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* Defend the biblical principles summarised in the common Christadelphian statement of faith.
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**Editorial**

Academic research in biblical studies takes place largely in isolation from the church, and this division is the subject of comment by scholars. This division exists for obvious reasons: firstly, church members are holding down jobs and raising families and they do not have the time for biblical study; secondly, the professional clergy are largely engaged in pastoral and administrative work; thirdly, church seminaries, colleges, and secular universities have only small numbers who are engaged in full-time research; teachers in such institutions are only able to devote a proportion of their time to research. There are then three degrees of separation between the researchers and the church. The question is: how does this gap get bridged?

**The Plot of Acts**

**Andrew Perry**

A common suggestion by commentators is that Acts 1:8 announces the plot of Acts. B. Gaventa offers a variation on this suggestion, “The story that follows conforms so closely to this statement that it serves as something like a table of contents for the entire book of Acts”.[[1]](#footnote-1) It is observed that Acts begins in Jerusalem (Acts 2), then the church is scattered through Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1), finally, after the conversion of Cornelius, the gospel is taken to the ends of the earth and the book finishes in Rome.

This suggestion bears further scrutiny and it is argued here that it is a superficial analysis. Acts does not illustrate a linear plot which moves from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria and then to Rome. The plot development that moves the gospel out of Jerusalem affects Judea and Samaria simultaneously; further, while the gospel is taken to the Gentiles after Cornelius, this development is presented as an unexpected development driven by the holy Spirit (Acts 11:17). Finally, while the gospel is taken to the Jews and Gentiles in Paul’s missionary journeys, Jerusalem and Judea remains the centre of the church and where journeys are ended. The story of Acts circles around Jerusalem instead of moving in a straight line away from Jerusalem to Rome.

It is implausible to suggest that Luke advertised a “plot” in Acts 1:8; this literary concept does not match the structure of Acts; hence, Gaventa’s notion of a “table of contents” is more appropriate. A further consideration relevant to this question is the “end” of Acts; Acts does not have an end for its plot. Insofar as Paul’s trial at Rome dominates the closing chapters, the story is driven by the plotting device in Acts 25:11-12, Paul’s appeal to Caesar. The resolution of this device is unfulfilled. For this reason, it is implausible to read “ends of the earth” in Acts 1:8 as a geographical term of reference for “Rome” as if the plot of Acts was to end in Rome. The “ending” that is signalled in the story of Acts is not narrated by Luke. This lack of an advertised ending has been the subject of speculation: Luke died or was prevented from finishing his account; Paul died or was executed and Luke did not want to narrate such an ending; Paul was acquitted and Luke did not want to narrate *that* ending, *and so on*. To these suggestions, we can add the further proposal that Acts ends with Paul’s stay in Rome because Luke has included the end of his story in the eschatological predictions of Luke 17/21. The end of the story is the return of the Son of Man to Jerusalem. The plot of Luke-Acts has this ending rather than the outcome of any trial in Rome. Paul’s journey to Rome is a sub-plot of the witness to the ends of the earth, a sub-plot with the same status as his journey to Cyprus or Macedonia. Luke does not end Acts with the outcome of Paul’s trial because he does not end his advertised plot with the return of the Son of Man.

W. S. Kurz[[2]](#footnote-2) observes, Luke is able to continue his story beyond Acts 28 and show how it is linked to eschatological material in the Jewish Scriptures through a description of an eschaton (e.g. Lk 17, 21).[[3]](#footnote-3) The presence of this material in Luke-Acts affects the reader’s perception of the whole story and what is being done in the life of John the Baptist, Jesus and the apostles.

Thus there is “wrath” to come (Lk 3:7, 21:23, cf. 2 Chron 29:8-10); there is condemnation of that “generation” (Lk 21:32, Acts 2:40, cf. Deut 32:5); there is a sequence of events in relation to Jerusalem and the land that are to happen before the return of the Son of Man (Lk 21:27, Acts 7:56, cf. Dan 7:13). With the prospect of this impending crisis, to which the return of Jesus is linked, the missionary story is one of escape and deliverance (Lk 3:7, 21:21, Acts 2:40).

Luke does not narrate the fulfilment of these predictions but they nevertheless condition the implied reader’s perspective on his story. Jesus and the apostles are not preaching an *actual* restoration of Israel inaugurated in their actions (Acts 1:6), but offering a prospective restoration in which those who respond to the gospel can participate (Lk 1:74). This is the classic story-pattern of the Jewish prophets: they prophesy impending doom and offer a prospective salvation conditional upon repentance (Acts 3:19-21).

The plot-line of Acts, when this is considered independently of the gospel, supports this replication of the role of the Jewish prophet. The apostles are commissioned to preach throughout the land and to the “end of the earth” (e[wj evsca,tou th/j gh/j, Acts 1:8). This expression is one of Luke’s Septuagintal phrases of choice; it occurs, for example, in Isa 49:6, which is a key text for Luke (Lk 2:32, Acts 13:47, 26:23, 28:28). This text gives a Jewish perspective to the perceptual geography of the phrase “end of the earth”. This is an idiom for “outside the land” where the Jews have been scattered. The LXX interpretation of the MT of Isa 49:6, explicitly connects the phrase to the Diaspora — kai. th.n diaspora.n tou/ Israhl (“and the Diaspora of Israel”).

The use of evsca,tou th/j gh/j (“ends of the earth”) elsewhere in Isaiah confirms this idiomatic sense. Thus, Isa 48:20 associates the phrase with the Babylonian captives proclaiming a message of liberation to the “end of the earth”. The point of the proclamation by Yahweh in Isa 45:22 is that the “end of the earth” should look unto Zion for salvation, and the same point is found in Isa 62:11. The sense of the phrase in Acts therefore is not a cipher for Rome,[[4]](#footnote-4) or Spain, or a distant *location*, but rather an idiom for all countries outside the land where the Jews have been dispersed. Luke’s story shows proclamation throughout the “end of the earth”.[[5]](#footnote-5)

This proposal changes the rhetoric of Paul’s assertion in Acts 13:47,

“For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.” Acts 13:47

The usual interpretation of this assertion is that “the ends of the earth” are “the Gentiles” and that Paul is making a contrast between those who are of Israel and those who are “of the ends of the earth”; the gospel is being taken to the Gentiles. However, this gives an ethnic cast to the expression unsupported by the LXX. The logic of the citation is just that the apostles have been appointed to be a light for the Gentiles in addition to the Jews who live alongside Gentiles in the Diaspora.

**Contextualizing Prophetic Oracles (4)**

**Assyrian Deportation Policies**

**Andrew Perry**

Sargon II had pursued the policy of deporting and exchanging populations. The record of his capture of Samaria states,

“At the begi[nning of my royal rule, I…the town of the Sama]arians [I besieged, conquered…I led away prisoners…[The town I] re[built] better than before and [settled] therein people from countries which [I] myself [had con[quered].”[[6]](#footnote-6)

Sargon II brought Babylonians to settle in Samaria (2 Kgs 17:24) in 721 from his first campaign against Merodach-Baladan. This campaign was not successful in that Merodach-Baladan remained on the throne of Babylon until 710,[[7]](#footnote-7) but an inscription of Sargon II (propaganda) commemorating the campaign records the relocation of Babylonians to Syria:

“(Merodach-Baladan), whom since he, not according to the will of the gods, the rule over Babel [had seized for himself, I overcame in war and smote]….inhabitants together with their property I transported…and settled them [in the land] of Hatti.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

Given the biblical record in 2 Kings, this relocation to Hatti (Syria) could well have included Northern Israel. Such a migration would offer an explanation of the influence of Babylonian idolatry in Judah.

Oracles in Isaiah about returning exiles from Babylon have been taken to refer to the Babylonian captivities leading up to the year 587. However, this inference is not certain because captivity in Babylon is a strong possibility in 701.

