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**Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation**

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* Engage with academic biblical studies that originate in other Christian confessions.
* Defend the biblical principles summarised in the common Christadelphian statement of faith.
* Subject the published articles to retrospective peer review and amendment.

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**Editorial**

If you look at the footnotes of books and articles written in, say, the 1950s, in the area of OT and NT scholarship, you will see many names of scholars who are no longer cited very often. From each generation, a very small number of scholars survive to be quoted in future generations but, by and large, it is the fate of most scholars to be a footnote in books and articles seldom consulted by future generations.

Certain books and key articles *do* survive and become historically important, and so the names of these scholars survive. But, in the main, scholars contribute to the “now” of their discipline, and regard their life as a profession. They retire and pass away and they are buried in footnotes and library storage. An important scholar now is more than likely to be unconsulted in future generations. If you cast your survey back to the 1900s very few indeed are read in biblical scholarship; such is the lesson of Ecclesiastes.

While new primary texts do come along, and the Dead Sea Scrolls are a prime example, it is mostly the case that each generation of scholars are talking about the same primary texts. Hopefully each new generation will bring new methodologies to the old texts and produce different insights, but there is also a large amount of repetition in subject-matter; the same issues are being turned around. This means that there is great value in going back to the older discussions of scholars. Older material tends to be less complex, less specialized, and more straightforward. Further, if the primary texts are the same textually, there is little danger of the older material being out of date. There is also the chance that older material will not be caught up in the fashion of the current moment and provide a different perspective.

New journals are born and many will die. In Philosophy a new journal is likely to be born if a new philosophical fashion takes root. For example, the journal *Analysis* was born in the aftermath of the Second World War as Anglo-Saxon philosophy turned to linguistic analysis as a philosophical method. It has evolved over the years but its trademark is short analytical pieces on very precise matters of detail. I mention this journal because it is an example of a good policy even if linguistic analysis is no longer a panacea. The *EJournal of Biblical Interpretation* particularly looks for short articles (max. 2500 words) on precise matters of detail. Comments have been made about the relatively few contributors; anyone thinking of writing a piece should not think that length is a factor. However, only a few contributors are inevitable as the community is a lay community of people holding down jobs and raising families; Christadelphians have no professional clergy or Bible College where ministers are trained. The EJournal does not seek to compete with established community magazines where there are broader groups of writers. The EJournal exists to provide a forum for more technical treatment of biblical matters.

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In this issue we have added a supplement in the area of “Apologetics”. Noah’s Flood is a battleground for evangelical Christians, liberal Christians and scientists. Many websites proclaim a “young earth”, an “old earth”, a “global flood” and a “local flood”. This supplement develops the biblical case for a local flood.

**A First Century Charismatic Community**

**Andrew Perry**

The Qumran community was charismatic in the broad sense of the word “charismatic”; that is, they gave a prominent role to the holy Spirit in the life of the disciple, particularly in his or her moral life. There is no evidence that they had any teaching about miraculous gifts of the Spirit. Our analysis of their thinking will ask whether they thought the holy Spirit brought a person to faith; it will show how they saw the holy Spirit involved in the process of initiating the convert to the community; finally, we will describe how they saw the ongoing role of the holy Spirit in maintaining the life of the disciple within the community.

Scholars assign relative dates to the manuscripts of the DSS, and on this basis it is possible to argue that Qumran thinking about the Spirit developed over time. However, the manuscripts do not present contradictory points of view about the Spirit; rather they offer differing emphases. It is difficult therefore to sustain any developmental thesis. We have a deposit of manuscripts and all we can really do is describe the thinking represented in these manuscripts as a whole or in part.

**Conversion**-**Initiation**

It is perhaps surprising that the DSS do not link the Spirit of God to the process of converting an individual. Instead, what they do is link the Spirit to the initiation of the disciple into the community. They make this link because they see the initiation of a convert as a cleansing and an entry at the same time.

Certain Qumran community texts suggest that they perceived they were in the last days. In this context, they applied Ezekiel’s restoration prophecy to themselves. Thus, 1QS III, 7-9 echoes Ezek 36:25-26 in its description of the prospective member,

And it is by the holy spirit of the community, in its truth, that he is cleansed of all his iniquities. And by the spirit of uprightness and of humility his sin is atoned. And by the compliance of his soul with all the laws of God his flesh is cleansed by being sprinkled with cleansing water and being made holy with waters of repentance.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Here the novice submits to the counsel of the community and to the sprinkling and cleansing of his flesh, and in this submission he is united to the truth of God and is thereby “cleansed” by the spirit of holiness.[[2]](#footnote-3)

The expression “holy Spirit of the community” could mean nothing more than the spirit of life that the community manifests, and it is following this life that necessarily cleanses the novitiate. However 1 QS IV, 20b-21 uses the expression “spirit of holiness” in relation to God:

Then God will refine, with his truth, all man’s deeds, and will purify for himself the structure of man, ripping out all spirit of injustice from the innermost part of his flesh, and cleansing him with the spirit of holiness[[3]](#footnote-4) from every wicked deed. He will sprinkle over him the spirit of truth like lustral water (in order to cleanse him) from all abhorrences of deceit and from the defilement of the unclean spirit.

God is the agent here cleansing an individual with the holy Spirit. The reference to water cleansing no doubt picks up on the ritual washing practised by the Qumran community. The metaphor of “cleansing” along with a mention of the “spirit of holiness” secures an allusion to Ezekiel’s restoration prophecy,

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. Ezek 36:25-27 (KJV)

We conclude therefore that 1QS is not just about the disposition of the individual being invigorated by the effects of a pious life demonstrated by the community.[[4]](#footnote-5) The holy Spirit lies behind the truths presented by the community, and the change effected in the novitiate can be equally attributed to the rules of the community or the holy Spirit. Accordingly, we read of community members in 1QS IX, 3, that “these exist in Israel in accordance with these rules in order to establish the spirit of holiness in truth”; the presence of the holy Spirit is established through obedience.[[5]](#footnote-6)

**Maintenance**

Although we have cited texts above that focus on initiation into the community, their language is equally applicable to the ongoing life of the believer. Sometimes it is difficult to know in a text whether the focus is the process of initiation or the ongoing life of the disciple.

The language of the DSS is informed by scriptural metaphors for the bestowal of Spirit upon believers:[[6]](#footnote-7)

I give thanks, Lord, because you have sustained me with your strength, you have spread your holy Spirit over me so that I will not stumble... 1QH XV, 6.

[I give thanks, because] you have spread [your] holy spirit upon your servant... 1QH IV, 26

This bestowal is directly related to the life that a person leads:

Since I know all this I want to find a reply of the tongue to prostrate myself and to ask [forgiveness...fo]r my offence, to look for the spirit [...] to be strengthened by [your] ho[ly] spirit. To adhere to the truth of the covenant... 1QH VIII, 14-15

I have appeased your face by the spirit which you have placed [in me,] to lavish your [kind]nesses on [your] serv[ant] for [ever,] to purify me with your holy Spirit... 1QH VIII, 19-20

May he be gracious to you with a spirit of holiness and (may) fav[our...] and the eternal covenant. 1Q28b II, 24-25

The goal of the bestowal of the Spirit is to create a “community of holiness” (1QS IX, 2), a community in which the holy Spirit was present (1QS IX, 3).

**Conclusion**

The teaching about the Spirit in the DSS is unremarkable. There are no texts which relate the Spirit to the process of converting a person. A bestowal of the Spirit is expected during the initiation of the novitiate and the Spirit remains as a force in the believer’s life. The purpose of the Spirit to effect obedience, and in this way the community is a place where the Spirit is present.[[7]](#footnote-8)

# Deuteronomistic History in Romans 2 and 3 (Part Three)

**Paul Wyns**

The final part of our investigation will offer a detailed exegesis of Romans 3 based on the observations noted in the comparison table in the first article. This will continue our placement of Pauline thought firmly within Deuteronomistic history; particularly within the Davidic royal court history (including the relevant psalms) recounting the Bathsheba incident.

**Romans 3:1-8**

What advantage then has the Jew, or what *is* the profit of circumcision?Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: “That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged.”But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.)Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?And *why* not *say,* “Let us do evil that good may come”? -- as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.Rom 3:1-8 (NKJV)

Of this passage, J. D. G. Dunn comments, “Such an uninhibited attack on Jewish self-confidence in Israel’s privileged status before God raises problems which Paul cannot ignore—particularly in relation to Israel’s election and thus also to God’s faithfulness to the people he chose”.[[8]](#footnote-9) If the circumcision covenant and possession of the law did not grant the Jew a privileged position (in contrast to the Gentiles)**—**then what is the point in being Jewish? What advantage does election bring?

Paul answers that being Jewish has many advantages, not least that they received the oracles. The “oracles of God” refers to God**’**s self-revelation in the OT and particularly to the Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel 7. It is essentially a continuation of the Davidic theme that Paul began in Rom 1:3-4 as an introduction to his epistle. Paul’s answer to the question of Jewish election is that it was not the law that made them elect, but the fact that God had chosen their race, particularly through the “seed of David after the flesh.....declared to be the son of God by the resurrection” (Rom 1:3-4).

In 2 Samuel 7 David sat before the ark and saw a vision of the risen Christ, a vision that he described in Psalm 110. It was the fact of the resurrection that declared him to be the Son of God: “Thou art my son; this day I have begotten thee”. At that point he became the universal Lord of the Gentiles also – “Ask of me and I will give you the Gentiles for your inheritance” (Ps 2:7-8). So it was the covenant promises concerning the messiah that conferred special status to the Jews—not the law. But what if some Jews did not believe the covenant promises—if they demonstrated their unbelief by rejecting Christ? Does this nullify the covenant and make divine faithfulness ineffectual?

Paul’s response to this question was “Let God be true and everyman a liar” (Rom 3:4). Here, Paul has 2 Sam 7:28 in mind: “And now, O Lord God, You are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this goodness to your servant”.The unfaithfulness of some of the Jews could not undermine the faithfulness of God. God**’**s words are true and the Word made flesh is the expression of that truth. In contrast, all men are liars (Jew and Gentile), and human unbelief and law breaking only justifies divine judgement.

Paul turns to Psalm 51 in order to emphasize the point: “As it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged” (Rom 3:4). G. Herrick explains this quotation as follows,

The quotation from Ps 51:4 is taken almost verbatim from the Greek OT (Ps 50:6 LXX), with only minor modifications. In Psalm 51 David humbly cries out to God for forgiveness because of his sin with Bathsheba. The point of v. 4 is that David admits he is a sinner against God and *therefore* *God is proved right when he speaks and justified when he judges.* Paul says that even *the* king of Israel, David himself, who enjoyed an excellent overall reputation in first century Judaism, had to be judged for his sin. Thus God is *true* to bless and to punish no matter who the offending party...The Jew, then, who thinks that God is unjust and unfaithful when he makes promises to his people on the one hand, and then judges them for sin on the other, is sadly mistaken. In fact, this state of affairs actually proves that God is true and that men are liars.[[9]](#footnote-10)

Herrick avers that Paul cites the LXX and the MT is different:[[10]](#footnote-11)

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest. Ps 51:4 (KJV)

Against thee only have I sinned, and done evil before thee: that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. Ps 51:4 (LXE)

Paul’s point is that when Christ was judged he overcame and was vindicated. Thus Paul’s argument is that when men judge God of unfaithfulness to the covenant or of unrighteousness, God would “overcome” and be proven right—justified and vindicated by upholding the covenant through David’s descendant, Jesus Christ; in this sense, God’s “overcoming” is the same as Jesus’ “overcoming”.

**Romans 3:10-18**

10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: 14 Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes. Rom 3:10-18 (KJV)

R. N. Longenecker observes, “A recurring feature in Paul’s biblical quotations, and one that points up his midrashic heritage, is the Pharisaic practice of ‘pearl stringing’; that is, of bringing to bear on one point of an argument passages from various parts of the Bible in support of the argument and to demonstrate the unity of Scripture. This is most obviously done in Rom 3:10-18 (Ps 14:1-3; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; Isa 59:7f; Ps 36:1)”.[[11]](#footnote-12)

Paul has indeed quoted, like pearls on a string, a number of OT passages – they are all (with the exception of Isa 59:7f) related to David.

* Psalm 14 is almost identical to Psalm 53; the fact that Psalm 53 follows a psalm with an explicit historical title about Doeg the Edomite, and proceeds a psalm about Saul’s hunt for David the outlaw, suggests that this psalm also belongs to the same period in David’s life.
* The next quote is taken from Psalm 5, where the context stresses lack of faithfulness and flattery, probably reflecting David’s betrayal by his counsellor Ahithophel. This is significant as Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba. After his sinful behaviour David became ill and lost authority – during this period Absalom fomented rebellion.
* Absalom’s rebellion is reflected in the next quote from Psalm 140 – the reference to the “serpent” is an allusion to Genesis 3 “Ye shall be as gods”. Glib promises of advancement and power for those whom Absalom sought to win over to his cause.
* The next quote is from Psalm 10 and this psalm stresses cursing...deceit...fraud...mischief...vanity (v. 7), all of which were true of Saul and his proxy Doeg the Edomite.
* The stream of citations from the Psalms is briefly interrupted by a quote from Isaiah 59:7-8. This is particularly interesting as the original context emphasises the shedding of innocent blood: “we grope for the wall......stumbling at noonday as in the night” (v.10). Paul has in mind his own experience, when he was blinded during his Damascus road conversion. The parallels with the nation are obvious, for although they had privileged status (like Paul, cf. Rom 11:1), they too were “blinded in part” (like Paul, cf. Rom 11:7) and persecuted the Lord’s anointed.
* Lastly, Paul concludes with Psalm 36, highlighting the defiant (fearless) attitude of the wicked. The Psalm continues (v.2) “... For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, even when his iniquity is found to be hateful.” (Darby). This parallels the Pauline accusation of boasting in the law (Ro, 2:18, 23; 3:27) even though they are law breakers (Rom 2:1) they still believe themselves to be untouchable (Rom 2:3). The liturgical setting for Psalm 36 may well have been the Day of Atonement (see vv. 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9), fitting with Paul’s treatment of Jesus as a propitiation (Rom 3:25).

To sum up, this passage is based on the life of David (with the Isaiah exception), particularly notable is the cooperation between Jew and Gentile in persecuting, the “Lord’s anointed.” The persecutor Saul was a Benjamite (similarities with Saul of Tarsus) and his ally was an Edomite (like Herod). These parallels[[12]](#footnote-13) would not have escaped the apostle Paul, neither did they escape the other apostles (Acts 4:25-28). This section summarises the universality of sin, by Jew *and* Gentile and the resistance to “Truth”, first by Jew and then by Gentile. Both persecuted the Lord’s anointed. Both are without excuse. One is condemned under the Law; the other is condemned outside the law.

N.T. Wright describes the situation as follows,

Israel was entrusted with the oracles of the creator god (3:2); that is, it was to be the messenger through whom the creator’s saving purpose would be carried to the world. What is the covenant god to do about the failure of his covenant people (3:2) to be faithful, on their part, to this covenant? Somehow, this god must be faithful nonetheless; and, unless the covenant itself is to be dissolved (which would evoke a very strong mh. ge,noito [“may it never happen”] from Paul) this means, logically, that there must somehow, after all, be an Israel that is faithful to the covenant, so that through this Israel the creator/covenant god can deal with the evil of the world, and with its consequences (i.e., wrath, as in 1:18ff). What is provided in 3:21-31 is just such a solution. “The works of Torah,” that is, those practices which mark Israel out from among the nations, cannot be the means of demarcating the true covenant people; they merely point up the fact of sin (3:20, looking back to 2:17-24 and on 5:20 and 7:7-25). Instead,the covenant faithfulness of the creator of the world is revealed through the faithfulness of Jesus, the Messiah, for the benefit of all, Jew and Gentile alike, who believe. Rom 3:21-31 then expounds this revelation of the divine covenant faithfulness. The central emphasis of this passage, I suggest, lies not on the human faith/faithfulness, which, in place of works-of-Torah, becomes the badge of covenant membership, but on the faithfulness of the Messiah, Jesus, as the means through which the covenant faithfulness of the creator is enacted.[[13]](#footnote-14)

# Romans 3:27

# Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.Rom 3:27 (NKJV)

N.T. Wright remarks that, “whatever we do with 3.27, it will never cease to be cryptic”.[[14]](#footnote-15) The *crux interpretum* of this chapter is dia. poi,ou no,mou(“By what law?”).

We propose the phrase is taken from 2 Sam 7:19**:**

Whereas I was very little before thee, O Lord, my Lord, yet thou spokest concerning the house of thy servant for a long time to *to come*. And *is* this the law of man, O Lord, my Lord? 2 Sam 7:19 (LXE)

And yet this was insignificant in Your eyes, O Lord God, for You have spoken also of the house of Your servant concerning the distant future. And this is the custom of man, O Lord God. 2 Sam 7:19 (NASB)

The NASB taking a cue from the LXX has rendered the Hebrew, “the *torah* of Man” as “the custom of man” but removes the question mark. The NIV has “Is this your usual way of dealing with man?”; the NSRV renders it, “May this be the instruction for the people”, while the RSV appears to omit it completely. W.C. Kaiser paraphrases verse 19b “This is the charter by which humanity will be directed”.[[15]](#footnote-16) However, these English versions remove the pun carried by the Hebrew word for “law” i.e. *torah*— the Law of Moses. The LXX preserves this pun, and if Paul quotes “By what law?” from here, we should retain “law”.

The Samuel passage highlights the Davidic Covenant, with its messianic implications, as the foundation for all subsequent working of God in history. This seems to be Paul’s point: this is the “law” upon which God works and not “the Law” of Moses.

So far we have suggested that the Pauline phrase is based on 2 Sam 7:19. If Paul did indeed base his challenge in Rom 3.27 on Samuel (as the Davidic theme in Romans 2 and 3 suggests) then Paul *acts as our interpreter.* Paul has distilled the phrase to its bare essence. The point is that David was not allowed to sit before the ark as he was not a priest or even a Levite—“Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that you have brought me this far?” (2 Sam 7:18, NASB). So, the Law could not bring him into the presence of Yahweh (in fact the Law could only kill him for sitting in front of the ark); the Law could not grant him a vision of the risen Christ and the Law could not give him the superb covenant promise that he received (more importantly the Law could not forgive him after he sinned—only condemn and punish). The Law was very limited in what it could achieve. It became an instrument of wrath because it highlighted weak, sinful human nature. The answer to “By what law?” then is the law of faith in God’s promises to David. The parallel in Chronicles makes this clear:

And *yet* this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast *also* spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O Lord God. 1 Chron 17:17

The exalted man....the one who ascended to sit in the presence of Yahweh...was Jesus Christ. David no longer saw according to the “law of sin and death” but according to “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom.8:8). Yes, David saw it, but he only understood it after his sin with Bathsheba.

**Conclusion**

This series of articles has opened up a range of fresh possibilities with regards to the New Perspective on Paul and, if nothing else, it highlights the relevance of the Old Testament in understanding the theology of Paul.

**The Gentile Mission and the Tabernacle of David**

**Andrew Perry**

**Introduction**

In an earlier article, “The Restoration of Israel”,[[16]](#footnote-17) it was suggested that one reason for the Gentile Mission being brought forward in the purpose of God was to place ecclesias in the Diaspora to witness to the Jews who would be scattered as a consequence of the Jewish-Roman war of 66-73 CE. As it happened, Jews and Christians parted ways after the Apostolic Era and Christianity became something other than that which was intended.

In this article, we return to the topic of the Gentile Mission and why it happened; we are interested in an argument that sequences the Gentile Mission in the purpose of God and relates that mission to the outreach and conversion of the Gentiles in the messianic age—this argument is to be found in Acts 15:13-18.

**Amos 9:11-12**

In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old… Amos 9:11 (KJV)

James[[17]](#footnote-18) quotes Amos 9:11-12 in his argument. Scholars discuss the form of his quotation as it has aspects in common with both the LXX and the MT.[[18]](#footnote-19) We will not discuss this question. We will first look at the text in the MT and then consider James’ quotation in the light of that text.

There are four points to note about this text:

1) “In that day” is a common prophetic phrase to refer to that day in which God acts decisively on behalf of his people (e.g. Isa 28:5, 29:18, 30:23, 31:7).

2) The “tabernacle of David” (KJV) is a unique expression. H. A. Whittaker suggests that the expression refers to Hezekiah in his state of mortal sickness.[[19]](#footnote-20) He avers that in the Amos text God promises that he would “raise” up Hezekiah in that day in which he acts to save his people from Assyria. He does not offer supporting texts for the equation, but with Amos describing the punishment of God upon Israel (Amos 9:1-10) and Assyria being the superpower of Amos’ day, some action of God in relation to “David” rather than Samaria is implied. Other scholars take “tabernacle of David” to be a metaphor for the Davidic kingdom,[[20]](#footnote-21) or the Davidic house, which God is then promising to raise up.[[21]](#footnote-22)

Our claim is that the “tabernacle” (hks) is a reference to Jerusalem. The RSV and NASB have “booth” which is better, as the underlying Hebrew is not the normal word for the Tabernacle. This word occurs in Isaiah,

And the daughter of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a lodge in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. Isa 1:8 (RSV)

It will be for a booth by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain. Isa 4:6 (RSV revised)

The reference to Jerusalem is clear: the city was a booth in a vineyard which the Assyrians were going to strip, but it would instead become a booth from the heat of the Assyrian onslaught. In this sense, we propose that the better translation would be “shelter of David”.

