intermediaries were perfectly compatible with Jewish monotheism. Dunn sees this as the way Jewish thinkers sought to reconcile the transcendence and immanence of God. He discusses angels, linguistic and attributive hypostatizations (such as Wisdom and Word) and exalted human beings.

In the fourth chapter, Dunn applies his conclusions about Jewish intermediaries to Jesus. He notes that the NT describes Jesus as a mediator, as an exalted man, and identifies him with Wisdom and Word. Here, Dunn reaffirms his hermeneutic of an ‘Adam Christology’ in the Pauline epistles, something both Bauckham and Hurtado have queried. This is significant because the role of Christ as the last Adam speaks of the **exaltation of a man** rather than an eternal divine equality.

Dunn is a Methodist and an avowed Trinitarian so his answer to the title question is noteworthy: “No, by and large the first Christians did not worship Jesus as such” (p. 150). What is interesting about the argument Dunn develops throughout his book is his view that Jesus was **the** way in which God was immanent amongst mankind. The resulting Christology seems very close to the concept of theophany developed by the Christadelphian pioneers.

**TG**

 **Jesus and the Eyewitnesses**

(R. Bauckham; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006)

Some time ago I attended a presentation about the impact of the open access movement on journal publishing. The speaker commented on how the discourse about a particular subject can easily be moulded by a set of baseless assertions; it is left to some poor individual (the speaker had himself in mind) to go to through the hard work of detailed and thorough analysis only to disprove these assertions. It is a good warning to beware the conventional wisdom within any discipline.

This is certainly true in the case of the study of Jesus. For years the academic community has been influenced by the conclusions of the 19th century German ‘form critics’, who had decided that the Jesus traditions has been passed down in a long and fluid process of oral transmission prior to writing of the gospels. For myself, such a conclusion always seemed unlikely *a priori* because even if we accept a late date for the gospels (say, mid-80s) then they are still within living memory and so a very fluid transmission could be contradicted. However, with the research of R. Bauckham, we can now be confident that the assertions of the form critics are false.

Bauckham begins by re-examining the testimony of Papias (chapter 2), who explicitly records his own endeavour to gather together the testimonies of eyewitnesses still living and those who knew them. This indicates that the testimonies about Jesus were still attached to eyewitnesses and should incline scholars to take seriously claims, such as those of Luke, that the gospels were based upon eyewitness testimony. Bauckham analyses named individuals within the gospels (chapter 3) and argues that their naming is irrelevant unless they were supposed to be known by the readers. The gospel writers were specifically connecting these incidents with eyewitnesses who could corroborate the story. After some fascinating analysis of the provenance of names in 1st century Palestine (chapter 4), Bauckham continues to explore the roles of eyewitnesses in the gospels (chapter 6), primarily Peter as the witness behind Mark’s gospel (chapters 7 & 9).

Having established the strong case that living eyewitnesses were explicitly connected with the stories about Jesus by the gospel writers, Bauckham proceeds to analyse the nature and role of oral tradition (chapters 10-12). He contradicts the idea that oral transmission must necessarily be fluid, demonstrating that this is entirely dependent on the type of material and the community preserving it. Examples of Paul’s letters are used to demonstrate that the traditions about Jesus were passed to the churches by careful memorization of those traditions. He also provides some useful research into the reliability of eyewitness memory, demonstrating that it can be reliable even after many decades, particular regarding the kind of momentous events recorded in the gospels.

In the final section (chapters 14-17), Bauckham extends his thesis further and contradicts the received wisdom by arguing that John’s gospel is also eyewitness testimony. He identified the “disciple whom Jesus loved” as John the Elder, not the son of Zebedee but another follower of Jesus. Bauckham sees John’s gospel as presupposing the existence of the other gospels, and supplementing their testimony (primarily Petrine) with the reminiscences of John.

Some readers may not agree with everything Bauckham writes. He seems to take for granted a particular view on the synoptic problem and, as a historical study, he does not talk about inspiration. Nevertheless the significance of this work should not be underestimated. It restores the link between the gospels and the eyewitnesses, and so fatally undermines the form critical approach to the gospels. The study of “historical” Jesus should never be the same again.

**TG**

**The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity,**

(Ed. P. C. Phan; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

The concept of a “companion” is difficult to define; is it necessary background information or is it supplementary material? Some companions provide a useful introduction to a topic with an overview of the current state of the field. This companion is unsure as to its status. The editor would like it to be a “fellow traveller” (p. xiii) with the reader; I felt little fellowship with the contributors.

The editor contributes two introductory chapters, one on the development of the doctrine of the trinity and another of systematic theology. The paucity of both chapters renders them of little value; his account of the development of the trinity is particularly inadequate.

The next part of the companion is entitled “Retrieving the sources”, which might give the reader some hope that the contributors will consider the revelatory status of the trinity. However, only one chapter is devoted to the New Testament (chapter 3). The analysis given in this chapter seems to amount to “if you already accept the trinity you can read the NT triadically”. This chapter gives no historical explanation for the origins of the trinity, and absolutely no justification for this doctrine. The next two chapters, on the Greek and Latin fathers respectively, are more substantial and give an interesting, if one sided, account of the changing emphases in Christian doctrine. To the credit of the contributor, the chapter on the Greek fathers begins with the (so-called) Apostolic Fathers, such as Clement of Rome and Ignatius – a group of writings often overlooked in accounts of the development of the trinity. Yet it is clear that these contributors are not seeking to describe the development of the trinity but rather to argue that it didn’t develop, there was merely a change in emphasis.

The third part of the companion traces the history of the Trinity both before and after the Reformation. However those familiar with such works as Alan Eyre’s *The Protestors* will be surprised by the absence of any significant discussion of unitarian movements from this period. Similarly, in part five, where the companion discusses other religions, the absence of any discussion of non-Trinitarian Christians is striking.

In sum, the companion provides some interesting insights into the role of the Trinity in Christian doctrine past and present. Unfortunately the presentation of these insights is too one sided to make this a useful resource.

**TG**

**God is Judge: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel**

(P. Wyns; Biblaridion Media; 2011)

Few other books of the Bible, save perhaps Revelation, so interest and agitate scholars and laity alike as the book of Daniel. Our own community is no exception; many books and articles have been written about this intriguing part of Scripture. No doubt the reason for this interest is the book’s remarkable visions, both for their prophetic significance and their enigmatic quality. It is presumably for this same reason that the opinions of scholars, both critical and conservative, have become dogmatic in such a bi-polar manner. Conservative scholars claim that the book was written by a real prophet of the Neo-Babylonian era, who uttered real prophecies (often with a Rome-centric interpretation). Critical scholars claim that the book is a pseudograph, composed during the Maccabean crisis, with prophecy *ex eventu* (often with a Greek/Seleucid-centric interpretation). Wyns adopt a middle course. With academic rigor and intellectual honesty he draws on the best of both positions, recognising Daniel as a real prophet whilst utilizing the insights of critical scholars.

The primary thesis of *God is Judge* is that the book does not end with the reign of Cyrus, as many scholars assert, but with the reign of Darius Hystaspis. According to Wyns, the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus did not mark the end of the seventy years. There was a twenty-one year delay (Dan 10:13) till Darius Hystaspis captured Babylon and allowed the temple in Jerusalem to be reconstructed (515 BC), thus completing seventy years from the final Judean captivity (585 BC). This proposition provides Wyns with a new approach to some of the most intractable parts of the book. It is used to remake the schema for interpreting the seventy-week prophecy; the mysterious “Darius the Mede” is identified as Darius Hystaspis. Not everyone will agree with these conclusions but Wyns presents a robust and detailed case, which should not be ignored.

Another useful aspect of the book is the intertextual approach, particularly with regards to Isaiah. This material will be new to most readers and is fertile ground for further exploration.

Were one compelled to make criticisms it would be acknowledged that not everyone will find this an easy read. The book is over 400 pages, is littered with footnotes and references, and engages readily with the highest levels of scholarship. Whilst this means that this is not a book for beginners, it is testament to the in-depth research and wealth of many years’ patient study.

Some may also object to Wyns’ thoughts about the redaction of the book. Whilst confirming that the original court tales and visions of Daniel were written in the Persian era, Wyns postulates a final redaction in the Maccabean era when Dan 11:5-39 were incorporated into the text.[[33]](#footnote-33) Whatever one’s view, one has to admire Wyns’ thoughtful approach that acknowledges the speculative nature of any reconstruction of the book’s history. In any case, dissension on this point will not prevent the reader from gleaning much that is useful from the rest of the book.

This will not be the final word on Daniel nor will it settle all debate, but it is one of the most original and thorough approaches to the book of Daniel to come from our community and is worthy of a far wider audience.

**TG**

**Correspondence**

Dear Editors,

Grace and peace from our father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I refer to Paul’s essay titled *Matthew’s Genealogy* in *EJBI*, October 2011. In this Paul writes that Matthew has only 13 names in the last group of 14 generations. This is based on a mis-reading of Matthew’s genealogical structuring about which, writing by the holy spirit, Matthew carefully specifies the beginnings and endings of each of the three sets of *fourteen generations*. Matthew 1:17 identifies the first of the *fourteen generations* as from Abraham to David, the second of the *fourteen generations* as from David to the carrying away into Babylon and the third of the *fourteen generations* as from the carrying away into Babylon to Christ.

From this we see that the first-named in the first *fourteen generations*, Abraham, is the first of the set of fourteen. Following this pattern, the first-named in the second *fourteen generations*, David, is the first of the set of fourteen (not Solomon as Paul tabulates). This yields fourteen generations from Abraham to David, the first set of fourteen; fourteen generations from David to Josiah after whom Babylonian captivity commences, the second set of fourteen; and fourteen generations from Jeconiah, who was taken captive into Babylon, to Christ. There is no missing name in the final set of *fourteen generations*.

Of course, recognizing this is the genealogical structuring adopted by the spirit in Matthew yields the need for exposition to resolve unusual features alongside others identified by Paul: why does David feature as the end of the first of the *fourteen generations* **and also** as the first of the second of the *fourteen generations*; why are the end of the second of the *fourteen generations* and the beginning of the third of the *fourteen generations* demarcated by the carrying away into Babylon and not with the relevant ancestral names? But this is not the place to pursue answers to these matters.

I believe Matt 1:17 demonstrates to us that the scriptural function of “generations” is counter our expectations for sequential genealogical lists of names: the dual use of David and the use of an event to demarcate the end/beginning of the second/third set of fourteen shows this. The omitted five “generations” (I use the term here consistent with expectations) is a further illustration of this. The first scriptural use of “generations” also shows this: Genesis 2:4 has no genealogy, scripture speaks of the generations of the heavens and earth. In a different kind of way, the use in Genesis 37:2 also shows this: scripture speaks of “generations” (plural) and then proceeds with the singular mention of Joseph! In sum, scripture’s use of “generations” is not principally one of genealogical listing; it has a different function which requires exposition to discover.