Sennacherib deported (according to his annals) substantial numbers of Judeans during 701.[[9]](#footnote-9) The policy of the Assyrians was to deport captives and resettle them in parts of the empire where population was depleted through war. Between 704 and 702, Sennacherib conducted a successful first campaign in Chaldea and conquered 89 large cities and 820 small cities.[[10]](#footnote-10) His second campaign, in 702, took place east of the Tigris in the mountains of the Kassites and Yasubigallians. His record of this campaign states,

“People of the lands which my hand had seized, I settled therein, and placed them under the governor of Arrapha”[[11]](#footnote-11)

This policy refers to his previous (first) campaign, so that the people resettled in the country of the Kassites and Yasubigallians were the Chaldeans. This suggests a pattern of sequential resettlement whereby those displaced in a first campaign are resettled in territories conquered in a second campaign, and those taken in a third campaign likewise settled in areas depopulated in the first campaign.

Sennacherib’s third campaign, in 701, against the Syro-Judean land bridge, yielded 200,000 captives, and these would most likely have been deported in their turn to the region of Babylon. Micah prophesied at this time:

“Writhe and labor to give birth, Daughter of Zion, Like a woman in childbirth; For now (**ht[**) you will go out of the city, Dwell in the field, And go to Babylon. There you will be rescued; There the Lord will redeem you From the hand of your enemies.” Mic 4:10 (NASB)

This prophecy predicts a departure from Jerusalem, and it is part of a prediction that covers the siege of Jerusalem:

“Now (**ht[**) also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.” Mic 4:11 (NASB)

Sennacherib’s Annals do record the exit of *some* deportees from Jerusalem:

“As for Hezekiah, the terrifying splendour of my majesty overcame him, and the Urbi and his mercenary troops which he had brought in to strengthen Jerusalem, his royal city, deserted him. In addition to the 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver, gems…as well as his daughters, his harem, his male and female musicians…he had bring after me to Nineveh, my royal city”[[12]](#footnote-12)

This most likely occurred during Sennacherib’s siege of Lachish when tribute (gold and silver) was paid to secure a treaty (2 Kgs 18:14-16). However, this small deportation of members of the royal court does not “fulfil” Micah’s prophecy, which is instead spoken to the Jerusalem population as a whole. Micah’s prophecy was not fulfilled for Jerusalem; but it does express an *expectation* on the part of Micah that the population would go to Babylon. Such an expectation is entirely fitting in the light of Assyrian policies of deportation and Sennacherib’s recent campaign in southern Mesopotamia. Assyrian records do not note where the Judean captives were deported, but it is likely that some went to Babylon to repopulate the region after the depopulation of Sennacherib’s first campaign.

**Predicting the Babylonian Captivity?**

**Andrew Perry**

Isa 47:6 is usually taken to refer to the sixth century Babylonian captivity. Critical scholars take it as an utterance of Second Isaiah living in Babylon; conservative scholars take it as a long range prediction of such captivity. How can this question of the time of utterance be determined?

“I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.” Isa 47:6

This text may refer to a deportation of Judeans to Babylon in 701 by the Assyrians for several reasons:

1) There is enough time for the deportation from the cities of Judah to have taken place and for the exiles to have settled down under the servitude of indigenous Babylonians.

2) God’s heritage was Jacob/Israel (2 Kgs 21:14), and it is not said that Babylon has polluted God’s inheritance. In 701 Assyria had polluted God’s sanctuary (the land). The description that God’s inheritance was polluted implies a presence in the land of a conqueror (e.g. Jer 16:18). Instead, Judean captives were delivered into the hand of Babylon by the Assyrians.

3) The utterance envisions a *failure of the Babylonians to return their captives*. This is indicated by the motif of “mercy” (~xr) which is used elsewhere to indicate the merciful act of sending captives home:

“For if ye turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children *shall find* compassion (**~xr**) before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land…” 2 Chron 30:9

The point being made in Isa 47:6 is that Babylon took the captives and instead of returning them, they indentured them; Isaiah is not describing the harsh treatment of slaves during seventy years of captivity; it is the *choice* that the Babylonians made to receive the people that the prophet emphasizes.

4) It is next said that Babylon did not “lay these” to her heart; the KJV interprets the demonstrative as “these things” but it could equally be “these people”—the ones upon which Babylon had had no compassion in her heart (cf. Isa 49:12, 21).

5) Babylon had also failed to remember the “latter end of it” (the Hebrew is singular). The latter end of God’s wrath with his people was the defeat of Assyria and their restoration in the land. Therefore, Babylon ought to have treated his people with kindness and not indentured them. Because they had done this and because Babylon had boasted that *she* would not be a widow and loose her children, of which she accused Jerusalem, then she would be destroyed. This happened in 689 in Sennacherib’s last campaign; it did not happen by the hand of Cyrus.

In terms of their history, Babylon did fall suddenly in 689 to Sennacherib’s army. Unlike Cyrus’ capture of Babylon which was peaceful,[[13]](#footnote-13) Sennacherib’s final capture of the city was devastating:

“The city and its houses, foundation and walls, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire. The wall and outer-wall, temples and gods, temple towers of brick and earth, as many as there were, I razed and dumped them into the Arahtu canal.”[[14]](#footnote-14)

Moreover, the gods of Babylon were removed at this time, and the statue of Marduk was taken to Nineveh.

“The gods dwelling therein,—the hands of my people took them, and they smashed them. Their property and goods they seized.”[[15]](#footnote-15)

In terms of Sennacherib’s early campaign in the south (704-702), Babylon had not been destroyed; the temples of the gods had not been affected. After the Chaldeans rebelled in 694, and killed Sennacherib’s son, Assyria turned its attention to Babylon; in 689, Sennacherib dealt a decisive blow to the city. The terms of Isaiah’s prophecy were realized: fire, widowhood, and loss of children.[[16]](#footnote-16)

These points establish that it is an eighth century Babylonian captivity that is described. It is not a prediction of the sixth century captivity, although Isaiah of Jerusalem had made such a predication (Isaiah 39).

Is there additional evidence in the oracle as a whole for this reading? The catalyst for uttering such anti-Babylonian oracles in the days of Hezekiah would have been the visit of the Babylonian envoys, which can be dated to 700-699 at the latest.[[17]](#footnote-17) This visit implies that the language of diplomacy might have been used by Isaiah of Jerusalem in his opposition to any Babylonian alliance; Isaiah 47 illustrates such language.

*The Language of Diplomacy*

1) The prophet “invites” Babylon to “come down and sit” (v. 1). This implies a *meeting* between Yahweh and Babylon. Hence, Yahweh asserts, “I will not meet thee ([gp[[18]](#footnote-18)) a man” (v. 3). The invitation to meet is conveyed in a mocking tone. Babylon is invited to sit on the ground because there was “no throne”, and this is a jibe indicating that Merodach-Baladan had no throne at the time of the meeting. The invitation to “come” (dry) implies that Babylon is to join Yahweh in the dust; it is not addressed to Babylon at a distance: it is not the command to “sit down” in the dust. As such, this expression does not naturally describe the fall of Babylon to Cyrus, which did not involve a “coming” and “sitting” in the dust. Babylon lost none of her regal status in Cyrus’ capture.

The removal of Merodach-Baladan from the throne of Babylon was *partly* achieved in the campaign of 702, when Sennacherib replaced him with Bêl-ibni.[[19]](#footnote-19) However, Sennacherib clearly felt it necessary to wage a further campaign in the south during 700 in order to establish Assyrian order. In this campaign, he placed Assur-nâdin-shum, his eldest son, on the throne. The language of his record states, “I placed on his royal throne Assur-nâdin-shum, my oldest son, offspring of my loins. I put him in charge of the wide land of Sumer and Akkad”.[[20]](#footnote-20) Within the context of the record, it is Merodach-Baladan who figures as Sennacherib’s opponent. The expression “his royal throne” therefore betrays Sennacherib’s political perspective—that the throne of Babylon was still that of Merodach-Baladan. This fourth campaign (following so soon after the first campaign) settled the issue of the monarchy for Sennacherib—his son was to reign in peace for about six years; this reign began in 700 at the time of the visit of the Babylonian envoys.

