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**Editors:**

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

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

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

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

Andrew.Perry@christadelphian-ejbi.org

Paul.Wyns@christadelphian-ejbi.org

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

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

Cover Design: D. Burke

**Editorial**

Duck-rabbit pictures are illustrations that look like a duck and/or a rabbit. A person can be seeing the picture as a duck and nothing else and then, all of a sudden, s/he sees it as a rabbit, especially when prompted to focus on a particular line of the picture.

Interesting philosophical questions can be discussed in relation to duck-rabbit pictures, such as the nature of perception, what is identity, and the nature of ambiguity. Our question for Bible study is this: what if you were in the unvarying habit of seeing a verse, a passage or a book, in the Bible as a “duck” and then all of a sudden you saw it as a “rabbit”. How dis-quieting would this be if you were always concerned for the truth of the matter?

You could change your stance and say that the text was both a “duck” and a “rabbit”, but is this a defeatist and lazy attitude? There is nothing wrong with ambiguity in a text provided the different levels of meaning are shown to have purpose and design in their overall context. But the danger is that lazy thinking will allow incompatible meanings to be attributed to a text. We have to be careful to ascertain whether we are being misled to now see a “rabbit” or whether the text is intentionally meant to portray both a “duck” and a “rabbit”.

Mistakes that are made with the bits and pieces of a text are inevitable and not so worrisome, but mistakes that are made with the whole, mistakes where you have got it completely wrong, are entirely possible and something to be feared. You see it as a “duck” but it was inspired as a “rabbit”. The difference between an Abrahamic and Biblical monotheistic Christian faith and a Trinitarian Christian faith is a duck/rabbit situation. Orthodox Christians *see* the same texts differently; everything is different.

How you see Jesus Christ changes everything; it changes not only theory but also the practise of worship. In Islam, Jesus is a lesser prophet than Mohammed; in Judaism, Jesus is not recognised as a true prophet; in Trinitarian Christianity, Jesus is the incarnation of the second person of something called the Trinity; only in Biblical monotheism is Jesus the actual son of God.

**The Olivet Discourse**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

It is often asserted that Jesus does not know the day or the hour of his own return or of the restoration of Israel and therefore any inquiry into the “times and seasons” by his disciples is foolish. Of course, there is ample evidence of foolish predictions and failed interpretation to stand as a warning to any exegete presumptuous enough to assume to know the will of God. Nevertheless, Jesus does give us signs and parables about the end and encourages us to watch and stay alert. In this spirit, we must re-examine Jesus’ words and tentatively offer certain “time-frames” without dogmatically setting dates.

**Knowing ‘times and seasons’**

Firstly, the assertion that Jesus does not know the time of restoration is hardly plausible and rests on a failure to correctly contextualize his sayings. Jesus admits that even the Son does not know the day or hour only the Father knows (Mark 13: 32//Matt 24:36) but this saying reflects Jesus’ knowledge before his glorification. Do we really believe that the resurrected Christ who sits at the right hand of the Father is still ignorant of the day and hour of his return? Is there any knowledge that the Father withholds from the Son? All things are put under subjection to the Son (Heb 2:8) and all things were created through him and for him (Col 1:16). In other words the ‘new creation’ exists because of him and even the hierarchy of heaven has changed with Christ elevated ‘above the angels’. The apostle Paul notes in 1 Cor 15:27 (NLT): “For the Scriptures say, ‘God has given him authority over all things’. (Of course, when it says “authority over all things,” it does not include God himself, who gave Christ his authority)”.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The glorified and resurrected Lamb won the right to open the scroll (Revelation 5) and to guide events to their final consummation. Before his ascension, the resurrected and glorified Christ is asked by his disciples if he will “at this time restore the kingdom to Israel” which draws the response: “It is not for you to know *times or seasons* which the Father has put in His own authority” (Acts 1:6-7). We note that the Lord no longer says, ‘I don’t know’, but ‘It is not for you to know’, and Christ adds that the Father has put the times and seasons under ‘his own authority’. In other words, the Father is in control of this crucial decision but that does not mean that the glorified Son is ignorant of the times and seasons. The reference to times and seasons is relevant because they are the feasts established in the Jewish luni-solar religious calendar—the feast days and the harvest seasons are measured by celestial movements (cf. Gen 1:14; Ezek 45:17; Gal 4:9-10).

**Heaven and Earth pass away**

Significantly, the Olivet Discourse speaks of *stars falling from heaven* and *the moon not giving its light* (Matt 24:29) and also *of heaven and earth passing away* (Matt 24:35). In the context of the Jewish festal calendar this means no more religious feasts.

If the moon does not give light it is impossible to calculate the feast-days. Jewish months began on the new moon which was determined by observation. When the new moon was observed, the Sanhedrin declared the beginning of a new month and sent out messengers to tell people when the month began. People in distant communities could not always be notified of the new moon (and therefore, of the first day of the month), so they did not know the correct day to celebrate. They knew that the old month would be either 29 or 30 days, so if they didn’t get notice of the new moon, they celebrated holidays on both possible days.

From the remotest time to the present, the Israelites have computed the day from sunset to sunset, or rather from sunset to the appearance of the first three stars which marked the beginning of a new day (cf. Lev 23:32; 2 Esdras 4:21). So, if the *stars fall out of the sky* and *the moon stops shining*, the Jews are unable to calculate any of the feasts proscribed by the Law of Moses (Passover, Atonement, etc.), and do not even know when the given days officially commence. In other words, the poetic expression concerning the disruption of the *moon and stars* stands as a metaphor for the cessation of cultic ritual and therefore the end of the dispensation of the Mosaic Law. Jesus anticipates this when he says: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away” (Matt 24:35).

The word ‘heaven’ is juxtaposed five times with ‘earth’ in 1 Kings 8 in a chapter that is concerned with the dedication of Solomon’s temple and an appeal to hear prayer in heaven when the people pray in (or towards the temple) on earth. The expression *‘*the powers of the heavens will be shaken’ in Matt 24:29 echoes the desecration of the Sanctuary during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (god manifest) in Dan 8:10, “And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down *some* of the host and *some* of the stars to the ground, and trampled them”. Similar language is employed by Peter, “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up” (2 Pet 3:10). In AD 70, the Second Temple was burned and the works of the law ceased—the ‘elements’ (rudiments, first principles or literally ABC’s of the Law) were no longer necessary as Christians had a ‘better covenant’. Of course, the old ‘heaven and earth’ had to pass away in anticipation of the fresh order: “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also, there was no more sea” (Rev 21:1).

In Matthew’s account, Jesus utters the words concerning the passing away of ‘heaven and earth’ immediately before stating that he does not know the time of his return (v. 36). This is significant because it means that although Jesus predicted that the Second Temple would be destroyed he did not know the exact time of kingdom restoration—at that time the knowledge was the privilege of the Father alone. This allows the fulfilment of the Olivet Discourse a certain measure of flexibility—it could have been completely fulfilled in the first century (or not). After the destruction of the temple, the Jewish nation could have repented and accepted Jesus as the Messiah. However, for early Christians, it became increasingly apparent that Christ was not returning as quickly as they hoped. They had to understand that divine chronology does not conform to human expectation.

Psalm 90:4 became an influential text both in Rabbinic Judaism (cf. *Apoc. Bar.* 48:12-13; *Pirķê de Rabbi Eliezer* 28) and in early Christianity (2 Pet 3:8-9) to make the point that time is irrelevant to God who is an immortal being and therefore outside the confines of the space-time continuum. Psalm 90 records the reflections of Moses who is refused entry into the Promised Land and who is contemplating his imminent death: “For a thousand years in your sight *are* like yesterday when it is past, and *like* a watch in the night”. It is therefore appropriate that Peter employs the Psalm when contemplating the end of the Mosaic System.

The typology being deployed by Peter is that the kingdom cannot be earned through the “works of the law” which can only inherit death, and are therefore destined to be ‘burned’. Moses himself will only inherit the Promised Land through the Messiah—the Law could only bring him to the border of the Promised Land (kingdom)—where Moses could view the land at a distance but not enter.

**Destruction of the Temple and End of the Age**

It is obvious that the disciples expected the destruction of the Temple to coincide with the end of the age and therefore with the inauguration of the kingdom. Jesus, on the other hand, declares that despite all the cataclysmic events “*the end will not come immediately*” (Luke 21:9),[[2]](#footnote-2) and although the *heavens and earth will pass away* (the Temple and the Law), his words would not pass away, indicating that his words have a fulfilment beyond the events surrounding AD 70.

Once again, this suggests the flexibility of fulfilment in the Olivet Discourse—it should be viewed as a transparency through which ‘end time’ events are viewed—a kind of template.[[3]](#footnote-3) Thus, we can infer that ‘end time’ events would not be re-activated until the Jews returned to their land and recommenced (in whatever limited form) the rituals associated with the Law, particularly the observation of seasons and times as indicated by the festal calendar. Perhaps we can even expect the re-institution of some form of Jewish sacrificial worship immediately before the end. In any case, the Jewish festal calendar has developed significance beyond the rituals of the Law—for example, Passover now has Christological import as it celebrates the deliverance achieved in the resurrection. Therefore, although the feasts are still celebrated by the Jews as cultic institutions, (especially the orthodoxy), their relevance as eschatological signs remains unrecognized.

Perhaps we should define what we understand as the Olivet Discourse. In a strict sense, it refers to the eschatological discourse given in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. The gospel writers under inspiration edited and arranged the material for specific purposes. For example Mark 13:9b-12 is found in Matt 10:17-21 and not in Matthew 24. Luke has some of his material in Luke 17 (Luke 17:23-24//Matt 24:26-28) and the rest in Luke 21. To this we might add the observation that Jesus probably adapted his discourse to meet the needs of different audiences. Jesus most certainly delivered variations of his message and some of the gospel writers have compiled the material thematically rather than chronologically. It is therefore difficult to separate the destruction of the temple from the end of the age and although the disciples make a distinction between both events in the two-fold question that they pose (Mark 13:1-2; Matt 24:3), it is likely that they understood both events as intimately related with very little time between the removal of the temple and introduction of the kingdom.

The difficulty encountered when separating the destruction of the temple from the end of the age suggests (as we have already noted) that the possibility existed of a first-century advent. However, national disobedience and the Judaist onslaught against the primitive church prevented an early return of Christ—as a consequence the temporary casting away of Israel allowed the extension of mercy to the gentiles. Whereas the account in Luke focuses on the historical, Matthew has more of an eschatological slant. Luke refers to the (Roman) armies surrounding Jerusalem (Luke 21:20) and encourages disciples to flee to the mountains (Luke 21:21). On two occasions the Romans either withdrew or relaxed the siege,[[4]](#footnote-4) and Eusebius refers to an oracle that had the saints flee to Pella.[[5]](#footnote-5) In Matthew, Jesus adds that they should pray that their flight should not occur in the winter or on the Sabbath (Matt 24:20), presumably because Sabbath restrictions and the perennial flooding of the Wadis would make it more difficult to flee as would pregnancy and responsibility for children (v. 19).

**This Generation**

Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Matt 24:34

This verse has engendered much discussion and different interpretations have been proposed. Preterist interpreters[[6]](#footnote-6) understand it as a chronological modifier—‘generation’ (Gk: *genea*) stands for a specific time period (40 years or 70 years, etc.) or the contemporary ‘generation’ that is present when Jesus speaks these words. In this interpretation it signifies the imminence or immediacy of fulfilment and therefore Preterists believe that complete fulfilment occurred in the events of AD 70.

Of course, it is said that this is not the case, therefore Jesus either got it wrong, or his return was an invisible *parousia* (the Greek means ‘coming/presence’)*.* However, the Olivet Discourse itself makes it clear that the return of Christ would be highly visible and unmistakeable and the term *parousia* is not normally used in the sense of a hidden or invisible presence and Jesus warns against rumours concerning a hidden return.

Other scholars argue that ‘generation’ should be understood in a qualitative sense as it is often combined (especially in Matthew) with pejorative adjectives such as ‘evil’ or ‘adulterous’ thus denoting an indeterminate ‘age’ or ‘generation’ of unbelief such as when Jesus extends ‘this generation’ from the time of the murderers of Zechariah to include the present hearers in Matt 23:35, a period that covers some 400 years! This suggestion is attractive and has merit but, despite this, the synoptic versions of the saying in Matt 24:34 give the impression of imminence—“till all things take place” (Luke 21:32//Mark 13:30) and “….when you see these things happening, know that it is near -- at the doors!” (Mark 13:29).

If the words of a prophet do not come to pass that prophet is considered a false prophet. Jesus predicted an imminent judgment on Judaism and foretold the destruction of the temple. The generation that heard these words saw them happen. In this sense, Jesus is vindicated as the Danielic ‘Son of Man’ who comes in judgement: “Not *one* stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down. (Mark 13:2)…Tell us, when will these things be? [i.e., concerning the destruction of the temple] And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?” (Mark 13:4).

The assumption among the disciples is that the destruction of the temple will herald the *parousia* and inaugurate the kingdom age: “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?” (Matt 24:3) Jesus clearly admits that although heaven and earth will pass away (the institutions of Judaism), he does not know the day or hour of his return, nevertheless, his words (i.e., the signs he is imparting to them) concerning the day and the hour of his return will not pass away (Matt 24:35-36). This leaves the immanence of the *parousia* an open question allowing the destruction of the temple to stand in tension with the immediate inauguration of the kingdom – the destruction of the temple may or may not herald the return of Jesus, and although ‘this generation’ will see all things fulfilled, Jesus admits that he does not know the day or hour of his return.

In other words, although Jesus gives the disciples a sequence of events that culminate in his return, he is unable (at that early stage) to give them a date for the advent. Nevertheless, they are reassured that the ‘passing away of heaven and earth’ (the institutions of Judaism) will not allow his words to pass away. This is only possible if the events of the first century form a pattern through which the last ‘generation’ can view the fulfilment of all things—that means a renewing of witnessing and judgements against Judaism. This is only possible if Jewish institutions are restored before the end of the age.

**Look at the fig tree, and all the trees**

Then He spoke to them a parable: ‘Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near’. (Luke 21:29-30)

The saying in Luke 21:29-30 contains the additional phrase “and all the trees”, which is absent in the parallel sayings in Mark 13:28 or Matt 24:32. The fig tree is an obvious symbol for the nation of Israel and features in the parable of the barren fig tree in Luke 13:6-9 and in the cursing of the fig tree in Matt 21:18-21.[[7]](#footnote-7) Of course, we have recently seen the restoration of the “fig tree” with the return of the Jews to Palestine.

As far back as 50 BC, the Jews have celebrated a feast called **Tu Bishvat** the **New Year of the Trees.** It was important to establish the ‘age’ of trees for the purpose of tithing (Lev 19:23-25) and the date of the feast was a matter of rabbinic debate until it was set as the 15th day of the month of Shevat (usually Jan-Feb). It was certainly an established feast by the time of Christ.

Since the establishment of the agricultural settlements in Palestine in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the **New Year of the Trees** has acquired great significance symbolizing the revival and redemption of the land by the conquest of the desert. In keeping with the idea of Tu Bishvat marking the revival of nature, many of Israel’s major institutions have chosen this day for their inauguration. For example, the cornerstone-laying of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem took place on Tu Bishvat 1918; the Technion in Haifa, on Tu Bishvat 1925; and the Knesset, on Tu Bishvat 1949. The **New Year of the Trees** is therefore intimately linked with the revival of all the Jewish institutions including the establishment of the Jewish democratic Parliament.