In the Lord Jesus Christ, Peter Heaviside

**Reply:**

Dear Peter,

Thanks for the comments....it is nice to know that someone actually reads the articles!

If I have understood it correctly David is mentioned twice in Matthew 1:17 at both the end of a grouping and at the commencement of the next grouping. The second grouping should then start (according to Matt 1:17) with David and not with Solomon but as the genealogical list is a continuous list of ancestors I have simply followed the list that Matthew recorded.  Matthew uses David twice to delineate his genealogy and structure it around the number 42 (3x14) but the actual genealogical list only has 41 names. It is obvious that under guidance of the Spirit, Matthew wanted to highlight the importance of the fact that Christ appeared after 42 generations - in order to do this he was selective with the genealogy (omitting five ancestors) and used David twice in his summary in Matthew 1:17.

Regards in Christ, Paul

**New Books**

**THE NATURE OF ECCLESIAL FELLOWSHIP**

By Bro. Richard Mellowes, Meli Publications, Caerphilly.

This book discusses the Scriptural basis of fellowship, and how it should be applied in ecclesial life, and in inter-ecclesial relationships.

Available from early 2012, God willing. Price £6.50, incl. P&P. From R. Mellowes, 88, Heol Trecastell, Caerphilly, CF83 1AF

**ISAIAH 58-66**

By Andrew Perry, Willow Publications.

This book is the second volume of a trilogy on Isaiah 40-66. It traces the rise of the Anonymous Conqueror, the Arm of the Lord whom God raised in the aftermath of 701 to liberate the Judahites that had been taken by the surrounding nations during the Assyrian invasion.

Available now (£8.99) from www.lulu.com/willowpublications.

The first volume, *Isaiah 40-48*, on the Babylonian Crisis, is also available.

**Obituary**

Christadelphians have not often been scholars in the field of Biblical Studies or related disciplines. Bro. Lambert was a scholar in Assyriology and we invited a colleague, A. R. Millard (Emeritus Rankin Professor of Hebrew & Ancient Semitic Languages, University if Liverpool), to write an obituary for EJ of his working life.

………..

**Bro. W G Lambert**

Boys at Westminster Under School from 1948 to 1955 may have been surprised at the way their Classics Master spent his spare time. He sat in the British Museum peering at ancient clay tablets and drawing the cuneiform signs impressed upon them. Back in his lodgings, he studied and translated them. In this way Wilfred Lambert began the career which was to make him the pre-eminent authority in the world on Babylonian and Assyrian literature. Leaving King Edward's High School in Birmingham in 1943, he studied Latin and Greek at Cambridge (1943-45), returning, after a break for service in farming as a conscientious objector, to take a course in Hebrew and Assyrian (1948-50). Assyriology became the central interest of his life. The texts he copied while a school master formed the nucleus of his first major publication, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature,* which offers some valuable comparisons with the Hebrew books of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. It is still the standard work, despite the discovery of additional texts. By the time the book appeared (1960), he had left England to become a lecturer in Near eastern Studies at the University of Toronto, then, in 1959, to an associate professorship at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, following the famous archaeologist and biblical scholar, W. F. Albright. Birmingham was his home, so he delightedly moved back in 1964 to teach at the University, retiring as Professor in 1993.

The most important source for ancient Babylonia literature today is the remnant of the great library king Ashurbanipal collected in Nineveh in the 7th century B.C. (between the times of Isaiah and Jeremiah). Most of the surviving tablets are held in the British Museum and almost all are broken, having fallen from shelves or been struck by debris when the Babylonians and Medes sacked the city in 612 B.C. To recover the ancient compositions means examining the fragments to join pieces and reconstruct as much as possible of each tablet. Happily, there were several copies of many 'books', so often gaps in one copy can be filled from another. By combing the collection of over 25,000 pieces and reading many from other places in the British Museum and museums in Europe, the Near East and North America, Lambert gained an unrivalled knowledge of Babylonian culture and thought.

Following his work on wisdom literature, he turned to ancient accounts of creation. He was gathering material for a definitive presentation and discussion of Babylonian and the earlier Sumerian narratives when the writer, employed in the British Museum, came upon two unusually large, broken, tablets (about 8 inches high, whereas most cuneiform tablets can be held in the hand). Made about 1635 B.C., they relate the creation of mankind and the Flood. Lambert had worked on previously known small fragments of the story, so it was appropriate to work together to produce *Atrahasis. The Babylonian Story of the Flood* in 1969. The tablets had been misplaced in the Museum's tablet collection and came to light in the course of cataloguing fragments from Nineveh scattered throughout it. That search brought to light several literary pieces, so the *Catalogue of the Cuneiform Tablets in the Kouyunjik Collection of the British Museum, Second Supplement* (1968) was another joint work. He was always a congenial colleague, supportive and ready to share his insights and new information, although his comments could be scathing when others failed to reach his high standards, as some of his book reviews reveal. His work on creation stories was constantly interrupted by attention to other compositions, but he had completed it before his death and had funding to enable a younger scholar to computerise his typescript, so this long-awaited publication is shortly to appear.

Assyriology has always contributed to Biblical Studies and Lambert was well-read in that field, as might be expected. Besides attending the annual conferences of Assyriologists, based in Paris, but held in various parts of the world, he was present regularly at the British Society for Old Testament Studies meetings in January and July and was President of the Society in 1984. He published essays on Biblical topics as illuminated by cuneiform texts and was severely critical of Biblical experts who misinterpreted them, yet he was always ready to help those who sought his advice, either in person or by letter, and he would readily read their work before it went to the printer.

Austere and reserved at a first meeting, he could discuss a wide range of topics with knowledge and humour, all the while eager to revert to Assyriology. His death deprives that subject and Biblical studies of an outstanding, original and stimulating scholar.

**Prof. Alan Millard**

**Columnists**

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**Analysis**

**J. Davies**

In 1 Samuel 4 – 7 the Spirit records an enigmatic event where the ark of Israel is lost to the Philistines. A simple reading of the text inevitably leads to a number of intriguing questions.[[34]](#footnote-34) Why does God allow the ark to go into the hands of the idolatrous Philistines? Why is the ark mentioned so frequently? Why are we told about Dagon’s hands being cut off? Where do the elusive golden mice come from?

To examine these questions, and underpinning the ‘Analysis’ column, is a methodology to ‘search the Scriptures’ by ‘comparing spiritual things with spiritual’[[35]](#footnote-35) (Acts 17:11, 1 Cor 2:14[[36]](#footnote-36)). By doing so, the aim is to receive with meekness the engrafted word and to be doers of the word, and not hearers only. The consideration of this text in 1 Samuel will highlight the need to ‘look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen’ (2 Cor 4:18).

**‘to prove Israel by them’**

To appreciate the context of our passage, Israel is at war with the Philistines, something they have been engaged in since the time of Samson (cf. Jud 13:5).

Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. 1 Sam 4:1b (KJV)[[37]](#footnote-37)

We learn from Judges 3 that the Philistines[[38]](#footnote-38) had been left in the land purposefully by God:

Now these [*are*] the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them, [*even*] as many [*of Israel*] as had not known all the wars of Canaan;Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof;[*namely*], **five lords of the Philistines**,...and they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. Jud 3:1-4 (KJV)

In the incidents we will examine, we are seeing God using the Philistines to prove Israel to see whether they would keep the commandments He gave to their fathers, by the hand of Moses.

**‘it may save us’**

With the latest battle lost, and with the loss of 4,000 Israeli lives (1 Sam 4:2), Israel began to question why this had happened (1 Sam 4:3). In so doing, they apportion the blame of the defeat to God and are entirely self-absorbed:

…the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten **us** to day before the Philistines? Let **us** fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto **us**, that, when it cometh among **us**, it may save **us** out of the hand of our enemies…

The elders believe that their salvation will come from the ark ‘that, when **it** cometh among us, **it** may save usout of the hand of our enemies’ (v. 3). The elders of Israel believe that **the ark** alonewill save them (cf. Exod 32:8). At best, they treat the ark of the Yahweh of hosts as a mascot; at worst, they treat it like an idol.

The elders of Israel believe that the ark would ‘save *(ysh)*’ (1 Sam 4:3). The irony was that Israel already had a specific commandment by the hand of Moses regarding **salvation** in a battle situation:

When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, [*and*] a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God [*is*] with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; For the Lord your God [*is*] he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save (*ysh*) you. Deut 20:1-4 (KJV)

The priest was to tell the people that Yahweh would **save** them – not the ark *itself*. Israel had failed to hearken to His commandments. The elders had not followed the ‘biblical’ approach, but had chosen their own course of action.

In 1 Samuel, we learn the identity of the ‘priests’ who were supposed to be leading Israel into battle – Hophni and Phinehas[[39]](#footnote-39) (1 Sam 4:4; cf. Deut 20:2). As priests they were to ‘keep knowledge’ (Mal 2:7), they should have known Deuteronomy 20 and applied it. Yet Hophni and Phinehas, ‘sons of Belial’ who ‘knew not Yahweh’ (1 Sam 2:12), were not at the battle but back with the ark at Shiloh (1 Sam 4:4). The priesthood of the day was so corrupt they didn’t know Yahweh – or his commandments (cf. Jud 3:4).

**‘shouted with a great shout’**

After losing the first battle, the ark was brought into camp to assist Israel in the next military skirmish (1 Sam 4:5). Upon arrival, Israel ‘shouted with a great shout’ (1 Sam 4:5). By comparing this Hebrew phrase elsewhere, it would appear that Israel are *trying* to draw inspiration from events at Jericho a couple of hundred years prior.

In Joshua 6, God gives Joshua explicit instructions detailing how they were to take Jericho:

And seven priests shall bear before **the ark** seven trumpets of rams' horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long [*blast*] with the ram's horn, [*and*] when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall **shout with a great shout**; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him. Josh 6:4-5 (KJV)

As a result of obeying God’s command, God gave Israel the victory:

…the rereward came after **the ark of the Lord**, [*the priests*] going on, and blowing with the trumpets.**..**so the people shouted when [*the priests*] blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people **shouted with a great shout**, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. (Josh 6:13, 20)

The similarity of events between the battles of Joshua 6 and 1 Samuel 4 is illustrated by the use of the ‘ark’ of God and the people ‘shouting with a great shout’:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 Samuel 4 | Joshua 6 |
| “the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp” (v. 5) | “so **the ark of the Lord** compassed the city...and they **came into the camp**” (v. 11) |
| “all Israel shouted with a great shout” (v. 5) | “the people **shouted with a great shout**” (v. 20) |
| “be carried about to Gath” (5:8) | “**compassed** the city” (v. 15) |

The Hebrew word translated ‘carried about’ three times in 1 Sam 5:8, 9 is the same word translated ‘compassed’ in Joshua 6:15. Just as Joshua compassed about Jericho and destroyed it with the Ark of the Covenant, so also here in the Philistine towns.

