**Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation**

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

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**Editorial**

The EJournal welcomes Bro. John Adey to the editors. John is currently a member of Wolfson College Cambridge, and is completing an MPhil in Hebrew Studies. His research is in the area of the Divine Name and in epigraphic and Biblical Hebrew personal names, with additional interests in the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint, intertextuality and quotation. He is a member of the International Organisation of Septuagint and Cognate Studies (IOSCS). John will take up responsibility for a “Text and Language” section in the EJournal. With Tom’s specialist brief of “Church History”, the EJournal is moving towards a section editor approach in its presentation. Potential contributors can send articles in these areas to Tom and John. It is hoped in the future (DV) to add other specialist editors, and we would be happy to talk with any who might be interested in this project.

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What *might* be wrong in Old Testament scholarship? The question is deliberately vague and all-encompassing. We might ask, similarly, what *might* be wrong in Church Doctrine? What would we answer in this case? Suggested answers might include: the doctrine of the Trinity, the nature of Christ, the nature of the Spirit, teaching about the Devil and Satan, the immortality of the soul, the nature of man and human sin, heaven and hell, the kingdom and Israel, to name a few matters.

Should we expect a similar list in Old Testament scholarship? The situation is slightly different since such scholarship is a recent invention—a product of the German Enlightenment. Even today, the influence of the Enlightenment is felt in the discipline. In contrast, many church doctrines are the product of Apologists and the Early Church Fathers. The two eras are poles apart but there is something to the comparison.

Many Christadelphians might prepare a bible talk on a matter of doctrine by investigating bible texts and consulting the writings of other Christadelphians. For example, unless a talk is being given on the History of the Trinity, it is unlikely that Trinitarian treatises will be consulted when preparing a talk on the nature of Christ. The same aversion is not evidenced in strictly Old Testament subjects where church commentaries might very well be consulted and their opinions adopted; this is a generalization, but it is an odd inconsistency.

It is not possible to say what *is* wrong in Old Testament Studies, but a list of what *might* be wrong could include such things as: the postulation of multiple editors, who changed and added to prophetic texts up until Maccabean times; a second and third Isaiah; rejection of single authorship for prophetic books; four sources for the Pentateuch; a Deuteronomist editor or school responsible for much of Samuel-Kings; postexilic origins for undated minor prophets; a Maccabean Daniel; legendary treatment of Genesis and Exodus; rejection of account of the Conquest; a developmental approach to Israelite Religion; a critical treatment of the claims of Bible history; *and so on*.

These things *might* be wrong and conservative and critical scholars will argue some of the points. Moreover, critical scholars have many variations on these hypotheses which *may* also be wrong. Our point is the question: What *if* they are wrong? Is this not a damning indictment of a discipline?

**To Speak Well of God**

**John Pople**

**Introduction**

The Biblical drama of Job has proven a long-standing enigma. A faithful disciple is seemingly tortured at the hands of his God, apparently so that the Deity might win a barter. It sounds like the most deplorable of Greek myths, yet the drama rests within the Bible, the central text of Christianity! Reaction to this Old Testament (OT) book has generated many varied emotions, to say the least. Many Christians simply avoid the book altogether, or conclude that the God of the Old and New Testament (NT) are very different.

The central feature of my interpretation, as the title of this article implies, is that one can actually present the behavior of God in a praiseworthy light throughout the Joban drama, without distorting the text, introducing extraneous ideas, or minimizing Job’s suffering. This approach is distinctively different to other expositions which, perhaps in somewhat defensive mindset, tend to either conclude that God’s restoration of Job is sufficient to recompense for His destruction of him, or that the Joban drama teaches that we must not question God. This latter conclusion reminds me of the generic defense lawyer who does not permit the questioning of his client, quite possibly because he believes that any close questioning might readily expose his client’s guilt!

**Synopsis of the Biblical Drama of Job**

**Prologue (chapters 1-2, prose):** God invites a character termed “the Satan”[[1]](#footnote-1) to consider the piety of his servant Job. The Satan counters that God has failed to realize Job is only pious because he is well blessed in riches and, were he deprived, he would curse God. God allows the Satan’s demands to be met and God Himself destroys Job’s fortunes, family and ultimately health. Yet Job does not curse God; the Satan loses the barter.

**Debate (chapters 3-31, poetry):** Job’s three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar come to sympathize but, ultimately, they chastise Job. A debate ensues, where each speaker attacks Job in turn, calling upon him to acknowledge the sins they believe must have triggered his destruction, and Job replies in self-defense. In all fourteen speeches and rebuttals are voiced, with the debate growing ever more heated and culminating in lengthy speeches from Job appealing to God to appear so that his (Job’s) righteousness can be revealed.

**Intervention (chapters 32-41, poetry):** Instead, a young witness, Elihu, speaks out. He too is critical of Job, yet limits his criticism to Job’s recent words, not lifestyle, all the while defending God as righteous.

Then God speaks (His longest speeches in all scripture!). He first presents a tour of creation, focusing especially on wild animals, observing that He can control them where Job cannot. When Job briefly responds, God rebukes him and launches a second speech focused wholly on His ability to control two beasts whose descriptions seem other-worldly. Job’s latter response states he has ‘seen God’ and avers a new life direction.

**Epilogue (chapter 42, prose):** God rebukes the three friends for not speaking correctly about Him; praises Job for succeeding in that regard; and directs Job to intercede in prayer for his friends for God to forgive them. God then restores Job: he receives double of his previous blessings yet, while he receives twice as many flocks and herds as previously, he is only blessed to receive as many children as before.

Understandably, the plotline forms a mystery – arguably several mysteries!

**Theme: To Speak Well of God**

The underlying theme of the Joban drama is how one speaks about God. ‘Who God is’ is the most prevalent theme within the drama. A further subtle indicator of this theme is that the first and last spoken words of the drama concern how one speaks about God, with the entire drama sandwiched between. The first words spoken are by Job: he sacrifices for his children in case they have spoken ill of his God. Similarly the last spoken words, spoken by God, chastise Eliphaz and his two friends for not speaking well of God where Job did. (Job’s sacrificing for his children also showed he had chosen for himself the lifestyle of a priest.) The drama of Job vicariously challenges each of us similarly as we witness his destruction. Job, from the crumpled carnage of his life, still manages to speak well of his God. But will we?

**Enter Satan**

The identification of Satan is *critical* to any interpretation of the unfolding drama. I propose[[2]](#footnote-2) that the Satan throughout the Bible is a metaphorical character who represents human pride—and in this specific drama of Job the Satan is the distilled pride of the three friends. This proposal is based on a number of observations (and the assumption that the canon of scripture communicates a consistent message):

* The word ‘Satan’ is a Hebrew word meaning ‘opponent’ and is referenced with the definite article (i.e. *The* Satan). This suggests ‘the Satan’ may be a metaphorical character, not a proper name.
* The natural reading of the prologue indicates that the ‘opponent’ is the opponent of God.
* While many take the Satan to be an angel, either benign or malign, Peter’s NT writing excludes this possibility; revealing angels do not slander righteous men (as the Satan does to Job).
* All other scriptures indicate that the opponent of God is invariably the stubborn, proud heart of man (e.g. Genesis 6; Jeremiah 17; Mark 7).
* The Satan is stupid! The entire basis of the Satan’s argument is that he is cleverer than God and has observed something God has missed. This characteristic arrogance points strongly at human pride as the source.
* The scriptural template of God interacting with Satan follows three generic points: 1) God speaks a truth; 2) Satan counters with an untruth, which forms an accusation against a righteous man; and 3) God rebukes the Satan. (E.g. Genesis 2-3 & Revelation 12; Matthew 16; Ezra 1-4 & Zechariah 3). This template is consistently fulfilled in Job if we understand the Satan as the pride of the three friends, because their untruths concerning God’s character form accusations against righteous Job and their pride-filled rhetoric is rebuked by God at the end.

I interpret the ‘conversation’ between God and the Satan as a literary device. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar “present themselves before the Lord”, and they see Job in the assembly and, because of his wealth, the sight of him causes their blood to boil with the sense of perceived injustice. God hears the slanderous evaluations of their hearts as clearly as if they had been words shouted aloud. His response is recorded in the drama’s text but, I suggest, God’s words are not heard by the three friends. In other words, the Satan is *unaware* that he is in ‘conversation’ with God, even as the conversation proceeds. This satisfies the essential requirement that the three friends have no knowledge of the events of the prologue; else the subsequent debate about why Job is suffering would not occur.

I understand the ‘conversation’ in Job as a poetic recapitulation of the events where God responds to the thoughts he sees in the hearts of prideful men. This literary device is an attractive way to reveal to the reader how God works in human lives, bringing situations we need to experience to bear, as He works to fashion more godly disciples and gently chafe away the rough edges that do not reflect Him.

The affliction brought upon Job is explained similarly. The friends see Job and think: “How could God allow this injustice? Doesn’t He see that the only reason Job is pious is because of all the material blessings He has given him?” God ‘replies’—though the three men never hear the words—”I see what you’re thinking. You think that if Job loses his material possessions he’ll curse Me. I have something to teach you. I’ll empower your wicked thoughts and act on them. I’ll bring destruction on Job, just as your jealousy wants, and you will see, through the perseverance of my servant, the type of God I am and what I am working to ultimately achieve”. This demonstrates God *brought* the affliction, but the Satan is *to blame for* the affliction, both of which details are specified in the text.

The all-important consequence of this interpretation of the Satan is that it dramatically changes our appreciation of who God is. By peeking to the end of the story we see that the three friends are brought to salvation by what happens to Job, so we are enabled to realize that the reason God entered the ‘barter’ with the Satan was because He had a specific intent of bringing salvation, even to those infected by that Satan! This is of critical importance, as this interpretation demonstrates the love of God, to save even those under the influence of the Satan (pride), more powerfully than any other interpretation (cf. John 3:16).

**The Wilderness Journey**

Investigating the genealogies of the characters reveals that Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar are all children of Abraham, while Job is likely a Gentile. This sets the precedent that there are children of Abraham self-righteously and falsely accusing a righteous man whose father’s lineage did not trace through Abraham; just as the Pharisees would later do to Jesus of Nazareth. The implied message, even back in OT times, is that to be a child of God is determined by one’s lifestyle, not one’s lineage.

Job’s genealogy is blatantly obscured in the drama. He is *never* listed with his lineage and, reinforcing the contrast, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite are *never* listed *without* theirs.

Researching the ‘when and where’ places the drama during the wilderness wanderings of Israel under Moses, both geographically and chronologically. The land of Uz is in the desert south of the Promised Land. As for timing, comparisons between Job’s statements and the prophet Isaiah show Job speaks about the destruction of Egypt in the Red Sea during the Israelite Exodus. This implies that Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, children of Abraham, are part of the wandering multitude.

This timing and geography influences the spiritual vista. Israel is at their lowest spiritual ebb. It has been ~500 years since Jacob (Israel) left Beth-el (house of God); and Joshua (Hebrew: Jesus) is yet to lead them back. So we can understand, though not excuse, the moral emptiness of the three friends’ arguments, from the backdrop of the literal and spiritual homelessness of the people.

The scene of the drama is the wilderness; the interplay that the Satan will clash head to head with the Righteous Man there. An important theme is emerging.

**Satan in the Wilderness: The Debate**

Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar’s speeches reveal they believe in the doctrine of retribution: a simplistic tenet that states anyone who suffers does so because God is punishing them for their sins. Their speeches ultimately blossom in demanding Job to confess the sins they believe he must have committed. As each speaker takes the podium he attacks Job more determinedly than the preceding one and likewise Job feels driven to defend himself ever more stridently. Job succeeds in rebutting their false accusations, so the three friends lose the debate. But Job’s victory is pyrrhic: he is now as haughty as the friends. He denounces God’s treatment of him and effectively subpoenas God, demanding an audience with Him so he can display his own righteousness.

God will now not speak to Job, to protect him from misunderstanding that the Creator is answerable to His Creation at any time the latter demands.

The winner of the debate is, curiously, the Satan; because human pride is now dominant throughout all four speakers. Satan struggles against a righteous man in the wilderness – and Satan wins! This gives a fascinating education to all disciples who likewise struggle in their own wilderness: righteous conduct will not defeat the Satan.