Moreover, the Middle East is currently undergoing a period of unprecedented turmoil (“distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring” Luke 21:25) with the Arab peoples attempting to establish democracies. ‘**Arab Spring**’ is a phrase that was used beginning in March 2005 by numerous media commentators to suggest that a spin-off benefit of the invasion of Iraq would be the flowering of Western-friendly Middle East democracies. The term took on a new meaning in 2011, as democratic uprisings independently arose and spread across the Arab world. In this context the words of Jesus concerning the spring-time budding of the **fig tree and all the trees** indicate that summer is near.

**The Times and Seasons**

Dates for the return of Christ are not given in Scripture but important intervals are established, particularly in the book of Daniel (i.e. 1260, 1290 and 1335 days) and some of these are repeated in the book of Revelation (1260 days). Although it is only for the Father (and now the exalted Christ) to know the day and hour, Daniel implies that the ‘wise will understand’ and the apostle Paul states that we are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake us as a thief (1 Thess 5:4). Investigation into the chronological intervals in the book of Daniel demonstrate that they are all linked with the ‘times and seasons’ (Jewish Feasts) and that the times of Daniel commence on the fast that commemorates the destruction of the temple (on the 9th of Ab) and end in a feast that celebrates deliverance or forgiveness of sin (Passover, Atonement, Purim or Hanukkah), some three-and-one-half years later.[[8]](#footnote-8) These blocks of time (3 ½ years) are repeated throughout the centuries in the Jewish Festal calendar. At an early stage the Jewish calendar was a luni-solar calendar regulated by observation of the moon with the addition of an extra month in leap years, but modern Jews have converted to the Gregorian calendar[[9]](#footnote-9) used since the 16th century in the western world.

If we were to take Tu Bishvat as a starting date next year, the following Jewish Feast Days deliver some interesting intervals[[10]](#footnote-10) – 1335 days from the New Year of the Trees (Tu Bishvat) on the 8th Feb 2012 to the Eighth day of Assembly (**Shmini Atzeret**)[[11]](#footnote-11) on 5 Oct 2015, but even more importantly (in the light of Daniel and Revelation), 1260 days from the Fast of Temple destruction (**Tisha B’Av**) on July 16 2013 to the Feast that commemorates the re-dedication of the Temple (**Hanukkah**) on the 25th of December 2016,[[12]](#footnote-12) with another period of 1335 days commencing on the same Fast (**Tisha B’Av**) July 16th 2013 and ending in **Purim** on the 12th of March 2017.

**Conclusion**

The Olivet Discourse was given to the disciples to encourage them to watch for the signs of the kingdom. It is still not for us to know the day or the hour but nevertheless we are not ignorant or in darkness like the world. The Jewish ‘times and seasons’ are important eschatological signifiers and we would do well to observe the events in the Middle-East against these time-frames. The Jews commemorate the fasts and celebrate the feasts as important historical memorials but we should know better – a ‘new temple’ is about to be dedicated one comprising of the saints of all ages – and an important three-and-one-half year witnessing period is about to commence. The ‘heavens and earth’ did indeed pass away, but a ‘new heaven and earth’ are about to be revealed! Jesus’ words in the Olivet Discourse did not ‘pass away’ soon ‘all things will be fulfilled’ and ‘this generation’ will see it happen.

**The Historicity of Acts**

**J. Burke**

**Introduction**

Scholarly attitudes to the historicity of Acts from the twentieth century range widely. C. J. Setzer comments,

**British scholarship has been relatively positive about Acts’ historicity**, from Lightfoot and Ramsay to W. L. Knox and Bruce. German scholarship has, for the most part, **evaluated negatively** the historical worth of Acts, from Baur and his school to Dibelius, Conzelmann, and Haenchen. **North American scholars show a range of opinion**.[[13]](#footnote-13)

The leading critical scholar of Acts at the turn of the 19c. was the German theologian A. von Harnack, and his extreme criticism has been discredited,

It is difficult to acquit Harnack here of an exaggerated hypercriticism. **He offers a lengthy list of inaccuracies** (*Acts* pp. 203-31), but most of the entries **are bizarrely trivial**... [[14]](#footnote-14)

However, the more conservative W. M. Ramsay’s views[[15]](#footnote-15) are also now considered exaggerated,

Over a hundred years ago, the British archaeologist Sir William Ramsay set out to disprove the historicity of Acts, but, after extensive work, particularly in Turkey, **became convinced of the book’s reliability** and converted to Christianity.

Ramsay no doubt put the point much more strongly than many of his contemporaries would have been prepared to accept, and he was capable of making assertions about Luke’s historical accuracy which went beyond what could be shown by the available evidence. [[16]](#footnote-16)

The Roman historian, A. Sherwin-White’s praise of Acts is qualified: [[17]](#footnote-17)

For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming. Yet Acts is, in simple terms and judged externally, no less of a propaganda narrative than the Gospels, liable to similar distortions. But any attempt to reject its basic historicity even in matters of detail must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted.

More recently, there is general agreement that the book is reliable in its depiction of the first century milieu. The New Testament scholar and Acts specialist, C. H. Talbert, judges Acts to be consistently accurate with regard to many details,

There are certainly points at which the contemporary color of Acts can be challenged, but they are few and insignificant compared to the over-whelming congruence between Acts and its time and place.[[18]](#footnote-18)

whilst noting,

There is widespread agreement that an exact description of the milieu does not prove the historicity of the event narrated.[[19]](#footnote-19)

In this article, we will look at what scholars point to as evidence of Acts’ reliability, and then we will discuss some historical difficulties.

**Evidence of Acts’ Reliability**

There are many points of historical reliability in Acts. The historian, J. Taylor, writing in the standard academic dictionary of the Roman world, ‚Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt‘(*ANRW*), states,

The narrative of the Acts **contains many details which can be related to information from other sources** and help build up a picture of the Roman provinces of Macedonia and Achaia in the middle of the first century of our era. **Valuable light is cast** on Roman institutions in the provinces, civic life in Greek cities and Roman colonies, economic and social realities, communications, religion, especially Judaism.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Taylor describes the accuracy of Acts positively, and lists many examples.[[21]](#footnote-21)

* Thessalonican city authorities called *politarchs* (Acts 17:6, 8)
* *Grammateus* is the correct title for the chief magistrate in Ephesus (Acts 19:35)
* Felix and Festus called procurators (Acts 23:24, 26; 24:27)
* Centurion Cornelius, tribune Claudius Lysias (Acts 10:1; 21:31, 23:36)
* The title proconsul (Greek: *anthypathos*), used for the governors of two senatorial provinces (Acts 13:7-8; 18:12)
* The prohibition against Gentiles in the Temple’s inner court (Acts 21:27-36)
* The function of town assemblies (Acts 19: 29-41)
* Soldiers in the tower of Antonia descended stairs into the Temple precincts (Acts 21:31-37)
* Trial scenes throughout Acts
* Reference to Phrygo-Galatia (Acts 16:6; 18:23)
* The voyage from Troas (Acts 16:11-12)
* Lydia a historical figure (Acts 16:14)
* Magistrates named correctly (Acts 16)
* Paul objects to a beating without examination (Acts 16:37)
* A synagogue in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1)
* Jason before the city rulers (Acts 17:5-9)
* Jews in Berea (Acts 17:10)
* Athens full of idols (Acts 17:16)
* The Athenians’ curiosity (Acts 17:21)
* Paul on the Areopagus (Acts 17:19)
* The ‘unknown god’ (Acts 17:23)
* Paul’s visit to Athens (Acts 17:16-33)
* Jews expelled from Rome (Acts 18:1-2)
* Gallio the governor of Achaia (Acts 18:12)
* The tribunal of Gallio (Acts 18:12-16)
* Events in Ephesus (Acts 19:28-41)
* Paul’s appeal to Caesar (Acts 25:11-12)

To this list we can add the evidence of the ‘we’ passages. Some verses in Acts use the first person plural (‘we’), indicating that the writer is participating in some of the events he is describing, which would contribute significantly to the argument for the book’s historicity. The traditional interpretation of these passages (that the writer was an eyewitness, by tradition—Luke), was challenged in the twentieth century. However, the interpretation of the ‘we’ passages as indicative that the writer was a historical eye witness (whether Luke or not), remains the most influential in current Biblical Studies.

**Evidence of Acts’ Mistakes**

Certain passages have come under sustained criticism and claims of historical inaccuracy. We cannot examine all of them in a short article but, for instance, Peter’s address in Acts 4:4, the description of the cohort of Cornelius in Acts 10:1, and the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, have all been subject to these claims. We will look at these examples.

*Peter’s address: Acts 4:4*

The NT scholar, R. Grant, claimed that the population of Jerusalem was too small for 5,000 converts to Christianity.[[22]](#footnote-22) Grant’s estimate of the population of Jerusalem relied on an influential study by J. Jeremias in 1943, [[23]](#footnote-23) but did not mention that Jeremias calculated a far higher population figure for festival seasons such as Passover, at which he estimated Jerusalem would contain up to 125,000 pilgrims. Furthermore, estimates of the population in Jerusalem vary, as shown in W. Reinhardt’s summation—estimates upwards of 50,000 and often towards 70,000.[[24]](#footnote-24)

*The ‘Italian band’: Acts 10:1*

It has been claimed that no Roman troops were stationed in Herod Agrippa’s territory,[[25]](#footnote-25) and that the record of Cornelius (“At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort”, Acts 10:1, RSV) is historically suspect. The lack of inscriptional and literary evidence corroborating Acts, however, is not evidence of absence. The ‘Italian Cohort’ is generally identified as ‘cohors II Italica civium Romanorum’, a unit whose presence in Judea is attested no earlier than 69 CE, but it is possible that the regiment was stationed temporarily in Caesarea. Further, it is also possible that Cornelius had a home in Caesarea away from the regiment, which was stationed elsewhere. We have then two possible harmonizations of Acts and the lack of external data.

*The Jerusalem Council: Acts 15*

The description of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 is generally considered to be the same event described in Galatians 2, and by some scholars to be contradictory to the Galatians account. It was rejected completely by some scholars in the mid to late twentieth century.[[26]](#footnote-26) Recent scholarship is inclined to treat the Council and its rulings as a historical, though this is sometimes expressed with caution. F. Philip makes this observation in his recent doctoral study on Pauline Pneumatology: “There is an increasing trend among scholars toward considering the Jerusalem Council as historical event. An overwhelming majority identifies the reference to the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 with Paul’s account in Gal 2.1-10, and this accord is not just limited to the historicity of the gathering alone but extends also to the authenticity of the arguments deriving from the Jerusalem church itself”.[[27]](#footnote-27) Philip’s remark shows the shifting sands of scholarly opinion and should make the Bible student cautious in rejecting the history in Acts.

**Conclusion**

We have noted many points of historical accuracy in Acts and examined some inaccuracies. For us, as conservative readers, it is useful to note that the historicity of Acts is taken seriously, (though not accepted completely), even by critical scholars such as G. Lüdemann,[[28]](#footnote-28) A. Wedderburn,[[29]](#footnote-29) H. Conzelmann,[[30]](#footnote-30) and M. Hengel.[[31]](#footnote-31) Alongside this fact, we should note that recent modern studies are far more positive in their assessment of the historicity of Acts than many previous critical commentaries.

**The Shape of Things to Come**

**J. W. Adey**

This two-part table brings together information (with text references) to do with the coming of Christ. Whilst this list does associate events, it is concerned with *what* is to take place rather than a chronological sequence of them. **Part A** is a presentation of end-time prophecy Jesus will fulfil, ultimately realising his Father’s will on earth. **Part B**, focused by the terms and texts of Part A, projects from present-day Israel and regional developments to the set of conditions pre-millennial Israel experiences prior to the Gogian invasion of Ezekiel 38.

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| Part A: | Biblical text |
| The saints view their coming redemption, and observe God’s will being done in the earth, through the lens of prophecy about end-time fulfillment. Prayerful preparation for that day is needed (2 Pet. 3:12). Relate to sign of Jewish restoration, loving Christ’s appearing and his kingdom, look for signs of gathering of the nations and end to Jerusalem’s treading down by the Gentiles; the fulness of the Gentiles coming in. As the day draws near, the pace of events increases (cf. events in Esther): Jesus comes quickly (as he warns in the context of Armageddon: Rev. 16:15.)  | Luke 12:37, 38; 21: 24, 27-28, 36. 2 Thess 2:1ff.Ezek 38. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Elijah the prophet comes before the day of Yahweh, to prepare Israel for their encounter with Him whom they pierced (Rev 1:7).  | Mal 4:5; Matt. 17:11 |
| Once the (sit thou at my right hand in heaven) ‘until’ is reached (Psa. 110:1), Jesus descends from heaven and raises the dead (1 Cor. 15:23). He comes out of Zion, saves his people (the Jews – beloved for the fathers’ sakes) from their enemies at the battle of that great day of God Almighty at Armageddon (Rev 16:14-16). He turns away their ungodliness.  | Ps 110:1-3, 5-7;Acts 3:19-21.Rom 11:26ff.Joel 3:16. Zech14. |
| Christ comes to earth with his mighty angels at the time appointed by his Father. Subsequently, with his judged saints, the “called, and chosen, and faithful” (‘dead in Christ’ resurrected at the last trump, or a saint is changed if alive at his coming), he executes the judgment written. (See also Dan. 7:18-27. In v. 22 judgement is given to the saints of the Most High. Cf. Rev 17:14.) The world to come is not subject to the angels (Heb 2:5).  | Matt 13:41-43; 24:29-31; 2 Thess 1:7; Ps 149; Acts. 17:31; Rev 17:14. 1 Cor 15:52//1 Thess 4:16-17. Heb 1:13-2:9. |
| Messiah executes the wrath of God (Rev 14:17-15:4)// the wrath of the Lamb: “For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” (Rev 6:16, 17). | 2 Thess 1:8-10; Rom 2:5; Rev 17:14 |
| The sending of Christ is called “the revelation of our lord Jesus Christ” and means his open, visible presence. Every eye shall see him, and those who pierced him. He does not come secretly, invisibly, or in some mystic ‘inward’ sense. | 1 Cor 1:7; 2 Thess. 1:7; Rev 1:7; Zech 12:10; Luke 17:24. Acts 1:11. |
| Armageddon’s battle (or location) is “upon the mountains of Israel” and focused on Jerusalem. (Cf. Pss 2 and 83). He is the Hope of Israel. | Ezek 38:8; Zech 14: 1-3; Rev 16:16. |
| Christ’s coming is ‘his day’; ‘the Lord’s day’; “the day of Yahweh (of hosts).” Then shall Yahweh go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. Zech 14:3. “Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord Yahweh; **this is the day** whereof I have spoken” (Ezek 39:8; Rev 16:17).(Cp. Luke 17’s Son of man in his day’, etc.) | Cf. ‘in that day’.Isa 63:4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. |
| Yahweh roars out of Zion. The land of Israel is to shake at ‘Yahweh’s’ = Christ’s presence, as with the saints (Rev 19:14) he goes forth to fight those nations gathered around Jerusalem, who have invaded God’s land, and come to take a spoil. This ends: ... Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, **until** the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (Luke 21:24). | Isa 2:19-21; 13:13; Ezek 38:19-20; Joel 2:1;3:16; Nah 1:5; Zech 14:4-5; Rev 16:18. |
| Eruption of divine power in the earth is brought by Christ’s return. (The elements melt with fervent heat, etc. ‘Heat’ associates with God’s poured out anger and fury on His enemies among mankind. Christ manifesting God comes in flaming fire taking vengeance on those that know not God nor obey the Gospel….”) | 2 Thess 1:8-10.2 Pet 3:10-12. Isa 13:13; 34:2; 63:3-6; Ezek 38:18; |
| In this end-time scenario, in the fulfillment of the day about which he has spoken (Ezek. 39:8), in defeating Gog and saving Israel, God makes His holy name known. *In that day* there shall be one Yahweh, and His name one (Zech 14:9). | Ps 83:18; Ezek 38:23; 39:7; Heb 8:11. John 17:26. |
| Jesus reigns on the throne of David in Zion until all enemies are made his footstool (1 Cor 15:24-26. The kingdoms of this world become ‘His’/’his’. | Pss 2; 8; 110; Luke 1:32-33; Rev 11:15. |
| Jesus is king-priest. Future elevated Jerusalem with the temple is named “Yahweh is there.” Jerusalem is thus *safely* inhabited. Nations go up to worship the king Yahweh of Hosts.  | Pss 24; 122; Isa 2:1-3;Ezek 48:35; Zech. 6:13; 14:9-11 |
| God’s will is done on earth. Swords are beaten into ploughshares (Isa 2:4). Jerusalem and her people are a joy.... There is a “new heaven and new earth wherein dwells righteousness.” | Ps 72; Luke 11:2; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:5;Isa 65:17. |
| Part B: | Biblical text |
| Given the above, the state of political peace and security Israel enjoys before the Gogian invasion is not the effect of some secret or invisible presence of Christ. At best it *foreshadows* the security of the Kingdom following the invasion (Jer 30:10; Zech. 14:11). Also, since the Kingdom produces a physical state of peaceful settlement in Israel, the pre-Gogian “dwelling safely”, i.e., prior to the Kingdom, must also be a physical situation, but one of imperfect peace; though it may produce a (falsely) secure psychological effect. That it is a physical condition and not merely a behavioural one of bravado or military confidence is evident in the use ‘rest [e.g., from war]’ (Heb. *sheket*). Also, “Dwelling without bars and gates” and living in “unwalled villages” emphasises the pre-millennial political and security situation in the Land. Regional rest produces economic prosperity, leading to being sought for spoil, and the taking of a prey...cattle and goods (Ezek 38:12). The current unprecedented grass-roots’ moves in the Mid-East and North Africa for freedoms, etc., enjoyed in democracies in the West, and the State of Israel, could well lead to Ezekiel 38’s ‘rest’. | Ezekiel 38 should be matched with other issues and overviews, e.g. Isa 34:1-8;Joel 3; Zephaniah. Zech 14. Rev 19. NB. ‘Rest’ (Heb. *sheket*) typically is from war: e.g., Jos 11:23; 14:15; Jud 3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28.NB. Jud 18:27. |