In 1 Samuel 4, the elders and the people model their actions on the events of Joshua 6. However, there is a key contrast between these two events, which is the underlying approach to the battle. In Joshua 6, God had explicitly stated what would happen (Josh 6:2-5), and Joshua highlights the fact that it is *Yahweh*who was the one giving the city (Josh 6:16). Whereas in 1 Samuel they believe that it is the *ark* that saves. As Israel found, the mere slavish repetition of deeds without appreciating the underlying principles and truths is ineffectual.

The noise of Israel’s great shout terrifies the Philistines (1 Sam 4:6, 7), who believe that ‘God is come to the camp’ (v. 7), highlighting Israel’s failure to appreciate the divine (v. 3). The Philistines continue:

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

The Philistines refer to a) the ‘**hand** of these mighty gods’ and b) reference the plagues inflicted on Egypt, an event some 400-500 years prior (cf. Exod 15:14). As we shall illustrate, there is an uncanny foresight in the two aspects of verse 8.

**Gender Issues**

**G. Horwood**

Gender issues have been the subject of debate in our community in recent years, as they have been in the wider Christian community. The purpose of this column is to examine Biblical teaching on gender related issues.

The analytic category of ‘gender’ encompasses the concepts of differences between the sexes, social relations between the sexes and the social organization of relations between the sexes. The word ‘gender’ became widely used in the 1970’s in order to distinguish socially constructed differences from biological differences denoted by the word ‘sex’; however the term ‘gender’ is now commonly used to encompass both biological and constructed differences.

‘From the beginning’ it was God’s intention that man and woman would be joined together as one flesh, to work side by side in God’s service and in their daily concerns (Matt 19:6). The woman was to be the man’s helper and companion (Gen 2:18; Mal 2:14). Together the man and woman were to have dominion over the earth; producing and raising godly offspring (Mal 2:15; Gen 1:28) so as to fill the earth with people reflecting God’s image and glory (Gen 1:28; Hab 2:14).

In a sinful world reality soon fell short of this ideal, and selfishness marred the harmonious relationship between man and woman. God said to Eve, ‘Your desire shall be to your husband, and he shall rule over you’ (Genesis 3:16). The meaning of this phrase is debated; suffice to say at this point that **something about the relations between the sexes was included in Eve’s sentence and not in Adam’s**, indicating that in this area, women would experience something different to men.

Throughout recorded human history and across every society, males occupy most of the positions of power and influence whilst females are most likely to be found tending to other people’s needs. Power in sinful human hands tends to result in the oppression and exploitation of the vulnerable (Ecc 4:1; 5:8). The Victorian commentator, Albert Barnes, summarised the plight of women throughout the centuries: “Under fallen man, woman has been more or less a slave. In fact, under the rule of selfishness, the weaker must serve the stronger”.

Amongst prejudices none has proved more durable, more widespread or more pervasive than misogyny. J. Holland states that “no race has suffered prejudicial treatment over so long a period of time, no group of individuals, however they might be characterized, has been discriminated against on such a global scale. Nor has any prejudice manifested itself under so many guises”.[[40]](#footnote-40)

Thus, the recognition of the equal worth of men and women and the fair treatment of women are issues of perennial importance for the ecclesia. At some times men of God have treated women better than what was common in society at the time; at other times men of God have conformed to cultural norms which oppressed women.

In Western countries the feminist movement has brought about a great deal of change in the past fifty years. “The shift in thinking about gender achieved by the liberation movements of the 1970’s is irreversible” says one masculinity researcher.[[41]](#footnote-41) Not long after women gained unprecedented freedom in the West, the church began to follow suit, and many churches now ordain women to ministry positions previously restricted to men.

Current Christian views on gender are commonly grouped into two categories. ‘Complementarians’ believe that men and women are equal in worth but have been proscribed different, complementary roles, with roles of leadership and public teaching confined to men. The complementarian position has been the traditional one in the Christadelphian community. ‘Egalitarians’ believe that suitability for leadership, teaching and other roles should be determined by God-given ability rather than by gender.

Evangelical egalitarians recognise scripture as the inspired word of God[[42]](#footnote-42) and maintain that their ideology is derived, not from secular feminism, but from Biblical data correctly interpreted. Jesus is said to have elevated the status of women and dispensed with gender hierarchy. Leadership in the first century church is said to have been egalitarian. Texts traditionally used to support hierarchy are interpreted not as transcultural mandates, but as temporary concessions to social conventions of the time in order to address specific local problems, or to protect the reputation of the church in society.

Most egalitarians acknowledge that the scriptures do contain many examples of, in their words, a “less-than-ultimate ethic in the treatment of slaves and women”.[[43]](#footnote-43) However they argue that, just as Biblical laws moved beyond existing social norms to offer greater protection and dignity to slaves, sojourners and women, so the ‘underlying redemptive spirit’ of the Scriptures ought to inspire Christians to move beyond static, culture-based applications and towards an ‘ultimate social ethic’ where inequities based upon class, race or gender are abolished.

In our community the cultural shift in thinking about gender has had an impact. Some no longer accept the traditional complementarian position and have embraced egalitarianism. Many remaining in traditional ecclesial environments are struggling with inner dissonance now that the principles of equality and non-discrimination are absorbed, consciously or unconsciously, into younger people’s minds from an early age. Today women are likely to be educated to the same level as men, and to have successful careers past or present, further highlighting the disparity between their status and opportunities in the secular world and in the ecclesia. These differences will only become more sharply felt as time goes on.

Another effect of the change of the past few decades is that many men are now uncertain about their role. The formerly simple role of a man as the provider and protector of his family has become more complex; and many men now struggle to find a strong sense of direction and purpose in life. In our community it has been observed that young men are increasingly reluctant to take on positions of responsibility; and are more likely than young women to become disengaged from the ecclesia.

In the changing times we live in, it is important to ascertain what the Bible does say about gender, about the differences and similarities between male and female, and the roles of each. It is not our intention in this column to duplicate arguments previously made by others, or to promote a particular agenda. In this column we will attempt to approach Biblical texts relating to gender in a fresh and, as far as is possible, objective manner with the aim of producing and affirming a positive picture of God’s purpose for men and women and their relations with each other.

**Archaeology**

**J. Burke**

**Does the archaeological ‘Low Chronology’ disprove the Biblical narrative?**

The ‘Low Chronology’ is a proposed re-dating of the Iron Age, placing the reigns of David and Solomon in an era during which there is no archaeological evidence supporting them.

This suggested ‘Low Chronology’ supposedly supports the replacement of this paradigm by a new one (in fact, similar to one presented earlier by David Jamieson Drake and others), according to which the kingdom of David and Solomon either did not exist or comprised at best a small local entity.[[44]](#footnote-44)

Proposed at least as early as the 1980s,[[45]](#footnote-45) the re-dating received almost no support and was resisted strongly by the archaeological consensus.

The Tel Aviv group’s idiosyncratic ‘low chronology’, however, was not accepted by the Jerusalem school, or by any European or American archaeologist (it still is not widely accepted, even by all Tel Aviv archaeologists).[[46]](#footnote-46)

Finkelstein responded, but criticism was renewed in 2000 by Na’aman and Ben-Tor.[[47]](#footnote-47) Over the next five years Finkelstein was virtually the only promoter of the theory.

Currently, Finkelstein is the only outspoken proponent of the Low Chronology.[[48]](#footnote-48)

In the meantime, his views are opposed by such leading archaeologists as Amihai Mazar of Hebrew University, excavator of Tel Rehov;\* Amnon Ben-Tor of Hebrew University, excavator of Hazor;\* Lawrence Stager of Harvard University, excavator of Ashkelon; and William Dever of the University of Arizona, excavator of Gezer. More to the point, Finkelstein’s low chronology has not been accepted even by his codirector at Megiddo, David Ussishkin.[[49]](#footnote-49)

It should not go unnoticed that not a single other ranking Syro-Palestinian archaeologist in the world has come out in print in support of Finkelstein’s ‘low chronology’.[[50]](#footnote-50)

Mazar and Dever note evidence agreeing with the Bible’s description of Jerusalem under David and Solomon.

However, the “Stepped Stone Structure” in Area G in the City of David is a huge retaining wall that must have supported one of the largest buildings (perhaps the largest) of the 12th-10th centuries B.C.E. in the entire land of Israel. The pottery evidence indicates that it was founded during the Iron Age I (12th-11th centuries B.C.E.) and went out of use at some time after the tenth century. This fits the Biblical description of “The Citadel of Zion” (Metsudat Zion) as a Jebusite citadel captured by David and used as his stronghold (2 Samuel 5:7).[[51]](#footnote-51)

If the biblical Solomon had not constructed the Gezer gate and city walls, then we would have to invent a similar king by another name.[[52]](#footnote-52)

Garfinkel likewise says evidence supports the description of the Israelite battles with the Philistines;[[53]](#footnote-53) he cites architecture at Khirbet Qeiyafa indicating David ruled an established state (as in the Biblical narrative),[[54]](#footnote-54) and Carbon 14 dated olive pits at the site with an age within the traditional date for the reign of David.

As Khirbet Qeiyafa is an Iron Age IIA site, we are left with a dating post-1000 BCE, that is, 1000–975 BCE (59.6%) or 1000–969 BCE (77.8%). These dates fit the time of King David (ca. 1000–965 BCE) and are too early for King Solomon (ca. 965–930 BCE).[[55]](#footnote-55)

Garfinkel believes the evidence from Khirbet Qeiyafa to be conclusive, and has declared “Low chronology is now officially dead and buried”.[[56]](#footnote-56)

The four new C14 results from Khirbet Qeiyafa clearly indicate that the “low chronology” and the “ultra-low chronology” are unacceptable.[[57]](#footnote-57)

The biblical text, the single-phase city at Khirbet Qeiyafa, and the radiometric dates each stands alone as **significant evidence clearly indicating that the biblical tradition does bear authentic geographical memories** from the 10th century BCE Elah Valley. There is **no ground** for the assumption that these traditions were fabricated in the late 7th century BCE or in the Hellenistic period [My Emph.].[[58]](#footnote-58)

**Marginal Notes:**

**Job 42:6—AP**

Therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes. Job 42:6 (NASB)

Therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Job 42:6 (ESV)

These two modern translations are different in one of the main verbs; in addition the ESV has a footnote for the second verb offering the alternative ‘and am comforted’—so the translations could be completely different if we followed the ESV footnote.

