|  |
| --- |
|  |
| Christadelphian EJournal |
|  |
| Of Biblical Interpretation |

**Vol. 8, No. 1, Jan 2014**

**Editors:**

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

Contents

* Editorial

* Is Pentecost a Beginning or an End?
* Annihilationism
* Theories of Judgment
* Infant Baptism
* The Woman’s Desire
* The Eyewitnesses to the Birth of Jesus
* Luke’s Genealogy
* Columnists:
	+ Did Jesus Exist? (Part 1)
	+ How does Luke use the Servant Discourse of Isaiah?
	+ Samuel: Prophet like unto Moses
	+ Reflections on Psalm 2
* Reviews
* Marginal Notes: Gen 20:13; 32:28; 1 Cor 14:40
* News
* Postscript
* Supplement: Joban Scholarship

Editors: D.Burke@christadelphian-ejbi.org (Theology, Apologetics & History)

T.Gaston@christadelphian-ejbi.org (Philosophy and Apologetics)

Andrew.Perry@christadelphian-ejbi.org

Paul.Wyns@christadelphian-ejbi.org

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

 r.benson@christadelphian-ejbi.org (Exposition)

 bhmkent@christadelphian-ejbi.org (Exegesis/Analysis)

 R.Dargie@christadelphian-ejbi.org (Intertextuality)

Consulting Review Panel: David Levin (Hebrew)

Cover Design: D. Burke

**Editorial**

In order to progress in a scholarly career an individual must publish in scholarly journals. There are not enough journals to satisfy the demand of authors who need to publish. As a result, many scholars put their work in progress and unpublished material onto www.academia.edu. This is a good resource for Biblical Studies as there are many papers that can be downloaded on all manner of topics. The website seems to be closely tracked by Google in terms of rankings insofar as Google searches for a topic, say, ‘Jewish Monotheism’, will put papers on academia.edu near the top of the search list. The website then tracks the number of document views and downloads for a given essay. It is no surprise that papers on God and Christ are popular downloads compared to, say, papers on ‘The Plot of Luke-Acts’.

Another website that is useful for Biblical Studies is www.biblicalstudies.org.uk which has thousands of older conservative evangelical papers from journals. Its aim is “To make high quality theological material available throughout the world, thus providing Bible teachers and pastors with the resources they need to spread the Gospel in their countries. This is achieved by digitising and uploading in co-operation with authors and publishers, rare and out-of-print theology books and articles.”

Getting hold of papers/articles by scholars can be difficult without access to a university library. A good resource in this regard is the Tyndale Library in Cambridge (www.tyndalehouse.com). This is a specialist Biblical Studies library which has a purchase policy of maintaining a complete collection in this narrow field. The advantage offered to the distance learning student is that they offer a photocopy service by post for journal articles and book chapters from their collection.

The problem with biblical research for the independent bible student is getting to know the relevant material and getting hold of it for reading. The problem is simply that this costs money. Knowledge is a commodity and journal publishers and universities charge for access. An article from a journal of about 20 pages could cost about £20 (GBP) if you do not have access to a university and they take the journal. While some universities allow free access to their print collections, they do not allow free access to their online subscriptions. Increasingly, the latest research is available only through online subscription.

 Many people use a computer concordance. Two good online choices are www.StepBible.org and www.tanakhml.org. This last website is a Hebrew verse analyser which has a particularly good layout and range of options for analysing Hebrew accents. The StepBible has an especially good interlinear layout for multiple English versions with Greek and Hebrew.

This is the important point. No matter what sources you may consult when doing Bible study, there is no substitute for doing the basic concordance work with the actual text. This is where the spiritual growth happens.

**Articles**

**Is Pentecost a Beginning or an End?**

**A. Perry**

**Introduction**

Recent Lucan scholarship has been concerned with whether the Spirit has a soteriological function (initiating or maintaining the individual Christian life), or whether the Spirit has solely a missiological purpose.[[1]](#footnote-1) This paper seeks to redress this balance in Lucan scholarship, one which has tended to exclusively associate the Spirit with **the beginning of the church** and its requirements.

We propose to redress the balance in Lucan scholarship about the Spirit by prioritizing the question of whether Luke uses instead a Jewish eschatological framework for the bestowal of the Spirit, or whether he works with a broader Christian salvation-historical model. Does Luke see the eschatological bestowal of the Spirit as one pertaining to the “last days” of a Jewish age, or does he see it as a signature for the beginning of a new Christian dispensation? If Luke sees the bestowal of the Spirit as the beginning of a new age, does he see this age as uniquely “Christian” or does he see it as a beginning for the Jews?

This eschatological question subordinates the issues that have dominated Lucan scholarship about the Spirit, which has instead largely accepted that the bestowal of the Spirit pertains to the beginning of the church.

Where issues of eschatology have been addressed, the discussion has centred on how the Spirit is related to a *beginning* rather than an *end* — and this has been on the beginning of the age of the *church* rather than the end of a Jewish age. We need to determine the applicability of Jewish eschatology to Luke’s pneumatology and whether the bestowal of the Spirit can be seen as indicative of **the end of a Jewish age**.

Our essay reopens the logically prior question of whether the bestowal of the Spirit should be seen as a Jewish phenomenon. Our answer is that Luke does in fact present the bestowal of the Spirit in relation to the “last days” of a Jewish age.

**Pentecost**

Pentecost is a narrative beginning, but this does not mean that it is the beginning of a new age. The Pentecost account is modelled using narrative patterns from the Jewish Scriptures, and scholars who see in it an actual beginning often point to Sinai as a comparable beginning. M. M. B. Turner has offered the fullest defence of this approach.[[2]](#footnote-2) Our contrary view argues both that Sinai does not inform Luke’s account and that instead his account is modelled on Jewish deliverance and reformation traditions and in particular the deliverance traditions of Isaiah 32, Joel 2 and the reformation traditions of Malachi 3/4. In addition, the theophanic aspects of Acts 2 draw upon Isaiah’s Call Narrative thereby showing that mission is at the heart of Pentecost.

This alternative approach shows that a transition to a new age was *possible* but not certain. The quality that Pentecost has as a “beginning” does not imply the beginning of a new age *in* that event; rather it is designed to imply that the birth of a new age was being *offered*. This is a *Jewish* rather than a *Christian* eschatological perspective upon Luke-Acts. The successful establishment of the Christian church has led scholars to read the story of Luke-Acts as a successful transition to a new age. However, this hindsight hardly seems available to Luke and his audience, and in particular it does not situate Luke-Acts in relation to Jewish eschatological expectations.

The leading typology in Acts 2 is not one based around Sinai and the presentation of a Christian analogue to the Old Covenant and the Law. Rather, it is a typology centred in the eighth century deliverance of Jerusalem by the Angel of the Lord. This is suggested by Luke’s use of Isaiah and Joel, the material of which would have been read in an eighth century setting by first century readers. (We cannot bring to Luke’s intertextuality the compositional theories of historico-critical scholarship).

At this point, my argument can call upon Pentecostal scholarship. The premise for Pentecostal scholars who present an empowerment view is that the gift of the Spirit is promised to those who are *already* Christians. This prior status is shown by Luke’s loose coupling of reception of the Spirit and water baptism. Luke has examples of baptised believers without the Spirit (Acts 8, 19). The gift of the Spirit is therefore secondary and additional to the Christian life; its purpose is mission. Scholars who take this approach may further delimit the Spirit as essentially prophetic in the style of the Old Testament prophets *preaching* to the nation. R. P. Menzies, perhaps, is the most detailed defence of this position. However, I part company with such scholars because they do not tie the bestowal of the Spirit to **Jewish requirements**, and share the same approach as more broadly charismatic scholars by taking the gift of the Spirit to be Christian in its focus.

We will first set out the details that correspond to Isaiah 6, and then we will evaluate the commonly made Sinai connections.

**Isaiah’s Call Narrative**

Luke is deliberately evoking Isaiah’s Call Narrative (Isa 6:1-13). Isaiah saw “the lord sitting (ka,qhmai) upon a throne” and “the house” (oi=koj) “full (plh,rhj) of his glory” (Isa 6:1, LXX[[3]](#footnote-3)). In the accompanying theophany smoke fills (pi,mplhmi) the temple, and there is a voice or sound (fwnh**,**) of praise (Isa 6:3-4), which shakes (evpai,rw) the doorposts of the temple. Isaiah has his “lips” (Isa 6:9) purged as a symbol of his appropriateness as a mouthpiece of the deity.

Luke’s Pentecost account has corresponding detail: Luke has the disciples in “the house” (oi=koj), when the house is filled (plhro,w) with a rushing mighty wind (Acts 2:2); the disciples are then filled (pi,mplhmi, Acts 2:4) with the holy Spirit, and their voice (fwnh**,**, Acts 2:6) is a voice of praise, and they are empowered to speak on behalf of God; finally, this event takes place after Jesus has ascended and been exalted to a position as “the lord” sitting upon a throne (ka,qhmai, Acts 2:33, 34).

In addition to these correspondences, there is a broad thematic “fit” with Acts insofar as Isaiah’s call narrative is about calling and commission. The crux in the text is about who will be “sent” (avposte,llw) and who will tell the people (Isa 6:8-9). This corresponds to the commission of the disciples to be “apostles” (avpo,stoloj, Luke 6:13, Acts 1:8). Isaiah’s commission was ultimately to be unsuccessful insofar as the people would hear “but not understand”, and see “but not perceive” (Isa 6:9). This is the quotation upon which Luke concludes his view of the Jews (Acts 28:25-26), which thereby shows his Isaianic view of the preaching of the disciples throughout Acts.

A typological comparison between Pentecost and Isaiah’s Call Narrative is further supported by determining where the theophanic phenomena were experienced. Scholars have mainly supposed a setting in a house or more specifically a room in a house.[[4]](#footnote-4) Luke certainly uses oi=koj of “houses” and in contrast to the temple (Acts 5:42). C. K. Barrett argues that Luke’s use of ka,qhmai elsewhere in Acts means “sit” and therefore in Acts 2 the disciples are sitting in a room and that oi=koj should be understood as “room”.[[5]](#footnote-5) He allows the possibility that oi=koj may indicate a chamber of the temple rather than a room in a private house, and he cites Josephus’ usage of oi=koj for the temple chambers (*Ant*. 8.65).

The possibility that it was a room in the temple compound is supported by the silent transition in the narrative to a public space where there is a crowd. Barrett notes that any transfer of location is formally absent from the text.[[6]](#footnote-6) Since, the multitude that subsequently clusters around the disciples (Acts 2:6) would not be facilitated in the room of a private house, some transition to a public space is needed, and one that can attract and embrace three thousand converts. Luke adds that the disciples were daily in the temple (Acts 2:46, cf. Luke 24:53; Acts 5:25), and this would seem the natural location for them on the day of Pentecost.

However, another possibility is that oi=koj refers to the temple as a whole rather than a chamber,[[7]](#footnote-7) and that the disciples are sitting in an open area at the time the sound and rushing wind engulfed them. While Luke uses i`ero,nin Acts for the temple (22 times), rather than oi=koj,, this word is used by him (Acts 7:47, 49; cf. Luke 13:35; 19:46), when he is directly using Jewish scriptural material about the temple.[[8]](#footnote-8) Luke could therefore be using oi=koj as part of his set of allusions to Isaiah 6 and as part of his theophanic description. A setting in the temple makes it more likely that the Spirit would have inspired praise amongst other speech acts.

**Sinai Typology**

Many scholars have affirmed that there are similarities between Luke’s Pentecost account and the Sinai theophanies. Similarities with the scriptural account include details such as the following: the people were gathered together (Exod 19:8) prior to the theophanies in the third month after leaving Egypt (Exod 19:1), and similarly, Pentecost was in the third month after the crucifixion and the disciples were gathered together; the Sinai theophanies involved “sound” (fwnh**,**)) and “fire” (pu/r), which are features also mentioned at Pentecost (Exod 19:16-18; 20:18; Acts 2:2-4); and the Sinai theophanies accompanied something that was “given”, viz. a law, likewise the Spirit was “given” at Pentecost. Finally, a comparison can be made between the 120 at Pentecost and the group of elders who approach God on Sinai, while the people remain “afar off” (Exod 20:18, makro,qen, Acts 2:39, makra,n).

In addition to these similarities, scholars have put forward several socio-literary arguments to show that Luke’s readership would have made a connection between Pentecost and Sinai because of their likely awareness of common cultural codes. The contribution of the literary co-text is twofold: firstly, it joins the event of the giving of the Law and the establishment of the covenant to the celebrations of the Festival of Weeks; and secondly, it embellishes the scriptural Sinai narrative with details that are reminiscent of Luke’s descriptive detail in Acts 2. Thus, texts variously describe the Law at Sinai being offered to the nations in i) different languages; ii) in thundering voices; and iii) in a theophany involving flames of fire. Israel is then chosen because of its response to the offer made by Yahweh. It is argued that Luke’s readers would have seen the bestowal of the Spirit as an analogous and comparable foundational event involving flames of fire, a thunderous sound and tongues.

Scholars offer a broadly similar argument. J. C. Vanderkam[[9]](#footnote-9) and L. O’Reilly[[10]](#footnote-10) particularly emphasize rabbinical texts (2c. and later). Vanderkam also stresses the associations between Sinai and the Festival of Weeks that are indicated in *Jubilees* and Qumran texts. Turner’s case is largely based on Philo’s account of Sinai, and his conclusion is that “there is a relatively secure case that Acts 2 deliberately evokes the fundamental Jewish story of Moses’ ascent to God to receive the Torah which he then gives to Israel (and beyond) with theophanic accompaniment”.[[11]](#footnote-11) After his review of primary texts, Vanderkam concludes that, “the *Jubilees*-Qumran tradition shows that already in the second century B.C.E. the Festival of Weeks was closely tied to the events at Mount Sinai”.[[12]](#footnote-12) Correspondingly, he observes that there is little in Acts 2 that reminds a reader of what the Old Testament says about this festival.

Against these scholars, R. P. Menzies argues that Pentecost merely shows an author who is “familiar with the language of Jewish theophany”. [[13]](#footnote-13) Barrett expresses a similar opinion when he says that “Luke is accumulating features characteristic of theophanies”.[[14]](#footnote-14) H. Conzelmann states that any comparison is “debatable”.[[15]](#footnote-15) G. Hovenden’s evaluation of the positions of Turner and Menzies is that “while Turner’s argument probably wins the day, it needs to be said that the parallels are to Philo’s elaboration of the Sinai event rather than to the Old Testament account”.[[16]](#footnote-16) We need not rehearse the arguments of these opposing scholars; however, we can supplement their collective case with some typological considerations.

Whether a scholar perceives any typology in the account of Pentecost largely depends on how s/he perceives Luke’s theological intent; the typology is used to support this theology. Thus Menzies, who sees the gift of the Spirit as a supplementary gift for mission, is sympathetic to a comparison with Babel, and is disinclined to see any Sinai typology in the Pentecost narrative. Turner uses a Sinai typology to support the view that Luke is presenting a theme of *covenant* *renewal* in his account. J. D. G. Dunn uses Sinai typology in a similar vein to Turner, except that he sees Pentecost as *initiation* of a new covenant.[[17]](#footnote-17) O’Reilly eschews the idea of covenant as the basis of comparison, and argues instead that the typology consists in “the affinities between the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost and the giving of the Law at Sinai”,[[18]](#footnote-18) and he does this because he sees the story of Acts as the story of the “word of God”. These scholars represent the main typological choices that have been offered.

All of these approaches are attempts to characterize *the beginning that is Pentecost* in an ecclesiologically significant way legitimating the existence of “the church”. Contrary to Turner’s view that there is a “secure case” for comparing Pentecost and Sinai, there are significant typological arguments to be heard against the case. Considerations of plot, episode details, as well as the character-roles of Jesus and the disciples, militate against reading Pentecost as an anti-type to Sinai:

1) While Pentecost is a “beginning” for the disciples (Luke 1:2; 24:47; Acts 11:15), it is not a beginning for Jesus (Acts 1:2). Sinai was not a beginning for Israel, rather the departure from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea were the “beginning”, as indicated by the institution of the calendar (Exod 12:2). Luke’s comparison of the bestowal of the Spirit to water baptism (Luke 3:16) suggests a natural antitype in the crossing of the Red Sea.[[19]](#footnote-19)

2) Sinai represents a covenant *agreement*; there is sacrifice and declaration of intent, and a giving of a law. The series of episodes represents an extended transaction between the people and Yahweh. These elements are absent from Acts 2.[[20]](#footnote-20) Had Luke intended a comparison or contrast with the Law and the Spirit, he could have used Ezek 36:26-27 or Jer31:33, as Paul does in 2 Cor 3:3.

3) There are multiple ascents and multiple theophanies at Sinai; no one ascent or theophany serves as a type for Pentecost.[[21]](#footnote-21) A comparison can be made with the first theophany at Sinai (Exod 19:16) in terms of the “wind” and the “fire” but, crucially, Moses has not ascended to the top of Sinai prior to this theophany, and only communicates with God from the base of the mountain (Exod 19:20); law-giving is implied by the editorial conjunction of legal material that follows (Exod 20:1-17), but there is no explicit mention of “the giving of the law” or of any transaction to do with the making of a covenant.

Following an ascent/descent (Exod 19:20-21), the next theophany (Exod 20:18) duplicates the detail of the first theophany without the mention of “fire” but, again, Moses is with the people, “afar off” rather than up the mountain, and there is no mention of anything being given, although it is implied (again via editorial collocation) that the ten commandments were given before Moses had to return suddenly to the people.

The next theophany (“fire” — Exod 24:17) sees Moses up the mountain to receive the Law (v. 12), but it *follows* the covenant transaction, which takes place someway down the mountain, and at which both Moses and the elders of Israel are present. Furthermore, only tabernacle plans follow this theophany, rather than what might be considered “the Law”.

If Luke intends his readers to pick up on Sinai in his Pentecost account, he does not point them to any one episode. The right spatial relationship in which both Jesus and Moses are “up” and “give” something to the “people” does not coincide with the occurrence of the theophanic detail to which Luke is said to make an allusion (Exod 19:16).[[22]](#footnote-22)

4) Instead of inviting his readers to compare a single ascent of Moses up Sinai and the giving of the Law to Pentecost, Luke may actually invite a more general comparison between Moses and Jesus’ multiple ascents to heaven after the resurrection. A typology is suggested[[23]](#footnote-23) in Jesus’ cryptic remark to Herod, “Behold, I cast out demons, and I do cures today and tomorrow (sh,meron kai. au;rion), and the third day(τῇ τρίτῃ) I shall be perfected” (Luke 13:32). This remark describes a two-day time-period for his ministry, and then a “third day”. The same lexical fragments pick out identical time periods in the Sinai account, “And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow (sh,meron kai. au;rion), and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day (th.n tri,thn)” (Exod 19:9-10). This allusion may indicate Luke’s perspective on Jesus’ exorcisms, viz., that they were an anti-type to Moses’ sanctifying of the people, prior to ascending the mountain to God on the third day.

The fragments, sh,meron kai. au;rion and τῇ τρίτῃ, if they allude to the Exodus text, identify a “third day” upon which Moses ascended Sinai as being analogous to the period after the resurrection, which took place on the “third day” (Luke 24:7, τῇ τρίτῃ). Luke identifies an evidently symbolic period of forty days for this time in which Jesus was “teaching” the apostles (Acts 1:3), and this may allude to the forty-day periods during which Moses received tabernacle instructions and commandments from God (Exod 24:18; 34:28). Luke’s account distinguishes two and possibly three ascensions[[24]](#footnote-24) of Jesus (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9), as well as mysterious appearances and disappearances (Luke 24:31, 36). Luke’s readers may therefore have seen a comparison with Moses’ *multiple* ascents of Sinai and the period of the Ascension.

Accordingly, rather than equate Pentecost and Sinai, Luke’s allusions suggest a comparison between the period of the Ascension and Sinai. Sinai has a narrative focus on Moses ascending and descending and bringing the commands and instructions to the people; this is Luke’s record about the Ascension period. Such a comparison would be part of Luke’s general presentation of Jesus as an anti-type to Moses.[[25]](#footnote-25)

5) The Ascension period is the concluding part of Jesus’ ministry in relation to the disciples. Rather, than comparing Pentecost to Sinai, Luke’s readers are more likely to have compared Jesus’ teaching throughout his ministry to the giving of a law. This is indicated by Luke’s allusion to Deut 1:1 and the “words of Moses” in Jesus final remark to the disciples in Luke 24:44, (oi` lo,goi ou]j evla,lhsen Mwush/j panti. Israhl/Ou-toi oi` lo,goi mou ou]j evla,lhsa pro.j u`ma/j). This closing Lucan epitaph sets Jesus’ words as the anti-type to the Law given through Moses, and therefore it is unlikely that Luke’s readers would have seen the “gift of the Spirit” as the anti-type to the gift of “the Law”.

6) In terms of the *plot* of Exodus, the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost is more likely to evoke recollections of the bestowal of the Spirit upon Joshua through the laying on of hands, in readiness for his work after Moses’ departure (Deut 34:9). A typology based on this incident retains a Moses-like character role for Jesus (as in the conventional Sinai reading of Acts 2); it adds an element of “succession” (the disciples have the character-role of a “successor”), which is absent from the conventional Sinai typology; it offers a scriptural precedent for the “laying on of hands” motif in Acts; and it supplies a reason for the mention of “signs and wonders” in Acts 2:22 in connection with Jesus — such a mention of “signs and wonders” in connection with Moses immediately follows the bestowal of the Spirit upon Joshua (Deut 34:10-12). Alternatively, a comparison with the bestowal of the Spirit upon the seventy elders would be justified in terms of plot.

7) Luke’s note of timing — Pentecost — may not be designed to connect with the giving of the Spirit, as most scholars suggest. It could equally provide a context for understanding the success of the disciples’ initial preaching. Firstfruits was celebrated at the beginning of harvest (Exod 23:16, qerismo,j), and the festival of “ingathering” at the end of the harvest. Luke has previously used a harvest figure to describe the mission of the seventy (Luke10:1-2, qerismo,j). This suggests that Luke would have conceived of the disciples at Pentecost as “labourers” in the field and the result of their preaching on this occasion (3000 converts, Acts 2:41) to be the firstfruits of a future fuller harvest. Such a typology is consistent with Luke’s view of “the preaching of the word” as a sowing of seed (Luke 8:11). This proposal locates the point of Luke’s calendrical observation in Jewish scriptural traditions about Firstfruits, rather than contemporary Midrash upon Sinai traditions.

8) Finally, Sinai and Pentecost do not assign a structurally comparable role to the *character* of the recipients of the Law/Spirit.. Sinai does not embody the response of praise on the part of the people. The people need cleansing (Exod 19:10), there is a danger of perishing (Exod 19:21), they are afraid (Exod 20:18), and finally there is the sin of the Golden Calf (Exod 32). Instead of a Sinai typology, the outburst of praise at Pentecost could have been seen as analogous to the praise delivered by the Red Sea.[[26]](#footnote-26)

**Conclusion**

Luke’s inspired use of the Jewish scriptures implies that he constructs typology with multiple echoes to his scriptural source materials. Thus, any Sinai typology in Acts 2 should consist in a series of echoes and allusions. The lexical links and typological correspondences that have been put forward are miscued and an insufficient basis upon which to affirm that the implied reader would have drawn a comparison between Sinai and Pentecost.

Our conclusion therefore is that Luke is not deploying any extensive Sinai typology. The elements of his account echo different scriptural episodes, Babel, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the call theophany of Isaiah. If Luke intends a link with proto-rabbinic traditions about Sinai, then this is likely to reside in the common requirement that the Torah and the Gospel needed to be taken to the ends of the earth in all languages. This single point of contact, however, does not yield a Sinai typology in the Pentecost account; rather it is recognition of the language barrier facing the proclamation of the Word of God. This is not a sufficient basis upon which to compare Pentecost to Sinai as a foundational event. Contrary to Turner’s view that there is a “secure case”[[27]](#footnote-27) for comparing Pentecost and Sinai, there are significant typological arguments to be heard against this view. These question whether the comparisons of scenic detail that Turner and other scholars assert are sufficient to make Pentecost theologically comparable as a foundational event.

**Annihilationism**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

Several notable scholars have recently questioned the theology of Hell, including John Wenham, Stephen Travis, Clark Pinnock, John Stott, Philip Hughes, Michael Green and Edward Fudge. Fudge’s work has become definitive for the annihilationist argument, and although it has certain weaknesses, it presents a good overview of the arguments. The annihilationism (extinction) that they propose has been subjected to critical examination by traditionalists such as Robert Peterson, David McKay and recently, among others, Chris Morgan who hold to the conscious eternal punishment of the wicked and use the theology of Jonathan Edwards to answer the annihilationists. The key text is Matt 25:41,

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels…

This article unashamedly takes the position of annihilationism as a biblical one, and it will attempt, without repeating old arguments, to offer some fresh insights to the theological and hermeneutic methodologies that support this position. Before we precede any further let me emphatically state that annihilationism does not presuppose universalism with which it is often unjustifiably linked.