**Understanding Prophecy**

**A. Perry**

**Introduction**

When we come to the prophetic books in our daily readings, the text is often difficult to understand except for some of the more famous passages. Do we read the Prophets only for its surface language? For example, do we read “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength” (Isa 40:31) for its exhortational value rather than its contextual meaning? Do we think historical and contextual meaning is relevant or has it been lost? Should we read the Prophets only for the messianic application? Are commentaries reliable? These are questions, what are the answers?

**History**

Some prophetic oracles have historical contextual information embedded in them, such as the name of a city, town or village; a river, a mountain, perhaps; a country or tribal group; perhaps the name of an individual. Some prophetic books have superscriptions identifying the kings in whose reigns a prophet prophesied. However, it is true that much of the time, the prophetic oracle does not have the contextualizing information that we would like to have as historians.

It is not the fault of the material that it does not contain what we want in order to do history. The oracles were given in a situation and there is no *a priori* requirement that they should have a certain kind of contextualization. The lack of contextual indicators that satisfy our needs only goes to show that the situation in which the oracles were delivered was known by the original audience and they were able to supply all the information for their understanding that we now lack. This is a well-known aspect of the pragmatics of language use.

But there is a problem here, and it is that we are in danger of allowing our needs to drive the description of the prophetic oracle as having no historical value. We are at risk of saying that it has no indication of its context, the time it was written, or the circumstances/catalyst that is its cause. For example, take Obad v. 1,

The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom; We have heard a rumour from the Lord, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle. Obad 1:1 (KJV)

We may complain that this does not contain the historical information we want, but obviously it still has historical information in every clause. If we make our needs the measure of things, we will go astray. Thus, we cannot say that the prophet/scribe has “omitted” to note the king under which Obadiah prophesied. The inclusion or exclusion of the name of the king may never have entered the head of the one writing the superscription—we cannot say he has ‘omitted’ the name just because we would have liked to have known the relevant king. We have the inspired text as it is, and the historical information it does contain, and we should make our deductions on that basis.

There is a fallacy at play here in the background. Commentators may assign a prophetic oracle to different historical contexts, for example, suppose scholars have come up with four main alternative contexts for the prophecy of Obadiah. We might throw up our hands and say that we cannot know when the prophecy was written. We might say, how can we know when scholars cannot agree among themselves?

The fallacy is that we have excluded considerations of truth and falsehood. Of the four views, view A is true; if we believe view A for the reasons given, then we have a justified true belief[[32]](#footnote-32) and thus we can claim to know the historical context of Obadiah. Because there are many opinions “out there”, this does not mean that we cannot know nor, more importantly, that God does not want us to know the historical context of Obadiah. We just have to weigh the contrary opinions and make the right choice.

The evidence that decides the historical context of an oracle may not be in the place that we are looking, or where we would expect to find it, or even have put it ourselves had we been the ones doing the writing. Hence, because the information we think we need is not where we are looking, we might fall into the trap of saying that God does not want us to know the historical context. This would be superficial: the working prejudices that we are bringing to the text are misdirecting our thinking.

For example, it is well known that the identity of the Servant figure in Isaiah is disputed by scholars. You could find half a dozen different views supported by scholars through the decades if you cared to read up on the history of research on this topic. The Servant is not named,[[33]](#footnote-33) as such, and we could argue that if it was important for us to know who the Servant was, God would have told us his name.

This is too quick. We are looking for an easy solution; we are looking for a kind of information (a name) that is not there and we are running towards the conclusion that the issue is not important. Thus, we might be led to say that the Servant is just the Messiah and that these prophecies have no definite historical application in the days of Isaiah because they are timeless in this fashion.

This is false reasoning driven by what *we* bring to the text—viz., our expectations of how the text should answer questions about identity. In order to expose this further, let us suppose that as a matter of fact the Servant is Hezekiah. If someone argues for this identification, s/he would use various arguments including intertextual evidence. If you believe the argument, you believe the truth of the matter. Since God has inspired the intertextual evidence, you believe what God has wanted readers to discern about the historical context of the Servant oracles.

The historical information that determines a context might not be what we think or expect; it may be in a place we are not looking. For example, suppose we are like the Ethiopian eunuch, but looking at Isaiah 49. We want to know the identity of the Servant. There are, perhaps, two dozen lines of evidence across the Servant oracles to establish the identification with Hezekiah. One example from Isa 49:6 is this: Hezekiah had said to Yahweh that “it is a light thing (llq) for the shadow to go down ten degrees” (2 Kgs 20:10); correspondingly, Yahweh said to Hezekiah, “It is a light thing (llq) that you should be my servant”. The evidence here is conversational and about how individuals talk to each other alluding to earlier exchanges. It contributes to the proof that the Servant is Hezekiah.

If this is the kind of evidence that God has placed in the text for us to discern the identity of the Servant, then if we do not see it or we reject it as inconsequential, then we go astray in our exegesis. It is then misleading to claim an oracle carries no indication as to the time it was written. The information may not be where we are looking nor be in the form that our prejudices require. Prophetic books with no kings in their superscriptions like Joel or Obadiah are susceptible to this sort of false claim.

**Typology**

No prophecy is timeless; each has a fulfilment and often an initial and secondary, messianic, fulfilment; such fulfilments may be partial or complete. A prophecy is given by God to an initial audience in a context and for a reason; the prophecy may be for the short or long distance. Subsequent fulfilments of short distance prophecies are typological; they correspond to the initial fulfilment.

It is well known that Isaiah has messianic prophecies and the book is quoted extensively in the NT. It is possible to write Christian commentaries on Isaiah with little or no reference to the life and times of Isaiah of Jerusalem. However, where we can discern that the prophecy had an initial fulfillment (often partial) in the life and times of Isaiah, the later fulfillment in relation to Christ becomes typological.

In the same way, it can be seen that some prophecies in Isaiah 40-66 have a typological application *before* the time of Christ, in times which were superficially similar to the last years of Hezekiah’s reign (the Assyrian invasion and the aftermath). Insofar as later prophets quote, allude to or echo the language of Isaiah 40-66, we have evidence for a typological application. This would be the case for a prophet like Jeremiah facing the Babylonian destruction of Judah and seeing the example of the earlier Assyrian invasion in the eighth century as a type.

What is important here is to understand the stages of exegesis and not elevate one level of application above another or deny the existence of lower or higher levels. You start by understanding the prophetic oracle in its historical context, understanding the catalyst that God is addressing in inspiring his prophet. With this basis you move on in your analysis to the messianic application of the prophecy.

**Conclusion**

We might read books and articles and/or hear talks about the Prophets that are only exhortational and handle the English surface. We may only be exposed to messianic readings which dig deeper and look at how an oracle prophesies about Christ. However, we should not neglect the historical context in which the prophets were inspired to speak the oracles of God. This is where the controls lie for understanding Christ in all the Scriptures.

**Dating Daniel (1)**

**T. Gaston**

**Introduction**

It is well known that opinion is divided on the dating of the book of Daniel. Whilst conservative scholars favour an early date (6th/5th century BC), critical scholars since the nineteenth century have dated the book to c.165 BC. There have been numerous studies by conservative scholars (and laypersons) attempting to rebut the critical arguments for the late date. Perhaps the most important of these studies was *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel* (ed. D. J. Wiseman), which addressed historical and linguistic issues. This has been the precedent of many of the subsequent studies, which continue to focus on historical and linguistic issues to defend an early date.

In principle, there is nothing wrong with these sorts of arguments. Since critical studies continue to be produced that repeat nineteenth century arguments in a remarkable uncritical manner it is important to continue to emphasize their limitations. For example, the critical scholar who asserts that the Aramaic of Daniel is late or that the author had a poor knowledge of sixth century Babylon simply has not done his research. Yet historical arguments remain inconveniences for the critical scholar because, though the author clearly had better knowledge of sixth century Babylon than the Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon, the critical scholar can always respond that perhaps the author had some form of historical tradition that we’re not aware of or perhaps the historical bits were composed earlier than those troublesome predictive prophecies. Though both of these suggestions seem improbable they seem sufficient to stop critical scholars taking the alternative option seriously. There is, therefore, a need for new arguments and more rigorous criteria for dating the book that can categorically rule out an early date.

In this two-part article, I outline a new set of criteria for dating the book, identifying fixed starting points and the preceding stages from which a rigorous procedure for setting the latest possible date at which the book could have been written.

### Manuscript Evidence

When it comes to dating the book of Daniel (as for any book of the Bible) the definitive piece of evidence would be the autograph, the original scroll on which the book was written. If we had the autograph there could be no dispute about date. But we do not have the autograph.

What we do have are manuscripts and manuscript fragments. These are important and tangible evidence for dating the book. It is worth emphasizing, as this will form a major part of the argument, that these manuscripts do not indicate a date of composition, they indicate the latest possible date of composition (*terminus ad quem*).

The oldest manuscripts of the Masoretic text (MT) are Leningrad Codex (1008 AD) and the Aleppo Codex (c.925 AD), which was damaged in 1948 during the fighting that took place when the State of Israel was founded. The oldest complete manuscripts of the Septuagint are found in the Codex Siniaticus (4th century AD) and the Codex Vaticanus (4th century AD).[[34]](#footnote-34) Though these are important textual witnesses, they do not provide manuscript evidence for dating Daniel.

Eight manuscripts of the book of Daniel were found at Qumran: 1QDana, 1QDanb, 4QDana, 4QDanb, 4QDanc, 4QDand, 4QDane and 6QpapDan.[[35]](#footnote-35) None of these manuscripts are complete, but each contains a small section of the book of Daniel.[[36]](#footnote-36) In 1953, the Biblical texts from Qumran cave 4, including the five Daniel fragments, were allotted to Frank Cross, then Associate Professor of Old Testament at McCormick Theological Seminary (Chicago), for publication and study. In 1958, he published some of his findings. Of one of the Daniel fragments (4QDanc) he wrote:

One copy of Daniel is inscribed in the script of the late second century BC; in some ways its antiquity is more striking than that of the oldest MSS from Qumran, since it is no more than about half a century younger than the autograph of Daniel.**[[37]](#footnote-37)**

Cross’ paleographical assessment was that 4QDanc was written “in the script of the late second century BC”, meaning that this fragment was dated sometime after 150 BC. A few years later he revised his dating of 4QDanc to around 100-50 BC.[[38]](#footnote-38) Recent scholarship has dated 4QDanc to around 125 BC.[[39]](#footnote-39) The other fragments are dated after this up to around 50 AD when the latest manuscript (4QDana) was written. None of the Daniel fragments from Qumran have been carbon-dated as the process would result in the destruction of parts of the manuscript. It is also possible that there is further manuscript evidence as yet discovered or held by private collectors.[[40]](#footnote-40)

**Conclusion 1: 4QDanc fixes a *terminus ad quem* of 125 BC for the book of Daniel**

**Working Backwards**

Since 4QDanc is not the autograph, a certain amount of time (t) must have passed between the date of the autograph and the date of this copy. Bruce Waltke has argued that the finds at Qumran should push back the date of Daniel prior to 165 BC. He writes:

Equivalent manuscript finds at Qumran of other books where the issue of predictive prophecy is not in question have led scholars to repudiate a Maccabean date for their compositions.**[[41]](#footnote-41)**

For example some of the Psalms were previously thought to date from the Maccabean period. However the discovery of manuscripts at Qumran containing these Psalms led to a revision in this theory. William Brownlee writes:

Each song had to win its way in the esteem of the people before it could be included in the sacred compilation of the Psalter. Immediate entrée for any of them is highly improbable.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Waltke also cites Millar Burrows who revised his dating of Ecclesiastes from the second to the third century BC based upon the discovery of two scrolls found at Qumran, and Jacob Myers who ruled out a Maccabean date “for any part of Chronicles” based upon a Chronicles fragment at Qumran.

Professor Waltke legitimately questions why scholars, such as Brownlee, have not revised the second century date for Daniel based upon equivalent evidence.[[43]](#footnote-43) Brownlee’s argument regarding the Psalms that each needed a period time before it could be accepted as sacred can surely also be applied to the book of Daniel. Given that Daniel was not written at Qumran, how is it that within forty years of its composition it could have been accepted as sacred (not to mention popular) amongst the community at Qumran?

### Canonicity

Individual texts (e.g. letters) could be transported very quickly, even in the ancient world so, in theory, a copy of book could be produced in another location shortly after its original composition. Therefore, the discovery of a single copy of Daniel does not, of itself, push back the date of composition. However, if a manuscript is being copied for religious purposes (i.e. if it is already regarded as canonical) then a significant lag time between original composition and reception (i.e. copying) is implied.