Amos has Yahweh saying that “in that day” he would “raise” up the shelter that was Jerusalem. The same terminology of “raising” is used of the restoration of the cities of Judah in Isa 61:4: “And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations” (KJV).

While Jerusalem was not overrun during the siege of 701 the city was partly reduced to ruins as a result of building outer defensive walls from houses inside the city, and the temple suffered damage by fire (Isa 22:5, 64:11).[[22]](#footnote-23) Amos’ prophecy has partial application therefore at this time and a future application on James’ reading.

3) Amos refers to repairing the “breaches” which indicates the walls (cf. Isa 58:12), and “raising” walls that have “fallen” is the best sense (cf. Isa 30:13, Mic 7:11).

4) Finally, the statement concludes with the general assertion that Jerusalem will be built as in the days of old; here the normal word for the action of “building” is used (cf. Isa 61:6, 65:21-22).

The above points, (1)-(4), establish the primary application of Amos 9:11 to be a reference to the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the damage suffered during the Assyrian invasion. We can now consider the next verse.

That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this. Amos 9:12 (KJV)

This prophecy has its initial fulfillment in Hezekiah’s restoration of Judah.

5) After 701, Hezekiah waged a campaign of liberation in Edom against the nations who had been confederate with Assyria (Isa 34:1-15, 41:2, 41:25, 59:16-18, 63:1-6). Amos refers to “they” and these are God’s people (less the sinners, Amos 9:10). God’s people would possess the survivors (remnant) from Hezekiah’s campaign in Edom.

6) God’s people will also “possess” those who are called by God’s name among the nations. This refers to those of the nations who responded to the good news of Assyria’s defeat and sought the God of Israel (Isa 4:1, 43:7, 62:2, 65:1). The “light to the Gentiles” in Hezekiah’s day brought about some response from the nations roundabout and such as responded were called by God’s name. These Gentiles became those upon whom God’s name was called, i.e. they belonged to him.[[23]](#footnote-24) This is a startling assertion in Amos, but one familiar in Isaiah.

Points (1)-(6) establish a framework of understanding for Amos 9:11-12 that we can take into the NT. This is an important result because NT scholars have taken “tabernacle of David” to refer to either the restored Davidic kingdom of Israel,[[24]](#footnote-25) or more popularly, the apostolic Christian community viewed as the “temple” of the future age.[[25]](#footnote-26) The resurrected Jesus has also been proposed in a manner which would support Whittaker’s application of Amos originally to Hezekiah.[[26]](#footnote-27)

The suggestions of “tabernacle”, “temple” or “kingdom” are unlikely because the Hebrew for “shelter” (hks) is never used of these entities in the OT.[[27]](#footnote-28) The word carries the overtone of something like a shelter, and this idea fits the role of Jerusalem facing the onslaught of the Assyrian storm. A related theme from the time is the notion a hiding place (Isa 2:19; 28:17, cf. 32:2).

NT scholars have interpreted “tabernacle of David” to be the temple-community or the restored kingdom of Israel for several reasons. OT scholars[[28]](#footnote-29) do not relate Amos’ prophecy to the eighth century and so miss the Jerusalem connections with Isaiah. NT scholars usually rely on consensus views of OT scholars to tell them what to think about the OT. Furthermore, they usually reference the LXX treatment of Amos which uses a broader word meaning “tent” (skhnh**,**) and this is a word which is used for the temple. Finally, NT scholars are more comfortable looking for applications of prophecy to the church. We will now explore the use of Amos 9:11-12 in Acts 15.

**Acts 15:13-18**

James “answers” points that have been raised by the participants at the council, but we do not have their contribution recorded. His first point echoes the account of the exodus in his description that “God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name”. This action resonates with the language of “visitation” in which God brought the children of Israel out of the Gentiles, i.e. Egypt (e.g. Exod 3:16, Acts 7:23). James’ point is that God has also visited the Gentiles in their day to take out a people for his name. This “visit” has been recorded in Acts in the Cornelius episode; this visit is to be distinguished from the “visit” of God to the Jews represented in the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus (Luke 1:68, 78). James says that Peter has explained how God first visited the Gentiles and given that this happened with Cornelius, Peter is the obvious one to have given this explanation.

**Acts 15:16**

James says that the prophets agree with his understanding of the Gentile mission which he has described as a visitation in v. 15, and he cites Amos 9:11-12 in a form that does not exactly correspond to the MT. Sidelining this issue for the moment, when we come to Acts 15:16, the key question is: how does Amos fit James’ argument?

After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up… Acts 15:16 (KJV)

James uses the ordinary Greek for “tent” (skhnh,) which the LXX uses for the MT “shelter” in Amos 9:11. The semantic range of skhnh, includes tents, the Tabernacle, as well as shelters. It serves for hks in “feast of booths” (Lev 23:34, 42, 43; it is used for the “pavilions” of the battlefield (1 Kgs 20:12); it is used for Jerusalem as a “booth” in Isa 1:8; and it is used for Jonah’s shelter (Jon 4:5). There is therefore no reason *not* to infer that James saw in the “skhnh, of David” the same reference as we find in the Hebrew original.[[29]](#footnote-30)

The most important crux for interpreting James’ quotation of Amos is: when does God return? Is James saying God *has* returned in his day and is now building the shelter of David, or is he stating that God will return and build the shelter of David? Scholars who see the “tabernacle” of David as the Christian community see God’s return in James’ day; scholars who see the return of God as future, see the “tabernacle” of David in terms of a restoration of Israel.

James says “after this” and this picks up on a “first” happening. “After this” or better, “after these things”, does not come from Amos 9:11 which has instead “in that day”. It may be redundant, but Luke does not elsewhere treat his scriptural quotes and their composite nature in a redundant way. He removes an “after this” from Joel 2:28 when he quotes this text in Acts 2.[[30]](#footnote-31) In James’ flow of argument, the “this” after which God will return is the mission to the Gentiles. James is saying that *after this* God would build again the shelter of David. In terms of Amos 9:11, this means that Jerusalem will be built *after* the mission to the Gentiles and this is a significant claim.

The argument is tightly knit around the idea of a first visit and a second visit. Having asserted that God *has* visited the Gentiles, James then asserts that God will *return* and build Jerusalem. Such an assertion by James is consistent with Jesus’ prophecy that Jerusalem would be destroyed “until the times of the Gentiles” were fulfilled (Luke 21:24). Once these times were fulfilled, Jerusalem would no longer be trodden down and by implication—built.

However, this does not explain why James would use Amos 9:11-12 in connection with a point about God visiting the Gentiles. Why would he want to say at this point that God would return and build Jerusalem?

There are lexical links between Acts 15:16-17 and Hos 3:5 (LXX) which are worth noting as these pick up corresponding words in the Hebrew:[[31]](#footnote-32)

After these things the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days. Hos 3:5 (RSV revised)

This prophecy refers to Israel’s exile and that time when she would return to David (Judah) and seek the Lord. James is combining fragments of Hos 3:5 with his quotation of Amos for a purpose. There is rhetorical contrast between James’ assertion and Hosea: in Hosea, Israel “return” “after these things” and “seek the Lord”; in Acts, God returns and builds the shelter of David and the Gentiles seek the Lord.

James has also added “I will return” to the Amos quotation. This assertion has several possible sources in the OT.

a) Zech 8:3 states “I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem”.[[32]](#footnote-33) Zech 1:16 has, “Therefore thus saith the Lord: I will return to Jerusalem with compassion; and my house shall be rebuilt in her”.[[33]](#footnote-34) These two texts are obvious sources for James’ “I will return”.

b) Jer 12:15-16 is part of a prophecy about Israel’s pagan neighbours. God states, “I will return and have compassion on them…then shall they be built in the midst of my people” (KJV).[[34]](#footnote-35) This connection seems inappropriate and against the grain of Amos 9:11-12. In Amos it is Jerusalem that is built; here in Jeremiah it is a building of those who believe of the nations.[[35]](#footnote-36)

c) Num 10:36 sees the children of Israel invoking the Lord to return to the tabernacle.[[36]](#footnote-37) This shares a motif of return but the setting is not Zion and a strange bedfellow for Amos 9:11-12.

d) Isa 63:17-19 shares with Acts the idea of God “returning”,[[37]](#footnote-38) and it is the “sanctuary” to which he is asked to return after it has been trodden down. The “sanctuary” here is “the land” considered to be God’s sanctuary (Exod 15:17). Elsewhere “treading” is used to describe the effects of an enemy upon a people (Isa 14:19, 25; 63:6). This prophecy therefore has a broader scope than Amos.

The above options, (a)-(d), can be whittled down to (a). Zech 1:16 and 8:3 have the necessary “return” to Zion, although Zechariah has a focus on the temple and this might suggest that the “tabernacle” of David in Acts is to be taken as a reference to the future temple rather than Jerusalem as it is in Amos.

More importantly, however, we can say that as Zechariah is concerned with a return to Jerusalem and a rebuilding of the temple; James’ argument is not saying that God *has* “returned” and is building the “tabernacle” of David in the form of the Christian community or in the person of Christ. At James’ point in time, Jerusalem has yet to be destroyed.

Further details support this line of interpretation.

After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up… Acts 15:16 (KJV)

In that day will I raise up the shelter of David that is fallen, and I will wall up its breaches; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old… Amos 9:11 (KJV revised)

In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and I will rebuild the ruins of it, and I will raise up the parts thereof that have been broken down, and I will build it up as in the ancient days… Amos 9:11 (LXX)

In the next part of the quote, there is stated “I will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down”. This interprets the MT, “I will *raise up* the shelter of David which is fallen down”. Acts also differs here from the LXX, as the LXX has “raise up”, although both are reasonable treatments of the Hebrew. To understand why Acts should use “build” for “raise”, an understanding of translation issues surrounding metaphor is needed. James is *bringing out* the building aspect of the metaphor of “raise up” whereas the LXX is retaining the metaphor; both approaches to metaphor are legitimate.

James’ quote from Amos then states “I will build again the ruins”, and the “ruins” are the “fallen down sections” (wall breaches). This corresponds to “I will wall up its breaches, and raise up its ruins” of the MT. Again Acts is different to the LXX preferring “build” whereas the LXX retains “raise”. Lastly, James’ quote states “I will set it up”, which varies “I will build it” from the MT, a variation not shared by the LXX, which translates the Hebrew as “I will build it”.

The focus of the quote and the source in Amos is about the city of Jerusalem. The reference to “walling up” and “breaches” could refer to repair work on a city wall or a public buildings like a temple (e.g. 2 Kgs 12:13, Hos 2:8), but the reference to the “tabernacle/booth/shelter” of David has a clear link to Jerusalem in Isaiah. Bauckham has not noted these connections and hence asserts that “the reference is to the restoration of a *building*”.[[38]](#footnote-39) He is right however to exclude other interpretations that make the “tabernacle/booth/shelter” a metaphor for the Davidic throne, the Davidic ruler or the Davidic kingdom. All these suggestions overlook the “tabernacle/booth/shelter” motif in Isaiah.

We have noted that the NT quotation of Amos 9:11 uses “build” for the MT “raise”. This variation uses a common word for “build” which resonates with texts about the building of Jerusalem— Ezra 4:13, Neh 2:5, Dan 9:27. This resonance may explain the choice of “build” for “raise” in James’ citation, and direct the reader to interpret the “tabernacle” of David as a reference to Jerusalem rather than the eschatological temple.

James’ citation omits the reference to “walling up the breaches” and the reference to the “days of old”. The reason for the truncation is a matter of speculation. Bauckham suggests that a contrast is indicated by the omission of the “days of old” so that in our interpretation James would be indicating that the rebuilding of Jerusalem would be different from that in days of old. Similarly, the absence of “walling up the breaches” could show that this detail of the rebuilding of Jerusalem will not apply in the future age.

**Acts 15:17**

The citation of Amos in Acts 15:17 shares more with the LXX than the previous verse, but the LXX diverges notably from the MT in its translation of Amos 9:12.

That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this. Amos 9:12 (KJV)

…that the remnant of men, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, may earnestly seek *me*, saith the Lord who does all these things. Amos 9:12 (LXX)

That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Acts 15:17 (KJV)

The differences between the MT and the LXX have been extensively discussed. Whittaker postulates that the MT is corrupt and favours the LXX as an accurate indicator of the original Hebrew.[[39]](#footnote-40) Scholars generally take Luke to be citing the LXX and ignore the MT as an influence on Luke’s record at this point.[[40]](#footnote-41) Our proposal is that James sees a type in “the remnant of Edom” which suggests to him “the remnant of men”. There are two points to distinguish:

1) Superficially, the type might be suggested by the fact that the Hebrew for “Edom” is ~wda and for “men” is ~da, which is a pun. More importantly, a type would be suggested by James’ reading of Isaiah and the role that Edom played among “the nations” that were allied to Assyria (mankind/men). The campaign against Edom after 701 was one of liberation of those of Judah who had been taken captive by the Assyrian confederacy. Their liberation produced a response of “seeking after the Lord”.

Thus, James sees in Edom a type of those men who would bring about the scattering of Israel in his day. God will return and rebuild Jerusalem so that the survivors of such men would seek the Lord.

2) The defeat of Assyria in 701 (and then Edom) was the basis of the “good news” (gospel) to the nations roundabout. Some of the people in these nations responded and were called by God’s name at this time, i.e. they became God’s possession. Those of the Gentile nations who responded at that time were called by God’s name *as Gentiles* and not as proselytes to Israel.

Thus, James sees in the defeat of God’s enemies in 701 a type of the good news of Jesus’ victory over death which was the basis of the apostles’ Gentile mission.

James is citing Amos 9:12 by way of a typological reading, and this accounts for the variation on the MT. His reading is similar to that of the LXX, but we do not need to hypothesize on why this is the case. The most common suggestion by scholars is that Luke is quoting the LXX, but even if this is the case, we still have to explain the relationship of the varied language in Acts to the MT.[[41]](#footnote-42) We might say there is no relationship and the MT is corrupt; we have provided the alternative explanation that James is bringing out a typological reading from the Hebrew.

James adds the object of what men seek to his citation, viz., the Lord. Bauckham offers Zech 8:22 as a complimentary text that may have prompted James to add “the Lord” as the object of “seek”.[[42]](#footnote-43)

The end of Acts 15:17 is different in the KJV, RSV and NASB, and this reflects issues in the NT Greek text. For our purposes, we will follow the RSV of Acts 15:18 which quotes Isa 45:21,

…says the Lord, who has made these things known from of old. Acts 15:18 (RSV)

Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Isa 45:21 (RSV)

This allusion to Isaiah fits with Amos 9:11-12 because it comes from a prophecy (Isa 45:20-21) which concerns the survivors or remnant of men who are escaped of the nations.

**The Gentile Mission**

The relevance of James’ quotation to the council deliberations of Acts 15 can now be described. The council was not debating the legitimacy of the mission to the Gentiles; it was debating whether they should become proselytes and be circumcised. This would be a move to make them Jewish rather than Gentile. Bauckham notes[[43]](#footnote-44) that Amos 9:12 has the Gentiles belonging to Yahweh *as Gentiles* rather than proselytes, and this is the main thrust of James’ citation.

However, there is a suppressed premise in this explanation not noted by Bauckham. The argument made by James is as follows:

*God did at first visit the Gentiles, but it is also said that after this he will return and build Jerusalem so that the residue of men might seek the Lord and all the Gentiles.*

The suppressed premise here is: the Gentiles being visited through the apostolic ministry *belong* to those Gentiles who would go up to Jerusalem to worship in the kingdom. The explicit premise is: Gentiles go up to Jerusalem *as Gentiles*, not as proselytes. James’ conclusion from these two premises is that we should not circumcise Gentiles now.

**Conclusion**

In this article we have presented a further reason for the Gentile mission. In an earlier article, “The Restoration of Israel”,[[44]](#footnote-45) we suggested that one reason for the Gentile Mission being brought forward in the purpose of God was to place ecclesias in the Diaspora to witness to the Jews who would be scattered as a consequence of the Jewish-Roman war of 66-73 CE. We can add to this reason the second reason:

*God sought to call out the Gentiles before the rebuilding of Jerusalem* ***so that there would be*** *Gentiles to go up to Jerusalem to worship as Gentiles in the messianic age.*

This does not mean that when the kingdom is established, no more of the nations will go up to Jerusalem; it is just that the apostles’ mission to the Gentiles is a foreshadowing of this greater time.

**Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:3-8**

**Paul Wyns**

**Introduction**

In the majority of his Old Testament citations, Paul adheres to the original sense of the passage.[[45]](#footnote-46) However, in Rom 10:3-8 he appears to be quoting scripture without regard to the original context. Paul seems to deliberately change the words of Moses regarding the nearness of the Law and the requirement to “do it” [[46]](#footnote-47) into the Gospel of faith in opposition to the Law. H. Hübner has treated the passage as a proverbial allusion rather than a quotation.[[47]](#footnote-48)[[48]](#footnote-49) Scholars cannot conceive how Paul could possibly have considered such a radical transformation of Deuteronomy 30 to be ‘legitimate’:

In the O.T. the words are used by Moses of the Law: how can St. Paul use them of the Gospel as against the Law?[[49]](#footnote-50)

J. Munck observes that Paul distinguishes “between the use of authoritative scriptural texts, and the use of scriptural texts in formulating thoughts of [his] own”.[[50]](#footnote-51)Munck is simply reflecting the unease of earlier exegetes, such as Calvin, who noted, “...if it is alleged that this interpretation is too forced and subtle, we should understand that the object of the Apostle was not to explain this passage exactly, but only to apply it to his treatment of the subject in hand”. [[51]](#footnote-52)

The following article will examine Pauline usage of the Deuteronomic passage within the wider context of the Isaianic argument that he is presenting in chapters 9-11 and will dispel the often heard charge that he is dishonestly handling scripture.

**Sources for Paul’s Quotation**

Various sources have been proposed as contributing to the transformative reading that Paul offers in Rom 10:5-8.[[52]](#footnote-53) It is not the intention to discuss the merits of each of these proposals as they have already been extensively reviewed.[[53]](#footnote-54) Moreover, we simply cannot exclude some of these proposals because Pauline use of scripture is so creative and polyvalent that multiple allusions and echoes from more than one source are not only possible, but very probable.[[54]](#footnote-55) Our aim is to present a new contextual reading refracted through the twin lenses of Deuteronomy 30 and certain texts in Isaiah.

We concur with Guy Waters that, “the text employed in Rom 10:6-8 is ‘too close’ to that of Deuteronomy ‘for the agreement to be accidental’”.[[55]](#footnote-56) Our proposal is that the apostle’s changes were deliberate and theologically justified by his understanding of Isaiah. A comparison of Romans 10 and Deuteronomy 30 placed alongside Isaiah makes the interrelationship clear. The comparison table below has been developed independently of scholarship, and the lack of notice in such scholarship of links with Isaiah may lie in the fact that the majority of scholarship adopts the classic tripartite division of the book, and has failed to contextualize the many Isaianic oracles within the reign of Hezekiah. Failure to understand the oracles initial setting has led to a failure in understanding how Paul applies various Isaianic texts it in Romans 10.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rom 10:3-8** | **Isaiah** | **Deut 30:12-14** |
| …going about to **establish** their own righteousness for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that **believeth.** (10:3) | If ye will not **believe** ye shall not be **established.**  (7: 9-10) | …if thou turn unto God with all thine heart, and all thy soul (30:10). |
| **Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven?** (10:6) | Ask a sign of the Lord either **in the depth or the height above**  (7: 9-10)  For thou hast **said in thine heart**, **I will ascend into heaven,** I will exalt my throne above the stars of God (14:13). | Who shall **go up for us to heaven**… (30:12a) |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rom 10:3-8** | **Isaiah** | **Deut 30:12-14** |
| That is, to **bring Christ down** **from above**…  Or who shall descend into **the deep** (abyss)?  That is, to **bring up** Christ again from the dead  But what saith it **(=the righteousness which is of faith speaketh v.6)** The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; | **Drop down, ye heavens**, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness...  ...let the **earth open**, and let them **bring** forth salvation (45:8).  I have not spoken **in secret,** in a dark place of the earth: I said not to Jacob, seek ye me in vain;  **I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right** (45:19). | ..and **bring** it unto us that we may hear and do it?  Neither is it beyond **the sea** (abyss), that thou shouldest say, who shall go over the sea for us, and **bring it** unto us, that we may hear and do it? (30:12b-13)  [The **secret things** belong to the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong to us and our children for ever... (29:29)] |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Rom 10:3-8** | **Isaiah** | **Deut 30:12-14** |
| That if thou shalt **confess with thy mouth the Lord** Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto **righteousness**; and with the **mouth** confession is made unto salvation. | I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my **mouth** in **righteousness**, and shalt not return, that unto me every knee should bow, **every tongue shall swear.** Surely, shall One say, in the Lord have I **righteousness** and strength: even to him shall men come... (45: 23-24). | And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live (30:6). |

**The Historical and Cultural Context**

The wider context of the usage of Deut 30:12-14 in Romans 10 cannot be viewed in isolation from Paul’s extensive quotation of Isaiah in the remainder of the chapter[[56]](#footnote-57) or indeed of the whole of Romans. This has not escaped the notice of J. R. Wagner, who comments,

We should not underestimate the close knowledge of the book of Isaiah possible for ancient readers-particularly those with “scholastic” interests- who regarded it as a sacred text. To what degree Paul’s use of Isaiah betrays such intimacy with the text is, of course, the point at issue in the present work; the preceding discussion, however, offers an important reference point for evaluating what evidence we do have concerning Paul’s reader-competence and interpretive strategies in their historical and cultural contexts.[[57]](#footnote-58)

Although Wagner makes a brave attempt to place (as far as modern scholarship will allow) portions of the Isaiah oracle in “historical and cultural context”*,*[[58]](#footnote-59) he inevitably generalises because the context is misunderstood.[[59]](#footnote-60)

**Hezekiah**

Ahaz sought an alliance with the Assyrians (2 Kgs 16:17-18)—he had a copy made of the Assyrian altar and removed the altar of Yahweh to one side. He could not, however, remove the foundation of the altar, which formed part of the bedrock of Zion and this served as a constant reminder of his disloyalty (cf. Isa 28:16). The foundation literally became “a rock of offence”. Moreover, Ahaz refused the waters of Shiloh (Isa 8:5-8, later called Siloam), which was tantamount to a refusal of that which was “sent” (cf. John 9:7). In broader terms such a refusal typified the refusal of the eventual messianic Immanuel (Isa 7:11). The invisible, underground waters of Siloam were rejected (the hidden faith in the Davidic covenant) in favour of the mighty overflowing waters of the Euphrates (Assyrian power).