**The Goodness and Severity of God**

Annihilationists are often accused of using “emotive language” when presenting their case; of reflecting the liberal sentimentalism of the age and not allowing the Bible (however uncomfortable) to speak for itself. The charge of using human values to dictate theology, would, if true, be a powerful counter argument, but it is palpably untrue .The Bible clearly teaches that divine mercy is out of all proportion to divine wrath:

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever. (Ps 103: 9)

For his anger endureth but a moment. (Ps 30: 5)

The Lord, The lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. (Exod 34: 7).

Whatever other ‘theological problems’ these verses bring to the debate they do emphasise the great gulf between divine mercy and divine justice – God’s mercy is “plenteous” and is kept for a thousand [generations] but his anger is limited to “four generations” and lasts “but a moment.” This is not the language of “everlasting unending conscious punishment” – in fact it is the opposite.

It is not “theological squeamishness” that disallows the traditional view but the revealed character of God himself. We are however left with the anomaly that children are seemingly punished for the “sins of the fathers” but this charge was effectively countered by Ezekiel (18:19-32). The revelation of the divine attributes must be understood in the context of Gen 15:16,

In the *fourth generation* they [the Israelites] shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

The punishment that God stored up for the Amorites was postponed until the fourth generation [of Amorites] and when it came, it was truly terrible, for God commanded the cities to be “devoted” or sanctified to destruction – **complete annihilation** of animals, children, men and women – a horrific genocide capped by burning the cities to ash. If ever we have an example of God’s judgment and severity – a picture of “hell” then this is it.

Divine patience and “longsuffering” (*cf.* 2 Pet 3: 9) endured for four generations but to no avail, the Amorites did not repent; the words of Genesis are equally applicable here, “every imagination of his heart was only evil continually” (6:5); the Amorites and Canaanites were only fit for one thing – **annihilation** – except, it be noted, Rahab and her family, who had faith in the God of Israel. Moreover, the destruction of the unrepentant Canaanite was necessary in order to prevent the (total) corruption of the Israelite nation, thereby making it impossible to keep covenant mercy for a [figurative?] thousand generations.

God takes no pleasure at all in the death of the wicked (Ezek 18: 23); why should he then take pleasure in the “eternal suffering” of the wicked? Man is too insignificant to warrant conscious punishment for eternity, man can neither add nor detract from God’s righteousness by his actions (Job 35:6-8).

Apologists object that it is not contrary to God’s love to limit the period of mercy, to execute penal justice, or to allow human suffering. We have observed that all this is true—it is not contrary to divine love, but it is against God’s will, for it is not the divine intention that creation is subject to vanity. God’s justice is not man’s justice; in fact all human concepts of equity are overturned, the last will be first, those who work for one hour are given the same reward as the day-labourer, it is apparent that God’s redistributive justice and all-embracing mercy are different (and difficult) for human understanding—we cannot forgive once, never mind seventy times seven.

It is beneath divine dignity to punish man by making him suffer for eternity, God has already pronounced a punishment for sin: “the wages of sin is death”*.* Death is the ‘great leveller’ like God himself death is no “respecter of persons” and is his final word on the worth of human nature—*like the grass that perishes*. It is fitting that the grave is a ‘one size fits all’ punishment; for it allows man no allusions about his significance or his intrinsic ‘goodness’—for all die whether “good”, “wicked”, “believer” or “unbeliever” – “dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.” All men stand under the same judgment and all men require God’s mercy.

Revelation 20

It surprises me that even in annihilationist circles the interpretation of Matt 25:41 is not contextually set within the context of Rev 20:10-15 where it belongs. The chapter unambiguously speaks of the **end of death**:

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.11And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.13And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.15And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

**Death and hell are cast into the lake of fire.** This is a hendiadys; death and hell are synonymous (*cf*. vv.13 the sea or abyss) and are both destroyed. How do we understand this metaphorical language? It is obvious that death can only be destroyed permanently when all mortal beings on earth (who have the nature of death) have either perished or been made immortal. When this occurs the earth will be populated with immortals and God can be truly be said to be **all in all.** John wants us to understand that the last judgement known as the **second death** is the final consummation of the age. The last resurrection also coincides with a final confrontation with evil:

1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,3And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. (Rev 20:1-3)

John’s eschatology envisions the millennium as an idyllic Eden and into this scene we have “that ancient serpent the devil” introduced. As in Eden the “serpent” functions as the tempter seducing the nations with the age-old lie that man can be like God. Gog and Magog representing the nations are encouraged to attack the peaceful camp of the saints and are consumed by **fire from heaven** before their plan can be realised. It is not coincidental however that the seducing spirit emerges from the **bottomless pit.** John wants us to understand that the second resurrection is the catalyst for the final confrontation, for he is paraphrasing Isaiah 24:

21And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.22 And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and **after many days shall they be visited.** (Isa 24:21-22)

The scene is clearly set—it is the second resurrection which introduces the serpent, those who are excluded from eternal life at the last judgement are also excluded from the kingdom—they act as agitators amongst the remaining population seducing them to attack the “camp of the saints.” They are like the generation that perished in the wilderness;

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you [yourselves] thrust out. (Luke 13: 28)

Weeping and gnashing of teeth denotes rage (not necessarily sorrow; cf. Acts 7: 54) at exclusion. In John’s imagery the tree of life is present in the “garden” and he wants us to understand that the protagonists are attempting a last grasp effort at the fruit of immortality.

Johannine theology complements our understanding of how God deals with men, even at the very last he allows mankind (the mortal population) the dignity of freewill and the ability to make a choice—choose life or death—like Adam and Eve. The rebellion that ensues sorts out the “wheat from the chaff” some to everlasting life others to everlasting condemnation.

The “torment” that is suffered by those rejected and expelled at the End is the certain knowledge that they will eventually be extinguished and will not enjoy the benefits of everlasting fellowship. The punishment of the wicked is not so much about the vengeance of God as about the vindication of his Son and the saints. What then of the lake of fire that clearly exists at the commencement of the millennium and has been the resting place of the beast and the false prophet (and their adherents) in the intervening period? The lake of fire is clearly not hell, nor can it be situated in hell, for hell itself is consumed therein.

It is not beyond the realms of possibility that John wants us to understand the lake of fire as a literal topographic feature formed during the cataclysmic events surrounding the Second Advent. These events certainly feature seismic activity, possibly even the shifting of the rift fault, which is volcanically active.

21 I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Sovereign Lord. Every man's sword will be against his brother. 22 I will execute judgment upon him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulphur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him. 23 And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord. (Ezek 38: 21-23)

John is obviously drawing on various Old Testament prophecies:

On that day I will give Gog a burial place in Israel, in the valley of those who travel east toward the Sea. It will block the way of travellers, because Gog and all his hordes will be buried there. So it will be called the Valley of Hamon Gog. (Ezek 39:11)

The demise of Gog is a replay of the demise of the beast and false prophet, or possibly it is describing the same event or different events. In a similar fashion the defeat of those who aligned themselves against Hezekiah functions as a prototype:

And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. (Isa.66: 24)

It is clear from these quotes that a **memorial function** is envisioned here, a sort of holocaust museum, a warning to future generations. This should be understood in the same aetiological manner as Gen 19:26 and hyper-literalism should not be pressed. Lot’s wife is “immortalised” as a pillar of salt; people stare at her “carcass” her “worm does not die” and she too had been killed with “unquenchable fire.” The ancient Oriental mind would readily grasp such metaphors without applying the hyper-literalism of modernity. (Do we have immortal worms in hell?) When we think of Lot’s wife we are reminded of Pompey preserved in its death throes.

We are clearly dealing with a profound and complex set of imagery and metaphor in Revelation – the “tree of life”—is it real? Does it represent the cross? How does John understand the grasping after divinity? The tree obviously represents fellowship with God, which makes eternal life possible. This demonstrates the care we must take when interpreting Scripture. Whatever the “lake of fire” is – literal or figurative (or both?) it represents **a finality** that **hell does not.** After all Jesus came back from hell, has the keys to the gates of hell, and promised that hell would not prevail against his church. Hell and death have been conquered in the resurrection event by the firstborn of the dead and will be utterly and finally cut off at the end of the age.

**Conclusion**

Annihilationists suggest that the doctrine of the immortal soul is of Greek, Platonic origin and contend that God alone possesses immortality (1 Tim 6: 16) and that it is only received at the resurrection of believers. Immortality is therefore conditional. Scholars such as Fudge, Pinnock, Dunn, White and Wenham among others argue for the annihilation of Jesus at death. R. A. Peterson comments:

The systematic implications of holding that Jesus was annihilated when he died are enormous. Nothing less than orthodox Christology is at stake.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Peterson is absolutely correct in his analysis, for if we believe that God at the point of death withdraws his “breath” thereby extinguishing life completely by removing the life force – then Jesus **truly died** and was required to have the same faith in his Father as we are asked to display; that God would remember him and restore his life.

[Jesus] also himself likewise took part of the same [nature as us]; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. (Heb 2: 14).

For Jesus, the horror of the crucifixion was not the pain and suffering or the shame of the cross – it was the complete separation and forsaking by his Father who had been with him all his life and could not be with him in the grave.

**Theories of Judgment**

**A. Perry**

The bar diagram below sets out various theological ‘theories of the judgment’, i.e. theories that thinkers have devised to answer the question: On what basis is a person saved or assessed at the judgment seat. The table is offered without comment or the citation of texts to support each ‘theory’. It assumes baptism at the age of 16 and death at the age of 70. The sentence to pose for each ‘bar’ is, ‘You are saved on the basis of…’ and then add the bar text to complete the sentence.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 16 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 70 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |   |   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  | All of life since baptism : Continuous assessment |
|  |   |   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 16 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 70 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |   |   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  | All of life : predestined for salvation : no judgment |
|  |   |   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 16 |  |  |  |  |  |  | 70 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |   |   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  | Who you are at death; the final result; Last Rites |
|  |   |   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 16 |  |  |  |  |  | 70 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |  | Baptism : regardless of life |  |  |
|  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 16 |  |  |  |  |  | 70 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |  | An outstanding event |  |  |
|  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 16 |  |  |  |  |  | 70 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |  | Assessment tests : A pattern of the new man |
|  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 16 |  |  |  |  |  | 70 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |  | No Judgment : all are saved |  |  |  |
|  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 16 |  |  |  |  |  | 70 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   | The "account" you give : courtroom defence |  |
|  |   |   |   |  |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

The prospect of judgment is real and uncomfortable; the comfort that human beings have offered themselves about judgment needs to be carefully weighed. Scripture alone will tell us upon what the judgment will be based.

**Infant Baptism**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

D. Wright writes[[29]](#footnote-29) as one from within the paedobaptist tradition, from a national church that practises widespread if not indiscriminate baptism, and he is highly critical of this tradition. This makes his criticism all the more powerful as it is not an outright rejection of paedobaptism:

Such an investigation finds much of its integrity from accepting infant baptism as baptism, and not as a wholly mistaken practice which should never have been invented in the first place.[[30]](#footnote-30)

Quoting P. J. Leithart he says,

The remarkable fact about baptism in the early church is that infant baptism emerged…..as the dominant practice of the church.[[31]](#footnote-31)

Wright’s book is based on a series of lectures which examine “the damaging ascendancy of infant baptism in practice and theology since the late patristic and early medieval centuries.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

The subtitle to his book “An Enquiry at the End of Christendom” reflects Wright’s observation that we are, “living through the disintegration of Christendom” a change that has been underway since the French Revolution of 1789. He understands Christendom as that long phase of Christian history during which the church and the civil order, whether people, nation or empire, were largely co-terminous. In other words that period in which the church/state were indistinguishable – at times the baptism of the new-born was required by the law of the state, as happened in the Reformation strongholds of Strasbourg and Geneva. Wright suggests that his investigation is timely, not simply because of the changing socio-political context that is moving away from state sponsored religion, but because a significant theological shift is taking place in the direction of an acknowledgement that **the norm of baptism is faith baptism.[[33]](#footnote-33)**

**Infant Baptism in the hands of Christendom**

Wright presents his critique in seven points, which are briefly summarised here:[[34]](#footnote-34)

**1.** The domination of infant baptism has cramped historical enquiry.

**2.** Christendom’s regnant paedobaptism fostered exaggerated historical claims, especially about the New Testament era and the next centuries.

**3.** Infant baptism took over and monopolized the theology of baptism.

**4.** The Reformation’s perpetuation of infant baptism alongside its insistence on ‘faith alone’ in time contributed to a reductionist view of baptism.

**5.** The Augustinian theology which paved the way for the universalizing of infant baptism in the early Medieval West itself had consequences detrimental to baptism.

**6.** The hold of infant baptism has been so strong for so long in Western Christianity that, since the re-emergence of the case for believers’ baptism (first seriously in the sixteenth century with the Anabaptists), it has tended to be reactive and inadequate.

**7.** The New Testament’s presentation of baptism became remote, and baptism could no longer function as a key to the character of the church.

After discussing how infant baptism as employed by “Christendom” led to the distortion and reductionism of NT baptism and the stifling of genuine historical enquiry, Wright turns to the effect paedobaptism had on the profession of faith.

**Baptism and Profession of faith**

Wright’s thesis is expressed thus:

That we find ourselves where we now are, with, for example, the label ‘Christian’ applied in evangelical circles to converted believers irrespective of baptism but certainly not to baptized infants, is, I believe, inexplicable without the pervasive effects of baptismal reductionism wrought by paedobaptism in Christendom, although it can hardly furnish the whole explanation. If I have one overarching aim…it is to foster an enhanced appreciation of baptism among Christians and their churches, particularly within the evangelical constituency.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Wright indicates that although the earliest unambiguous reference to infant baptism is in the *Apostolic Tradition* (ca.220) there is, “a great deal of hard evidence in the fourth and early fifth centuries that the offspring of Christian parents–**the known offspring of known Christian parents-were not baptised as babies**.”[[36]](#footnote-36) Wright appeals to the early testimony of Augustine and Asterius in order to demonstrate that infant baptism at that period was “very far from being majority practice”–this runs counter to the historical case presented by the German theologian J. Jeremias.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Our proposal is that although paedobaptism was probably introduced early (before 200) it was not normative practice. This would of course take the practice closer to apostolic times but that in itself is no guarantee that it was first century apostolic practice. It is clear from the Pauline epistles that the primitive church was threatened with subversion and corruption by Judaisers. The adoption of paedobaptism was most probably a reaction against socio-political pressures. One can imagine that it was introduced in some quarters (after the death of the apostles) as an alternative rite to circumcision in order to counter the Judaist threat. Also, as the church came under renewed imperial persecution it is understandable that Christians, who were facing the danger of a cruel death, would want to baptize their infants and children. As we progress to the 4th century, when Christianity became the “state religion”, paedobaptism is adopted as the perfect mechanism to seal the citizenship of the individual. The question is not when it was introduced, or even why it was introduced – but **is it Biblical?**

**Baptism in Mission**

It is impossible to instruct babies in preparation for baptism. Wright remarks,

In the long term, the universality of baby baptism resulted in the transposition of the catechumenate after baptism, which was the *Sitz im Leben* for the numerous catechisms compiled in the Protestant Reformations of the sixteenth century.[[38]](#footnote-38)

Of course, one might ask why a long period of instruction is necessary (three years in many churches) as many NT baptisms were spontaneous events; but this must be understood against a Jewish background where many candidates, even gentile proselytes, were already familiar with the Jewish Scriptures. The other extreme is death bed conversion or baptism after an indefinite delay in obeying the Lord.

Although Wright does not deal sufficiently with the great commission given in Matt 28:19-20, it is clear that paedobaptism has detrimental consequences for baptism in mission. Perhaps his most telling comment is the following:

We have tracked…a truly massive change in the history of Christ’s church. From being a company recruited by intentional response to the gospel imperative to discipleship and baptism, it has become a body enrolled by birth. It was arguably one of the greatest sea changes in the story of Christianity. It led, as we have seen, to the formation of Christendom, comprising a Christian empire, Christian nations or peoples. Christianity became a matter of heredity, not decision.[[39]](#footnote-39)

If the introduction of paedobaptism caused Christianity to become a “matter of heredity” rather than a personal decision, then paedobaptism becomes virtually indistinguishable from the rite of circumcision, which is also practiced on infants. Interestingly enough the covenant of circumcision is used as a justification for paedobaptism.

**Covenant Theology**

The understanding of paedobaptism as the virtual equivalent of circumcision is based on Covenant Theology.[[40]](#footnote-40) Accordingly, there exists a relationship between the Old Covenant sign of circumcision instituted in the Old Testament and the New Covenant sign of baptism that we find introduced in the New Testament:

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. Col 2:11-12

The “Gospel” was preached to Abraham (Gal 3:8) and therefore the sacraments of the two dispensations have essentially the same significance – Rom 4:11 calls circumcision a “seal” and Eph 1:13 applies the same term to baptism. Therefore the two sacraments correspond to each other as sacraments of reception into the covenant. As G. R. Beasley-Murray observes;

One of the difficulties in coming to grips with this view is the presence in it of elements of truth, to which all would accord fullest recognition, alongside a distortion of the Biblical evidence that makes the interpretation unacceptable. The major mistake of the writers of this school is their one-sided stressing of the elements of unity in the Covenant, Gospel and Church of both dispensations, and their ignoring of the equally clear elements of discontinuity, elements which, in fact, often take the attention of the New Testament writers more than elements of unity because they are so overwhelming.[[41]](#footnote-41)

The “Gospel”, as Paul asserts, was indeed preached to Abraham–the seal of circumcision and the “sacrifice” of Isaac witness to this; but what does circumcision mean? It is obvious that the genitals were cut in order to establish a permanent reminder that the covenant concerned a **promised** **seed**. Paul specifically makes this seed **singular** and finds its fulfilment in Christ (Gal 3:16). Ironically, although males were circumcised the covenant would not literally be established through impregnation with male seed but through virgin birth and divine intervention. Christ was therefore the fulfilment of the covenant of circumcision and is described by Paul as a ‘minister of the circumcision’ (Rom 15:8); he is also the only circumcised Jew who lives after the power of an endless life–and because of this Jesus fulfils, *once and for all*, the covenant of circumcision. Jesus himself is therefore the link between the Old Covenant (fulfilled in him) and the New Covenant (established by him).

Circumcision was largely an exclusivist covenant based on ethnicity and heredity; baptism, on the other hand, is universal and based on free choice. The covenant of circumcision (and all the previous covenants) were fulfilled in Christ (the singular seed), but this also includes the individuals who identify with him–not anymore by accident of natural birth, but by being born again–by water and Spirit (John 3:5). Circumcision and baptism are indeed covenants of birth into a chosen people–**but what different births**!We see clearly elements of continuity and discontinuity between the Old and New Covenants–**but they are not the same**.Whereas the Old Covenant is one after the flesh (literally cutting the covenant in the flesh), the New Covenant is one after the Spirit of grace (literally). The Jews refused to understand the true meaning of circumcision, therefore it became nothing more (in the words of Paul) than an act of self-mutilation of the flesh; God requires circumcision of the heart (Deut 10:16, Jer 4:4), which is the same as *the answer of a good conscience toward God* **not** *the putting away of the filth of the flesh* (1 Pet 3:21).[[42]](#footnote-42) The Christian believer responds in an act of faith, by identifying with the death and resurrection of Christ, and is therefore “clothed on” with Christ and becomes a Son (or daughter) of God.

Paedobaptists often refer to Acts 2:39 to justify infant baptism; the argument is presented as follows: The Apostle Peter specifically tells us in Acts 2:39 that this new sign of the covenant [baptism], just like it was in the Old Testament, is “for you and for **your children**and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.” Notice the similarity with Peter’s words concerning the New Testament sign of the covenant and God’s words to Abraham in Gen 17:8 concerning the Old Testament sign of the covenant. He says, “And I will establish my covenant between me and you and **your offspring**after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant.” If the Old Testament is relevant to the New Testament and if we can then use the Old Testament ritual of circumcision to inform the New Testament references to children and the covenant, then the argument for infant baptism becomes more reasonable. Let us quote the complete text before attempting an exegesis:

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**. **For the promise is unto you, and to your children**, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call. (Acts 2:38-39)

When Peter says, “the promise is unto you and your children”, he is speaking about **the promise of the Holy Spirit** (mentioned in the previous verse) not about baptism. John the Baptist, who preached the baptism of repentance, declared that the one coming after him would baptise not with water, but with the Spirit:

And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, **the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Spirit**. (John 1:39)

The context of Peter’s speech in Acts 2 is the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, when he quotes the prophecy of Joel 2:

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will **pour out of my Spirit** upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens **I will pour out in those days of my Spirit**; and they shall prophesy… (vv. 17, 18)

The promise to their children was not water baptism, but the outpouring of the Spirit–a baptism of the Spirit. This promise was not confined only to Jews and their children, but also to them that are *afar off* (Gentiles). In fact, in the case of the Gentiles, God made an **exception** when Cornelius and his family **received the Spirit before baptism** (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17). This does not mean that the administration of water baptism is somehow unnecessary, (for they were baptised afterwards), but that God deliberately *reversed the order* to demonstrate to the reluctant Peter that neither circumcision nor un-circumcision meant anything, but only faith and belief in the Messiah. It is clear that the outpouring of the Spirit before baptism was an exception–and was intended to be an exception–it cast all doubts out of the apostle’s mind and he accepted the Gentiles into fellowship: “for you and for your childrenand for all who are far off, **everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself**.” If God had demonstrated through Spirit baptism that he had called out the Gentiles, who could prevent them being baptised with water? It is simply eisegesis to apply this passage to child baptism. Clearly the meaning is (1) repent (2) be baptised (3) receive the Spirit as promised (to you and your kids and even to strangers) **it is not** (1) repent (2) be baptised (3) this sign of baptism was promised to you and your babies.

**New Testament Arguments**

In an article on Ecclesiology G. Herrick states the following:

The idea that baptism is not necessary for salvation is further confirmed when we read Paul’s comments in 1 Cor 1:17. He says there that Christ did not send him to baptize, but to preach the gospel. But, if baptism were an essential element in a saving response to the gospel, Paul would certainly have never omitted it. But, by his own testimony, he did. In effect, then, he separates the preaching of the gospel from the ministry of baptizing. Thus baptism is not an essential part of the gospel. Peter, too, says as much when he equates baptism with the pledge of a good conscience toward God and not the removal of dirt from the body (1 Pet 3:21). Further, to add baptism, i.e., an external rite to the gospel, is to create insuperable tensions with Romans 4:1-12 and—all protestations to the contrary notwithstanding—to mix faith and works (Eph 2:8-9). It is a different gospel than the one Paul preached and is to be flatly rejected (Gal 1:6-7). Finally, if baptism were essential to saving faith, then the thief on the cross could not really have entertained the hope of heaven as Jesus promised (Luke 23:43).[[43]](#footnote-43)

Once again this is dishonest handling of Scripture, manipulating texts for the sake of apologetics. Firstly, the apostles’ statement in 1 Cor 1:17 was made, not because Paul thought that baptism was unimportant or unnecessary (otherwise, why does he devote a whole chapter to baptism when writing to the Romans?), but because he did not want to encourage rivalry. He did not want anyone claiming that they had personally been baptised by Paul; “Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ” (1 Cor 1:12). There was intense competition and divisiveness in Corinth, which Paul declined to encourage by baptising people and creating a “Pauline party.”

Secondly, it is disingenuous to state that Peter diminishes the importance of baptism because “he equates baptism with the pledge of a good conscience toward God and not the removal of dirt from the body” (1 Pet 3:21). As Beasley-Murray observes, “The chief lesson of this passage is its emphatic denial that the external elements constitute either its essence or its power. The cleansing in baptism is gained not through the application of water to the flesh but through the pledge of faith and obedience therein given to God, upon which the resurrection of Jesus Christ becomes a saving power to the individual concerned.”[[44]](#footnote-44) Peter is seeking, presumably, to distinguish baptism from certain rites of cleansing and initiation practiced by the Jews.

The Greek employed is r`u,poj rather than perika,qarma – “not the putting away of the filth (r`u,poj)of the flesh” – this form is used only here in the NT but is found in the LXX of Job 14:4 and Isa.4:4. The context of Job is particularly fitting to Peter’s argument; “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean (r`u,poj)? Not one.” Job wishes that he could be hidden in the grave and resurrected (remembered) only when divine anger had dissipated (v. 13). This is particularly relevant for a rite that identifies the believer with the death and new birth into Christ.