**My Messenger**

The Debate’s finale requires that another character arrive, to vacate the subpoena Job has unwisely issued, freeing Job so he can hear from God without misunderstanding that God was required to obey his demands.

Thus, the entrance of Elihu, which happens at this point, should no longer be thought erratic or inexplicable, as it is in most expositor’s works. I believe the evidence shows Elihu is a good man whose character and conduct are dramatically opposed to the three friends’. I propose the following reasons for this view:

* Elihu calls for God to be praised; the three friends remain silent on this matter. The importance of this distinction is amplified when seeing ‘Speaking Well of God’ as a central, underlying thesis to the drama.
* Elihu ascribes his wisdom to God; the three friends claim (ironically accurately) their wisdom is their own.
* Elihu explicitly states his desire is that Job be found innocent; the friends have already pronounced Job guilty.
* Elihu is not criticized by God; the three friends are.

I hypothesize Elihu should be understood as a type of John the Baptist who is preparing the way for the Word of God’s arrival. Comparisons between Elihu and John show these distinctive parameters:

* Introducing the arrival of the Word of God.
* Having a purpose of ‘straightening the way’, as Isaiah states it: i.e. correcting misperceptions in the audience, so that when the Word of God comes the audience will be best placed to understand Him. Specifically, Elihu flatly disagrees with the three friends’ arguments and also corrects Job’s few errors, elucidating that God *is* present, *does* answer prayer and does *not* pervert justice. This is Elihu’s work, to vacate Job’s subpoena, allowing Job to hear from God.
* Anticipating the themes of the Word of God even to the extent of explicitly voicing them. John the Baptist correctly anticipates the theme of repentance in preparation for the kingdom of heaven. Elihu specifically comments on God’s authority via His thundering voice, that He controls the elements of the weather and that His principal task is to deliver man from pride, all three of which correctly anticipate God’s revelations to Job.
* Fading away when their job is done, as is the signature of the herald. Elihu’s disappearance, which perplexes most expositors, becomes understandable using John the Baptist’s explanation of his own role: “He [the one I introduce] must increase and I must decrease”.

**God Speaks**

Almost every expositor suggests either that God does not answer Job’s cries for help, or that God’s speeches are designed to communicate solely His Supremacy and that Job has no right to question Him. I contend instead God answers Job’s cries for help; and in a style which also reveals truths Job had not appreciated.

The divine point, of which Job is unaware, is that Job is now infected with pride—caught in the jaws of the Satan. God sees this Satan as a rampaging Wild Beast which He will later label Leviathan. God’s desire is to save Job; that is His character. It is with compassion for Job’s situation that He asks Job in His first speech: “Are you as good as I am at controlling wild beasts, Job?”

Job is dismayed. His perspective is very different. So far he sees he has been cursed, evidently from God and then wrongly denounced by the hapless moralizing of his proud friends. He has hollered to the heavens for deliverance and received no answer. And now the Lord he has been seeking has finally appeared He seems to be sneering at Job for his inability to control the animal kingdom! Disconsolate, having misunderstood his Father’s currently obscured message, Job sulkily replies that he is aware of his inferiority.

But God is aware that His excellent disciple can hear the Word of God, so He speaks again. He continues the same theme, yet transitions from the natural creation to the spiritual creation, to reveal: “So how can you control THE Beast, Job? The rampaging beast that brings every man down? Do you recognize this beast? Let me describe him to you. Have you seen him anywhere recently?” And such is the resonance between the godly disciple Job and God’s Mind that, even on first hearing, Job understands!! Job realizes that the Beast Leviathan *is* the Satan who *is* human pride, whom he has been unsuccessfully wrestling. He sees only the Word of God can defeat this Beast. Job’s restoration, and the salvation of his three friends held by the Satan, can now begin in earnest.

God has presented the Beast of human pride in His second speech using two visions (Behemoth and Leviathan) which have the same interpretation. This mirrors the (recent) time of the Pharaoh when God sent two visions with the same meaning. The purpose, Joseph explained, was to communicate that God’s decision is certain and He will act soon. This hints that God’s restraint of the Satan will certainly occur, and soon; lending additional credence to seeing the three friends associated with the Satan, who are rebuked in the very next chapter.

The fact that the Satan can only be defeated by the Word of God has fascinating implications for the NT gospels. It teaches that Jesus, who struggles against the (same) Satan in the Wilderness— and wins!—does not win because he is a righteous man. The Joban drama teaches Jesus wins because he is the Word of God, a message in perfect harmony with John’s Gospel’s presentation of him. In fact, Jesus may have learned this from reading Job.

Importantly we see that God’s speeches are insightful, on topic and, above all, *helpful* to the cries for assistance from the disciple He loves. Did we really expect any different?

**Salvation**

Job is utilized by God to act as priest for his three friends, quite possibly because Job had chosen a priestly life, as we are shown in the prologue. Since Job is not descended from Levi, it must be the spiritual priesthood of Melchizedek into which God has enrolled him. The NT letter to the Hebrews explains the two identifiers of Melchizedek’s order: 1) they learn obedience through suffering; and 2) they have “neither father nor mother”, appearing essentially ‘out of the blue’. This latter feature explains why Job’s genealogy is deliberately obscured in the drama: to represent him as a priest in Melchizedek’s order.

Job’s ‘double-portion’ blessing seems only to be realized in receiving twice as many flocks and herds, yet not children. The beauty and subtlety of what God does here is profound. The only way Job can have fourteen sons and six daughters, twice what he had before, is if the original seven sons and three daughters can, in some way, be considered to be alive, in a way in which the equally deceased animals are not. I believe God is communicating the hope of resurrection to Job! And God sends this message in His characteristic way, via a very subtle play of numbers of flocks, herds and children: a message medium so gentle it will not even be noticed by any but the most careful listener. But Job is an extremely careful listener to God’s words, as the drama has shown. This is a unique and amazing promise given to a unique and amazing man. Most importantly of all, it enables us to speak well of God, as it powerfully illustrates the unfailing love our Father willingly displays towards His children, which flowers in the ultimate hope of resurrection for all His children.

Figure 1: The Book of Job. Circles represent the characters, grey bars the interfaces between them.

The drama has shown that the suffering of a righteous man has brought salvation to unrighteous men. In this statement alone we can see both a wonderful reason for that suffering—to save lives—and also whom Job foreshadows: the Christ. For if the suffering of one righteous man can bring salvation to three of his friends, how much more can the suffering of The Righteous Man bring redemption to all who will be his friend?

**To Speak Well of God**

The Joban drama is delightfully simple: just three characters and the all-too-revealing interactions deriving from their inherent natures. God is laying out before us the three fundamental forces in the spiritual universe: God; Good; and Evil and using the drama to teach us their true nature. The characters are:

* God (not counting his ‘armor-bearer’ Elihu as a separate character in his own right, which is appropriate).
* The Satan, Leviathan, human pride, the second most powerful force in the universe, who is in essential opposition to God. He is manifest in the triumvirate form of the three friends of Job; (yet the three friends are victims of Leviathan as much as they are unwitting promulgators of him).
* Job, the Righteous Man, who attempted to wrestle with the Satan; and through whose intense suffering God was able to free the three friends trapped in their own pride.

The drama can be summarized in four simple movements, where God sequentially steps through all four interactions that can exist in the spiritual universe (see Figure 1).

* *Prologue*: God interacts with the Satan. The subject is how the Righteous Man, Job, behaves.
* *Debate*: The Satan interacts with the Righteous Man. The subject is how God behaves.
* *Intervention*: God interacts with the Righteous Man (initially through one sent before to straighten the way and then directly). The subject is how the Satan, Leviathan, behaves.
* *Epilogue*: All three parties collide and the conclusion of the matter is revealed. God speaks concerning all parties. The Righteous Man speaks concerning God and himself. The Satan is left with nothing to say. I suspect it will also be this way at the ultimate conclusion, at the end of days.

Woven amid the dramatic interactions is the theme itself: “theology” (Greek: Theos = God; Logos = word), i.e. the words that a man, whether he in is opposition to God or in resonance with Him, i.e. whether he is satanic or righteous, will speak about his God.

Whence then Job’s suffering? Ironically, it was a consequence of sin, just as the three friends had said all along. But not his sin, as they had wrongly supposed: theirs—the intractable pride that kept them from union with their God. But because God loved them, and saw the persevering faith of His servant Job, He devised a plan by which their pride would be brought into such sharp relief that they would be able at last to recognize their error, repent and find grace; provided their priest was willing to intercede for them. And what an immense degree of suffering Job had to bear for this to happen! Such is the degree of damage human pride inflicts upon the world. Yet now that we can see the true source of the suffering—human pride—God is justified even as Job suffers.

It is the drama of Job which, perhaps in total opposite to its surface appearance, has revealed the true degree of care God has for all men, in that He attempts to bring salvation to everyone. Perhaps it is no wonder the drama is introduced with God’s curious invitation, aimed at any who truly want to know Him: Have *you* considered my servant Job?

**Specialization**

**Andrew Perry**

**Introduction**

Specialization in Biblical Studies is the norm. Scholars will be “Old Testament” or “New Testament”; perhaps “Intertestamental Judaism” or “Second Temple Judaism”, and possibly some topic in the area of “The Bible and the Modern World”. A quick glance at the University staff lists will show this sort of grouping. However, matters are more specialized than this grouping would suggest. Scholars will teach Old Testament but within Old Testament Studies they will be specialists in Isaiah, or the Minor Prophets, or the Prophets, *and so on*. The same point can be made in respect of New Testament Studies and Second Temple Judaism; a New Testament scholar might be a Pauline specialist; a Second Temple scholar might be a specialist in the writings of Enoch. Why is there such specialization? Is this a good or a bad thing? What are the advantages and disadvantages? Does anything matter here to the man in the street?

**Causes of Specialization**

There is an obvious cause of specialization. Scholars need to make an ongoing contribution to some field of knowledge. The university system is large and the number of publications each year in the whole field of Biblical Studies is significant, never mind the growing back catalogue. In order to make a contribution to knowledge, it is necessary to cover the published material of some field in order to comment in that area. The logistics of the situation require specialization: whereas it is reasonable to cover a narrow field it is impossible to cover a larger area.

There is a further factor. World class athletes who specialize in the 100m and 200m distances measure their success in hundredths of a second. There is an analogy in Biblical Studies: in order to make a contribution, the “race” chosen has to be restricted and in order to find the hundredths of a second, intensive training and preparation has to be undertaken. With a specialism, a scholar can secure his/her position and from such a secure base, extend their horizon to encompass other nearby fields, albeit in a more general way. Once an area is narrowed by a publication, more publications are engendered in that field. The process of specialization is easy to kick-start and perpetuate. For example, a new literary method and terminology produced in Russian literary criticism can (and has) engendered a specialism in Biblical Studies. Human creativity gives rise to a specialism, and specialization is deepened by human creativity.

**The Man or Woman on the Street**

The man or woman in the street uses specialists all the time: doctors, dentists, lawyers, accountants, plumbers, *and so on*. The religious person will view the professional clergy as a specialist and defer to their views and opinions. Of course, second opinions may be sought, but there is a fair amount of trust and deference to specialists.

An example of such deference can be seen in television documentaries on aspects of the Bible. These usually appear at Christmas or Easter and they have an expert visiting the Holy Land and talking to other experts about the topic of the documentary. Such programmes are aimed at the person at home and so the invited specialists make their contribution at a dumbed down level and the television presenter likewise “dumbs down” their material for the audience. In this process their viewpoint will be presented as the most reasonable construal of the selectively presented relevant data, and the audience is expected to take the information on trust.

The problem is that in the area of Bible, this “dumbing down” process leaves out all sorts of complications and caveats, not to mention other pertinent data, and the presenter’s viewpoint will seldom be one that cannot be challenged, and it is likely to be one that is culturally of the age. Standards may differ across the world, but UK sourced documentaries on Biblical subjects have been poor over the years.

Another area of danger where a consensus in specialist knowledge is made readily available is the “Study Notes” in Study Bible Editions. For example the chronology of the Divided Monarchy in the Harper Collins Study Bible (p. 537) presents a critical consensus view that differs from the standard conservative harmonization. It is conveniently placed for bible reading groups to reference and so it has an advantage in forming opinion.