2) The place for discussion is the “dust” and “earth”. This motif of “dust” is used of a people suffering under the adverse conditions of war and invasion. In Isaiah the term is used of the effects of the Assyrian invasion upon the people (Isa 25:12, 26:5, 29:4, 52:2).[[21]](#footnote-21) As such it is an appropriate description of the land in the aftermath of a war. The word pair “dust-earth” occurs elsewhere only in Job 39:14, Isa 25:12, and Lam 2:10. In these texts there is, variously, the destruction of a city’s fabric (Isa 25:12), the humbling of Jerusalem’s rulers (Lam 2:10), and the ostrich’s nesting pattern.[[22]](#footnote-22) The prophet therefore is inviting Babylon to come and sit down in what was called “dust” and “earth” but which had been delivered—Jerusalem and the land.

3) Babylon had a reputation for being “tender and delicate”, and this description picks up on the quality of her speech. For example, Prov 25:15 uses “tender” ($r) in the aphorism, “By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft ($r) tongue breaketh the bone” (cf. Job 40:27, Prov 15:1). In Isaiah’s oracle, it is a quality describing Babylon’s diplomatic overtures to Jerusalem. There appears to be an allusion to the “tender and delicate woman” of Deut 28:56, who is an evil woman, quite able to eat her children in a time of siege.

4) The claim of Babylon was to be the “queen of the kingdoms”, but Isaiah derides her and presents her as a female mill worker grinding flour (v. 2). This image is then combined with an image of a woman wading through rivers: “Remove your veil, strip off the skirt, Uncover the leg, cross the rivers” (v. 2, RSV). This combination is distinctive but may well reflect the fact that Merodach-Baladan fled from his hiding place in Babylonia to the marshes by boat when Sennacherib rolled down in 700 to re-establish Assyrian authority.[[23]](#footnote-23)

5) Yahweh asserts that instead of meeting with Babylon *he* will take vengeance (v. 3). This could well be the vengeance promised for the aftermath of the Assyrian Crisis (Isa 34:8, 35:4, 59:17, 61:2, 63:4). As such, it is an assertion of independence, that Yahweh needed no alliance with Babylon. Yahweh had redeemed Judah from the captivity imposed by Assyria (v. 4).

6) Babylon is referred to as the “queen of kingdoms” and this propaganda could well reflect Babylon’s role as the leading city among the tribes of southern Mesopotamia. Its position was recognized by the Assyrian kings in their adoption of the dual title “king of Assyria and Babylon”. Isaiah’s assertion that Babylon would “no more” be called the “queen of the kingdoms” fits the context of Merodach-Baladan’s final defeat in 700. Instead, Babylon was to be silent and dumb and then go in (b) “darkness” (v. 5). This “darkness” is used by Isaiah as a figure of their lack of understanding about God and his intentions for his people (vv. 10, 12-13).[[24]](#footnote-24)

The above points configure the language of vv. 1-5 as an address to the Babylonian envoys: they are “Babylon”. The oracle is not an address to the ruling elite of Babylon at the end of the exile. These words mock the envoys because the basis of their appeal to Judah had been taken away by Sennacherib in his renewed campaign of 700.

**The Scapegoat**

**Paul Wyns**

*Etymology*

The etymology of the name *‘Ăzâ’zêl,* cited four times in Leviticus 16 has long been a source of puzzlement. The lots were cast for two goats, one was *“for Yahweh”*, and the other *“for ‘Ăzâ’zêl”* (the scapegoat) – in itself this parallelism would suggest that *‘Ăzâ’zêl* is a name. D. P. Wright notes four proposals:[[25]](#footnote-25)

1) a precipice or cliff face

2) the name of a demon

3) an abstract noun for “destruction”

4) a descriptive noun meaning “scapegoat”

The reasons for these proposals are as follows:

1) The scapegoat was released *alive* in the wilderness; however, by the first century the custom was changed and the scapegoat was thrown from a cliff (to prevent it returning?). According to Talmudic interpretation,[[26]](#footnote-26) the term *‘Ăzâ’zêl* designated a rugged mountain or precipice in the wilderness from which the goat was thrown down.

2) The Book of Enoch brings *‘Ăzâ’zêl* into connection with the Biblical story of the fall of the angels; he becomes the leader of the rebellious angels.[[27]](#footnote-27) First century Jews thought of *‘Ăzâ’zêl* as denoting a demonic, satanic power in opposition to God. Alternatively, the medieval commentator, Ibn Ezra, proposes that *‘Ăzâ’zêl* belongs to the class of “*se’irim*,” goat-like demons[[28]](#footnote-28) that haunt the desert, to which the Israelites were wont to offer sacrifice.

3) This suggestion is proposed in BDB and derived from the ideas of “strength” (*‘az*) and “removal” *‘âzal* (to go away, remove).

4) This interpretation is derived from the similarity to the Hebrew *‘êz* (goat) and *‘âzal* (to go away, remove) – the scapegoat of the Septuagint.

In addition to these suggestions, more recently, **Jacqueline C.R. De Roo proposes on the grounds of** textual, semantic, and contextual evidence that *‘Ăzâ’zêl* is a metathesized form of *zzl* and interprets it as a reference to ‘the powerful wrath of God’.[[29]](#footnote-29)

*Proposal*

*‘Ăzâ’zêl* was originally a cognate derived from the roots *‘âzar* and *êl* – meaning: *God helps*. The difference between *‘Ăzâ’zêl* and these roots (one letter) is accounted for – either by a copyist error, or more likely, a deliberate manipulation. The hypothetical form *azarel* lraz[ (God helps) is virtually identical to *azazel* lzaz[.

**Scapegoat Typology**

**Paul Wyns**

*Yom Kippûr Typology in the Old Testament*

Scapegoat typology permeates the Old Testament; Cain is the primary example of being cast away from the divine presence: *“A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth”* (Gen 4:12). However, his banishment did not mean exclusion from divine care, nor did it negate the possibility of restoration. The Law, and particularly the Day of Atonement, made no provision for capital sins, such as murder or adultery; King David committed both these sins, and like Cain was sent away from the divine presence; *“And David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up”* (2 Sam.15:30). He sent the Ark of the Covenant back to the sanctuary, fully realising the extent of his estrangement: *“And the king said unto Zadok, carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew both it, and his habitation”* (2 Sam.15:25). This was a terrible punishment for David, and is reflected in his penitentiary Psalms: *“Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me”* (Ps.51:11).

Although he was punished, David was forgiven and restored to favour (forgiveness and restoration occurred *outside* the law, for the law could not save David, only condemn him). Earlier in his reign David himself had exercised forgiveness, when one of his sons had murdered the other; his military captain, Joab, perpetrated a ruse (employing an old woman) to remind David of God’s concern for restoration: *“Neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him”* (2 Sam.14:14). [[30]](#footnote-30)

The individual examples of Cain and David are applied to the whole nation - also sent away from the divine presence into exile; *“And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face”* (Ezek. 20:35). The release of the sin-bearing scapegoat into the wilderness becomes a metaphor for the nation, alienated and exiled because of their sin; *“My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations”* (Hos 9:17).