According to Herrick, “To add baptism, i.e., **an external rite** to the gospel, is to create insuperable tensions with Romans 4:1-12 and—all protestations to the contrary notwithstanding—**to mix faith and works** (Eph 2:8-9). It is a different gospel than the one Paul preached and is to be flatly rejected (Gal 1:6-7).” If baptism is a “work” then keeping the Eucharist is also a “work”, for keeping the Lord’s Supper can be equated with having ones feet washed by Christ (John 13:4-10). It is obvious that Herrick is confused as to what constitutes a “work” and what constitutes an act of faith. James is adamant **that faith without works is** **dead** – this does not contradict Paul, for the apostle uses “works” in a very specific way, namely, “self-justifying works of the law.” When Abraham obeyed God and sacrificed his son – his “work” was counted as an act of faith.

More poor exegesis follows with his last statement: “Finally, if baptism were essential to saving faith, then the thief on the cross could not really have entertained the hope of heaven as Jesus promised” (Luke 23:43). First, Jesus did not promise the thief that he would “go to heaven.” The word Jesus used was “paradise” there is no adequate ground for equating paradise with heaven, particularly as Jesus preached (and prayed) for the Kingdom of God **on earth.** Secondly, the Greek has no punctuation, therefore when Jesus says, “Verily, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise”, it should read as an emphatic statement: “I say to you today: **You will** be with me in paradise”. The fact is that Jesus did not go to heaven **that day[[45]](#footnote-45)** – he went to the grave and was resurrected on the **third day**–on which day, he declared that he had **not yet ascended** to the Father (John 20:17; this puts paid to the falsehood of the ‘immortal soul’ ascending to heaven). Finally, it is an assumption that the thief was not baptised. Many people had undergone the baptism of repentance administered by John the Baptist (Jesus’ disciples had). There is evidence that the “thief” more correctly rendered “malefactor”, was an insurrectionist like Barabbas, who is also called a robber (cf. Mark 15:7 and John 18:40). This man was probably (like Barabbas) a lapsed disciple of Jesus, who turned to insurrection after Jesus refused to lead a rebellion against Rome (John 6:53, 60, 66). The “thief” made a confession of faith while he hung next to Christ, demonstrating that he was familiar with his teachings:

* This man hath done nothing amiss (Jesus sinless)
* We indeed receive the due reward for our sin (confession of unworthiness)
* Jesus was “Lord” (the Messiah)
* Jesus would rise from the dead
* Jesus would ascend to heaven (after his resurrection)
* Jesus would come again
* On his return Jesus would raise the dead (implicit in the statement “remember me”, which also implies discrimination (i.e. judgement) between those accepted and those not
* Jesus’ return would also establish a kingdom

Whether or not the “thief” was a lapsed disciple who had been previously baptised becomes almost irrelevant, for he made a baptismal confession of faith and was literally “baptised” into Jesus’ crucifixion.[[46]](#footnote-46)

While it is true that the New Testament speaks of “households” being baptised (Acts 16:32-33; 1 Cor. 1:16) there is no evidence that these households contained babies, or, if they did contain infants, that these were also baptised – the argument from silence is a very weak strategy employed by paedobaptists.[[47]](#footnote-47) Beasley-Murray comments,

In so writing I would cite Paul’s words, ‘I have been a fool! You compelled me to it! (2 Cor.12:11). But has not this nonsense an important lesson? Luke, in writing these narratives, does not have in view infant members of the families. His language cannot be pressed to extend to them. He has in mind ordinary believers and uses language only applicable to them. Abuse of it leads to the degradation of Scripture.[[48]](#footnote-48)

In contrast the New Testament has copious examples of believer baptism – as many as three thousand ***believers*** (Acts 2:41) baptised in one day! Paedobaptists sometimes appeal to the gospel story of Jesus blessing the children and laying hands on them (Mark 10:13-16; Matt 18.3ff, Luke 18:15-17). Wright comments on how this was employed by the church;

One feature of this infant-dominated descent into unreality deserves special mention. It seems that it was in the course of this regressive development, during the seventh and eighth centuries more precisely, that the Gospel incident of Jesus’ blessing of little children was recruited to justify the laying of hands on infant heads in the remnants of the catechumenate now conscripted to process infants.[[49]](#footnote-49)

The passage in question is eschatological in nature[[50]](#footnote-50) and has nothing to say about infant baptism but rather about attitudes towards Jesus.

**Augustinian Theology**

Finally, something must be said about the Augustinian theology of infant baptism. Wright touches on this when he says,

That theology centred in the original sin, both guilt and incapacity, inherited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. It necessitated baptism if one was to escape condemnation to hell for the guilt of original sin, irrespective of whether one had lived long enough to add sins of one’s own. I remember Peter Brown, a distinguished biographer of Augustine and brilliant interpreter of religion in late antiquity, showing a small post graduate class in Oxford an illustration in an early printing of Augustine’s anti-Pelagian works. It depicted two mothers carrying their babies to the church for baptism. One arrived safe and was baptized, the other died on the way. **It said it all.**[[51]](#footnote-51)

Beasley-Murray observes:

In view of Rom.5:12-21 there seems to be no doubt that Paul taught the entailment of the whole race in Adam’s sin;[[52]](#footnote-52) but he also taught the entailment of the whole race in Christ’s deed of righteousness. Naturally he had no explicit concern for infants in his brief exposition; he was concerned with men that sinned, whether in possession of or without the Law, and their relationship to the disobedience of the First Adam and the obedience of the Second Adam. The logic of the argument would appear to imply, however, that as truly as the reach of Adam’s deed is universal, so is that of Christ’s redemptive act. No act of the Church is required to bring infants within the scope of Christ’s action, any more than an act of the group is required to bring the infant under the dominance of Adam’s sin. When assent is given to sin by the individual, so that in some measure he too sins ‘after the likeness of Adam’s transgression’, then sin is both personal and culpable; only the cry of repentance and faith towards Christ can then bring the deliverance from sin which slays (Rom.7:11). At that point Christian baptism becomes meaningful.[[53]](#footnote-53)

According to Scripture, the children of believers are sanctified by the belief of the parents until they reach the age of discernment. Beasley-Murray says,

They are the most privileged children of all time, under the shadow of the wings of God and his Christ, being prepared in the midst of his people for his Kingdom of grace and glory. Recognizing to the full the blessings of such a situation, it is a mistake not to recognize its limitations. Birth in a Christian home is a priceless privilege, but it is not a guarantee of inheritance in the Kingdom of God. In the inscrutable providence of God, neither all the members of Christian families repent and believe the Gospel, to be incorporated into Christ and the Church, nor, mercifully, are all members of unbelieving families doomed to irreparable loss. For election also cuts across the distinctions created by the Churches’ institutions. The problem of the child dying before reaching the age of responsibility has no relevance to our subject; only an evil doctrine of God and man sets them among the lost or in limbo, and fortunately the Lord is not bound by our ignorance and mistakes. God is good, his Word is good, and his grace is ever about us and our children; our chief responsibility is to see that we, and they, hear the Word and live.[[54]](#footnote-54)

**Conclusion**

In contrast with many scholars, who deliberately wrest Scripture and offer poor exegesis (eisegesis) for the sake of apologetics, Wright offers a refreshing look at the subject of paedobaptism. He does not reject infant baptism out rightly but his analysis is penetratingly honest and damning of the damage that infant baptism has done to the Church. It is a credit to good scholarship that he offers opinions counter to his own beliefs. Particularly insightful are his observations regarding paedobaptism being an instrument of “Christendom.” Institutionalised Christianity has done untold damage to a personal response to the Gospel. The pity about Wright’s book is that it does not reject paedobaptism altogether.

**The Woman’s Desire**[[55]](#footnote-55)

**G. Horwood**

**Introduction**

In Gen 3:16 the woman is told, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you” (ESV).

The word for ‘pain’ relates to physical pain as well as to emotional sorrow.[[56]](#footnote-56) It also refers to the pain of toil, i.e., labour that is strenuous and requires the expenditure of considerable energy.[[57]](#footnote-57) The second phrase ‘In pain you shall bring forth children’ uses a cognate word and the intended meaning is similar, serving to reinforce the first phrase. The process of bearing and rearing children was going to be painful, labourious and difficult - for the woman in particular.

The interpretation of the second half of the verse, in particular the woman’s **desire**, has in recent times become the subject of some controversy. In this article we will examine what the nature of the woman’s desire is.

**Current Interpretations**

The word translated as ‘desire’ occurs only three times in the Old Testament – in Gen 3:16; 4:7 and Song 7:10 – and means simply ‘urge, longing, i.e., a very strong emotion or feeling to have or do something’.[[58]](#footnote-58)

Traditionally, the woman’s desire in Gen 3:16 has been interpreted in one of two ways. Many have understood this to refer to the woman’s yearning or need for the man in some way – such as sexual desire, or a desire for protection. Alternatively, the phrase has been translated as per the KJV margin, “Thy desire shall be [subject] to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee”, indicating that the woman would no longer be able to act upon her desires autonomously.

In 1975, a new interpretation was put forward by Susan Foh, whose re-examination of Gen 3:16 was, in her own words, ‘prompted by the current issue of feminism in the church’4.[[59]](#footnote-59) Foh’s theory was that the woman’s desire towards her husband was a hostile one - a desire to master and dominate him. Based on a comparison with sin’s desire to control Cain in Gen 4:7, Foh rendered Gen 3:16b as “Your desire to control shall be to your husband; but he should master you”. As Foh explained, “Her desire is to contend with him for leadership in their relationship … and so the man must actively seek to rule his wife.”[[60]](#footnote-60)5

Whilst it is true that the language of Gen 3:16 is almost identical to that of Gen 4:7, a problem with Foh’s argument is that Gen 4:7 is itself an obscure text. G. J. Wenham notes that Gen 4:7 has been described as “The most obscure verse in Genesis” (Procksch), going on to say, “Because of its grammatical improprieties and its unusual terminology, commentators are forced to choose between emendation and positing a rare meaning for ‘crouching’. To compound the problems, other words are of uncertain meaning.”[[61]](#footnote-61)

On Foh’s interpretation of Gen 3:16, G. J. Wenham comments, “There is a logical simplicity about Foh’s interpretation that makes it attractive, but given the rarity of the term ‘urge’ (apart from Genesis 3:16 and 4:7, occurring only in Cant 7:11), certainty is impossible.”[[62]](#footnote-62)

An analysis of Gen 4:7 will not be attempted here. However, as I. A. Busenitz writes, “Although there are linguistic and thematic parallels between Gen 3:16b and Gen 4:7, contextual differences and interpretive problems indicate that Gen 4:7 cannot be used to interpret the meaning of “desire” in Gen 3:16.”[[63]](#footnote-63) The uncertainties surrounding Gen 4:7 mean that, “Regardless of which view [of Genesis 4:7] one espouses, neither is sufficiently certain to allow it to become the basis for establishing the meaning of qwv in Gen 3:16.”[[64]](#footnote-64)

Busenitz suggests that the immediate context of Genesis 3 is the key in interpreting Gen 3:16, rather than linguistics. He notes that the judgments given to the man and the woman both revolve around propagation and seed. Both involve the earth (used metaphorically of the womb - Ps 139:15, Job 1:21). Both involve a desire or hunger (the barren womb is insatiable - Prov 30:15-16). Both involve seed sown (resulting in the conception of new life, plant or human – Num 5:28, 1 Pet 1:23). Both involve pain and toil in the bringing forth of that new life (the ‘fruit of the womb’ or ‘fruit of the ground’ - Deut 7:13, Luke 1:42). Thus, “The context speaks not of the desire of woman to rule the man but of the continuation of life in the face of death. Such is the central element of 3:16a. Such is the focal point of 3:17-19. Thus, there is good cause to believe that the same idea is present in 3:16b.”[[65]](#footnote-65)

Despite the pain and toil involved in bearing and raising children, God’s command to be fruitful and fill the earth would still be carried out, and the headship of the man would be maintained. Despite the pain and toil involved in producing food, the man and the woman would eat bread and human life on earth would be sustained.

**Eve’s Desire**

The immediate context of the woman’s sentence is the bringing forth of new life through childbearing (Gen 3:16a). It is likely then that the woman’s desire (Gen 3:16b[[66]](#footnote-66)) also has some connection to childbearing. In addition, it is important to remember that the sentence was given to an individual woman – Eve. When ascertaining the meaning of ‘desire’ in Gen 3:16, we must ask what Eve subsequently desired.

In Gen 3:16b God said to Eve, “your desire shall be for your ***ish*** *(*man/husband)”. The very next recorded utterance of Eve is her triumphant cry following the birth of her firstborn son, “I have gained a man (***ish***) from the Lord” (Gen 4:1). Wenham notes that “‘Man’ is nowhere else used to describe a baby boy.”[[67]](#footnote-67)

Eve’s desire, evident in this verse, was not only for her husband, but for a child - a son. Above all, Eve’s desire was for a son who would be a savior – the ‘seed of the woman’ promised in Gen 3:15 who would crush the serpent’s head and redeem those in bondage to sin.

In what could well be a commentary on Gen 3:16 and 4:1, Jesus says in John 16:21, “A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.”

Unfortunately Eve’s joy at the birth of Cain was to turn to sorrow again, as Cain was not ‘*the* man’ (John 19:5) but a man-slayer (1 John 3:12-15). The final recorded words of Eve are in Gen 4:25 – “And Adam knew his wife again, and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.”

As such both of the recorded utterances of Eve following the fall concern her desire for children, in particular the promised ‘seed of the woman’. Eve could not produce children by herself. Because of her desire for children, Eve would desire her husband.

Men were and are indispensable in the process of conceiving children; and historically, the continued presence of a father has also been crucial to the successful raising of those children. The demands of pregnancy, childbirth, nursing and the care of children would also of necessity limit the woman’s participation in the public sphere.

Although the woman’s desire for children would contribute to her dependence upon and subordination to the man, it also ensured that God’s purpose was carried out. Being fruitful and multiplying’ and filling the earth was always God’s purpose in creation (Gen 1:28). ‘Godly seed’ was the purpose of marriage (Mal 2:15). Adam recognized his wife’s vital role when he called her Eve, meaning ‘living one’ or ‘life-giver’.

Whilst the words of Gen 3:16-19 are addressed to two individuals, they also served to introduce Adam and Eve to the world in which they would now be living. As such we can expect some level of applicability to all mankind. J. H. Walton comments as follows on the woman’s desire:

The text of 3:16 indicates not a role subordination but a psychological subordination born of the inevitability of a single overwhelming fact: Women desire to have children … What feminism discovered was that as much as some women wanted the same job status as men and as much as some had rejected the validity of marriage, the importance of family, or the need for men in any way, there was a deep-seated, undeniable need to have children. Betty Friedan said (Chicago Tribune, 27/2/83), “The power of this desire to have a child – when women no longer need to have a child to define themselves as women – seems to be as great or even greater than ever.[[68]](#footnote-68)

Feminists have long recognised a connection between childbearing and women’s subordination to men. Radical 1970’s feminists such saw procreation as the primary reason for women being marginalized. Shulamith Firestone wrote in her feminist classic *The Dialectic of Sex*, “The heart of woman’s oppression is her childbearing and childrearing roles.”[[69]](#footnote-69) Yet, as modern feminist Amy Richards writes, “Thirty-plus years of challenging society’s dictates hasn’t changed many of our core desires – most women still want to procreate and create a family.”[[70]](#footnote-70)

The innate desire of most women to have children and to care for them is often ignored or discounted in today’s society, as one author writes:

Maternal desire is at once obvious and invisible partly because it is so easily confused with other things. Those fighting for women’s progress too often misconstrue it as a throwback or excuse, a self-curtailment of potential. Those who champion women’s maternal role too often define it narrowly in the context of service – to one’s child, husband or God. What each view eclipses is the authentic desire to mother felt by a woman herself – a desire not derived from a child’s need, though responsive to it; a desire not created by a social role, though potentially supported by it; rather a desire anchored in her experience of herself as an agent, an autonomous individual, a person.[[71]](#footnote-71)

Childbearing is painful and difficult, and it means that women must rely upon men. Yet most women today, as in times past, want and expect to have children.

**Spiritual Significance**

Both the woman’s punishment and her redemption were found in the process of childbirth (1 Tim 2:15). The process leading to salvation (the birth of new children of God) would be similar to labor – it would involve toil and struggle. This is a common figure throughout scripture. “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” (Rom 8:22-23).

The woman (the ‘bride’ or Israel) desired salvation – just as many barren women in scripture desperately desired a child. But without ‘the man’ – the saviour - the creation of new sons of God would not be possible (Isa 59:16, 50:2, John 1:12-13). Thus the woman desired her husband, the bridegroom (Isa 54:4-6, 62:4, Mal 3:1). He was ‘*the* seed’ (singular) to whom the promise was made (Gal 3:16-19). And so “when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal 4:4-5). He suffered and died in order to ‘bring many sons to glory’ (Heb 2:10). As a result of his saving work, Christ would rule - God “hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the ecclesia, which is his body” (Eph 1:22-23).

All the elements of Gen 3:15-16 come through beautifully in Isaiah 53 and 54. “And when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him” (Isa 53:2). “He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: By His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong … Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, thou that didst not travail with child, for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord … thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles … thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth. For thy Maker is thine husband” (Isa 53:10-54:5).

**The Eyewitnesses to the Birth of Jesus**

**Thomas Gaston**

**Introduction**

The canonical gospels approach the birth of Jesus in different ways. Luke records much about Mary’s pregnancy and the events leading up to the birth, whereas Matthew is almost silent on these matters and focuses on the slaughter of the infants and the flight to Egypt. In Luke’s gospel, the baby Jesus is visited by shepherds; in Matthew’s gospel he is visited by magi. The core narrative is the same in both gospels – Jesus is born in Bethlehem to the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit – but the surrounding events are almost entirely different. (It is not my intention to discuss how these events can be reconciled into a single timeline, suffice to say that I do not believe these two accounts to be in contradiction). Mark’s gospel ignores the birth and childhood of Jesus entirely, whereas John makes only veiled reference to it.

In this essay, I will propose that (part of) the explanation for these differences is that the different gospel writers depend on different eyewitnesses for their accounts. I will argue that Matthew’s account is most plausibly read as the testimony of Joseph, probably transmitted through one of his sons, and that Luke’s account is most plausibly read as the testimony of Mary, perhaps told directly to Luke or transmitted through another of the women disciples. This dependence on eyewitness testimony may also explain the absence of an infancy narrative in Mark, since he is likely dependent on Peter as his chief eyewitness. This essay is, in part, motivated by Richard Bauckham’s *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses,* though Bauckham himself does not discuss the infancy narratives.

**How the gospels relate to one another**

The canonical gospels do not seem to be entirely independent accounts. The overlap between the Synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) has long since led most to conclude that there must be some interdependence. This is known as the Synoptic Problem. The majority view amongst biblical scholars is that Mark is the earliest gospel and that both Matthew and Luke depended on this gospel and another source (known as Q), with some additional material. Q is a hypothetical source, usually considered to be a collection of the sayings of Jesus. The text of Q is reconstructed from the overlap between Matthew and Luke that is not found in Mark.[[72]](#footnote-72) It is often concluded that Q did not contain an infancy narrative, however this is only based on the fact that there is no overlap between the text of Matthew or Luke on this topic. It is conceivable that Q did contain an infancy narrative that was only followed by Matthew or by Luke, or that was followed by neither. (The full extent of Q, assuming it existed, can never be known for this reason). This being said, it might seem peculiar that there should be so little overlap between the infancy narratives of Matthew or Luke, if they had the same source in front of them.

An alternative solution to the Synoptic Problem is that Mark wrote first, Matthew depended on Mark and Luke depended on both Matthew and Mark (this is sometimes known as the ‘Farrer’ hypothesis[[73]](#footnote-73)). On this view there is no Q-source[[74]](#footnote-74) and Luke would have known about Matthew’s infancy narrative when he wrote his own. The problem with this hypothesis is that it would mean that Luke either almost entirely ignored or wilfully contradicted the account from Matthew, replacing almost every detail excepting the core narrative. Now whilst it is possible that Luke has inspired reasons for wishing to focus on shepherds, rather than magi, and on the blessing in the temple, rather than the flight to Egypt, it seems difficult to accept that there should be no trace of Matthew’s infancy narrative in Luke’s had he known about it.

I do not intend to venture an opinion on the Synoptic Problem *per se*;it seems unlikely either that Matthew and Luke have a shared source for their infancy narratives or that Luke depends on Matthew for his infancy narrative. The most plausible hypothesis seems to be that **Matthew and Luke wrote their infancy narratives independently**. The coincidence of the shared core narrative between the two accounts lends weight to the historical veracity of that core narrative.

**Matthew’s Infancy Narrative**

The key figure in Matthew’s infancy narrative is Joseph, the husband of Mary and Jesus’ step-father. Matthew knows nothing, or at least says nothing, about the angelic visitation to Mary or the time she spent with Elizabeth prior to Jesus’ birth. The first incident Matthew records is Joseph’s discovery that Mary was with child (Matt 1:18-25). This incident is told from Joseph’s perspective: his intention to put her away secretly (v. 19), his dream of the angel (v. 20), his response to the dream (v. 24) and his naming of the child (v. 25). Matthew records two subsequent dreams received by Joseph, one warning him to flee to Egypt (2:13) and one telling him when it was safe to return (vv. 19-20). In each case the response to the dreams is from Joseph: he took Mary and Jesus to Egypt (v. 14), he took Mary and Jesus back to Judea (v. 21) and he becomes afraid of Archelaus and so travels to Galilee (v. 22). In contrast, Mary is passive throughout Matthew’s account, as indicated by the verbs applied to her: she is “betrothed to Joseph” (1:18), “found with child” (1:18), taken as a wife (1:24), seen by the magi (2:11) and taken by Joseph (2:14, 21). Mary is only active in bringing forth Jesus (1:25) and this is subordinate to the subject of the verse, which is Joseph and his not knowing Mary until after the birth. It is Joseph, and not Mary, who is the active figure in Matthew’s account.

If there is eyewitness testimony behind Matthew’s infancy narrative then it is the testimony of Joseph. Not only is he the subject of the narrative but in several cases he is the only possible eyewitness, such as with regards his three dreams (1:20; 2:13, 19-20) or his own intentions (1:19) and fears (2:22). **Only Joseph could have borne witness to these things in the first instance and that testimony could only have been known if he relayed it to others**.

There is only one part of the story to which Joseph was not a witness and that is the incidents in the court of Herod the Great. We first encounter the magi when they present themselves in Jerusalem (2:1-2), presumably in the royal court (though this is not stated). The account continues with Herod’s concern at this news (v. 3), his enquiry into the prophets (vv. 4-6), his secret meeting with the magi (vv. 7-8). Plausibly, this information could have been relayed to Joseph by the magi when they came to worship Jesus, however the subsequent details could not, that is, the anger of Herod and his command to slay the infants (2:16). This may have been common knowledge. An alternative hypothesis is that Matthew received the testimony of someone who had been in the court of Herod the Great.

**Luke’s Infancy Narrative**

In contrast to Matthew’s account, Joseph is less conspicuous in Luke’s account. He is first named as the man to whom Mary was betrothed (Luke 1:27) and then not mentioned again until he goes from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be registered (2:4). All subsequent actions taken by Joseph are undertaken with his wife (cf. “they” 2:6, 22, 39; “parents” 2:27; “his father and his mother” 2:33). Nothing in Luke’s account is told from Joseph’s perspective, except those events where his perspective is shared by Mary.

It is Mary who is the key figure for Luke’s account. She receives a visit from an angel (1:26-38), she travels to stay with Elizabeth (1:39-45), she utters her song (1:46-56) and she receives the words of Simeon (2:34-35). These events are unknown in Matthew. It is Mary who is active in Luke’s account. She brings forth a son, she wraps him, and she lays him in the manger (2:7). For some of these events Mary is the key witness. Joseph was not present for all the time that Mary was with Elizabeth. Indeed, since Zechariah and Elizabeth would have been long since dead by the time Luke wrote his gospel, it seems most plausible that Mary’s testimony stands behind Luke’s account of the birth of John. For those events when Joseph is present, they are nevertheless told from Mary’s perspective. For example, regarding the visit of the shepherds Luke notes “Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart” (2:19). Similarly, during the dedication in the temple, words are directly specifically to Mary (2:34-35); perhaps Joseph heard these words, but they would have had the most personal resonance for Mary.

**The Testimony of Joseph**

It is often presumed that Joseph had died by the time Jesus began his ministry. This is because of his absence in places where we might otherwise expect him. For example, when Jesus is rejected at Nazareth he is named as “the carpenter”, not the carpenter’s son and Joseph is not listed alongside Jesus’ other family (Mark 6:3 / Matt 13:55). Nor is Joseph mentioned on other occasions when the family of Jesus is mentioned together (Mark 3:31f / Matt 12:46f / Luke 8:19f).[[75]](#footnote-75) Joseph is not mentioned as accompanying Mary at the crucifixion (John 19:25) or in the upper room at the ascension (Acts 1:14). Other reasons why Joseph was not on the scene during these events are conceivable but the most parsimonious conjecture is that Joseph had since died. In any case, the later that one dates Matthew’s gospel, the more likely it is that Joseph was already dead by the time Matthew was gathering his sources; the earliest credible date for the gospel is probably the mid-50s, which would require Joseph to be in his 70s or 80s if he still lived.