There is little dispute that by the end of the first century AD the book of Daniel formed part of the Christian Scriptures. The book is quoted by pseudo-Barnabus,[[44]](#footnote-44) Clement,[[45]](#footnote-45) and by the evangelists,[[46]](#footnote-46) who name Daniel as a “prophet”. The writer to the Hebrews cited Daniel as an example of faith.[[47]](#footnote-47) There are also repeated allusions made in the book of Revelation.[[48]](#footnote-48) The allusions in Paul are enough to indicate that Christian reverence for the book was early.[[49]](#footnote-49) The current consensus is that the NT witnesses to[[50]](#footnote-50) both OG-Dan and Th-Dan.[[51]](#footnote-51) There are no allusions to the apocryphal additions, indicating that the additions were not regarded as Scripture.[[52]](#footnote-52)

Josephus also regarded the book of Daniel as Scripture.[[53]](#footnote-53) His praise of Daniel is overflowing; he styles him “one of the greatest of the prophets”.[[54]](#footnote-54) Josephus devotes two chapters to the exploits of Daniel and his friends, recounting all six stories.[[55]](#footnote-55) Though he knows an additional story in which Daniel builds a tower in Ecbatana, he makes no reference to the events of the apocryphal additions. Josephus believes that God inspired Daniel to degree worthy of wonder[[56]](#footnote-56) and accepts Daniel’s visions as genuine prophecy.[[57]](#footnote-57) Oddly, Josephus refers to “several books” that Daniel wrote.[[58]](#footnote-58) Klaus Koch suggests that this implies that the Greek versions were regarded as separate books, though there is no particular reason for this.[[59]](#footnote-59) It is possible that Josephus viewed the book of Daniel as a compilation of several works. The most likely explanation is that Josephus was aware of some para-Danielic text no longer extant—the story of the Ecbatana tower probably came from such a source. It is unlikely that Josephus counted these para-Danielic texts amongst the sacred books, which he numbers at twenty-two.[[60]](#footnote-60)

The inclusion of the book of Daniel in the Old Greek or Septuagint version is a strong indication that the book was regarded as canonical amongst the group in which the translation originated, generally recognized to be the Alexandrian Diaspora.[[61]](#footnote-61) The Old Greek version appears to have been an evolving entity, commencing with the translation of the Pentateuch in the 3rd century. The book of Daniel was probably translated c.100 BC and was included amongst the Prophets, though it is not clear when the Old Greek books were first ordered in this way. The Old Greek version includes the apocryphal additions to the book of Daniel, indicating that these too were regarded as Scripture. The other major witness from Alexandria is Philo. The majority of his works are commentary on sections of the Pentateuch which demonstrates his reverence for those books, but we do not have a representative sampling for his attitude to the other OT books. When Philo refers to other OT books, he does so with “the same profound reverence as the Pentateuch”.[[62]](#footnote-62) Philo does also regard the teachings of Plato to be authoritative. From Philo’s descriptions of the holy books, E. E. Ellis suspects that he had the same canon as Josephus, though the evidence is too scant to be conclusive.[[63]](#footnote-63) In one fragment Philo does refer to the three divisions of the OT.[[64]](#footnote-64)

In 1955 when the first transcription of the Daniel fragments from Qumran was published by D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, it was asserted that the book of Daniel was not regarded as canonical. [[65]](#footnote-65) Barthélemy had two justifications for this assertion: 1) in the Daniel fragments the height of the text was approximately equal to its width, whereas in other Biblical manuscripts the height was double the width, and 2) one Daniel fragment was written on papyrus (pap6QDan).[[66]](#footnote-66) Further discoveries at Qumran revealed that, though there were general stylistic trends, one style was not followed exclusively for canonical books. Some fragments of Deuteronomy and Psalms also use the square format (4QDeutn, 4QPsg) and there are fragments of Kings and Isaiah on papyrus (pap4QIsap, pap6QKgs).[[67]](#footnote-67) Though Barthélemy’s conjecture is occasionally repeated,[[68]](#footnote-68) the modern consensus is that the book of Daniel was regarded as canonical at Qumran.[[69]](#footnote-69) The reverence for the book is evidenced by the eight copies found amongst the scrolls, (surpassed only by Isaiah (12), Deuteronomy (14) and Psalms (10), and also be the frequent allusions to the book.[[70]](#footnote-70) It is possible that the threefold division of the Old Testament referred to by Josephus and Philo was known at Qumran.[[71]](#footnote-71) Daniel is called a prophet.[[72]](#footnote-72)

The above evidence indicates that by the early first century AD the book of Daniel was regarded as canonical by Christians, rabbinic Jews, and amongst the diaspora. Given this geographical distribution, it is likely that the book of Daniel had already been in existence for a long time previously. Koch proposes that there was “a century of neglect” of the book of Daniel in mainstream Palestinian Judaism c.150-50 BC.[[73]](#footnote-73) His evidence, however, is negligible comprising of the Psalms of Solomon solely and he admits likely dependence of I Maccabees on the book of Daniel.[[74]](#footnote-74) Coupled with the appearance of Th-Dan during this period, the allusions in I Maccabees are strong indicators that the book of Daniel was indeed regarded as canonical prior to 50 BC.

The reception of the book of Daniel outside the community demonstrates that the book did not originate from Qumran (though this was never in doubt). As an exclusive sect, the dialogue with ‘mainstream’ Judaism would have been minimal and the likelihood of a book being accepted into the canon of the community from outside is likewise minimal. It is therefore probable that the canon of Qumran, apart from its own internal additions, represents the canon of ‘mainstream’ Judaism prior to their separation (c.150 BC).[[75]](#footnote-75)

There is no established theory about how manuscripts received canonical status and how long that process might have taken. We can speculate that reception, particularly in the absence of an ecclesiastical hierarchy, would be dependent on circumstances – for example, we can hardly imagine that the book of Jeremiah had wide reception prior to the captivity but probably had wide acceptance afterwards. Ironically, we might reasonable suppose that a book written during the Maccabean revolt that failed to predict correctly the outcome of the conflict (as some scholars allege of the book of Daniel) would not receive wide canonical recognition. What we can say, is that it is unlikely that canonical status is instantaneous and that the speed of reception is likely to be affected by circumstances, particularly the location of composition.

It would seem then that the canonical status of Daniel pre-dates the traditional higher critical date (c. 165 BC) and the question that we have now is what length time should we allocate from composition to canonical reception. This is the subject of the next part of this essay.

**To Be Continued**

**Bereshith 4: from the foundation of the world (1)**

**J. W. Adey**

**In the beginning**

‘Bereshith’ (tyvarb/*Br’šyT*) is the title of the first book of the Hebrew Bible (HB).[[76]](#footnote-76) Its name matches the book’s opening phrase: ‘in the beginning’.[[77]](#footnote-77) A perspective on this first expression will provide a useful entry point into Genesis 4, a text that includes acts or actors typifying Jesus or what he endured that he locates as “from the foundation of the world” (Luke 11:47-51).

Like ‘Bereshith’, the other HB Pentateuchal book titles are also incipit based.[[78]](#footnote-78) ‘*B’* + ‘*r´šyT* ’ (‘in’ + ‘beginning’) is apt as a title since *r´šyT* (*reshith*) is about the ‘first part’ what is before anything else, whence ‘first *fruits*’. Its cognate *r´šwn* (or *r´šwnh*) is the ordinal number ‘first’ (cf. ‘foremost’).[[79]](#footnote-79) Underlying these terms is *r´š* (‘rosh’) ‘head’ or ‘top’. Although *r´šyT* is not used in Bereshith Chapter 4, that chapter, as we shall see, is notable for the number of *firsts* recorded in it.

The next important ‘beginning’ is in Gen 4:26 “then began men to call upon the name of Yahweh”. On this occasion the word ‘began’ (lxwh/*hwHl*) is not related to *r´šyT*. In fact grammatical difference also obtains, *hwHl* (‘began’) is a verb, whereas there is no ‘began’ verb in the *r´šyT* family, only nouns and adjectives.

A related form of Gen 4:26’s ‘began’ is used with ‘in’ hlxtb/*BTHlh* (*B* + *THlh*) to produce: ‘in (KJV ‘at’) the beginning’ (e.g., in Gen 13:3; 41:21; 43:18, 20). However, as *Br’šyT* was used in Gen 1:1 for ‘In the beginning’ and not *BTHlh*, this difference suggests significance: (a) *BTHlh* is not relationally configured for conceptual or thematic purpose as is *Br’šyT*, it being related to ‘first’ and ‘head’, and (b) choice of available words is operative at the opening of the Hebrew Bible (and could bear on the issue of the naming of the HB’s first book.[[80]](#footnote-80))

Evaluating what the first use of a word means in its context is a good basis for comparison with what subsequent instances yield. This deployment of *Br’šyT* and not *BTHlh* for the first unit of meaning is also a value to be measured. ‘Bereshith’/*Br’šyT* is evidence of Divine choice and coding (cf. Matt 13:35). From the start, transcendence is at work, or is proved, in what is written; as in what resulted from God’s speech-acts in ‘the beginning’.[[81]](#footnote-81)

In both testaments, ‘first’ and ‘beginning’ relate to ‘Bereshith’ and to its creation context as that is narrated. Semantically, their opposites are ‘last’ and ‘end’ respectively, used particularly of God’s foreknowledge of His purpose (Isa 41:26), and the application of ‘the First and the Last’, ‘the Beginning and the End’ to God (Rev 1:8; 21:6). As Yahweh Himself puts it in Isa 41:4 (note *r´š* [ ‘rosh’―‘head’] in these cognates of *r´šyT*):

Who hath wrought and done *it*, calling the generations from the beginning [*mr´š* ]? I Yahweh, the first [*r´šwn*/*rishon*], and with the last *ones*; I *am* He.

And (re-rendered as per HB text’s order) God’s temporal―past-to-future―involvement, a defining characteristic of the Bible’s God, provides a prophetic guarantee:

Declaring from the beginning [*mr´šyT*], the end, and from ancient time that not *yet* done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and all my pleasure [cf. ‘will’ Rev 4:11] I will do’ (Isa 46:10).

‘First’ (*r´šyT*) is associated with ‘wisdom’ before (and in) creation in Prov 8:22 and wisdom is the “first love”.[[82]](#footnote-82)

This is a brief scan of Bereshith’s Biblical ‘beginning’ and ‘first’ relational fields. These associations complement the significance of *Br’šyT* as the opening expression of the Bible, and the first book’s most likely title, if it had one.[[83]](#footnote-83)

The relation Jesus has to *Br’šyT* in terms of *first-ness* is like his Father’s but also has certain specifics that are to do with him alone. God chose this first expression of the HB with His son, Jesus in mind.

In the New Testament (NT) Jesus is referred to in ‘Bereshith’ related terms as:

* “The beginning” (avrch,, Col 1:18; Rev 22:13).
* “The beginning of the creation of God” (Rev 3:14).[[84]](#footnote-84)
* “First” (Rev 1:17; 2:8; 22:13).
* “The *first*born” (the Greek term, unlike its Hebrew counterpart, has ‘first’/‘prōtos’ in it: Rom 8:29; Col 1:15 “of all creation”, 18 “from the dead”; Heb1:6; Rev 1:5. Cf. Matt 1:25).
* Having ‘preeminence’, a word that has ‘first’ in it (Col 1:18. See n. 2, p. 40). In God’s purpose Jesus is ‘before all things’; he has ‘first place’ (is “Lord of all” Acts 10:36, that God, his Father, has “put under him” 1 Cor 15:27; 1 Pet 3:22).
* “The ‘head” of the ecclesial body (Eph 4:15; Col 1:18; 2:10).

The title ‘Genesis’ of English Bibles derives, via the Vulgate, from Greek Septuagint (LXX),[[85]](#footnote-85) and like ‘Genesis’ none of the titles of the four other Pentateuchal books is incipit based. ‘Genesis’, transliterating Ge,nesij and meaning ‘birth’ (cf. Matt 1:18),[[86]](#footnote-86) does not connect with the title or opening of ‘Bereshith’ (*Br’šyT*), nor therefore matches its relevant associations discussed above.

Of course, unlike the term ‘Genesis’ which readily accommodates into the English language alongside related Greek-derived words (e.g., genetic, genealogy), ‘Bereshith’ would have no such meaningful or family connections. However, this is not to provide a justification for the adoption of the title ‘Genesis’ in English versions. LXX Gen 1:1’s translationevn avrch/| /*en archē* aligns with the HB’s *Br’šyT* opening ‘in the beginning’. The term ‘Genesis’ has no linguistic link with evn avrch/|, but LXX could have used this phrase instead as an incipit based title.

The Greek form evn avrch/|in John 1:1-2 presents a ‘Bereshith’ opening to this Hebraic Gospel. The HB’s “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” is clearly referenced in the NT by the Greek term for ‘beginning’ (usually with ‘from’ or ‘in’) coupled with ‘creation’, e.g., Mark 10:6; 13:19; 2 Pet 3:4. This makes some connection with (either ‘before’ or ‘from’ added to) ‘foundation of the world’. From the perspective of the NT, the contextualised primal times’ ‘beginning’ and “from the foundation of the world” (Matt 13:35; 25:34; Rev 13:8; 17:8) cover events and first principles (cf. Luke 11:49-51) that include Cain and Abel.

Bereshith 4 is recounted, including ‘gaps’,[[87]](#footnote-87) in a straightforward matter-of-fact manner. From the start the HB has a ‘this is how it was’ narrative style.[[88]](#footnote-88) The text presents what is to be received on a *need-to-know* basis. The consequences of the first “Yea hath God said?” challenge (Gen 3:1), produced these chapters in, or on, the early history of man.

My main aim is to present what is unique to Bereshith 4. It will require comparison with preceding chapters, particularly Chapter 3, to discover what is new and what continues in Chapter 4. I do not follow a verse-by-verse method that could include detailed philological analysis, but instead treat first instances of terms, events described and issues arising.

*Significance* (as we have seen with the term *Br’šyT*) is about what matters amount to, initially in this foundation of the world (con)text, but also by the contribution of commentary and comparative linguistics elsewhere in the HB and in NT.[[89]](#footnote-89) The ideal commentator and expositor, Jesus, went back to this beginning, and fulfilled what the spirit of Christ (his ‘I’) in the Psalmist prophet spake:

I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world (Matt 13:35).

**From the foundation of the world**[[90]](#footnote-90)

Bereshith 4 is a delimited stretch of text with a unique identity fitting between the end of the Garden of Eden time of chapter 3, and the different genre that is chapter 5, which begins with the first use of the Hebrew term rps/*sPr* that suggests ‘a written account(ing)’, whence the rendering ‘book’: “This is the book of the generations of Adam” (cf. Exod 17:14).[[91]](#footnote-91)

Gen 4:1-2 is the first birth narrative, with the mention of Cain and (then) Abel born to Adam and Eve. (Gen 5:4 tells us that the Adam family consisted also of other sons and daughters, but Seth is the only other named offspring.) Later in Chapter 4, the Cain biography records him as the first murderer, the first (of a type) to be exiled from (a place of) God’s presence (Gen 4:14, 16), and the first to build a city, which he names after his son Enoch (Gen 4:17). ‘Enoch’ can mean ‘dedication’. Building accompanied by dedication is found later in Israelite contexts (Deut 20:5; 1 Kings 8:63; Ezra 6:16).

Cain’s descendants include ‘fathers’ (Gen 4:20-21) of various inventions; *firsts* representative of human culture or behaviour “of this world”: city building (Gen 4:17), tent-dwelling and farming, music, and metalwork (Gen 4:20-22), coveting instanced in polygamy (Gen 4:23), and vengeance and its justification (Gen 4:23-24).

The end of Bereshith 4 is about Seth (cf. Gen 4:25; 5:3; 1 Chron 1:1), who Eve believes is a God-given replacement for Abel. Seth has a son Enosh in whose time “to call upon the name of Yahweh was begun” (Gen 4:26). Leading up to this is Eve’s Yahweh-name consciousness and this chapter’s first use of ‘Yahweh’ by itself. ‘Yahweh’ is now also singled-out in religious observance as the basis of communion with Yahweh (cf. Part 2, forthcoming).