The warning in these two examples is not difficult: the man or woman on the street needs to be wary and diligent in searching the scriptures to see whether things are as people say. Space forbids mention of the dangers inherent in popular books on the Bible that can be bought in Christian bookshops.

**The Body**

There is specialism in the body of Christ insofar as Paul uses the metaphor of a body and its parts to describe an ecclesia. There are those who are mouths and there are those who are feet. The idea of a body and the goal of purposive co-operation is Paul’s point. Specialization within the ecclesia in biblical study therefore has value; it is a kind of service to the body. As such it has no intrinsic value above or below any other kind of service; it seeks to increase knowledge and understanding.

There are disadvantages to specialization. Within academic studies one disadvantage is that it restricts the ability of a person to contribute to wider topics of investigation. Another drawback is that the specialist relies on the consensus results of scholarship in related areas of study. This means that s/he perpetuates a consensus to which he does not contribute and which may be in error. Specialists can suffer from tunnel vision and fail to see the wider picture; they can develop a specific jargon – communication with a wider audience can be poor.

Within the body the main problem of specialization is the damage it does to an individual’s spiritual balance. All scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16, KJV). Spiritual balance is a matter of reading all of scripture. Further, given the fact that scripture is inspired, concentrating personal studies on Paul or the Minor Prophets inevitably misses many of the echoes, allusions and quotations that exist across the Bible.

A second problem is pride; “knowledge puffeth up” and a specialist has spent years acquiring knowledge and expertise in a restricted domain. Others look to this person for knowledge – the occasions for prideful thinking are obvious. The pride of life attaches to all human endeavours as a danger and a temptation. Whether a person is a mouth in the body, or a hand, or a brain, prideful feelings can intermingle in the service to the body.

As it is there is relatively little specialization in Biblical Studies within the body; certainly there are no specialized publications or journals, or even a back catalogue of specialized studies in various topics; there has been no engagement with what is published about the Bible by the churches. Publications have been restricted to the general and introductory, the devotional, the homiletical and the preaching genres. While these are necessary areas for writing, advanced written Bible Study has had to be sought outside the community, and this is saturated with error and contrary opinion. Swimming in this sea is perhaps the third problem attending the brother or sister who seeks to specialize in an area of biblical knowledge. S/he is faced with a substantial array of technical studies and monographs, a technical jargon, a panoply of cited authorities in a forest of footnotes, and the return on an investment in time can often be poor.

**Conclusion**

There is a need for specialist and advanced writing in the body; precise and detailed, and eschewing the general. It is not clear how such a project can be realized.

**The Teacher of Righteousness**

**Andrew Perry**

**Introduction**

The KJV margin offers “teacher of righteousness” as an alternative for the Hebrew of Joel 2:23, but this proposal is rarely followed by commentators and a rare choice in other versions. Is this marginal alternative correct and does it matter? This article argues that it is the right choice and that it is a building block for the NT doctrine of the holy Spirit.

**Joel**

Joel 2:21-27 is regarded as an oracle unit to do with the blessings of restoration after the northerner is removed (Joel 2:20). One aspect of that restoration is described in v. 23, and the KJV margin suggests that the reason for the gladness of the people at that time is that the Lord has given them a “teacher of righteousness” (KJV mg.).

Be glad then, ye children of Zion,[[3]](#footnote-3) and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you a teacher of righteousness (hqdcl hrwmh), and he has caused to come down for you the rain, the former rain (hrwm), and the latter rain in the first *month*. Joel 2:23 (KJV revised)

The Hebrew, which we have translated “teacher of righteousness”, is translated as “the former rain for your vindication” in the RSV and NASB, and rendered as “the former rain moderately” in the KJV. The issue between the translations centres on the Hebrew hrwm (*moreh*) which can mean “former rain” or “teacher”. The arguments in favour of “teacher of righteousness” for the phrase hqdcl hrwmh (*ha-moreh lisedakah*) are as follows:

1) In addition to the second occurrence in Joel 2:23, the Hebrew hrwm is translated once elsewhere as “early rain” (Ps 84:6) and as “teacher(s)” three times (Job 36:22; Prov 5:13; Isa 30:20). The only other prophetic usage is Isaiah,

And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your Teachers will not hide themselves any more, but your eyes shall see your Teachers. Isa 30:20 (RSV revised)

Isaiah uttered this during the crisis of 701, but “the Teacher” is not identified; the reference could be to a single individual or to a group of individuals who were teachers. The KJV has “teachers” as the Hebrew noun is plural in form; however, the associated verb “hide” is a unique singular, and hence the RSV (and NASB) opt for “Teacher”. We give precedence to the plural form of the noun as the verb is unique and we cannot be sure whether the singular form for this verb did not also function as a plural. The significance of this Isaiah text for Joel is the common stress upon teaching from another eighth century prophet.

2) The Hebrew hqdcl hrwmh has the definite object marker (ta), which would suggest a determinate substantive[[4]](#footnote-4) for the reference (as in “the corn”, “the northerner”, “the years”, “the name”, etc. Joel 2:19, 20, 25, 26); hrwm in Ps 84:6 and in the second occurrence in Joel 2:23 lacks the definite object marker.

3) A comparable phrase, “teacher of lies” (rqv hrwm) occurs in Isa 9:15, although there is no definite article or definite object marker. Its significance for Joel is again the timing of the oracle—Isaiah inveighs against such a “teacher of lies” during the Syro-Ephraimite and Assyrian crises of Ahaz’ reign (730s).

4) Joel can be read in contrast to Isaiah—the people had been given a “teacher of righteousness” or rather a “teacher *for* righteousness”. The sign accompanying the advent of the teacher was the bringing down of the former and the latter rain in the first month;[[5]](#footnote-5) normally, only the “latter” spring rain would fall in March.

5) One connection between rain and a teacher of righteousness is supplied in the blessing of Deuteronomy:

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day…The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season… Deut 28:1, 11 (KJV) cf. Deut 11:13-14

A teacher of righteousness who leads the people back to the Lord would be the instrumental cause of the Lord blessing the people with rain (Deut 11:14), and so the giving of the former and latter rain in the first month of spring would be a sign that such a teacher had been given to the people.

6) Another connection is the use of “rain” as a simile for teaching in such statements as “My doctrine shall drop as the rain” (Deut 32:2). In the same vein Isaiah declares,

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it. Isa 45:8 (KJV)

And the verb “drop” (@jn) is used of prophetic speech:

Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord: Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not *thy word* against the house of Isaac. Amos 7:16 (KJV)

Son of man, set thy face toward the south, and drop *thy word* toward the south, and prophesy against the forest of the south field… Ezek 20:46 (KJV) cf. Ezek 21:2

The language of Joel is double-edged: not only had there been a recent gift of the early and latter rains in the same month, but there was a promise of righteousness raining upon the people. Hosea expresses a similar simile when he states,

Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord; his going forth is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth. Hos 6:3 (RSV) cf. Prov 16:15

The people would experience the presence of the Lord as spring rain.

7) The expression hqdcl is literally “for righteousness” and it is used of Phineas’ act which was counted to him for righteousness (Ps 106:31); it is used of the Lord looking for righteousness in his vineyard (Isa 5:7); and it is used in Hosea in apposition to the rain:

Sow to yourselves for righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for *it is* time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you. Hos 10:12 (KJV revised) cf. Psa 72:6

Here Hosea again anticipates a coming of the Lord to the people and a rain of righteousness. While the RSV and NASB have “for…vindication” in Joel 2:23 as the translation of hqdcl, the database of usage for hqdc illustrates a spectrum that moves from the *acts* to a *state*—the acts of righteousness lead to a state of righteousness.[[6]](#footnote-6) The notion of “vindication” seems foreign to Joel and an idiosyncratic suggestion for inclusion in the database of hqdc.

8) Early Jewish interpretation supports the rendering “teacher of righteousness”. C. Roth notes that the text may be the source of the Qumran doctrine that their leader was the “Teacher of Righteousness”.[[7]](#footnote-7) Unfortunately, the Minor Prophets scrolls from Qumran lack a rendering of the relevant verse in Joel. Nevertheless, Qumran expectation was that the people would walk in an age of wickedness “until he comes who shall teach righteousness at the end of days”,[[8]](#footnote-8) which looks like a conscious allusion to Hosea. The Jewish Targum has “For he has given you back your teacher in righteousness” or possible “your teacher of righteousness” and this was followed by the Vulgate.

**Conclusion**

On the basis of the above observations, (1)-(8), we conclude that Joel refers to the giving of the “teacher of righteousness”; this could be an individual,[[9]](#footnote-9) a priest or a prophet, but it is just as possible that there is here a personification of the bestowal of the Spirit. Such a personification is indicated by the personification of the Spirit in John:

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. John 14:26 (RSV)

Joel presents a story in which the land is devastated, the people repent and turn to the Lord, and the land is restored. This isn’t a story of vindication as if the people were to be vindicated before their enemies, but one of deliverance. Subsequent to their repentance there was to be a bestowal of the Spirit, the teacher of righteousness. This was also prophesied by Hosea as a “coming of the Lord” in showers of rain.

Joel has two predictions about the bestowal of the Spirit—Joel 2:28-29 which is quoted by Peter at Pentecost, and Joel 2:23 which personifies the Spirit as a “teacher of righteousness”, a facet taken up by John. What John says about the Spirit is part of the same bestowal that Luke records in Acts. Given the occurrence of the Johannine “Pentecost” in John 20, this conclusion significantly affects the church doctrine that Pentecost represents the beginning of the church.

**The First Century Influence of John the Baptist**

**Paul Wyns**

In a previous article[[10]](#footnote-10) it was observed that scholars think[[11]](#footnote-11) that John the Baptist was in some sense a competing focus for loyalty in the early church and that one of the aims of the Fourth Gospel (4G) was to place the ministry of the Baptist in a correct perspective. If this is true it would reinforce the hypothesis that the 4G was delivered first to Ephesus, where disciples of John the Baptist were encountered by Paul.

**He must increase but I must decrease**

In a Gospel that is renowned for the “signs” that Jesus performed (John 2:18; 4:54; 6:14, 30; 12:18) we are informed that *“*John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true*”* (John 10:41). Although the ministry of John and Jesus are contrasted favourably, the reader is left in no doubt that John’s function is preparatory andtestamentary*.*  Even so, the author of the Gospel is at pains to stress that the witness of John did not lend Jesus his authority: “You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved” (John 5:33-34). J. Ashton comments,

Although everything John the Baptist said about Jesus was true (cf. 10:40-41), Jesus himself did not, could not, accept human testimony -i.e., he himself did not depend on it to establish who he was in his own mind.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Another illustration of the subordination of the Baptist is seen in the detail of Jesus’ baptism. J. D. G. Dunn remarks,

For the Fourth Evangelist the important thing between the encounter between the Baptist and Jesus was the descent of the Spirit on Jesus. Far from implying that this was effected through or by water baptism John focuses attention exclusively on the operation of the Spirit.[[13]](#footnote-13)

In contrast, the synoptics describe the actual water baptism of Jesus in more detail.[[14]](#footnote-14)

The Fourth Gospel also differentiates itself from the Synoptists in that it knows of a baptismal ministry administered by Jesus, although careful to specify that it was the disciples who baptized. G. R. Beasley-Murray observes,

While each of the Synoptists gives an account of the baptism of Jesus, the Fourth Evangelist merely presumes it without mentioning the event (John1.32f). On the other hand, the Synoptists are silent about any administration or authorisation of baptism by Jesus, but the Fourth Evangelist refers twice to such an activity on the part of our Lord (John 3.22ff, 4.1ff). Nor can it be said that the Evangelist views this work as an insignificant aspect of the ministry of Jesus; the account is part of his exposition of the relations between Jesus and John. He implies that there was a period when the ministries of John and Jesus were exercised concurrently (3.22ff) and, somewhat surprisingly, that the baptizing ministry of Jesus was more successful than that of his forerunner: John’s disciples tell him that ‘everybody’ was going to Jesus for baptism (3.26), and Jesus learns that the Pharisees heard He was making and baptizing more disciples than John (4.1).[[15]](#footnote-15)

Many scholars regard the passage[[16]](#footnote-16) as largely tendentious, motivated for apologetic reasons – to provide an explanation for the Church’s adoption of John’s water baptism or to combat movements who saw the Baptist as the Messiah. However, J. A. T. Robinson concludes,

That there were elements of John’s following which did not find their way into the Church is indeed very probable; that these elements constituted a rival group to Christianity in the first century, with a competing Christology, is, I believe, without any foundation whatever.[[17]](#footnote-17)

We might add his observation that,

…for this Gospel above all there is no *antithesis* between the history and the theology, so that the more theological it is (which no one would dispute), the less historical it is (as many would conclude).[[18]](#footnote-18)

There is no reason to regard the baptism administered by Jesus’ disciples as any different to that of John; indeed many scholars understand it as a continuation of John’s baptism[[19]](#footnote-19) but we are still left with a problem, namely, if the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus (Christian baptism) are essentially the same – why does the Fourth Gospel feel it necessary to emphasise the superiority of Christ? Was there an underlying problem with some of the disciples of the Baptist?