This being the case, it seems probable that Matthew did not receive the testimony of Joseph directly but through another source. Given that Matthew does not give Mary’s testimony, as recorded in Luke, we should rule out of the possibility that she was the conduit for Joseph’s testimony. The other most likely candidates for passing on this testimony are the sons of Joseph, some of whom were prominent elders in the church at Jerusalem.

This possibility draws credence from the “Jewishness” of Matthew’s gospel. The early church father, Papias, stated that Matthew “collected the sayings of Jesus in the Hebrew tongue” (Eusebius, *HE* 3.39.16); certainly a Hebrew gospel, attested to be similar to Matthew, was known to Origen and Jerome.[[76]](#footnote-76) Aside from this, the gospel itself appears to have a special interest in the Jews and the OT. William Barclay expresses the consensus view when he says, “one of the great objects of *Matthew* is to demonstrate that all the prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Jesus”.[[77]](#footnote-77) He also argues that Matthew is especially interested in the conversion of the Jews. Matthew’s gospel is written within the context of the Jewish institutions at Jerusalem. He alone records Jesus’ warning about the angry person being “in danger of the council” (Matt 5:22). He alone records Jesus’ teaching about the correct state of mind for offering gifts at the altar (Matt 5:23-24). He alone records Jesus’ injunction against swearing by Jerusalem (5:35) or the temple (23:16f). Only Matthew’s gospel records the incident regarding the temple tax (17:24f). Only Matthew notes the detail that priests can profane the Sabbath and be guiltless (12:5). Only Matthew notes that the curtain of the temple was torn in two (27:51). Only Matthew records that the dead came out of their tombs at the crucifixion and entered Jerusalem (27:52-53). **Matthew’s gospel is written for those who know about Jerusalem and understand the significance of the temple**.

Given thsi likely milieu of Matthew’s gospel, it is not a wild conjecture to suppose that the gospel was written within the Jewish-Christian heartland, perhaps at its most prominent church, Jerusalem. (This, of course, presupposes that the gospel was written prior to AD 70 but I do not regard this as implausible[[78]](#footnote-78)). If so then Matthew would have had access to James, the son of Joseph, and probably other of Jesus’ brothers. Indeed, if Matthew’s gospel was to be received by the Jerusalem church, and other churches thereabouts, it is likely that he had the sanction and support of the leader of that church, James. Of course, we have no evidence that Joseph did impart his testimony to James but, if he imparted it to anyone, James seems like the most probable candidate.

**The Testimony of Mary**

The latest mention of Mary, mother of Jesus, is in the upper room after the ascension (Acts 1:14). Where Mary went after this is not stated. Jesus commends his mother to the care of the beloved disciple, who took her into his own home (John 19:26-27), presumably in Jerusalem – though, according to tradition, this disciple later went to dwell in Ephesus. If Mary confided the things she kept in her heart to the beloved disciple, then he could have been Luke’s source for this testimony.

Another possibility derives from Bauckham’s proposal that Luke, uniquely amongst the gospel writers, depends on the testimony of certain women, who followed Jesus.[[79]](#footnote-79) These women are named as Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna (Luke 8:3) and Mary, the mother of James (24:10). According to Luke, these were women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and were present at his crucifixion and burial (23:49-55). The four named by Luke were not the only women of Galilee present at the crucifixion, also there were Salome (Mark 15:40), Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary the mother of Jesus (John 19:25). When Luke listed Mary the mother of Jesus in Acts 1:14, he mentions her alongside “the women”, presumably a reference to the women who followed Jesus from Galilee. Can we then surmise that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was part of the group that followed Jesus from Galilee or, at least, was well known to them? Could one or other of them be Luke’s source for Mary’s testimony? The fly in the ointment is that Bauckham argues that the mentions of the women in Luke 8:3 and 24:10 form an *inclusio,* a specific literary device to bracket the testimony of witnesses. The infancy narratives would fall outside this *inclusio.*

A simpler solution is recommended by Luke 2:51, where Luke repeats that Mary “kept all these things in her heart” (cf. 2:19). The “kept” must signify that Mary did not speak about these events to others. The fact that Luke puts no time marker on this statement (e.g. “kept in her heart until X”) suggests Luke is not making a casual statement that Mary didn’t talk about it much, but is providing an explanation for recording information hitherto unknown to his readers, i.e. Mary has not yet told anyone else about this things. The implication of this statement then is that Luke has had direct access to things that Mary kept to herself, meaning that Mary is Luke’s witness. Whilst this probably requires an early date for the gospel of Luke (say late-50s or early-60s), this is not implausible. Without further historical information, we cannot know where Mary was dwelling at the time, where and under what circumstances Luke met her and what other involvement, if any, Mary had in the composition of this and other gospels. None of this makes it any less plausible that Luke could have (and did in fact) consulted Mary about her memories of Jesus’ birth.

**Explaining the Gospels’ Infancy Narrative**

I have argued that Matthew’s infancy narrative is based upon the testimony of Joseph, probably transmitted through James or another of Joseph’s sons, and that Luke’s infancy narrative is based upon the testimony of Mary. This would explain why Matthew’s and Luke’s accounts differ in the events they record, because they were based on different testimonies. Some of the events recorded by either writer could not have been recorded by the other because the unique witness to those events was only to one and not the other.

The dependence on eyewitnesses would also explain the way the other canonical gospels treat the birth of Jesus. Bauckham argues persuasively that Mark’s gospel is based upon the testimony of Peter (as Papias records). Peter was an important eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus but not to the events surrounding his birth. As we have seen some of those events were known uniquely to either Joseph or Mary. Mark almost certainly knows that Joseph is not the real father of Jesus, else he would name Jesus as the “son of Joseph” rather than “son of Mary” (Mark 6:3). He also knows that Jesus is the Son of God (Mark 1:1; 3:11; 5:7; 15:39). But depending largely, perhaps solely, on the testimony of Peter, Mark had no access to the eyewitness testimony of the events surrounding the birth of Jesus and so he does not write about them.

The beloved disciple, on the other hand, did have access to a key eyewitness of the birth of Jesus: Mary. However he chooses not to include those events in his gospel. There are likely two reasons for this. First, it is likely that he wrote after Luke and knew about Luke’s gospel. John’s gospel supplements the Synoptics, rather than depends on them. John had no need to write Mary’s account of the birth of Jesus because he knew that this had already been written. Secondly, John’s gospel is the testimony of the beloved disciple (John 21:24). At no point does he indicate that he is citing any other source or depending on another’s testimony. John could not testify to the birth of Jesus because he was not present. Nevertheless it is clear that John was aware that Jesus was born in Bethlehem (cf. John 7:42) and that Joseph was not Jesus’ real father (cf. John 8:41).

The likelihood that the infancy narratives are based upon eyewitness testimony explains the way these events are recorded across the four canonical gospels.

**Problems**

There are two significant problems with the thesis I have proposed, both deriving from the fact that there is almost no overlap between the accounts of Matthew and Luke. First, bearing in mind that spouses usually know each other better than any other person, is it plausible that the testimony of Joseph should not mention any events for which Mary alone was a witness, and *vice versa*? For example, did Mary never mention to Joseph that she had received a visit from Gabriel? And if she did, why does not Joseph include it in his testimony? Secondly, and perhaps more problematically, why do the two testimonies not overlap regarding events for which they were both present? For example, both parents were present when the shepherds came (Luke 2:16) and, almost certainly, both parents were present when the magi came (Matt 2:11).[[80]](#footnote-80) Why are these events only mentioned in one account?

In response to these problems, a number of points can be made:

It is plausible that Mary did keep some things secret from her husband. For example, Mary was told by the angel that she would conceive of a child by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), but when Joseph discovers Mary’s pregnancy, he needs to be told that the child is conceived of the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20). Either Mary told him about the visit of the angel and he did not believe her, or else Mary did not tell him. The latter is not inconceivable given, (a) Mary and Joseph were only betrothed, not married, and so would be living separately; and (b) Mary spent three months subsequent to the visit of the angel with Elizabeth (Luke 1:56). Even if Mary did later tell Joseph about the angel’s visit, there were other things she kept in her heart (Luke 2:51).

As we have observed, these two accounts are told from a particular perspective. Matthew’s account is written from Joseph’s perspective: it starts with Joseph’s earliest knowledge of the pregnancy and ends with Joseph’s settling the family in Nazareth. It is appropriate for Joseph’s account to stay silent on those events known only to Mary, and *vice versa.*

We should be careful of making assumptions about how the gospel writers would have interrogated their witnesses. Perhaps Matthew only recounts certain events because his source only told him about certain events. This problem would be compounded by the fact that Matthew almost certainly received Joseph’s testimony second hand. We can see these paucity in Matthew’s account. He has no record of the birth of Jesus itself. He tells his readers that Joseph did not know Mary until after the birth (Matt 1:25) and then jumps to the events after the birth (2:1). We might expect Matthew to record something about the birth itself had he known about it; this glaring omission speaks to the paucity of the testimony he received.

We also cannot ignore the fact that gospel writers select which events they record to suit their own inspired purposes. One of Matthew’s motivations is to demonstrate that the birth of Jesus was the fulfilment of scripture, which he details four times throughout his account (Matt 1:23, 2:15, 17, 23); presumably Matthew selected events that he could most clearly link to prophecies. Another motivation of Matthew is to portray Jesus as a type of Israel, paralleling the events of Exodus with the slaughter of the infants, the coming out of Egypt, both of which build up to the testing of Jesus in the wilderness. Mentioning Jesus’ dedication at the temple, for example, might have been chronologically appropriate but would have disrupted Matthew’s typology. In contrast, Luke is concerned with the covenant of Israel being opened to all who fear God. Therefore, he selects events that emphasize that Jesus came as a continuation that covenant (cf. Luke 1:32-33, 54-55, 68-69, 73-74; 2:4, 11, 22-24, 25, 38), but also to open the covenant to all who fear God (cf. Luke 1:50, 79; 2:4, 14, 32). The slaughter of the infants and the flight of Egypt, though of huge significance to the young family, does not add to Luke’s scheme.

**Conclusion**

I have shown that the two infancy narratives in the canonical gospels contain the perspectives of Joseph and Mary. I have also shown that it is plausible that the gospel writers had access to these testimonies, perhaps transmitted by a third party. The hypothesis that the gospel writers are dependent on eyewitness testimony not only explains (in part) which events are recorded by the gospel writers but also explains why these events are not recorded in Mark or John.

If this hypothesis is correct then it reinforces the proposal of Bauckham that the gospel writers were concerned to base their gospels on the testimony of eyewitnesses.

**Luke’s Genealogy**

**J. Burke**

**Introduction**

It seems incongruous that Luke does not place the wilderness temptation in immediate proximity to the declaration of sonship at Christ’s baptism. Instead, the two are separated in Luke by an extraordinary digression of 15 verses which apparently describe the genealogy of Christ through Joseph. By the time this digression has ended, Luke has seemingly led the reader far away from the issue of Christ’s Divine sonship, as declared in verse 22, and has apparently taken great care to collate and emphasise a physical genealogy of Christ as a son of men. Indeed, the starting point of Luke’s genealogical account presents Christ as supposedly the son of Joseph, and ends with Adam, expressly declared to be the son of God. If anything, Luke’s genealogy appears superficially to be contrasting Christ as the son of Joseph, with Adam as the son of God. Yet Luke deliberately includes the declaration of Christ’s Divine sonship before embarking on this apparent digression, so it is clear he is not abandoning the Biblical teaching that Christ was the unique son of God, Divinely begotten of the Father.

**What then is the purpose of Luke’s digression?**

Far from isolating the Divine sonship of Christ from the account of the temptation, Luke is in fact emphasising the vital connection between the two by means of a dramatic - almost hyperbolic - enlargement of the issue of Divine sonship. This enlargement consists of a ‘genealogy’ which is not a literal physical genealogy of Christ, but an ancestral list commencing with the commonly held false belief regarding Christ, and ending with a Biblical truth which reintroduces the very issue which is at stake in the temptation experience.

The first important point to identify is that Luke’s genealogy is not a description of Christ’s physical descent. Much confusion has resulted from attempts to read this passage as a description of Christ’s natural descent, or at least as a description of Christ’s ‘legal’ lineage. It has been argued that the genealogy is Mary’s, and that it represents a ‘Levirate’ line of descent. Writing in the 5th century, Augustine was sufficiently misguided to argue that Christ could be legitimately called the son of Joseph, on the basis that he was born to Mary, who was married to Joseph (‘On the Harmony of the Gospels’, book II, chapter i, section 2), whereas Luke never graces this view with the slightest suggestion of legitimacy.

All such arguments completely miss the point of what Luke is actually saying. Remarkably, men such as Augustine have misread Luke entirely. A careful reading of Luke’s words will demonstrate to us the foundation on which he is building, and help us to understand the true purpose of his genealogy:

Luke 3:

23 So Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years old. He was the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli…

From the very start of this section, Luke makes it transparently clear that he is not about to justify the common idea that Christ was the son of Joseph. On the contrary, he records this as the view of common supposition, in complete contrast to the declaration of Christ’s Divine sonship which he has already presented. This verse is not, as many seem to see it, the commencement of a totally new section completely unrelated to what has gone before, but the deliberate contrast of the Divine perspective with the mortal. It should be read in the context of the preceding verse, thus:

Luke 3:

21 Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. And while he was praying, the heavens opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my one dear Son; in you I take great delight.” 23 So Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years old. He was the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli…

These verses contain two statements which are directly opposed to each other, and Luke places them together in deliberate contrast:

You are my dear son

The son of Joseph

These statements are mutually exclusive. They cannot both be correct. One is the Divine declaration, and the other is the opinion of men, and lest there be any confusion as to which view is Luke’s, he makes it abundantly plain here:

Luke 3:

23 So Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years old. He was the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli…

As far as Luke is concerned, the idea that Christ is the son of Joseph is the mere supposition of men. But why does he mention this here? Luke’s intention is to confirm the Divine declaration made at Christ’s baptism. Writing for a Gentile audience, his purpose is to confront the skeptical assumptions regarding Christ, and overturn them with incontrovertible evidence. He also wishes to demythologize a term which his Gentile readers may misinterpret - ‘son of God’. That this is an important issue for Luke, is seen from his description of the birth of Christ:

Luke 1:

35 The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God.

The description given by Luke is deliberately written to inform the Gentile audience that Christ’s conception occurred in a manner radically different to that of the pagan demigods, who were products of a physical union between the gods and mortals. Whilst Divine in origin, Christ’s birth was completely different to the birth of the Greek and Roman ‘sons of the gods’.

The juxtaposition of ‘You are my dear son’ with ‘The son of Joseph’, is Luke’s introduction of the issue of sonship which will be settled by the temptation of Christ. By means of this method of introduction, Luke gives us the reason for the public declaration of the Father at Christ’s baptism - it was to confirm publicly a critical issue which was under question, a matter of public dispute.

How then does the genealogy which follows contribute to Luke’s aim? Superficially, it appears to lead the reader in the opposite direction entirely. We must first identify Luke’s purpose in providing this apparently misleading genealogy. At the outset we must dismiss the idea that it is intended to be an accurate description of Christ’s literal physical lineage. On what basis can we do this?

First, because Luke makes no claim that this is a literal genealogy of Christ (unlike Matthew’s declaration ‘This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham’, Matthew 1:1, though even Matthew does not represent his genealogy as a description of Christ’s physical descent from Joseph). Secondly, because Luke introduces this ‘genealogy’ as being what people supposed regarding Christ, as opposed to the reality (Luke 3:23). Thirdly, because we know from Luke 1:27, 34-35 that it cannot be a literal physical lineage through Joseph, since Luke takes great care to inform us that Christ’s birth to Mary was not the result of the usual physical union between man and woman (verse 27 ‘to a virgin’, verse 34 ‘How will this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?’, verse 35 ‘“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God’). Fourthly, because the ‘genealogy’ given by Luke makes no sense as a literal physical lineage of Christ.

What point is it trying to make? Matthew’s genealogy explicitly identifies Christ as ‘the son of David, the son of Abraham’, commences with Abraham, refers to David as king, and moves down to Christ through Mary, once Joseph’s genealogy is complete. Luke’s genealogy is inverted, starting with Joseph, making no specific mention of Christ’s relation to any of the important figures in Jewish history, and moving backwards all the way to Adam, of all people.

Matthew’s genealogy (although also describing the lineage of Joseph, not Christ), is intended to emphasise two of the most renowned individuals in Jewish history (Abraham and David), so much so that he actually commences with Abraham (Matt 1:2), and makes specific reference to David’s kingship (Matt 1:6). It is theologically important for Matthew to refer to these two ancestors, and their exalted position. But Luke’s genealogy makes no such connection. It starts with a common man of no distinction (Joseph), omits to identify either David or Abraham as significant, and ends with Adam.

What importance could possibly be attached to either Joseph or Adam in Christ’s ancestry? Matthew’s genealogy starts with an individual of great importance - the father of the Jewish nation, but Luke starts with the commoner Joseph. Having commenced in mediocrity, Luke’s genealogy leads to no stunning conclusion, no exalted finale - it ends with Adam, the ‘universal father’. This is certainly not a way of making Christ look ‘special’, of distinguishing him from other men - everyone can claim Adam as their ultimate ancestor. This genealogy (if it were literally Christ’s), would represent him in exactly the opposite manner - as just another man. It is true that Luke’s genealogy then moves further back from Adam to God, but this conveys nothing significant regarding Christ (who is at this point very far removed from Adam by Luke’s genealogy, and even further removed from God). If anything, it would appear to be saying that Adam was the son of God, whereas Christ was merely the son of Adam. There is an important reason why Luke actually ends his genealogy with the reference to Adam as the son of God, but it is not to prove that Christ was ‘son of God’ by way of a protracted physical descent from Adam.

The genealogy in Luke, therefore, is intended to present what was commonly supposed regarding Christ - that he was the literal son of Joseph, with a mundane genealogy of no particular importance, that he was just another descendant of Adam, like everyone else:

Luke 3:

23 So Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years old. He was the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli…

It is important to note that verses 23 to 38 are all one extended sentence. Everything following this verse is part of what was ‘supposed’ - not the specific details of the genealogy, but the general ideal that Christ had an earthly father and a mundane genealogy. Luke’s point is that it was ‘supposed’ that Christ had a genealogy just like other men - that he was, at the end of the day, nothing more than just another son of Adam. For this reason, precise historical accuracy in this genealogy is completely unimportant. It is a sample of the thoughts men had of Christ, the attribution to him of a mundane physical descent just like that of any other man.

There are certainly reasons behind Luke’s choice of whom to include in this genealogy of Joseph (Matthew’s genealogy is similarly selective, being likewise theologically motivated rather than historically motivated), but his reasons do not include the description of Christ as the son of Joseph, whether physical, ‘legally adopted’, or ‘Levirate’, nor is he merely interested in drawing Joseph’s family tree. For Luke has a far higher purpose in mind - he intends to prove that Christ is the son of God.

It is important to note at this point that the subtleties of Luke’s presentation in this chapter would not have gone unnoticed by his intended audience. Though undoubtedly writing for a Gentile, Luke assumes a certain Bible knowledge on the part of his reader, for Theophilus is not ignorant of the Christian faith:

Luke 1:

3 So it seemed good to me as well, because I have followed all things carefully from the beginning, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know for certain the things you were taught.

We cannot be certain to what extent Theophilus had been instructed, but we can be certain that he had been made aware of the gospel, and that he had some knowledge of Scripture. Throughout his gospel Luke makes frequent mention of Abraham, Moses, David, and other key Biblical figures without so much as an explanatory aside, assuming a certain prior knowledge on the part of his audience.

For this reason, we can be assured that Luke’s careful construction both of the temptation narrative and its introduction, is not lost on his reader. Theophilus would be aware of the true teaching regarding Christ’s birth (described in careful detail in Luke 1:34-35), and would be aware also of the importance of men such as David (whose kingship and throne are given particular emphasis in Luke 1:32). The genealogy in Luke 3 appears totally incongruous in the context of Luke 1, and would have lead the reader to a close examination of the text, in order to determine the purpose of this seemingly contradictory digression.

Given these facts, it is reasonable to expect Luke’s reader to be treating the text with the same scrutiny to which we are subjecting it, and likewise reasonable to consider that Theophilus would have discerned the same meaning we find here.

**Conclusion**

To summarise Luke’s message in verses 22-38, this is what he is saying:

At his public declaration of his mortality and need of salvation from God, Jesus was in return publicly declared by God to be His son. For popular opinion supposed that Jesus was the son of Joseph, with the same kind of genealogy that many people could claim, just another son of Adam (who actually was the son of God). This is a paraphrase, but true to the sense of the text, as we can see:

Luke 3:21-23, 38:

21 Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. And while he was praying, the heavens opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my one dear Son; in you I take great delight.” 23 So Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years old. He was the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, [...] 38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

The conclusion of this passage with a reference to Adam as the son of God returns the mind of the reader to the key issue raised in verses 22-23 - is Jesus the son of God?

If what was ‘supposed’ regarding Jesus was true, then he would be just another son of Adam, and the temptation in the wilderness would prove this. In fact, Luke’s narrative of the temptation will not only prove that Jesus is the son of God, but prove that he is the son of God in a way that Adam never was. Given Luke’s care to demythologize the term ‘son of God’ as applied to Christ, we may ask why it is that he uses the term so readily of Adam, without qualification.

The reason for this is twofold. First, Luke is probably taking for granted the fact that Theophilus is aware of the manner of Adam’s creation (and that he was not physically sired as the pagan demigods were). Secondly, Luke does in fact wish to make a point of the unique circumstances of Adam’s origin, that he was at least as much a son of God through a miracle as Jesus himself. Luke is going to demonstrate that a miraculous Divine origin is not what constitutes a true son of God. The sonship of Scripture operates on principles which are above and beyond the mechanics of merely physical origin. This is what Luke wishes his reader to understand from this entire introductory passage (Luke 3:21-38). It is in this context that he then describes the wilderness temptation. Concluding his genealogical list with ‘Adam, the son of God’, enables Luke to prove this by a number of contrasts between Adam and Christ which are made apparent by means of the wilderness temptation narrative.

Here is Adam, the first ‘son of God’, and here is Christ, another ‘son of God’. One would expect them to have much in common. Will they demonstrate the same characteristics or not? With ‘Adam, the son of God’, as the words immediately preceding the description of the wilderness temptation, a contrast between the two is naturally prompted in the mind of the reader as a result of Luke’s record:

* Adam grasped for equality with God; Christ subjected himself to the will of the Father
* Adam was led by the words of the serpent; Christ was led by the words of his Father
* Adam sought to provide for himself; Christ trusted his Father to provide for him
* Subsequent to his temptation and fall, Adam was opposed by cherubim; subsequent to his temptation and triumph, Christ was ministered to by angels

One of the most striking contrasts is that Adam was placed by God in a garden to test him, but because of disobedience was sent into a wilderness, whereas Christ was placed by God in a wilderness to test him, but because of obedience will be received into a garden. This is not described entirely by Luke here in the temptation narrative, but is initiated by him here – the contrast will be completed later in his gospel account (Luke 4:1-13, with 22:43).

**Columnists**

**Archaeology**

**J. Burke**

**Did Jesus Exist (Part 1)**

Some readers may be surprised or shocked that many books and essays—by my count, over one hundred—in the past two hundred years **have fervently denied the very existence of Jesus**. Contemporary New Testament scholars have typically viewed their arguments **as so weak or bizarre that they relegate them to footnotes, or often ignore them completely**.[[81]](#footnote-81)

There are no contemporary records of Jesus’ life; that is, none written during the time that he was alive. Even the gospels were written long after his death. The apostle Paul is in fact the earliest witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

The following are sources outside the New Testament, commonly cited as witnesses for the historicity of Jesus. They are not all of equal value, and some of them do not contribute very useful historical data.

1. Thallos (Greek historian, also spelled ‘Thallas’ or ‘Thallus’), c. 55 CE.

The Christian historian Georgius Syncellus quotes a passage from 3rd century Christian historian Julius Africanus, who in turn quotes Thallos referring to an eclipse.[[82]](#footnote-82) Although Thallos treats the eclipse as a natural event, Africanus argues he is wrong, and that this was an act of God which took place at the crucifixion of Jesus.[[83]](#footnote-83)

The uncertainty of who Thallos was, what he wrote, and the lack of a direct reference to Jesus, means this source does not provide any useful information confirming the existence of Jesus.[[84]](#footnote-84)

1. Josephus (Jewish historian), c. 90s CE.

Josephus is considered the most important historical witness to the life of Jesus outside the New Testament, not only because he is the earliest but also because his work ‘Antiquities of the Jews’ (written during the 90s), contains two references to Jesus.