Therefore I despise myself, and am comforted in dust and ashes. Job 42:6 (ESV footnote)

The verb *nacham* (~xn) translated ‘to repent’ is in the Niphal form and we might be tempted to think that Job is repenting of sin, coming to a realization of personal sin in some way. We might then say that although Job was ‘perfect’ (Job 1:1), he came to realize that no man is perfect and that he was sinful. Or, we might say that he sinned during his trial by being rebellious against God. However, the Niphal form of *nacham* is used in a number of places in quite a consistent way; in particular it is used of God. For example, just taking the Perfect form of the Niphal, and putting to one side the fact that we have two verbs with the same form, one text is,

For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken *it*, I have purposed *it*, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it. Jer 4:28 (KJV)

For this the earth shall mourn and the heavens above be dark, because I have spoken, I have purposed, and I will not change my mind, nor will I turn from it. Jer 4:28 (NASB)

Other texts: Gen 6:7; Jud 21:5; 1 Sam 15:11, 35; Jer 20:16; 42:10; Amos 7:3, 6; Zech 8:14.

This is quite a consistent pattern. One exception might be Jer 31:19, but this text might still be about changing your life rather than confessing sin. Another text is an exception because it uses *nacham* in the sense ‘to comfort’ (2 Sam 13:39).

The same pattern can be observed with the Imperfect Niphal except here it is worth further observing that of the 23 verses involved there are more ‘to comfort’ senses, particularly in Job (all cases) and Isaiah (all cases)—Job 7:13; 21:34; 29:25; Isa 1:24; 12:1; 51:19; 57:6; 66:13. We can be confident therefore in saying that the KJV understood in a modern way is wrong and that Job is either expressing a change of mind or taking comfort. Of these two possibilities, maybe both are intended given that the same form can function as two different verbs. However, the determination of this matter depends on how we understand ‘dust and ashes’.

**Gal 3:15, 19 PW**

If a human covenant is established then additional clauses cannot be ‘added’ or changed afterwards. God made a covenant with Abraham which promised him the birth of Christ. The Law was given 430 years *after* the Promise and therefore cannot disannul the Promise.

Paul explains that the Law was ‘added’[[59]](#footnote-59) [to the Promise] because of transgressions. Earlier Paul had argued that normal human convention does not ‘add’ anything to a covenant once it has been ratified. In everyday life we would expect the involved parties to reach an agreement on terms and have the contract witnessed; after that point we would not expect the addition of extra clauses. Paul used this strategy to argue that the Law could not be ‘added’ to the promise – yet here he is saying the opposite ‘the Law *was* added’.

Unless Paul is contradicting himself another explanation must be sought. The key lies in the word ‘confirmed’ (‘ratified’) – the Promise made to Abraham was effectively still open until it ‘was confirmed before by God in Christ’ (Gal 3:17). According to Paul then, the Law could not be ‘added’ to the Promise (like some extra clause) because although the Promise was given *before* the Law it was only *confirmed* by the resurrection (“Anddeclared to bethe Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” Rom1:4).

Ratification of the Promise abolished the Law; therefore the Law was a temporary interlude. The Promise was therefore both prior *and* subsequent to the Law. The Law was never intended be God’s final word on salvation but “was added because of transgressions”. The Law, temporary in nature, functioned as a teacher and disciplinarian until the arrival of Christ. What could the Law teach? The only lesson that the Law could teach (and it did it superbly well) was that man could not save himself by his own righteousness.

**Postscript**

**Philosophy and God**

Philosophers have argued about the existence of God for millennia, and we might suppose that we could find God if we studied their arguments. There are two problems with such a proposal: the first difficulty is that philosophers disagree amongst themselves as to whether there are *any* valid philosophical arguments for God's existence. However, there is a more fundamental problem, even if we thought that philosophical arguments were valid. This problem concerns the identity of God. We can illustrate this problem with regard to the philosophical argument for God's existence which involves the concept of *design*.

Many people would say that there is design in nature and that this shows the existence of a creator. This is a powerful argument and it can be elaborated in great detail. However, the problem with the argument is that it is used by many different and conflicting religions. For example, had we been living in the days of the Babylonian Empire in Israel, the priests of the Babylonian religion would no doubt have claimed that it was *their* gods which were involved in the creation of the world, and they would have referred to their epic tales (e.g. *The Gilgamesh Epic*) to substantiate their claim. The prophets of Israel also made the same claim for the God of the Bible with great conviction and power using the account in Genesis.

As ordinary individuals living in those times, we might have agreed that the earth and sky showed very intricate ‘design’ (‘wonders’), but we might have been unsure as to who created the world. As individuals living today, we might find ourselves in the same position. We might see that there is a creator, but we might be unsure of who is that creator. Had we chosen to believe in the Babylonian gods of that era, we would have made the wrong choice, because those gods have come and gone. We need to avoid making a similar mistake today.

The God of the Bible has been worshipped throughout all ages, and this is strong evidence that He really exists. We can safely dismiss the gods that have come and gone, but there are other gods which have (so far) survived the vicissitudes of history. A few religions of the world are ancient religions, for example, Hinduism traces its beginnings back to approximately 1500 BC. Is there another line of evidence to establish that which is true?

We have said that the same philosophical arguments are claimed by all religions, and that they are not *specific* enough to find God. What we need in order to find God are arguments that a *god uses* and which are unique to him, and which can be evaluated and then received in faith. These arguments can only be found in words and sentences used by such a god, for arguments are tools of language.

The Bible supplies us with many arguments for the existence of the God of Israel. If these arguments stand up, then we will have found the one true God. The main line of evidence proving that the God of Israel is the one true God is **fulfilled** **prophecy**.

**AP**

**Supplementary Discussion**

This discussion puts forward two very different and **incompatible** interpretations of the Greek word translated ‘mediator’. The first article, by A. Perry, argues that the word has the sense of ‘intermediary’. The last article in the set, by P. Wyns, argues for the sense of ‘reconciler’. These two articles also illustrate two different ways of going about the business of interpretation. The two articles in between the first and the last are included for background information.

**Mediator or Intermediary**[[60]](#footnote-60)

**A. Perry**

**Introduction**

The KJV is very familiar: there is one mediator of God and of men, a man Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:5). What does the Greek underlying ‘mediator’ mean? Our case is that Jesus is an ‘intermediary’ for God and that ‘mediator’ is too strong for the relevant texts in today’s English. Our general point is that Jesus is not a mediator in the sense that he is acting for two parties, bringing both to the table, taking on board each side and mediating reconciliation. That Christ has a work of reconciliation is not denied; but this is not part of the point being made with the Greek for ‘mediator’.

**Intermediary**

The relevant Greek word is mesi,thj and it occurs 6x in the GNT. If we take the KJV version for 1 Tim 2:5 as a start and change ‘mediator’ for ‘intermediary’ following the lead of the NET Bible we get,

For *there is* one God, and one intermediary of God and of men, a man Christ Jesus... 1 Tim 2:5 (KJV revised)

We have eliminated the ‘between’ preposition because it is not there in the Greek and given the simple genitive ‘of’ which is used. What is arresting in this statement is the expression ‘a man Christ Jesus’ as this is an obvious quotation of ‘the man Moses’:

And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses *was* very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people. Exod 11:3 (KJV)

(Now the man Moses *was* very meek, above all the men[[61]](#footnote-61) which *were* upon the face of the earth.) Num 12:3 (KJV)

The expression ‘the man Moses’ is distinctive to these verses; it isn’t highlighting Moses as a mediator between Pharaoh and the Egyptians; rather Moses would have stood for Pharaoh to the people—an intermediary. The Hebrew for ‘man’ here is *ish* rather than *adam*.

The use of the expression in Num 12:3 is an obvious quotation of Exod 11:3 and we are expected to see a change in Moses’ role because he is now ‘to the children of Israel’ rather than ‘to Egypt’. The context of Num 12:3 is a dispute with Miriam and Aaron; the immediately preceding verse has Miriam and Aaron stating that the Lord had spoken by Moses, thereby acknowledging him as an intermediary for God, but claiming that God had also spoken by them.

Paul’s point in Timothy is that ‘Moses’ is no longer[[62]](#footnote-62) the intermediary for God towards men; there are not two intermediaries but only one, ‘a man Christ Jesus’. Moses was God’s servant, faithful over his whole house, i.e. his steward (Num 12:7)—this is not a mediatorial role but the role of someone who is an intermediary for the master of the house. What Moses will bring to the people are the words of God (Num 12:8). This understanding remains applicable in the case of Christ even though he is more than a steward, being a son (Heb 3:5-6).

**Covenant**

The concept of an intermediary is one-way, for God toward men; what Christ brings to men is a better covenant:

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the intermediary of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. Heb 8:6 (KJV revised); cf. Heb 9:15; 12:24

The point to notice here, which 1 Tim 2:5 impresses upon us, is that the covenant is brought to *men* from God. Men may reject or accept this covenant. For those who accept the covenant, and enter through baptism, Christ *has been* an intermediary, but then we are brethren with Christ. This is the point in the final ‘mediator’ text in Galatians 3.

**The Law**

Paul’s argument in Galatians is about the Law:

Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of an intermediary. Now the intermediary is not of one, but God is one. Gal 3:19-20 (KJV revised)

It might seem as if the Galatians text is stating the obvious: an intermediary is not of one. This is a very obvious truth. Any reader of Paul would know that an intermediary was not of one, necessarily: an intermediary functions between two. However, stating the obvious might not be what Paul is doing, because he goes on to make the contrast, ‘...but God is one’. Moreover, it might also seem as if Paul is talking about Moses and saying that he, as ‘the intermediary’ of the previous verse, is not ‘of one’. Again, while we can make sense of this reading for the opening clause,[[63]](#footnote-63) it is difficult to see how it fits with the contrasting ‘…but God is one’. We should therefore investigate a little further.

If we are in Christ then we are heirs with him of the Abrahamic promises and this point is made in Hebrews using the ‘of one’ language to pick up on Galatians’ exegesis of Genesis:

For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren… Heb 2:11 (KJV)

The point here is that as brethren we are one with Christ in relation to the Abrahamic promises (Gal 3:28).[[64]](#footnote-64) In this relationship there is no intermediary in respect of God. Hence, Paul says “Now the intermediary is not of one” (o` de. mesi,thj e`no.j ouvk e;stin). The understanding of this clause relies on the reader taking on board what has just been stated to be ‘of one’ in v. 16:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises spoken. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one (e`no.j), and to thy seed, which is Christ. Gal 3:16 (KJV revised)

In saying that the intermediary is not ‘of one’ Paul is saying that the intermediary **role** is not part of the ‘of one’ identity.[[65]](#footnote-65) The reason given is ‘but God is one’ and the cogency of this reason lies in the facts that in Christ we are one with the Father and the Son, and that God will be all in all (John 17:21; 1 Cor 15:28).