**The Baptism of Repentance**

The baptism of John and Christian baptism are essentially the same, they differ only in their temporal perspective; one is preparatory and looks forward to the salvation event, the other projects backwards to the same event.

The ministry of the Baptist marked a turning point: *“*since that time the kingdom of God is preached*”* (Luke 16:16),[[20]](#footnote-20) therefore John the Baptist, together with Christ, belonged to the new dispensation. The baptism itself did not result in the forgiveness of sins. Dunnremarks,

In other words, it is not a repentance *baptism* which results in the forgiveness of sins, but John’s baptism is the expression of the *repentance* which results in the forgiveness of sins. This is confirmed by passages as Acts 3.19; 5.31; 10.43; 11.18; 13.38; 26.18.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Beasley-Murray understands the call to repent as an appeal to turn to God.[[22]](#footnote-22) As such this would complement the O.T. prophetic exhortations to return (or turn back) to God; he says,

It is not feasible that either Jesus or John meant by that word, ‘Come to baptism that God may turn you!’[[23]](#footnote-23)

However, as H. A. Whittaker notes,

If repentance only was the gist of his teaching, in what respect was he better than the Old Testament prophets who just as trenchantly taught the same?[[24]](#footnote-24)

The answer supplied by the Fourth Gospel is that John was baptizing in order that the **Messiah should be manifested** to Israel (John 1:31). National repentance could be achieved on the Day of Atonement – baptism was more than an acknowledgement of sin and a return to God. The rite of baptism was a means of manifesting the Messiah to the people. It spoke of the suffering, rejection, death and resurrection of the servant prophecies in Isaiah that the Baptist so often used in his preaching (i.e. John 1:29, 36 *cf.* Isa.53:7). It may be objected that such an interpretation is anachronistic – as it could only be fully understood after the resurrection event. This is partly true, for what chance did the ordinary people have when even the disciples failed to understand the full significance of baptism until after the resurrection? The major difference between the baptism of John and Christian baptism was the reception of the Holy Spirit, the power and promise of the new age, which promise was cut short because of the unbelief of the nation and the apostasy of the Church.

**The Problem with John’s Baptism**

So far we can conclude that there is no essential difference between the baptism of John and Christian baptism. The Apostles did not require re-baptism before receiving the Spirit at Pentecost. Why then the stress on the superiority of Christian baptism? It is suggested that the baptism of John lent itself readily to subversion by Judaists, who accepted John as a prophet and viewed his baptism in the same light as the ceremonial cleansings and purifications proscribed by the law. The disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus (Acts19:1-7) are an illustration of defective knowledge. They had not even heard of the promise of the Holy Spirit therefore they could not have obtained their instruction first hand from the Baptist – no wonder Paul was astonished. Such disciples could easily be subverted and led back to the law. The baptism of John would be detached from any deeper significance other than a cultic lustration producing ceremonial cleanliness.

It is here that the Fourth Gospel demonstrates awareness of the dangers of Judaism. The six water pots of the Jews are changed into new wine (John 2:1-11). This is not a reference to the baptism of John, but rather to the Law and its ceremonial rites for cleanliness. Similarly, the water of the pool could not heal the man – this was accomplished solely by the word of the one who was sent by God (John 5:1-18); nor could thirst be permanently quenched with water from Jacob’s well (John 4:7-72). The Jewish water pouring rite at Tabernacles was but a prefiguring of the Spirit (John 7:37-39). As Dunn observed,

John uses water in two distinct ways – by way of contrast and by way of equation. In chapters 1, 2, 3 and 5, water is that which represents the old dispensation (in its preparatoriness, its poverty, its mere externality, and its inability to help), in contrast to that which Jesus gives in the new dispensation (represented by the gift of the Spirit, by wine by healing).[[25]](#footnote-25)

Both the *gift of the Spirit* and *water* were used in various strands of Judaism as a metaphor for the Torah (*cf.* Isa 55:1). For example, Rabbi Ishmael taught that, “…the words of Torah are compared to water. Just as water raises the status of the impure to purity, so too do the words of Torah” (*Sifre Ekev* 48). Or again, Philo taught that the water that the Israelites thirsted for in the desert was a symbolizing of divine wisdom in the Torah: “...until God send forth the flowing waters of His supernatural wisdom (i.e. gift of the Spirit) and so provide drink of unfailing healthfulness to the wandering soul” (*Allegorical Interpretations* 2:86). Furthermore, the Essenes affirmed that “the well [dug in the desert, Num 21:16-18] is the Torah” (*Damascus Document* 6:3).

The dispute in John 3:25 between someof John’s disciples and the Jews about purification, is often regarded as being occasioned by a Jew who had been baptized by Jesus and who was concerned with the relative merits of John’s baptism.[[26]](#footnote-26) However, this seems unlikely as it is more probable that John’s baptism was compared with contemporary purification rites practiced at Qumran. As the baptism of John was outwardly similar to such practices (and some argue derivative from them), it could easily lend itself to subversion and reduction to mere externals.

The question put by the “Jews” in John 3:25 should be placed in the context of Nicodemus, a “ruler of the Jews” in John 3:1. Initiation into the kingdom can only occur through water *and* Spirit. This is not a hendiadys as is sometimes supposed, but rather two distinct components of the same baptism. For Nicodemus, who had probably undergone the baptism of John (as many Pharisees had) and who obviously had a defective understanding of that baptism (the eschatological significance of it) it was impossible, nay humiliating to require a new birth. It was necessary to re-baptise with water in cases where the purpose for the baptism had not been clearly understood in the first place.

**Conclusion**

The baptism of John and Christian baptism are in principle equivalent. The Seal of the Spirit (in the first century) - the power of the age to come, was proof that the baptism of John (that looked forward to the new age) had been fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ, the one who could inaugurate the new age. Nevertheless, the baptism of John lent itself easily to manipulation by Judaists, who equated it with Torah observance and cultic lustrations. This necessitated an apologetic approach by the author of the Fourth Gospel and it is suggested that this was directed to solve the problems at Ephesus.

**Sun, Moon and Stars**

**Andrew Perry**

**Introduction**

The “darkening” of the sun, moon and stars is a convenient shorthand for describing Joel 2:10,

The earth has quaked before him; the heavens have trembled: the sun and the moon have been darkened, and the stars have gathered their shining… Joel 2:10 (KJV revised)

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. Joel 2:31 (KJV)

The sun and the moon have been darkened, and the stars have gathered their shining. Joel 3:15 (KJV revised)

The question arises as to what this celestial language means. J. L. Crenshaw[[27]](#footnote-27) canvases the various suggestions that have been made: the darkening of the sky is due to the great number of locusts, a literal earthquake, a cosmic shaking of the heavenly realm, or a solar eclipse; and he accounts for the moon being turned to blood with such ideas as the raging fires of burning cities, dust rising to the sky, or sandstorms. J. Barton takes a similar approach, adding the idea of a lunar eclipse to the mix.[[28]](#footnote-28) The main explanatory proposals for the darkening here are: i) dense locust swarms; ii) storm clouds; iii) wind-driven sandstorms; and iv) lunar and solar eclipses. How stars withdraw their shining is a neglected question in commentaries.

**Locusts**

Commentators who believe that Joel 1 and 2 is about a natural locust plague interpret the “cosmic” happenings in phenomenological terms. L. C. Allen, following his locusts reading, affirms that “the earthquake is probably based on the visual effect of the locusts covering the ground” and the “idea of preternatural light is suggested by their flight”;[[29]](#footnote-29) Allen does not discuss the text further. The suggestion is that great swarms of locusts will look like the earth moving when on the ground and as swarm-clouds they will block out the light and make the heavens shimmer.

However, there are objections to this interpretation. Barton usefully observes that the text states that the earth quakes before *him* or *it*, raising the question of why a singular form is used if it is locusts that cause the earth to quake,[[30]](#footnote-30) although he also tends towards the “locust-cloud” reading.[[31]](#footnote-31) Crenshaw also notes this indeterminate pronoun in the text and doubts whether the natural effects of a locust swarm would give rise to the kind of cosmic language we have in v. 10.[[32]](#footnote-32) These are decisive objections to the locust interpretation.

**Storm-Clouds**

Barton suggests that the v. 10 denotes “meteorological changes that attend YHWH’s visitation of the earth”.[[33]](#footnote-33) Crenshaw takes a similar line, seeing v. 10 as a theophanic description.[[34]](#footnote-34) He compares Joel to Isaiah,

Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger. Isa 13:13 (KJV)

The theophanic argument is that the Day of the Lord is all about Yahweh’s visitation to the earth (cf. Nah 1:5). However, while theophanic manifestation is naturally associated with “clouds and thick darkness” (Joel 2:2; cf. Exod 20:21; 2 Sam 22:10; Zeph 1:15), this proposal does not explain why Joel does not have the “clouds and thick darkness” motif in v. 10, and instead has a “sun, moon and stars” element. The proposal assumes a causal link between clouds and thick darkness and the darkness of the sun, moon and stars, but “cause and effect” is not the explanatory requirement of the text: v. 10 needs to have its verbs “to grow dark” and “withdraw/gather shining” explained. The theophanic argument is masquerading as an explanation; climatic conditions are not the reference in Joel’s language.

**Wind-Driven Sandstorms**

M. A. Sweeny promotes the wind-driven sandstorm reading. He avers, “a strong dry desert wind…that blows in from the desert at times of seasonal transition in Israel…These winds can be very destructive as they reach high velocities, and they frequently blow a great deal of dust and debris that blocks out the sun, thus darkening the land and causing the moon to appear as a deep red”.[[35]](#footnote-35) This meteorological proposal suffers from the same weaknesses as the storm-cloud explanation.

**Solar and Lunar Eclipses**

Solar and lunar eclipses are also commonly proposed for the darkening of the sun and the moon. F. R. Stephenson documents the characteristics of solar and lunar eclipses and argues that Joel denotes *total* eclipses and is thus writing in the fourth century B.C.E.[[36]](#footnote-36) As Stephenson notes,[[37]](#footnote-37) a total eclipse of the sun is appropriately described as “the sun shall be turned to darkness”, although it is also not unreasonable to take this as a description of a partial eclipse of the sun.[[38]](#footnote-38) A total eclipse of the moon is appropriately described as the moon being “turned to blood” (Joel 2:31), because when the moon enters the earth’s shadow, light is refracted through the earth’s atmosphere and this illuminates the moon giving it a reddish colour. This explanation of the description of the sun and moon is promising, but it offers nothing for the description of the stars.

**Divination**

In sum, there are difficulties with the first three of the above proposals, and the fourth requires supplementing with an account of the practise of celestial divination. The difficulties are,

1) Dense locust swarms turn the sky dark and obscure the light; when a person is in the thick of a day-time swarm, it is not possible to see the sun. Such swarms at night would obscure the moon and the stars. However, swarms are fast moving and the sun, moon or stars would appear once more as the swarm moved.

2) The meteorological conditions implied by Joel 2:2 would certainly obscure the sun, moon and stars, but this is not the point of Joel 2:10: if storm-clouds or sandstorms obscure, they do not *turn* the sun and the moon dark, and nor do stars *withdraw* or gather their shining.