The first reference is lengthy, and much of it looks like it was written by a Christian rather than a Jewish historian such as Josephus; see the words marked here in bold.

Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, **if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure**. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. **He was [the] Christ**; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, **those that loved him at the first did not forsake him,** **for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him**; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.[[85]](#footnote-85)

It is certain that this reference contains a lot of material which is obviously not authentic, having been added by later Christians scribes when copying Josephus’ work.[[86]](#footnote-86) [[87]](#footnote-87) [[88]](#footnote-88) Nevertheless the overwhelming majority of scholars believe that once these Christian additions are removed, there is still a genuine historical reference to Jesus in the text, which was written by Josephus. Here is an example of what the original text is typically understood to have looked like.

At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man. For he was a doer of startling deeds, a teacher of people who receive the truth with pleasure. And he gained a following both among many Jews and among many of Greek origin. And when Pilate, because of an accusation made by the leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him previously did not cease to do so. And up until this very day the tribe of Christians (named after him) has not died out.[[89]](#footnote-89)

Very importantly, a 10th century Christian manuscript written in Arabic quotes this section of Josephus in a way which shows the writer (Agapius of Mabbug), had access to a text which did not suffer from the Christian additions of the oldest available Greek text.

At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.[[90]](#footnote-90)

This text was only published academically in 1971, [[91]](#footnote-91) long after scholars had suggested a neutral ‘reconstructed’ version of the quotation from Josephus, with the most obvious Christian additions removed.

The fact that this Arabic text is very similar to the reconstructed text, and is independent of the corrupted Greek version, strengthens the considerably the case that Josephus contains an authentic reference to the life and death of Jesus. This is acknowledged by the overwhelming majority of current scholars.[[92]](#footnote-92) [[93]](#footnote-93) [[94]](#footnote-94)

The second reference to Jesus in Josephus contains a reference to James, called by Josephus ‘the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James’.[[95]](#footnote-95) This reference has been far less disputed, since the mention of Jesus is incidental and since he is referred to as Jesus ‘who was called Christ’, indicating that the writer himself did not believe Jesus was the Christ.[[96]](#footnote-96) [[97]](#footnote-97)

The second article in this series considers the evidence from Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius, and the Syrian writer Mara bar Serapion, before summarizing the current scholarly consensus.

**Exegesis/Analysis**

**Benedict Kent**

**How does Luke use the servant discourse of Isaiah 40-55 & 61 in his gospel?**

**Introduction**

This year, our column will focus on Luke’s Gospel. Our first few columns will consider the Servant prophecies of the book of Isaiah and Luke.

Isaiah’s servant figure is a significant piece in Luke’s Christology. The story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8.26-40) confirms that early Christians were interpreting Jesus’ life in light of the song of the ‘suffering servant’ in Isa 52.13-53.12. Disagreement, however, arises in discussion of whether Luke’s gospel portrays Jesus’ role as predominantly Isaianic, priestly, Davidic, messianic or apocalyptic.[[98]](#footnote-98) Simeon’s song (Luke 2.25-35) and the Nazareth sermon (Luke 4.16-30) have the highest concentrations of Isaianic servant allusions in Luke’s gospel. This essay will focus on these two passages to explore how, and for what purpose, Luke front-grounds the Isaianic aspect of Jesus’ ministry through his use of the servant discourse of Isaiah 40-55, 61.

Since Bernhard Duhm’s demarcation of the servant songs (1892), scholars have contested the boundary lines that structure Isaiah’s servant discourse and distinguish the poems from the rest of the text.[[99]](#footnote-99) Stepping back from the debate, N. T. Wright aptly warns of the anachronistic reading that ‘second-Temple Jews had anticipated modern criticism in separating out the ‘servant songs’ from the rest of Isa 40-55’ and instead recognises that ‘Isaiah 40-55 as a whole was thematic for Jesus’ kingdom announcement.’ [[100]](#footnote-100) This essay agrees with Wright’s wider inclusion of the servant discourse, but will go as far as showing that Isaiah 40-55 and Isaiah 61 is necessary to understand Luke’s use of the servant discourse in his gospel. We include Isaiah 61 in the servant discourse because it strongly echoes and reflects the writing of earlier servant songs, despite not referencing a servant explicitly.

With this category of ‘servant discourse’ in mind, it is possible to demonstrate how Luke appropriates motifs from Isaiah 40-55, 61 to create narrative episodes that are programmatic for Jesus’ ministry and rejection. With regards to an audience-orientated perspective, we are using Menakhem Perry’s scholarship to shed light on the impact of Luke’s narrative ordering. We will also compare Luke and Mark’s use of Isaiah 40 as a key to understanding Luke’s interest in specific Isaianic motifs. From there, close analysis of Simeon’s song and the Nazareth sermon will demonstrate how the Isaiah’s servant discourse influences Luke’s own language. Observations of literary style such as parallelism, morphology and phonology aim to show how Luke reworks the language of Isaiah’s servant to produce two similarly shaped narratives which, like Isaiah, have ‘servant songs’ at their centre.

Unlike scholars such as Darrell Bock and Paul Schubert who emphasise the Christological or soteriological function of the OT scriptures in Luke’s gospel,[[101]](#footnote-101) we will argue that Luke’s use of Isaiah’s servant discourse is not solely Christological or soteriological but also has a strong narrative function.[[102]](#footnote-102) The function of Isaiah’s servant intertext is not simply to prove Messianic prophecy as fulfilled by Jesus, but is also to allude to familiar ‘frames’ from the Jewish scriptures by which his audience can create ‘structures of expectation’ for his ensuing narrative.[[103]](#footnote-103)

We will begin by dealing with the co-textual issues of narrative ordering, followed by a brief examination of Luke 3.4-6 as a key to understanding Luke’s thematic interests. In future columns, we will turn to literary analysis of ‘Simeon’s Song’ and the ‘Nazareth sermon.’

**Narrative structure**

Luke structures his gospel in a way that heightens the programmatic qualities of his chosen Isaiah-influenced texts. At the beginning of the gospel, Luke draws his readers’ attention to the significance of narrative order: ‘I too decided […] to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus’ (1.3). Menakhem Perry’s scholarship in literary theory has highlighted the significance of narrative ordering in texts.[[104]](#footnote-104) In his essay, ‘Literary Dynamics’, Perry references research in psychology to show that narrative information at the beginning of a text exercises huge influence on the reading process and on the reader’s creation of meaning. He calls this phenomenon the ‘primacy effect’.[[105]](#footnote-105) Simeon’s song and the Nazareth sermon, both set at beginning-points of the narrative thus exercise a ‘primacy effect’. The infant narrative at the beginning of Jesus’ life and the Nazareth sermon at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry thus function to anticipate events in the unrolling narrative. This particular arrangement of servant allusions immediately suggests that they are deliberately positioned to increase their programmatic function.

The significance of Luke’s narrative arrangement is heightened when the Nazareth sermon’s location is compared with its position in the other synoptic gospels. If Mark and Matthew are referring to the same incident as Luke (Matt 13.53-58, Mark 6.1-6), then they position the episode much later in Jesus’ Galilean ministry. In contrast, Luke places the episode at the very beginning of the Galilean ministry and includes more detail and plot in the narrative. Such an editorial decision suggests that the episode holds extra significance for the audience’s understanding of the gospel narrative that follows.

The end of Luke’s gospel further confirms the programmatic nature of the servant allusions, particularly the suffering aspect. Whilst they, at the beginning of the gospel, anticipate how the audience should understand Jesus and his ministry, the resurrected Jesus’ conversations with his disciples confirm how readers are to understand his life retrospectively: ‘Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures’ (Luke 24.27; see also Luke 24.25-27, 32, 44-46). Perry supports Luke’s retrospective reading process when he theorises that the reading process is not unidirectional. He writes: ‘What has been constructed up to a certain point sheds light on new components, but is illuminated by them as well.’[[106]](#footnote-106) The servant references are emphasized at the beginning and at the end of Luke’s gospel which are key positions for communicating how the audience should understand the narrative.

Even the confirmation of the servant aspect of Jesus’ life at the end of Luke’s gospel is somewhat programmatic. Jesus’ teaching on how the disciples are to understand his life retrospectively is programmatic for the disciples’ own ministry in the book of Acts. Whilst the events of Luke 24 come at the end of Luke’s gospel narrative, they also are repeated at the beginning of Acts’ narrative (Acts 1.1-11). Jesus’ confirmation of the servant interpretation of his life becomes programmatic for how the disciples will understand and teach about him in their own ministry (Acts 2.23, 3.17-18, 8.35).

As well as the servant references at the beginning and at the end of Luke’s gospel, additional allusions to the servant discourse throughout the gospel suggest the theme is not only foregrounded but front-grounded. Jesus reasserts two features of his Nazareth reading of Isaiah in respect of John the Baptist (Luke 7.22) as confirmation that he is Israel’s Messiah. Isaiah’s servant discourse is further alluded to in Luke 18.32, 23.23 and directly referenced in Luke 22.37. Perry also asserts that ‘the primacy effect never works in isolation. If the text intends the effect of its initial stage to prevail throughout, it must keep reinforcing it.’[[107]](#footnote-107) By carefully ordering events, Luke manipulates the reading process of his narrative, establishing texts influenced by Isaiah’s servant discourse as programmatic of, and reinforced by the rest of the gospel.

**Luke 3.4-6**

Luke’s use of Isaiah 40, in comparison with Mark’s usage, is a key to identifying specific Isaianic motifs Luke is interested in and appropriates in his programmatic texts. If Luke is using Mark’s gospel as a source for his own, then how Luke repeats or adapts Mark’s material reveals significant editorial intention regarding matters of theme and style. Isaiah 40.3 is particularly significant because not only is it one of the few texts used by all four gospel writers, but it also forms the opening lines of Mark’s gospel. Luke’s use of Isaiah 40 provides a valuable example of Luke’s thematic interest as well as his exegetical method.

Whilst Mark quotes just Isa 40.3, Luke under inspiration extends and changes the quotation to include:

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh (πᾶσα σὰρξ) shall see the salvation of God. (Luke 3.5-6, RSV)

Luke extends the quotation to include Isa 40.4-5, thus showing specific interest in three vivid motifs that he reconstructs to be programmatic and thematic for the rest of his gospel. The first motif is the reversal of statuses, manifested by the symbolic restoration of the path of YHWH’s return.[[108]](#footnote-108) Luke uses this Isaianic theme to create an image of ‘undulation’, a rising and falling movement of landscapes, people, statuses and fortunes. Luke creates the undulating effect by the repeated movement from noun to indicative verb. This undulation motif is a representation of the workings of God’s salvation, foretelling restoration for the deserving and punishment for the wicked. As we shall see, Luke also appropriates this theme in Simeon’s song and the Nazareth sermon to be programmatic of the effect of Jesus’ ministry.

The second motif Luke identifies is one of salvation for Jews and Gentiles, communicated by Luke’s use of πᾶσα σὰρξ. A third motif is the tangible presence of God’s salvation. This theme is emphasised by being positioned at the end of the passage. God’s salvation is visible, as Simeon’s song and the Nazareth sermon later declare, in the person of Jesus himself. Luke’s extension of the Isaiah 40 quotation reveals his editorial interest compared to Mark and the other gospel writers. Reversal of conventional statuses, a message for Jews and Gentiles, and the immediate presence of salvation are repeated themes from Isaiah that Luke reconstructs in his own songs about his very own servant.

The programmatic nature of these themes is immediately glimpsed in the following episode of John the Baptist (Luke 3.7-22). The reversal of statuses motif is manifested in John’s dialogue with the crowd, as he warns his audience that the privileged sons of Abraham are ready to be disinherited and that God is able to ‘raise up children to Abraham’ from stones (Luke 3.8-9). Isaiah’s message to ‘all flesh’ is manifested in the three contrasting social groups that approach John, with the soldiers, whether Jewish or Roman in ethnicity, representing Gentile forces in the land (Luke 3.10-14). Finally, the visible, tangible presence of God’s salvation is revealed as Jesus enters the scene and is baptised and anointed with the Spirit (Luke 3.21-22). This hint of fulfilment in John’s ministry suggests how the servant discourse in the following texts might influence Luke’s narrative.

**Exposition**

**R. Benson**

**A Prophet Like Moses?**

**Introduction**

On the threshold of the Promised Land, Moses revealed how his work would continue. His role as the spokesman of God would not disappear with him; rather, “the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you” (Deut 18:15). Moses, in recounting God’s promise, clearly speaks of an individual prophetic messenger: “I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him” (Deut 18:18). This individual fulfilment was expected among Jews of the first century. “Are you the Prophet?” the leaders ask John the Baptist (John 1:21). “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world,” declare the people concerning Jesus (John 6:14; see also John 7:32).

The application of Moses’ prediction to Jesus is confirmed by Peter:

Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him shall you give heed to everything He says to you. [...] For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways… (Acts 3:22, 26, NASB).

Yet while Peter focuses on an individual fulfilment, he refers also to the line of the prophets. His quotation from Deuteronomy is followed by the comment, “likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and *his* successors onward, also announced these days” (Acts 3:24). This reflects the wider context of Deuteronomy 18:15-22 concerning prophets to come, and how to determine whether their message is from God, as well as allusions to the work of the Deuteronomic prophet elsewhere in the Old Testament (e.g. Jer 1:7).

This article will explore the extent to which Samuel fulfils the role of the Deuteronomic prophet. While not the first prophet to succeed Moses (Judg 4:4; 6:8), Samuel is the first of the line of prophets identified by Peter, and is given particular prominence by other Biblical writers (Ps 99:6; Jer 15:1). As such, the life of Samuel is recorded to present him as a prophet like Moses, though not the prophet like Moses.

**Childhood**

There are notable parallels between the childhood of Samuel and that of Moses.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Samuel** | **Moses** |
| “The sons of Kohath: […] Elkanah […] Samuel” (1 Chron 6:18, 27, 28) | “The sons of Kohath: Amram […] Moses” (Exod 6:18, 20) |
| “after Hannah had conceived, that she gave birth to a son” (1 Sam 1:20) | “The woman conceived and bore a son” (Exod 2:2) |
| Mother named and prominent in the infancy narrative | Mother named (Exod 6:20) and prominent in the infancy narrative |
| “So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him” (1 Sam 1:21) | “So the woman took the child and nursed him” (Exod 2:9) |
| “Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her […] and brought him to the house of the Lord” (1 Sam 1:24) | “The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter” (Exod 2:10)  |
| Raised in an environment of opposition to God (1 Sam 2:12-36) | Raised in an environment of opposition to God (Exod 1) |

Outside of the patriarchal period, the only Old Testament accounts of conception, birth and childhood are of Moses, Samson and Samuel, Samson being somewhat briefer than the other two.

**Inauguration as a prophet**

The account of Samuel’s ministry displays parallels with incidents in the Pentateuch, demonstrating that Samuel is not simply “like Moses” but “a prophet like Moses”.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Samuel** | **Moses** |
| “the lamp of God had not yet gone out” (1 Samuel 3:3; see Exod 25:31-40 which describes the lampstand as a stylised tree)  | “the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed” (Exod 3:2) |
| “Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord” (1 Sam 3:3) | “the place on which you are standing is holy ground” (Exod 3:5) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Samuel** | **Moses** |
| “the Lord called Samuel” (1 Sam 3:4)“Then the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’” (1 Sam 3:10) | “God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, ‘Moses, Moses!’” (Exod 3:4) |
| “and he said, ‘Here I am.’” (1 Sam 3:4) | And he said, ‘Here I am.’” (Exod 3:4) |
| “In that day I will carry out against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end.” (1 Sam 3:12) | “So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it” (Exod 3:20) |
| Unwilling to speak (1 Sam 3:15) | Unwilling to speak (Exod 4:10) |
| “the Lord was with him and let none of his words fail.” (1 Sam 3:19) | “I will be with you” (Exod 3:12)“I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say” (Exod 4:12) |
| “All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the Lord.” (1 Sam 3:20) | “Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed” (Exod 4:30-31) |

**Prophetic Ministry**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Samuel** | **Moses** |
| A call to repentance:“If you return to the Lord with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your hearts to the Lord and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.” (1 Sam 7:3) | A call to repentance:“[When] you return to the Lord your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons,then the Lord your God will restore you” (Deut 30:2-3)“You shall fear *only* the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name. You shall not follow other gods” (Deut 6:13-14) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Samuel** | **Moses** |
| Serves as faithful prophet during decadent priesthood of Eli and Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phinehas | Serves as faithful prophet during decadent priesthood of Aaron (Exod 32:21-24), and Aaron’s sons, Nadab & Abihu (Lev 10:1-3) |
| Intercedes for Israel:“I will pray to the Lord for you. […] Samuel cried to the Lord for Israel and the Lord answered him” (1 Sam 7:5, 9; see also 1 Sam 12:19-23) | Intercedes for Israel:“Moses entreated the Lord his God […] So the Lord changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people.” (Exod 32:11, 14, see also Exod 33:12-17) |
| Not a priest, but offers sacrifices:“Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it for a whole burnt offering to the Lord” (1 Sam 7:9) | Not a priest, but offers sacrifices:“[Moses] offered on it the burnt offering and the meal offering, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.” (Exod 40:29) |
| Deals with the issue of kingship:“there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations” (1 Sam 8:19-20)“whom the Lord has chosen” (1 Sam 10:24) | Deals with the issue of kingship:“‘I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,’you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses” (Deut 17:14-15) |
| Writes down law and places it before God:“Then Samuel told the people the ordinances of the kingdom, and wrote *them* in the book and placed *it* before the Lord” (1 Sam 10:25) | Writes down law and places it before God:“when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book until they were complete, that Moses commanded […] ‘Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God’” (Deut 31:24-26) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Samuel** | **Moses** |
| Orders war against Amalek:“Go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him” (1 Sam 15:3) | Orders war against Amalek:“go out, fight against Amalek […] I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.” (Exod 17:9, 14) |
| Defeats enemy of Israel:“And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the Lord at Gilgal” (1 Sam 15:33) | Defeats enemies of Israel:“after he had defeated Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan” (Deut 1:4) |
| Mourned by Israel:“Then Samuel died; and all Israel gathered together and mourned for him” (1 Sam 25:1) | Mourned by Israel:“So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab […] So the sons of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days” (Deut 34:5, 8) |

**Farewell address (1 Samuel 12)**

In his farewell address to the people of Israel, Samuel places himself as the latest in the line of deliverers sent by God, starting with Moses (vv. 6-11). There are clear parallels between Samuel’s address and the final speeches of Moses recorded in Deuteronomy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Samuel** | **Moses** |
| “I am old and gray, and behold my sons are with you. And I have walked before you from my youth even to this day” (12:2) | “I am a hundred and twenty years old today; I am no longer able to come and go” (Deut 31:2) |
| Recounting Israel’s history up until the recent defeat of Nahash (12:6-12)  | Recounting Israel’s history up until the recent defeat of Sihon & Og (Deut 1-3) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Samuel** | **Moses** |
| “If you will fear the Lord and serve Him, and listen to His voice and not rebel against the command of the Lord, then both you and also the king who reigns over you will follow the Lord your God. If you will not listen to the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the command of the Lord, then the hand of the Lord will be against you, *as it was* against your fathers” (12:14-15) | “I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish” (Deut 30:16-18) |
| “Take your stand and see this great thing which the Lord will do before your eyes” (12:16) | “Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today” (Exod 14:13) |
| “all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel” (12:18) | “the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses” (Exod 14:31) |
| “the Lord has been pleased to make you a people for Himself” (12:22) | “the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession” (Deut 7:6) |
| “Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart” (12:24) | “You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him” (Deut 10:20) |

**The prophet like Moses?**

Would Samuel or his contemporaries have seen him as the Prophet of Deuteronomy 18:15-19? Does he fulfil the characteristics described by Moses?

1. Raised up by the Lord
2. “a prophet like Moses”
3. “from among you… from your countrymen”
4. “you shall listen to him”
5. “I will put My words in his mouth”
6. “he shall speak to them all that I command him”

Samuel fulfils all but the fourth: the people did not listen to him.

The role of the Prophet was to speak God’s words; it was God’s response to the people’s request not to “hear again the voice of the Lord” (Deut 18:16). Samuel exhorted Saul to “listen to [literally, hear the voice of] the words of the Lord” (1 Sam 15:1), castigated him when he did not “obey [hear] the voice of the Lord” (15:19), and told him of God’s delight in people “obeying [hearing] the voice of the Lord” (15:22). Samuel reminded the people of the need to “listen to [hear] His voice” (12:14) and the consequences for those who do “not listen to [hear] the voice of the Lord” (12:15). But “the people refused to listen to [hear] the voice of Samuel” (8:19). Instead, at God’s direction, Samuel “listen[ed] to [heard] the voice of the people” (8:7, 9, 21, 22; 12:1).

Although a prophet like Moses in many ways, Samuel was not “the Prophet who is to come into the world”.

# R. Dargie


# Reflections on Psalm 2

### Introduction

P. Wyns[[109]](#footnote-109) has previously commented on the appearance of new scholarly approaches to the analysis of the Psalter.

In his article he draws attention to Psalm 2 and posits the use made of it by Hezekiah. Wyns suggests that Psalm 2 is possibly used / adapted by Hezekiah as a sacred text re-confirming Davidic covenantal promises possibly within a coronation liturgy.

Having quoted from G. W. Anderson, Wyns then goes on to cite the evidence from Isa 38: 9-20 where Hezekiah states “we will sing my Songs all the days of our life in the house of the Lord”.

We follow the suggestion that the songs referred to here are those of the Psalter, underpinning the implied view that Hezekiah has acted as the compiler and editor in chief of the Psalter a view shared by others.[[110]](#footnote-110)

This article will examine whether there is any additional supporting evidence from the Hezekiah period for the view put forward by P.Wyns, in particular with reference to Psalm 2.

We will show that Hezekiah specifically alludes to Psalm 2 and indeed uses it as a template for prayer. Also, that the Hezekiah allusions are also used later by the Apostles in Acts 4 to link with and amplify the work of Jesus Christ. Other than the quotation above, all quotations are from the KJV.

### Psalm 2 & Hezekiah

When we reflect on the experiences of Hezekiah i.e. close to death through mortal illness with the armies of the Assyrians (the heathen) besieging Jerusalem, it is perhaps unsurprising that the words of Psalm 2 (which the Apostles Peter and John attribute to David - Acts 4:25), are considered to be applicable in part to Hezekiah[[111]](#footnote-111)

Indeed some commentators[[112]](#footnote-112) have suggested that Hezekiah at the scene of his greatest trial (the letter from Sennacherib - Isaiah 37) alludes to Psalm 2 in his prayer and receives responses from the Almighty via the prophet Isaiah that also mirror the language and sentiment of Psalm 2.

Consider the table below and notice the strong allusions in the 5 verses from Isaiah 37 through to corresponding meanings in the Psalm.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Isaiah 37**  | **Psalm 2**  |
| Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth (v. 16) | Ask of me and I shall give the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession (v. 8) |
| “Hear all the words of Sennacherib which hath sent to reproach the living God” (v. 17) | “The kings of the earth set themselves, and ....take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed saying” (v. 2) |
| “Now therefore O Lord our God save us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord even thou only” (v. 20) | “Yet have I set my king upon my Holy Hill of Zion” (v. 6) |
| “This is the word which the Lord hath spoken concerning him (Sennacherib): The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn” (v. 22) | “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision” (v. 4).“Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath and vex them in his sore displeasure” (v. 5) |
| “I know the rage against me. Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into my ears” (vv. 28-29) | Why do the nations rage?” (v. 1).“The kings of the earth set themselves, and ....take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed saying” (v. 2) |

On any objective analysis, the fit between these five verses and Psalm 2 is quite remarkable. It seems as though Psalm 2 is being used by Hezekiah as a template for prayer at a time of national crisis (affecting the very existence of the nation and the covenants of promise).

Could it be then that Psalm 2 has (at least in Hezekiah’s time) become the “default psalm (prayer)” to be uttered by an Israelite monarch at a time of national crisis when all other human channels of salvation / relief have been rendered nugatory? Perhaps our question is answered in what follows.