In v. 16, and by using ‘of one’, Paul refers to a word and the semantics of that word as used in Genesis, namely, ‘seed’; in Genesis, ‘seed’ refers to Christ according to Paul. This is about identity, which is important for the fulfilment of promises (i.e. the Abrahamic covenant); to be heirs of this promise we have to be part of the identity that is Christ. This framework of covenantal promise and our participation in Christ cannot be patterned on Moses as the intermediary of the Law.

A feature of the passage is the use of the genitive to classify and distinguish:

‘they which are of faith’ vv. 7, 9

‘as many as are of the works of the Law’ v. 10

‘the Law is not of faith’ v. 12

‘if the inheritance be of the Law’ v. 17

‘Now the intermediary is not of one’ v. 20

The contrast between what or who is ‘of the Law’ and ‘of faith’ is complemented by saying that the intermediary role is not ‘of one’—Christ (or what will pertain to being one in this passage—the multitudinous seed).[[66]](#footnote-66) Oneness with God comes through Promise and not Law and so the fulfilment of ‘God is one’ will be realized in this way.[[67]](#footnote-67)

**Conclusion**

Christ was/is an intermediary for God to men in respect of the Abrahamic covenant that God offers to men. In this he is like Moses who was an intermediary for angels to Israel in respect of the Law—a role he held through the Wilderness. For those who become heirs with Christ to the Abrahamic Promises, Christ is not an intermediary and this is because they are brethren, one with Christ and in Christ. This is implied by the doctrine that God is one because God will be all in all.

**Meanings of ‘Mediator’**

**A. Perry and P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

The Greek term translated ‘mediator’ is not an uncommon word in Greek literature and so scholars will study other uses of the word when deciding what its use in the NT means, especially when that usage is only six occurrences. This article gives a few examples of the word outside the NT.

**Mediator**

The occurrence of mesi,thj(‘mediator’) is rare in the NT (Gal 3:19-20; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24) and the word is only found once in the Greek LXX in Job 9:33—“Would that *he* our mediator (mesi,thj) were *present*, and a reprover, and one who should hear *the cause* between both” (Brenton).

The word is used in Josephus (*Ant.* 4.133; 16.24; for the related verb, see 7.193; 16.118) and Philo (used for angels *Som.* 1.142-3; and for Moses *Vit. Mos.* 2:166). It is worth quoting these texts in order to broaden our database of usage for the term:[[68]](#footnote-68)

This they said with an oath, and called God for the arbitrator of what they promised; and this with tears in their eyes, and all such marks of concern, as might show how miserable they thought themselves without them, and so might move their compassion for them. *Ant.* 4.133

Hereby Joab was persuaded, and pitied the distress that Absalom was in, and became an intercessor with the king for him. *Ant.* 7.193

And, indeed, the king bestowed a great many benefits on every city that he came to, according as they stood in need of them; for as for those who needed either money or kind treatment, he withheld nothing from them; but he supplied the former himself out of his own expenses: he also became an intercessor with Agrippa for all such as sought after his favour, and he brought things so about, that the petitioners failed in none of their suits to him… *Ant.* 16.24

We are willing to make a larger defence for ourselves; but actions never done do not admit of discourse. Nay, we will make this agreement with you, and that before Caesar, the lord of all, who is now a mediator between us… *Ant.* 16.118

The uses of the related noun and verb here are, respectively, i) God being called upon to guarantee the promise the men of Israel give to the Midianite women (*Ant.* 4.133); ii) Joab interceding for Absalom (*Ant.* 7.193); iii) King Herod interceding for supplicants with Agrippa (*Ant.* 16.24); and iv) Caesar acting as a negotiator of peace between Herod and his sons (*Ant.* 16.118).

And it is in reference to this employment of theirs that the holy scripture has represented them as ascending and descending, not because God, who knows everything before any other being, has any need of interpreters; but because it is the lot of us miserable mortals to use speech as a mediator and intercessor; because of our standing in awe of and fearing the Ruler of the universe, and the all-powerful might of his authority; having received a notion of which he once entreated one of those mediators, saying: ‘Do thou speak for us, and let not God speak to us, lest we die.’ *Som.* 1.142-3

So Moses, being amazed, and being also constrained by this command, believes those incredible events, and springs down to be a mediator and reconciler; not however, in a moment, for first of all he addressed supplications and prayers on behalf of his nation to God, entreating God that he would pardon these their sins; then, this governor of and intercessor for his people, having appeased the Ruler of the universe, went down at the same time rejoicing and feeling sorrowful; he rejoiced indeed that God had admitted his supplication, but he was full of anxiety and depression, being greatly indignant at the lawless transgression of the multitude. *Som.* 2.166

Here, Philo sees angels as intermediaries carrying the word of God to mortals (*Som.* 1.142-3) and he sees Moses as a mediator and reconciler, perhaps seeing the mediator function as one of reconciliation (*Som.* 2.166).

**Analysis**

The Greek mesi,thjhas a range of usage and our task to is to determine what it means in any given text. We should not take a lexicon and simply transfer the range of English equivalents and apply them all to our target texts, as if there is some one complex composite meaning. These examples that we have given illustrate the separate ideas of an intermediary, an intercessor and a negotiator. The tendency to collect up meanings is illustrated by M. Gill when he states, “The use ofmesi,thjin Josephus and Philo, reflects the Hellenistic idea of an umpire, guarantor, or negotiator of peace”.[[69]](#footnote-69) Gill is synthesizing here in the direction that he prefers; we ought to hold instead the range of meaning for our term as a spectrum of ideas. The analysis that we give of the primary data is important and under our control. We can choose to distinguish or we can choose to bring together. We can also choose to draw in texts that do not use the word mesi,thj.

**Conclusion**

Taking extra-Biblical usage into account, the term mesi,thj could connote an individual functioning with two parties (in the middle), usually with the intention to intercede and negotiate a peace; or it could refer to an individual acting as an intermediary for one party towards another taking something to that party.

**Scholarly Opinions on Gal 3:19-20**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

The most difficult ‘mediator’ text in the NT is Gal 3:19-20. Commentators recognize the existence of many different interpretations of Gal 3:19-20.[[70]](#footnote-70) In this article, we will survey two—those of N. T. Wright[[71]](#footnote-71) and M. Bachmann.[[72]](#footnote-72)

**N. T. Wright**

N.T. Wright offers an ingenious interpretation of Gal 3:19-20 that is based on an attempt to redefine how ‘seed’ is understood in v.16,

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ.

The ‘seed’ in Gal.3:16 should, according to Wright, not be understood as the individual Christ but as the ‘family’ of God that is incorporated in Christ. Wright sums it up as follows,

The problem with this passage, which emerges in most translations, is the word ‘seed’, which I have translated here as ‘family’. This is in fact the only way to make full sense of Paul’s argument. God made promises ‘to Abraham and his seed’; the ‘seed’ is singular, meaning the Messiah - who, for Paul, represents God’s people, so that the ‘singular seed’ means the single family, incorporated into the Messiah, that God always intended..[….] The point of the very difficult verses 19 and 20 is then as follows. The law was given through the agency not only of angels (this is, for Paul, a way of saying that the law was indeed God’s law, wonderful and holy) but also of the ‘mediator’, that is, Moses. Moses, though cannot be the mediator through whom God creates the ‘one’, the single family he always wanted; but God is one, and so (as Paul explains in Romans 3.29-30) he desires a single family, not many families.[[73]](#footnote-73)

According to Wright a paraphrase of v. 20 would look something like this; “Now he (Moses) is not the mediator of one (i.e., the single family of God compromised of Jew and Gentile) but God is one (there is only one family in God)”.

Ostensibly, this makes sense of a very difficult passage; however, there are a number of problems. Predominately, Paul makes it clear with the phrase ‘who is Christ’ (v. 16) that he has a particular *individual* in mind and that he is contrasting the individual with the ‘many’. The emphasis on the *singular* seed is not “a purely semantic trick”, nor is the statement ‘who is Christ’ a mere “explanatory note”.[[74]](#footnote-74) Wright dismisses the singular argument (i.e., Christ as the referent of seed) as weak:

And if v. 16 is as weak as this, the argument of the whole passage is weakened also: Paul’s line of thought appears to run ‘the promises are made to Abraham’s seed; Christ is Abraham’s seed (v. 16); you belong to Christ (vv. 26-29a); therefore you are heirs to the promises (v. 29b)…[[75]](#footnote-75)

However, in explaining the statement ‘who is Christ’ Wright himself appeals to a similar line of reasoning;

Christ is the ‘seed’ because, and insofar as, the promised single family of Abraham is brought into being in and through him alone. It therefore finds its identity in him and him alone. He is its incorporation...[[76]](#footnote-76)

On this reading, the ‘seed’ refers to the ‘family’ (in Christ) *and also* to Christ?? Even in the time of Abraham the seed had a *singular* focus “in Isaac your seed shall be called” (Gen 21:12), natural descent (cf. Ishmael) from Abraham was insufficient to qualify for inheritance (Rom 9:7); only faith sufficed for incorporation into Christ (Gal 4:28).

If ‘Christ’ becomes synonymous with the ‘corporate family’, then the distinction between the singular ‘seed’ and the ‘many’ becomes blurred and this cannot have been the intention of Paul’s contrast in v. 16. Moreover, when ‘family’ is applied to the interpretation of v. 19, the ostensible reason seems to be forced:[[77]](#footnote-77)

Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions until *the family* should come to whom it had been promised.[[78]](#footnote-78)

This seems to me to be setting the horse behind the cart as *the family* could only come into existence once the promise had been fulfilled by the seed (singular). The many are indeed incorporated into the ‘seed’ but only **after the sacrifice** of Christ (Abraham saw this “afar off” and did not receive the promise; cf. Gen.22:4; Heb 11:13)—the focus of the promise(s) is Christ—*the family* is the **result** of his faithful work.

As A. A. Das observes, it is not until v. 29[[79]](#footnote-79) that Christians are incorporated into the one seed. Therefore, a natural ‘sequential reading’ of the text does not prepare the reader for a collective understanding of ‘seed’ in v. 16.[[80]](#footnote-80) Wright objects that if the ‘seed’ in v. 16 refers to Christ then, “it seems to imply that the promises meant nothing at all until the coming of Christ”.[[81]](#footnote-81) This is indeed correct, for although the promise(s) may have had a partial typological fulfilment in Isaac, Solomon etc., the promise(s) meant nothing at all until they were *confirmed by God in Christ* (Gal 3:17). Note that Paul does not say “confirmed by God in the seed” – he is quite explicit in *naming Christ* as the confirmation and seal of the promise. So for Paul, Christ was the ‘seed’ (singular, “who is Christ”) to whom the promise was given, and the resurrected Christ himself (not the family) was the confirmation of that promise.