In view of the above difficulties, (1)-(2), our conclusion is that Joel refers to eclipses of the sun and moon. The eclipses would not have happened at the same time, but they could each have occurred in the months before the Day of the Lord. While a solar and lunar eclipse would turn the sun and the moon dark to some extent, such eclipses do not address the question of what happens to the stars. Here our proposal is that the withdrawal of shining by the stars is the language of appearance for those atmospheric conditions in which stars and constellations are not seen in the night sky, or for the obscuring of stars that lie in the elliptical path of the moon. All these aspects were part of the celestial divination of Joel’s day.

Joel does not offer a statement of divination in v. 10 like those preserved in Mesopotamian texts, but he does express a prediction that would have been the basis of divination in the Mesopotamian science of the day. The diviners and seers that made their prognostications on the basis of celestial happenings are criticized by the eighth century prophets:

Then the moon shall be confounded (rpx), and the sun ashamed (vwb), when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously. Isa 24:23 (KJV)

Then shall the seers be ashamed (vwb), and the diviners confounded (rpx): yea, they shall all cover their lips; for *there is* no answer of God. Mic 3:7 (KJV)

Here the sun and moon are pictured as opposing the word of prophecy from Yahweh, but then ashamed and confounded as Yahweh manifests his reign in Zion. Micah translates the figure in terms of the seers and diviners associated with temples devoted to the sun and the moon.

Micah’s criticism is ironic. Diviners and seers observed the darkness of the sun and the moon, its time of occurrence, extent and duration, and based their prognostications upon its darkness in a positive manner. Micah turns this around—night and day would be dark and devoid of knowledge:

Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make my people err…Therefore night *shall be* unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark ($vx) unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark (rdq) over them. Mic 3:5-6 (KJV)

Joel and Micah use rdq (“darken”) for what happens in respect of the sun and the false prophets, but whereas Micah uses the term in an ironic metaphorical way, Joel is also about the *fact* of lunar and solar eclipses. Another example of an eighth century prophet criticizing divination is found in Amos’ warnings to Northern Israel prior to the end of Samaria:

*Seek him* that maketh the seven stars (hmyk) and Orion (lsyk),[[39]](#footnote-39) and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord *is* his name…Amos 5:8 (KJV)

The *rhetorical* emphasis here is to seek the one who made the stars, rather than those who claim to “divine” the future by the stars. F. Rochberg affirms that,

The conception of a divinely created order underlies the various forms of Mesopotamian divination, which functioned as a system of divine communication with human beings by means of perceptible patterns of phenomena.[[40]](#footnote-40)

These beliefs justified the appeal to the gods to direct events and mitigate bad portents. Celestial divination discerned weather phenomena, especially cloud formations, as well as lunar, stellar, solar and planetary phenomena.

The kinds of details that are noted in texts are tabulated below:[[41]](#footnote-41)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date and duration of lunar visibility | The appearance of the horns of the lunar crescent. |
| Halos around the moon | Lunar Eclipses, time of night, duration. |
| Position of stars within the horns of the crescent moon | Darkness of moon relative to constellations |
| Conjunctions with planets and certain stars | Moon’s position in the sky with respect to the sun |
| Solar eclipses | Solar coronas |
| Position of planets | Time of first/last appearance in sky |
| Planetary colour and appearance | Position and visibility of stars |
| Rainbows | Lightening, thunder and winds |
| Earthquakes | Cloud formations |

These details are given significance in terms of such things as the prosperity of the king, the fate of the army, the security of the country, floods, crop failure, and pestilence.[[42]](#footnote-42) For example,[[43]](#footnote-43)

The moon rose darkly and cleared: Omen of the destruction of Elam and Gutium.[[44]](#footnote-44)

If the sun is red like a torch when it becomes visible on the first of *Nisannu*, and a white cloud moves about in front of it…[[45]](#footnote-45)

If Libra is dark: for three years locusts will attack and devour the harvest of the land. [Variant: locusts will devour the land; the land will have to eat a reduced harvest]; three years…[[46]](#footnote-46)

If the moon is dark in the region of the stars to the west of Cancer, the decision (is for) the Tigris: The Tigris will diminish its flood waters.[[47]](#footnote-47)

[If] the moon rid[es] a chariot in the month Sililti: the dominion of the king of Akkad will prosper, and he w[ill capture] his enemies…If the moon is surrounded by a halo and the Old Man Star stands in it: a reign of long duration.[[48]](#footnote-48)

The Libra example is interesting because it hypothesizes about the constellation of Libra being dark, and this illustrates “the stars withdraw their shining” of Joel 2:10/3:15. Another explanation of this phrase could be the obscuring effect of the moon upon the stars in its path in times of eclipse.[[49]](#footnote-49)

Rochberg notes[[50]](#footnote-50) that anthropomorphic metaphors were used in Mesopotamian literature to describe eclipses of the moon, for instance, “the moon god mourns/cries” is used for eclipses of the moon. This characteristic arises because of the association between the moon and a god. Thus the moon can be referred to as “in distress” when referring to an eclipse. In Mesopotamian astrological texts, *adāru* primarily means “to be worried or distressed” but can also mean “to be darkened”.[[51]](#footnote-51) Such a detail has been carried over into Joel insofar as the verb for “darken” (*qdr*, rdq) in “the sun and the moon shall be dark” has within its semantic field the sense of mourning (e.g. Jer 4:28; 8:21; 14:2; Ezek 31:15).

Solar and lunar eclipses do not occur together (*sic*); accordingly, Joel should be seen as referencing different calendar dates before the Day of the Lord for the two types of eclipse. Do the eclipses of the times support this reading? This question depends on when Joel delivered his oracles. However, this investigation lies outside our scope. The NASA website contains the necessary eclipse calculator.[[52]](#footnote-52)

**Conclusion**

A modern interpreter might view lunar and solar eclipses as purely astronomical events and find them impressive. An ancient would find such events to be religious and portentous. The eclipses of the sun and the moon and their position in the sky, as well as their approach to one another were all matters that affected the political decisions of the day amongst the Mesopotamian powers.[[53]](#footnote-53) Any one type of eclipse would, in the divination of the times, be taken as indicative of forthcoming events on earth. Joel is likely using the language and thinking of his day to warn about the forthcoming Day of the Lord.[[54]](#footnote-54)

**The Fourth Gospel and Hebrews**

**Paul Wyns**

**Introduction**

Previous articles on the Fourth Gospel (4G) suggested that the Gospel was written to the Diaspora at Ephesus and discovered links between the 4G and Luke-Acts.[[55]](#footnote-55) Luke is regarded as Paul’s companion and biographer; therefore his employment of underlying Johannine sources helps in establishing the early provenance of the Fourth Gospel – before the segregation of a distinct “Christian” ecclesia at Ephesus (founded by Paul).

The following article will attempt to demonstrate that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written to the same audience (Diaspora Jews at Ephesus), probably after the death of Paul. Hebrews shows the same concerns about baptism as the 4G; however, in Hebrews the situation is in danger of degenerating into outright apostasy.

The relationship between the books might be represented as follows:[[56]](#footnote-56)

**Acts**

*c.*57-62

Acts 19 -Ephesus

**Luke**

*c.*57-60

 *cf.* Lk. 1-2

*cf.* Acts 8-9

Ephesian Ecclesia splits from synagogue

**4G**  - *Ephesus c.*40-50

**Ephesians** *c.*58

**Hebrews** – *Ephesus*

*c.*67

**The Doctrine of Baptisms**

The unusual **plural** phrase, *“*of the doctrine of baptisms*”* (baptismw/n didach/j), is listed in Heb 6:2 among the rudimentary teachings of Christ. How then are we to understand such baptisms? Is this contrasting the baptism of John and Christian baptism? J. D. G. Dunn believes that those addressed are most probably converts from Judaism:

The initial preaching to them having taken up what was valid in their old belief. This is the best explanation of the non-(specifically)-Christian list of six points: they describe an area of overlap between Judaism and Christianity in terms common to both…[[57]](#footnote-57)

G. R. Beasley-Murray states,

Since the plural ‘baptisms’ is so unusual in the New Testament, we may safely set aside the view that repeated immersions are thereby intended. The employment of baptismo,jinstead of the usual ba,ptismaconfirms what in any case most naturally occurs to the reader, that the writer implies a contrast between Christian baptism and other religious ‘washings’. The term is wide enough to include the ritual washings of the Old Testament and every kind of baptism by initiates known in the writer’s time, including the baptism of John, the baptism practised in the Jordan Valley and by the Dead Sea, Jewish proselyte baptism, and whatever ritual washings existed among the various Mystery Religions.[[58]](#footnote-58)

Previously, we have argued that the baptism of John and Christian baptism were essentially the same. The baptisms in Heb 6:2 are set in the context of *“*laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works”(Heb 6:1). The **foundation of repentance** can only refer to the baptism of John, whose baptism of repentance was the cornerstone or founding element of what would become the fully developed Christian baptism. We suppose that the letter’s warning against apostasy concerned those who had experienced the baptism of John and had consequently received the Spirit through the laying on of hands (*cf.* Heb 6:2) or, who had been re-baptised (like the disciples of the Baptist found at Ephesus in Acts 19:1-7). They were in danger of drifting back to Judaism. J. A. T. Robinson states that,

...just as disciples of John transferred their allegiance to the Christian church (as John 1 asserts and Acts 18-19 presupposes), so John himself is best explained on the hypothesis (however guardedly stated) that he had perhaps earlier been brought up in the Qumran community, or at any rate that his baptism of repentance is more fully understandable against that background than that of the other contemporary Baptist sects.[[59]](#footnote-59)

This is entirely plausible as the Qumran community also practised lustrations and attached importance to the Isaiah oracles.[[60]](#footnote-60) The Qumran community was hostile towards the Jerusalem priests whom they regarded as evil and impure. The only rituals available to them (outside the Temple cult) were the baths and lustrations practised in the Old Testament. The Qumran covenanters had an eschatological orientation and by applying texts such as Isa 40:3, saw themselves as preparers of the way.

John the Baptist may or may not have grown up, or been influenced by the Qumran community; what is clear, however, is that his baptism was unique. It can be differentiated from the multipleQumran baptisms in that it was a one off rite, concerned with repentance and manifesting the Messiah, rather than external purity. John’s baptism differentiated itself so substantially from Qumran that it required further probing from the Jerusalem temple elite (John 1:19) – an investigation that would be uncalled for if it was simply an extension of Qumran covenanting. Nevertheless, John’s baptism would readily lend itself to Judaists who attempted to subvert his former disciples back to the ritual purity of the Torah (water pots for purifying the Jews—John 2:6). The lapsed were ‘once enlightened’ and had ‘tasted the heavenly gift’ (Heb 6:4-5).

These last phrases often have exegetes in a quandary,[[61]](#footnote-61) largely due to a failure to recognise the chiastic structure and the correspondence with the 4G:

**A** who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift,

 **B** and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,

 **A'** and have tasted the good word of God

**B'** and the powers of the age to come.

The ‘power of the age to come’ is obviously synonymous with the ‘Holy Spirit’, which is the eschatological Spirit *par excellence.* Similarly, the ‘tasting of the heavenly gift’ is synonymous with, ‘tasting the good word of God’ and this experience is equated with ‘enlightenment’. Our suggestion is that the heavenly gift is the bread from heaven, and scholars fail to recognise the Johannine idiom—it speaks of partaking of the **bread and wine**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **John** | **Hebrews** |
| **1:26** I (John) baptize with water…. | **1.** Foundation of repentance |
| **1:5** The light shines in the darkness….**1:9** The true Light which gives light…. | **2.** Once enlightened |
| **4:10** If you knew the gift of God…. | **4.** Tasted the heavenly gift |
| **6:53** Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood…….. | **5.** Tasted the good word of God |
| **14:26** But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name…..  | **6.** The powers of the age to come |

**Common Themes between Hebrews and John**

The letter to the Hebrews demonstrates familiarity with many of the themes that interested the Fourth Evangelist.

1) The centrality of the figure of Moses (Heb 3:2f, 5, 16; 7:14; 8:5; 9:19; 11:23f; 12:21: John 1:17, 45; 3:14; 5:45f; 6:32; 7:19, 22f; 8:5; 9:29). This corresponds to the veneration of Moses in Hellenistic Judaism of the Diaspora,[[62]](#footnote-62) which understood Moses as unique because of his unmediated access to the presence of God (cf. John 1:18).