### Psalm 2 – David, Hezekiah and Jesus linked Together

The relevance of Hezekiah’s usage of Psalm 2 is confirmed by the remarkable comments and quotations from the Apostles Peter and John in Acts 4. Consider the table below:

**Comparison of Psalm 2 & Isaiah 37:16 with Acts 4: 23-30**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Acts 4**  | **Isaiah 37:16**  | **Psalm 2**  |
| “Lord thou art God which **hast made heaven and earth**, and the sea, and all that in them is:” (v. 24) | “...thou art the God, even thou alone of all the kingdoms of the earth: **thou hast made heaven and earth**” (Isa 37:16) |  |
|  | “...thou art the God, even thou alone **of all the kingdoms of the earth**: thou hast made heaven and earth” (Isa 37:16 | “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the **heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession**” (Ps 2:8). |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Acts 4** | **Comment** | **Psalm2** |
| “…who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things? The Kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ ” (vv. 25-26). | Ps 2:4 is not quoted“Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us” (v. 4). | “Why do the nations rage?” (v.1).“The kings of the earth set themselves, and ....take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed saying” (v. 2) |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Acts 4** | **Comment** | **Psalm2** |
| “…for of a truth against thy holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together” (v. 27). | Note : 1. Heathen = Romans & Edomites
2. People = faithless Israel
3. K of Earth = Pontius Pilate and Herod
4. Rulers = Sadducees, Pharisees & Herodians
 | “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion” (v. 6) |
| “...behold their threatenings...” (v. 29). | The raising of Jesus from the dead on the 3rd day (prefigured by Hezekiah 2 Kings 20:5) derided the efforts of the Jews to put away Christ once and for all. |  “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision” (v. 4). |
| “And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common” (v. 32) |  | “Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling” (v. 11).  |
| “and with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all” (v. 33). |  | “Blessed are all they that put their trust in him” (v. 12). |

We note that the Apostles quote from Isa 37:16 in Acts 4:24, and in doing so they link the words of Hezekiah and then quote from Psalm 2 applying the words to Jesus and the potentates of their day.

So, we have three Kings of Israel juxtaposed. David, the writer of the Psalm, with his struggle to ensure Solomon was crowned king in his day in the face of Adonijah’s rebellion. Hezekiah, who was triumphant over mortal illness and the armies of Sennacherib. And finally, Jesus, who being pre-eminent over these two was raised from the dead and became the first fruit of a new creation.

It is surely significant of “something” that on at least three occasions a Davidic King has either written, alluded or had these words spoken on his behalf regarding the establishment (or should it be “resurrection”) of the original Davidic covenant at moments of national crisis. The “something” being, as Psalm 2 sets out, the clash of wills between God and man – there being only one victor.

### Conclusion

The use by the Apostles of Isa 37:16 before applying the words of Psalm 2 would seem to strengthen the links between Hezekiah and Psalm 2 and provide vindication for those who argue that Hezekiah was more than just familiar with the opus of Davidic psalms.

Indeed, it would seem that Hezekiah was intimate with all his Father’s psalms and drew strength and inspiration from the works of his illustrious Father, and in particular the comforts of Psalm 2.

We are therefore of the view that the use of Psalm 2 by Hezekiah is well grounded.

**Reviews**

***Chronology Study Bible.* Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008. ISBN 978-0-7180-2068-2.**

Anyone familiar with the Bible will understand the desire to re-order the text chronologically. Whilst Genesis to Kings roughly follow a linear historical narrative, other books of the Bible fall outside that framework and often neighbouring books come from very different historical circumstances. This "problem" is even a feature within books, Jeremiah, perhaps, being the most pronounced example of a book that is jumbled (chronologically-speaking). So one can understand the motivation of the publishers and editors to present a way of studying the Bible in historical context.

However, as the introduction acknowledges, one almost instantly runs into problems when trying to determine how the books should be placed. One problem is that of the lack of scholarly consensus on the dating of large portions of the Bible. The editors have given voice to most major options when introducing new parts of the Bible and opt for supported options when placing books, nevertheless one feels it might have been preferable to adopt a position rather hedging. A second problem is how one positions non-historical books; should prophets be dated to composition or to the events they predict? A third problem is how to deal with issues of alleged pseudonymy. In general the editors have chosen to position books and sections according to their setting; for example, they have positioned the proverbs of Solomon with the historical events of Solomon's life whilst reserving judgment on whether Solomon actually wrote them. This solution, though diplomatic, raises questions about the purpose of the book. If it is meant to aid historical study of the Bible then surely it is unhelpful to reserve judgment on significant historical issues. Again, one feels that it might have been preferable to adopt a position.

One unfortunate consequence of trying to place the books of the Bible in a chronological structure is that some passages are almost impossible to place. For example, some of the psalms carry no temporal markers and are, in that sense, timeless. Therefore the editors have placed a number of poetic passages, including the whole book of Job, in the period of Babylonian exile. This fairly arbitrary placement seems to undermine the very purpose of the book.

Another strange consequence of the chronological rearrangement is that all the synoptic passages are grouped together, occurring one after another. So when Kings and Isaiah describe the same events the reader encounters two passages that are almost word for word the same. It is not clear what purpose this serves. Had the two passages been laid out side-by-side for easy comparison it would probably have been more useful. As it is, one cannot really imagine reading this Bible from cover-to-cover, which might be consider a major drawback.

Lastly the Bible is not easy to navigate. Obviously the traditional ordering of the Bible is of little help in trying to find books of the Bible, but because the editors have decided not to venture specific dates for each passage it is not possible to find passages according to date either.

Despite these criticisms, this study Bible does have some attractive features. It has lots of information boxes and historical comments. It is pleasingly laid out and typeset. Nevertheless one feels that the result has not lived up to the promise of the title.

**TG**

**Graham Jackman, *Re-reading Romans in Context,* 2013. ISBN: 978-1-291-34213-0. 257pp.**

Those who have read *The Language of the Cross* will know that Jackman writes with consideration and clarity, though never simplistically. The same is true of his latest book, *Re-reading Romans in Context.* As the title suggests it is an effort to re-read, and to encourage readers to re-read, Paul’s letter to the Romans in light of the circumstances Paul wrote it. Paul was dealing with a specific situation in Rome, particularly the question of the standing of Gentile believers within the church, and the issues he covers in his letter are intended to speak to, and even resolve, that situation. This approach is in contrast to common approaches to Romans that treat it as a theological treatise or statement of doctrine.

The book is informed, in part, by recent developments in Pauline studies, namely the “New Perspective” on Paul pursued by scholars including Stendhal, Sanders, Dunn and Wright. It is unsurprising to find these works cited frequently throughout the book, though Jackman does draw on other sources. Nevertheless, the book is written for a Christadelphian audience and does not seek to participate in the academic discourse but rather to address the assumptions underpinning Christadelphian approaches, particularly the Lutheran bent common to many Protestant approaches. Jackman wisely chooses not to engage negatively with previous Christadelphian commentaries on Romans and instead seeks to present his approach in a sequential manner.

The result is a refreshing, if challenging, re-appreciation of the book of Romans. After completing his initial assessment of the purpose of the book, Jackman undertakes to apply his treatment to the whole book. This allows the reader to see how Jackman’s proposed re-reading affects the message of the book.

It is probably as well to note, as Jackman himself acknowledges, that *Re-reading Romans* is unafraid to question Christadelphian approaches to certain topics. His treatment of the Holy Spirit is perhaps the most pertinent example.[[113]](#footnote-113) He writes:

The emphasis that I have placed here on the role of the Spirit and of the indwelling Christ may be unfamiliar, perhaps even unsettling, to many Christadelphian readers. It has to be said, however, that faithfulness to Paul's argument makes that emphasis not wilful or wayward but simply inevitable (p132).

All readers will be impressed by Jackman’s diligent and careful study, and with the sincerity in which he addresses his topic.

The book includes two useful appendices covering the history of the Roman church in the first century and some thoughts about interpreting texts.

**TG**

**Marginal Notes**

**Gen 20:13 Elohim—AP**

Generally speaking, the word ‘elohim’ takes a singular form of the verb although it itself has a plural form. For example, ‘And God said…’ uses the third person singular form of the verb ‘to say’. However, there are exceptions to this rule and one such exception is Gen 20:13,

And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father’s house, that I said unto her, This *is* thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He *is* my brother. Gen 20:13 (KJV)

English versions render ‘elohim’ as ‘God’ here even though ‘caused…to wander’ is a third person plural form of the verb ‘to wander’. The plural form of the verb is linked to ‘princes’ in Isa 19:13, so it is unclear why versions can resist a plural for ‘elohim’ in Gen 20:13 and translate the Hebrew as “And it came to pass, when gods caused me to wander…”.

That Abraham would have spoken to the pagan Abimelech in this way illustrates nothing more than the use of language in a way with which Abimelech would have been familiar—he would have been familiar with the gods directing the ways of men. What the English translators neglect is the dimension of speaking to a pagan and how close the narrative is reflecting the conversation. The implied narrator is conforming his description of the encounter to the terms used in the actual speech of Abraham at this point.

While Abraham was not a pagan and would have understood the concept of angelic involvement in the lives of men, angels are not the referent of ‘elohim’ in this record of Abraham’s speech; rather, Abraham is using Abimelech’s own framework of understanding in order to execute a successful (ordinary) conversation.[[114]](#footnote-114)

**Gen 32:28—AP**

The KJV and modern versions differ in this verse:

And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. (KJV)

He said, “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.” (NASB)

Scholars today do not think that the KJV is correct (e.g. Westermann). The Hebrew (MT) does not have a comparative noun-phrase ‘as a prince’ and the Hebrew verb underlying ‘as a prince hast thou power’ (KJV) is unique to this text and Hos 12:4 which is a commentary on Genesis. The meaning of the verb is being taken from the incident, hence the NASB has ‘to strive’ but versions are free to pick and choose something similar. Two of the consonants from the verb’s root (hrf, larfy) are incorporated into the Hebrew of ‘Israel’ along with the title of God—’*ēl*. They are also the two consonants in the Hebrew noun for ‘prince’ which may explain the KJV translation.

The emphasis in Hosea is on God who was manifested in the angel. Jacob has this understanding that he is wrestling with God in the angel because he names the place Peniel (‘the face of God’):

He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed… Hos 12:3-4 (KJV)

The KJV drops ‘as a prince’ here and Hosea gives us another verb in ‘power over the angel’ but it is also rare (rwf, 3x). It doesn’t necessarily help us fix the meaning of hrf, although there may be a word-play in its use. Translations vary in their rendering of the verb rwf in Hosea (RSV, ‘to strive’, NASB ‘to wrestle’) and the few other occurrences don’t help. Again, it seems the incident is driving translational choices.

The name ‘Israel’ means whatever the translation indicates: for example, something like ‘God will have power’ (KJV) or ‘God will strive’ (RSV). However, the use of the common verb for ‘to prevail/to be able’ (lky) to sum up Jacob’s success is not incorporated into the name ‘Israel’.

Genesis also mentions ‘and with men’. Why is this? Hosea mentions Jacob taking Esau by the heel which would be the beginning of Jacob’s struggle with men. But we don’t have to restrict the ‘and with men’ just to Esau since Jacob’s life saw him struggle with men. Is the ‘and with men’ important to the name ‘Israel’? It is attractive to say so because ‘God will have power with men’ fits the story of salvation-history. Perhaps we are meant to infer that God will strive with men from use of the name. Hebrews 2:14 is relevant here because it quotes ‘took his brother’ in the phrasing ‘took part of the same…the seed of Abraham’. This would make Jacob’s struggle with men a type of God’s struggle. Giving the name ‘Israel’ to Jacob in effect declares that God will strive with men ‘in Jacob’ which is a prophecy of Christ.

Striving with God is obviously a different function than striving with men. Insofar as the name ‘Israel’ incorporates a title for God with ‘to have power’ (KJV), it is excluding the ‘with God’ element: God does not strive with God. This shows that it is the ‘striving’ that is important to the name. It is the angel that shows that God will strive with men.

Hosea continues,

Yea…he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us… Hos 12:4 (KJV)

What is interesting is that here we do not have further description of the wrestling. Rather, the statement is summarising aspects of Jacob’s life. We can tell this because weeping and making supplication are not part of the wrestling but the same verbs are used together in Jacob’s meeting with Esau (Gen 33:4-5); and finding God in Bethel is recounting Jacob’s encounter with God in Bethel where it is also emphasized that he ‘spoke’ with him (Gen 28:16; 35:15).

**1 Cor 14:40—AP**

There are many verbal connections between 1 Corinthians 11 and 14. The ‘decently and in order’ text is a close link. The word for ‘decently’ (euvschmo,nwj) is rare (3x) and includes the idea of ‘behaving yourself’. Paul uses the word in Rom 13:13, “Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness” (NASB). The contrast between behaving properly and drunkenness gives us our connection with 1 Corinthians 11 since Paul tells them “for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk.” (v. 21). What we have in 1 Cor 14:40 is a recap and reminder of the problem Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians 11—they were to behave properly at the Lord’s Supper. The reason why Paul concludes 1 Corinthians 14 in this way is simply that the Lord’s Supper and how they meet together has been his focus across 1 Corinthians 10-14.

The second link with 1 Corinthians 11 is the ‘order’ word (ta,xij). It occurs nine times in the NT in relation to the order of priesthood (Hebrews and Melchizedek, 6x). A cognate verb (diata,ssw) occurs in 1 Cor 11:34 and the connection is brought out in the KJV, “And the rest will I set in order when I come.” A more modern version might have something like ‘give directions’ (RSV). Paul is saying that he has been setting things in order in 1 Corinthians 11 but there are other matters he will deal with when he visits them. It is the order of things in 1 Corinthians 11 which Paul recapitulates in 1 Cor 14:40 when he says, “Let all things be done decently and in order.” The reason is the same: **Paul has been dealing with the Lord’s Supper across these chapters**.

**News**

This issue sees two new columnists join the EJournal. Bro. Benjamin Kent, who is a doing a PhD at Manchester University in Biblical Studies and Bro. Richard Benson, whose day job is a lecturer in English language at a local college in the Birmingham-Walsall area. The only other bit of news from the EJournal is a note of congratulations to Bro. Tom Gaston who was awarded his PhD from Oxford University in some obscure area of early church history.

**Postscript**

It is regrettable when believers leave fellowship after publicly declaring a giving up of their faith because it is no longer convincing. Unfortunately, the reaction to such a sad event (from our point of view) can be too dismissive. Instead of prompting introspection and self-examination (of our fellowship and thinking) it often elicits just a ‘holding fast to the traditions’ response. Instead of asking whether we (collectively) can do better at addressing genuine questions and concerns, we can retreat ever further into our worldview. What we do is fail to engage with the issues out of *fear* that we might actually be wrong or because it is more comfortable to be getting on with our own lives. The intellect and the rational thinking part of human nature is as vital as the capacity for love; each is challenged by God and the challenge to faith is as old as Eden.  A fundamentalist response is not the answer to difficult questions; in fact it is counterproductive, as it accelerates the departure of genuine questioning minds. We should not place our confidence in institutions, a group identity, or look only inwards, but rather we should hold fast at the same time as engaging outwards in a rational and personal way, doing justice to the power of Scripture.

**PW**

**Supplement**

Joban Scholarship

**Andrew Perry**

**Introduction**

Scholarship on Job is extensive, as is the case with most areas of study of the Hebrew Bible; though perhaps more so with Job.[[115]](#footnote-115) It is broadly similar except for the work of a few commentators and it is these that we will pick up towards the end of this paper. The goal of the paper is to argue for a new approach to Job.

**Dating**

When was Job written? On the question of date, one scholar, D. J. A. Clines, offers the following comment,

Most scholars today would date the composition of the book of Job to some point between the seventh and the second centuries, with the probability that a prose folktale of a pious sufferer existed long before the largely poetic book itself was written.[[116]](#footnote-116)

Such a consensus that the book of Job contains an ancient story is telling, but we do not have to assume any date for the book of Job, nor do we have to assume that it contains an ancient folktale. Scholars date the book anywhere between the 8c.[[117]](#footnote-117) and the 2c., but any arguments are inconclusive, and beyond the scope of this book, and in any event such a period (8c.-2c.) is so broad as to be unhelpful.

It is not difficult to think of “writing contexts” for the book in the eighth, seventh or early sixth centuries.[[118]](#footnote-118) The Assyrian[[119]](#footnote-119) and Babylonian onslaughts on the land affected the faithful remnant as well as the wicked of Israel and Judah. The book could be seen in those contexts as a study in the suffering of the “righteous” or the “suffering of Israel and Judah”. Three lines of argument support a time frame for the book just prior to the Exile.

1) There are motifs shared only between Jeremiah and Job (e.g. the motif of “purpose”, Job 42:2, Jer 11:15, 23:20, 30:24, 51:11), which suggests the thought-world of Jeremiah is the writing context for Job.[[120]](#footnote-120) This suggests a time-frame of Jeremiah’s life for the writing of Job—late seventh/early sixth century. This would explain links between Jeremiah and Job that have been noted by scholars such as the inter-dependency of Jer 20:14-18 upon Job 3, and texts such as Jer 12:1, 31:29.[[121]](#footnote-121)

2) There are also links between Job and Deuteronomy, which suggests that the late seventh century/early sixth century is the time when Job was written. A renewed interest in the Law in the reign of Josiah was engendered by the discovery of the book of the Law (Deuteronomy) in the temple (2 Chron 34:14-15). Exactly what this discovery meant is beyond the scope of this study, but the application of Deuteronomic law at this time supplies a literary context and a catalyst for the author of Job to work allusions to Deuteronomy into his book. The Deuteronomic principles of retributive justice are obviously discussed in Job.[[122]](#footnote-122)

3) The mention of Job by Ezekiel (Ezek 14:14, 20), along with Noah and Daniel (MT not LXX[[123]](#footnote-123)), is thought to be a mention of the Job of folklore,[[124]](#footnote-124) rather than evidence that the *book* of Job was extant in Ezekiel’s day, but this is not conclusive—it could equally be evidence of the existence of the book of Job.

Ezekiel’s point is that the righteousness of Job would not *deliver the land* from destruction. This reading cannot be based solely on the prologue/epilogue construed as a self-contained folktale, because the epilogue references what has been *said* in the body of the book by both Job and the friends. Moreover, this reading cannot be based on just the prologue because it is only in the epilogue that Job is invited to *intercede* on behalf of his friends; it is such a righteous intervention that Ezekiel’s point presupposes. Accordingly, we would argue that Ezekiel has some form of the book of Job (for instance, chs. 1-2, 3-22, 38-39, 42). The date of this oracle in Ezekiel (ca. 595-587) suggests the “book” of Job is in circulation and this allows us to date the book to the late seventh/early sixth century.

This dating leaves unanswered the question of why an author would write a patriarchal story. This question is a matter of speculation. Our proposal would be that the author of Job is representing the political positions inside Hezekiah’s Jerusalem. With this concern, he chooses “Edomite” characters,[[125]](#footnote-125) as those traditionally antagonistic to Judah. This in turn allows a “Jacob and Esau” style parable in which Job is presented like the patriarch Jacob. The views of these characters are political in that they require Job to repent in order to affect a solution to the crisis facing Judah. In contrast, Job refuses to take this solution; he upholds his righteousness.

In this way, we can make the book an apologetic treatise ostensibly defending Hezekiah’s attitudes and opposing the opinions and policies of internal opponents. In addition, we can make the book an explanation of why Hezekiah suffered—he suffered because God sought to demonstrate his disinterested righteousness.[[126]](#footnote-126)

The mention of “the Satan” might suggest a later post-exilic date for the book.[[127]](#footnote-127) However, the inclusion of Satan in a book written in the late seventh/early sixth century is close enough in time to Zechariah’s prophecy (ca. 520) to make a theological connection between Job and Zechariah plausible, without dating Job to the later time. Further, it has been observed that the heavenly scene bears some comparison to the vision of Micaiah (1 Kgs 22), which dates from the ninth century; so, Job may represent an earlier innovation of the concept of “the Satan” vis-à-vis Zechariah. There is good reason to suppose that Zechariah requires the *prior* existence of the parable of Job.

Our only contribution to the dating question is that the language of Isaiah of Jerusalem links to Job in such a way as to indicate that the book reflects the eighth century Assyrian crisis. These links can be taken as *prima facia* evidence for a date closer in time to Isaiah’s oracles. The *intensity* of the book requires a date closer to its historical subject-matter. The conditions prior to the exile are a better catalyst for Job, when we read Job as a parable of the times of Hezekiah and an object lesson for Judah and the monarchy. The reconstructive context after the exile seems inappropriate for a book offering “comfort” in the face of disaster.

Scholarship has a broad consensus on the development of the writings of the Hebrew Bible.[[128]](#footnote-128) The book of Job is often fitted within this consensus at a later (usually post-exilic) date; we place Job at a pre-exilic date. The common topical and thematic material that we identify between Job and the other writings of the Hebrew Bible does not require us to presume the existence of such writings as finished products. The common material does however provide evidence for the existence of common traditions which have been included in the writings that form the Hebrew Bible. Our reading assumptions about the material common to Job and other writings are as follows:

* “JEDP” traditions from Genesis to Numbers and Deuteronomy were of influence in the literate society of the author of Job.[[129]](#footnote-129)
* Contemporary records concerning the period up to and including Hezekiah (i.e. those in 1 and 2 Kings) existed and were known. The written traditions in Chronicles relating to Hezekiah post-date Job, but encode opinion that was forming during the time of the author of Job.[[130]](#footnote-130)
* Certain Psalms carry royal themes of battle and victory, and these *can* be related to the events of Hezekiah’s reign (e.g. Pss 89, 107).[[131]](#footnote-131)
* For the Minor Prophets,[[132]](#footnote-132) where there are no dating superscriptions, (e.g. Joel, Obadiah, Nahum, and Habakkuk), we take a location in the Book of the Twelve (MT) to be a chronological indication of a date for these books. We take Joel,[[133]](#footnote-133) Obadiah,[[134]](#footnote-134) and Nahum[[135]](#footnote-135) to be late eighth early seventh century prophets and Habakkuk to be a Josianic prophet. Hosea and Amos are eighth century prophets, and Micah is a late eighth early seventh century prophet.
* Many of Isaiah’s early oracles (chs. 1-35) relate to the reign of Hezekiah and the Assyrian Crisis (e.g. chs. 1, 2-4, 5, 28-33).[[136]](#footnote-136) Oracles in the later part of the book of Isaiah, which are normally taken to be exilic and post-exilic, are here taken to have mainly pre-exilic application. This is a controversial assumption requiring support, which we sketch below.

None of the above assumptions are unchallenged in scholarship. They have been both defended and questioned. However, the task of such a defence is not our concern in this paper. Our task is not to locate Job in a developmental framework for the writings of the Hebrew Bible. Our parabolic interpretation of Job is not materially affected by hypotheses of dates.

**Hebrew Poetry and Philology**

The Hebrew of Job is the most difficult in the Hebrew Scriptures, with many unique words, unusual grammatical constructions, problematic vocalisation, and difficult word combinations. Consequently, scholars often use comparative philological materials (e.g. Ugaritic, Arabic) in order to make the Hebrew more regular and remove hypothetical corruptions or inappropriate editorial changes. In effect, this produces a new version of the poem.[[137]](#footnote-137)

Hebrew poetry is characterized by parallelism; in addition, scholars have developed theories about Hebrew metrics. Thus, they may have views on the number of syllables that are appropriate to the line (colon), as well as theories about stress and sound, which may also dictate what is appropriate in a word and on a line.[[138]](#footnote-138) In addition, scholars may have a view on how many lines are to be associated to form a complete unit (bi-colon, tri-colon), and how the thought in that unit is composed (synonymous parallelism, contrasting parallelism, etc.), and how such units compose larger units of thought such as strophes.[[139]](#footnote-139) On the basis of such theories, scholars propose amendments to the text, if they feel the existing line is out of balance.

However, there is no consensus on how to measure and apply a metrical system to Job, and disagreement exists between each commentator on how the larger poetic units are distinguished.[[140]](#footnote-140) Pope observes that “The counting of syllables, unstressed and stressed, in lines where the text is above suspicion shows such irregularity as to cast doubt on emendations made purely on the grounds of metric theory”.[[141]](#footnote-141) Hartley observes that an “unbalanced” line could well be deliberate, and thereby convey an emphasis.[[142]](#footnote-142)

These two factors (poetic form and philological comparison) define the text-critical layer of scholarship in relation to Job.[[143]](#footnote-143) They contribute to determining the chosen text upon which a scholar then superimposes his commentary about the cut and thrust of the argument in Job, i.e. his various higher levels of analysis.