Wright’s exegesis is however entirely correct in highlighting the divisiveness caused by the Law and the fact that the Law was an obstacle to the promised incorporation of the Gentiles and therefore to the unity of the one God and the one ‘family’ of God.

**M. Bachmann**

M. Bachmann offers a different analysis to that of Wright. He avers, for example, that the NKJV has inserted certain words (indicated by *italics*) that are absent from the original Greek:

*It was* appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator (3:19c)

Now a mediator does not *mediate* for one *only,* but God is one (3:20a)

Many versions have done some sort of inserting for these verses. Bachmann observes, “One of the reasons this passage has become a *crux interpretum* clearly emerges here: one feels urged, as the additions…show, to supplement an enormous amount; the text is formulated extremely succinctly”.[[82]](#footnote-82) This can be clearly appreciated with a literal rendition of the original Greek of 3:20,

BNT (3:20) o` de. mesi,thj e`no.j ouvk e;stin( o` de. qeo.j ei-j evstinÅ

YLT (3:20) And (de.) the mediator is not of one, and (de.) God is one[[83]](#footnote-83)

Bachmann offers an analysis of Paul’s reasoning in terms of syllogism, a kind of logical argument in which one proposition (the conclusion) is inferred from two or more others (the premises) of a certain form.

Bachmann is sceptical of scholars who treat the two clauses of v. 20, both commencing with a de., as the minor and major premises of an incomplete syllogism.[[84]](#footnote-84) He gives his reading as follows:

Moses did not mediate the law to the one seed, which was last mentioned in 3:19 and has already been equated with Christ in 3:16, but rather, not surprisingly, to Israel. In view of this joint relationship of God, Moses, and Israel, at least the difference from the conventional approach ought now to be in plain view: 3:20a is not about a general concept of a mediator but concretely about the mediator Moses…[[85]](#footnote-85)

Bachman’s paraphrase of Gal 3:20 would be,

(Now a mediator [Moses] does not *mediate* for one [Seed (i.e., for Jesus) …but for many/ Israel]*,* but God is one)[[86]](#footnote-86)

This is less forced as a reading and the confessional statement (God is one) demonstrates that God is both behind the Promise and the Law. In this construct the numeral ‘one’ has Jesus (seed) as the first referent and God as the second. Nowhere does Paul deny that God is behind both the Promise and the Law, the weakness of this proposal is that it does not further Paul’s argument regarding the superiority of the Promise.

Furthermore, the argument seems to be that Moses was a mediator for the many (Israel) but that Moses did not mediate for the one (Jesus), presumably because he is already *part of the Godhead* (God is one). This would make the verse a statement on the divinity of Christ rather than on the inadequacy of the Law. If Moses was mediator for the many (Israel) but not for the one (Jesus) then Jesus was effectively outside the Law, yet Paul is quite clear that Jesus was under the Law (cursed by the Law). Again, the function of the mediator is critical—Moses was only the delivery mechanism— the agent of *Law giving*. Moses did not mediate forgiveness (either for the ‘many’ or, for ‘the one’) for transgressing the Law. On these grounds Bachman’s reading can be rejected as contextually weak and theologically unsound.

**Conclusion**

In this brief analysis of two scholarly views, we have closed down some erroneous paths in interpretation. Each scholar’s reading is given greater justification than our extracts, but our purpose has been just to illustrate some choices in interpretation that have been made when making sense of Gal 3:19-20. Wright brings the idea of the multitudinous seed too early in Paul’s reasoning; and Bachmann chooses to make the reference of ‘the mediator’ solely the individual Moses.

**Mediator**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

The Greek term translated as ‘mediator’ (mesi,thj) is flexible enough to carry a range of meanings including that of an ‘intermediary’. The difference between an intermediary and a mediator is that whereas the former functions solely as a communicator the latter acts as a **reconciler** between antagonistic parties. This article argues for Christ as a mediator in the true sense of the word – one who facilitates peace. This is something that neither Moses nor the angels could do (cf. Gal 3:19-20).

**One Mediator**

Paul is quite clear that there is only one God and one Mediator:

For one is God, one also is mediator of God and of men, the man Christ Jesus, who did give himself a ransom for all—the testimony in its own times. 1 Tim 2:5-6 (YLT)

To phrase Paul negatively, there are not ‘two’ gods neither are there ‘two’ mediators. The existence of other mediators is ruled out by Paul; moreover, the function of a mediator is bound up with an act of expiation – “did give himself a ransom”(v. 6). When Moses attempted to give himself as a ransom he was refused: “Yet now, if you will forgive their sin -- but if not, I pray, blot me out of your book which you have written. And the Lord said to Moses, Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot him out of my book” (Exod 32:32-33).

**The Man Christ Jesus**

The stress in Timothy is on “oneness” (one God/one mediator), the emphasis being on unity (cf. Gal 3:19-20).[[87]](#footnote-87) The man Jesus Christ brings unity between God and man but also between Jew and Gentile, between slaves and free, between male and female. They all become one in Christ and therefore they are one with God. For this reason the passage in Timothy highlights that the ransom is **for all** irrespective of race, gender, ethnic origins or station—whether king or slave. God wants “all men to be saved” (v. 4) and therefore the believer is urged to pray even for (sometimes hostile) kings and authorities (v. 2). The use of the expression **the man** Jesus Christ is not so much a reflection or contrast with the role of Moses but rather on the messianic prophecy in Zechariah:

Behold, the Man[[88]](#footnote-88) whose name *is* the Branch! From his place he shall branch out, And he shall build the temple of the Lord; Yes, he shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on his throne; So he shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. (Zech 6:12-13)

The man Jesus Christ would also bring unity to the role of king-priest typified by Melchizedek of Salem (Heb 7:2). Thus, it was not fitting to revile even the Jewish ‘authorities’ who had crucified Jesus (cf. Acts 23:2-5). The role of mediator is essentially that of a ‘peace maker’ and the covenant that Jesus mediated would inaugurate peace and unity for all, thus believers are encouraged to pray for the ‘authorities’.

**Prince of Peace**

The birth of Christ is heralded as an act of peace and goodwill toward men (Luke 2:14) and Paul states that, “having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:1). Without Christ we are at enmity with God (v. 10)—“….we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son”, and this militates against translating the Greek mesi,thjas ‘intermediary’. Christ was more than a mere messenger (like Moses) who delivered a covenant—he was the means (provided by God) through which that covenant was established.

This does not mean that Jesus sat between two hostile parties and negotiated a peace through a series of concessions (a process of give and take) as an ordinary mediator might do. No, Jesus achieved this by completely surrendering his will to the Father and putting his flesh to death:

…and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. (Col 1:20)

This ‘peace’ encompasses vertical (between God and man) and horizontal relationships (between Jew and Gentile):

For he himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *that is,* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace. (Eph 2:14).

It is his unique position as Son of man and Son of God that qualified Jesus for the role of mediator and that allows us as men (and women) to share (through faith) in the victory of **the man** Jesus Christ*,* **the man** (Zech 6:12) whose name is the branch, **the man** who is *my fellow* (Zech 13:7). On this, A. D. Norris says,

A mediator should not represent one party only: yet God is indisputably One party and not the other. Moses, on the other hand was a mere man, not really standing in-between God and man as to his nature. If there is to be a true and ultimate, saving mediation between God and man, it must come from the one who is truly related to both. Moses was only a man unrelated to God; the angels who gave the message to him were related solely to God and not to man. What is needed is truly someone between: and this Someone was provided in Jesus, when ‘God sent forth **His Son, made of a woman**, made under the Law [Gal.4.4]. It is for Him, therefore, that it was necessary to wait.[[89]](#footnote-89)

Jesus Christ becomes the mediator of the new covenant “by means of his death” and even Moses (who was not allowed to enter the land) receives the promise of the eternal inheritance through this mediatorship:

And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (Heb 9:15)

For Paul, there was only one mediator—the man Christ Jesus. The Law had no true mediator until the arrival of Christ on the scene. Up to that point in time the Law functioned as a barrier between God and man and between Jew and Gentile leading to hostility and alienation. The argument presented by Paul in Galatians 3 emphasizes the inferiority of the Law with regard to the Promise. Although the Law had many ‘mediators’ (intermediaries), such as Moses, the angels, and the high priest, none of them could alleviate the sway of death that the Law held over man.[[90]](#footnote-90) Indeed, none of the ‘mediators’ held the unique qualifications necessary for the task, only **the man** who was ‘my fellow’. The Promise delivered reconciliation and peace by an act of mediatorship wrought by the obedient, sinless, death of Christ. The Law brought division but the Promise embodied in the One Seed (Christ) brought the unity desired by the One God.

In Gal 3:19, the plurality of messengers (angels) does not infringe on a monotheistic understanding of the unity of God (God is one) – but it does highlight that no matter how many messengers were sent, or who was perceived as the mediator by the Jews (Moses?)—all of them (without exception) were divine agents. The traffic was headed in one direction—no negotiation was possible. On one side of the equation we have God/angels (God is one) together with Moses delivering the Law, on the other side stand the people who were obliged to keep the Law if they wanted to live. Moses then acted only for one (God is one) and not for the people.

The Law was only good for highlighting the pitiful state of man as a transgressor until the arrival of Christ “to whom the promise was made” (3:19b). The phrase spe,rma w-| evph,ggeltai (*seed to whom the promise was made*) seems to have passed by most commentators. The Promise incorporates not just the promise to Abraham, but also the promises made to all the patriarchs, including David. Paul is quite specific in establishing the point that there is only *One Seed* (singular) and that seed is Christ. Therefore, the promise was made **to Christ** and all others (Abraham, David, etc.) share in the promise through him!

As many as are God’s promises, they are ‘Yes’ in him. (2 Cor 1:20)

Christ becomes the mediator of the Promise. However, because the Promise was *given before* the Law, and because the confirmation of the Promise *concluded* the Law, Christ can be said to have acted *as mediator for* the Law. The Law was actually ‘mediated’ to such an extent that it was abolished by his death (cf. Rom 10:4), something that neither Moses, nor the angels could do.

Here, then, the Promise is no longer the promise to Abraham, but **the promise to Christ** himself – “I will be his Father, and he shall be my son” (2 Sam 7:14). The son also received another promise, “The Lord has sworn and will not relent: You *are* a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek” (Ps 110:4).