*Yom Kippûr Typology in the New Testament*

Tertullian interprets the two goats of the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:5-28) typologically to argue that two advents of Christ were prophesied in that text.[[31]](#footnote-31) Tertullian’s interpretation fails to understand the theology of *Yom Kippûr* - it focuses on the sin-bearing quality of the scapegoat and neglects the banishment (exile) from the divine presence. The scapegoat is not a *substitute* for the nation – it *represents* the nation (or individual) who is alienated and exiled from the divine presence because of sin. Jesus was never alienated from God because of *personal sin;* neither can his death be considered an exile as the consequence of personal sin. Jesus was not the scapegoat, he was the *“goat for Yahweh*,*”* destined for sacrifice not for release. Second Temple Judaism had introduced the innovation (contrary to the atonement ritual) of killing the scapegoat by casting it from a cliff: *“And they rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way”* (Luke 4:29, 30). They sought to identify Christ with the goat *“for ‘Ăzâ’zêl”*, but God would not allow it for three reasons:

* It was not yet his time.
* The scapegoat was never killed.
* He was not the goat for *‘Ăzâ’zêl* , he was the *goat for Yahweh.*

The Fourth Gospel combines the typology of Atonement and Passover with the release of Barabbas (John 18:39-40; the scapegoat) and the death of Jesus (the goat for Yahweh). Barabbas means the “son of the father”; he was incarcerated because of rebellion and released by Pilate - the other “son of the Father” was innocent and is sacrificed. Clearly, both men typified different principles – this excludes the scapegoat (goat for *‘Ăzâ’zêl* ) from typifying Christ.

*The Commentary of Jesus on Yom Kippûr*

The words of the Lord Jesus Christ on the atonement ritual are paramount to our understanding, and are an incisive commentary on Second Temple Judaism. His commentary is to be found in Luke 11:21-26 in the form of a prophetic parable (parallel accounts Mk.3:9-30; Mtt.12:22-37). The context is the accusation that he is casting out evil spirits by the power of Beelzebub – the prince of demons. This was an *unforgivable* accusation for they were blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Jesus highlights the Day of Atonement themes concerning *forgiveness of sins* and *repentance.* This is reinforced in Matthew (12:38-42, parallel Luke 11: 29-32) by the saying about the men of Nineveh and the queen of the South, who would rise up and condemn that generation.

Custom dictated that the book of Jonah[[32]](#footnote-32) was read in full on the Day of Atonement – and it still is to this day. The theme of the book of Jonah was seen as suitable to the ritual, for it recounts the repentance of Nineveh at the miraculous appearance of Jonah, after being dead three days in the belly of the whale. Temple sacrifice was still practiced in the time of Jesus, but after the destruction of the temple the book of Jonah would occupy an even more prominent position in the atonement liturgy. To the Jews it came to signify that sacrifice was not necessary for forgiveness, merely repentance. Bearing the context in mind, the passage reads as follows:

“When a *strong* (man) armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But *when a stronger* than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. He that is not with me is against me: he that gathereth not with me scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through *dry places,* seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And we he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”

The background of the parable is the Day of Atonement ritual. The unclean spirit symbolises *“all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins”* (Lev.16: 21), which are sent into the wilderness (dry places) seeking rest In the original Greek the word “man” is absent (denoted by italics in the AV): *“When a strong fully armed guardeth his palace his goods are in peace.”* The scapegoat *‘Ăzâ’zêl* carried the meaning of *strong* after the exile (although this was probably a corruption of the original meaning). The house into which the unclean spirit returns was the temple; note that the unclean spirit refers to it as *my house.*[[33]](#footnote-33)

When he returned to his house he found it *“swept and garnished.”*  This is a reference to the *feast of unleavened bread.* The Jews were commanded to remove the leaven from their houses (Ex.12:15) in preparation for the Passover. Jesus Christ had “swept” the temple and cleansed it just before the Passover (John 2:13-16). The final condition of the “strong” is *complete madness* (seven unclean spirits). [[34]](#footnote-34) This is obviously a reference to *Legion*an acted parable that bears many similarities with the “strong” in this chapter. In the parallel account in Marks gospel Christ says the following: “Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation” (Mk.3:28, 29).

We note that this passage is about forgiveness (Day of Atonement) and that it contains an oblique reference to Enoch.[[35]](#footnote-35) The book of Enoch influenced Jewish theology on the Day of Atonement. The only occasion where the book of Enoch is quoted is Jude 14: “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgement upon all, and to convict all works of ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

In the book of Enoch, *‘Ăzâ’zêl* was understood as the embodiment of evil – synonymous with the devil, Satan, or a fallen angel. The Day of Atonement ritual entailed sending the goat to *‘Ăzâ’zêl* (strong one) in the wilderness and sacrificing the other to Yahweh.

The parable of the wandering spirit can be paraphrased as follows:

ACCUSERS: You cast out devils by Beelzebub (…by *‘Ăzâ’zêl*, or by Satan etc).

JESUS: Tells them a parable about the Day of Atonement: “The strong one” has been sent away by one who is stronger. Those who make such accusations will not be forgiven (no Day of Atonement for them) in fact even their own book of Enoch will condemn them for their hard speeches against him – the Ninevites who repented at Jonah’s preaching (which book they read on atonement) will also condemn them.

*Conclusion*

The scapegoat represents a sinful state of alienation and exile from God – as such it represents the nation. The condition is, however, not irredeemable.

**The Day of Atonement**

**Paul Wyns**

*Introduction*

The Day of Atonement is a complex subject. The problem addressed in this article is: If the Day of Atonement is a post-exilic feast, does it have an origin rooted in the history of Israel - as does, for example, the Passover?

*The Day of Atonement in Genesis*

Analysis using historico-critical methodologies has led scholars to the conclusion that the Day of Atonement is essentially a post-exilic feast,[[36]](#footnote-36) for the Fast is only mentioned in Leviticus. Nehemiah makes no mention of it when he read the Law to the people, and the earliest mention of public fasting is in the post-exilic book of Zechariah (7:35, 8:19). Ezekiel on the other hand enjoined two atonement days—the first day of the first month and the first of the seventh (Ezek 45:18-20), the ritual being different to that described in Leviticus.

While, it is true that the Fast is not explicitly mentioned in the Pentateuch (except for Leviticus) it forms an intrinsic thematic backdrop to one of the earliest Biblical narratives; that of Cain and Abel. Despite the consignment of Genesis 4 to the earlier pre-exilic Yahwist sources[[37]](#footnote-37) it contains many cultic overtones – the offering of sacrifices, the priestly function of the two brothers,[[38]](#footnote-38) and the banishment of Cain from the ‘presence’ of Yahweh.[[39]](#footnote-39) J. Moster[[40]](#footnote-40) recognizes the importance of the Cain Narrative as a Biblical ‘introductory story’, as the pattern is repeated many times in the Bible in the lives of individuals and the nation. However, most scholars neglect to make the connection with Day of Atonement typology, where one goat is slain at the sanctuary (Abel) and the other is sent away (Cain). Furthermore, the offering of the *wrong sacrifice* (as Cain did) is integral to the genesis of the atonement ritual.

*The Day of Atonement in Exodus*

Although the Fast is not specifically mentioned in Exodus, it is alluded to in Exodus 30: 8-10. A cursory examination shows that the first half of the chapter concerns both the construction of the altar of incense and atoning for it, and the latter half concerns the payment of atonement money as a ransom for the male population whenever a census was taken. The Day of Atonement was not initially introduced with the other feasts but the mention of atonement in connection with the altar of incense reflects the essential historical core that later developed into *Yom Kippûr*: “And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it (altar of incense), a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. Ye shall offer *no strange incense thereon*, nor burnt offering nor meal offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. And Aaron shall make atonement upon the horns of it once in the year: with the blood of the sin offering of atonement: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord.” The expression *“once in the year”* demonstrates that we are dealing with ceremonial elements usually associated with the Day of Atonement; however, the full rite is not introduced in Exodus. The stress is on atoning for the incense altar, whereas in Leviticus it is on entering the inner sanctuary to atone for the people’s sins.[[41]](#footnote-41)

*Leviticus*

Although the Feast of Passover was instituted *before* the giving of the law, it was nevertheless incorporated into the Siniatic covenant. The Passover traces its historical origins to the deliverance from Egypt and although (like Tabernacles) it may have older associations with harvest festivals it was the defining historical reality of the Egyptian deliverance that gave the Feast true meaning - the offering of the ‘first-fruits’ became a rite that was rich, not just with agricultural significance, but with theological symbolism – a thanksgiving festival for saving the ‘first-born.’