The end of Bereshith 3 had left man outside of the Garden that was eastward in Eden; the first human pair expelled through disobedience to God’s law. Now they, and ‘Adam’ the race, humanity in the loins of Adam (cf. 1 Cor 15:22; Rom 5:14), are under sentence to death (Gen 2:17; 3:17-19). Previously they were of non-dying living (not mortal and not immortal), but now they are ‘dead’, of dying-living. Hence, man who has sinned himself into mortality, is justly excluded from the Garden; excluded it might be said from Eden as an archetypal sanctuary.[[92]](#footnote-92)

Physical reversal and re-entering the Garden[[93]](#footnote-93) is denied Adamic-man, or his progeny that remain ‘in him’ (1 Cor 15:22). Terrestrial man, made in the “image and likeness” of the celestial angel-gods[[94]](#footnote-94), but in nature “lower than”[[95]](#footnote-95) them (Ps 8:5 [HB v. 6]//Heb 2:7-9, 14; cf. Gen 1:26-27), the Adamic couple were (by image, etc.) “‘angels’ who preserved not their ***first/beginning*** [avrch,n/*archēn*] but left their own habitation” (Jude 6).[[96]](#footnote-96)

The cherubim and “a flaming sword” (Gen 3:24) positioned on Eden’s east side bar and preserve the way to the Tree of Life. As with other foundational features, this now permits a hindsight viewpoint via ‘the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat’ (Heb 9:5) first in the tabernacle (cf. Exod 25:17-22). Yahweh God causing the cherubim to ‘dwell’ (KJV has ‘placed’, but cf. ‘tabernacle’) at the east of the garden inevitably makes a statement both in terms of their then-present function and (future-oriented) typology.[[97]](#footnote-97)

The cherubim (though no ‘flaming sword’) are linked with the place of propitiation (= mercy seat) and the communion *there*[[98]](#footnote-98)of God with man (Exod 25:22; Num 7:89; 2 Kgs 19:15).

Already, before expulsion, in clothing Adam and his wife Eve with coats of skin (to cover their physical and symbolic nakedness, Gen 3:10-11, 21), Yahweh God both provided covering and typified propitiation (Rom 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Rev 13:8). Now outside of the Garden of Eden reconciliation with God remains possible on God’s terms.

Cain’s parents, naked and ashamed, hid (√abx/*HB´* ) from the presence/faces of Yahweh God in the garden; but outside Eden Cain, expelled by Yahweh from its vicinity, is “hidden” (√rts/*´sTr*) from the presence/faces of Yahweh. These factors set the scene for the developments which follow. So, Bereshith 4 is about the earliest human story outside of Eden. It begins to tell of the struggle of God’s good versus man’s evil.

Bereshith 4 is one of the early foundational texts of ‘first’ principles.[[99]](#footnote-99) In the NT, both Cain and his brother Abel of this chapter are contrasted types, especially to do with pleasing God or not. God’s acceptance of Abel witnessed he was righteous, for by faith he offered “a more excellent sacrifice than Cain” (Heb 11:4).

Bereshith 4 may be the first time “father of” occurs (of inventions, etc.), but Adam had already (in Chapter 3) ‘fathered’ sin. It was by Adam’s *disobedience*, by this first man (1 Cor 15:45), that “sin entered into the world and death by sin” (Rom 5:12-19). Expressed in personificatory terms sin is manifest as “the spirit that now works in the children of *disobedience*” (Eph 2:2; 5:6; Col 3:6). *The devil is in the disobedience*.

Therefore, “he that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning [avpV avrch/j/*ap’ archēs*]. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). Jesus, who “did no sin” (1 Pet 2:22), was able “through [his sacrificial] death” to destroy “the one having the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb 2:14-15). “In his own self [Jesus] bare our sins in his own body” (1 Pet 2:24), “[destroying] the body of sin”, by crucifying the “old [Adamic] man” (Rom 6:6). Jesus’ power to save and be saved was in his obedience (Heb 5:7-8) to God’s word (Heb 1:3). An unquestioning “Yea, God has said”, “in the volume of the book” (Ps 40:7(HB 8); Heb 10:7), upheld him on all occasions.

“For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Rom 5:19).

Cain was of “the wicked one”; Cain’s “works were evil” (1 John 3:12). Cain was sin’s child; “a child of the devil” (Acts 13:10). He killed his brother Abel by opening the door to the ‘desires of his father the devil’ (John 8:44); Cain allowed devilish desire the mastery (Gen 4:7). *Cain and his father were one.*

To be a servant of a master requires obedience: “Whosoever commits sin is the servant of [the master] sin” (John 8:34) and “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom 6:16).

Another way of putting this is ‘the devil’ “having put into the heart of” (John 13:2; cf. Gen 4:7) Cain, he became “a murderer from the beginning [avpV avrch/j/*ap’ archēs*]” (John 8:44). “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: Whosoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother” (NKJV 1 John 3:10).

“From the foundation of the world” (Luke 11:50-51) righteous brother Abel is the first of a line of prophets whose shed blood cries for recompense. Abel, or his blood, also spoke of the “better things” to come in Christ (Heb 12:24). These things are for the “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto **obedience** and sprinkling of **the blood** of Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:2).

Yahweh’s response to Cain’s behaviour in Gen 4:7 expounds these universal principles operative since the sentencing of his parents and the serpent.[[100]](#footnote-100) Man must please God; this involves mastering desires that are not God-ward. Judgments control or condemn.

God is a “Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb 11:6), but He also justly convicts the sinner for their sin. Capital punishment is not meted out to Cain, but instead he became in type the first of those “wandering [cf. ‘Nod’, Gen 4:16] stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever” (Jude 13).

“The voice of” Abel’s blood (Hebrew ‘bloods’) ‘crying to God from the ground’ (Hebrew: *’dmh*) speaks to all such subsequent slayers and to God’s saints their victims that He will “avenge His elect” (Luke 18:7-8; Rev 6:10; 16:2; 19:2).

Righteousness requires a reckoning and rewarding. Abel may not be in Adam’s book of generations (5:1ff), but he is the first of a generation of spiritual types (Heb 11:38) who are in God’s remembrance (Exod 3:6; Mal 3:16; Matt 22:29-32; Rev 3:5): “written in the book of life from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8; 17:8).

**Arius (3)**

**D. Burke**

The previous installments of this series introduced Arius, the Alexandrian presbyter, and the heresy for which he has become infamous. Arius taught that Jesus was a pre-existent divine being, of lesser rank and power than the Father, and ontologically separate from Him. Although previously accepted by the 2nd and 3rd Century Apologists, this Christology was now increasingly seen as redundant and heterodox.

Following Bishop Alexander's unsuccessful attempts to silence and excommunicate him, Arius found support outside the Alexandrian church − most notably among his influential friends in Nicomedia. A series of local councils having failed to settle the dispute, Alexander sent a direct appeal to Emperor Constantine himself. The opening paragraph of Constantine’s reply to Bishop Alexander did not inspire confidence in a swift resolution:

When I stopped recently in Nicomedia, my plan was to press on to the East at once. But while I was hurrying towards you and was already past the great part of the journey, the news of this business reversed my plans, so that I might not be forced to see with my eyes what I did not think possible ever to reach my hearing![[101]](#footnote-101)

K. Baus notes[[102]](#footnote-102) that Constantine’s initial response to the controversy betrays his failure to recognise its greater significance. While his bishops were already treating it as a life or death matter, the Emperor clearly saw the problem in a different light. His letter to Alexander and Arius goes on to represent the doctrinal division as analogous to a disagreement by two philosophers regarding superficial issues on which there could be private, differing views.

In the words of S. Hall:

His letter gives an account of the origins of the dispute, and describes a pointless and useless question by Alexander about a passage from the ‘Law’ (i.e. the Scripture), and a rash and improper answer. Neither was edifying to the people, or even within human rational capacity. Both question and answer should be withdrawn, and the public dissension set aside.[[103]](#footnote-103)

Constantine, with breathtaking optimism, requested that the two opponents become reconciled and restore peace and unity in the Church, so that general harmony, his political goal, could be assured in the Empire. The complexity of the dispute had totally escaped him. This should not surprise us, for although Constantine was a brilliant administrator and a superb general, he was no theologian. Christianity had undoubtedly changed his life—and would continue to do so—but its inner workings were a complete mystery and his own faith a simple one.

Bishop Hosius of Córdoba, whose unenviable task it had been to deliver the Imperial letter, realised on his arrival in Alexandria that it would take more than a cessation of public discussion for the controversy to be resolved.

Alexander quickly succeeded in convincing Hosius that the theological implications of the ‘Arian Heresy’ were of the utmost significance to the Church’s stability. It became apparent that the only chance of restoring peace was to summon the entire episcopate of the Church to a great synod, in order to establish a binding decision. But Arius was in no mood for reconciliation with Alexander, and for the most part absented himself from the Egyptian capital altogether during Hosius’ visit. The outcome was predictable; eventually, having achieved nothing more than a series of sympathetic discussions with Alexander, Hosius returned to Nicomedia and grimly admitted the failure of his mission to Constantine.

We now come to review the Arians’ position. This is how it was described by Bishop Alexander in a cyclical letter to his fellow church leaders:

Now those who became apostates are these, Arius, Achilles, Aeithales, Carpones, another Arius, and Sarmates, sometime Presbyters: Euzoius, Lucius, Julius, Menas, Helladius, and Gaius, sometime Deacons: and with them Secundus and Theonas, sometime called Bishops. And the novelties they have invented and put forth contrary to the Scriptures are these following:-

God was not always a Father, but there was a time when God was not a Father.

The Word of God was not always, but originated from things that were not; for God that is, has made him that was not, of that which was not; wherefore there was a time when He was not; for the Son is a creature and a work.

Neither is He like in essence to the Father; neither is He the true and natural Word of the Father; neither is He His true Wisdom; but He is one of the things made and created, and is called the Word and Wisdom by an abuse of terms, since He Himself originated by the proper Word of God, and by the Wisdom that is in God, by which God has made not only all other things but Him also.

Wherefore He is by nature subject to change and variation as are all rational creatures. And the Word is foreign from the essence of the Father, and is alien and separated therefrom. And the Father cannot be described by the Son, for the Word does not know the Father perfectly and accurately, neither can He see Him perfectly.

Moreover, the Son knows not His own essence as it really is; for He is made for us, that God might create us by Him, as by an instrument; and He would not have existed, had not God wished to create us. Accordingly, when some one asked them, whether the Word of God can possibly change as the devil changed, they were not afraid to say that He can; for being something made and created, His nature is subject to change.[[104]](#footnote-104)

Cardinal Newman believed this was written on Alexander’s behalf by Athanasius, and includes it in his *Select Treatises of St. Athanasius*.[[105]](#footnote-105) While the language is reminiscent of Athanasius, the majority of scholarship accepts it as the work of the Bishop.

Alexander’s response is more significant than he knows, for it provides us with the following gem:

And the novelties they have invented and put forth contrary to the scriptures are these following:-

God was not always a Father, but there was a time when God was not a Father.[[106]](#footnote-106)

Did Arius ever actually say this? Whatever the case, Alexander places this crucial phrase in the mouths of his opponents, decrying it as a ‘novelty’ and ‘invention’ of the Arians. But it was neither. In fact, it had been emphatically stated by Tertullian in a lengthy epistle against a leading heretic of his day:

God has not always been the Father. For He could not have been the Father previous to the Son. There was a time when the Son did not exist.[[107]](#footnote-107)

Here was an opportunity for the Arians to defend their orthodoxy (however outdated) by an appeal to Tertullian’s confession that ‘God was not always a Father’ and his description of the Son’s mystical ‘begettal’. J. C. McDowell observes that the Arians tried something of this sort, though not from the works of Tertullian:

By the 340s there existed a small dossier of extracts purporting to be from the works of Dionysius of Alexandria which the Arians were using in support of their position. Dionysius insisted that the Son was a creature and *agenēton*, a thing made and generated, not ‘proper’ (*idion*) to the nature of God but ‘alien in substance’ as the vine-dresser is different from the vine and the shipwright from the boat: ‘and … he did not exist before he was generated’.

Dionysius of Rome, implicitly referring to his Alexandrian namesake, denounced those who in their eagerness to avoid Sabellianism spoke of 3 separate hypostases or ‘divinities’. However Dionysius may have refined his later theology it is impossible to avoid seeing some influence upon Arius being exerted. The damning passage from his *Letter to Euphranos and Ammonius* is altogether too like Arian doctrine for one to regard it as insignificant.[[108]](#footnote-108)

Athanasius follows Alexander’s example in chapter 2 of his first *Discourse Against the Arians*, quoting *Thalia* in order that Arius might be condemned out of his own mouth. He also provides us with what he believes to be the logical conclusion of Arius’ propositions. The attributions to Arius are enclosed in apostrophes:

And by nature, as all others, so the Word Himself is alterable, and remains good by His own free will, while He chooseth; when, however, He wills, He can alter as we can, as being of an alterable nature. For ‘therefore’, saith he, ‘as foreknowing that He would be good, did God by anticipation bestow on Him this glory, which afterwards, as man, He attained from virtue. Thus in consequence of His works foreknown, did God bring it to pass that He being such, should come to be’. Moreover he has dared to say, that ‘the Word is not the very God’; ‘though He is called God, yet He is not very God’, but ‘by participation of grace, He, as others, is God only in name’. And, whereas all beings are foreign and different from God in essence, so too is ‘the Word alien and unlike in all things to the Father’s essence and propriety’, but belongs to things originated and created, and is one of these.

Finally we have the Arians themselves, who put their case in a joint letter to Alexander:

To Our Blessed Pope and Bishop, Alexander, the Presbyters and Deacons send health in the Lord. Our faith from our forefathers, which also we have learned from thee, Blessed Pope, is this:--

We acknowledge One God, alone Ingenerate, alone Everlasting, alone Unbegun, alone True, alone having Immortality, alone Wise, alone Good, alone Sovereign; Judge, Governor, and Providence of all, unalterable and unchangeable, just and good, God of Law and Prophets and New Testament;

who begat an Only-begotten Son before eternal times, through whom He has made both the ages and the universe; and begat Him, not in semblance, but in truth; and that He made Him subsist at His own will, unalterable and unchangeable; perfect creature of God, but not as one of the creatures; offspring, but not as one of things begotten;

nor as Valentinus pronounced that the offspring of the Father was an issue; nor as Manichaeus taught that the offspring was a portion of the Father, one in essence; nor as Sabellius, dividing the Monad, speaks of a Son-and-Father; nor as Hieracas[[109]](#footnote-109), of one torch from another, or as a lamp divided into two; nor that He who was before, was afterwards generated or new-created into a Son,

as thou too thyself, Blessed Pope, in the midst of the Church and in session hast often condemned;

but, as we say, at the will of God, created before times and before ages, and gaining life and being from the Father, who gave subsistence to His glories together with Him.

For the Father did not, in giving to Him the inheritance of all things, deprive Himself of what He has ingenerately in Himself; for He is the Fountain of all things. Thus there are Three Subsistences.

And God, being the cause of all things, is Unbegun and altogether Sole, but the Son being begotten apart from time by the Father, and being created and founded before ages, was not before His generation, but being begotten apart from time before all things, alone was made to subsist by the Father.