2) The particular contrast between the shadow (type) and true fulfilment is also a typically Johannine mode of idiom (the copy and shadow of the heavenly things (Heb 8:5); true tabernacle (Heb 8:2); copies of the true (Heb 9:24); the true Light (John 1:9); the true bread from heaven (John 6:32); and the true vine (John 15:1)).

3) The nearest NT parallel outside the Johannine Corpus to ‘the Word’ (John 1:1-3) is in Hebrews (Heb 11:3; cf.1:3). Similar to the 4G, Hebrews stresses the superiority of Christ’s ministry; it is no longer John the Baptist who is the forerunner (John 3:28), for Jesus becomes the forerunner of all believers:

Whither the forerunneris for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizidek (Heb 6: 20).

John the Baptist may have been “sent avposte,llw(*apostello*) before him” (John 3:28), but Jesus was the avpo,stoloj(*apostolos*) “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession (Heb.3:1). He was not an Aaronic priest like John, but a priest of an entirely different, higher order.

4) Hebrews (like the 4G) is also concerned with differentiating the cultic cleansings of OT ritual with baptismal cleansing representing the sacrifice of Christ. The ashes of the red heifer may have sanctified the unclean person’s *flesh*, but they did not actually take away sins: “let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb 10:22). The parallelism is not antithetic; it is purely rhetorical (cf. Ezek 36:25).

**The Ephesus Connection**

Several textual details fit an Ephesus location for Hebrews:

1) The incident in Acts 19:13-17, which occurred at Ephesus, anticipates the theme of Hebrews 12—the removal of Mosaic forms of worship.The **seven exorcists**, the sons of the chief priest Sceva are overcome and flee **the house** naked and wounded.[[63]](#footnote-63)  The Synoptic parallel (Matt 12:43-45) is the Parable of the Wicked Spirit where we read “seven other spirits more evil (ponhro,teroj) than itself...who decide to return to **my house** from which I came”. The same term, “evil/wicked” (ponhro,teroj), is employed in Acts 19:12, 13, 15, and 16 to contrast the casting out of wicked spirits by Paul with the exorcisms practised by the Jews. The Parable of the Wicked Spirit and the incident in Acts 18 should be seen against the background of John the Baptist, who had come to prepare the ‘house’ for the Passover Lamb (John 1:29), and Jesus who had literally swept the ‘house’ clean in order to remove the ‘leaven’ (John 2:15).[[64]](#footnote-64)

2) The situation within the community described in the letter to the Hebrews (Heb 10:32-34) is one of persecution and difficulty, but *not of martyrdom*, as Heb 12:4 states that they had “not yet resisted unto blood”in the cause of Christ. It is noteworthy that although they were made a public show (qeatri,zw), “a gazing stock” (KJV), they were not subjected to loss of life.  The Greek word signifies “to make a spectacle”, from which we get our word “theatre”.  The riot (spectacle) at Ephesus occurred in the magnificent theatre of that city (Acts 19:31).  In the past, Jewish converts, including former disciples of the Baptist, had loyally stood by their fellow Christians, but now they had to be reminded of their solidarity (Heb 13:3).

3) The author of Hebrews is also aware of the Pauline epistle to the Ephesians. Similar to Paul, he associates[[65]](#footnote-65) Psalm 110 with Psalm 8 (Heb 1:3, 13, cf. Eph.1:20, 22) and Psalm 8 itself is cited in Heb 2:6b-8a. We may surmise that whereas Ephesians was written to the Gentile element in the ecclesia (Eph.2:11; 3:6-9), Hebrews was directed at the Jewish Diaspora: such expressions as “the fathers” (Heb 1:1), “your fathers” (Heb 3:9), “seed of Abraham” (Heb 2:16) and the language of Heb 13:9-15 is evidence of such an audience.

4) Another recurring theme in Ephesians is that of the “heavenly places” or “heavenly things”— it is used five times in Ephesians (Eph 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12) and only three times elsewhere.  Two of these occurrences are in Hebrews (Heb 8:5; 9:23) and one in John 3:12. This neatly links John, Ephesians and Hebrews.

5) The Pauline themes of “boldness of access”, and “sonship” (Eph 3:12) are also concepts upon which the author to the Hebrews expands (Heb 3:16; 4:16; 10:19, 35). Whereas Paul makes the Ephesians aware of the privilege of being “foreordained unto the adoption as sons through Jesus Christ” (Eph 1:5), the author to the Hebrews reminds them that with sonship comes responsibility and chastisement for wrongdoing (Heb 12:5-6). Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians addresses the tensions caused by the inclusion of Gentiles into the covenant relationship; Hebrews—the problem of Jews reverting to righteousness through legalism. Further thematic links are set out in the following tables:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ephesians (Gentile)** | **Hebrews (Jews)** |
| Saved through faith… not of works that man should glory (2:8).Strangers from the covenants of promise (2:12). No more strangers and sojourners but fellow citizens (2:19). | Salvation by faith (Hebrews chapter 11). Strangers and pilgrims (11:9, 13). He hath prepared them a city (11:16). |
| 2:14 For He Himself is our **peace**…. | 7:2 King of Salem, which is king of **Peace** |
| 2:14 Who hath made both (Jew/Gentile one and brake down the middle wall of partition (between God and man) having abolished in his flesh… | 9:10 By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, **through the veil,** that is to say his flesh… |
|  2:14-15 …The enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances  | 10:20Carnal **ordinances,** imposed until the time of reformation |
| 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your **faith** in the Lord Jesus, **and love** unto all the saints… | 6:10 God is not unrighteous to forget your **work and the love,** which ye showed towards his name |
| 1:15-18 **….**the eyes of your understanding **being enlightened;** that ye may know…… | 10:32 …..which after ye were **illuminated** (enlightened by the spirit)… |

**Conclusion**

Hebrews was written to an urban community (Heb 13:14) that had links with Timothy and with those “from Italy” (Heb 13:24), a phrase previously used to describe Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:2), who had close associations with Ephesus (Acts 18:24-26). The author of Hebrews was familiar with the Pauline circle but this does not necessarily mean that Hebrews was written by Paul (who was probably martyred by now). We conjecture that the epistle was written to Ephesus from somewhere in Asia, where the author, together with Priscilla and Aquila (of Italy) were waiting to be joined by the liberated Timothy (who was imprisoned in Rome?). The cumulativeevidence presented so far suggests that the 4G, Hebrews and Ephesians were directed at different elements within the Ephesian community. The 4G was written to the Diaspora Jews before the split with the synagogue; Ephesians was written after the split (when Gentiles were included); and Hebrews was a warning directed at Diaspora Jewish Christians at Ephesus who were drifting back to an apathetic Judaism.

**The Fourth Gospel and Revelation**

**Paul Wyns**

**Introduction**

In earlier articles, links were established between the Fourth Gospel (4G) and the epistles to the Ephesians and Hebrews. It was suggested that they were all addressed to different elements within the Ephesian community at different stages of its development. The last writing that completes the chain of evidence is the warning to Ephesus in the book of Revelation. In order to reach a conclusion it is necessary to examine the relationship between the Johannine writings—are the 4G and Revelation written by the same hand, namely, John the son of Zebedee?

**The Relationship between the 4G and Revelation**

Critical scholarship recognises that some relationship must exist across the Johannine Corpus for, despite their differences, they display many theological likenesses. This has led scholars to postulate a “Johannine School” or “Johannine Circle”— a common group of disciples of John the Apostle who wrote and edited these works—thus explaining the similarities and differences between them. G. R. Beasley–Murray proposes that the authors of John and Revelation were both disciples of John the son of Zebedee.[[66]](#footnote-66) There is almost unanimous agreement among critical scholarship that the author of Revelation and the author of the 4G could not be the same person. However, it is just as easy to attribute both books to a single author writing in different circumstances.

We know that Revelation was written during a period of banishment on Patmos, possibly under house arrest (or forced labour?) with restricted access to the wider Christian community. As such one would expect Revelation (if left unrevised) to be different in many ways to a Gospel that was composed under more comfortable circumstances, even though we may be uncertain about the exact date and circumstances of the Gospel.

The two Johannine writings in question are of a different linguistic character; for example, John of the Apocalypse frequently uses “ungrammatical” solecisms; however, these are done purposely because elsewhere the author practises correct usage. Nevertheless, according to G. B. Caird, “It is certain that they [both] came from the same geographical, cultural, and theological setting, if not from the one hand”.[[67]](#footnote-67) What can be said for the view that both books were composed by the apostle John, the son of Zebedee?

**Theological Correspondence between the 4G and Revelation**

In an appendix to M. Hengel’s work on the Johannine question,[[68]](#footnote-68) J. Frey has noted correspondence between the apocalyptic theology of the 4G and Revelation. Both works emphasise what are typically regarded as apocalyptic motifs: dualism; determinism; election; messianism; revelation; hostility with the world; wisdom; eschatological judgment; and the revelation of heavenly mysteries by Jesus. Thus, Beasley-Murray observes that,

Both works alone, for example use the term *logos* (the “Word”) of Christ, both see in the Lamb of God a coalescence of the concept of the apocalyptic Warrior Lamb and the Passover Lamb (see Beasley-Murray 1978, 124-26; and 1986, 24-25,354-55). Moreover the terms for witness, life, death, thirst, hunger and conquer in a spiritual or moral sense occur so frequently in the Gospel and the Revelation as to suggest a positive relationship in the area of soteriology between the two works.[[69]](#footnote-69)

A comparison table demonstrates their thematic associations:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **John 1** | **Revelation 14** |
| Where abidest thou? Come and ye shall see (vv. 38, 39) | I saw the Lamb stood on Mt. Zion and with him 144,000 (v. 1) |
| The Lamb of God. (vv. 24, 36)They followed Jesus (vv. 37, 43) | Which follow the Lamb wherever He goes (v. 4) |
| Nathaniel found ‘under the fig tree’ (v. 48) | Firstfruits unto God and the Lamb (v. 4)  |
| Nathaniel an Israelite in whom is no guile(v. 47) | In their mouth was found no guile (v. 5) |
| **John 12** | **Revelation 12** |
| Then came a voice from heaven, saying, I have glorified it and will glorify it again (v. 28. | And I heard a loud voice in heaven, Now is the salvation, and the power and the kingdom, become our God’s, and the authority is become his Christ’s (v. 10, RV mg). |
| Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out (v. 31) | And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil (v. 9) |
| **John 12** | **Revelation 14** |
| If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my servant be(v. 26) | These are they that follow the Lamb wherever He goes (v. 4) |
| Verily, verily, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it bringeth forth much fruit (v. 24) | These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb (v. 4) |
| He that loveth his life shall loose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal (v. 25) | From henceforth saith the spirit, (RVmg), yea, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them (v.13)  |
| **John 12** | **Revelation 14** |
| A voice from heaven saying (v. 28)The people said that it thundered, others said, an angel spake to him (v. 29) | Saying with a loud voice (v. 7)The voice of a great thunder (v. 2) |
| For this cause came I unto this hour(v. 27)Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out (v. 31) | The hour of his judgment is come (v. 7) |
| **John 16:20-21** | **Revelation 11:10; 12:1-5,12** |
| Enemy rejoicingA woman travailing in birthSorrowBirth of a man childYour sorrow turned to joy | Enemy rejoicingA woman travailing in birthPained to be deliveredBirth of a man childRejoice ye heavens… |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **John 21** | **Revelation 1** |
| If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? (v. 21) | I was in the Spirit on the Lords day (v. 10) |
| The disciple who Jesus loved (v. 20) | Unto him that loved us (v. 5) |
| ..even the world itself….would not contain the books that should be written (v. 25) | What thou seest, write in a book (v. 11) |
| This is the disciple that beareth witness (R.V.) of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his (= Jesus?) witness is true  | Who bare witness (R.V.) of the word of God, and of the testimony (witness) of Jesus Christ, and of all the things that he saw (v. 2)The faithful witness (v. 5) |

In R. Gundry’s[[70]](#footnote-70) analysis of lo,goj (word) and its related family, he comments on John’s frequent and synonymous use of evntolh,(commandment(s)), as in Rev 14:15, 21; 15:10, 12, all of which speak of keeping Jesus’ command-ments, or commandment, and John 8:51, 52; 14:23, 24; 17:6, all of which speak of keeping his word. He also expands the associated family to include the word used for Jesus’ marturi,a(testimony) in John 3:11, 32, 33; 4:44; 5:31; 7:7; 8:13, 14, 18; 13:21; 18:37 and compares this with the association of testimony with “the word of God” in the book of Revelation.