Although the Day of Atonement is anticipated in the Cain narrative and in the account of the construction of the incense altar in Exodus – it is not explicitly enumerated among the Feasts until Leviticus. The reason for this omission is that the Fast was instituted *after* the giving of the Sinai covenant, for the historical core that gave rise to Fast was the contamination of the altar of incense [[42]](#footnote-42) by the sons of Aaron.

In Leviticus 10, we are informed how Nadab and Abihu are struck down when they offered strange fire on the altar of incense. It is this incident that gave rise to the necessity to cleanse the sanctuary. Our suspicion is confirmed by the opening words of the Atonement chapter,

“And the Lord spake unto Moses *after the death of the two sons of Aaron,* *when they offered before the Lord and died*; and the Lord spake unto Moses, speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place with the vail, before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat.” Lev 16: 1, 2

The passage implies that the sons of Aaron penetrated into the “Most Holy” after offering “strange fire.” Schneir suggests that the death of Aaron’s sons was a tragic accident - they were engulfed in flames from the unexpected flash fire of their new and untried mixture of flammable incense.[[43]](#footnote-43) However ingenious this is extremely unlikely, as the prohibition on drinking alcohol (Lev 10:9) during the performance of priestly duties demonstrates that it was a deliberate act while in a state of intoxication.[[44]](#footnote-44) The similarities with Cain deliberately bringing the ‘wrong’ sacrifice are obvious.[[45]](#footnote-45)

The smoke from the altar of incense represented prayer rising up to God (Pss 141:2), it is this prayer that allows man into the presence of God, but only if the incense is kindled by fire taken from the brazen altar in the outer court. The brazen (sacrificial) altar in the outer court had *already been atoned for* (Exod 29: 36, 37) and was therefore holy. To the ancient Israelites it was clear that man could only enter into the divine presence through prayer that was sanctified by an atoning sacrifice. Moreover, it was God, not man, who determined the manner in which he was to be approached.

The Aaronic priests acted as mediators for, and representatives of, the people; therefore their actions defiled both the sanctuary, and the people. Aaron and the priests were forbidden to mourn for Nadad and Abihu, instead; *“Let your brethren the whole house of Israel bewail the burning which the Lord hath kindled”* (Lev 10:6).

*Conclusion*

While standard critical scholarship assigns development of the Day of Atonement to the post-exilic period, we would argue that the *form* of the “Cain and Abel” narrative and the Altar of Incense ritual in Exodus both constitute evidence of the existence of a Day of Atonement earlier than the post-exilic period.

The Day of Atonement was instituted in the first instance in order to cleanse the sanctuary, the people and the priesthood from the sins of Nadab and Abihu. The “affliction of the soul” that forms such an integral part of the ceremony found it’s origins in the people’s mourning for the deaths of the two priests. The sin involved the whole nation, not just the two perpetrators – for the people no longer had access to the contaminated sanctuary. It demonstrated both the limited efficacy of the Aaronic priesthood and the necessity for the repentance from *national sin.* It was instituted as a constant reminder of these principles – looking forward to a time when a greater priest would make atonement *‘once and for all’* for the sins of the people.

**Footnotes and Parentheses**

**Andrew Perry**

Hebrew writings were not laid out with the apparatus of footnotes and parentheses. Marginal corrections and marks above and below the line were used to comment upon the accuracy of the text. This does not mean that the phenomenon of a footnote is absent from the text; it is just that the modern representation of a footnote is obviously absent. This observation can also be made for parentheses. Identifying footnotes or parentheses is no different in principle from identifying excurses, digressions, or other in-line comments.

**Footnotes**

The criteria we propose for identifying a footnote are,

* The text features at the end of an oracle.
* The text reproduces one or more lexical items from inside the oracle.
* The text expands on the information inside the oracle that is associated with the replicated lexical items.
* The text does not naturally close the oracle.

These criteria do not all have to be fulfilled, and are only offered as a guide.

For example, the text of Isa 44:28 is a footnote to what the Lord will “perform” in respect of Jerusalem. This is indicated by several markers:

* v. 28 is at the end of the oracle.
* v. 28 reproduces lexical material from v. 26,
* The Lord asserts that he “performs” (~lv) the counsel of his messengers. These messengers are giving a message about Jerusalem, the cities of Judah, and the waste places; v. 28 picks up this idea of what the Lord will “perform” and asserts that Cyrus will “perform” (~lv) the pleasure of the Lord.
* The messengers have a message for Jerusalem (~Ølvwryl rma); v. 28 places a message for Jerusalem into the mouth of Cyrus (~Ølvwryl rma).
* v. 28 expands on the point being made in v. 26; it repeats the spirit of the message, but varies its prediction.

Since Cyrus is not a messenger, his charge is positioned as the *fulfillment* of the counsel of the messengers. This characteristic makes v. 28 a prediction of how vv. 25-26 will be fulfilled (performed). As such it could well be a footnote interpreting vv. 25-26. The fulfillment is typological in that *Jerusalem* will now be “built” whereas the oracle had asserted that Jerusalem will only be “inhabited”.

Sensitivity to the presence of footnotes at the end of oracles is important. Scholars attuned to repetition in oracles will often “delete” the repetition as secondary and later, the work of a clumsy editor.[[46]](#footnote-46) Footnotes require some repetition to function, and expand on an oracle precisely as an “afterthought” or “parallel thought”. These characteristics have been misconstrued by scholars as indicating the work of later editors.

**Parentheses**

Parentheses are an in-line comment that an author places into a text. They may explain a word or a point; they will relate to the body of the text to some degree, but they are signalled as a parallel thought to the flow of the text. They could be as small as a “which being interpreted”, or as a large as a digression or excursus.

The thought in Isa 45:1 is Davidic. The oracle addresses the Lord’s anointed (v. 1). The Hebrew for word “anointed” is fairly common (37x) although it is rare in the prophets (3x). Its principal usage is in relation to the Davidic king (e.g. Lam 4:20, Hab 3:13), and the classic example of its use is found in Psalm 2:

“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, *saying*…” Psa 2:2 (KJV)

The exact Hebrew expression in Isa 45:1, “to his anointed” (wxyvml), only occurs in two other texts (2 Sam 22:51, Psa 18:51) and in relation to David. It is likely therefore that Isa 45:1 quotes these earlier texts. However, the use of “to his anointed” in respect of Cyrus is precisely *not* Davidic, and this suggests that “to Cyrus” is a variation of “to David”.[[47]](#footnote-47)

The same explanatory structure is present in the original text of 2 Sam 22:51 and Psa 18:51. The expression vrwkl wxyvml (“to his anointed, to Cyrus”) is a citation of the structure of dwdl wxyvml (“to his anointed, to David”). But the citation arrests the attention of the reader because it was not completed with a “to David” but a “to Cyrus” and this makes it a metalepsis.

The point of the citation is precisely the variation of “to Cyrus” for “to David”, and this is *ironic* because Cyrus is *not* David and yet is given a Davidic role. Cyrus is *standing in* for David in respect of restoring his original achievements, which were to capture Jerusalem and establish her as the city for Yahweh to dwell, and acquire the materials for laying the foundation of the temple. Cyrus is standing in for “David” because the Davidic king in Jerusalem (Hezekiah) has failed to fulfil his Davidic role because of his courtship of the Babylonian envoys (Isaiah 39).