For He is not eternal or co-eternal or co-unoriginate with the Father, nor has He His being together with the Father, as some speak of relations, introducing two ingenerate beginnings, but God is before all things as being Monad and Beginning of all.[[110]](#footnote-110)

We see from their letter that it is God who created Christ (according to the Arians) and that Christ did not exist ‘of himself’; nor is he co-eternal or co-unregenerate; nor is he *autotheos* (Gk: ‘God in himself’, self-existent as God). Notice also that this public declaration denies that Christ has existence of himself, using language that is too clear to be misunderstood.

The Arians affirm that God,

…made Him [Christ] subsist at His [God’s] own will, unalterable and unchangeable; perfect creature of God, but not as one of the creatures; offspring, but not as one of things begotten…but being begotten apart from time before all things, alone was made to subsist by the Father.

This appears to contradict Arius’ own words in his letter to Eusebius, when he wrote:

…we say and believe, and have taught, and do teach, that the Son is not unbegotten; and that He does not derive his subsistence from any matter; but that by His own will and counsel He has subsisted before time.[[111]](#footnote-111)

The significance of this discrepancy is much debated. Hall resolves it thus:

Alexander made much of the error of the Arians in saying Christ is ‘changeable’ or ‘mutable (Socrates, HE 1.6 10-12 [*New Eusebius*, 323]). Mutability implied the possibility of change for the worse, which in Platonic terms is by definition impossible for God. The truth is that Arius held the Son to be changeless in a less absolute sense; it is at the Father’s will he is unchangeable, and so could have been changeable. The anti-Arian Council of Antioch in 325 anathematized ‘those who say he is immutable by his own act of will, … and deny he is immutable in the way the Father is’ (*New Eusebius*, 336). Some modern writers (especially Gregg and Groh) regard the freedom of the Son to change by improvement, or to resist temptation by moral effort, as essential characteristics of Arian spirituality. This does not seem to match Arius’ efforts to assert that the Son is unchangeable and vastly superior to all his creatures.[[112]](#footnote-112)

The Arians’ letter is a sophisticated diplomatic appeal. It makes careful use of acceptable terminology and condemns a number of well known Christological heresies. One item is of particular interest:

…nor as Hieracas, of one torch from another, or as a lamp divided into two

Ironically, this ‘torch from torch’ idiom was the very same used by Justin Martyr to define the generation of the Son by the Father. Now considered heretical due to its associations with Hieracas, it would soon be rehabilitated in the crucial clause of the Nicene Creed. The language of Christology had come full circle, but Christological development marched on and the Arians were not keeping up.

In the next installment we will consider further implications of Arian doctrine and the ideological context which framed the ensuing Council of Nicaea.

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**![C:\Documents and Settings\User 1\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\2GO4YUVJ\MC900383730[1].wmf]()Intertextuality**

**R. Morgan**

In 1977 *The Testimony* magazine ran an article entitled “701 Quotations in the Apocalypse”. The second half of the article is just that; a list of 701 quotations from the OT found in Revelation. But it doesn't take long for you to realize how much of Revelation is made up of words and phrases we're already familiar with from the rest of Scripture.

This is typical of the book. Not only are there multiple quotations from the Old Testament but these quotations come from a wide range of passages. The letter to Ephesus, for instance, contains quotations from Deuteronomy, Zechariah, Isaiah, Proverbs, Jeremiah, Psalms, Genesis, Song of Solomon and Ezekiel. What we have in the Apocalypse is a mosaic of OT quotations weaving together what might at first seem like a haphazard patchwork quilt. There are also obvious allusions to other New Testament passages. What are we to make of these quotations and why is there so much intertextuality in Revelation?

I suppose we can more or less ignore these quotations and just admire the richness of language, such language that we are familiar with from our Bible reading. But we do so at our peril for the very word ‘revelation’ (Gk. ἀποκάλυψις) helps explain how vital these quotations are for interpreting this enigmatic book. The basic meaning of this term is to uncover or reveal (hence its translation), in the sense of lifting the veil or lid off something to reveal that which was previously hidden. Revelation lifts the lid off OT Scripture revealing hidden gems of meaning applicable in the context in which the book was written.

The apostle Paul uses the word ‘revelation’ in this way in Eph 3:3-5, where he talks about the ‘revelation’ of the mystery, of that which was secret, but has now been revealed. A perusal of NT Scripture on the topic tells us that the mystery was something hidden in OT Scripture and now revealed to the apostles. We see the same phenomenon continue in Revelation. Also, in Revelation itself certain mysteries are revealed. For instance, the mystery of the seven lampstands is revealed as representative of the seven ecclesias of Asia.

So, how are **we** meant to understand the revelation of the Old Testament Scripture in Revelation? The main key is the context and especially the intended recipients of the book (Rev 1:1-4). It was written to the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ; in particular, to the seven ecclesias. It may seem like an obvious point, but it’s an important one, that the book was not written to the Jews (Israel).

A fulfilled promise is portrayed relating to those out of *every* kindred, tongue, people and nation, not just Israel (Rev 5:9-10). But more importantly, the promise itself to be “kings and priests” is a quotation from Exod 19:6. The context there is about the generation of Israel which came out of Egypt. But the promise made to Israel is here applied to first century ecclesias, (and by extension all who keep those things which are written in the book). This shouldn’t surprise us; there are other examples of Israelitish promises applied to the Gentile Ecclesia in the NT and Revelation is doing nothing new here but establishing what the mystery of the gospel is: “that the Gentile should be fellowheirs” (Eph 3:6).

Revelation is not about natural Israel since it was not delivered to them. It was delivered to the ecclesia and is about events surrounding the history of the ecclesia and the apostasy that subsequently developed. This follows the same pattern as OT Israel, in fact, and that is the point of Revelation; that what happened in the OT context is true with regards to the NT ecclesia. In other words, the passages of Scripture the Apocalypse uses are taken out of their original context and applied, spiritually we might say, to the ecclesia and the things connected with the ecclesia. Revelation isn’t simply reiterating OT prophecy but applying it in a new historical context.

Two simple examples can help us understand the context. First, with the reference to Rev 2:20, we are told that there was a false teacher in the ecclesia of Thyatira called Jezebel. Of course, this wasn’t the original Jezebel of OT times, but someone like her, someone who came in her ‘spirit’. Secondly, in Rev 8:2 we are told of “seven trumpets”, a quotation from Josh 6:4 and the seven trumpets used in the destruction of Jericho. But, in the context of Revelation, Jericho is long gone. Instead, the spirit of the destruction of Jericho is applied to the destruction of a NT city. And so it continues. As Israel fell into apostasy, so would the ecclesia, following the pattern of history over and over again.

In the context in which John wrote the ecclesia was suffering persecution from the Judaizers within and the Romans without. It is a book written to strengthen them, and us too as we suffer similar ‘persecution’ although of a more subtle nature. We too have to deal with problems within and without the ecclesia. The exhortations contained in the message of the Apocalypse will help us to overcome.

In the first verse of Revelation there the words “show unto… which must shortly come to pass” are taken from Dan 2:27, 29.

Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise *men,* the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, **shew unto** the king; But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed, **what should come to pass hereafter**: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. (Daniel 2:27-29)

Perhaps the most obvious reason why this passage is used is the use of the phrase ‘revealeth secrets’ by Daniel, an echo with the word ‘revelation’. Only the God of heaven could reveal the secret of the dream to Nebuchadnezzar. We have to apply this to Revelation. We have been given the vision and need to interpret it. But we need to be like Daniel and trust in God. Of our own selves we have no ability to interpret the Apocalypse. I cannot read any passage of the book and hope to form a correct understanding unless I follow the clues – the abundance of intertextuality in Revelation.

**Intertextuality in Revelation: A Response P. Wyns**

My first point in response to Bro. Richard’s column is that the intertextual use of the Jewish Scriptures by the Apocalypse is prolific as is the use of Jewish Temple imagery and reference to Jewish Temple Feast Days. Perhaps no other book has the same intense “Jewish flavor” as the Apocalypse. Therefore, we cannot exclude an Israel application for Revelation.

Second, the major assumption in the column is the assumption that the seven ecclesias were Gentile. The Apocalypse is addressed to seven churches in Asia Minor, to the “servants of Jesus Christ” and according to some has therefore nothing to say to “natural Israel”. But the churches of Asia Minor were a mixture of Jewish-Christians and gentile-Christians. In fact, until Jewish-Christians were excommunicated c.80-100 AD, the movement was integral to Judaism. Gentiles were grafted onto the Jewish stock and so prophecy continues to have an Israelite focus. The churches of Asia Minor were all established in places where *Diaspora* communities and synagogues were already present. It was the practice of Paul to first preach in the local synagogue and to separate when there was hostility.

Thirdly, if the Apocalypse has a **late date** (c. 96 AD after the destruction of the Temple) then it might be true that it has nothing to say to the Jewish nation…but then it would also have nothing to say to first century Christians. However, if the Apocalypse was **written early** (before 70 AD) then the message to the seven churches would also resonate with the Jewish nation. A first century Jewish-Christian living in Ephesus could say to his fellow Jews: “Look the Apocalypse confirms what Jesus said in the Olivet prophecy…the day of wrath is coming (Rev 6:12-17). The Temple will soon be destroyed and the nation scattered…therefore repent”. A Jewish-Christian or gentile-Christian living in Ephesus could say to those fellow Jews who were apostatizing: “Why do you return to Judaism like a dog to vomit? The Temple and nation will soon be removed…Jesus has warned us again (in the Apocalypse)”. A Jewish-Christian or gentile-Christian facing the Neronic Persecution could take comfort that they would not be forgotten (Rev 6:9-11).

Fourthly, there are intertextual reasons why at least some of Revelation has an Israelite application. I take two examples:

1) Matthew 24:19-22 echoes Revelation 12.

**Woe unto them** (**woe** to the inhabitants of the earth Rev 12:12) that are **with child** (**woman travailing** in birth…Rev 12:2) and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land (RV **earth**) and **wrath** (the devil is come down unto you having great **wrath** Rev 12:12) upon the people.  And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And except those **days be shortened**… (the devil…hath but a **short time**… Rev 12:12).

2) Matthew 24:9-13 echoes **warnings given to the churches** in Revelation 2-3.

Then shall ye behanded over to bepersecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me (**Smyrna** – on trial ten days). At that time many will turn away from the faith (**Ephesus**-fallen) and will betray each other, (**Pergamos**/Balaam) and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people (**Thyatira**/Jezebelthe false prophetess). Because of the increase of wickedness (**Sardis**-dead, defiled garments), the love of most will grow cold (**Laodicea** – neither hot nor cold), he who stand firm to the end will be saved (**Philadelphia** –thou hast kept the word of my patience).

To sum up: My response to the argument of Bro. Morgan is that at least part of Revelation has an initial Israelite application.

The situation in Jerusalem in 60-70 AD had become untenable with the Jewish-Roman war looming and nationalistic zeal hindering further missionary progress. In order to mark the imminent passing away of the Jewish body politic the message is directed to seven churches in Asia. The Jewish/Gentile converts (my servants) who were also encountering the back-wash of the Palestinian troubles were warned that judgment against Judaism was imminent (as predicted by Christ in the Olivet Discourse). They were to remain firm, to test “false apostles” and not apostatize to Judaism, nor were the gentile converts to succumb to attempts to turn liberty in Christ into hedonism—a policy instigated by Judaists intent on misrepresenting the gospel of grace preached by Paul.

The Apocalypse warns of coming wrath that will sweep away the Jewish nation and the Second Temple (cf. Rev 6:12-17). **In this sense the Apocalypse was important not only to the “servants” of Jesus but also to the Jewish nation.** The shift in focus from Palestine to Asia indicates that the time for the (temporary) “casting off” and judgment of Israel was imminent (shortly come to pass Rev 1:1).

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**Archaeology**

**J. Burke**

**The Tel Dan Stele: Minimalist objections refuted**

The Tel Dan Stele consists of two pieces of stone (originally a single piece, since broken), found in northern Israel with an inscription referring to the ‘House of David’. It is a significant find, providing evidence that the nation of Israel existed as early as the 10th century, and that it was ruled over by King David, as the Bible says.

To William Dever and many other scholars, this inscription provides clear evidence that David was indeed a historical figure and not merely a mythical leader invented by later Biblical authors to give Israel a heroic past, as the Biblical minimalists maintain.[[113]](#footnote-113)

Several challenges have been made to the authenticity and translation of the Stele. P. Davies and T. Thompson are two scholars who have argued that the translation ‘House of David’ is incorrect. Professional archaeologists and epigraphers object to these reinterpretations, noting that they are suggested by Biblical scholars who have no formal qualifications in the relevant fields.

Davies has claimed that the text, when properly translated, does not refer to the House of David. Since the Stele was not found in its original position (it was reused as building material in another location), Davies has suggested it is actually a forgery. Secular archaeologist, W. Dever, has completely dismissed this as impossible.[[114]](#footnote-114)

The errors of minimalists, Thompson and Davies, have been exposed by archaeologist and expert Assyriologist K. Kitchen (Professor Emeritus of Egyptology and Honorary Research Fellow at Liverpool University), and professional Semitic linguist A. Rainey (Professor Emeritus of Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and Semitic Linguistics, Tel Aviv University).

Davies represents what he and a circle of colleagues call the “deconstructionist” approach to Biblical traditions. The present instance can serve as a useful example of why Davies and his “deconstructionists” **can safely be ignored by everyone seriously interested in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern studies**.

… **“The House of David” was certainly such a proper political and geographic name in the mid-ninth century B.C.E**. André Lemaire’s recent discovery that the same name (BYTDWD) appears in the Mesha stela **further confirms the reading in the Tel Dan inscription**.

The same situation pertains to BYTDWD (House of David) in the text from Dan. The first component is BYT (house), here in the “construct” form meaning “house of.” The main accent is on DWD (David), the second component. The combination was obviously recognized by the scribe of the Dan inscription as an important proper name. **There is no reason whatever to doubt the correctness of the reading “House of David”**.[[115]](#footnote-115)

The majority of leading epigraphers believe the inscription to be a genuine reference to the House of David.

On the “positivist” side of the controversy, regarding the authenticity of the inscription, **we now have published opinions by most of the world’s leading epigraphers** (none of whom is a “biblicist” in Thompson’s sense): **the inscription means exactly what it says**.[[116]](#footnote-116)

Even some of those who hold a minimalist view of the Bible and archaeology have conceded that the evidence for the authenticity of the inscription is overwhelming. After reviewing a range of objections to the Stele’s authenticity, P. Lemche concluded that the Stele should be accepted as genuine unless significant evidence to the contrary is found.

Even if my observations about the almost uncanny prominence of the terms ‘King of Israel’ and ‘House of David’ are not accepted, **I have to admit that the arguments in favour of seeing the Tel Dan fragments as fake need to be much more forceful**—certainly stronger than I have been able to show in this survey—i**f they are to prove beyond doubt that the inscription is the work of a forger**. … At the end of the day, is the Tel Dan inscription important for the study of the history of Israel in Antiquity? Of course it is important—if it is genuine. **And, until the opposite has been proven, we have to reckon it to be genuine**.[[117]](#footnote-117)

**![C:\Documents and Settings\User 1\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\R9U4LTTU\MP900444315[1].jpg]()Marginal Notes**

**John 3:16—JHB**

One of the best known verses in the whole Bible must be the passage in John's Gospel, which in past years often appeared on "Wayside Pulpits":-

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16

The basic meaning of the text is clear enough; steadfast faith in the scripturally revealed role of Jesus, the Son of God, is essential in every person hoping to attain to the life of the age to come.

As the passage stands, whether in the A.V. or in most later translations, the English reader will almost inevitably take the third word – ‘so’ - in the verse quoted as added emphasis. Some modern versions stress this further by reading ‘so greatly’ or ‘so dearly’, to underline **how much** God loved the world. But one could look at this little word ‘so’ rather differently.