Pauline rhetoric has brought us to the perfect mediator between God and man—Jesus Christ. It might be argued that we are expecting too much from Paul’s readers to make the leap from “the seed to whom the promise was made” to the typology of Melchizedek as mediator—not so! Psalm 110:4 is the most extensively quoted Psalm in the New Testament because it was used by Christ himself as a proof text (Mark 12:35–37; 14:62).The Christian argument was well known to both Jews and Jewish-Christians as Hebrews testifies:

Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? (Heb 7:11).

By using this device, Paul has brought us to the question of mediatorship. Paul now sets out to demonstrate that **the Law had no mediator (for transgressions) until the arrival of Christ**.

Of course, his opponents would argue that either the Angel of the Presence, or Moses, or the high priest mediated the Law. Paul accords the Law the high status that it had by referring to its “appointment by angels”—the fault lay not with the Law but with human nature—“by the hand of a mediator”—here, Paul is deliberately ambiguous; he could have simply said, “by the hand of Moses”, but he does not. Why is Paul not more specific? Was he being careful not to offend Jewish sensibilities? I believe that Paul was not interested in whom the Jews *thought* the mediator of the Law was—he was interested in **the function of the mediator**.

For Paul, none of the usual suggestions functioned as mediators! The Law had no true mediator until Christ! Whether it was Moses, the high-priest, or even the Angel of the Presence, they were mere intermediaries—communicating the will of God between one party and another party, or acting as a representative of one party to another party. The Jews may well have thought of several as ‘mediators’, but a mediator who mediates for only one side is useless! Moses spoke for God because the people were afraid of the divine presence (God was not afraid of the people). We cannot speak here of true mediation as a mediator is not only required to act on behalf of two-parties, the mediator must also be *qualified* to act on behalf of both parties.

The Yahweh angel also spoke for God but did not speak for men because he “would not pardon transgression”. The Law contained no mechanism for mediation. It seems then that the Law is in complete opposition to the Promise. Not so, this is a misunderstanding of the soteriological function of the Law. The Law could never deliver righteousness because human nature made it ineffectual. The Law locked the Jews into a no-win position resulting in death. The Law is actually fair and just, treating everyone the same (Jew and Gentile) and giving everyone their deserved reward. This is equality (of a different kind) so that all (Jew and Gentile) come to the promise by faith in Jesus Christ with the same status—that of needy sinners requiring mediation for transgression.

In contrast to the Law, the Promise was not conditional on the keeping of the Law, but predicated on faith in the promised seed (Christ), who was both the son of Abraham and the Son of God. Therefore the Promise had an in built mechanism for mediation. Unlike the Law, the Promise did not reinforce division between God and man (because of transgression), or between Jew and Gentile (because of exclusivity). The Promise brought unity thus complementing the “oneness” of God. It did this because those who identify with the death of Christ (the mediator) through baptism (Gal 3:27) are (like him) dead to the Law and inheritors of the Promise *in him* through faith (like Abraham is) and this includes faithful Gentiles as “all nations will be blessed”.

**Conclusion**

Paul’s argument in Galatians 3 can be summed up as follows:

* Faith brings the free gift of the Spirit
* The Gospel is inclusive and prior to the Law
* The Law is conditional
* Therefore the Law cannot justify
* The Law cursed Christ the Law-keeper
* By his death Christ took the curse away
* A Seed (singular) was promised
* The Promise was made to the Seed (Christ)
* The Promise was confirmed by God in Christ (= the resurrection)
* The Law was therefore not added to the Promise
* The Promise is both prior and subsequent to the Law
* The Law was temporary until the Seed
* The Law had no mediator until Christ
* God is one
* Believers (Jew and Gentile) are now one in Christ
* Believers died with him (baptism) and become inheritors with him of the promises
* Faith transforms believers in Christ into the seed of Abraham

Paul employs the Greek **ei-j** to express the word “One” - if we arrange all the occurrences of this word in the order found in Galatians 3 (vv.16, vv.20 [x2], vv.28) then Paul’s argument becomes crystal clear:

One Seed, mediator not of-One, One God, One in Christ

Paul had neither Moses, nor the angels in mind as mediator—for Paul there was only **One Mediator** of the Law—Christ, who was *mediator not of-One* because he mediated between God *and* men (both Jew and Gentile). Christ abolished the Law through his death and thus interceded for transgressions. All the cultic aspects of the Law foreshadowed Christ (the Law was a teacher), anticipating his act of mediation for sinners “shut-up” under the Law of Sin that brought death. Only Jesus could affect a pardon for sin—through his death the covenant of righteousness by works (Law) was transformed into the covenant of faith—the New Covenant. So, not only did Jesus act as mediator for the Old Covenant: “He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises” (Heb 8:6).

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1. Some explanations have recourse to the Greek to position the comma after the ‘Today’—this is not our concern. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Ed. AP]: It is possible to add a third in the idea of the presence of God which was signified in the darkness that overshadowed the place where Jesus died. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Originally published in *The Testimony* (2002) and reprinted here with minor changes. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Another case is that of Peter in the NT, who is associated with experiences in which the number *three* occur. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Hebrew: *zera` ’élōhîm* is susceptible of two complementary senses: ‘seed of gods’ and ‘seed of God’. A brief summary: the ‘Godly seed’ of the KJV are the ‘gods’ of whom Jesus speaks in John’s Gospel (10:34-35), where he cites Ps 82:6’s use of *’élōhîm* applied to “children/sons of the most high*”*. They are the saints, individuals who are agents or recipients of God’s word (e.g. Exod 7:1). This concerns ‘God-manifestation’ in a believer in which the ‘one(ness)’ of which Jesus speaks in John 10:30 is extended: “that they may be one even as we are one” John 17:20-23). An alternative expositional route is to focus on (the Abrahamic) ‘seed’, e.g. via 1 Pet 1:3 “...God and Father...hath begotten us again... (v. 23) Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.” The seed of God’s word sown in the hearts begets God’s sons and daughters, producing a God-seed with His image and likeness (as said in creation to the *’élōhîm*, Gen 1:26-27). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Compare my intentionally angled ‘seen to it’ with ‘He will be seen’ (because: ‘He will see to it’) = He will provide’ - Hebrew: *yireh* - used by Abraham later in his life (Gen 22:14). This matches how God speaks of choosing David in 1 Sam 16:1, using the past tense/sense of *yireh*: *ra’ity*: God *had seen to it*. He had, in His way of seeing the not seen (as yet), provided a replacement for Saul. God sees not as man sees. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The basic sense of ‘reckon’ (etc.) is maintained whether the grammar is identical or not. The grammar shifts to passive in the NT where the Gen 15:6 text is re-used. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The instances of ‘place’ (where God puts His Name) relate to the use of ‘there’ or the motioning ‘there’: ‘thither.’ The ‘there’ is that singular place where Yahweh is to be installed. Hence, His name will be ‘there.’ The Hebrew term ‘shammah’ is used for ‘thither’ and ‘there’ in Deut 12:5ff and many times in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel, ‘shammah’ / ‘there’ has its final application, the target of the prophecy, around the function of ‘there’, is thus achieved in the last verse of the last chapter: 48:35. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Of course, in Gen 22:6, we are told that “both of them”, father Abraham and son Isaac, “went together”. The word ‘together’ is a developed sense of the Hebrew for ‘unity’ or ‘one.’ So Isaac could have said “I and my father are one” (John 10:30). It is not surprising, therefore, that Heb 11:19 tells us that this experience was coded as a ‘parable’ (KJV has ‘figure’ for the Greek term commonly translated ‘parable’ in the NT.) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This is analogous to the quickening process within Sarah’s dead womb and Abraham’s aged body to produce a Godly seed (Rom 4:17, 19-20). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. All this preceded Mount Moriah, and thus fortified, or focused his thinking on that occasion. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. I have adjusted the translation to conform more closely to the Greek. It also helps to focus on the aspect of ‘beings’ yet ***to be***, by resurrection. Those who died in faith, for whom the Gospel effects renewed life (cp. Matt 22:32.) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Daniel 12:1-4: 1And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which stands for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3**And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.** 4 But you, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Scripture also makes a point of telling us that there is a ‘seven’ relation between Hebron and an Egyptian city: “Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoanin Egypt” (Num 13:22). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. J. MacQueen, *Numerology: symbolism of numbers in literature*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 1985), 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See: (i) C. H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society And Belief in Early Christian Egypt*, (London: The Schweich Lectures; 1977), 35-36, 78. In the context of a palaeographical examination of *Nomina Sacra*, and their abbreviations, Roberts mentions the Epistle of Barnabas’ symbolic interpretation of the number 318 (Gen 14:14). This represents the Greek letters tau for 300, and iota eta for 18, as signifying the cross and Jesus, respectively. However, it is not obvious that the Hebrew components of the number ‘318’, *šmnh `śr wšlš m’wt*, are open to the speculative reading found in this Greek post-Biblical source. The numeral 318 “written not in words but in symbols, contrary to the practice of Graeco-Jewish manuscripts” (Roberts, p.78) has also been found in the Yale Genesis Codex.