**Intertextuality Criteria**

**Andrew Perry**

Bible scholars and readers constantly make intertextual connections. In discussion, such connections are subject to disagreement. The question arises therefore as to how a connection can be assessed as valid. Richard Hays has proposed seven criteria for assessing the validity of intertextual connections.[[48]](#footnote-48)

Hay’s Criteria of Intertextuality

## 1. Availability

Hays’ first criterion for assessing an allusion is whether the source text was available to the author and audience. Thus, a typology based on an author’s use of Jewish scriptural material has a firmer footing than one that is reliant on hypothetical reconstructions of the broader literary co-text of the first century.

## 2. Lexical volume

Hay’s second criterion concerns the volume of corresponding lexical and syntactic material. This criterion is obviously satisfied in respect of a quotation such as that of Joel in Acts 2. However, many allusions use less material. For example, in Luke 24:49, “from on high” and “upon us” quotes Isa 32:15. The common lexical material in the LXX and NT comprises four words with and two different grammatical forms. Nevertheless, an allusion appears certain for several reasons.

Hays notes that the volume of an echo is not only determined by lexical correspondence; the distinctiveness or prominence of the precursor text is also a factor. Thus, given the rarity of “Spirit of God” texts in prophetic corpus, their distinctiveness accentuates any possible allusion from a later writer, especially when the candidate allusion is set within a “Spirit of God” context; accordingly, the allusion to Isa 32:15 seems secure.

According to Hays, an allusion is also strengthened if it is rhetorically prominent in the successor text, i.e. the plausibility of co-incidence is reduced. The programmatic nature of the Baptist’s prediction, Jesus’ promises to the Twelve, as well as Pentecost, ensures that any allusion is meant to have a critical role in interpretation.

### *Semantic Volume*

Hays does not offer a criterion relating to the volume of *typical* correspondences between precursor and successor texts. These may pertain to description of a location, the position of an episode in a plot, the details of event, the presence of corresponding characters or groups, *and so on*. These correspondences do not depend on lexical or syntactic links.

## 3. Recurrence

Hay’s third criterion is optionally applicable in that it tests whether an allusion is from a text that an author uses on more than one occasion. This criterion can be broadened to include a count of how often an author quarries a book or parts of a book for allusive material, which might show a predisposition towards making the allusion under test. For example, there is evidence to show that Luke re-used Malachi, Joel, and Isaiah in more than one place. Thus, while the quotation of Joel in Acts 2 is evident, the presence of this citation makes other allusions to Joel more likely. The use of “sun, moon, and stars” in Luke21:25 is more likely to be related to Joel 2:10 and 3:15, because of Luke’s use of Joel in Acts 2.

## 4. Thematic Coherence

Hay’s fourth criterion is that the allusion should fit with the line of argument being developed by the author. Luke’s use of Joel serves his purpose in offering a deliverance context and a broadly-based bestowal of the Spirit. Isaiah 32 likewise offers a deliverance context for the bestowal of the Spirit. These allusions therefore fit with his end-time expectations for Jerusalem and the “generation” contemporary with Jesus.

### *Coherence among the selected precursor texts*

A variation of Hays’ “coherence” criterion would be to consider whether Luke’s precursor texts are a coherent grouping. This criterion is satisfied if the texts share common motifs and themes. If this is the case, it would be reasonable for Luke to incorporate allusions drawing on Isaiah 32 and Joel 2 when describing the bestowal of the Spirit.

## 5. Historical Plausibility

Hay’s fifth criterion is an assessment of whether a proposed allusion is historically plausible for the original audience. Such an audience for NT writers would have been comprised of pre-critical readers. Accordingly, much modern historical criticism of the NT use of the OT would have been foreign to them and is unlikely to be able to uncover what an allusion meant to a first century reader.

## 6. History of Interpretation

Hays defines his sixth criterion as a question: Have other readers, both critical and pre-critical, heard the same echoes?[[49]](#footnote-49) The problem with this criterion is that different reading communities offer different histories of interpretation. Historical critics offer a different history to that of a pre-critical fundamentalist community.

## 7. Satisfaction

Hays’ final, seventh, criterion “is difficult to articulate precisely without falling into the affective fallacy, but it is finally the most important”.[[50]](#footnote-50) The “satisfaction” of an allusion or a cluster of allusions is a function of the reading background that a commentator brings to the text and it suffers from the same problem as the “history of interpretation”.

**Conclusion**

Hays’ criteria have been widely discussed and applied in Old and New Testament Studies; other criteria could be offered. Strictly speaking, they are not “criteria” of evaluation; our presentation has been a loose statement. They are however useful tools for assessing allusions.

**Reviews**

*Redating the New Testament*

*Reviewed by Paul Wyns*

Is the New Testament truly an “eye-witness” account of events that occurred at the time of Christ and during the life of Paul, or is it a later composition—an account recorded by a second generation of Christians and influenced by Church tradition and theology? This is the question that J.A.T. Robinson sets out to answer in his book, *Redating the New Testament.*[[51]](#footnote-51)The consensus among modern scholarship is that the New Testament Scriptures, particularly the Gospels and Pastoral epistles are of late origins. It is usually claimed that Mark was the first gospel written around A.D. 70. Matthew’s composition is dated in the 80’s, followed by Luke in the late 80’s. The Gospel of John, which is regarded as an even later Christological development is dated in the 90’s followed by the Apocalypse, dated in 96. Late authorship fits neatly within a higher critical worldview that regards Scripture as a natural evolution of Church tradition. One assumes that the evidence for a late date is based on sound evidence rooted in recent discoveries in History, Archeology, Patristics, Papyrology and other related fields – but the problem is that none of these fields can determine conclusively either a late (80-150) or early date (40-70) of composition. Are we then left in the uncomfortable position of relying on personal bias (usually in the case of modern scholarship this is a bias against the supernatural)? Not so, for Scripture itself provides the internal evidence that allows us to accord it an early date.

*The significance of 70*

As Dr. John Ankerberg and Dr. John Weldon observe; “The fact that both conservatives (F.F. Bruce, John Wenham) and liberals (Bishop John A.T. Robinson) have penned defences of early dating for the New Testament is a witness to the strength of the data for an early date.” [[52]](#footnote-52) J.A.T. Robinson himself comments; “One of the oddest facts about the New Testament is that what on any showing would appear to be the single most datable and climactic event of the period - the fall of Jerusalem in ad 70, and with it the collapse of institutional Judaism based on the temple - is never once mentioned as a past fact.It is, of course, predicted; and these predictions are, in some cases at least, assumed to be written (or written up) after the event.  But the silence is nevertheless as significant as the silence for Sherlock Holmes of the dog that did not bark.” (JAT 1993, 14) [[53]](#footnote-53)

John Robinson’s survey of New Testament scholarship is extensive and the argument presented varies - from overwhelming in the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews through powerful (the Gospels, Acts and the Epistles of John) to merely strong (the Pastoral Epistles, the non-Johannine Catholic Epistles and Revelation). His argument is cumulative — whereas each line of reasoning is possibly unpersuasive by itself, but taken collectively his arguments converge and render the conclusion very probable. The book of Acts is a prime example of a book that seems to have no knowledge of anything that occurs after (roughly) 65 AD. The omission of the martyrdoms of Peter Paul and James (which occurred ca. 64-66 AD) and the neglect to mention the cataclysmic destruction of the temple and dispersion of the Jews makes a the case for an early date for Acts very forceful. This in turn effects the dating of Luke, which most scholars accept should be dated before Acts; in turn this has a knock on effect on the dating of Mark, as scholars believe Luke depends on Mark’s Gospel as a source.

Robinson also reconsiders the dates of several sub apostolic works: The Clementine Epistles, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Didache, the accepted dates for which range from the 90’s to the latter half of the Second Century. In his penultimate chapter, “A Post-Apostolic Postscript,” he dates the “Epistle of Clement” to the early months of 70 AD. Robinson’s important work on dating the New Testament has continued in his book, *The Priority of John*. [[54]](#footnote-54)

*Conclusion*

J.A.T. Robinson challenges the presuppositions that underlie much of what is currently written about First Century Christianity. His analysis is thorough and thought provoking – this is not merely an argument about dating but about the historicity of the New Testament. Most Christadelphians would concur with his conclusions – the exception being his early (pre 70) date of the Apocalypse based on the denial that there is any evidence that there was a “Persecution of Domitian” in the 90s (since just about the only “evidence” for this is Clement itself).