The underlying Greek word has the main meaning ‘in this way’,[[118]](#footnote-118) so that the verse translates as “**This is how** God loved the world, He gave His only Son, in order that every one who believes in him should not die, but have eternal life.” Similarly, with the parallel passage in John's first letter,

Dear friends, if God loved us in this way we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God is in us, and His love has been made perfect in us. 1 John 4:11-12

**1 Cor 11:5—AP**

A major Christadelphian study in its opening chapter comments, “Yet 1 Corinthians 11 speaks **approvingly** of sisters speaking in prayer and prophecy. How can the command for silence in chapter 14 be reconciled with the **approval** of sisters speaking in chapter 11?”[[119]](#footnote-119) Is this reading exegetically correct?

The relevant text, initially, is 1 Cor 11:5, which states (in the KJV), “But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.” There is **no verb of approval** in this text. What the commentators are doing in using the notion of ‘approval’ is to *over-read* the text or *read into* the text something more than there is in the text. The text **presupposes** that women were praying and prophesying, but presupposition is neither approval nor disapproval.[[120]](#footnote-120) *We might* *want* the text to approve of sisters’ speaking (if that is our view), but we misrepresent the **logic** of the text if we read it as an approval.

In 1 Cor 11:2, we read, “Now I praise you…” which is a verb of approval—but it is in v. 2. Does this help? It does not. This is because there is a contrast with v. 3. The writer says, “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things…But (δὲ) I would have you know…” The Greek disjunction is forceful: there were things that were not right. Men and women were dishonouring their ‘head’ (vv. 4-5). This was not praiseworthy behaviour and so the verb of approval in v. 2 does not carry forward into v. 5. Hence, in v. 17, it is said, “Now in this I am declaring, I praise not” (Τοῦτο δὲ παραγγέλλων οὐκ ἐπαινω).

So, there is no need, so far, for an exegete to reconcile “the command for silence in chapter 14” with “the approval of sisters’ speaking in chapter 11” because there is no such approval. Something else is needed in our exegesis if we are to understand the relationship of 1 Corinthians 11 and 14.

**News: Books and Magazines**

**Biblical Investigations** (£7.50 plus postage and packing from www.lulu.com/willowpublications)

This book (226 pages; ISBN 978-0-9563841-3-3) is a collection of essays that defend the Bible as the inerrant and inspired Word of God. Some essays have previously been published in magazines, but are now difficult to obtain; other essays are new. The essays included are “Bible Study”, “Evaluating the King James Version”, “The Unvarnished New Testament”, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and Bible Translation”, “Inspiration”, “Exegetical Considerations relating to Inspiration”, “Luke as Scripture”, “The Spirit of Elijah”, “Old Testament History”, “Old Earth Creationism”, “Heaven”, “Creation Types in Exodus”, “Noah’s Flood”, “The Historical Jesus” and “Finding God”.

**iTunes and iBookstore**



Two older books by Willow (**Fellowship Matters** and **Head-Coverings and Creation**) have now been made available for the iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch in epub format on iTunes and the iBookstore. These are substantially cheaper (£3.99/£3.49) than the print versions (£7.00/£6.00) which are still available on www.lulu.com and they also avoid the costs of postage; the first 60 pages are also available as free sample downloads (Just search on iBookstore for “Andrew Perry”).

**The Testimony**

On the original BTDF (there are now two BTDFs), Bro. J. Thomas has announced,

We are planning to launch an electronic copy of the Testimony magazine in January 2012. Prior to that launch we wish to test out how we might do this. Consequently the July and August magazines are being made available in pdf format to anyone who wishes to receive it. There will be no charge for this, but we do need any who access the e-version of the magazine to provide feedback so that any concerns and problems can be addressed before the proposed launch date. If you are willing to take part please contact eric@marshalle.co.uk and I will let you have the URL each month to allow you to access the e-magazine.

It is good news that *The Testimony* is launching an electronic copy of the magazine.

**Postscript: Waffle**[[121]](#footnote-121)

**A. Perry**

At a Hoddesdon Conference I attended long ago, a speaker played an Adrian Plass video. He was an Anglican vicar, and practised a more itinerant ministry. The video clip we watched was a “sermon” in a church by Rev. Plass, a sermon designed as a parody of Anglican sermons. The point of the parody was to point up typical characteristics of the typical “Anglican” sermon. It was very funny. Essentially, the parody was an exercise in vacuous waffle taken to the extreme in order to make it plain. The “lesson” was from the parable of the Good Samaritan and theme was about going *down* to Jericho.

It’s difficult to reproduce a visual piece of humour in writing, so I won’t try here. The vicar’s “message” was that we are all going *down* and we need to be brought *up*. He delivered this with a multitude of various sentences using the words “up” and “down”—anecdotes, aphorisms and pithy proverbs. It was clear that he was waffling on as if there was no tomorrow.

The value of the parody was to get us to think about what we say when we speak, but equally it served as a wake-up call about waffle in writing. Do we waffle on in our speaking or writing? Not a pleasant question, but what is waffle? What would be the telling character­istics? Perhaps the first tell-tale sign is **repetition**. If we find ourselves repeating common express­ions, perhaps we are waffling. Christadelphians have their own well-worn lines of explanation, and perhaps we rely on this too much.

Another facet of waffle is **lack of substance**. Politicians are famous for this. If you listen to them, it is easy to see that they have carefully prepared scripts that say essentially nothing. Christadelphian writers or speakers are not like politicians, they need no guard. Their speaking and writing should not lack sub­stance. We need to match the substance of what we have to say to the correct audience. Further, if we have a small amount to say, we should not extend the saying of it. Otherwise, we can end up waffling through lack of substance. Similarly, if all we have to say is superficial and introductory, and it has been said many times before, why should we say/write it?

A third feature of waffle is **relevance**. A talk may have substance, but it may not be *relevant to* *the audience,* and accordingly they may dismiss it as “waffle”. A hobbyhorse talk or article might be like this. Most speakers and writers have their favourite topics - hobbyhorses - and can speak and write in some depth on these subjects. But others might not find the subject matter very relevant. To them, it’s all waffle. The simple rule here is to avoid getting on these horses.

Another example of failing to be relevant is the use of jargon, words and ideas from a reading background that is unfamiliar to the audience. This is a sharp failing; it is quite possible to express Biblical points without using academic jargon. Our talk needs to be relevant to the needs of the audience, but the audience for a talk differs from an audience for writing. The latter kind of audience is broader and made up of a greater number of different types of person with different reading backgrounds. As a writer, you do not face your audience, so you may choose to write for some but not all of the projected readers—this cannot be done in a talk. Hence, one of the failings of a magazine can be that of having *little relevance* because it has only one level of writing. The difficulty here is to balance a magazine or journal so that all parts of its audience are getting some benefit by selecting what is most relevant to read from what is on offer.

Another kind of irrelevant waffle is **deviation**. I remember taking a friend to a public lecture once; it was his first public lecture, so I was a bit nervous. What would he think? My heart sank when I saw the speaker. He had a reputation for being very verbose and flowery in his language and a general waffler (albeit a very nice brother). His delight was introducing new dictionary items to your attention. His talks could be all over the place. Still, what could I do? My friend and I settled down for the talk. The first twenty minutes of the forty minute talk were about a social dinner that the speaker had attended aboard a boat on the River Thames. We heard about his dinner in detail, and the audience were looking at each other, and looking at the pro­gramme, which had the title “The Jews, God's People”! And *then* the *point* came: The boat was a *Jewish* vessel, and a testimony to the survival of the Jew and a proof that the Jews were God’s people.

I’ve remembered the first twenty minutes of the talk after thirty years, which is no mean achievement for a speaker. I’ve forgotten his last twenty minutes. But the lesson is plain. We shouldn’t talk for the sake of talking on loosely connected topics.

We are not all good speakers or writers. The apostle Paul was not a good speaker (2 Cor 10:10). Waffle, however, is not the preserve of the poor writer or speaker. A good speaker or writer maybepoor but *good* *at waffle*. A large part of Christadelphian ecclesial life is based around speakers, a good deal less around reading what is written, and so the quality of our speaking is an important issue that we should all contribute towards. Why?

What is the purpose of writing or speaking?

But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things which is the head, [even] Christ… Eph 4:15 (KJV)

The purpose is growth. What we speak or write about should be growth-centred. Physi­cal growth happens naturally, but spiritual growth requires conscious development. If speaking and/or writing is to be directed to the growth of the ecclesia it can­not be a hit and miss affair, but rather it has to be part of an ecclesial growth plan. Speak­ing/writing that does not promote growth is just waffle. Let us choose our words with love.

**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 statements of faith; and subject the published articles to retrospective peer review and amendment.

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

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

**Subscriptions**: This is a “free” EJournal to communities and individuals whose statement of faith is broadly consistent with the Christadelphian common statements.