Hezekiah was the first significant “Immanuel” of the Isaiah oracle. In his early reign, he reached out to the northern tribes, reformed cultic worship (2 Chron 29:3) and re-established covenantal relationships. At around the mid-point of his reign he was afflicted with a mortal disease (Isa 38:1) which coincided with an Assyrian invasion in 701. He was raised from his sick bed on the third day (2 Kgs 20:8) and the Assyrian army was miraculously defeated (2Kgs 19:35-37). This deliverance was a type of the Passover (Isa 31:5, 33:19). As such Hezekiah became one of the greatest proto-types of the messiah. Corporately and corporally he represented the nation and suffered undeserved punishment as God’s suffering servant

**Romans, Deuteronomy and Hezekiah**

We can now offer a paraphrase of Rom 9-11 in the light of Hezekiah and at the same time situate Paul’s quotation of Deut 30:12-14.

1) Romans 9. Only a faithful remnant will be saved similar to the time of Hezekiah (Rom 9:27-28; Isa 10:22-23), when the faithful heeded his call to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Hezekiah nearly died childless, thus nullifying the Davidic covenant,[[60]](#footnote-61) but God saved him and also a faithful remnant (Rom 9:29; Isa 1:9). Hezekiah became a “rock of offence” to all who refused faith in the covenant, just like the altar foundation that accused Ahaz and acted as a constant reminder of his disloyalty; in a similar fashion Christ was a “rock of offence” (Rom 9:33a; Isa 8:14; 28:16).

2) Romans 10. Ahaz/Israel had refused to believe the heavenly messianic sign regarding the covenant (Rom 10:3; Isa 7:11); instead the nation sought to exalt themselves (establish their own righteousness) like the proud Assyrian kings, who challenged God himself (ascended the heights) and were therefore thrust down into hell (Rom 10:6; Isa 14:3). However, the Lord God speaks righteousness and is faithful to his covenant (Rom 10:6, Isa 45:19); he has not acted secretly, but he openly raised and exalted his suffering servant (Hezekiah/Christ), thus establishing the covenant. The covenant was not accomplished through human effort – God had himself provided a messiah with heavenly origins (Hezekiah’s promised conception/virgin birth of Christ) and God had raised him (Hezekiah from a sick bed/Christ from death) – (Rom 10:7, Isa 45:8). But what does the covenant say (the righteousness which is of faith as explained in Deuteronomy)? It says that the word of God (his messiah) is near…even in your mouth and in your heart. (Rom 10:8).

Yahweh has vindicated his Suffering Servant and will cause all men to acknowledge him (Rom 10:9, Isa 45:23-24, cf. Rom 14:11b). Those who put their trust in the suffering servant (Hezekiah/Jesus) will be vindicated (Rom 10:11; Isa 28:16). Those who call on the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom 10:13; Joel 2:32).[[61]](#footnote-62) The Good News (Gospel) of the enemy’s defeat and the recovery of our king (Hezekiah/Jesus) is heralded by messengers – God reigns in Zion (Rom 10:15; Isa 52:7). But who believed the message? It was only a faithful remnant (Rom 10:16, 21-22; Isa 53:1, 65:1-2).

3) Romans 11. The remainder of the nation continued to be blind and asleep (Rom 11:7-8 Isa 29:10). But the faithfulness of Hezekiah/Jesus had caused all enemies to be defeated and prisoners to be released. The Gentiles were also now incorporated into the covenant relationship (Rom 11:26-27a; Isa 59:20-21). Truly, God’s purpose is marvellous for no one could have anticipated the outcome of the rejection and ingathering of Israel (Rom 11:34; Isa 40:13).

**Conclusion**

Paul’s use of Deut 30:12-14 can only be fully understood against the background of Hezekiah’s times. Paul reads the covenant in Deuteronomy through the lens of Isaiah. Our next article will attempt to determine if the reading is uniquely Pauline or if other factors influenced his exegesis. The original context of Deut 30:12-14 will be also be re-examined and explanations offered for Paul’s omission, “to do it.”

**Psalm 110**

**J. Adey**

**Introduction**

This article shows how the New Testament applies Ps 110:1 to Jesus with his Father in heaven. This article is designed to tell the significant New Testament truth that English translations have needlessly obscured about Jesus and his Father.

* NT quotations of Ps 110:1 use the Greek term ‘**ek**’ to depict Jesus’ position *beside* God, which English versions render ‘at’ or ‘on’ the right hand (see [A] [1],[2]; [C] [4]).
* However, English versions continue using ‘at’ or ‘on’ when the Greek changes to ‘**en**’ with the momentous meaning of ‘in’, understood by our first century Greek (using) brethren & sisters.
* Sometimes English versions, even in the same verse, translate two uses of ‘en’ as ‘in’, but retain ‘at’ for the third: “Which he wrought **in** Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* **at** his own right hand **in** the heavenlies” (Eph. 1:20). KJV has: ‘at’ Rom. 8:34; Heb. 12:2, and ‘on’ Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; Heb. 8:1; 1 Pet. 3:22. Only Rev. 3:21 has ‘in’.
* The change of meaning – from **ek** to **en** – marks the culminating ‘in-ness’ of Jesus’ intimate unity with God, his Father; beyond *beside* God is the fellowship of being ‘in’ (see [C] [5]).
* This outcome for Jesus, entailed in Psa. 110:1, previews God becoming “all and ***in*** all” (1 Cor. 15:28), which is the ‘in’ and ‘one’ (unity) end to which Jesus directs his prayer in John 17.

**Data**

[A] Texts directly citing and closely representing the wording of Psa. 110:1.

**[2]** Sit thou at my right *hand* until I make/appoint/set thine enemies thy footstool.

**[1]** The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou at my right *hand* until I make/appoint/set thine enemies thy footstool.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Matt.  22:44 | Mark  12:36 | Luke 20:42  - 43 | Acts  2:34 -35 |  | Heb.  1:13 | Heb.  10:12 -13 |

[B] Texts using Ps 110:1 which are not about ‘right *hand*’:

**[3]** …until he hath put/set

[all = Ps 8:6(7)] enemies

[under his feet = Ps 8:6(7)]

|  |
| --- |
| 1 Cor 15:25 |

[C] Texts *talking about* the fulfillment of the state of affairs that Ps 110:1 predicts. There are two groups of texts [4] and [5].

[4] Allusions to Ps 110:1 mostly with ek as ‘on’/‘at’ with “sit[ing] on/at the right *hand*”.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Matt. 26:64  Son of man sitting on/at the right *hand* of power | Mk. 14:62  Son of man sitting on/at the right *hand* of power | Mk.  16:19  he was received up to heaven and sat on/at the right *hand* of God. | Lk.  22:69  …shall the  Son of  man sit on/at the  right *hand* of the  power of God. |
| evk dexiw/n | evk dexiw/n | evk dexiw/n | evk dexiw/n |
| ek dexiōn | ek dexiōn | ek dexiōn | ek dexiōn |
| (out)of/at the right | (out)of/at the right | (out)of/at the right | (out)of/at the right |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Acts  2:33  Therefore being exalted to the right *hand* of God. | Acts  5:31  Him hath God exalted to [his] right *hand* | Acts  7:55-56  Jesus…. the Son of man **standing** on/at the right *hand* of God. |
| th/| dexia/| | th/| dexia/| auvtou/ | evk dexiw/n |
| tē  dexia | tē  dexia  autou | ek dexiōn |
| to the right | to his right | (out)of/at the right |

**[5]** Allusions to Ps 110:1 using en ‘in’ not ek, beginning at Rom 8:34 ‘in’ + ‘right *hand*’:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rom.  8:34  who is even in the right *hand* of God | Eph.  1:20  and sat *him* in his own right *hand* in the heavenlies. | Col.  3:1  where Christ is, sitting in the right *hand* of God. | Heb.  1:3  …purged out sins, sat *down* in the right *hand* of the Majesty on high |
| evn dexia/| | evn dexia/| | evn dexia/| | evn dexia/| |
| en  dexia | en  dexia | en  dexia | en  dexia |
| in the right | in the right | in the right | in the right |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Heb.  8:1  high priest, who is  seated in  the right *hand* of  the throne  of the Majesty in the heavens | Heb.  12:2  and sat him in the right *hand* of the throne of God. | 1 Pet.  3:22  Who is gone into heaven, and is in the right *hand* of God. | Rev. 3:21  am seated with my Father in his throne.  (Cp. Rev. 12:5) |
| evn dexia/| | evn dexia/| | evn dexia/| | evn tw/| qro,nw auvtou/| |
| en  dexia | en  dexia | en  dexia | en tō thronō autou |
| in the right | in the right | in the right | in his throne |

*Note*

I have italicised *hand* since ‘hand’ is not used with ‘right’ in the Hebrew or Greek texts. Except for reasons of space in the bottom (English translation) row of the tables, I have not eliminated ‘hand’ since there is a deep associative background between God’s ‘right’ and His ‘hand’ in the OT (e.g., Exod. 14-15.) Also, ‘hand’ in some other uses is understood (e.g., Gen. 48:13, 14; Matt. 27:29; Rev. 5:7.) This is an area for more precise determination. E.g., What has ‘the right of fellowship’ (Gal. 2:9), which does not contain ‘hand’, to do with Jesus being ‘in’ God’s right?

**Pre-Pauline Influences on Romans 10:3-8**

**Paul Wyns**

**Introduction**

A previous article concluded that Paul’s use of Deut 30:12-14 in Rom 10:3-8 can only be correctly understood against the backdrop of Hezekiah. Paul reads the covenant in Deuteronomy through the lens of Isaiah. We noted that Paul’s usage was not dependant on proverbial Second Temple Jewish tradition and stated that it was either totally unique—originating with Paul himself—**or it was a further development of existing Christian tradition.[[62]](#footnote-63)** This article will examine the hypothesis of possible development of existing Christian tradition and it will also re-examine the original Deuteronomic covenant in order to discover if Paul was theologically justified in re-casting Deut 30:12-14 within an Isaianic framework.

**Precursor Traditions**

The suggestion is that antecedent tradition existed that influenced Paul’s choice of Deut 30:12-14, in particular his use of Isaiah as an interpretive instrument through which to read the Deuteronomy text. Our hypothesis is that the choice of Isaiah as an interpretive lens can be traced directly back to the Baptist,[[63]](#footnote-64) who in turn influenced his disciples and even Jesus. The Baptist aligned himself with Isaiah’s “crying voice” (Matt 3:3), and introduced Jesus (John 1:35) to his **own disciples** using words that echo the description of the Servant of God in the Septuagint version of Isaiah: “Behold, the Lamb of God” (cf*.* Isa 53:4, 7, 12).

Moreover, of the two disciples who were thus introduced by the Baptist to Jesus, one of them is traditionally considered to be the author of the Fourth Gospel *and it is this Gospel* that frames the account of Jesus’ **public ministr**y with an *inclusio* using citations from Isaiah (commencing with John 1:23/Isa.40:3 and ending with John 12:38/Isa 53:1; John 12:40/Isa 6:9, 10). Luke’s gospel has Jesus commencing his public ministry by reading from Isa 61:1-2 (Luke 4:18-19) and his interchange with the disciples of the **imprisoned** Baptist, although not a citation, is also based on Isaiah, with the implicit understanding that the *captives would not be released* (Luke 3:20; 7:20-23 *cf*. Isa 61:2).[[64]](#footnote-65)

The earliest Christian traditions have John the Baptist employing Isaiah (Mark 1:2-3; Matt 3:3; Luke 3:4-6) and this obviously influenced early church thinking about Christ. The Johannine Gospel has four explicit quotes from Isaiah (nearly a quarter of his citations) but it has many allusions and echoes that are generally unrecognized. If the Fourth Gospel was early[[65]](#footnote-66) then it would have had a direct influence on Paul’s transformative quotation in Romans; even if the Fourth Gospel was a late writing, it still reflects the fact that the underlying Christian Isaianic thinking was early and directly attributable to the influence of John the Baptist. So it is entirely feasible that Paul was either influenced by the Fourth Gospel, or by the traditional Christian interpretations of Isaiah that formed the underlying Gospel sources.

**Isaiah and Hezekiah in the Fourth Gospel**

Our proposal is that Paul based his argument in Romans 10:3-8, not on proverbial tradition, but on John 3:12 which alludes to Isa 7:11. The discussion with Nicodemus concerns the origins not only of the Messiah but of every believer:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **John 3** | **Isaiah** |
| Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless **God is with him**. (v. 2) | Immanuel (7:14) **“God with us”** |
| Born from above (v. 3) the only begotten Son of God.(v. 18) | Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (7:14) |
| Born of water (v. 5) | Waters of (Shiloh) Siloam**:** Inasmuch as these people refused The waters of Shiloh that flow softly (8:6) |
| If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has **ascended** (avnabe,bhken) to heaven but He who **came down** (kataba,j)from heaven, *that is,* the Son of Man who is in heaven. (vv. 12-13) | Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God; ask it either in the **depth or in the height** above.” (7:11) |
| He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he **who does not believe** is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.(v. 18) | **If you will not believe**, Surely you shall not be established (7:9) |

In his commentary on Romans, E. Käsemann notes the pairing of the verbs anabai,nein (“ascend”) and katabai,nein (“come down”) not only at Rom 10:6-8 but also at John 1:51, 3:13.[[66]](#footnote-67) Käsemann considers that elements of Romans 10:6-8 betray a pre-Pauline “hymnic (or) liturgical text.” On the other hand it might be said that John 3:13 should be excluded from consideration, for although the schema at John 3:13 (down/up) is formally identical to that of Rom 10:6-7, it actually follows a reverse conceptual order from that of Paul (up/down). J. D. G. Dunn argues that the order is simply determined by the original order of the clauses in Deuteronomy.[[67]](#footnote-68) However, these points are insignificant when placed alongside the other evidence, which demonstrates forcefully that John and Paul based their narratives on Isaiah or, (if it existed at that time), that Paul used the Fourth Gospel.

**The Sending Formula**

The emphasis that Jesus was “sent” (John 3:17) is not uniquely Johannine,[[68]](#footnote-69) but the evangelist’s association with the waters of Siloam is unique (John 9:7). This clearly indicates that Jesus drew his metaphor from Isaiah who prophetically foretold Hezekiah’s birth.[[69]](#footnote-70) In earlier article, “Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:3-8”, we noted how Shiloh (Siloam) functioned metaphorically and typologically for faith in the Davidic covenant – reflected in the fountain that feeds the pool. The evangelist takes pains to instruct us that Siloam means (avpestalme,noj) “sent.” The **blind man** was made to wash at the pool of Siloam (John 9:7).

Similarly, Paul interjects, “How shall they preach [the Gospel] unless they are sent?” (Rom 10:15), and “blindness in part has happened to Israel” (Rom 11:25), for they have “eyes that do not see” (Rom 11:8 citing Isa 29:10/Isa 6:9, *cf.* Deut 29:4).

The major theme of the Fourth Gospel is the legitimacy and origin of the Messiah:

Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. ‘But I know Him, for I am from Him, and **He sent Me**. John 7:28-29

Jesus’ cry happened on the great day of the Feast of Tabernacles on which, traditionally, a water pouring ceremony was carried out on the base of the altar with water that was carried from the pool of Siloam.[[70]](#footnote-71) Dunn insists that Paul and his readers thought of Jesus (“the Sent One”) simply in terms of a divine commission rather than any divine incarnation[[71]](#footnote-72) — the Fourth evangelist thought of Jesus in the same terms. Our conclusion so far must be that Romans, John and Isaiah are in harmony – the background is the birth of Hezekiah, the suffering servant, who functioned as a proto-type for the Messiah.

**Theological Justification**

Paul’s omission of a requirement to “do the law” and his statement that Christ is the “end of the Law” (te,loj)**[[72]](#footnote-73)** is thought to introduce such a radical discontinuity that it is often rejected, leaving Paul open to accusations of dishonestly manipulating scripture when he cites the Law. However, this fails to recognize that the Deuteronomic covenant is not a simple re-iteration of the Siniatic covenant:

These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, **besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb**. Deut.29:1

The Deuteronomic covenant anticipated Israel’s failure to keep the Law – it envisaged a recall from an exile that would occur as a result of apostasy. Moreover, when it was given, the people were on the border of the land and they were required to circumcise the generation born in the wilderness because the rite had been neglected (Josh 5:2-9). The neglect was in fact an outright rejection of the Abrahamic covenant, but God’s covenant with Israel was not contingent upon Israel’s obedience.[[73]](#footnote-74) Even when faced with national disobedience God would remain faithful to his covenant promises.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ABRAHAMIC COVENANT (Genesis) | **DEUTERONOMY 29-33** |
| And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to **be a God unto thee,** and to thy seed after thee (17:7) | That he may establish thee today for a people unto himself, and that he **may be unto thee a God**, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob (29:13) |
| And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.  This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me **and you and thy seed after thee** (17:9-10) | Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath; But with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, **and also with him that is not here with us this day** (29:14-15) |
| Jehovah–Jireh [means “Yahweh will be revealed”] (22:14) Walk before me, and be thou perfect (17:1). Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge (26:4-5) | The **secret things** belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which **are revealed** belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may **do all the words of this Law** (29:29) |
| That in blessing I will bless thee, and in **multiplying I will multiply** thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies (22:17) | And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, **and multiply thee** above thy fathers (30:5) |
| And ye shall **circumcise the flesh** of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you (17:11) | And the Lord thy God will **circumcise thine heart**, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live (30:6) |
| And I will bless them that bless thee, and **curse him** that curseth thee (12:3) | And the Lord thy God will put all **these curses** upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee (30:7) |

Paul’s choice of the Deuteronomy text was therefore quite deliberate- it spoke of Israel’s failure to keep the Law; it anticipated future apostasy and exile (an inability to externalize righteousness by Law-keeping); and finally, it acknowledged that admission into “their rest” could only occur under the Abrahamic covenant. Moreover, the requirement to “do it” (the Law) was met by Abraham **before the law even existed.** Abraham “kept the Law” proleptically – this is reflected in Gen 26:4-5, where God promises to bless Isaac’s seed because: “Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws”. This verse is unique in that it contains the first occurrence in the Bible of the four words to describe the Law: charge (*mishmereth*), statute (*chaqah*), commandments (*misvah*) and laws (*torah*). All these words are first associated with Abraham **and not with Moses***.* The Abrahamic covenant was therefore definitive for Paul’s understanding of the Law.

For Paul, Abraham’s belief in the covenant righteousness of God is the true essence of keeping the Law. Paul marries the Abrahamic and Davidic covenant promises by referring to their establishment through belief (Rom 10:3/Isa.7:9/Gen 15:6). The “doing of the Law” transcends the limitations of Law-keeping and epitomizes the New Covenant of Jer 31:33 (of which it was always a part). This is a covenant of obedience and acknowledgement of Christ, by confessing with the mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing with the heart that God has raised Jesus.[[74]](#footnote-75)

Righteousness cannot be established by human effort. Seeking equality with God through the Law will not work (Gen 3:5); moreover, it is an act of *hubris* to exalt oneself (ascending to heaven—Isa 14:13) against the Lord and his anointed. It is not only impossible (as raising Christ again would be), but totally unnecessary to attempt such extreme measures (to go to the heights/depths) to achieve righteousness, for God has already established covenant righteousness—as he demonstrated with a sign in the heights (heavenly origins) and the depths (resurrection) concerning the Messiah.