I recommend this book to fellow Christadelphians; internal Scriptural evidence on dating is always to be preferred above uncorroborated external evidence - and if it challenges our own preconceptions on the Apocalypse as much as it challenges the bias of modern scholarship on dating the rest of the New Testament – that can only be a good thing.

**Marginal Notes**

**Isaiah 52:11 (AP)**

“Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.”

This text is most likely to be interpreted in a commentary to be about the return of the exiles from Babylon bearing the temple vessels. Such an interpretation is part and parcel of the Babylonian reading of much of Isaiah 40-55 common in older commentaries. In the last 10-15 years, this consensus has been changing. H. M. Barstad is one scholar who has offered new interpretation of texts that fits a non-Babylonian context.

In the case of this text, Barstad[[55]](#footnote-55) gives the following reading: Isaiah 52:11 is a call to the armies of the Lord to go out from Jerusalem, “clean” and without foreign mercenaries, bearing the armaments of war. The proof of this reading is as follows:

1) Isaiah 52 is about Zion (v. 1), not Babylon. There is a need to put on “strength” (v. 1). She will no more be trodden down and “captive”, as she was in the time of Sennacherib’s siege.

2) “Awake, Awake” (v. 1), the double imperative, is echoed in “Depart, Depart” (v. 11) – the addressee is the same.

3) The “vessels of the Lord” (hwhy ylk) is not a reference to the “vessels of the house of the Lord” (hwhy tyb ylk, Jer 27:16, 28:3, 6). Isa 52:11 is the only Biblical text to have “vessels” without “house” and this is a key difference. Instead of “vessels” the Hebrew word’s semantic domain includes “weapons”. In fact, the verb in Isa 52:11 “bearing” (afn) when used with “vessels/weapons” denotes the bearing of arms. Only in 2 Sam 18:5 are the same Hebrew forms used and this text refers to the bearing of Joab’s armour. Elsewhere the Hebrew words for “bearing” and “vessels/weapons” in different forms are used for the bearing of arms (1 Sam 14:6, 7, 12, 31:4, 5, 2 Sam 23:37, 2 Kgs 23:4, 1 Chron 10:4-5). In Pss 7:14, ylk is used for the weapons of Yahweh.

Thus, Isa 52:11 is part of that theme in Isaiah 40-55 which exhorts the people to take up arms and go out from Jerusalem and retake Judah and bring deliverance to the cities of Judah.

END

1. B. R. Gaventa, *Acts* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. W. S. Kurz, “Luke-Acts and Historiography in the Greek Bible”, *SBLSP* 19 (1980): 283-300 (284). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. We have excluded here Luke’s genealogy as a link with the Jewish story as this does not function as a plot device. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Thus, instead of seeing the plot of Acts as “movement to Rome”, this should be treated as a sub-plot of the Diasporan plot implied by Acts 1:8 — a sub-plot initiated by Acts 19:21, dei/ me kai. ~Rw,mhn ivdei/n. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Perceptual Geography is a branch of Human Geography that studies the perceptions of communities about space. For example, it studies the use of spatial expressions about the compass such as what is the “south”, where does the “south” begin, and where does it end. It cannot be simply assumed that “end of the earth” in the mouth of a Galilean character signalled “Rome” as opposed to Dan or Beersheba, Babylon or Spain. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. ANET, 284. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. J. Oates, *Babylon*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. E. Schrader, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament* (trans. Owen C. Whitehouse; 2 vols; London: Williams & Norgate, 1885-1888), 1:268. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. ANET, 288. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Annals of Sennacherib*, (trans. D. D. Luckenbill; Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *Annals*, 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *Annals*, 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. ANET 315-316. J. Oates, *Babylon*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1986), 131-135. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *Annals of Sennacherib*, (trans. D. D. Luckenbill; Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 56, 83-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *Annals*, 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Oates, *Babylon*, 118-120. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Most scholars date this visit to 702, but this is by no means certain and it can be argued that Hezekiah recovered from his sickness in 701 before the siege of Jerusalem was lifted, and it is this miraculous recovery on both counts that prompts the visit of the envoys. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The semantic range of this word includes “meet, intercede”—Isa 53:12, 59:16, 64:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Annals*, 54, 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. *Annals*, 35, 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See also Isa 2:10, 19, Mic 7:17. This figurative sense of “being reduced to dust” explains the assertion “dust shall be the serpent’s meat” (Isa 65:25): the Assyrian Leviathan Serpent (Isa 27:1) would be reduced to eating “dust” as that invader had reduced God’s people to dwelling in dust. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The Ostrich is a figure for the elite of Judah in Job’s parable of the Assyrian Crisis; see D. Wolfers, *Deep Things out of Darkness*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 221. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. *Annals*, 35. See Oates, *Babylon*, 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. “Darkness” is used as a figure for lack of understanding in texts such as Isa 5:20, 9:1, 29:18, 58:10, 59:9, and 60:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *ABD* 1:536-537. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. *b.Yoma* 67*b*, cf. *Sifra* Lev 16:10, *Ps.-J* Lev 16:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. *1 Enoch* 8:1, 9:6, 10:4-6, 14:5, 38:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The first appearance of *śā’ îr*occurs in Lev. 17:7, which states that sacrifices for the “goat idols” (NIV) or “goat demons” (NASB) are strictly forbidden. The mention of “goat demons” or devils [literally “hairy ones”] directly after the atonement chapter suggests that the unclean scapegoat became an object of worship. Similarly, the golden calf incident was probably a falsification of the calf-faced cherubim; “And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the [statues of] calves which he had made” (2 Chron 11:15). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Jacqueline C. R. De Roo, ***Was the Goat for Azazel Destined for the Wrath of God?* (**Biblica**81 (2000): 233-242 n.p. [cited 25 April 2007], Online:** http://www.bsw.org/project/biblica/bibl81/Ani06m.html [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. The background to this quote is a ruse perpetrated by Joab. It involved an old woman seeking justice from David. She told him the story of her two sons, one whom had killed the other and who was now himself in danger of being killed by the rest of the family (the avenger of blood), leaving her childless. The object of the ruse was to make David forgive his son Absalom for murdering his half-brother Amnon, David’s other son, and to restore Absalom from exile. There is no doubt that Joab was playing on David’s guilt, as he was aware of David’s sin with Bathsheba and employed this to manipulate him for his own nefarious ends. The two sons in the old woman’s story are based on *Cain and Abel*: the phrase *“in the field”* demonstrates this, as it is unique to the Samaritan Pentateuch’s narrative of Gen.4:8 (Cain murdered Abel in the field), although it has dropped out of the Masoretic text. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Geoffrey Dunn compares Tertullian’s rhetorical use of Leviticus 16 to those of Barnabas and Justin’s Dialogus. In Barnabas the goats are not two advents, but rather Jesus’ suffering both as sacrificial victim and as the rejected one, whereas Justin’s Dialogus explicitly links the goats to Jesus’ two advents. In Justin and Tertullian, the second goat “was a typological reference to the first coming of Jesus . . . while the first goat referred to the second coming of Jesus”; both authors used this interpretation against the Jewish contention that “Jesus could not be the Messiah because he did not come victoriously. Geoffrey Dunn, “Two Goats, Two Advents, and Tertullian’s *Adversus Iudaeos*”, *Augustinianum* 39, (1999): 245-264 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. The Fourth Gospel employs the thematic of atonement by alluding to Jonah alongside elements associated with atonement theology including the deaths of Nadab and Abihu and the murderer Cain.