(ii) *The Hastings Bible Dictionary*, Vol. III (T & T Clark. 1900): 566-567, “…the number 318 is the equivalent of ‘Eliezer’ [Hebr. *’ly`zr*], if the numerical values of the different letters of this name are added together: 1+30+10+70+7+200=318”. It would be a coincidence if the number of Abraham’s ‘trained servants’ stood in such a relation to ‘Eliezer,’ the only name known of a trained servant of Abraham”, but the text does not mention Eliezer by name in Gen 14, and this rests on assumptions about Hebrew letters having numerical values. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Contrary to church tradition, which mandated 30 as the minimum age of a bishop; perhaps in emulation of Christ? [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. “...Arius, who had great confidence in the Eusebians, and talked very wildly, urged by the necessities of nature withdrew, and suddenly, in the language of Scripture, falling headlong he burst asunder in the midst [Acts 1:18], and immediately expired as he lay, and was deprived both of communion and of his life together” *To Serapion, concerning the death of Arius*, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Athanasius, *De Synodis*, 25. NPNF, ser. 2, vol. 4, 462. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Athanasius, *De Synodis*, 26. NPNF, Series 2, vol. 4, 462-464. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. It was of this period that Jerome would later write, “The whole world woke up and groaned to find itself Arian”, *Dial. Contra Lucif*. 19; this extract is cited in J. Stevenson and W. H. C. Frend, eds., *Creeds, Councils and Controversies* (London: SPCK, 1989). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. This strategy proved ineffective, as the bishops merely united against Julian under the common goal of self-preservation. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. “Theodosius declared that true Christians were those who believed in ‘the single divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit within an equal majesty and an orthodox Trinity’. He named Damasus of Rome and Peter of Alexandria as examples of episcopal orthodoxy and labelled Arians and other dissenters as heretical madmen deserving punishment”. R. E. Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God*, (San Diego: Harcourt, 2000), 220. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God*, 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God*, 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. S. G. Hall, *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church*, (London: SPCK, 1991), 158-159. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Gregory Nazianzen, Oration XXXII, The Fifth Theological Oration; On the Holy Spirit, 1; reproduced in NPNF, Series 2, vol. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Gregory Nazianzen, Oration XXXII, The Fifth Theological Oration; On the Holy Spirit, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. J. C. McDowell, 1994. *Arius: A Theological Conservative Persecuted?* Retrieved on January 5, 2012, from: www.oocities.org/johnnymcdowell/papers/Arius.doc. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See R. J. Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998); R. J. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008); L. W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Bauckham, *God Crucified*, 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. For my responses to Bauckham’s line of argument see T. E. Gaston, “Proto-Trinity: The Development of the Doctrine of the Trinity in the First and Second Centuries” (MPhil diss., University of Birmingham, 2007) 56-68; and “Worship of Jesus”, *CEJBI* 3:1 (2009): 69-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. [Ed. AP]: For a two-way discussion of Daniel 11 see A. Perry, “Daniel 11 – An Angelic Piece of Writing?” and T. Gaston, “Daniel 11” in *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation Annual* (2008): 295-316. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Scripture teaches that we should humbly interrogate the text of scripture – cf. 1 Cor 9:9, 10; Luke 10:26. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. For further consideration of this see P. Heavyside “‘Comparing spiritual things with spiritual’: the whole counsel of God as the basis for sound doctrine”, *The Testimony* Vol. 55, p. 131 – 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. These two passages are connected – the Greek word translated ‘searched’ in Acts 17:11 is the same word used in 1 Cor 2:15 translated ‘discerned’. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. The first clause of 1 Sam 4:1 is part of the previous section, “for Yahweh revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the **word** of Yahweh [3:18], and the **word** of Samuel came to all Israel. [4:1a]” (1 Sam 3:21b-4:1a). Some translations have highlighted this in their formatting, e.g. ESV, NET, NKJV. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. By comparing Josh 11:22, 15:45-47, Jud 1:18 and 1 Sam 5:1, 8, 10; 7:14 it would appear that the possession of these towns was relatively fluid between Israel and the Philistines. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Hophni and Phinehas are referred to as priests in 1 Sam 1:3 [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. J. Holland, *A Brief History of Misogyny* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2006), 270. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. R. W. Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Hereafter in this column all references to ‘egalitarian’ views will be references to evangelical (conservative) egalitarian views. Liberal Christian egalitarians do not assume the inspiration or inerrancy of scripture and therefore the examination of their views is outside of the scope of this column. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. “As various problematic components surface within the biblical texts on slaves and women, one strong impression emerges: a less-than-ultimate ethic in the treatment of slaves and women is reflected in various parts of Scripture”. W. J. Webb, “A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic” in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy* (eds. R. W. Pierce, R. M. Groothuis, and G. D. Fee; Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2005), 384. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. A. Mazar, “The Search for David and Solomon: An Archaeological Perspective” in A. Mazar and I. Finkelstein, *The Quest for the Historical Israel: debating archaeology and the history of Early Israel* (ed. B. Schmidt; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 117-138 (119). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. W. G. Dever, “Biblical and Syro-Palestinian Archaeology” in *The Blackwell Companion to the Hebrew Bible* (ed. L. G. Perdue; Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 127-148 (137). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Dever, “Biblical and Syro-Palestinian Archaeology”, 137-138. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. S. M. Ortiz, “Deconstructing and Reconstructing the United Monarch” in *The Future of Biblical Archaeology: Reassessing Methodologies and Assumptions* (eds. J. K. Hoffmeier & A. R. Millard; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 121-147 (129). [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ortiz, “Deconstructing and Reconstructing the United Monarch”, 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. H. Shanks in a review of I. Finkelstein, D. Ussishkin and B. Halpern, (eds.), “Megiddo III—The 1992–1996 Seasons” *BAR* Nov/Dec (2000): 64-71 (66). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. W. G. Dever, “Histories and Non-Histories of Ancient Israel: The Question of the United Monarchy” in J. Day (ed.), *In Search of Pre-exilic Israel* (JSOTSup 406; London: T&T Clark, 2003), 65-94 (73). [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. A. Mazar, “Does Amihai Mazar Agree with Finkelstein’s ‘Low Chronology’?” *BAR* Mar/Apr (2003): 60-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. W. G. Dever, ‘What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know it?’, p. 133 (2002). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Y. Garfinkel and S. Ganor, “Khirbet Qeiyafa: Sha’arayim”, *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 8/22. (2008): 2-10 (6). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Garfinkel and Ganor, “Khirbet Qeiyafa: Sha’arayim”, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Garfinkel and Ganor, “Khirbet Qeiyafa: Sha’arayim”, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Y. Garfinkel & S. Ganor, ‘Khirbet Qeiyafa: An Early Iron IIa Fortified City in Judah’, presentation to the American Schools of Oriental Research, slide 24 (2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Garfinkel and Ganor, “Khirbet Qeiyafa: Sha’arayim”, 4-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Garfinkel and Ganor, “Khirbet Qeiyafa: Sha’arayim”, 5-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. The verb ‘was added’ in v. 19 is different from the verb in v. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Other treatments of this topic consulted for this discussion piece were M. Bachmann, *Anti-Judaism in Galatians? Exegetical Studies on a Polemical Letter and on Paul’s Theology* (trans., R. L. Brawley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 60-84; J. Carter, *The Letter to the Galatians* (Birmingham: CMPA, 1949), 80-90; N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 157-175; and M. Morris, “One Mediator of God and of Men”, *The Testimony* (1985): 191-193. Our treatment bears most affinity with that of Morris. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Note also the ‘men’ word here which is used in 1 Tim 2:5 along with the quotation of Exod 11:3/12:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. The proof of this rhetoric lies in Paul’s point elsewhere that we are ‘**no longer** under a schoolmaster’ (Gal 3:25). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. We might say that, for example, Moses is not ‘of one’ i.e. Christ. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Hence, it is a misuse of this text to argue as feminists do that it means men and women are functionally equal in Christ. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. The Greek is ‘the intermediary’ and this use of the definite article is to refer to the intermediary role exemplified in Moses. Paul is making a general point about what it is to be **an** intermediary, an interpretation found in some translations (e.g. RSV, NASB). It is not a specific reference to Moses himself because Paul uses the present tense ‘is’ rather than the past tense ‘was’; had he been referring to Moses the individual we would have read, ‘Now the mediator was not of one’. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. If there is no intermediary role ‘of one’ because God is one, the principle of baptism into Christ is a necessary concomitant (Gal 3:27) to the God-manifestation implied by ‘God is one’ (1 Cor 8:6). In this passage therefore we move from identifying the singular seed which is Christ (v. 16) to recognising the multitudinous seed that is Christ (vv. 27-28) via the reason that the intermediary role does not pertain to what is ‘of one’ because God is one. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. It might be felt that we are not one with the Father and that we need someone to intercede for us. This felt need is not the subject of Gal 3:19-20 which is about oneness in the purpose of God—a oneness in Christ with the Father. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Our texts are from Bibleworks. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. M. Gill, *Jesus as Mediator: Politics and Polemic in 1 Timothy 2:1-7* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008), 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. The modern classic work in this area is H. D. Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979); and *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. N. T. Wright, *Paul for everyone: Galatians and Thessalonians*, (London: SPCK, 2004); *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. M. Bachmann, *Anti-Judaism in Galatians? Exegetical Studies on a Polemical Letter and on Paul’s Theology* (trans., R. L. Brawley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Thessalonians*, 36-37. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 159, 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 158. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. See J. S. DeRouchie and J. C. Meyer, “Christ or Family as the ‘Seed’ of Promise? An Evaluation of N. T. Wright on Galatians 3:16” *SBJT* 14/3 (2010): 36-48 (41), who state “This wording accentuates the awkwardness of Wright’s interpretation, because the actual flow of Paul’s thought prohibits such a translation”. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: Galatians and Thessalonians*, 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. [Ed. AP]: Choosing v. 29 looks wrong to me; there are better start-points earlier in the discourse. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. A. A. Das, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001), 72–73, n 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Bachmann, *Anti-Judaism in Galatians?*, 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. [Ed. AP]: Young’s literal translation is itself making an interpretive choice about the translation of the o` de structure; the choice of ‘and’ is dependent on how an interpreter-translator reads the rhetorical flow of the passage. Elsewhere, ‘but’ is often chosen for this structure—see the RSV of Gal 3:12 or KJV and NASB of Gal 5:10. For Gal 3:20, both the KJV and NASB have ‘Now’ because they sense a pause equal to Gal 3:16 which has the same opening structure. This ‘pause and move on’ in the reasoning is shared between Gal 3:16 and 20 and is important. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Bachmann, *Anti-Judaism in Galatians?*, 65; he gives the missing conclusion as “the mediator is not God’s” (66). [Ed. AP]: The fact that the conclusion is supposedly missing gives the lie to the syllogistic approach; Bachmann’s own reason is that Gal 3:20 is not written in the way that Paul normally presents syllogistic reasoning, but his example of such reasoning (Gal 3:28d-29a) is not syllogistic. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Bachmann, *Anti-Judaism in Galatians?*, 69. [Ed. AP]: In rejecting the reading that Paul is referring to the role/function of mediator Bachmann is starting off down the wrong track. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. [Ed. AP]: In choosing ‘for one’ as the sense of the Greek ‘of one’, Bachmann is not seeing that ‘of one’ cites ‘of one’ in Gal 3:16 to dissociate the role of mediator from what is ‘of one’. Also, he is not proceeding intertextually and adding Heb 2:11 to his matrix of texts. Doing so illustrates the superiority of the intertextual method in exegesis but it presumes the inspiration of Scripture. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. [Ed. AP]: For a study of whether the *Shema*, (used here in Gal 3:20), could be about ‘unity’—see J. W. Adey, “The Shema of Deut 6:4” *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation 2010* *Annual* (Sunderland: Willow Publications, 2010), 142-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And *Pilate* said to them, “Behold the Man!” (John 19:6). [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. A paraphrase of Gal.3:19-20 in A.D. Norris, *Acts and Epistle*s (London: Aletheia Books, 1989), 204. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. “Beware of him and obey his voice; do not provoke him, for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name *is* in him” (Exod 23:21). [↑](#footnote-ref-90)