**Conclusion**

Pauline theology is complex, subtle and polyvalent. It is placed firmly within the matrix of the Old Testament. He did not distort the Deuteronomy text; rather, by employing the Isaiah oracle as a refractive lens, Paul placed it within a wider covenant context and pointed it to its natural conclusion – Christ “the end of the Law for (self) righteousness”.

### **Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego**

**Tom Gaston**

**Introduction**

With the archeological discoveries of the 19c., there was a great interest and much ink expended in correlating the Biblical accounts with archeological data. The book of Daniel was no exception and discoveries such as the name of Belshazzar on clay cylinders at Tell Muquyyar was used in defense of the Daniel’s historicity. However, 19c. German critical scholars persuaded the Anglo-Saxon scholarship of the time against the traditional date for the composition of Daniel. Today many scholars regard the question of dating as concluded, and believe that the book is a Maccabean pseudograph. Thus they have simply stopped looking for historical correlations. Nevertheless some conservative historians continue to link biblical events with archeological discoveries.

According to the book of Daniel, when Daniel and his three friends arrive in Babylon they are each given a Babylonian name. Daniel is named Belteshazzar, Hananiah is named Shadrach, Mishael is named Meshach, and Azariah is named Abed-Nego (Dan 1:7). These four serve Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 1:19) and are each promoted to high office. Daniel is made “ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon” (Dan 2:48), and the other three are also appointed as officials in province of Babylon (Dan 2:49, 3:30).

In 1982, W. H. Shea presented a paper[[75]](#footnote-76) in which he proposed that the names of Daniel’s three friends could be identified on a cuneiform text known as the *Istanbul Prism.*[[76]](#footnote-77)This thesis has been welcomed enthusiastically by evangelicals[[77]](#footnote-78) (not to mention a host of internet apologists), though it is less frequently cited by conservative scholars. Critical scholars have almost entirely overlooked Shea’s proposition; the one exception is J. J. Collins, who briskly dismisses Shea’s identifications.[[78]](#footnote-79) Despite this mixed (!) reception, Shea’s proposition remains an intriguing hypothesis and is worthy of some consideration.

**The Istanbul Prism**

The *Istanbul Prism* contains a list of officials from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. D. J. Wiseman states that the prismseems to have been “drawn up to record a procession to commemorate a special occasion”,[[79]](#footnote-80) though we are currently unaware as to what that occasion might have been. Shea’s own thesis places the composition of the *Istanbul Prism* at the time of the events of Daniel 3.

Using the evidence of Nebuchadnezzar’s Chronicle, Shea establishes that there was a revolt in Nebuchadnezzar’s tenth year (circa. January 594 B.C.E.). He suggests that references to Zedekiah going to Babylon early in 593 B.C.E. (Jer 51:59-64) might imply a large gathering of vassal kings. That Nebuchadnezzar took his army westward in late 594 may have been for the very purpose of gathering these vassal kings. Shea connects all these events with Dan 3:1-3, where it is recorded that Nebuchadnezzar erected a large statue on the plain of Dura and sent for “all the officials of the provinces” to come attend the dedication. Shea reasons that the revolt against Nebuchadnezzar in 594 prompted him to review all his officials (and possibly replace them), and to reassert his authority over his vassal kings, and this reaffirmation of their loyalty was the purpose of the erection of the statue on the plain of Dura.[[80]](#footnote-81) The *Istanbul Prism* would be the record of those officials and kings who affirmed their allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar.

The prism is not dated and neither are the events recorded in Daniel 3, so we lack positive confirmation of Shea’s thesis; but there are some details that make it probable that the *Istanbul Prism* was a loyalty oath following a revolt. First there is the comprehensive nature of list, which is incomparable with any other list of officials from Mesopotamia. Second, there is the opening statement of the list, which reads: “I ordered the (following) court officials in exercises of (their) duties to take up position in my (official) suite”. As Shea points out, this implies that all the officials listed were appointed, or at least reappointed, at the same time.[[81]](#footnote-82) That the text gives “at least a representative sampling of officials from the major echelons of civil servants and from many of the areas under the control of the government of Babylon”[[82]](#footnote-83) suggests that these appointments represented a major overhaul of the government of Babylon. Thirdly, the fact that the foreign kings are included in the list suggests that this overhaul was far wider that just administrative positions. That Zedekiah did indeed rebel against Nebuchadnezzar a few years later vindicates Nebuchadnezzar’s concern regarding the loyalty of his vassals.

Whether or not Shea is correct to link the prism with the events of Daniel 3, he does provide an interesting analysis of some of the names contained on the prism. This includes possibility that Shadrach, Meshech and Abed-Nego are named on the prism.

**Hananiah / Shadrach**

One of the court officials (*mašennim*) listed on the prism is “Hanunu, chief of the royal merchants”.

The name ‘Hanunu’ is not Babylonian in origin, but Western Semitic. A. L. Oppenheim called it “a typical Phoenician name”,[[83]](#footnote-84) but Shea argues that the name could also be Jewish in origin. ‘Hanunu’ is philologically the same as the Jewish name ‘Hanani’ (lit. ‘gracious’), which is the same name as ‘Hananiah’ (lit. ‘Yah is gracious’), except for the Yahwistic element (i.e. the ‘iah’ ending).[[84]](#footnote-85)

As well as sharing etymology, the names ‘Hanani’ and ‘Hananiah’ are used synonymously. This Shea demonstrates by reference to the *Elephantine Papyi* (nos. 21, 30, 31, 33 and 38) dating from the fifth century B. C. E., which refer to a significant individual in a Jewish community who is designated in the texts as both ‘Hanani’ and ‘Hananiah’. Another example of synonymous use is Neh 7:2, which describes a single individual (“a faithful man”) while seemingly using two names: ‘Hanani’ and ‘Hananiah’.[[85]](#footnote-86) We may, therefore, account for the difference between the name recorded on the prism (‘Hanunu’) and the name recorded in Daniel (‘Hananiah’). It is realistic to suppose that the Babylonian scribes would have sought to suppress the Yahwistic element in Hananiah’s name, while the author of Daniel would have wished to include the element.

Collins objects to the identification of Hanunu with Hananiah, saying “it would be anomalous to have the Hebrew name listed, and Shea must further assume that it as modified by dropping the theophoric ending”.[[86]](#footnote-87) However, neither of these objections is decisive. Firstly, it is a matter of fact that a Semitic name is listed on the *Istanbul Prism.* Secondly, since it is clear that Hanani and Hananiah were used synonymously, Shea’s claim about the omission of “the theophoric ending” (i.e. ‘-iah’) is a valid assumption.

Why it is that Hananiah should be listed on the *Istanbul Prism* by his Hebrew name, instead of his Babylonian (‘Shadrach’), is not clear, but the presence of a Semitic name on the prism is significant and provides evidence of foreigners holding high-rank in Babylonia.

**Azariah / Abed-Nego**

On the basis that a Jewish writer would wish to suppress reference to Babylonian gods in the names of Jewish heroes, it has long been hypothesized that the original form of the name ‘Abed-Nego’ was ‘Abed-Nebo’, after Nebo (or Nabu) the Babylonian god (patron of writing and vegetation). ‘Abed-Nego’, then, would literally mean ‘servant of Nebo’, from db[ (*abd*) meaning ‘servant’.[[87]](#footnote-88)

On the prism we find the entry “Ardi-Nabu, secretary of the crown prince”, and ‘Ardi-Nabu’ means ‘servant of Nebo’. The Akkadian word for ‘servant’ at this time was *ardu*, which would be translated in Western Semitic languages by db[*.* ‘Abed-Nebo’ would then be a translation, rather than a transliteration, of the name ‘Ardi-Nabu’.[[88]](#footnote-89) Collins assents to the correspondence between these two names, though only allows that this is witness to the name, not the individual.[[89]](#footnote-90)

It is interesting to note that the crown prince at the time, to whom Ardi-Nabu was secretary, would have been Amêl-Marduk (Evil-Merodach) who is recorded as treating Jehoiachin favourably, the former king of Judah (2 Kgs 25:27-28). Could it have been the influence of a Jewish secretary that prompted this favourable treatment?

**Mishael / Meshach**

Shea admits that his identification for Mishael is more tentative. The identification he proposes is with Mušallim-Marduk, one of the overseers of the slave girls.

The name ‘Meshach’ (*Mešak*) is similar to ‘Mishael’ (*Mišael*) with the exception of the final element. The ‘-el’ stands for ‘God’ in Mishael’s name (lit. ‘who is like God’) and it is reasonable to suppose that when Mishael’s name was changed the intention was to suppress or replace this element. Shea proposes that this final element could have been replaced by a reference to the Babylonian god Marduk, as is implied by the final element of Meshach (‘k’). Mishael’s Babylonian name would thus be Miša-Marduk, perhaps shortened to Meshach (**Miša**[-Mardu]**k**) by the Jewish author to avoid reference to the Babylonian god. However, Shea writes “better sense can be made out of this name if the whole Hebrew name Mišael is adapted into the participial form of *mušallim*”.[[90]](#footnote-91)

Collins’ accusation that this identification is “far-fetched”[[91]](#footnote-92) is perhaps too harsh. The names are, at least, semantically related—‘Mishael’ meaning ‘who is like El’ and ‘Mušallim-Marduk’ meaning ‘who is like Marduk’. Shea relates these two names on the assumption that the Babylonian officials would have wished to transpose ‘Marduk’ for ‘El’, which, while not implausible, is without positive evidence. Even granting this assumption, we still require a leap of imagination to account for the fact that the Jewish writer transliterated ‘Mušallim-Marduk’ in the abbreviated form ‘Meshach’. In any case, the name ‘Mušallim-Marduk’ is too common for this individual to be definitively identified with the Mishael of Daniel.

**Daniel / Belteshazzar (omitted)**

In Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar explains that Daniel is named Belteshazzar “according to the name of my god” (Dan 4:8). It has previously been assumed that the intended god in this instance was Bel and since the name was understood as a transliteration of *balatšu-usur* (lit. ‘may he protect his life’), the explanation of Daniel 4 has been described as “false etymology”.[[92]](#footnote-93) However Millard provides an alternative suggestion, proposing that Belteshazzar is a transliteration of *bēlēt-šar-usur*, literally ‘Lady, protect the king’. He explains that Bēlēt was “a title for the wife of Marduk or Bel, the patron of Babylon”.[[93]](#footnote-94)

There is no reference to either Daniel or Belteshazzar on the *Istanbul Prism* and any attempt to link either name to any of the entries on the prism would be highly dubious.[[94]](#footnote-95) It is possible that Daniel’s entry has been lost since the prism is damaged[[95]](#footnote-96) and the office of ‘chief over the wise men’ is not included on the prism. Yet the omission of Daniel from the prism is consistent with Shea’s theory since Daniel is conspicuously absent from the events recorded in chapter 3, though there is no indication in the chapter as to why he should have been absent.

**Conclusion**

Seeking to identify Biblical characters in non-Semitic texts is a tentative exercise as it is not always clear how the foreign scribe would have rendered Semitic names. In this case the problem is compounded by the double names of the characters and the real possibility that the Jewish renderings of their Babylonian names are imperfect or intentionally corrupted (to disguise references to foreign gods). The Semitic names Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah are quite common and so we must approach any identification with caution.

The thesis Shea proposes is intriguing and plausible. Though the identification between Mušallim-Marduk and Mishael is problematic, the other two identifications are reasonable. However, as Collins notes, the identification cannot be conclusive beyond equating the names; the critical scholar can legitimately respond that this is just some other Hanunu and Ardi-Nabu. It is significant that these two names are found on the same tablet but further than this we cannot go.

Whether or not Shea is correct, the *Istanbul Prism* still provides some useful conclusions. Firstly, the presence of a Western Semitic name on the prism indicates that foreigners were engaged as high officials in the Babylonian administration and corroborates the idea of Daniel’s appointment at the court of Nebuchadnezzar. Secondly, the name ‘Ardi-Nabu’ validates the mention of Abednego in Daniel as historically credible.

**Marginal Notes**

**2 Samuel 7:19— PW/AP**

And yet this was a small thing in your sight, O Lord God; and you have also spoken of your servant's house for a great while to come. *Is* this the manner of man, O Lord God?2 Sam 7:19 (NKJV)

P. Wyns suggests in “Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:3-8”[[96]](#footnote-97) that the question in Rom 3:27, “By what law?”, echoes2 Sam 7:19,“Is this the manner of man?”. The Hebrew of the phrase is,

~dah trwt tazw

*wezō’t tôrat hā’ādām*

The phrase is literally, “and this—law of men”, which is naturally taken to be a question. Wyns notes that although English versions remove a reference to a “law”, the LXX preserves a reference to a “law”.

Whereas I was very little before thee, O Lord, my Lord, yet thou spokest concerning the house of thy servant for a long time *to come*. And *is* this the law of man, O Lord, my Lord? 2 Sam 7:19 (LXE)

R. Alter translates the phrase as “This is a man’s instruction”, but admits that “this is no more than an interpretive guess, for the meaning of the Hebrew is obscure”.[[97]](#footnote-98) The NIV has “Is this your usual way of dealing with man?” and the NRSV renders the phrase as “May this be the instruction for the people”. The RSV might appear to omit the phrase completely because it has “and hast shown me future generations”. However, here the RSV is regarding the Hebrew as corrupt and relying on an emended text suggested by scholars such as S. R. Driver.[[98]](#footnote-99)

The obscurity that Alter mentions is not an obscurity about words—the Hebrew phrase has four common words which are literally “and this—law of men”. Hence, while H. A. Whittaker; observes that the phrase is a “trial to interpreters”, he translates the phrase as “the law of the man” which is possible.[[99]](#footnote-100) The obscurity for scholars, on the other hand, is *about what is being said*. The question form is often inferred in Hebrew clauses, and the phrase “and this—law of men” would naturally suggest a question such as, “And is this a law of men?”; hence, the NIV has a question form. However, other versions do not interpret the phrase as a question, and so the NRSV makes the phrase into an expression of hope on the part of David, and the NASB makes the phrase a declaration: “And this is the custom of man”.

W. C. Kaiser paraphrases 2 Sam 7:19 as a declaration: “This is the charter by which humanity will be directed”. [[100]](#footnote-101) Taking Kaiser’s line, the Samuel passage highlights the Davidic Covenant, with its messianic implications, as the foundation for all subsequent working of God in history. 2 Samuel 7 becomes, with the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12, 15 and 17), the universal “charter” by which Yahweh will confirm the universal promise of blessing to all nations.

Driver states that the best explanation of 2 Sam 7:19 that had been so far offered in his day interpreted David as saying that God had evinced a regard for him in accordance with a law prescribed by God himself that regulated the dealings of men with one another.[[101]](#footnote-102) Driver rejects this explanation because ideas of “manner” and “custom” are not regular senses for the Hebrew word *torah*; he thinks the Hebrew text in this phrase is corrupt.

With any suspected corruption in the Hebrew text in Samuel-Kings, scholars examine the parallel text (if there is one) in Chronicles. The Chronicler’s parallel line reads in the NIV as, “You have looked on me as though I were the most exalted of men”; the NRSV has “You regard me as someone of high rank”. However, these proposals betray significant interpretative choices by the translators. The Hebrew could well mean, “You have regarded me as a turtledove of men of high degree” (cf. Ps 74:19). Such a figure could cause a literally minded translator to pursue other translation choices. Whittaker offers, “Thou hast caused me to see according to the law of the man of the ascent”,[[102]](#footnote-103) although ‘law’ is not in the existing Hebrew text.Certainly ‘ascent’ is possible rather than ‘high degree’.

Driver considers the parallel text in 1 Chron 17:17 to be “more obscure”[[103]](#footnote-104) than 2 Sam 7:19 and similarly corrupt. He “corrects” the Hebrew of 1 Chron 17:17 to give the English sense, “and hast let me see the generations of men”. The “correction” of Hebrew might be proposed on various grounds including suggestions that substitute similar shaped consonants which result in the text having a different word. This is what Driver is essentially doing in this text and by changing one consonant he can eliminate a phrase that appears to be “as a turtledove” to “generations”. With another change to the person of the same verb from “You regard me” to “You have let me see”, Driver has engineered “and hast let me see the generations of men”. The RSV follows Driver’s approach and has “and hast shown me future generations” in 1 Chron 17:17; it then substitutes this phrase from 1 Chronicles into 2 Samuel (regardless of 2 Samuel’s actual Hebrew).

In conclusion, we can argue that Paul’s quotation of 2 Sam 7:19 in Rom 3:27—“By what law?” interprets the Hebrew as a question, retains the semantic ingredients of “law” and “men” and allows readers today to arbitrate among the various competing modern translations.

The last three months has seen a large increase in the number of subscribers as a result of one brother emailing his own contacts list with an advert about the EJournal. As we do not advertise, we are always grateful for such support, as we rely on word of mouth for disseminating the EJournal.

This issue is the first that will be sent via Google Groups. Ironically, if you do not receive it, you should e-mail us and we will re-send the issue and check out Google Groups for future distribution.

**Supplement**

This supplement discusses a topic in Biblical Apologetics: Noah’s Flood. There are those who argue that Noah’s Flood was global; here we present the alternative view that it was a local catastrophic event in history. Articles are invited from anyone who would like to explore the global case.

**Geographical Perspectives in Genesis 2-6**

**Andrew Perry**

**Introduction**

A common objection against fundamentalist Christians is that they believe in a “god of the gaps”. Non-believers accuse fundamentalists of shifting their interpretation of the Bible in respect of the creation and the flood accounts to avoid scientific objections. They credit God with what Science has not explained. The counter-argument to this accusation is that while Science has shown some interpretations of Genesis to be untenable, this does not mean that the Genesis account is untrue *per se*. In the 19c., as uniformitarian geology argued the case for an “old earth” and a long period of time for the geologic column, Flood Geology fell by the wayside and the “global flood” interpretation was challenged by the interpretation that Genesis in fact described a local flood. This development might look like a retreat to the “gap” of an unproveable or “easier to prove” local flood theory, or it might be a false interpretation finally dying the death and thereby allowing a true interpretation to emerge. This is a matter of spin.

Whether the Genesis flood was local or global is just a matter of biblical interpretation. The case for a local flood is centred on the analysis of “perspective” in narrative. There is the perspective of the narrator and that of the principal characters—Yahweh and Noah. These perspectives are their respective horizons and points of view on the situation of which they are a part. The perspective to determine when deciding for or against a local flood is geographical, both human and physical.

**Narrator Perspective**

The “narrator” tells the story and the author writes the narrator into his story. With Genesis, scholars identify sources and hypothesize about a long transmission of story from oral to written form with editorial work along the way. Unless we work with the final form in the MT, such a transmission affects what can be said about the “narrator”. That person may evolve as the story evolves. However, we do not need to enter into source-critical issues about the flood account. We can attribute to the earliest incarnation of the narrator a post-flood perspective in matters of geography when describing the situation prior to the flood.

This result in analysis is significant for the question of the scope of the flood. The effect of a global flood would not leave the geography intact across this event. Without speculating about the mechanisms of global flood theories (e.g. plate tectonic theories, water canopy theories), the changes envisaged are *all-encompassing* as regards any possible geographical continuity. It would seem then that the inclusion of a *local geographical perspective* in the opening account (Gen 6:1-4) on the part of the narrator is an indicator to the reader to adopt such a view.

1) Continuity in geography is implied before Genesis 6 in the story of the Garden of Eden. Eden is described in terms of later naming conventions and economic activity. For instance, the name of “Assyria” or “Ashur” (Gen 2:14) is one that derives from the history following Nimrod’s descendants in Mesopotamia (Gen 10:8-11), and the name of “Cush” reflects the same post-flood development of nations in which “Cush” is a regional name in Northern Mesopotamia rather than its later denomination of the lower Nile. In addition, the courses of the rivers applied in the Edenic story are those of the post-flood world, which again suggests continuity in such aspects as the location of mountain ranges, watersheds and basins. The economic activity of the regions also betrays a later point of view, and this is one in which gold and precious stones are valued. Such valuation implies trade and commerce, and given the use of the names of nations, the description of Eden is complete as one given from the post-flood (post-Babel) point of view. This is an illustration of the harmony of the various stories in Genesis 1-11.

The perspective of the narrator is from a later time, and the continuity implied is one that permits the application of names and descriptions to regions and their characteristics. This kind of continuity is about physical geography rather than human geography. It is not implied that Assyria or Cush existed as nations in the days of Adam and Eve. For our purposes an implication about continuity of topography is a significant for how you read the flood account. It directs the reader to suppose that the gross physical geography was unaffected by the flood. Rivers remained where they were before and after the flood; land was in the same place, mountains, *and so on*.