We can observe other connections between the two books. For example, in Rev 19:13 it says that Jesus’ name is the “Word of God”, and John’s exile on Patmos “because of the word of God” (Rev 1:2, 9) probably refers to a testifying to Jesus himself and exile because of him. Or again, the “commandment(s)” of Jesus concern baptism and the breaking of bread. This unique usage of “commandments” is also found in Rev 12:17; 14:12; 22:14. Finally, another pertinent observation is that the 4G contains no Olivet prophecy, probably because the equivalent is already found in the Seal Section of Revelation.

**The Warning to Ephesus**

The Letter to the Hebrews demonstrates awareness of the warning to Ephesus in Revelation. Hebrews was a last ditch appeal to the Jewish element at Ephesus which carried the threat of the removal of the temple cult, a lesson that had been reinforced at Ephesus with the expulsion of the exorcists. Of course the early dating of the 4G (for which we argue) and Hebrews (pre-70) has implications for the dating of Revelation–we leave the reader to draw their own conclusions.

Previous articles have already established links between Hebrews and the community at Ephesus; the literary dependence of Hebrews on the warning to Ephesus in Revelation confirms our earlier conclusion. The reverse could be argued, namely that Rev 2:1-7 is dependent on Hebrews, but this is less plausible. Thus, we would argue that the author of Hebrews was obviously aware of the warning issued by Jesus to Ephesus and felt the need to remind his readers at Ephesus by weaving those warnings into the “woof and warp” of the fabric of his epistle.

If the first readers of Hebrews were unaware of the existence of Rev 2:1-7, then the multiple allusions would be pointless—now they form a powerful argument to the Hebrews—you (Jewish Christians at Ephesus) have already been warned from heaven by Jesus…therefore repent! (See Table)

Often a counter argument to the above view is presented, namely, that the situation in the ecclesia at Ephesus can scarcely have deteriorated so rapidly that it degenerated into apostasy so soon after being founded by Paul. Arguments of this nature are subjective (how long does it take—5 years, 10 years, 20 years for apostasy to develop?); moreover, they fail to take account that a concerted campaign was underway to subvert the Gospel.[[71]](#footnote-71) Even during his lifetime Paul could declare that, “all those in Asia have turned away from me” (2 Tim 1:15) and to the Galatians Paul could write; “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel; which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal 1:6-7).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Hebrews (c. 67)** | **Revelation 2:1-7** |
| But **call to remembrance** the former days, in which after ye were **illuminated** ye endured a great fight of afflictions (Heb 10:32) | **Remember** from whence thou art fallen...will remove thy **lampstands** (illumination) (vv. 1-7). |
| God is not unrighteous to forget your **work** and the love, which ye showed towards his name (Heb 6:10). | I know **thy works** and thy labour and thy patience (v. 2). |
| That ye wax not weary **fainting** in your souls (Heb 12: 3). | And hast borne, and hast patience and for my names sake hast laboured and hast not **fainted** (v. 3. |
| That **no man fall** after the same example of disobedience (Heb 4: 11; cf. 6:6). | Remember therefore from whence thou **art fallen** (v. 5). |
| …how much more shall we not escape, who turn away from him that **warneth from heaven** (Heb 12:26) | Revelation is the only message from Jesus **spoken from heaven** to the churches |
| And this word, yet once more signifieth the **removing of those things that are shaken** (Heb 12:27) | I will **remove thy lampstand**…. (v. 5)  |

God walked amongst the trees in the cool of the day (Gen.3:8). This aspect of God “walking” is picked up in a descrip­tion of the tabernacle/temple (2 Sam 7:6; 2 Cor 6:16). This feature thus illustrates how the Garden of Eden and the tabernacle/temple are consciously linked as areas of dwelling for God. In the same way, Jesus walks amongst the seven candlesticks (Rev 2:1) which together correspond to the trees of Eden. Hence, the description of the candlestick in the tabernacle clearly mimics the parts of a tree - trunk, branches, knops, flowers and almond fruit (Exod 25:31-37). Each ecclesia was to think of itself as a candlestick/tree in a Garden. The tree of life is forward of the throne of God and of the lamb in Revela­tion (Rev 22:1), just as the candlestick was also forward of the ark in the tabernacle in the Holy Place. Hence, each ecclesia was also to think of itself as a “tree of life”. Hence, in Jesus’ warning to Ephesus, there is mention of the tree of life (Rev 2:7). These temple/tabernacle/Garden allusions provide the framework for Jesus’ warning to Ephesus about their “fall”. Such allusions to Genesis in Revelation's warning to Ephesus are deeply embedded and intricately woven and cannot be suspected of being a dependent on Hebrews—we are dealing here with the original which Hebrews references.[[72]](#footnote-72)

**Conclusion**

The 4G and the book of Revelation come, if not from the same hand, at the very least from the same mind. Revelation was received in the region of Asia on the island of Patmos and (admittedly weak) external evidence suggests that the 4G was also written to the community at Ephesus in Asia. The series of articles presented in the EJournal have presented a chain of internal evidence linking the 4G, Hebrews (and Ephesians) with different sections of the Ephesian community of believers at different stages of their development.

**Marginal Notes**

**Isa 13:17 and the Medes—AP**

In an earlier article, “Babylon in Isaiah 13-14”,[[73]](#footnote-73) it was suggested that Isa 13:17 referred to Median harassment of Israelite places of settlement in Media after the captivity of 722 (2 Kgs 17:6). The purpose of this note is to put another (better) suggestion into the field that is also consistent with the eighth century application of Isaiah 13 to the sack of Samaria and the deportation of the northern tribes which was argued in the article.

It cannot be assumed that Isa 13:17-18 refers to a Median conquest of the city of Babylon. Rather, it is just as possible that this verse begins a new oracle which predicts the role of Media in the downfall of Assyria in the late seventh century.[[74]](#footnote-74) The juxtaposition of such an oracle with the previous oracle is easy to explain: the role of Assyria in the downfall of Samaria would be punished—they would be overthrown for the simple reason that the Lord intended to bring the northern tribes back home (Isa 14:1-3). This oracle, Isa 13:17-18, is included alongside the next oracle, Isa 13:19-22, because Assyria boasted of their possession of Babylon in their war propaganda during their campaign in Israel (725-722); their proud possession would become a desolation.

The advantage of this proposal is that it takes account of the mention of gold and silver: “Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and *as for* gold, they shall not delight in it” (Isa 13:17). The Israelite settlements would not be flush with silver and gold, but the Assyrian empire and its major cities would have an abundance of gold and silver. The prophecy predicts that the Medes would have no concern for such plunder. Assyria was their traditional enemy[[75]](#footnote-75) and they were assisted in their destruction of Assyrian power by the Babylonians, their traditional ally.

The reason why Isaiah 13-14 are “The Burden of Babylon” is nothing to do with the peaceful capture of Babylon by Cyrus, but rather they are oracles that meet the war propaganda of Assyria directed against God’s people, viz. that *they* possessed Babylon, the Rome of their day, and that their king was the “king of Babylon”, a situation that had obtained since Tiglath-Pileser took the hand of Bel in 730-729.

**Isa 34:5 My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens—AP**

This text rendered above as in the RSV correctly captures the Perfect aspect/tense of the Hebrew verb which places the “drinking” of the sword in the past. The KJV has “shall be bathed in heaven” which incorrectly directs the English reader to think of a future and imminent act. Since in the KJV the next clause of the verse has, “behold, it shall come down in Idumea”, which correctly captures the Imperfect aspect/tense of its Hebrew verb, readers are presented with the odd equation of heaven and Edom and driven to think of ‘heaven’ as a metaphor for the “political heavens”.

However, the RSV allows a different reading: “My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens, behold, now, it shall come down upon Idumea”. The “behold, now” expresses the tone of the hnh. This in turn allows the reader to see that “the heavens” are a figure of speech for Zion which is evident in other Isaiah texts. The declaration is now seen to refer to the recent siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian army and its confederate nations in 701, one of which was Edom. The statement anticipates that *now* (700) was to be the year of recompence (Isa 35:8).

**John 1:18 The Only Begotten Son—TG**

Textual Criticism is a necessary, if sometimes maligned, activity. The substance of textual criticism is the comparison of manuscripts to determine which reading is most likely to be the original. John 1:18 is a case in point.

No one has ever seen God; the only God [*monogenes theos*], who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known. [ESV]

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son [*monogenes huios*], who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. [NKJV]

While the former reading is support by important early manuscripts like the Codex Siniaticus and the Codex Vaticanus, the latter has the support not only of the Byzantine family of manuscripts but also early witnesses like Irenaeus, Clement, Hippolytus, and Eusebius. Though many translators give preference to the witness of the Codex Siniaticus, in this case the array of witnesses supporting the latter reading is also compelling. Where the textual witness does not indicate the preferred reading with certainty, there are a number of principles brought into play by the textual critic; the primary principle is: “choose the more difficult reading”.

With regard to John 1:18, the more difficult reading would certainly be *monogenes theos* (‘only-begotten God’ or ‘the only God’)—nowhere else in the New Testament do we find the suggestion of there being more than one God. If we were to follow the principle outlined above we would say that *monogenes theos* is more likely to be the original reading. However, this reading is almost too difficult. If *monogenes* carries the meaning of literal begettal then we have a contradiction since, by definition, God cannot have a beginning. If, on the other hand, *monogenes* carries the meaning of ‘unique’ or ‘first-ranked’, as many scholars believe, then we are in greater difficulties because this would make John say that Jesus is the ‘one and only God’ [cf. NIV!] despite calling the Father ‘God’ in the very same verse. Even by modern Trinitarian standards, this is heretical. Since John regularly uses the phrase *monogenes huios* (‘only-begotten Son’—John 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9), it is reasonable to suppose that this is the original reading.

In sum, though a difficult reading is often likely to be the original, we should bear in mind that there is more than one reason why a text might contain a less difficult reading. The advent of Trinitarian thinking was responsible for more than a few theological ‘corrections’.[[76]](#footnote-76)

**Acts 4:24-30 A Model of Collective Prayer—JA**

This passage offers a paradigm for a **prayer of request**. Psalms of petition are another source for prayer form(s). This prayer shows an awareness of how scripture can be used to ‘read’ a circumstance, and thereby facilitate the relevant construction of the request to God. The prayer has following features:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| v. 24 | To God, who is both Lord (Gk: *despota*) and Creator. |
| v. 24 | With one accord (Gk: *homothumadon*—about the same purpose. |
| vv. 24, 29 | They (plural) lifted up their voice . . . said ... (your servants ... they may speak . . .). |
| vv. 25-26 | Cite Scripture (from David in Psalm 2). |
| vv. 27-28 | Apply it to recent fulfillment about (God’s holy child) Jesus. |
| vv. 29-30 | Petition (purpose of prayer): Now, Lord (Gk: *kurie*)… grant… |
| v. 30 | Requesting it be done ***through*** (Gk *dia*) the name of (God’s holy child) ... Jesus. (Cf. John 16:23). |

This model offers a challenge to ecclesias to facilitate the joining of voices together in prayer and confirms the pattern of asking through Jesus.

**Acts 7:55-56 “Speaking With” and “Praying To”—JA**

Speaking with someone and praying to someone are two different types of speech act. Actually speaking with Jesus, who is in heaven, puts communication on a different level. Where it is two-way audible communication, this does not happen in prayer.

Acts 7:55-56 in this unique context, where the heavens open and Stephen makes a request to a ***standing*** Jesus. Is this “request” a speech act of prayer? Like RSV of Acts 7:59, some Christadelphians[[77]](#footnote-77) go for “…**he** **prayed**, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit’…”—however, the relevant Greek (*epikaleo*) is not specific enough to fix unambiguously on ‘pray’. The Greek can be used for “calling upon [God]” (1 Pet 1:17), but it is also used when Paul later “appeals” to Caesar’s judgment (Acts 25:10, 11, 12, 21, 25). The speech act of appealing to Caesar in a framework of seeking a legal judgement is obviously not a speech act of “prayer”. The question therefore is this: what type of speech act is Stephen’s request? In an earlier article,[[78]](#footnote-78) it was shown that while Saul was “standing” legally consenting to Stephen’s death (Acts 22:20), Jesus’ own “standing” created a corresponding Divine Council in which he shared a different moment of judgment with Stephen, vindicating his witness. It follows therefore that in this context Stephen’s request to Jesus is an appeal and not an example of prayer.