**Authorship**

The language of Job shows that the author was a literary artist of high-order with knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic. The vocabulary has many Aramaisms and betrays an awareness of Arabic lexical material that has been absorbed into literary Hebrew. Gordis observes that “the only tenable conclusion is the most obvious and natural—the Book of Job was written by a highly learned Hebrew in his native tongue”.[[144]](#footnote-144)

The frequency of Aramaisms has been thought to suggest a post-exilic date for Job; however, this is not a secure conclusion. How the author became skilled in Aramaic, and how far Aramaic had penetrated literary or common society cannot be determined from the book of Job. It could be that the author has these language skills, but that they have not yet become common in all society. Literate Hebrew society could have been absorbing Aramaic influence as early as the eighth century (2 Kgs 18:26, Isa 36:11). As the times moved on, Aramaic advanced further until it became the *lingua franca*, but the quantity of Aramaisms in Job does not presuppose socially widespread use of Aramaic. Its presence is consistent with a date in the late seventh or early sixth century as well as later post-exilic times.[[145]](#footnote-145)

**Composition of Job**

The book of Job bristles with problems of textual integrity.[[146]](#footnote-146) A discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of this paper. Some of the leading issues include,

* The speeches *appear* to be in three cycles with a definite pattern (Eliphaz, Job, Bildad, Job, Zophar, Job, etc.), except that in the “third cycle” the pattern breaks down; Bildad’s speech is much shorter and Zophar does not have a speech. This has led scholars to propose that the text is disturbed and they offer reconstructions that restore the pattern. Some of the things that Job says in the third cycle are taken to represent the views of the friends, and this is where scholars reconstruct Zophar’s and Bildad’s third speeches.[[147]](#footnote-147)

For example, Clines argues, following other scholars, that Job 26:5-14 belongs to Bildad’s third speech and that Job 27:13-28:28 is Zophar’s missing third speech.[[148]](#footnote-148) However, we will assume that the text has not been disturbed and follow the treatment of F. I. Andersen[[149]](#footnote-149) in regarding Job as speaking all of Job 26-27. This means that there is no third speech for Zophar and Bildad’s “speech” is just an invited interruption by Job, who says, “If it is not so, who will prove me a liar, and show that there is nothing in what I say?” (Job 24:25).

If Zophar’s speech is absent, Bildad’s speech is more of an interruption, and the text is not disturbed, the proposal that there are three cycles of speeches is severely weakened. We are inclined to take the view that there are only *two* cycles of speeches, which are concluded by Eliphaz summarizing the friends’ position in Job 22:

J / E:J:B:J:Z:J / E:J:B:J:Z:J /E

This would make Eliphaz’ speech the structural counterpart to Job’s opening speech with both standing outside the two cycles. Eliphaz’ last speech brings to a close the “first day” of speeches, and the next day begins with Job, saying, “Today also my complaint is bitter” (Job 23:2).[[150]](#footnote-150) D. Wolfers’ conclusion is that “it is impossible to construct from any extant material a Third Cycle which is thematically consistent in the way that the first and second cycles are”.[[151]](#footnote-151)

We see nothing convincing in the reconstructions of scholars and there is value in providing a *final form* reading.[[152]](#footnote-152)

* There is a poem about Wisdom in the middle of the book (Job 28), which is placed into the mouth of Job. Its character has led scholars to observe that it is out of keeping with the tenor of Job’s remarks; it is often interpreted as an interpolation by the author or a later hand. We regard it is a *partial* digression spoken by Job, whom, as the author states, “continues” his parable in Job 29:1.
* Elihu’s speeches are the subject of dispute. Scholars observe that he is not mentioned in the prologue or epilogue, and that Job does not reply to him. Some scholars argue that he is a later addition to the book, e.g. Dhorme.[[153]](#footnote-153) We follow Gordis[[154]](#footnote-154) and treat Elihu as integral to the book’s design.
* Another area of dispute is how the narrative envelope and the dialogue relate to each other. Reading the dialogue without the scene setting of the prologue engenders the impression that Job’s situation is much worse; there are social, military and political aspects to his circumstances as well as his physical affliction. The Hebrew of the prologue is different to that of the dialogue. The consensus of scholarship is that the prologue reflects an ancient folklore, which has been adapted to exist with the poem.

Nevertheless, the narrative envelope and the dialogues are linked in such a way that indicates that the book was intended to be read as a unity. We do not need to split the two types of material and assign different authors and a different purpose. They are linked by the way the action flows into the dialogues. Thus the friends come and comfort Job; when they finish speaking, Elihu is introduced; God comes and gives Job an answer, and on the basis of this answer instructs Job to sacrifice for his friends at the close of the book. In addition, there are multiple intertextual links between all the speeches which lend cohesion to the book.[[155]](#footnote-155)

Thus, we treat the book as a literary unit. This takes the book “as is” and places issues of composition to one side.[[156]](#footnote-156) We assume that the prologue/epilogue, the “wisdom poem” of Job 28, the currently assigned speeches of Job and the friends, God’s speeches, and Elihu’s speeches, are all an integral part of the book for the purposes of our analysis. Our view is that the book has an identifiable *author* of both the narrative sections and the poetic dialogues, including those of Elihu.

Nothing in scholarship invalidates such a reading, but to defend its unity would require a different sort of commentary. Thus, while it may be true to observe that there is a difference in style and language in the Hebrew of Elihu’s speeches compared to those of the three friends, (there are more Aramaisms), or in the Wisdom Poem of Job 28, or in God’s speeches, such differences do not have to imply different authors of these parts; it could be that an author worked on the book at different times in his life, in different locales, or chose different styles and a different vocabulary for the different voices. If we present a successful reading of the whole book, then this is an argument for the integral unity of the book.

Carol Newsom offers a recent discussion of the question of composition, unity, and genre in *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*.[[157]](#footnote-157) She argues that those who assert the unity of the book have trouble offering a convincing explanation of the genre of the book, given the disparity between the prologue/epilogue and the dialogue. Our solution to this challenge is to say that the unity of the prologue/epilogue with the dialogue is achieved by there being a parabolic level of meaning in the prologue, which coheres with the political/military concerns of the dialogue. The genre of Job is therefore unique;[[158]](#footnote-158) but for want of a definition, we would propose that it is a work of the ***prophetic imagination***. It is a dramatized lament with associated consolation. It is a disputation about the causes, the progress, and the resolution of the political and military situation of “Job”. It is a work of “providential wisdom”—the wisdom of God’s dealings with his covenant people and their recent “ideal” righteous Davidic king.[[159]](#footnote-159)

Scholarship is motivated by five factors when it argues for a complex history of composition involving, first, an oral folktale, then an original author of a shortened version of the book and, finally, later editors.[[160]](#footnote-160)

1) Scholars do not see how the MT makes sense; they do not see how certain verses are consistent or coherent with surrounding material, and so they propose amendments to the text, reassign verses to different speakers, or re-order material. Such “errors” are assigned to editors and the vagaries of transmission.

2) Scholars perceive that the poetic structures of some verses are not “right” (according to some poetic theory) and so they suggest that the text has been corrupted or intentionally changed, and they propose corrective amendments to the text. Their amendments hypothesize about editorial activity, and in effect they put forward new versions of the poem of Job to that recorded in the MT.

3) Scholars do not understand the poetic figures. It is often the case that the author of Job puts together words, each of which has a conventional meaning outside Job, but when put together produce an apparently very odd figure; commentators often amend the Hebrew or ignore the pattern of usage outside Job and propose a unique sense for a constituent word in Job; they often rely on comparative philology for these proposals.

4) Fourthly, because of difficulty in comprehending the sense of the MT, scholars argue that text makes better sense if it is adjusted in respect of the separation of words, vocalisation, obvious omissions, and scribal errors.[[161]](#footnote-161)

5) Finally, scholars propose amendments to the text that are consistent with their overall reading of the book. Thus deletions and alterations may be proposed that make a speech represent preconceived ideas about what a speaker should be saying if he is to be a consistent character; or such changes may be proposed in order to fit a theory about the development of a theme.

In respect of these amendments, Pope notes that “the Masoretic Hebrew remains our primary source for the Book of Job, even though in many places the text is corrupt or obscure and has to be emended in order to yield any acceptable sense”.[[162]](#footnote-162) But he warns, “…the text has certainly been tampered with before and has suffered greatly in transmission. It would, however, be extremely naïve for anyone to place too much confidence in any of the ingenious and learned textual restorations and emendations contained in the commentaries and the extensive periodical literature on Job”.[[163]](#footnote-163)

**Proposal**

Our main proposal is that Job is a prophetic treatment of the times of Hezekiah. It is a book that has been developed with a folkloric story about a patriarchal individual called Job. It is a drama written for performance[[164]](#footnote-164) using this story, but carrying an eighth/seventh century debate. The prophetic-parable[[165]](#footnote-165) can only be uncovered by intertextual study. Strictly speaking, it only exists in the prologue and the epilogue: these parts of the book are obviously a story, but our argument is that the story is parabolic. The dialogue is *not* parabolic unless it is seen in relation to the narrative envelope.

If we put the prologue/epilogue to one side and take the dialogue on its own, the background information we have in the speeches takes on a new significance, and the character of that information is different. There are indications of kingship, political power, military conflict, policies of state, party groupings, diplomatic talks, and a crisis. It is then a question of identifying the historical context for this kind of dialogue. The prologue/epilogue disguises this level of meaning with a story about a patriarch.

The prophetic-parabolic approach is almost non-existent amongst the commentaries, which instead concentrate on determining the Hebrew text of Job, relating the text to comparative religious material, offering a surface paraphrase of the arguments in the book, and considering such questions as provenance, consistency and intent; to this mix they add value judgements on the lasting theological worth of the book (as a theodicy) in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Some commentaries observe that the book *may* represent an allegory of the nation of Israel and its suffering, but this has generally not been accepted.[[166]](#footnote-166)

The majority view is that the book is about the problem of Job’s innocent suffering and therefore a theodicy.[[167]](#footnote-167) The friends present alternative theodicies and Job rejects their proposals. The main problem with this reading is that it does not appear to encompass God’s speeches; these do not offer an answer to Job about his suffering.

Our case is that the book is not about the “problem of innocent suffering”; it is not a theodicy.[[168]](#footnote-168) The book is about whether a man can serve God for nothing (i.e. whether disinterested righteousness is possible). If Satan’s challenge is being tested in the rest of the book, this can only mean that Job’s suffering is the way that he is tested for disinterested righteousness during[[169]](#footnote-169) his life. His suffering brings about a state in which he has nothing, and this enables the test to proceed as to whether he serves God for nothing.[[170]](#footnote-170)

The embracing framework is set by Satan’s question: the ensuing discussion of innocent suffering is only the means by which Satan’s test is executed. Job is tested to see whether he will succumb to the friend’s theodicies, repent, and seek God’s favour. For Job to accept a reward/retribution theodicy would be for him to show the impossibility of disinterested righteousness. He would be conforming his behaviour to the goal of a reward, i.e. God’s forgiveness. It is essential therefore that Job uphold his righteousness if God is to be vindicated over against Satan.

God’s speeches answer Job, but they do not do so by justifying his suffering. The reason for the suffering is given in the prologue—Job is being tested for disinterested righteousness. (The friends do not offer this theodicy—that suffering is a test.) God’s speeches are designed instead to give Job the assurance that his suffering will soon end and that he is in control. Such an assurance is not a solution to the “problem of the book”, the book is not an attempt to explain the problem of suffering. The assurance is the signal to the reader that Job’s “test” is now ending and his healing beginning. God’s speeches are designed to bring closure to the test and restore Job’s faith.

If we ask why an author would write such a narrative, our proposal is that it was written to explain the suffering of Hezekiah and the nation during the Assyrian crisis. The “problem” of the book of Job is how to explain a recent event in Judah’s history. The author has encoded this explanation in a play about “Job” with Job representing Hezekiah. The value of this kind of writing in the period prior to the Exile is easy to appreciate, as it offers an explanation of recent suffering. It also bolsters confidence in “the land” in times of external threat; hence our suggestion that it is an apologetic prophetic work written during the times of Jeremiah.

Our proposal offers a parabolic meaning in the epilogue/prologue of Job, and a more literal political and military interpretation of the speeches. An original audience for Job might not have had the necessary background knowledge for such a reading. In the absence of such knowledge, the play works on a surface level as a dialogue about the suffering of a patriarch. If an audience had *some* background knowledge of the eighth century prophets, they could well have unlocked the deeper meaning that we present.[[171]](#footnote-171) Accordingly we conclude that it is entirely plausible to propose that an author would write a play about Hezekiah in a patriarchal style.

**Parabolic Approaches**

Studies on Job[[172]](#footnote-172) tend to be of three kinds: i) detailed text-critical monographs and articles on the Hebrew, both comparative-philological, linguistic, and literary, and often tied to considerations of composition, redactional history, and provenance; ii) heavy-weight commentaries which aim to summarise and add to the detailed text-critical work, as well as expound the book line by line; and iii) lighter material, perhaps more homiletical, perhaps apologetic, perhaps exegetical, which seeks to bring Job to the concerns of believers of a particular faith-community. The **only parabolic commentary** of Job is *Deep Things out of Darkness* by D. Wolfers. This does not offer a line-by-line analysis of Job. It seeks to offer a holistic reading of the book through a selected analysis of key motifs and themes. This is the only commentary that we engage as a dialogue partner.

Wolfers’ view is that “Job is primarily an allegorical figure representing the people of Judah and their king Hezekiah in the time of Assyrian conquests”.[[173]](#footnote-173) This is substantially correct, and Wolfers has employed an intertextual method. However, our view is that the prologue/epilogue of Job is a parable (not an allegory[[174]](#footnote-174)) portraying Hezekiah at the time of the **Assyrian siege**, and the dialogue is a literal matter-of-fact discussion of the crisis. Thus our view places Hezekiah centre-stage rather than Judah. Wolfers makes “Job” into a composite figure of “Judah and her king”; we identify Job as Hezekiah.

Wolfers also believes that “…the purpose of the author in writing the Book of Job was…to re-draw the nature of the relationship between the people of Israel and their God by demonstrating that the Covenants were no longer in operation, that they had been unilaterally abrogated by the Lord, or in the alternative, so transgressed by the people, that they had become inoperative”.[[175]](#footnote-175) This either/or appears to be an example of fence-sitting; even so, each option is not the purpose of the book.

Wolfers also says, “…the thesis of the book of Job at its deepest level is that the time had arrived historically for the severance of this tribal bond, the rupture unilaterally of the covenant, the treaty, between God and Israel, to free the way for the demonstration of that unrequited love of God, fear of God, worship of God, which Job at the end of his trials personifies”.[[176]](#footnote-176) Wolfers’ view has a pervasive impact on his reading of the speeches of Job, to which he gives an overly angry tone.

Wolfers’ thesis is flawed as a big picture, and this affects his reading at many points. Firstly, ‘Job’ was restored and Jerusalem was saved, and this does not suggest a unilateral rupture of the covenant at this point in history (587 would be a better proposal). Secondly, the terms of the Deuteronomic covenant allow for the return of a scattered Israel to the land (Deut 30:1-10); the “tribal bond” is still affirmed.[[177]](#footnote-177) Thirdly, the book of Job places to the foreground a test of disinterested righteousness and an individual. This is the explanation of the suffering that is offered, rather than the punishment of Judah and the abrogation of the covenant by Yahweh or the people. Finally, Wolfers reads Job’s speeches in terms of an accusation that God has abrogated the covenant, and this gives them a sense and a tone that does not fit the Chronistic traditions recorded about Hezekiah.

Hence, there are numerous points of disagreement between Wolfers and our proposal as to how the language of the book fits the historical situation (e.g. on the identities of “Satan”, “the sons of God”, “Behemoth”, “the hypocrite”, “the wicked ones”, and “the wicked one”). Contextualising poetry is inherently difficult and such disagreement is inevitable. Nevertheless, Wolfers should be read along with our proposal for purposes of comparison and contrast.[[178]](#footnote-178) In their review of recent Joban scholarship, Waltke and Diewert describe Wolfers’ book as a “striking anomaly” and comment that “it is unlikely that his views will gain wide acceptance” although they also say that it is “a helpful counterpoint to the conventional lines of understanding”.[[179]](#footnote-179) Our proposal is an attempt to correct Wolfer’s thesis and offer a more systematic defence of the counterpoint political-parabolic approach to Job.

The parabolic approach is also represented in J. W. Thirtle’s, *Old Testament Problems*.[[180]](#footnote-180) Thirtle comments that “Hezekiah had a sickness which was of the nature of leprosy; and before ever the time of crisis arrived, and, in answer to importunate prayer, recovery was vouchsafed, there was placed before him this parabolic narrative for his encouragement and comfort”.[[181]](#footnote-181) This is unlikely because of the connections that Job has with Jeremiah. Job betrays a perspective on a crisis that is over and past (but recent), and the book is *not* obviously designed for encouragement and comfort.

Thirtle develops connections between the books of Job and Isaiah.[[182]](#footnote-182) However, he does not assert that the book of Job is a parable about Hezekiah and his times; i.e. written to be about Hezekiah. Rather, his view is that the book is “an exhibition of his [Hezekiah’s] case in an illustrative light”.[[183]](#footnote-183) The illustrative light is that of Job, and it is this light that accounts for the “coincidences of expression” between the two books.[[184]](#footnote-184) In other words, Thirtle does not believe that Job is about Hezekiah, it just illustrates his plight; it is about Job. The difference between Thirtle’s essay and our proposal is one of emphasis, and Thirtle only includes a small number of illustrative examples to show the relevance of Job to Hezekiah; what is needed instead is a fuller commentary.

**Conclusion**

A full commentary offering a *radically new* and *reconfigured* reading of Job is required to break the stale and well-worn paths of traditional commentaries. Newsom comments that “a new reading should be judged in part by how well it deals with problems left over by other models, though it will inevitably introduce new ones. It should be rigorously answerable to the text in a nonarbitrary fashion. But if a new reading is to be culturally valuable, it should engage the book by means of emerging reading conventions that are part of the cultural project of the interpreter’s present”.[[185]](#footnote-185) A study on the lines I suggest would offer new answers to the hermeneutical problems that occupy Joban scholarship. These problems are not “left over” by existing models; such models deal with the problems with varying degrees of success. In Newsom’s terms, if Job is “polyphonic”,[[186]](#footnote-186) a new study would offer a neglected sounding derived from an intertextual reading of Job with the Prophets. The advent of computer-aided intertextual tools has made such new readings accessible. The reading can be evaluated by assessing the proffered links.

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

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

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

**Subscriptions**: This is a ‘free’ EJournal to communities and individuals who recognise that it is produced within the Christadelphian community.

**EJournal Book Fund**: A fund exists for small book grants for baptised young people who are unwaged. Details can be found on the EJournal website: www.christadelphian-ejbi.org.