The traditional ascription of authorship of Genesis to Moses is not required by our argument. In any event, such an ascription does not preclude Moses’ use of earlier traditions handed down by the patriarchal family. All our argument so far achieves is the identification of a narrator who has a post-flood outlook on the earliest primeval history.

2) The next perspective of the narrator to consider is the “father of” perspective. Necessarily, when a text attributes to an individual the distinction of being the father of a people or a way of life, then this implies that sufficient time has passed for such a people to come into existence or a way of life to become characteristic of a group of people. In the story of Cain and Abel we have “father of” statements. Jabal is the “father of” tent dwellers and cattle (Gen 4:20). This implies a time gap between the narrator’s position and the birth of Jabal—sufficient time for a people to grow up and choose a way of life centred on domestic husbandry. The same point applies to Jubal who is the “father of” all who handle the harp and organ (Gen 4:21): there is distance between the narrator and Jubal because not only has Jubal to be born and give rise to a people, musical instruments have to be invented and economic activity has to be such as to support the leisure activity of music.

The position in time of the narrator in this account is not necessarily after the flood. As far as the detail goes, the narrator’s perspective could be centred from before the flood—these characteristic groups could well be pre-diluvian. There is sufficient time before the flood for such developments. There is an absence of geographical indicators which would give away the later post-flood perspective which can be seen in Genesis 2. The only candidate is the reference to the “land of Nod” which carries the meaning “land of wandering” and is symbolic of Cain’s wandering; this is not a geographical term that appears in later scripture.

Of course, if Moses was the author of the Cain and Abel account, and did not use early tradition, the perspective of the narrator would plausibly be ascribed to him. It would be his point of view that Jabal was the father of tent-dwellers. This seems an unlikely viewpoint for Moses given that the patriarchal family and the Israelites were tent-dwellers. There is therefore an argument here that if Moses authored Genesis in some sense, he was using early traditions.

While critical scholars would not argue that Moses was “the author” of Genesis, this does not affect the value of our observation about the narrator in Genesis 4. If first century Jews believed that Moses was the author of Genesis, our argument about the narrator in Genesis 4 is the sort of argument that they could have developed to show that Moses used earlier traditions. Thus, if we were first century readers of the Torah, we could well have regarded the Cain and Abel story to be older than the second creation account, while accepting that the whole tapestry was inspired and from the hand of Moses in some final sense.

**The Face of the Eretz**

It is well known that the Hebrew *eretz* can be “earth, land, ground or country”. How it is translated affects the reading of a story and gives the reader a false or true perspective.

1) The first occurrence of the phrase, “face of the *eretz*”, is in Gen 2:6 and, given the agricultural context in v. 5, the correct reading is “face of the ground” or “face of the land”. It is important to note the agricultural context of v. 5 as this sets the scope of *eretz* to be “the land” viewed as that which is tilled and under cultivation.

In agricultural terms, rain is critical and drought is a serious problem. From this perspective, the narrator is describing the situation in Eden as one of drought in terms of rainfall, but one in which there arose each day a mist from the ground,[[104]](#footnote-105) suggesting a damp fog arising from a high water table or dew. In his view, there was no man to till the *ertez*.

When Cain says, “Behold, thou hast driven me this day away from the face of the ground” (*eretz*, Gen 4:14, RSV), he is betraying his perspective of “the land which my family farms” (to use modern terms). The expression “face of the *eretz*” is the land which men farm. This interpretation is in keeping with the emphasis of the curse that men should till the ground, although in Gen 3:17 the word translated “ground” is *adamah*.

2) The land can support people who live “off the land”—subsistence farmers. The next occurrence of “face of the *eretz*” is Gen 6:1, “when men began to multiply on the face of the land”. This detail continues the perspective of men living off the land, but the detail also echoes the fact that Cain had been banished from the face of the land. The intimation of the text is that there was pressure on the land to support the growing population.

At this time “the daughters of men” are taken by the sons of God and God’s spirit in his prophets strove against this practise. The continuance of their behaviour led to God’s pronouncement limiting their days.

3) Those tending the land are not the only group on the scene in Genesis 6. There are also the “giants” (KJV) but this is a misleading translation. Although the KJV has translated the Hebrew as “giants”, this is a reflection of the LXX translation of the Hebrew *nephilim* (~ylypn), and a more accurate rendering would be something like “those who fall upon”, i.e. marauders. This kind of person is precisely the opposite of those who tend the land and they are traditional enemies of those who farm. They are those who prey upon the settled populace, murder and steal arable produce and livestock in order to live. Their presence in Genesis 6 is a typical concern of a narrator whose outlook is agricultural rather than, say, nomadic.

We can see the narrator’s post-flood perspective in his mention of the “sons of God” before the flood and also *after* the flood:

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose…

…There were giants in the earth in those days; (and also after that (!k yrxa ~g), when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men, which *were* of old, men of renown). Gen 6:1-4 (KJV revised)[[105]](#footnote-106)

The passage says “and also after that” – i.e. after those days before the flood – there were sons of God who came unto the daughters of men and who subsequently bore “mighty men of old” and “men of renown”. These mighty men are compared to the “marauders” before the flood. This remark indicates the narrator’s perspective in that he is aware of marauders in his day and he is aware of the earlier sons of God and what happened to their agricultural way of life.

If we adopt a first century perspective on the Torah, this observation can be used to support the proposition that Moses used early traditions. An agricultural perspective and a concern about marauders would be typical for a settled community rather than the wilderness Israelites. The narrator of the opening flood account reflects such a background and this indicates something of the scale of the flood—it affected the land upon which his characters depended for their livelihood.

**The Nephilim**

The Hebrew *nephilim* only occurs elsewhere in Numbers:

And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, *which come* of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. Num 13:33 (KJV)

This passage states that the sons of Anak were of the *nephilim* as well as being the *nephilim*. Are these related to the *nephilim* of Genesis 6? Against an equation is the fact that the locale for Genesis 6 is Mesopotamia whereas in Numbers 13 it is Canaan. Further, the *nephilim* are now settled dwelling in cities rather than marauders. However, these differences are not decisive because after Babel there was migration and a settling of nations. The *nephilim* of Numbers 13 could be the descendents of Mesopotamians.

A detail is added in Genesis 6—the *nephilim* after the flood are “mighty men of old”. This is another indicator for the perspective of the narrator and, plausibly, of the author. From his vantage point, the *nephilim* after the flood were “of old”. This places the narrator at some distance from the generation that gave birth to the *nephilim*, but “of old”is an elastic expression.

The “days of old” in Deut 32:7 are the days of Babel; in Josh 24:2 they are the days of Terah and Abraham. In both these cases the days of old are Mesopotamian days. Does the narrator see the “mighty men of old” as men from the Mesopotamian days of Babel? The argument in favour of this conclusion is a comparison between Babel and the flood:

(i) In both cases there are two genealogical strands – Cain and Seth in Genesis 4-5 and Shem, Japheth and Ham in Genesis 10- 11.[[106]](#footnote-107)

(ii) There is violence in Genesis 6 and there is a beginning of violence with Nimrod who is described as a “mighty one” — “And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth” (Gen 10:8).

(iii) Imagination and thoughts are features of both times (Gen 6:5, 11:6)

We can suggest therefore that the perspective of the narrator in Gen 6:1-4 is of someone after Babel looking back upon the flood and seeing a comparison between the mighty men before the flood who pillaged the landed community and the mighty men who had built the cities of Mesopotamia; these men were scattered after Babel and some ended up in Canaan. This is a very local perspective on the flood.

**Conclusion**

The opening of the flood account is Mesopotamian in perspective. This is indicated by the expression “face of the land” which indicates an agricultural view. The geographical perspective of the narrator is local to the Near East and the days of old in Mesopotamia. While English versions use “earth” for *eretz*, and thereby contribute to a global view of the flood, the key opening Hebrew phrase of the account suggests a flood local to Mesopotamia.

**Mesopotamian Local Floods**

**Andrew Perry**

The local flood interpretation of Genesis 6-8 has biblical and non-biblical support. In this article we will set out the case for a local flood using an historical argument. It will be evident that we regard the Genesis story as true, but this point of view is not presupposed in our analysis.

The Genesis story is set in a Mesopotamian locale insofar as the “foothills of Ararat”[[107]](#footnote-108) are mentioned as the resting place of the ark (Gen 8:4). This indicates to the reader the fact that the flood concerned Mesopotamia. The existence of other accounts of a great flood in this region supports this presumption; these other accounts do not betray a global perspective. We can see this if we compare the various accounts.

While the Mesopotamian flood stories have been dismissed as non-historical and categories such as “myth” and “legend” have been applied to them, this is a discussion that we do not need to enter for our purposes. Our argument is that they are evidence for the *fact* of a catastrophic flood in the region, whether or not we regard any or most elements in the story as a-historical. Their witness to the fact of a local widespread flood is a strong argument for the view that the Genesis account is likewise a story a local flood.

**Gilgamesh**

The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic is well known and we cannot review its content here; our purpose is to point up the local perspective of that part of the story that relates to a Mesopotamian flood.[[108]](#footnote-109) The following points indicate the local perspective:

* Utnapishtim, the hero, is a resident of Shuruppak, a city on the Euphrates. The gods responsible for the deluge were worshipped in this city (XI.11-14).
* Utnapishtim asks about the reasons for the forthcoming deluge and is informed by Ea, his god, that another god, Enlil, hates him and he has to leave the city and go to a subterranean place where Ea dwells; he cannot go to the land of Enlil. The rain of the flood will come upon the men of Shurippak (XI. 38-47).
* Utnapishtim states, “Whatever I had of the seed of all living creatures [I loaded] aboard her” (XI.83); that is, the animals local to him were loaded on a ship.
* A violent storm begins the deluge and the gods are involved. For example, Ninurtu, the god of the wells and irrigation works causes the dykes to give way (XI.102). The involvement of this god gives a local scope to the flood insofar as it is important to state that the irrigation canals were overrun.
* The scope of the flood is “the land”; the “land” is broken like a pot (XI.107); the “land” is lit up by lightening (XI.104); the flood overwhelms the “land” (XI.128).
* After seven days, the flood “subsides”, a description which indicates a local flood receding (XI. 130).
* After the storm, Utnapishtim looks out of the window of the ship and sees on the horizon a stretch of land; the ship sets down on Mount Nişir, a mountain known to Utnapishtim before the flood (XI.139-140). Utnapishtim comments that “all mankind has turned to clay” (XI.133).
* After the flood, and after sacrificing to the gods, Utnapishtim says of Enlil, the god who brought about the deluge—“...without reflection he brought on the deluge and consigned my people to destruction” (XI.168-169). His focus is *his* people.
* Ea discusses the action of Enlil in bringing about the flood and says to Enlil at one point, “instead of thy sending a deluge, would that a famine had occurred and [destroyed] the land” (XI.184). The possibility that a famine could have served the purpose indicates a local scope.
* Utnapishtim is made to settle down after the flood at the “mouth of the rivers” (XI.195).

These details show the local scope of the flood and this delimits the scope of statements like “all mankind has turned to clay” (XI.133) and the “seed of all living creatures” was loaded onto the ship (XI.83).

There are many details in the Gilgamesh story of the flood that parallel the OT account as well as details that do not correspond.[[109]](#footnote-110) The similarities are about the sequence of events, story details such as the window, the raven, the sacrifice; the differences are in details such as the size of the ship, the length of the storm and how many were aboard the ship. The relationship between the two accounts is outside the remit of this article. Our point is that there is a *fact* of the flood indicated in the two accounts and Gilgamesh is clearly a local flood. This suggests that the Genesis story is likewise a local flood account.

**Story of Ziusudra**

This Sumerian account is very fragmentary, but it tells the story of Ziusudra a king-priest of the Mesopotamian city of Shuruppak.[[110]](#footnote-111) The “Sumerian King List” lists Shuruppak as one of the five cities of Sumer, and after listing eight kings over these cities it states, “(Then) the Flood swept over (the earth). After the Flood had swept over (the earth) (and) when kingship was lowered (again) from heaven, kingship was (first) in Kish”; it then lists post-diluvian kings.[[111]](#footnote-112) This gives a chronological placement of the flood in relation to Sumerian kings and the land of Sumer. As evidence of the *fact* of the flood, it bears some weight as the mention of the flood is unencumbered by the story-teller’s art.

The local detail that we have in the Story of Ziusudra is as follows:

* The flood sweeps over the “cult-centres”, i.e. the five cities’ temples.[[112]](#footnote-113)
* The flood sweeps over “the land”; a term used to refer to Sumer.[[113]](#footnote-114)
* The rain lasts for seven days and seven nights.

Again, as with the Gilgamesh Epic, there are correspondences with Genesis which we have not noted as well as differences.[[114]](#footnote-115) Our point is that the account is of a local flood, of what happened to the local cult-centres; it is perhaps obvious that Sumerians would pass down a story about “what happened to *them*”. Embellished in the re-telling, it still bears witness to the fact of a local catastrophic flood.

**Atrahasis Epic**

This epic concerns an “Exceeding Wise One”, which is the meaning of the name, ‘Atrahasis’. As with the Gilgamesh Epic and the Story of Ziusudra, the account is fragmentary,[[115]](#footnote-116) but the flood is clearly local to Mesopotamia.[[116]](#footnote-117)

* The text begins by stating that the cause of the flood was that “The land became wide, the peop[le became nu]merous”.[[117]](#footnote-118) This suggests population pressure and migration widening the borders of the land; it does not suggest a global scope.
* The epic describes aborted attempts by the Mesopotamian gods to quell the noise of mankind, including famine. The thought that famine *could have* solved the problem that humanity was creating for the gods indicates a local scope.[[118]](#footnote-119) The mention of famine and land in the story gives an agricultural setting—a farming community supporting cities.
* The animals are “the beasts of the field” and the “fowls of heaven”, as many as “eat herbs”. Family, relations and craftsmen are taken into the ship.[[119]](#footnote-120) This suggests domestic beasts and local inhabitants.
* The flood is caused by the storm-god Adad; the god Ninurtu assists by bursting the dykes.[[120]](#footnote-121) The specific detail of dykes being burst indicates a local concern in the story.
* The storm and flood last for seven days and seven nights.[[121]](#footnote-122) There is no mention of the fountains of the deep bursting. The quantity of rain is clearly a local indicator.

Again, these details show a parochial focus for the story. There are corresponding details with Genesis that we have not noted, as well as divergent details.[[122]](#footnote-123) Nevertheless, the world-view of the narrator is Mesopotamian rather than global.

**Conclusion**

The genetic relationship between the Genesis account and the Mesopotamian accounts is not important for our argument. The differences between the accounts do not prevent a synchronic comparison and do not disprove a relationship of some sort. The weakest theory describing that relationship would be that they share a common oral root. Our argument is that the three accounts and other incidental references to the flood in the king-lists point to the *fact* of a local flood. Moreover, given that the Mesopotamian plain was subject to flooding,[[123]](#footnote-124) as shown by the archaeological record, the flood of these traditions and the king-lists must have been exceptional to give rise to the stories. Contrary to Bailey who asserts[[124]](#footnote-125) that Gilgamesh and Atrahasis imply a world-wide flood, we have seen that the terms of these stories are *local* in scope. Bailey’s reading seems influenced by Christian readings of the Genesis Flood.

**The Rainbow in Genesis**

**Andrew Perry**

**Introduction**

A common reading of the story of the flood is that it describes the *origins* of the phenomenon of the rainbow. Such a phenomenon is global in nature – rainbows appear anywhere on earth given the right conditions. The beginning of such a phenomenon at this time is part and parcel of a global flood reading of Genesis 6-9. It requires that the meteorology of the earth was changed after the flood to bring about this phenomenon.[[125]](#footnote-126) In this paper we will question this reading.

**The Text**

The text states,

And God said, This *is* the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth. Gen 9:13-16 (KJV)

The Hebrew for “bow” is tvq, and it is the ordinary word for a bow—a weapon.[[126]](#footnote-127) We might ask why the phenomenon we call a “rainbow” should be called a “bow” rather than, say, a “rain-arch”, or a “rain-arc”, and it might be difficult to think of a reason, except to point out that a “bow” was a weapon and God calls the phenomenon that he places “in the cloud”—“my bow”. A militaristic echo is not inappropriate as the flood has demonstrated that God is a God of judgment and he has wrought judgment in the land against the (bow-using?) marauders of the land.[[127]](#footnote-128) That God has a bow is shown by Hab 3:9-11 and Ps 7:13.

However, this is an aside, and the main point for comment has to be on “my” in “my bow”. Why does God call the phenomenon something that belongs to him? Is this phenomenon just a rainbow? There is no word for “rain” in the text, and it is an ordinary word for “cloud”; we might ask then do rainbows *always* and *only* appear in clouds? The meteorological answer would be that this is not the case. The text asserts, “…when I bring a cloud over the land, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud”, and we might ask is this the case with clouds—do they *always* carry rainbows that are seen? Again the meteorological answer would be in the negative. If the phenomenon is not a spontaneously occurring rainbow then, is it something comparable to a rainbow, something that God brings about in a cloud from time to time?[[128]](#footnote-129)

The Hebrew “in the cloud” or “in a cloud” (!n[b) occurs eight times outside Genesis 9 (Exod 16:10, 34:5, Lev 16:2, Num 11:25, Ps 78:14, Lam 3:44, Ezek 1:28, 32:7). Four occurrences relate to the theophanic cloud; for instance:

And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. Exod 16:10 (KJV)

And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. Exod 34:5 (KJV)

And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy *place* within 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 16:2 (KJV)

And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that *was* upon him, and gave *it* unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, *that*, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. Num 11:25 (KJV)

Two occurrences relate to God manifestation but not directly to the theophanic cloud:

In the daytime also he led them with a cloud,[[129]](#footnote-130) and all the night with a light of fire. Ps 78:14 (KJV)

Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that *our* prayer should not pass through. Lam 3:44 (KJV)

The only divergent text is Ezek 32:7,

And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. Ezek 32:7 (KJV)

There are two points to note in the first four texts that bear comparison with Genesis 9:

1) Genesis 9 associates the bow and the cloud with a token of a covenant. Similarly, God’s presence in the cloud on Sinai was how he manifested himself during the covenant-making of that time.

2) God’s “glory” appears in the cloud *or* he appears in the cloud and this visible presence is a kind of light (or fire) in the cloud. Similarly, God places “his bow” (of glory) in the cloud before Noah.

The theophany of Ezekiel 1 seems to offer an exegesis of Genesis 9:

As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so *was* the appearance of the brightness round about. This *was* the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw *it*, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake. Ezek 1:28 (KJV)

This text compares the appearance of the glory of the Lord around the chariot throne to that of a rainbow. What Gen 9:13 is saying to Noah then is: You are used to seeing rainbows when there are storms — I will now set “my bow” in a cloud — this cloud in front of you that manifests my presence, and in future when I manifest my presence in a cloud you will see my glory in the cloud.

There is irony in Genesis 9. The text does not say that God’s bow would be in the cloud when there is rain, and appearances of the theophanic cloud have not involved rain. The irony is that the flood was brought about in part through sustained torrential rain. The bow of the *rain-less* theophanic cloud is therefore a reminder that God would not bring about a flood and destroy the land, but he would remember the covenant with Noah.

If this construal of the “bow” is correct, then it implies that there was no change in climate conditions before and after the fall vis-a-vis the *fact* of rainfall.[[130]](#footnote-131) The occurrence of rainfall prior to the flood is implied in a comment that at the time of the creation of Adam, there was no rainfall *because* there was no man to till the ground (Gen 2:5). Once there was a man to till the ground, the implication is that this brought about rainfall again in Eden (Gen 3:23). The Gilgamesh Epic[[131]](#footnote-132) mentions a similar phenomenon at the end of the flood,

As soon as the great goddess arrived [i.e. Ishtar] , she lifted up the great jewels which Anu had made according to her wish: ‘O ye gods here present, as surely as I shall not forget the lapis lazuli on my neck, I shall remember these days and shall not forget (them) ever! XI.162-165

This event takes place after Utnapishtim has offered the sweet smelling savour sacrifice (XI.159-160). Anu, the patriarchal god, gives Ishtar great jewels and this is taken to be a necklace represented as a rainbow in the sky. Ishtar then promises to remember the days of the flood which is comparable to Yahweh remembering the flood (Gen 9:15).

There are differences here with Genesis, but the similarities are notable. The manifestation of Ishtar was inferred from the presence of a bow described as “the great jewels”; the manifestation of God was seen in his bow in the cloud. However, the Gilgamesh Epic is too thin to support the proposition that the phenomenon of rainbows *began* at this time; it only records the fact of a bow. The Genesis account includes detail linking the bow to the future manifestation of God in a cloud, and this precludes the reading that rainbows began at this time; the bow of Genesis 9 is a very specific manifestation of God.