As another example of speaking to Jesus without praying, we might cite Acts 9:3ff, where the as yet unconverted, unbaptised Saul has a heavenly encounter, a vision (Acts 26:19), which those with him did not fully experience; they saw the light but did not hear the voice. It was the first of other promised *appearances* (Acts 18:9; 26:16) of Jesus to Saul/Paul. Saul engages directly with the identified voice of Jesus, asks what he should do, and follows the instructions Jesus gave him in the Hebrew tongue (Acts 26:14).

**New Book Notices**

**Historical Issues in the Book of Daniel**

**T. E. Gaston**

With the emergence of critical scholarship in the nineteenth century, doubts began to be raised about the historicity of the book of Daniel. Little was known about the reign of Nebuchadnezzar; the kings Belshazzar and Darius the Mede were unknown, and many of the situations in the book were simply dismissed as ahistorical. A Maccabean framework proposed by critical scholars was a strong inducement to dismiss the narrative portions of the book of Daniel as a bungled attempt at historical fiction from second century Palestine.

Numerous cuneiform tablets and inscriptions have since been discovered; historical research techniques have advanced significantly, and now the conclusions of the nineteenth century look uncertain. The veil of historical ignorance has slowly been drawn back and in many instances the book of Daniel has been vindicated. In *Historical Issues in the Book of Daniel,* T. E. Gaston reviews the question of the historicity of the book of Daniel in the light of historical advances. The book first examines the references to Daniel in the book of Ezekiel then explores the historical background of the exile and life at a foreign court. In subsequent chapters the madness of Nebuchadnezzar, the figure of Belshazzar and the conflicting accounts of the fall of Babylon are all considered. Possible identifications for Darius the Mede are discussed and the critical insertion of an independent Median kingdom into Daniel’s narratives is also scrutinized. The final chapter discusses historical issues from the Persian and Greek periods that have bearing on the interpretation of the book of Daniel, including the adequacy of Jewish chronology and the alleged murder of high priest Onias III.

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**John Pople**

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**END**

1. [ED JA] Translation note (and see n. 2): this use of “the Satan” is a mixed mode of presentation: part translation (‘the’), and part transliteration (capitalised ‘Satan’). Translations, ancient and modern, are variable when representing the Hebrew ‘S†n’ – !jf – family of terms, and in some cases advertise the imposition of diachronic, or other, presuppositions. The approach found recently in R. E. Stokes, “The Devil Made David Do it . . . Or *Did* He? The Nature, Identity, and Literary Origins of the Satan in 1 Chron 21:1” *JBL* 128 (2009): 91-106, connects, albeit in a preliminary way, with some aspects of the discussion needed. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [ED AP/JA] This proposal is one point of view in the Christadelphian community. However, there are many issues to investigate and address, such as, the exact linguistics of the term and whether “(the) Satan” is a metaphor in all biblical texts, exactly what type of metaphor, and how other levels of meaning are present in some texts, and how all the texts cohere under tradition-historical umbrella, is a subject that it is hoped will be addressed in future articles. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The expression only occurs elsewhere in Ps 149:2 in a psalm of vengeance. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 475. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The RSV and NASB have “as before” whereas the KJV has “in the first *month*” with the italics signalling the absence of the word “month” in the Hebrew. The KJV is correct here as the pattern elsewhere is for “month” to be elided (Gen 8:13; Num 9:5; Ezek 29:17; 30:20; 45:18, 21). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The KJV has the bizarre “moderately” turning the word into an adverb. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. C. Roth, “The Teacher of Righteousness and the Prophecy of Joel” *VT* 13 (1963): 91-95. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. CD VI, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Hezekiah could be identified as such an individual on the basis of Job 29:23. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. P. Wyns, “The Destination and Purpose of the Fourth Gospel” *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation* 3 (2008): 2-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. J. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, (Oxford University Press, USA, 1993), 253 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. A. Perry concludes that the baptism that John administered to Jesus (Matt 3:15) was not a *baptism of repentance* but a different kind of baptism, one that was a prophetic fulfilment of *all righteousness* (all the righteous acts of God). Perry is certainly correct with linking this typologically with the righteous act of national baptism in the context of the original quote from 1 Sam 12:6-7. In this type, Perry equates Moses with John and Aaron with Jesus. However, we would argue for baptism in the Jordan under Joshua, who led the nation into the kingdom. Neither Moses (which means **my son** *cf.* Matt. 3:17) or Aaron entered the land. See A. Perry, “Marginal Notes” in *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation Annual 2007*, 86-88.     [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Biblical and Theological Classics Library edition; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997), 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Some see a contradiction between John 3:22 (Jesus baptized) and John 4:1 (Jesus did not baptize) attributable to conflicting underlying sources, others regard John 4:2 as a parenthetical explanation by the Evangelist. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. J. A. T. Robinson, “Elijah, John and Jesus” in *Twelve New Testament Studies* (London: SCM Press, 1962), 28-52 (50). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. J. A. T. Robinson, *Priority of John* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 346. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. John the Baptist chose the nation’s entry point into the land (the same place where Elijah had vanished some 900 years earlier) as the locale for his preaching. His reference to raising sons to Abraham from stones (sons/stones is a Hebrew phonetic pun) is linked to the memorial built by the Israelites. See P. Wyns “John the Baptist” in *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation Annual 2007*, 50-58.     [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. H. A. Whittaker, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (Cannock: Biblia, 1985), 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. J. L. Crenshaw, *Joel* (AB 24C; New York: Doubleday, 1995), 15-16, 168. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. J. Barton, *Joel and Obadiah* (OTL; WJK Press, 2001), 97-98. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. L. C. Allen, *The Books of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah and Micah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Barton, *Joel and Obadiah*, 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Barton, *Joel and Obadiah*, 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Crenshaw, *Joel*, 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Barton, *Joel and Obadiah*, 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Crenshaw, *Joel*, 126-127. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. M. A. Sweeny, “The Place and Function of Joel in the Book of the Twelve”, in *Thematic Threads in the Book of the Twelve* (eds. P. L. Redditt and A. Schart; BZAW 325; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 133-154 (145). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. F. R. Stephenson, “The Date of the Book of Joel”, *VT* 19 (1969): 226-229. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Stephenson, “The Date of the Book of Joel”, 226. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Only two *total* eclipses were visible in Israel and Judah from Jerusalem between 1130-310 B.C.E. (357, and 336). The lack of total eclipses of the sun in Judah casts doubt on Stephenson’s interpretation. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Zodiac constellations, Astrolabe stars such as Pegasus, Pleiades and Orion, as well as elliptical stars feature in Mesopotamian celestial divination, F. Rochberg, *The Heavenly Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 67-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 67. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Texts cited are Old Babylonian or Neo-Assyrian. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. BM 22696 obv. 1-12 cited in Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Cited in Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. H. Hunger, *Astrological Reports to Assyrian* Kings (State Archives of Assyria 8; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1992) no. 502:15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Cited in Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Cited in Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 108 n. 43, states that the standard Assyrian Celestial Omen List identified 18 stars in the path of the moon. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 72, 167, 172-173. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 167; other metaphors noted for the moon in various states include the moon setting “with unwashed feet”, “wear a crown” at first visibility, or “ride a chariot”. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Dates are supplied by <http://eclipses.gsfc.nasa.gov> [Cited 6.10.2008]. Rochberg, *Heavenly Writing*, 77, argues that prediction of lunar eclipses was not achieved until the 7c. B.C.E. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. For example, see J. Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning and the Gods*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), ch. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. It is not possible to know the exact meteorological or celestial conditions that caused the stars to withdraw their shining. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. See P. Wyns, “The Destination and Purpose of the Fourth Gospel” and “The Fourth Gospel and Paul” in *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation*,(Vol. 3, No. 2, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. The dates are culled from J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1976), 352. Dates are given as approximations (by no means fixed) in order to establish relationships. For a review, see P. Wyns, “Review: Redating the New Testament” in *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation* *Annual 2007*(eds., A. Perry and P. Wyns; Sunderland: Willow Publications, 2007), 123-126. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1970), 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Biblical and Theological Classics Library: Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997), 243. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. J. A. T. Robinson, *Priority of John* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 172-173. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. J. A. T. Robinson, “The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community” in *Twelve New Testament Studies* (London: SCM, 1962: 28-52), 11-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. I. H. Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God* (3rd ed.; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1995), 142, says: “The precise nature of the ‘heavenly gift’ is uncertain. It is unlikely that the Spirit is meant”. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. The proposal that the initial audience for Hebrews is the Hellenistic synagogues is further supported by the allusion to angels as the mediators of the old covenant (Heb 2:2). This notion, absent from Exodus 19-20, and alluded to in Deut 33:2, gained acceptance sometime prior to the first century and spread among Hellenistic Jews (cf. Acts 7:38, 53; Gal 3:19; Josephus *Ant*. 15.5.3). Note also that Hebrews 12 contrasts Jesus with Moses by alluding to Stephen’s (a Hellenistic Jew) defence in Acts 7: Moses whom they refused (Acts 7:35); who refused him that spake on earth (Heb 12:25); him shall ye hear (Acts 7:37); Him that speaketh from heaven (Heb 12:25); in their hearts turned back again into Egypt (Acts 7:39); if we turn away from him (Heb 12:25). The veneration of Moses in Hellenistic Judaism can be quickly determined by following up the indices in J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols; New York: Doubleday, 1983-1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. The typological details in Acts 19:13-17 are relevant to the judgment on Judaism anticipated by first century Christians. The house is a metaphor for the temple. The seven exorcists are an allusion to the priestly dynasty of the high priest Annas, who was also father-in-law to the high priest Caiaphas (*Ant.* 18.2.1, 2 and John 18:13), and who produced five sons who became high priest. Annas was the power behind the throne at Christ’s trial (Luke 3:2; Acts 4:6; John 18:24). See H. A. Whittaker, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (Cannock: Biblia, 1985), 299-300, for an exegesis of the acted parable. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Other noteworthy features in Matt 12:43-45 are the allusion to releasing the scapegoat (typifying the unclean nation sent into captivity) in the wilderness (*dry places*, cf. Lev 16:10) and the allusion to the feast of unleavened bread, when the Jews swept their houses clean of leaven in preparation for the Passover (Exod 13:7). [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Psalm 8 and 110 are also correlated by Paul in 1 Cor.15:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (rev., ed.; NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1996), 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. M. Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage; Ein Lösungsversuch mit einem Beitrag zur Apokalypse von Jörg Frey* (WUNT 67; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1993). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. G. R. Beasley-Murray, “Revelation” in *The Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments,* (eds., R. P. Martin, P. H. Davids; Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1997), 1032. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. ##  R. H. Gundry, *The Old Is Better: New Testament: Essays in Support of Traditional Interpretations* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 2005), 327 (fn.28).

 [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. On this see H. A. Whittaker, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (Cannock: Biblia, 1985), 393-399. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. [ED. AP] The argument here is that the tightly knit text (Rev 2:1-7) is more likely to be the original for the echoes shared with a more diffuse text (Hebrews 4, 6, 10, 12) [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. A. Perry “Babylon in Isaiah 13-14” in *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation Annual 2007* (eds. A. Perry and P. Wyns; Sunderland Willow Publications, 2007), 11-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. G. Roux, *Ancient Iraq* (3rd ed.; London: Penguin, 1992), ch. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. *ARAB*, 795, 812. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. For a study of theological changes to the text see B. D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), and for his discussion of John 1:18, pp. 78-82. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. H. A. Whittaker, *Studies in the Acts of Apostles* (Cannock: Biblia, 1985), 104: “Now Stephen prayed…to Jesus”. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. J. W. Adey, ‘Stephen and the Divine Council’, in the *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation*, Vol. 2. No. 4. Oct 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)