1. See the review of scholarship in R. P. Menzies, *The Development of Early Christian Pneumatology: with special reference to Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. M. M. B. Turner, *Power from on High: the Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. We use the LXX for convenience to show the linkage with the MT. This LXX interpretation of the Hebrew is found in Johannine tradition and applied to Jesus (John 12:41). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For example, Menzies, *Development*, 208-9 n. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. C. K. Barrett, *Acts* (ICC; 2 vols; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994, 1998), 1:114; LS, 546, notes “room” for oi=koj. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:117. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. LS, 546, notes “temple” for oi=koj, and Josephus uses oi=koj for Solomon’s temple (*Ant*. 8.65). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. It should also be noted, given Luke’s subsequent use of Joel 3:1-5, that Joel’s preferred term for the temple is tyb, and Luke’s choice here is to secure the same pattern of use as Joel (1:9, 13f, 16; 4:18). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. J. C. Vanderkam, “The Festival of Weeks and the Story of Pentecost” in *From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New* (ed., C. A. Evans; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 185-205 (198-200). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Leo O’Reilly, *Word and Sign in the Acts of the Apostles* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1987), 18-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Turner, *Power*, 289. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Vanderkam, “Festival”, 203-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Menzies, *Development*, 241. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Barrett, *Acts*, 1:113. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. H. Conzelmann, *Acts* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. G. Hovenden, *Speaking in Tongues*, *The New Testament Evidence in Context* (JPTSup 22; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1969); *Jesus and the Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1975). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. O’Reilly, *Word and Sign*, 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. This typology becomes explicit in Paul — 1 Cor 10:1-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Although Vanderkam supports a Sinai application, he usefully notes that the Midrashic retellings of this story have the Lord offering the Law to the nations, whereas Luke has the disciples offer the Spirit to the Jews, ibid, 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Jewish writings re-tell Sinai and variously note multiple ascents (*1 En* 89:29-32), avoid the language of ascent and descent (*Pseudo-Philo* 11:1-15), or collapse several ascents into one (*Ant*. 3. 75-93). Luke is not re-telling Sinai, and if he is alluding to Sinai, we cannot infer from his allusive language that he thinks of Sinai as a single ascent. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Turner offers an argument based on Acts 2:33-34 that Luke visualises a single composite ascent based on Ps 68:18. His proposal, following other scholars, is that this text “affirms a New Moses fulfilment of Psa 68:18, re-contextualized in the light of Joel and the Pentecost events”, ibid, 287. There are several problems with this proposal: i) Turner himself states that it is “difficult to prove (or to disprove)”, ibid., p. 288, and this is because of the absence of corresponding lexical material; ii) Psalm 68 interposes “led captivity captive” (cf. Deut 21:10), which refers to the exodus from Egypt, between the “ascent” and the giving of gifts. This suggests that Ps 68:18 itemises achievements rather delineates a sequence of ascending on high and receiving gifts for men; iii) the mention of the “rebellious” receiving the gifts as well suggests that the “gifts” (as opposed to “gift”) refer to the bestowal of the Spirit upon the seventy elders (Num 11:24-27) who responded to Moses’ invitation. Eldad and Medad refused the invitation but still received the Spirit, i.e. the rebellious also received the gifts. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. This allusion is suggested by W. Grimm, „Eschatologischer Saul wider eschatologischen David. Eine Deutung von Lc xiii 31ff“ *Nov.T* 15 (1973): 114-133. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. J. A. Fitzmyer, *To Advance the Gospel*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 275, suggests that “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:46) may imply ascension prior to the Bethany ascension, and with the Olivet ascension, this indicates a pattern of multiple ascensions during the forty days prior to Pentecost. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. For discussion of this theme see R. F. O’Toole, “The Parallels between Jesus and Moses”, *BTB* 20 (1990): 22-29, J. Mánek, “The New Exodus in the Books of Luke”, *NovT* 2 (1955): 8-23, D. C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 97-100. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Both outbursts of praise take place in the morning (Acts 2:15; Exod 14:27). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Turner, *Power*, 289. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. R. A. Peterson, “The Hermeneutics of Annihilationism: The Theological Method of Edward Fudge” *Covenant Seminary Review* 21/1 (1995): 13-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. D. Wright, *What has Infant Baptism done to Baptism?* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ibid, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ibid, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Ibid, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Ibid, 12-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Ibid, 11-33, and the section headings. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Ibid, 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Ibid, 43. Emphasis in quotes is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. G. Johnson, “The Prevalence and Theology of Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries, East and West”//gregscouch.homestead.com/files/infantbap.html. This article revisits the Jeremias-Aland debate. Jeremias argued for the baptism of Christian children born to Christian parents in the first two centuries. However, K. Aland, interpreting much the same evidence as Jeremias, contends that adult baptism was normative in the early church, that infant baptism was introduced sometime around 200 CE, but that the practice did not become normative until the end of the fourth century. Wright himself argues that infant baptism was not even normative in the 4-5th centuries. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Ibid, 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Ibid, 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. In contrast with Covenant theology, Dispensational theology emphasises the discontinuity between the Old Testament and the New Testament. According to this view, while the New Testament often draws from principles in the Old Testament, it is nevertheless a complete replacement of the Old Testament, thus rendering the old covenant invalid. The new covenant believer’s starting point is the New Testament, distinct and separate from the Old, and therefore the believer derives all his understanding of the Christian faith from the New Testament alone. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), 337. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. The heart in Biblical idiom is the equivalent of the mind. It is not the seat of the emotions but of the intellect. Thus when Peter speaks of ‘*putting on* a *good conscience toward God’* he speaks about a change of mind and attitude, which is the equivalent of *circumcision of the heart* (Obviously this is something that babies cannot do). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. [Cited Nov 2013] https://bible.org/seriespage/ecclesiology-church [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ibid, 262. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. [Ed AP]: For the typology underlying ‘today’ and how the trees of Golgotha are ‘paradise, see P. Boyd “” *CeJBI* 6/1 (2012): 4-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. When John and James requested to sit on his right and left hand in the kingdom (Matt.20:20-23), Jesus asked them, “Can you be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?” Of, the two “thieves” on his right and left hand, one was literally baptised into his death and therefore received the promise of life eternal. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. The expression, “household”, probably means everyone in the house including children and servants. It does not, however, inform us how many children (if any) and servants (if any) were present, or their ages. If servants were present we must assume that they were voluntarily baptized (and not forced). If children were present they were at the age of discernment. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ibid, 312-320. Murray concludes that the “all the household” formula cannot be insisted to include all its members without exception. The same formula applies to the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 11:14)–whose whole house (including babies?) received the Spirit and spoke in tongues! In the case of the Philippian Jailor (Acts 16:31-33),“they spoke the word to him and to all that were in his house” (woke the babies at midnight to speak to them?). The same formula is used at the conversion of Crispus (Acts 18:8): *“*Crispus the ruler of the synagogue believed in the Lord together with all his household” (the babies believed?). [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Ibid, 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. The kingdom of God “belongs to them” – this does not mean that infants are “born into the kingdom” but as Murray points out (ibid, 320-329) the expression shares the same form as the Beatitudes *“theirs is the kingdom of heaven”* (Matt 5:3, 10). Therefore those who approach Jesus with the same child-like faith and trust are destined to be heirs of the kingdom. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Ibid, 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. [Ed AP]: This statement is unclear. Paul does not teach the entailment in Adam’s guilt which is the idea that underpins Augustinian paedobaptism. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid, 367. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Ibid, 343-344. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. For another discussion on desire see A. Perry & P. Wyns, “Discussion on Desire” *CeJBI* 2/4 (2008): 39-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. R. B. Allen, “עָצַב” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (eds. R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr. & B. K. Waltke; electronic edition; Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 687. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. J. Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.; Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), ref. 6779 #2. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew*, ref. 9592. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. S. T. Foh, “What is the Woman’s Desire?” *WTJ* 37 (1974/75): 376-383 (376). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Ibid, p. 383. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC; Waco, Texas: Word, 1987), 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. I. A. Busenitz, “Woman’s Desire for Man – Genesis 3:16 Reconsidered”, *Grace Theological Journal*, 7/2 (1986): 203-212 (203). [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Busenitz, “Woman’s Desire for Man – Genesis 3:16 Reconsidered”, 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Busenitz, “Woman’s Desire for Man – Genesis 3:16 Reconsidered”, 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. [ED AP]: The word is different to that used in Gen 3:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. J. H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 249-250. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. S. Firestone, “The Dialectic of Sex” cited in in A. Richards, ed., *Opting In – Having a Child Without Losing Yourself* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008), 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. A. Richards, ed., *Opting In – Having a Child Without Losing Yourself*, 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Daphne De Marneffe, *Maternal Desire* (New York: Little, Brown & Company, 2004), 3-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. J. M. Robinson, P. Hoffman & J. S. Kloppenborg *The Critical Edition of Q* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. So-named after Austin Farrar, who wrote an essay “On Dispensing with Q” in *Studies in the Gospels* (ed. D. E. Nineham; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952). [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. See particularly Mark Goodacre, *The Case Against Q* (Sheffield: Continuum, 2002) for a recent statement against Q*.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. In John 6:42 Jesus’ critics say Joseph is known to them, but this is not the same as saying he is alive. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. The case for this Hebrew gospel is laid out in J. R. Edwards, *The Hebrew Gospel and the Development of the Synoptic Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew* (2 vols; Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1975) 2:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. The arguments are discussed in J. A. T. Robinson, *Re-Dating the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1976). [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses,* 129-132 [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Matt 2:11 does not mention Joseph, but if this is his testimony then it is likely he was present. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. R. E. Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament: An Introduction to the Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 6. [All emphasis in quotes is mine.] [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. ‘Around 55 C.E., a historian named Thallos wrote in Greek a three-volume chronicle of the eastern Mediterranean area from the fall of Troy to about 50 C.E. Most of his book, like the vast majority of ancient literature, perished, but not before it was quoted by Sextus Julius Africanus (ca. 160–ca. 240), a Christian writer, in his History of the World (ca. 220). This book likewise was lost, but one of its citations of Thallos was taken up by the Byzantine historian Georgius Syncellus in his Chronicle (ca. 800).’, Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. ‘This fragment of Thallos used by Julius Africanus comes in a section in which Julius deals with the portents during the crucifixion of Jesus. Julius argues that Thallos was “wrong” (ἀλογώς) to argue that this was only a solar eclipse, because at full moon a solar eclipse is impossible, and the Passover always falls at full moon. Julius counters that the eclipse was miraculous, “a darkness induced by God.” Thallos could have mentioned the eclipse with no reference to Jesus. But it is more likely that Julius, who had access to the context of this quotation in Thallos and who (to judge from other fragments) was generally a careful user of his sources, was correct in reading it as a hostile reference to Jesus’ death. The context in Julius shows that he is refuting Thallos’ argument that the darkness is not religiously significant’, Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, 20-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. ‘**The question of identity aside, the value of this fragment is slight**. At best all that it shows is that someone in the first century had learned of the tradition of the darkness at the time of Jesus’ crucifixion and then attempted to explain it in natural terms’, C. A. Evans, “Jesus in Non-Christian Sources” in B. D. Chilton & C. A. Evans, (eds.), *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), 455. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Josephus, *Ant*. 18.63-64. All citations are from the edition, W. Whiston, (ed.), *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987). [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. ‘The clause “if indeed it is right to call him a man” suggests that Jesus was more than human. **This looks like a Christian scribe’s correction of the christological implications of calling Jesus only “a wise man**.**”** ’, Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. ‘The crux of this problem is the curt sentence “He was the Christ” (ὁ Χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν). Leaving aside the issue of how intelligible this statement would have been to Josephus’s Gentile audience, **this sentence looks like a confession of Jesus as Messiah**’, Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, 91. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. ‘The entire sentence, “For on the third day he appeared to them alive again, because the divine prophets had prophesied these and myriad other things about him” **is filled with Christian content**’, Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, 92. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. J. P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew, Rethinking the Historical Jesus: Volume One, The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. R. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah, Volumes 1 and 2: From Gethsemane to the Grave, a Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), 375. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. A 12th century Syriac text by Michael the Syrian, published at the same time, is very similar to the text of Agapius. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. ‘Hence the most that can be claimed is **that Josephus here made some reference to Jesus**, which has been retouched by a Christian hand. **This is the view argued by Meier as by most scholars today**, particularly since S. Pines drew attention to a less obviously Christian version of the ‘Testimonium’ which is quoted in Arabic translation in a tenth-century Christian work’, G. A. Wells, *The Jesus Legend* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1996), 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. ‘**Most scholars today consider the passage authentic**, but think it has been extensively altered to reflect core Christian beliefs (italic type in the quotation above indicates those parts of the *Testimonium* that are usually considered obvious additions by a Christian hand)’, T. R. Yoder Neufeld, *Recovering Jesus: The Witness of the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 2007), 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. ‘**Most scholars are confident that Josephus wrote something like this** because the later mention of the Christ in the James citation from *Antiquities* 20.200 assumes a previous mention of this figure.’, D. L. Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus: A Guide to Sources and Methods* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. ‘Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them **the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James**, and some others, [or, some of his companions]’, Josephus, *Ant*. 20.200. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. ‘**That, indeed, Josephus did say something about** Jesus is indicated, above all, by the passage — **the authenticity of which has been almost universally acknowledged** — about James, who is termed the brother of “the aforementioned Christ.”’, Feldman, “Introduction” in L. H. Feldman & G. Hata, (eds.), *Josephus, Judaism, and Christianity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. ‘**The overwhelming majority of scholars holds that the words “the brother of Jesus called Christ” are authentic, as is the entire passage in which it is found.** The passage fits its context well. As for its content, a Christian interpolator would have used laudatory language to describe James and especially Jesus, calling him “the Lord” or something similar. At least, as in the passage to be considered next, he would have used the term “Christ” in an absolute way. Josephus’s words “called Christ” are neutral and descriptive, intended neither to confess nor deny Jesus as the “Christ.” Thus Josephus distinguishes this Jesus from the many others he mentions who had this common name’, Van Voorst, *Jesus Outside the New Testament*, 83-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Scott W. Hahn, “Kingdom and Church in Luke-Acts” in *Reading Luke* (ed. Joel Green et al; Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2005), 294. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Darrell D. Hannah, “Isaiah within Judaism of the Second Temple” in *Isaiah in the New Testament (*eds. Steve Moyise and Maarten Menken; London: T & T Clark, 2005), 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK, 1996), 603. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Kenneth D. Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts* (London: T&T Clark International, 2005) 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Kenneth D. Litwak comes to a similar conclusion in “A Coat of Many Colours: The Role of the Scriptures of Israel in Luke 2,” in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels: Volume 3: The Gospel of Luke* (ed. Thomas R. Hatina; London; New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Litwak, *Echoes of Scripture*, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. M. Perry, “Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates its Meanings [With an Analysis of Faulkner's “A Rose for Emily”)”, *Poetics Today* 1 (1979) 35, accessed May 8, 2013, URL http://www.jstor.org/stable/1772040. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Perry, “Literary Dynamics,” 53-57. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Perry, “Literary Dynamics,” 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Perry, “Literary Dynamics,” 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. [Ed AP]: Whether Isa 40:3 is about Yahweh’s ‘return’ rather than his ‘coming’ depends on the interpretative framework a scholar brings to Isaiah. Conventional scholarship has seen Isa 40:1-11 in terms of a return of the exiles from Babylon but for a different pre-exilic approach see A. Perry, “The Alternative Approach to Isaiah 40-66” *The Testimony* (Special Issue, 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. P. Wyns “Psalm 2” *The Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation* 1/1(2007): 27-30 (27). [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. D. Fifield, *The Praises of Israel Volume 1* (Birmingham:CMPA, 2008), 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Fifield, *The Praises of Israel Volume 1*, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Fifield, *The Praises of Israel Volume 1*, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. [ED AP]: It is hoped to run a ‘Discussion’ Supplement in the EJournal on ‘The Prophetic Basis of Cessationism’ in a future issue. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. See R. Alter, *Genesis* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. For a recent review of Joban scholarship, see B. Waltke and D. Diewert, “Wisdom Literature” in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches* (eds. D. W. Baker and B. T. Arnold; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 318-327. This review is restricted and a broader review can be found in R. J. Williams, “Current Trends in the Study of the Book of Job” in *Studies in the Book of Job* (ed., W. E. Aufrecht; Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred University Press, 1985), 1-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. D. J. A. Clines, *Job 1-20* (WBC; Dallas, Texas: Word Publishers, 1989), lvii. Second century dating is much too late, because of the development of the story of Job in the first century document *Testament of Job*. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. For an early seventh century dating, see J. E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1988), 17-20. F. I. Anderson, *Job* (Tyndale; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976), 61-64, favours a formative date around 750. G. H. A. von Ewald favours a mid to early seventh century date, *Book of Job* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1882), 76, 81. However, see also M. H. Pope, *Job: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1965), xxxii-xl., who dates Job to the early period of the Exile. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. On the social-scientific context for the writing of the book see D. J. A. Clines, “Why is there a Book of Job?” in *The Book of Job* (ed. W. A. M. Beuken; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994), 1-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. G. N. Knoppers, “The Historical Study of the Monarchy: Developments and Detours” in Baker and Arnold, eds., *The Face of Old Testament Studies*, 207-235 (230), makes the point that scholars have neglected the impact of the Assyrian period on the writings of the Old Testament. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Other motifs shared with Jeremiah are not unique to Job and Jeremiah, but their use in Jeremiah seems to have an emphasis that is matched by Job, e.g. the motif of “pleading” (Job 13:19, Jer 2:9, 29, 12:1, 51:34, 36). [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. For example, N. C. Habel, *The Book of Job* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 41; A. B. Davidson, *The Book of Job* (ed., H. C. O. Lanchester; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), lxxiii. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Legal enactments in Deuteronomy are reflected in Job: Pledges—Job 22:6, 24:3, 9, Deut 24:6; Landmarks—Job 24:2, Deut 19:14, 27:17; prohibition of sun and moon worship—Job 31:26, Job 4:19; adultery—Job 31:9, Deut 22:22. Davidson, lxiv, offers the following comparisons: Job 2:7/Deut 28:35, Job 5:14/Deut 28:29, Job 5:18/Deut 32:39, Job 7:4/Deut 28:67, Job 8:8, 20:4/Deut 4:32. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. The LXX references a “Danel” which scholars think is a reference to a Ugaritic figure, an honest judge who cared for widows and orphans; for a review of scholarship on the relationship of Ugaritic texts and Job see, for example, P. C. Craigie, “Job and Ugaritic Studies” in Aufrecht, *Studies in the Book of Job*, 28-35. If the reference is to Daniel as per the MT, the question arises as to why these three names are chosen. Our proposal would be that Noah and Job are chosen because they are righteous men saved in a time of “flood” (the Assyrian Crisis is described as a “flood”, see below); and Daniel is chosen because he is the candidate for the “righteous man” at the time of the Babylonian “flood”, i.e. invasion. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. See R. Gordis, *The Book of God and Man: A Study of Job* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), ch. 6. While Job is a patriarchal figure and pre-dates the existence of Israel, Ezekiel’s veneration of Job allows the suggestion that he understood the parable of the book, i.e. that it was about an “Israelite” righteous king. Ezekiel’s praise of Daniel (MT) suggests that he viewed Daniel as a potential “Joseph” among the Exiles. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. These names of the friends have Edomite associations (see Chapter Two). [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. For an explanation of this notion see J. L. Crenshaw, *Introduction to Old Testament Wisdom* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. This is the view of E. H. Dhorme, *Job* (trans. Harold Knight; London: Nelson, 1967)*,* clxix. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. For conservative and critical overviews, see R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1970) or O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956). [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Scholars have traditionally identified hypothetical sources in the Pentateuch (entitled “J”, “E”, “D” and “P”), but regardless of when they position their origin as (more or less complete) writings later than our date for Job, and regardless of any hypothetical development that they propose for those writings, such theories do not preclude the existence of some of the constituent traditions of the Pentateuch prior to the 7c.. For an overview of the history of scholarship, see E. Nicholson, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), and for a shorter review G. J. Wenham, “Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm” in Baker and Arnold, eds., *The Face of Old Testament Studies*, 116-144. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Scholars typically locate traditions in Kings and associated historical books early and deriving from Northern Israel, and Chronicles as late and deriving from Judah. However, scholarship is in a state of flux, see Knoppers’ essay, “The Historical Study of the Monarchy: Developments and Detours” in Baker and Arnold, eds., *The Face of Old Testament Studies*, 207-235. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. J. Day, *Psalms* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 47-48, 88-106. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Many scholars, however, prefer to place these books at a later date. The MT grouping of the “Twelve” is evidenced in *Sirach* 49:10, *Contra Apion* I. 8.3, the Murabba’at Minor Prophets scroll, (2)MurXII, as well as 4QXIIc; the Greek Minor Prophets scroll, 8HebXIIgr also reflects the MT order. Only 4QXIIa evidences a different order in placing Jonah at the end of the scroll, and dating would appear to be a factor in the arrangement, see *B. Bath* 14b. Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2004), 80-88, convincingly argues that the LXX order is a late Christian revision. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. While we favour a late eighth/early seventh century date, J. L. Crenshaw offers a full discussion of the arguments that are used to support the more common early post-exilic date in *Joel* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1995), 21-29, but concludes, “…to some extent such endeavours to establish a historical context for a biblical book constitute exercises in futility. Much of the argument moves in the realm of probability, often resting on one hypothesis after another about the development of the language and religion of the Bible…”, 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Scholars typically give Obadiah a setting after the fall of Jerusalem, for example, see R. Mason, *Micah, Nahum, Obadiah* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 94. A minority of opinion has positioned the oracle earlier, and in the seventh/eighth century. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Mason, *Micah, Nahum,* Obadiah, 68 dates Nahum to 612, but notes other scholars who date it in the mid-seventh century. Dating depends on historical contextualization and it is not impossible that Nahum prophesied over a long period of time. The oracle of Nahum 3 presupposes the taking of Thebes in between 670-661, but this does not date the oracles of Nahum 1-2, some of which have echoes of the prophetic language of Isaiah, and may describe the crisis of 701 [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. A convenient list of oracles often linked to the Assyrian Crisis is given in B. S. Childs, *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (London: SCM Press, 1967), ch. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. This can be seen in how the LXX and the Qumran Targum to Job handle the Hebrew text. The LXX version is about 100 verses shorter, suggesting that the translator did not understand many verses and omitted them; further, the translator frequently paraphrases the Hebrew text for no apparent reason. The Aramaic Targum offers competing alternative translations for some of the words in the Hebrew, suggesting difficulty with the original language. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. For an introductory discussion of Hebrew metrics see S. E. Gillingham, *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), ch. 3, R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990), chs. 1-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. For a presentation of one strophic pattern to the book, see E. C. Webster, “Strophic Patterns in Job 3-28” and E. C. Webster, “Strophic Patterns in Job 29-42” in *The Poetical Books* (ed. D. J. A. Clines; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 232-259, 260-273. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. See the discussions in Hartley, *Job*, 33-35, and Anderson, *Job*, 37-41. With regard to syllable counting, various factors need to be taken into account: elision of vowels or diphthongs as the language evolved and manuscripts were brought up-to-date, development of segolate verbs, incorrect vowel pointing, and introduction of prosaic elements. These factors make the exercise precarious. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Pope, *Job*, liii. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Hartley, *Job*, 35, see also Dhorme, *Job*, clxxx-clxxxix. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Closely allied to this layer of scholarship is the rhetorical analysis of the text. This analysis seeks to uncover the structural patterns in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. Gordis, *The Book of God*, 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. For a discussion see Gordis, *The Book of God*, ch. 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. For example, see the overview of opinion in Eissfeldt, *Introduction*, 460-462. Eissfeldt usefully notes that textual amendment by scholars is motivated on metrical grounds as well as their perceived constraints upon what can and cannot be said by the participants in the dialogue. For a discussion see Pope, *Job*, xxiii-xxx. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. However, it is worth noting that the so-called disturbed third cycle is present in its present form in the Targum fragments discovered at Qumran, indicating that the current composition is as old as the 2c. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Clines, “The Arguments of Job’s Three Friends*”*, in *Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature* (eds., D. J. A. Clines, D. M. Gunn, and A. Hauser; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), 199-214 (208). Clines only canvasses one proposal about the disturbance of the text and notes that there are other suggestions. A convenient list of 24 different reconstructions is given in N. H. Snaith, *The Book of Job* (London: SCM Press, 1968), and Appendix 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Andersen, *Job*, 214-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. This two-cycle approach to Job is supported by D. Wolfers, *Deep Things out of Darkness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 225-255 and his “The Speech-Cycles in the Book of Job” *VT* 43 (1993): 385-402. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 254-255. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. For example, see the introduction to Job in B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (London: SCM Press, 1979), 542. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Dhorme, *Job*, cv. One argument is that the presence of Aramaic words is proportionately greater in Elihu’s speeches suggesting greater influence of that language. Aramaic was rapidly becoming the *lingua franca* throughout the eighth century, and so the different quantity of Aramaisms in Elihu’s speeches could suggest a later addition by the original author; and it is also likely the reason for the Aramaisms is to be found in the distinctive nature of Elihu’s argument. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. Gordis, *The Book of God*, 106-109. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. The clearest advocate of this position is that of Habel, *Job*, 25-29. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. Scholars disagree on the plausibility of amendments to the text. For a sceptical review see Gordis, *The Book of God*, 17-18. Others who defend the unity of the book and a single “author” include the heavyweight commentary by Dhorme, *Job*, lxxxv, and the popular commentary by Anderson, *Job*, 41-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. C. A. Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), ch. 1. Newsom says that, “the multigeneric nature of the book of Job does not lend itself readily to… [a]focus on unity”, 8. However, our counter-argument is that the elements in the prologue/epilogue direct the reader to a different level of meaning. It is not that the book of Job is multigeneric; rather it is multi-levelled in its meaning. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. It is beyond the scope of our study to discuss genre from a theoretical viewpoint; for a discussion see for example, Pope, *Job*, xxx-xxxi, Habel, *Job*, 42-46, Hartley, Job, 37-50, G. W. Parsons, “The Structure and Purpose of the Book of Job” in R. B. Zuck, ed., *Sitting with Job* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 17-34, C. Westermann, “The Literary Genre of the Book of Job” in Zuck, *Sitting with Job*, 51-64. Job illustrates aspects of lament, the legal lawsuit, and dialogic treatise. Pope asserts that it is “…*sui generis* and no single term or combination of terms is adequate to describe it”, xxxi. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. This definition of genre pertains to the *content* of the book rather than literary *form*. The themes in Job include a consideration of suffering, the relevance of innocence and guilt, the doctrine of divine retribution, the justice of God, as well as the nature of man and the creative power of God. Scholars discuss these themes and variously favour one or other in defining the genre of Job. Our proposal sets a military/political context for these themes. The book of Job is not an abstract discussion of these themes and therefore a discussion of the “wisdom” of God’s general dealings with mankind. The military/political echoes with the Prophets prevent a “Wisdom” classification of Job. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. This is the current consensus. The more complex the history the less valuable is the notion of an “original author”; see the discussion of Dhorme, *Job*, lxxii-lxxxv. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. For a discussion of this type of correction see Dhorme, *Job*, cxcii-cxcvi. Dhorme’s remark is that such errors “are not really frequent”, cxcvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Pope, *Job*, xlvii. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Pope, *Job*, l. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. J. H. Eaton, *Job* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2004), 39-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. While this word has a conventional meaning today, and this is how I use it, there is something to be noted about this word. The narrator refers to Job’s speeches (Job 27:1, 29:1) as a “parable”, and this word is used in Deut 28:37, “And thou shalt become an astonishment, a parable, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee” (1 Kgs 9:7, 2 Chron 7:20, Pss 44:15, Jer 24:9). This word very often has *political* import, and therefore it identifies Job’s speeches and those of the others in the dialogue as political in nature (Job 13:12). [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. For example, amongst commentaries, Pope says that this allegorical suggestion is “intriguing”, but “there is…not the slightest suggestion of interest in the fate of the nation Israel betrayed anywhere in the book”, *Job*, xxx; Carol Newsom is certain that the book “contains no references to historical events or persons”, *The Book of Job* (NIB IV; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 325; Anderson states that an “historical stage” is not used, *Job*, 254; Eaton asserts, *Job*, 65, that the book does not reflect the fate of Israel in the exile, and Habel, *Job*, 40, 41, states that Job “avoids direct allusions to the later historical and prophetic traditions of Israel”, and “there is no evidence that he [Job] represents Israel”. Amongst introductory works, J. J. Collins asserts that “the traditional wisdom teaching found in Proverbs, Job and Qoheleth is notable for its lack of attention to the history of Israel”, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), p. 97, and N. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 579, offers the view that Job does not reflect the experience of the people in exile. However, Timothy L. Johnson, in “Job as Proto-Apocalypse: A Fresh proposal for Job’s Governing Genre”, paper presented to the SBL Conference 2004, 18, (Online in 2008 at: http://www.sbl-site.org/PDF/Johnson\_Job.pdf), has argued for recognition of apocalyptic elements in Job; such elements would carry a political implication in relation to Israel. Further, Davidson, *Job*, xxix, has argued for a “national purpose” for the book. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. For example, see M. V. Fox, “Job the Pious” *ZAW* 117.3 (2005): 351-366, M. Tsevat, “The Meaning of the Book of Job”, *HUCA* 37 (1966):73-106. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. For a recent discussion of the theodicy in Job see E. W. Nicholson, “The Limits of Theodicy as a Theme of the Book of Job” in, *Wisdom in Ancient Israel* (eds., J. Day, R. P. Gordon & H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 71-82. Nicholson correctly notes, 72, that Job accepts both good and evil from the Lord (Job 1:21, 2:9), which obviates the need for a theodicy. Nevertheless, he believes that the book raises the issue of theodicy for readers. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. This is an important qualification; Job is not being tested for disinterested righteousness in respect of any reward after death; Job could endure his suffering for the prospect of a reward beyond death, although he makes no such connection; as it is, his test concerns only whether he will serve God for nothing in this life. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. The task of enumerating themes in Job is not part of our study. Scholars emphasize some themes as more critical to the purpose of the book. These include “piety and the proper response to suffering”, “reasons for innocent suffering”, “the justice of God in bringing about suffering”, “protest against God”, “the nature of God”, and “man’s relationship to God”. All of these themes are in Job and, for example, different reasons for suffering are given (suffering as an education, suffering as a punishment, suffering as part of a natural order). However, this does not make the point of the book one that has to do with the issue of theodicy. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. In order to unlock the meaning of the book it would have been necessary to interpret the references of key terms such as “the wicked one”, “the wicked ones”, “the oppressor”, “the hypocrite”, “the light of the wicked ones”; understand the military and political scope of such figures as “the flood”, “the river”, “the channel”, “the storm” and “the whirlwind”; and perceive that Job was a suitable personification of Hezekiah. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. For a recent bibliography, see P. Enns, *Poetry & Wisdom* (IBR Bibliographies 3; Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 14-15. Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 116, cites one precursor: B. D. Napier, *Song of the Vineyard* (New York: Harper, 1962), but this is not a commentary on Job. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. We exclude this categorization of Job and reserve it for those interpretations of Job which see in Job a Christian allegory, for example, Gregory the Great’s *Moralia in Iob*. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 14-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. For a discussion of the “restoration” aspects of the covenant, see J. G. McConville, “Restoration in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic Literature” in *Restoration: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Perspective*s (ed. J. M. Scott; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 11-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. As a matter of method we have not sought to explicitly rebut Wolfers (or other scholars); we have cited Wolfers when he is in support of our reading. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Waltke and Diewert, “Wisdom Literature”, 327. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. J. Barton-Payne cites this work in his essay, “Eighth Century Israelitish Background of Isaiah 40-66” *WTJ* 29 (1966-1967): 179-190 (179); *WTJ* 30 (1968): 50-58; 185-203. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*, 192. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*, 189-203. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*, 200. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*, 195. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. Newsom, *Moral Imagination*, 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. Newsom, *Moral Imagination*, ch. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)