**Conclusion**

The bow of Genesis 9 is a theophanic manifestation of the God of Israel confirming a covenant with Noah. This form of manifestation is distinctive to Israel’s traditions; hence, clouds are not noted in the Gilgamesh Epic. It may have taken the form of something like a spectacular cloud-bow, a glory, a coronae, or an iridescent cloud. Jewish interpretation of the first century makes the bow a rainbow (e.g. *Jub*. 3:12), and this has been the common Christian interpretation.[[132]](#footnote-133) However, it is a mistake in this interpretative tradition to suppose that rainbows *began* at this time or that any rainbow seen today is a manifestation the God of the Noachic covenant.

**Reversing Genesis**

**Andrew Perry**

**Introduction**

The global interpretation of the Flood account is very old and very common in Jewish and Christian thought. It rests on a straightforward reading of the “global language” of the account. Today, the strength of the local flood reading is often seen to lie in the scientific objections to a global flood, which come from diverse but converging disciplines. The fact that many different scientific subject areas have something to contribute against a global reading means that such a reading requires wholesale revision of *a lot* of scientific conclusions. In this article, we will examine the argument that the flood is a global reversal of the Genesis creation.

**Reversing Genesis**

The argument to consider is that the language of Genesis 6-9 is a reversal of Genesis 1, and therefore the planetary scope of Genesis 1 should be the same in Genesis 6-9. While it is conventional to consider Genesis 6-9 in terms of two sources (very much like Genesis 1-3 contain two creation accounts), we are examining the *final form* of the narrative and ignoring scholarly source criticism. There are number of points of contact between Genesis 1 and Genesis 6-9 that we need to consider in this argument. Our counter-argument will be that Genesis 6-9 includes points of contact with the *local* creation account of Genesis 2 and so the flood is not a simple reversal of Genesis 1.

1) Yahweh looks from heaven and sees that the wickedness of man was great in the earth (*eretz*, Gen 6:5), and he repents regarding his “making” of man upon the earth (Gen 6:6). The common verb for “making” links to Gen 1:26 where the intention of *elohim* to “make” man is stated. The argument is put that as there is global intent in Genesis 1 so too there is in Genesis 6.

However, there is no statement about *Yahweh* making man in Genesis 1 and it is well known that the name “Yahweh” is characteristic of the second and *local* creation account; here we read of Yahweh “forming” man and “making” his helpmeet (Gen 2:7, 22). This raises a doubt over the *global* reading of Genesis 6-9—the echo implied in the use of the name “Yahweh” is with the local creation of the Garden of Eden. When we read therefore of Yahweh looking and seeing that man’s wickedness was great, he was *looking upon a* *land* and repenting of the fact that he had made man upon the earth.

Is God looking and seeing the planet, or is he looking and seeing a land? Yahweh states that he will destroy man from off the “face of the *adamah*” (“ground” (RSV), “land” (NASB), Gen 6:7). This links with Gen 4:14 which has the first occurrence of the expression, “face of the *adamah*”. Cain’s use of the expression does not signal a planetary perspective. Cain had offered the fruit of the *adamah*, and so his remark that he has been cast out from the face of the *adamah* is a reference to the cultivated land. It would seem therefore that Yahweh is not looking at the planet in Genesis 6. He has created man on earth, but when he looks and evaluates man he is looking at the *land* where man lives.

Man is to be destroyed from the face of the ground i.e. the *adamah*; this is a significant detail insofar as its focus is not the *eretz*. The “ground” is the leading motif of the second creation account: Adam is created from the *adamah*. This would imply a local scope for the destruction that God intends to bring with the flood.

Yahweh states that he will destroy man, beast, creeping thing and fowl of the air (Gen 6:7, KJV). The term for “beast” is *behemah*, which is translated “cattle” in Gen 2:20, which is also where the expression “fowls of the air” occurs first in conjunction with *behemah*. This link is a further indication that the local creation account of Genesis 2 forms the backdrop to Genesis 6-9. This creation related to Eden and a garden; hence, the animals that Yahweh forms out of the *adamah* (Gen 2:19) are domestic beasts of the field and these are brought to Adam for naming. The bringing of animals to Adam is reflected in animals being brought to Noah (Gen 6:20).

However, it needs to be noted that “creeping things” are *not* mentioned in the second creation account and this detail is from Genesis 1. Further, the notion of “kinds” of animal is a link with Genesis 1 (Gen 6:20). Nevertheless, these links and the connections we have noted with Genesis 2 show that the flood account is not a simple reversal of the creation of Genesis 1.

2) A definite link with the first creation account lies in the phrase “the fountains of the great deep” (Gen 7:11); the first mention of “the deep” is Gen 1:2. Here the argument is made that in the beginning the planet was covered by the deep and the flood is a return to that state—it is a reversal of Genesis 1.

However, this interpretation is not secure: Genesis 6-9 does not say that “the deep” covered the earth, which would give the reverse picture to that in Genesis 1. Further, the account describes the waters as *covering the hills* (Gen 7:19-20) rather than the earth. It does not seem therefore that the narrative is seeking to portray a reversion to the primordial state of Gen 1:2.

The narrator’s perspective is displayed in the description, “fountains of the great deep”. If this was a description used by Yahweh, it might refer to the ocean(s) of the planet. In the perspective of the narrator, “the great deep” is the local sea—the local open sea. Isaiah uses the expression “great deep” to refer to the Red Sea (Isa 51:10); the psalmist contrasts the mountains of Judea with the great deep of the Mediterranean (Ps 36:7); and Amos uses the expression as a metaphor for a political power (Amos 7:4).That the “great deep” is the local open sea is shown by Gen 8:1-2 where it states that the fountains of the deep were stopped.

3) The initiation of the end of the flood is by a wind (*ruach*) passing over the earth (*eretz*, Gen 8:1). There is an echo here with Gen 1:2 where the Spirit (*ruach*) hovers over the face of the waters. It is argued that as one *ruach* is global, so too the other *ruach* is global.

But does the statement in Gen 8:1 relate to the whole planet? Is the new creation in Genesis 8 of the same global scope as Genesis 1? The dissimilarity with Genesis 1 consists in the fact that there the dry land appears upon the separation of waters; in Genesis 8 there is no such “separation” of waters and the appearance of dry land as a result. Further, in Genesis 1 the *ruach* is not linked to any separation of waters. If the flood was global, and the new creation consequent upon the end of the flood, exactly analogous to the creation of Genesis 1, the terminology of the “separation” of waters would have been entirely appropriate. On a global scale the separation of waters described the appearance of land in Genesis 1. In Genesis 8, the notion of the “assuaging” of the waters is not the idea of “separation”. Waters assuage or recede (or abate or subside) from *existing* land masses: the flood waters therefore reached up to a certain point on the land mass and assuaged from that point. Winds are indigenous and local and do assist the assuaging of flood waters.[[133]](#footnote-134)

This detail of the waters assuaging sets the *scope* for the “fountains of the deep”. The Hebrew word for “fountains” is not an uncommon word and denotes a “spring” on land. What the “fountain” might have been *in the deep* is a matter of speculation,[[134]](#footnote-135) but that they were local fountains seems clear.

4) The final detail which is said to reflect Genesis 1 is the “fruitful and multiply” theme (Gen 8:17; 9:1). This is a clear echo of Gen 1:28 as the motif is absent from the second creation account. This shows that the new creation after the flood is comparable to the Genesis creation.

However, this does not require a global perspective for the *destructive element* of the story. It is just as possible that Noah is commanded to replenish the land and to consider this a new creation analogous to the command to the male and female of Genesis 1. In later scripture, Israel is a “creation” and a “heaven and earth”; they are also to consider themselves in the light of Genesis 1—but they are not global creations.

The above points, (1)-(4), make the case for a local flood reading of the allusions to Genesis 1 and 2 in Genesis 6-9.

**Conclusion**

The “global” language of the flood story is not global. What appears global is in fact local. Nevertheless, there is a design in the story which makes the flood a reversal of creation. This design, however, is for example and for teaching—the flood that came upon Mesopotamia is compared to creation (Genesis 1) as an event of equal significance for that region.

**Global Language**

**Andrew Perry**

**Introduction**

An inference of global scope is made from the use of terms and expressions such as “all flesh”, “every living substance”, and “every living thing of all flesh”.[[135]](#footnote-136) The catalogue appears comprehensive. The problem with the argument is that it is vulnerable to a scope qualification: the counter-argument is that “all flesh” is destroyed from the *country* in which Noah lived and not the planet. When this qualification is made, a stalemate is created between those who argue for a global flood and those who advocate a local flood.

**Interpreting All**

At various points in the narrative a comprehensive “all” or an “every” is used. The number of uses of these quantifiers gives rise to an impression of totality. Coupled with the common translation of *eretz* as “earth”, the interpretation of a global flood is naturally suggested to a reader. However, closer reading should dislodge first impressions.

1) Yahweh repents of the fact that he has made man and cattle, creeping thing and fowl of the air and he proposes to destroy them from the face of the ground (Gen 6:7). This is not a comprehensive catalogue, as indicated by the choice of *behemah* (“cattle”) which links to the Genesis 2 creation of “beasts of the field” rather than the more general “beasts of the earth” from Genesis 1. We can be certain about this link because it is from the *ground* (not the earth) that the beasts of the field are formed (Gen 2:19-20) and it is the destruction of beasts from the face of the *ground* that is the focus of Genesis 6. We might ask why cattle (domestic beasts), creeping things and fowl are included while marine life and the beasts of the earth are excluded. To this we can say: the reason for the flood is the wickedness of man rather than the anything to do with cattle, creeping things, and birds. Their inclusion is puzzling until it is realised that they are part of man’s *habitat*.

If we pose the question: why would God *repent* of making cattle, creeping things and fowl, the detail of the story suggests that these resources in man’s habitat were being plundered by marauders raiding the farming communities. The violence that God sees leads to him to pronounce that he will remove both the perpetrators and the underlying causes of the violence.

2) The expression “all flesh” is used by God when speaking to Noah about what he proposes to do (Gen 6:12). The text says that “God looked” and this echoes the creation account of Genesis 1 where the phrase is used several times. There is a contrast between God looking and seeing that things are good in Genesis 1 and looking and seeing that “all flesh” had become corrupt in Genesis 6. The question to pose is: when God “looks”, does he look on those with whom he is working out his purpose? Elsewhere the expression “God looked” only occurs in Exod 2:25 in relation to Israel’s distress in Egypt. This suggests that for God to look upon the earth is for him to look upon those with whom he is working out his purpose. In the case of Genesis 6 these are the “sons of God”.

The perspective of the narrator is different to that of God. God looks down from *heaven* upon the *earth*; the narrator describes the state of affairs *in the* *land*. Hence, a narrator can describe the land as corrupt “before God” and “filled with violence” and God can *say* that the earth was filled with violence. This is an important distinction to bear in mind, as God can speak of “the earth” while the scope of the reference is still a land.

The Hebrew expression translated “before God” indicates matters of obedience and worship as this is the constant use of “before God” elsewhere (e.g. Exod 18:12; Josh 24:1). Such things had become corrupt before God. All flesh had corrupted his way, i.e. God’s way (cf. 2 Sam 22:31). This is obviously a different issue to the fault of violence. There is a pun in the Hebrew at this point: the text records God’s words as, “The end of all flesh is come *before me*, because the earth is filled with violence from *before them*”. What has come “before” God addresses what has come “before” all flesh.

The text states that God looked upon the earth and saw that “all flesh” had corrupted his way. This sets up an obvious restriction of scope on “all flesh”. It is trivially true that Noah is excerpted from the scope of “all flesh”, but more importantly, the scope of “all flesh” is contextual in that it is determined by the topic of discourse. Thus within the Prophets, there are discourses where the scope of the expression “all flesh” is Israel and/or her neighbours (e.g. in Isa 40:5; 49:26; Ezek 21:4; Joel 2:28: Zech 2:17). In some texts, “all flesh” is more general in scope (e.g. Deut 5:26; Job 34:15). In Genesis 6 the scope of “all flesh” comprises those who were coming before God and those filling the land with violence. In terms of the groups in the story, there are three: the sons of God, the daughters of men and the Nephilim. The “sons of God” are those who would have been coming before God (cf. Job 1:6), and the account blames them for consorting with the daughters of men. The Nephilim are, as the expression suggests, marauders—men of violence. In God’s address to Noah then, it is these groups who comprise the “all flesh”.

3) The expression “all flesh” is qualified in Gen 6:17, “all flesh, in which there is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that *is* in the earth”. The argument is put that this has global scope—*eretz* must mean “earth” as it is put in apposition with “from under heaven”.

There are three points to make regarding this argument. First, the motif of the “breath of life” is not used in Genesis 1 but in Genesis 2. The Hebrew in Gen 6:17 is “spirit of life” and in Gen 2:7 it is “breath of life” (Gen 7:22 has “breath-spirit of life”), but the expression in Genesis 2 is used of human beings and not animals. This delimits “all flesh” to be human beings rather than animals. Secondly, the assertion is a threat and the figure is hyperbole. The figure of destroying *a people* “from under heaven” is consistently used elsewhere in threats (Exod 17:14; Deut 7:24; 9:14; 25:19; 29:19; 2 Kgs 14:27). Thirdly, given the focus on human beings, the second clause “everything that *is* in the earth” also does not cover animals.

There is a perspective implied in the threat that is made by God. In communicating with Noah, God adopts Noah’s perspective which would have concerned the land. When God says to Noah that he will “bring a flood of waters upon the *eretz*”, Noah’s perspective would have been the land where he was living. This is indicated by the language of *bringing* a flood that God uses with Noah. This is a natural way of describing both river-based floods and floods caused by tidal inundation. A high tide or a tidal wave *brings* a flood upon the coastal land; heavy rain and/or a snow melt in the mountains *brings* a flood when the river downstream bursts its banks. The language of *bringing a flood upon the land* is not the language that describes a global flood.

4) The expression “every living thing of all flesh” in Gen 6:19 covers birds, domestic beasts and creeping things. They are of various kinds and to be preserved as male and female pairs. The scope of “every living thing of all flesh” is set by the further specification of clean and unclean beasts and fowl that were to be taken into the ark. It could be held that a specification of “clean and unclean” is not explicitly made for creeping things (Gen 7:2-3, 8), but this is probably an over-literal insistence and the distinction is ranging over beasts, birds and creeping things. In the Law (Lev 20:25), the three categories were included in the clean/unclean regulations (e.g. Lev 11:31). These three categories then seem to “go together” in Gen 6:19-20 and are categories of “every living thing”.

This specification of “clean” and “unclean” is restrictive in scope. Within the Law the classification pertained to *eating* and it included marine life (Lev 11:46; 20:25). This law is the only guide to the interpretation of Genesis 6 and the question of what animals were taken on board. The classification in the Law is not comprehensive for all animal life and broadly speaking we can say that it covers a restricted range of animals, birds and creeping things of which the Israelites had knowledge and were in the habit of eating. The Law sought to regulate their eating. Similarly, in Noah’s case, the animals and birds (clean and unclean) would be that range known to him and classified with regard to eating.[[136]](#footnote-137) The storybook image of elephants and tigers on an ark is not implied by “every living thing of all flesh”.

The expression “every living thing” translates a common and flexible Hebrew phrase (*kal* *har*) and the word for “living thing” (*har*) is also often translated “beast”. We should always note what Hebrew word is translated as “beast” as it could be *behemah* or *har* and a distinction is made between the two words in Gen 1:24. The phrase *kal* *har* occurs in Gen 1:28 in relation to the dominion of humankind over “every living thing”, but in Gen 1:30 the Hebrew expression is translated as “every beast”. In Gen 2:19-20 and 3:14 it is used in the expression “every beast of the field” and Gen 3:1 has “any beast of the field” using the same phrase. When the distinction “clean” and “unclean” is in focus the word *behemah* is used which would be more appropriate for a domestic distinction.

The expression “every living thing” can have a wide or narrow scope. In Gen 2:19-20 and 3:14 its scope is narrowed by the addition of “of the field” and it covers domestic beasts. The scope is similarly narrow in Gen 1:28 as it covers just “creeping things”. Moreover, Gen 1:28 is part of a general statement of animal husbandry (“dominion”, Gen 1:26-30) and focuses on the animals that humankind would husband. Here it is worth noting that Gen 1:30 is a practical direction for the first human pair about their husbandry. They are directed to both feed themselves and the animals over which they have dominion with plants (i.e. the produce of arable farming).[[137]](#footnote-138) It is noteworthy that grass (Gen 1:11-12) is not specifically mentioned, but perhaps grass, as such, was not farmed.[[138]](#footnote-139)

There is therefore an implication of arable and animal farming in the account of creation in Genesis 1, and this is an important detail to bear in mind when considering the scope of the flood. The global scope of the opening days of creation changes in Gen 1:24 when the sixth day begins. Commands are given to the human pair to have dominion over plants and animals; they are “given” the work of arable farming and animal husbandry.[[139]](#footnote-140) This narrowing of focus in the account reflects the local scope of the second creation account in Genesis 2. This account bookends the creation and fall of man with comments about their tilling of the ground (Gen 2:5; 3:19). The account of flood has symmetry here with the account in Genesis 1 and 2: after the flood Noah becomes a tiller of the ground. The local focus of Gen 1:26-30 and 2:4b-3:24 sets the local scope for the reading of Genesis 6-9.

5) While there is a miracle implied in the unclean and clean animals *coming* to Noah, the record states that Noah was to *take* “all food” on board for the animals (Gen 6:21). This detail implies a local scope for the flood with the food taken on board being agricultural produce for what would have been any (clean and unclean) animals fed on arable produce. This food would have come from the surrounding area and be the sort of produce that could sustain the animals *of that area*. There is no need to hypothesize that Noah sought bamboo from China to feed Giant Pandas.

This restriction of scope implied by the practicalities of feeding is an important detail. The purpose of the ark was to “keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth” (Gen 7:3). This compares with the corresponding statement in the *Gilgamesh Epic*, “Whatever I had of the seed of all living creatures [I loaded] aboard her” (XI.83).[[140]](#footnote-141) The expression “face of all the earth” is quoted from Gen 1:29, in connection with God’s assignment of plant bearing seed and trees to the male and the female for food. This connection indicates that the correct translation of the Hebrew is “face of all the land” and that the stress is on the “face” where these things grow. This implies that the purpose of the ark in keeping seed alive was not to replenish the globe but the local and now devastated country in which Noah lived and off which the people and animals had lived. Certainly, a local scope for “the face of the whole earth” is required for the story of Babel (Gen 11:4, 8-9), and elsewhere the expression denotes the extent of the Promised Land (Deut 11:25) and regions of Judah (1 Sam 30:16; 2 Sam 18:8).

6) A new expression of totality is introduced in Gen 7:4, 23, “every living substance that I have made will I destroy from of the face of the ground” (7:4) “every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground” (7:23). In Gen 7:23 the scope is delimited by “both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven”. There is no new information in this scoping that we have not already considered. The use of “ground” (*adamah*) rather than “earth” or “land” (*eretz*) draws in the background of the local creation of Genesis 2 rather than the global creation of Genesis 1.

The figure of a “face” of the ground is an import detail which conveys the idea of supporting life. We have noted the use of “face” in Gen 1:29 in relation to the land (*eretz*) and the contextual mention of plant bearing seed and trees. In Gen 2:6, the “face of the ground” is mentioned in an explicit agricultural context. Gen 3:19 contains a pun on “face” such that Adam will till the ground in the sweat of his “face”. Cain is driven from the face of the ground which, as a tiller of the soil, he feared. He was turned into (initially) a wanderer—the opposite of a farmer. The circumstances that gave rise to the flood revolve around the face of the ground: men multiply on the face of the ground (Gen 6:1, 7) and this leads to pressure on the land’s resources and consequent violence.

When we consider “every living substance that I have made will I destroy from of the face of the ground” we should do so in the light of this consistent pattern in the concept of a “face”—the scope comprises those living off the land, man and beast. The term “substance” is rare in the Hebrew and only used elsewhere in Deut 11:6 for the substance of a man’s household. Its use here in Genesis is a further pointer to the motif of a farming community: the living substance of each of the farming households would be destroyed in the flood. There is no indication in this language of a global flood in which kangaroos and tigers are involved.

7) In Gen 7:14, the animals that go into the ark are “every beast” (*kal har*) after its kind, “all the cattle” (*kal behemah*) after their kind, “every creeping thing” after its kind, “every fowl” after its kind, and “every bird” of “every sort” (Gen 7:14). The text echoes Gen 1:24 in its distinction of “beast” (*har*) and “cattle” (*behemah*) and the use of the idea of a “kind”; “male and female of all flesh”. We have argued that the scope of *kal behemah* is restricted to the clean and unclean beasts (*behemah*, Gen 7:2-3, 8). The categories of “clean” and “unclean” are also applied to birds and unless we are over-literal, to creeping things. The expression “every beast” unqualified by “of the earth” or “of the field” has its first occurrence here in Gen 7:14.

In Gen 6:19, we have “*kal har* of all flesh”, but the Hebrew is better translated “every living thing (*kal har*) of all flesh”, as Gen 6:20 has the corresponding verb “to keep alive (*hayah*) in the *inclusio* position. Accordingly, Gen 7:14 and its *kal har* should be “every living thing”. It is broader than the domestic scope of “all the cattle” (*kal behemah*).