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    | --- | --- |
    | John 7:51-8:44 | *Yom Kippûr* |
    | Out of Galilee no prophet (Jhn.7:52). | The prophet Jonah came from Galilee and was read every *Yom* *Kippûr*. |
    | The adulteress forgiven (Jhn.8:3-11). | Expiation of sins on *Yom* *Kippûr* . |
    | I do always those things that are pleasing to him [Yah] (Jhn.8:29). | Nadabiah- willing for Yah. |
    | We have one Father even God (Jhn.8:41). | Abiyahu –Yah is my Father. |
    | Your Father a murderer from the beginning (Jhn.8:44). | Cain –sent away from the sanctuary because he murdered his brother. |

    [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Jesus said, “*Your house* (Mtt.23:38) is left desolate” – it was no longer his Fathers house. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. The exorcism in Acts 19:13-20 is interesting in this context. Note the term “vagabond” Jews in v.13. This is a reference to Cain condemned to the land of Nod (wandering) – he would be *a vagabond in the earth* (Gen.4:14). Note also the reference to the “seven sons” of Sceva the chief priest. They attempted to exorcise the “strong man” but could not. The “seven sons” in this incident are obviously a reference to the high priest **1.** Annas and his dynasty. (**2.** Eleazar son of Annas, **3.** Caiaphas son-in-law of Annas, **4.** Jonathan son of Annas, **5.** Theophilius son of Annas, **6.** Matthias son of Annas, **7.** Annas son of Annas) [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Although the Greek spelling of the name Enoch is different, it is phonetically similar, a fact that would not be lost to the listening audience. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. According to E.O. James, *Seasonal Feasts and Festivals* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1963), 119, *Yom Kippur* is of a later origin, although he believes that the symbolism was borrowed from earlier sources; he speculates as follows: “In the book of Ezekiel the sanctuary is said to have been cleansed twice a year--on the first day of the first month and on the first day of the seventh month --but no mention is made of the Day of Atonement as described in the Levitical narrative. Therefore, the post-exilic observance would seem to have been an addition to the autumnal festival after the return from Babylon when the Jewish calendrical sequence was established, the symbolism of which was borrowed from earlier sources”. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Standard critical scholarship has divided the sources of the Pentateuch into four main sources dubbed “J”, “D”, “E” and “P”. Whereas the Yahwist (J) source is considered to be earliest and largely anthropomorphic, the (P) Priestly source is thought to be concerned with stressing cultic elements – however, literary criticism, particular the presence of chiasm, indicate that consignment to separate sources is an over simplification. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Bruce K. Waltke comments in “Cain and his Offering”*,* *WTJ* 48 (1986): 363-372, “The unity of the Pentateuch also enables us to discover, interpret, and validate clues regarding the brothers as priests. Leviticus 8-9, 26 teaches that the priest’s character qualified him or disqualified him from the altar. An encroacher, be he Israelite or non-Israelite, must be put to death. In this light, the statement in vv. 4-5 that the Lord accepted one priest, Abel, and rejected the other, Cain, takes on new significance. Whereas the text explicitly characterizes Abel’s offering, and more or less infers Cain’s, it dwells on Cain’s character, and more or less infers Abel’s”. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. In Gen 4:16 – the “presence” (ynplm, “from-before”) suggests that the offerings were brought to a sanctuary. The mention of *Sin* in Gen 4:7 is usually understood as a zoomorphism but this no more than an educated guess; the ellipsis must be supplied in order to understand the Hebrew idiom as - the *sin-offering* laid at the *door* (xtpl) of the sanctuary. The same words are used in Lev 16:7; “And he shall take the two goats, and present them *before the* (ynpl) *Lord* at the *door* (xtpl) of the tabernacle of the congregation”. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. J. B. Moster, “Cain: Why Is He Featured So Prominently in the Bible?” *JBQ* 24 (1996), 238. Cain goes through the following six-step cycle: (1) He sins; (2) He leaves a safe environment; (3) He enters a hostile environment; (4) While in the latter, God protects him; (5) He parts from God; and (6) He ends up in favourable circumstance. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. The expression ‘once a year’ is used in Lev 16:34 in connection with atonement for the sins of the people (rather than for the incense altar). The New Testament picks up on this expression: “But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people” (Heb 9:7). The author to the Hebrews is using the atonement ritual as a metaphor to stress the unique, never-to-be repeated, effectiveness of the sacrifice of Christ. The Day of Atonement was, of course, repeated every year, but that does not diminish the analogy. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. The altar of incense is associated with the cessation of the Aaronic priesthood – the death of the first two priests to inherit the office, but also with the announcement of the birth of the last legitimate Aaronic priest – John the Baptist (Lk 1:10, 18, 20). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. L. Schneir, “Sense and Incense”, *JBQ* 21 (1993): 242-247. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. As a priest on duty, Jesus Christ refused to drink wine again (after the last supper) until the establishment of the kingdom (Matt 26: 29). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Many commentators regard the divine rejection of Cain’s worship as a mystery, or worse, as an arbitrary or capricious act by God - Christadelphians have long recognised that Cain knew that blood sacrifice was required to cover sin (Gen 3:21) and that the ground (and its produce) was under a curse (Gen 3:17) – God would not accept what had been grown ‘in the sweat of thy face’ (justification by works) as *a sin offering* (although agricultural produce was sometimes offered together with blood sacrifice, or for different occasions). Garry Herion comes to a similar conclusion regarding the cursed ground in his essay; “Why God Rejected Cain’s Offering: The Obvious Answer” in his *Fortunate the Eyes That See* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 52-65*.* It was therefore a deliberate, pre-meditated act of defiance on Cain’s part – did the sons of Aaron purposely get drunk in order to work up the courage to offer strange fire? [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. For example, in the case of Isa 44:28, see C. C. Torrey, *The Second Isaiah* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928), 43-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Hence, commentators such as H. A. Whittaker, *Isaiah* (Cannock: Biblia, 1988), 393-397, or Torrey, *Second Isaiah*, 40-43, who argue that the mention of Cyrus is a later interpolation, misconstrue the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. R. B Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 29-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. *Echoes*, 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. *Echoes*, 31 [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. John A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Xpress Reprints 1993; First published 1976 SCM Press). Also available online [April 10 2007] http://www.preteristarchive.com/Books/1976\_robinson\_redating-testament.html or as a [PDF](http://www.preteristarchive.com/Books/1976_robinson_redating-testament.pdf)  [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Dr John Ankerberg and Dr. John Weldon, *The Historical reliability of the New Testament Text.* Available online as PDF format [cited April 10 2007] [The Historical Reliability of the New Testament Text—Part Four](http://www.ankerberg.org/Articles/_PDFArchives/editors-choice/EC2W1102.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Similarly C. F. D. Moule: “It is hard to believe that a Judaistic type of Christianity which had itself been closely involved in the cataclysm of the years leading up to ad 70 would not have shown the scars - or, alternatively, would not have made capital out of this signal evidence that they, and not non-Christian Judaism, were the true Israel. But in fact our traditions are silent.” C. F. D. Moule, *The Birth of the New Testament*, (London: Adam & Charles Black 1962), 123 [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. In his posthumous publication Robinson tackles the utter subjectivity of the argument that since John is “more Christologically developed” than the Synoptics it must have been longer in the making. He concludes that the topographical and chorographical knowledge of Palestine before 66/70 is more accurate in the Fourth Gospel and that it displays a greater coherence and verisimilitude (and most likely historical accuracy) of the Passion Narrative than the Synoptics. Robinson argues for the priority of John and believes that the Fourth Gospel is independent of the Synoptics, and that they are uninfluenced by one another. J.A.T. Robinson, *The Priority of John*, (London, 1985: SCM Press). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. H. M. Barstad, *The Babylonian Captivity and the Book of Isaiah* (Oslo: Novus Forlag, 1997, 68-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)