In Gen 6:19-20, we have the “two by two” instruction which is later expanded in terms of clean and unclean beasts, fowl and creeping things (Gen 7:2-3, 8). This suggests that “every living thing” (*kal har*) is an expression of general scope for whatever is being denoted by “all the cattle” (*kal behemah*), “every creeping thing”, “every fowl”, and “every bird” (Gen 7:14)—whatever was classified as “clean” and “unclean”. This reading is supported by Gen 8:1 which just has *kal har* and *kal behemah*.

8) A new phrase is used in Gen 7:21, which is best rendered, “all swarming creatures that swarm upon the land”. This specification is found in the Law in describing the class of “flying creeping things” (Lev 11:20-23), as well as other “creeping things” (Lev 11:29, 41-44). A number of creatures are identified in the Law under this description as clean and unclean. In the flood account, it would seem that the creeping things *that swarm* are a more precise identification of the “creeping things” so far mentioned. As such, “all swarming creatures” is as restricted as the other living things categorized as clean and unclean.

9) There is a distinction to draw between an expression of intention to destroy all flesh and any description of what actually happened. The description of the destruction of life in Gen 7:21-22 restricts the area affected to “the dry land” (NASB, RSV). The underlying expression is not very common and used elsewhere only of dry river beds (4x) and dry sea beds (2x) (Exod 14:21; Josh 3:17; 4:18; 2 Kgs 2:8; Ezek 30:12; Hag 2:6). We can infer then that the term for “dry land” does not denote the planet, or the land-masses of the earth; rather, the dry land here is that land related to river basins and delta basins—land susceptible to river flooding or the ingress of the sea. It is here that all flesh died rather than elsewhere on the earth.

10) The “new creation” after the flood is described in language that evokes the Genesis 1 account of creation (Gen 1:24-30). This makes the new creation a *type* of the Genesis creation and this intention of the narrative explains the “global appearance” of the language of “all”. Thus, “every living thing”, fowl, cattle and creeping thing after their kinds are to be “fruitful and multiply” in the land (Gen 8:17). This new creation is a *microcosm* of the Genesis creation; it is the Genesis creation established in Mesopotamia.

11) The final note of totality concerns the edict about animal life after the flood. In Gen 9:2 the expressions “every beast of the earth” (*har eretz*) and “all the fishes of the sea” appear for the first time in the flood account. These creatures would now live in “fear and dread” and this raises the question of why this consequence should be imposed.

The mention of every “beast of the earth” and all the “fishes of the sea” at this point in the text should be compared with the terms of the covenant made with Noah in Gen 9:10.

And with every living creature that *is* with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, even of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. Gen 9:10 (KJV revised)

There are three scope statements in this assertion. The first is “every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle”; the second is “even of every beast of the earth with you”; and the third is “from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth”.

The second scope statement uses “beast of the earth” for the second time in the flood account. It is not saying there were some wild beasts in the ark; rather it is a repetition for emphasis of the first scope statement: “even of every beast of the earth with you”. The third scope statement is a further repetition embracing the same fowl and cattle and every living creature in the ark. It is better rendered “out of all[[141]](#footnote-142) that go out of the ark, in respect of[[142]](#footnote-143) every beast of the earth”.

In Gen 9:2 there are “beasts”, “fowl” and “creeping things”. This is disguised in the KJV because it translates the relevant Hebrew as that which “moveth” rather than “creepeth” upon the earth. Along with the mention of fish, we have a fourfold division of creatures.

In Gen 9:3 there is an extension of the food chain for humankind to include every creeping thing over and above those previously classified as “clean”. The food chain is extended to include “every beast of the earth” in addition to clean beasts of the field. The giving of “every” living thing for food is compared to God previously having given “every” green plant for food. Prior to the flood, humankind ate of every green plant (the arable crops) but was restricted to eating clean animals; after the flood, just as they had eaten of every green plant, now they could eat of every living thing. The reason for this extension lies in the circumstances that gave rise to the flood, viz. the pressure on the resources of the land and the violence that this caused.

**Conclusion**

In this article we have examined the “all” and “every” expressions of the flood account. There are a large number and they give the impression of totality. There are many indications in the text that the scope of “all” and “every” is restricted and local to Noah and the land in which he was living. Nevertheless, the narrative has been written to signal to the reader the type that the old creation was being destroyed and a new creation was being created. We should not mistake language designed to convey a *type* for language describing a global flood.

**Mountains, Rivers and Land**

**Andrew Perry**

**Introduction**

Genesis 6-9 describes the flood with comparatively little physical detail. The global flood interpretation has substantial opposition from many scientific disciplines; the local flood reading has considerably less (if any) problems. The Mesopotamian region is known for extensive flooding throughout the ages.[[143]](#footnote-144) Nevertheless, there is some physical detail that we can examine and thereby evaluate whether the flood account is a reasonable description of a catastrophic local flood in Mesopotamia.

**Mesopotamia**

S. Pollock notes that “Mesopotamia is, geologically speaking, a trough created as the Arabian shield has pushed up against the Asiatic landmass, raising the Zagros Mountains and depressing the land to the southwest of them. Within this trench the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers and their tributaries have laid down enormous quantities of alluvial sediments, forming the Lower Mesopotamian Plain...Today the Lower Mesopotamian Plain stretches 700 kilometers...to the west of the Euphrates, a low escarpment marks the southwestern boundary of the alluvial plain and the beginning of the Western Desert”.[[144]](#footnote-145) The Mesopotamian Basin can be divided into the Upper Plain above Baghdad, the River Plain below Baghdad and the Delta Plain in the south.[[145]](#footnote-146)

This description of an extensive flood plain satisfies one of the conditions of the physical description of the flood, viz. that it extended beyond the visual horizon of Noah “under the whole heavens”. If we place Noah in the south, on the Delta Plain, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, where the Gilgamesh Epic places Utnapishtim,[[146]](#footnote-147) then the “high hills” (Gen 7:19, KJV) on the plain would have been covered “under the whole heaven” from Noah’s vantage point. As the waters prevailed upon the land by overflowing the river channels of the Tigris and Euphrates and their tributaries in the south, the high hills on the surrounding plain would have been covered. The Hebrew for “hills” is the same as for “mountains” (Gen 7:20), but the use of “mountains” in English versions gives an impression of global proportions for the flood. This fails to take into account the question of perspective implied by “high” in relation to a plain. The Hebrew word involved can be equally “hill” or “mountain”.

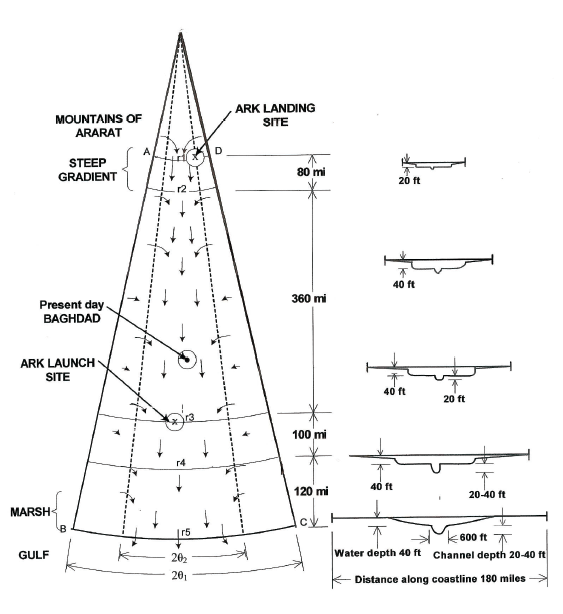
The Hebrew for “high hills” is ~yhbgh ~yrhh, and this expression is necessarily of relative perspective. A “high hill” to a dweller on a flood plain is not a high hill to a dweller in the Zagros Mountains. Within the alluvial floodplain there would have undulating hills of low proportions (sand hills, sedimentary deposits, old levees,[[147]](#footnote-148) low ridges[[148]](#footnote-149) and abandoned city-mounds for the flood waters to overflow. The “high hills” would not denote the Zagros Mountains or the foothills of these mountains. They are the hills local to the ark’s point of departure in the south of the Mesopotamian flood plain.

The waters “prevailed” upon the land; they increased gradually and lifted up the ark above the ground (Gen 7:17). The depth of the waters is given as 15 cubits above the high hills,[[149]](#footnote-150) a measure which is a significant indicator of the local proportions of the flood. This sort of measure would be taken by soundings and such a short measure only makes sense in a local situation.[[150]](#footnote-151) Alternatively, the measure might have been determined from the draught of the ark. More importantly, this measure is taken *at the point where the ark becomes buoyant*.[[151]](#footnote-152) This measure should not be applied by a reader elsewhere in the Mesopotamian Basin, where the river channel, the associated floodplain, and the local topography would have produced different measures. Thus, water may have been deep around the river channel but less so at further distances in other areas. In the south, where the flood plain of the Tigris and the Euphrates is extensively flat, the depth of the flood need only be shallow by this measure. Thus, for example, a 40 foot undulation would require a 70 foot flood depth.

A. E. Hill has proposed a geometric model for the flood. He includes a diagram (Diagram 1)[[152]](#footnote-153) which offers a proposal on how extensive the flood could have been progressing up the Mesopotamian Basin and how varied the flood depth could have been extending out from the river channels. He locates the ark launch point at Shuruppak in the south a city on the Euphrates, following the Gilgamesh Epic. The Bible account does not locate Noah, but such a location would fit the flood account, and in this case the high hills such as levees and city mounds nearest the river are those that would be the ones covered. Hill locates the resting place of the ark in the north near Cizre, which has substantial traditional support, however, the Bible does not state where in the region of Ararat the ark rested.

**Ararat**

The ark landed “upon the mountains of Ararat” (Gen 8:4, KJV). Ararat is a region that extends south into northern Iraq (2 Kgs 19:37; Jer 51:27),[[153]](#footnote-154) but the account does not indicate where in Ararat the ark grounded. No inference can be drawn from the word translated “mountains” as to the depth or extent of the flood in Ararat. The account implies that the flood was extensive in the south where the ark was launched, but there is no statement of extent for the resting place of the ark. Further, as already noted, “mountains” in Hebrew could mean “hills”. The geographical perspective of the text could well mean the *foothills* of Ararat that set the boundary of the Upper Plain. The flood waters beyond the Upper Plain could therefore have been narrowly confined and the ark could have travelled within the deeper water of a river channel and come to rest upon the banks of the Tigris *besides* the foothills of Ararat. The Hebrew preposition translated “upon” in the KJV and other versions has a wide variety of senses including a locative sense of “besides, by” (e.g. Gen 14:6; 16:7; 29:2; Num 3:26; Job 30:4).[[154]](#footnote-155)



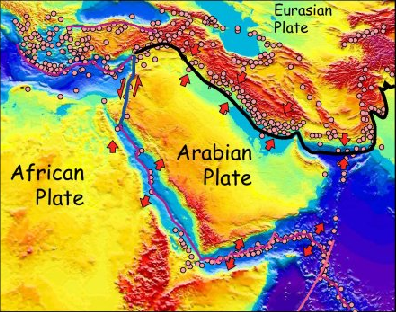
**Diagram 1**

**Water**

A local flood satisfying the measure of 15 cubits above the high hills requires a great deal of water in the south. Two sources are stated: rainfall and the “fountains of the deep” (Gen 7:11). This expression “fountains of the deep” has been taken to denote subterranean water but it is more likely to indicate tidal wave inundation from the Gulf. The Arabian Plate is subtended under the Asian plate along the western side of the Gulf (See Illustration 1) and any underwater volcanic activity (or quakes) could have led to tidal wave surges to extend inland over the Delta Plain for a considerable distance. With rainfall swelling the river system in the north and overflowing river channels in Upper Plain and the River Plain in all directions as it moved south, incoming tidal water (with eroded deposits off the Delta) would have seriously impeded water flow to the Gulf by creating widespread dams. This would have slowed the assuaging of the waters, thereby adding to the depth of the flood waters and their extent in the south on the Delta Plain. The whole delta lowland south of Baghdad is extremely flat and rises only a few metres from the Persian Gulf to Baghdad, so that Baghdad is still less than 10 metres above sea level; in effect the flood would have extended the Gulf.

Weather systems that could give rise to extended rainfall are known for the region. Exceptional cyclonic rain,[[155]](#footnote-156) coinciding with spring snow melt in the mountains that feed the Tigris and Euphrates valleys, along with geologic disturbance at the boundary of the Arabian Plate creating tidal waves, can account for the flood.[[156]](#footnote-157) The resulting flood would have been most extensive in the Delta Plain but less so in the Middle River Plain and the Upper Plain.

The scale of the flood on a local reading is large, as is the volume of water. But there is nothing in the biblical account itself that is implausible for the region in terms of these hypothetical weather conditions or the inundation of the sea that would exclude the explanation of a local flood for Genesis 6-9.



**Illustration 1**

The size and construction of the ark is that of an exceptionally large river barge, assuming a standard Israelite measure for the cubit. The stresses that the ark could bear and the water seepage that the ark would bear preclude a violent global flood. We do not know the number of animals or the volume of food in the ark; all we can do is guess at relatively small numbers and volumes given the implicit land husbandry of the “clean” and “unclean” directions.

As floods leave deposits and erode material, and the Mesopotamian Basin has always been subject to flooding, the physical evidence for Noah’s flood will have been affected in subsequent smaller floods, changes in sea level, and the shifting course of the rivers. Archaeological digs have found flood deposits in levels for various Delta Plain cities around 2900 BCE, and some have postulated that this may be evidence of Noah’s flood. Others have argued that 3500 BCE is a likely date and have pointed to other flood deposits as evidence.[[157]](#footnote-158)

**The End of the Flood**

Having stated that the waters prevailed for 150 days (Gen 7:24), the account next describes the fortieth day of the flood and why the waters prevailed for 150 days (Gen 8:1-4). This can be inferred because Gen 8:3 mentions the end of the 150 days. The explanation given is that although on Day 40 the rain was restrained, and the windows of heaven[[158]](#footnote-159) and the fountains of the deep were stopped, the waters prevailed for 150 days because the waters receded slowly. The Hebrew uses the verb “to go/to walk” in the infinitive (Gen 8:3) to describe the recession, so that we can say, the waters receded *walking*. During this period of 150 days the ark travelled to Ararat. For this to have occurred against the flow of water downstream, wind would have to have driven the ark north up the river channels.[[159]](#footnote-160) It is perhaps noteworthy in this connection that the account mentions a wind as the mechanism whereby the waters were assuaged (Gen 8:1), however, such a wind would have been opposite to that required to push the ark north. A southerly wind is necessary to move the ark; the journey may have been long or short during the 150 days.

In Gen 8:5, a time period of 73 days is implied after the 150 days in which waters continued to decrease after which the tops of the hills that had been covered (Gen 7:19) were seen. The text here is not saying that they were seen *by Noah*; rather, this is a narrator’s statement that the hills that had been covered in the Delta Plain were now revealed. At this point in the story, Noah is hundreds of miles to the north of his former homeland.

The narrative has symmetry in its second mention of 40 days. As the catastrophe draws to a close, a period of 40 days sees Noah wait before sending out a raven and a dove. Noah sends out a raven and then a dove or, more likely, a homing dove (Gen 8:9).[[160]](#footnote-161) A homing dove would be trained to return to home (in this case the ark).

On the first flight, the dove returned almost immediately unable to find rest for its foot in the vicinity of the ark. On the second flight it was able to stay out all day, until evening, and bring back a plucked olive leaf. The mention of the “plucking” of an olive leaf indicates fresh growth and this is another indicator that the flood was local to the Mesopotamia Basin. The dove would have had to have found olive trees on well-drained low ground unaffected by the flood, as olive trees would not have sprouted fresh growth under water for the year of the flood. Noah’s inference from the freshly plucked olive leaf that the waters had abated rests upon his knowledge that the dove needed rest during all day flight, rather than any presumption that flood waters had receded to reveal freshly sprouting trees.

After the waters had abated, Noah and the animals disembarked to a devastated landscape unable to support life. The land would need to spring back to life; Noah would need to re-introduce animal husbandry and arable farming. The non-domestic animals that were not going to be kept by Noah would migrate to the areas unaffected by the flood. Noah himself would migrate to such a region. In time, the devastated land would be replenished.

**Conclusion**

In this article, we have offered a physical description of the flood based on the text. The key ideas have been i) identifying the source of the water; ii) explaining the slow recession of the water through tidal wave deposits; iii) allowing for extensive flooding in the south and less extensive flooding in the north; iv) postulating a river barge driven by a wind northwards against the flow of water and following the river channels; and v) explaining the olive leaf as vegetation from an unaffected area.

**Postscript**

**Andrew Perry**

There are many websites arguing for a local flood and a global flood. This series of articles has presented the case for a local flood. It lies outside the remit of the *EJournal* to argue the scientific aspects of either view. In respect of a local flood, the scientific argument revolves around i) whether an ark of the stated size could have been constructed at that time and been weather-proof; ii) whether the loaded weight of the ark and its draught in the water is realistic; iii) whether the wind velocities necessary to drive the ark north against the direction of water flow are feasible; iv) whether the rate of water flow and recession of the flood towards the *open* Gulf makes a Mesopotamian flood implausible; and v) whether erosion can account for any absence of flood deposits today. The relevant scientific disciplines here are marine engineering, hydrology, climatology and geomorphology.

Biblical interpretation can only interpret the text and make sure that possibilities are clearly stated. Thus the text cannot settle the question of whether an ark of the stated dimensions could have been constructed at that time. The text allows for any construction to be proposed by a marine engineer that satisfies the contextual requirement of a very large river barge. In terms of the weight and draught of the ark, the key variable of the number of animals is unknown and the text’s stipulation of “clean” and “unclean” suggests a small number. Likewise, the depth of the main river channels is unknown and how far they were navigable. The depth of the flood was relatively shallow by the one measure given, but also unknown. The Delta Plain is extensive and the speed of water flow and drainage would have been affected by the high water table, marshland vegetation, and the extent of the water. Tidal wave inundation and any tidal deposits would affect water flow to the Gulf. Similarly, sedimentary deposits from the riverine flood waters would have affected flow. Rises in sea level are also possible. These factors are the variables which affect the judgment as to whether the “open end” of the Mesopotamian Basin would have allowed the flood waters to decrease slowly as the text requires.

These are the sort of scientific issues that arise in discussion of the theory of a local Mesopotamian “Noah’s flood”. This remains the most common “local” reading because the biblical account bears many similarities to Mesopotamian flood accounts.[[161]](#footnote-162)

Biblical objections to a local flood arise from i) the question as to why an ark was built: why was Noah not told to simply migrate away from the flood area; ii) the question of whether the account allows for there to be human and animal life unaffected by the flood outside Mesopotamia; and iii) the question of whether a local flood in Mesopotamia could have achieved the objective of destroying life *even in that region*.

As with any differing interpretations, dialogue proceeds via proposal, objection, revised proposal, counter-objection, *and so on*. So it is with the local reading of Genesis 6-9. Thus the choice of salvation through an ark is just that—it is a choice that resonates with Genesis 1 and serves as a typology of salvation in a way not possible in a story of “migration to another land”. As for the possible existence of human and animal life outside Mesopotamia, the local scope of the flood is shown in the genealogy of Genesis 10; the peoples that come from Noah’s sons migrate from Mesopotamia. The “rest of the world” is an unknown quantity in biblical terms. Would a local flood have destroyed life even in the Mesopotamian Basin? This question depends on how violent we imagine any tidal-wave inundation in the Delta Plain, but what is known from recent times of the rapid and destructive power of tidal waves makes the “fountains of the deep” coupled with cyclonic rain a plausible force for a total destruction of the Delta Plain.

1. All DSS texts are cited from *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition*, (ed., Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar; 2 vols; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For a recent discussion, see Barry Smith, “‘Spirit of Holiness’ as Eschatological Principle of Obedience” in *Christian Beginnings and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds., J. J. Collins and C. A. Evans; Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2006), 75-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. The Hebrew is the same whether the translator choose “holy Spirit” or “spirit of holiness” in 1QS. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. So A. E. Sekki, *The Meaning of Ruah at Qumran* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 92-93, who notes that in the sectarian scrolls the work of inner moral purification is the work of God. He also observes that the manuscript variation 4Q255 Frag. 2, lines 1-2 has, “And by his holy spirit which links him with his truth he is clea[nsed of all] his sins”, and makes the point that wXdwq xwr is used in the scrolls to refer to God’s spirit, *Ruach*, 72. This reading is noted by M. A. Knibb in *The Qumran Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 93, who nevertheless adopts a dispositional view. It is outside the scope of this article to discuss the doctrine of “the Two Spirits” in 1QS; there is a case to be made for both a cosmological reading and a dispositional reading. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. A relationship between the holy Spirit and the community may be indicated in the fragment, 4Q287 Frag. 10, “...against the anointed ones of [His] hol[y] spirit”. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. 4Q504 Frags. 1-2, V, 15 states in relation to Israel’s history, “[Fo]r you have poured your holy Spirit upon us, [to be]stow your blessings to us, so that we would look for you in our anguish”. Similarly, CD 2.12 states, “And he taught them by the hand of <the anointed ones> with his holy Spirit...” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. It is worth noting an irony: whereas scholars will typically argue that the teaching about the Spirit in the NT is implicitly trinitarian, this has never been argued in the case of the Qumran community. However, their teaching uses OT texts and describes the presence of the Spirit in comparable terms to the NT writings. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. J. D. G. Dunn, “Letter to the Romans” in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters* (eds., G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, D. G. Reid; Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 838-850 (845). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. G. Herrick, “Romans: The Gospel of God’s Righteousness” located online at <http://www.bible.org/series.php?series_id=22> [cited May 4th 2008]. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss if and how *far* Paul is quoting the Hebrew Scriptures and using the LXX; this would require a technical discussion of what it is to “quote” scripture within the framework of divine inspiration using uninspired materials. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. R. N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1995), 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Paul is at pains to explain the rejection of Esau the father of the Edomites in Rom 9:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. N. T. Wright, “Romans and the Theology of Paul” in *Pauline Theology* (eds., J. M. Bassler, D. M. Hay and E. E. Johnson; 4 vols; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991-1997), 3:37-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. N. T. Wright, “The Law in Romans 2” in *Paul and the Mosaic Law* (ed. J. D. G. Dunn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 131-150 (138). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. W. C. Kaiser, “The Blessing of David, the Charter for Humanity” in *The Law and the Prophets* (ed., J. H. Skilton; Nutley: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1974), 311. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. A. Perry, “The Restoration of Israel”, *CeJBI* 2/2 (2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Scholars would normally not think of “James” here but rather Luke’s presentation of James; we will ignore this issue and consider James as the proponent. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. For a comprehensive discussion see R. Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles” in *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts* (ed., B. Witherington III; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 154-184 (156-170). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. H. A. Whittaker, *Acts* (Cannock: Biblia, 1985), 226. In contrast, Hezekiah uses the word “tent” (lha) of himself (Isa 38:12). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. J. L. Mays, *Amos* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1969), 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. J. A. Soggin, *The Prophet Amos* (London: SCM Press, 1987), 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. We presume here an eighth century reading of Isaiah 40-66 contrary to scholarship. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Isa 63:19 expresses the point of view of those returning to Zion in the aftermath of 701; they were those “called by God’s name”. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. J. D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostle*s (Peterborough: Epworth, 1996), 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. R. Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles” in *History, Literature and Society in the Book of Acts* (ed., B. Witherington III; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 154-184 (165-166); J. Bradley Chance, *Jerusalem, the Temple, and the New Age in Luke-Acts* (Marcon: Mercer University Press, 1988), 35-41. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 448; G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission* (NSBT 17; Leicester: Apollos, 2004), 232-238. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 236, offers 2 Sam 11:11 for the use of hks for the “tabernacle”, but the “shelters” of this text do not include the tabernacle. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. Mays, *Amos*, 164; Soggin, *Amos*, 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. *Contra* Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 236, who is misled by usage of skhnh, elsewhere in Acts and the NT which refers to the Tabernacle. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. He drops “after these things” and has instead “in the last days” from Isa 2:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. See Whittaker, *Acts*, 226; Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles”, 163; Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles”, 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. Whittaker, *Acts*, 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Bauckham, “James and the Gentiles”, 164; Whittaker, *Acts*, 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Bauckham is misled by the Gentile conversion theme of Jer 12:15-16 which is present in Acts 15:14, 17, but not Acts 15:16, “James and the Gentiles”, 164. Beale also makes this mistake, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 238-239. However, even if Beale and Bauckham are misled to Jeremiah 12 by “I will return” in Acts, they do show that Jer 12:15-16 is relevant background to the prohibitions laid upon the Gentiles in the Jerusalem Council decision of Acts 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Whittaker, *Acts*, 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. Whittaker, *Acts*, 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. “James and the Gentiles”, 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. *Acts*, 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. For instance, Haenchen, *Acts*, 448, “The Hebrew text would be useless for James’ argument, and would even contradict it”. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. There is conceptual confusion in the idea that the holy Spirit through Luke quotes the LXX. If I quote from the standard English edition of Aristotle by Barnes, I am not quoting Barnes; I am quoting Aristotle even though he never wrote in English. Even if Luke uses the LXX of Amos, it is the Hebrew of Amos that is quoted by the holy Spirit, as Amos never wrote in Greek. We always need to think of how a NT quote of an OT prophet matches the MT. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. “James and the Gentiles”, 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. “James and the Gentiles”, 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. A. Perry, “The Restoration of Israel”, *CeJBI* 2/2 (2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. A survey of Old Testament citations in Paul demonstrates that although Paul’s quotations do not follow a simple pattern (often the text is not reproduced exactly or the citation varies from the LXX or the MT or from both), the variation does not necessarily always import exegetical significance. Sometimes his variations can be explained by Targumic influence or rabbinic interpretive practice, at other times by his rationale of corporate solidarity, historical correspondence or eschatological fulfilment. However, Paul’s use of the Deuteronomy passage in Romans 10 is unique in that it reflects neither the LXX, nor the MT tradition, nor is it a simple extrapolation of the original contextual argument. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. S. Westerholm has noted that Paul carefully avoids the language of “doing” when speaking of the Christian’s relationship with the Law. S. Westerholm, *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith: Paul and his Recent Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 201-205. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. H. Hübner, *Law in Paul’s Thought* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1984), 85-91. J. D. G. Dunn offers Zahn, Denney, and Barrett, as examples of scholars who do not believe that it was Paul’s intention to quote Deut 30:12-14 in Rom 10:6-8 in his *Romans 9-16* (WBC 38B; Waco: Word Publishing, 1988), 603. Ernst Käsemann has a more extensive list of scholars who view this text as “a rhetorically constructed paraphrase of the OT text”, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 284. For a survey of opinion prior to 1900 see H. A. W. Meyer, *A Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1884), 406. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. R. N. Longenecker summarises their position in *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period,* (Paternoster Press, New –edition –*Biblical & Theological Classics Library*: Carlisle, U.K., 1995) , 121-122 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans* (5th edition; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902), 288. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. J. Munck, *Christ & Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9-11*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. J. Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians* (trans. Ross Mackenzie; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 225. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. Rom 10:5/Lev.18:5, Rom 10:6-8/ Deut 8:17+Deut 9:4+Deut 30:12-14+Ps 107:26. The text of Deut 30:14 itself is applied to Wisdom in Bar 3.29f; it is quoted four times by Philo in *Post.* 84f.; *Mut.* 236f.; *Virt.* 183; and *Praem.* 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. For a comprehensive discussion of these texts see Guy Waters, *The End of Deuteronomy in the Epistles of Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 161-197. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. Guy Waters states “Of the three proposals surveyed, we have observed intriguing readings that are parallel in some respects to that of the apostle. No single proposal, however, has adequately demonstrated, to the exclusion of other possibilities, a single Jewish tradition of reading Deut 30 to which Paul was indebted”, *The End of Deuteronomy,* 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. *The End of Deuteronomy,* 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. Isa 28:16 (10.11) Isa 52:7(10.15) Isa 53:1(10.16) Isa 65:1(10.20) Isa 65:2(10.21); also Joel 2:32 (10.13) is from the same *Sitz im Leben*. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
57. J. R. Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul “in Concert” in the Letter to the Romans,* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002), 147-148. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
58. Wagner comments, “In Isaiah 8 and 28-29, trust in God entails staking one’s life on God’s righteousness - God’s wisdom, power, and faithfulness - to rescue his people from the international crisis threatening to engulf them. The antithesis of such trust is to rely for protection on foreign rulers and their gods, whether the kings of Damascus and Samaria (8:6) or Pharaoh (28:15; 30:1-7; 31:1c-3). Israel’s misplaced trust stems from their inability to perceive God’s plans vis-à-vis Israel and the nations-that God is using these nations as a tool to discipline and ultimately to deliver his people”, *Heralds of the Good News*, 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
59. It is beyond the remit of this article to discuss the composition of Isaiah. The *crux interpretum* is the Cyrus problem, on which see A. Perry and P. Wyns, “Did Isaiah Mention Cyrus?”*CeJBI* 1/4, (2007).For background on reading Isaiah’s oracles solely within an eighth century context see A. Perry, “Babylon in Isaiah 13-14”*CeJBI* 1/1, (2007); “Isaiah 24-27” *CeJBI* 1/2, (2007); and “Babylon and Assyria”*CeJBI* 1/2, (2007); H. A. Whittaker, *Isaiah* (Biblia: Cannock, 1988); and G. Booker and H. A. Whittaker, *Hezekiah the Great: The Songs of Degrees*, (Birmingham: CMPA, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
60. “Who shall declare his generation? (Isa. 53:8)…..he shall see of the travail of his soul (his children) and shall be satisfied…” (Isa.53:11). [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
61. The Joel prophecy is from the same period and relates the same event – Assyrian invasion and deliverance during Hezekiah’s reign, followed by an outpouring of the Spirit.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
62. P. Wyns, “Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:3-8” *CeJBI* 2 (2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. John the Baptist is posited as having links with the desert dwelling Qumran community; the fragment 4Q174 (1-2 line 15) is a Qumran text that describes Isaiah as *“the prophet for the last days”*;generally Isaiah was regarded with high esteem in Second Temple Judaism.John the Baptist was the first to interpret the Christ event in the light of Isaiah. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
64. Jesus proclaims the release of captives in Luke 4:16-30 just after John has been put in prison (Luke 3:20), and this is an instructive irony [Ed. AP]. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
65. J. A. T. Robinson cogently argues for an early date in *The Priority of John* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
66. E. Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (London, SCM Press, 1980), 289 [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
67. J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making* (2nd Ed.; London: SCM Press, 2003), 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
68. Mark 12:6 for example: “Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent (avpe,steilen) him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.' [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
69. The Lord has sent a word against Jacob, and it will light upon Israel (Isa 9:8) [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
70. The “dry place” (Zion) receives water from the “smitten rock.” [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
71. *Christology*, 246. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
72. T. R. Schreiner in “Paul’s View of the Law in Romans 10:4-5” *WTJ* 55 (1993): 113-35 lists several possible meanings for Rom 10:4—1. The Law is abolished. 2. Messianic Age ends the Age of Law. 3. Law has ended as a way of salvation. 4. Christ is the end of the Ceremonial Law. 5. The exclusivity of the Law is set aside. 6. Christ is the Goal of the Law. 7. Christ is the End and Goal of the Law. 8. Ceasing to use the Law to establish One’s own righteousness. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
73. The Rabbinic evidence is referred to and assessed by E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London: SCM Press,1977), 95-96 [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
74. Resurrection is at the heart of the Abrahamic account (Gen 22:5) and of the Hezekiah narrative (2 Kgs 20:5, Isa 53:10), as is acknowledgement of Yahweh’s self revelation (Gen 22:8, 14) and exaltation and confession of the name (Isa 26:2, 8-9; Isa 12:2; Isa 45:23-24). [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
75. W. H. Shea, “Daniel 3: Extra-Biblical Texts and the Convocation on the Plain of Dura”, *AUSS* 20 (1982). [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
76. VAT 7834 [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
77. C. Missler, *The Book of Daniel: Supplemental Notes* (Koinonia House, 1994), 15; J. Argubright, *Bible Believer’s Archaeology (*2 vols; Longwood: Xulon Press, 2003). [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
78. J. J. Collins, *Daniel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 141, 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
79. D. J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
80. “Daniel 3”, 29-37. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
81. “Daniel 3”, 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
82. “Daniel 3”, 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
83. A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
84. “Daniel 3”, 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
85. “Daniel 3”, 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
86. *Daniel*, 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
87. A. R. Millard provides an alternative explanation based upon Babylonian onomastica stating that Abed-Nego is “an Aramaic form meaning ‘servant of the shining one’”. On this basis he provides meanings for the other Babylonian names: “Shadrach represents *šādurāku*, ‘I am very fearful (of God)’” and “Meshech *mēšāku* ‘I am of little account’”, “Daniel 1-6 and History”*, Evangelical Quarterly* 49 (1977), 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
88. Shea, “Daniel 3”, 49. The transition between the names ‘Abed-Nabu’ (Aramaic) and ‘Ardi-Nabu’ (Akkadian) is not only theoretically possible, but is known to have occurred in other occurrences of the name in contract tablets, see J. H. Stevenson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Contracts with Aramaic Notes* (New York: America Book Company, 1902), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
89. Collins, *Daniel*, 141f, 183f. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
90. 50 “Daniel 3”, 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
91. *Daniel*, 141f. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
92. N. Porteous, *Daniel* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1979), 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
93. “Daniel 1-6”, 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
94. Elsewhere Shea has proposed that Daniel was originally given the name ‘Belshazzar’, which was adapted by the Jewish writer to Belteshazzar to distinguish him from the blasphemous king. On this basis, Shea identifies Daniel with a Belshazzar mentioned in two texts as “the chief officer” (*šaqu šarri*) of Neriglissar and Amel-Marduk respectively. These identifications remain hypothetical as we lack positive evidence for the shift from Belshazzar to Belteshazzar; see W. H. Shea, “Bel(te)shazzar meets Belshazzar”*, AUSS* 26 (1998): 67-81. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
95. There is a break at the top of column four and another at the bottom of column five, Shea, “Daniel 3”, 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
96. P. Wyns, “Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in Romans 10:3-8” *CeJBI* 3 (2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
97. R. Alter, *The David Story* (New York: Norton, 1999), 234. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
98. S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
99. H. A. Whittaker, *Samuel, Saul & David* (Chino: McDonald Publishing Services, 1984), 361. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
100. W. C. Kaiser, “The Blessing of David, The Charter for Humanity” in *The Law and the Prophets* (ed., J. H. Skilton; Nutley: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1974), 311. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
101. *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel*, 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
102. *Samuel, Saul & David*, 361. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
103. *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel*, 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
104. It needs to be stressed that the mist rises from the ground and is close to the ground; it is not a water canopy around the planet. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
105. I have added brackets to make the mention of the second group clearer. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
106. They also follow the same formula as with the ante-diluvians. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
107. We discuss this expression below. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
108. Our text is taken from the convenient edition of A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (2nd Ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949). [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
109. L. R. Bailey comments, “The similarities between the biblical and the Mesopotamian flood stories are so striking and so numerous that it is impossible to escape the suspicion that they are somehow related”, *Noah: The Person and the Story in History and Tradition* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
110. The city is stated in the account and a connection is made with the Gilgamesh Epic in the text known as “The Instructions of Shuruppak” which contains instructions from Shuruppak to his son Utnapushtu, see J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 594; hereafter ANET. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
111. ANET, 265. Bailey documents a similar citation, *Noah*, 14, from British Museum Tablet 2310, which lists rules of the city of Lagash (a Sumerian city) and begins the list, “After the Flood had swept over and had brought about the destruction of the land”. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
112. ANET, 43-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
113. ANET, 43 n. 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
114. See Bailey, *Noah*, 14-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
115. The latest text of the epic has been presented in A. R. Millard and W. G. Lambert, *Atra-Hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969). See also W. G. Lambert, “New Light on the Babylonian Flood” JSS 5 (1960): 113-123. An older less complete text is presented in ANET 104-106, 512-514, and Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*, 106-116, and the Millard-Lambert text has been excerpted in W. Beyerlin, *Near Eastern Religious Texts relating to the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1978), 90-93. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
116. For an overview see G. Leick, *Mesopotamia* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 82-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
117. ANET, 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
118. ANET, 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
119. ANET, 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
120. Lambert, “New Light”, 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
121. Beyerlin, *Near Eastern Texts*, 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
122. Bailey, *Noah*, 14-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
123. Bailey, *Noah*, ch. 3, sets out the evidence. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
124. *Noah*, 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
125. Many commentaries interpret the bow as a rainbow. For example, C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 473. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
126. G. von Rad, *Genesis* (London: SCM Press, 1961), 130, and *contra* Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 473. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
127. *Contra* von Rad, *Genesis*, 130, who says that the signification is that God has put aside his bow of war; rather, the bow is in a cloud and this represents what has just happened: God has destroyed mankind with storm-clouds. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
128. The presence of God in a cloud through the wilderness might suggest that after the flood there was a similar journey to a new land. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
129. The same Hebrew preposition can be “in” or “with” (b). [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
130. A hydrological cycle is implied in the common river geography before and after the flood (Gen 2:10-14). [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
131. Casting the net wider, some non-Mesopotamian flood stories mention a rainbow at the end of the account and the existence of these stories has been seen as evidence of a worldwide flood—Bailey, *Noah*, ch. 1; Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 477. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
132. D. A. Young, *The Biblical Flood: A Case Study of the Church’s Response to Extrabiblical Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 25. The standard treatment of early Jewish and Christian interpretation is J. P. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968). [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
133. Current weather systems do not allow for a single wind to pass over the whole planet; there are multiple wind systems in place. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
134. Repeated tidal waves caused by undersea volcanic activity would be one scenario. The Arabian Plate has one edge running along the east coast of the Persian Gulf. Any undersea volcanic activity here could produce repeated tidal waves inundating the top of the Mesopotamian basin. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
135. C. A. Hill, “The Noachian Flood: Universal or Local”, Perspectives on Science and the Christian Faith 54/3 (2002): 170-183 (171) calls this the best argument, biblically speaking, for a worldwide flood. She argues for a local flood. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
136. Hence, the command in Gen 9:3 is an *extension* of the range of what animals were permissible for eating and not the *introduction* of a permission for eating meat. The command has a practical relevance to the story of Noah’s flood if, as we have argued, one of the underlying causes was the violence of marauders towards the farming communities. Relaxing a restriction on eating would ease future pressure on food supplies. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
137. Of course, fish are not mentioned within such husbandry as the feedstuffs specified are arable and related to land husbandry. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
138. The mention of arable farming does not imply that humans were not meat eaters. A *positive direction* to farm necessarily does not imply a *negative prohibition* regarding animal husbandry or hunting. Rather, the direction to have dominion over animals would have embraced all aspects of husbandry; *contra* H. A. Whittaker, *Genesis 1-2-3-4* (Cannock: Biblia, 1986), 43-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
139. Hence, Gen 1:30 is not saying that all animals were vegetarian; rather, it is directing the first human pair to feed the animals that came under their dominion with arable produce; *contra* Whittaker, *Genesis 1-2-3-4*, 43-44. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
140. Our text is taken from the convenient edition of A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (2nd Ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949). [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
141. The Hebrew prepositional phrase occurs in Gen 6:19 translated as “of” and “out of”. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
142. The Hebrew preposition is used in a similar way in Gen 23:10 and compare Lev 11:42 and 16:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
143. L. R. Bailey, *Noah: The Person and the Story in History and Tradition* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), ch. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
144. S. Pollock, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 29. Pollock’s chapter 2 should be consulted for the geography of Mesopotamia in ancient times. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
145. Pollock, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 30. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
146. Our text is taken from the convenient edition of A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (2nd Ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949) and the reference is XI.11-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
147. Pollock, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
148. Pollock, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
149. The Hebrew and the LXX allows the 15 cubits’ measure to be above the land rather than the high hills, and if this were the case, the high hills would be river embankments. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
150. C. A. Hill, “The Noachian Flood: Universal or Local”, *Perspectives on Science and the Christian Faith* 54/3 (2002): 170-183 (174). [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
151. A. E. Hill, “Quantitative Hydrology of Noah’s Flood”, in *Perspectives on Science and the Christian Faith* 58/2 (2006): 130-141 (130). [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
152. “Quantitative Hydrology of Noah’s Flood”, 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
153. Bailey discusses the shifting extent of the region of Ararat down the centuries, *Noah: The Person and the Story in History and Tradition*, 55-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
154. See BDB 755, note 6, for more examples. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
155. The Mesopotamian flood accounts mention “wind-storms” and “south-storms”, see J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 44, 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
156. C. A. Hill, “Qualitative Hydrology of Noah’s Flood” *Perspectives on Science and the Christian Faith* 54/3 (2006): 120-129 discusses the weather requirements. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
157. Bailey, *Noah*, ch. 3, sets out the evidence. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
158. The “windows of heaven” may be a figure for violent rainfall thus allowing more restrained rainfall to have continued during the 150 days. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
159. Hill, “Quantitative Hydrology of Noah’s Flood”, 137-139, offers an estimate needed for the speed of the wind. The variables are the weight of the ark, the gradient, and the flow of the water downstream. He offers 4 possible cases, the “lightest” of which would be for a wind of between 54 mph and 70 mph. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
160. The Hebrew term is translated as both “dove” and “pigeon” in the KJV. E. Firmage in his article “Zoology” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols; ed., D. N. Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:1145, treats doves and pigeons together but states that homing pigeons are not attested for Mesopotamia *so far*. The story of Noah could be the only evidence of homing birds for Mesopotamia. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
161. Hence, proposals of a flood in the Mediterranean Basin, the Black Sea Basin and the Caspian Sea Basin have garnered little support. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)