1. NKJ Gen 39:4 So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all *that* he had he put under his authority. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mark 13:7 has *“the end is not yet”* which leads C. E. B. Cranfield to suggest that the entire first part of the Discourse has the theme “the End is not yet” in C.E.B. Cranfield, “St. Mark 13” *SJTh* 6 (1953): 189-196, 287-303; *SJTh 7* (1954): 284-303. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This is essentially what Cranfield proposes, namely, that in Jesus’ own view the historical and the eschatological are mingled, and that the final eschatological event is seen through the “transparency” of the immediate historical. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Josephus, *War* 2.19, 6, 7; cf. 5.10,1. Some Christian scholars speculate that the flight of the last remaining members of the church at Jerusalem on the Feast of Pentecost in CE 69 may have been recorded by Flavius Josephus who writes: “Moreover, at that feast which we call Pentecost as the priests were going by night into the inner court of the temple...they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking and heard a sound as of a multitude saying, ‘Let us remove hence.’” (Josephus, *War* 6.5.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 3:5:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. A distinction should be made here between full Preterism (that the Olivet Discourse was completely fulfilled in AD 70) and partial Preterism (that some of it was fulfilled in AD 70). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. It also features in Rev 6:13-14, “And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place”. The stars falling to earth echoes the Olivet Discourse and the removal of ‘every mountain’ echoes the casting into the sea of the temple mount in the cursing of the fig tree in Matt 21:18-21. The rolling up of the scroll (*biblaridion*) corresponds with the closing of the book (*biblaridion*) of Isaiah by Jesus (Luke 4:20) during a Synagogue reading of Isa 61:1-2, when Jesus deliberately neglected to complete the reading of the passage by omitting the latter half of the verse: “And the day of vengeance of our God” (Isa 61:2b), but see Rev 6:17; “For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” The conclusion is inescapable that the wrath of the Lamb described in Revelation 6 is the first century ‘curse’ of the fig tree – the institutions of Judaism and the rolling up of the ‘sky’ like a scroll (of the Torah) is the closing of the period of Mosaic Law and the casting away of the Temple Mount foretold in Matt 21:18-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See the chapter “Time Periods in Daniel (pp. 233-237) in P. Wyns, *God is Judge: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Adelaide: Biblaridion Media, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The Jewish Hebrew Calendar is available www.hebcal.com [cited April 2011]. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The intervals between these feasts can be checked using the date duration calculator online at www.timeanddate.com/date/duration.html [cited April 2011]. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. This is a feast (Lev 23:34) that is celebrated immediately after Tabernacles (**Sukkot**). The Eighth day of Assembly (**Shemini Atzeret**)signifies the commencement of the rainy season following the tabernacles harvest season in Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Hanukkah is a post-Mosaic feast but Hanukkah (dedication or lights) was celebrated in the time of Christ (John 10:22) and has pre-Maccabean origins. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. C. J. Setzer, *Jewish Responses to Early Christians: History and Polemics, 30-150 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 94; (emphasis here and in subsequent quotes is mine). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. C. J. Hemer & c. H. Gempf, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Michigan: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. C. Blomberg, *From Pentecost to Patmos: An Introduction to Acts Through Revelation* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. I. H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. A. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 189. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. C. H. Talbert, *Reading Luke-Acts in its Mediterranean Milieu* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003), 198-200, (201). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Talbert, *Reading Luke-Acts*, 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. J. Taylor, “The Roman Empire in the Acts of the Apostles” in *ANRW* (eds. H. Temporini and W. Hasse; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972-), 2437. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. *ANRW*, 2439, 2442, 2448, 2453, 2456, 2459, 2460, 2463, 2465, 2470, 2478, 2484, 2486, 2491. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. R. Grant, *A Historical Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. J. Jeremias, „Die Einwohnerzhal Jerusalems z. Zt. Jesu“, *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, 63, (Weisbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1943): 24-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. W. Reinhardt, “The Population Size of Jerusalem and the Numerical Growth of the Jerusalem Church” in *The Book of Acts in its Palestine* *Setting* (ed. R. Bauckham; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995), 247. J. Wilkinson, “Ancient Jerusalem, Its Water Supply and Population” *PEQ* 106 (1974): 33-51. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Grant, *A Historical Introduction to the New Testament*, 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. H. Mounce, “Apostolic Council” in *ISBE* (4 vols; Rev. Ed.; ed. G. W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 1:200. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. F. Philip, *The Origins of Pauline Pneumatology: the Eschatological Bestowal of the Spirit*, (WUNT/2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. A German critical scholar and atheist who he expresses extreme scepticism of the New Testament record of Christ in *The Great Deception: And What Jesus Really Said and* *Did* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. A critical scholar with what he describes as ‘a more than somewhat agnostic view of the evidence for the nature of the resurrection and its implications for Christian faith’, A. Wedderburn, *A History of the First Christians* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004), 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. A German critical scholar sceptical of much of the gospels and Acts, and who did not believe them to be inspired. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. A German critical scholar with a sceptical attitude to the gospels and Acts who nevertheless writes ‘after Josephus and Philo’s two historical writings, **the Acts represents the most important source for the history of Judaism between Herod and A.D. 70**’ in M. Hengel, “Early Christianity as a Jewish-Messianic, Universalistic Movement” in M. Hengel & C. K. Barrett, *Conflicts and Challenges in Early Christianity*’ (ed. D. A. Hagner; New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1999), 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. This is the classic starting point for a definition of what knowledge is, and philosophers will move on from this point in their qualifications. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. This is disputed. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Small fragments of the Septuagint have been found which are far older, including John Rylands’ Papyrus 458 (2nd century BC; Deuteronomy 23-38) and Papyrus Fouad 266 (a-c) (c. 100 BC; Genesis 3-38, Deuteronomy 10-33). [Ed. AP]: For a description, see R. A. Kraft, “Early Jewish LXX/OG Papyri and Fragments” in *The Bible as Book: The Transmission of the Greek Text* (eds. S. McKendrick and O. O’Sullivan; London: The British Library and Oak Knoll Press, 2003), 51-72 (55-58). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. These texts are also numbered as follows: 1Q71, 1Q72, 4Q112, 4Q113, 4Q114, 4Q115, 4Q116, 6Q7. The ‘Q’ signifies ‘Qumran’ and the preceding number is the cave number, so 4QDana is the first of the Daniel manuscripts from cave 4 at Qumran. A full catalogue listing can be found in: G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 639-656. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. These sections have been drawn together in a single English translation in: *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* (ed. M. Abegg; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999), 482-502. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. F. M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies* (New York: 1958), 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. F. M. Cross, “The Development of the Jewish Scripts”*,* in G. E. Wright (ed.), *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honour of W. F. Albright* (London, 1961),140. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Abegg, Dead Sea Scrolls Bible, 482. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. B. K. Waltke, “The Date of the Book of Daniel”, *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1976): 319-329 (321). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Waltke, “The Date of the Book of Daniel”, 321. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. W. H. Brownlee, *The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Waltke, “The Date of the Book of Daniel”, 321-2 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Epistle of Barnabas 4:4-5; v4 is introduced as the words of “the prophet”. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. I Clement 34:6, 45:6-7; Daniel and his three friends are cited as examples from “the holy and true Scriptures” (45:2). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Matthew 24:30, 26:64; Mark 13:26, 14:62; Luke 21:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Hebrews 11:33. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Revelation 1:1, 7, 13-15, 19, 2:10, 18, 3:5, 4:1, 7:14, 10:4, 5-6, 11:7, 15, 12:3, 14, 17, 13:1, 7, 8, 14:14, 16:18, 17:8, 18:10, 19:6, 20:4, 11-12, 15, 21:27, 22:5, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Daniel 2:44/1 Corinthians 15:24; Daniel 2:47/1 Corinthians 14:25; Daniel 6:21/2 Timothy 4:17; Daniel 7:22/1 Corinthians 6:2; Daniel 11:36/2 Thessalonians 2:4; Daniel 12:1/Philippians 4:3; Daniel 12:3/Ephesians 2:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. [ED. AP]: Although Theodotion post-dates the NT writings, the tag ‘Theodotion’ covers Greek readings of Daniel that are similar to Theodotion and prior to the NT writings; it is these that scholars compare to the New Testament; see K. H. Jobes and M. Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 41-42. In terms of usage the comparison that scholars make might be as weak as an ‘echo’ or as strong as a ‘quotation’; but it is also possible to reverse the direction of influence. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. For a challenge to the consensus regarding the use of Greek translations of the Hebrew Scriptures by the NT writers, see J. Adey, “Is Hebrews 10:5’s ‘body’ language from the Septuagint”, *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation* (Oct 2007). [ED. JWA] Also see: A. Gibson, “701 Quotations in The Apocalypse” *The Testimony* Vol. 47 No’s 553-554 (1977): 17-24, 57-64, who claims “The Apocalypse does not quote LXX Greek” (pp. 17-18), and lists a high proportion of Daniel reuse in The Apocalypse. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. One possible exception is Hebrews 11:12/Daniel 3:36 (OG-Dan). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. “… let him be diligent in reading the book of Daniel, which he will find among the sacred writings” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 10.10.4 (210)). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Josephus, *Antiquities* 10.11.7 (266). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Josephus, *Antiquities* 10.10.1-10.11.7. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Josephus, *Antiquities* 10.11.7 (277). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Josephus, *Antiquities* 10.10.4 (208-210), 10.11.7 (266-281), 12.7.6 (321-2). [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Josephus, *Antiquities* 10.11.7 (267). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. K. Koch, “Stages in the Canonization of the Book of Daniel” in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (eds. J. J. Collins & P. W. Flint; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 2:442. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Contra Apion 1.8 (38). [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. N. Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 53-64. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. R. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1985), 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. E. E. Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity: Canon and Interpretation in the Light of Modern Research* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991), 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. I.e. “the laws, the oracles uttered by the prophets, and hymns and the others” (Philo, *Hypothetica* 9, quoted by Eusebius in *Praep. Evang.* 8:11). [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. D. Barthélemy & J. T. Milik, *Qumran Cave 1: Discoveries in the Judaean Desert Volume 1* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Barthélemy & Milik, *Qumran Cave 1: Discoveries in the Judaean Desert Volume 1*, 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Hence, it is now held that “[Barthélemy’s] conjecture was insightful and judiciously worded, and he should not be faulted now that subsequent evidence indicates otherwise; but the conjecture should no longer be uncritically repeated” (E. Ulrich, “Daniel Manuscripts from Qumran. Part 1: A Preliminary Edition of 4QDana*”, BASOR* 268 (1987): 17-37 (19). Also, see W. E. Wegner, “The Book of Daniel and the Dead Sea Scrolls”*, Quartalschrift Theological Quarterly* 455 (1958): 103-116. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. D. N. Freedman & P. F. Kuhlken, *What Are the Dead Sea Scrolls and Why Do They Matter?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 4-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Koch, “Stages in the Canonization of the Book of Daniel”, 427-432; *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible,* 483. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. 11Q13 2:18; *War Scroll* 1:1, 11, 17:58; 4Q174 4:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. 4Q397 frgs 14-21.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. 4Q174 4:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Koch, “Stages in the Canonization of the Book of Daniel”, 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Koch, “Stages in the Canonization of the Book of Daniel”, writes that the references in I Maccabees do not “necessarily presuppose canonical status” (424). Yet the reference to “the abomination of desolation” (I Maccabees 1:54) is most reasonably interpreted as an actualization of Daniel’s predictions. This would presuppose that Daniel was regarded as a genuine prophet, which in turn would presuppose the canonicity of the book that records his predictions. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. cf. Ellis, *The Old Testament in Early Christianity: Canon and Interpretation in the Light of Modern Research*, 38-41. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. I use ‘Bereshith’ instead of ‘Genesis’, except for giving text-references. ‘Bereshith’, which anyway is the HB’s opening phrase, serves to connect with Biblical ‘beginning’ and ‘first’ language (e.g., as expounded in fn. 2 on p. 39 and fn. 2 on p. 40 below). English versions could have called the first Bible book: ‘In The Beginning’. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. The HB sometimes mentions a book by name, including some we do not have (e.g., Josh 10:13; Num 21:14; 1 Kgs 14:19). The NT makes reference to HB books (Mark 12:26; Luke 20:42). Perhaps ‘Bereshith’ was the name originally given. Palaeographical evidence traces it back at least as far as Qumran, where it appears on some fragmentary Biblical manuscripts: 4QGenh-title tyvrb (‘defective form’); tyvarb (‘plene form’) 4QGenb; 4QGeng. The Samaritan Pentateuch (*ca* 2nd cent B.C.) has the title: *BäräšiT* (cf. *BHS*). [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. ‘Incipit’ is a term for the first few words of the text’s opening line. English versions’ second book of the Pentateuch is ‘Exodus’ (via the Greek LXX), but no first few words of the book reflect its meaning: ‘the way out’. Thus ‘Exodus’, like ‘Leviticus’, ‘Numbers’ and ‘Deuteronomy’, is not an incipit based title. In the HB ‘These are the names’―*wü´ëlleh šümôt*―opens this book, giving its HB name, or just: *šümôt* (‘Names’). [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. The term *Br´šyT*is a composite form of ‘in’/*b* + ‘first’/*r´šyT*. Jer 2:3 uses *r´šyT* as the ‘first (fruits)’, and in Jer 49:35 as the ‘first’ (‘chief’) of military power. Cf. *Br´šyT*in Jer 26:1; 27:1; 28:1; 49:34. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. I am keeping separate here, Hebrew, the language of Bereshith, as the medium for revelatory presentation, from the question: Is Hebrew the original or sole language prior to Babel? (Biblically, it is the prime candidate.) [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Rom 1:20 “For the invisible things of him **from the creation of the world** are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse”; Ps 33:6 “By the word of Yahweh were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the spirit of his mouth”. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Of wisdom, Prov 8:22 says: ‘Yahweh possessed me *r´šyT* of His way’. As this is not *Br´šyT* /‘in the beginning’ it nuances as: “‘first’ of His way”. In Prov 4:5-7 wisdom is the *r´šyT* ―‘principal’ or ‘first *thing*/*part*’―to be ‘loved’ (cf. Prov 8:17, 21), and it connects via Eph 1:4-11 with wisdom and God’s love to His chosen in the beloved, prepared “before the foundation of the world” (cf. ‘love’ in Eph 2:4; 4:16). This Ephesian connection extends to identifying ‘wisdom’ with the (later) lost “***first*** love” in the Ephesian ecclesia in Rev 2:4. The remedial action required by Jesus of this ***first*** addressed of the seven ecclesias, so that they regain their ‘***first*** love’, was that they “...do the ***first*** works” (Rev 2:5). This must inevitably relate to “We love him, because he ***first loved*** us” (1 John 4:19). (I thank Mark Taunton for his observation that in Matthew’s Gospel (22:35-39) ***first*** qualifies the commandment to “***love*** the Lord thy God.” This is different from the Gospel of Mark [12:28-31], in which ‘first’ [“of all the commandments”] is applied to: “Hear, O Israel—The Lord our God is one Lord”). [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Nahum 1:1 lends weight to the idea of incipit-based book titling: “The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite”. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Compare the ‘Bereshith’ language in Col 1:15-18, in the context of God’s purpose in Christ in creation: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the ***first***born [**prwto**,tokoj] of all creation…And he is **before** all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the **head** of the body, the church: who is the **beginning** [avrch,], the ***first***born [**prwto,**tokoj] from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the **preeminence** [**prwt**eu,wn ]”.

Regarding the note of ‘preeminence’ see John the Baptist’s recognition of his position before Christ (although Jesus said “among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist” Luke 7:28): “…He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for ***first***[**prw/to,j**] of me he was” (John 1:15, 30). [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. I defer a consideration of: (i) what looks like Septuagintal agenda-led textual manipulation of ‘generations’ in this early narrative and thereby perhaps producing or attempting to justify ‘Genesis’ as a title (cf. fn. 2, below); and (ii) HB’s books - their titles and arrangement(s). [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Title word-play seems evident within the LXX tradition, ms. A has Ge,nesijko,smou: ‘Birth/origin of the world’. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. For example, what inferential scope is there in the text to account both for Cain being able to find a wife in his wandering, and for there to be sufficient population (or some to be violently disposed) for Cain to fear for his life (Gen 4:14-17)? [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. On ‘telling something the way it was’ and the Hebrew word for ‘truth’ “*emeth”*, see P. T. Geach, *Truth and Hope* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2001): 54-55. R. P. Gordon thus tells, “[W]hatever the proper genre of Genesis 1-11, these chapters have a serious historiographical aspect to them...” in *Holy Land, Holy City: Sacred Geography and the Interpretation of the Bible* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2004), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. In recent time approaches to the Biblical text have multiplied relative to academic developments or cultural influences. Christadelphians’ quest for meaning (equals truth) yielded by comparing internal linguistic usage (“Scripture interpreting Scripture”), co(n)text by co(n)text, makes *some* contact with the interest in the “plain sense” or “synchronic” approach.

J. Barton, in *The Nature of Biblical Criticism* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 106-7, usefully discusses J. Barr’s “plain sense” approach in disposing of the view in the Christian tradition (and also wrong if supposed for Paul in Rom 5:12) that ‘the fall’ meant “. . . Adam and Eve forfeited immortality . . . previously possessed” (cf. J. Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality: The Read-Tuckwell Lectures for 1990* (London: SCM, 1992). Pursuing a “semantic operation [that] proceeds from the individual words, to sentences, and up to the whole passage”, yields the normal sense of the Hebrew word ‘die’, for example, that excludes “to forfeit immortality”. Barton sums up: “Barr’s is a critical reading because it accepts the semantic constraints of the language in which the passage is written. (There is, we may note again, nothing particularly historical-critical about this reading, which says nothing about when the passage was written or whether it is composed from several different sources. It is, in the current jargon, a synchronic reading, simply taking the story as it stands)”. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. avpo. katabolh/j ko,smou/*apo katabolēs kosmou*: Matt 13:35; 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb 4:3; 9:26; Rev 13:8; 17:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Reference to “the book of life” in the NT, in which the approved have their names written, is said to belong to “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (cf. ‘Book of life’: Phil 4:3; Rev 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19). Being ‘thinkers of God’s name’ is among the devotions required to be named in this book, under the description: “book of remembrance” (Mal 3:16). This (‘peculiar treasure’) genealogy is the Godly seed (Mal 2:15; Isa 53:10; Gal 3:16). [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Cf. ‘The Land Theology of Genesis 4’ in R. P. Gordon, *Holy Land, Holy City: Sacred Geography and the Interpretation of the Bible* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 17, 22-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Entry to paradise, “when he [Jesus] comes in his kingdom” was promised by Jesus to the malefactor beside him on the tree (Luke 23:42-43). The Apocalypse garden-paradise is future when he will have “right to the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev 2:7). In the HB, Eden in Gen 2-3 is not called ‘the garden of Yahweh’ (Gen 13:10; Isa 51:3), ‘the garden of God’ (as the Eden is in Ezek 28:13; 31:8-9) nor ‘paradise’. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. See my treatment, in Part 2, on ‘live metaphor’ and its application to ‘God’-in-extension featured by *’lhym*. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Underlying ‘lower than’ in the Hebrew (of Ps 8:6 [v. 5 in KJV]) and matched by the Greek (of Heb 2:7, 9) is the sense of ‘lacking’ (Eccles 9:8) or ‘wanting’ (Ps 23:1), and lesser or inferior (John 3:30; 2 Cor 12:13). [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. The link between avrch,n/*archēn* as ‘first’ or ‘beginning’ as something formerly belonging to these ‘angels’, is caught in the rendering ‘*first* estate’. It is also seen in avrch/j/*archēs* in Col 2:10 as ‘principality’. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. The mention of ‘typology’ means that prophetic layers are present and intended in the Bereshith narrative, as in the Law and the prophets. This is specifically Paul’s inspired hindsight on whatsoever was written aforetime: “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure [Gk: tu,poj = ‘type’] of him that was to come” (Rom 5:14). This relates to Jesus’ viewpoint of “parables” or “things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world” (Matt 13:35). [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. See J. W. Adey, “A Tally of Two ‘Theres’” *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation*Vol 4, No. 1, First quarter 2010. I present the role of ‘there’ and ‘name’, the ultimate focus being the place (the ‘there’) of the name ‘Yahweh’, as first evident, unexpectedly as an inversion of Zion, at Babel in Genesis 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. My focus on ‘first’/‘beginning’ can be related to ‘first principles’ as in Heb 6:1, literally: ‘the beginning of the word of Christ' (th/j avrch/jtou/ cristou/ lo,gon/*tēs archēs tou christou logon*). [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. I do not present a philological treatment of Gen 4:7 on this occasion, nor critique various English version readings of this verse. Clearly, Cain’s case is (to be) contrasted with Christ’s, who contended against sin and was in himself a sacrifice ‘well-pleasing to God’. I do take this to be catered for in Gen 4:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Cited from R. E. Rubenstein, *When Jesus Became God: The Struggle to Define Christianity during the Last Days of Rome* (New York: Harcourt, 1999), 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. K. Baus, *History of the Church*, (The Seabury Press: New York, 1980). [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. S. G. Hall, *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church* (London: SPCK, 1994), 126. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. *Encyclical Letter of Alexander, Archbishop of Alexandria, upon his Deposition and Excommunication of Arius*, paras 9-13 in *A New Eusebius: Documents illustrating the history of the church to AD 317* (Rev. ed.; London: SPCK, 1987), 322-324. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Available online at www.newmanreader.org [cited 24.06.2011]. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. *Encyclical Letter of Alexander*, paras 8-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. *Against Hermogenes*, Chapter 3; available online at www.newadvent.org [cited 24.06.2011]. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. J. C. McDowell, “Arius: A Theological Conservative Persecuted?”, retrieved 22.06.11: www.geocities.ws/johnnymcdowell/papers/Arius.doc. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Hierarcas was a 3rd Century Egyptian ascetic affiliated with the Coptic monks. He promoted virginity as the prime Christian virtue. Some have seen his influence in Origen's Christology. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. *Letter of Arius to Alexander*; available in Stevenson, *A New Eusebius*, 326-327. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. *Letter to Eusebius*, in Stevenson, *A New Eusebius*, 324-325. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Hall, *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church*, 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. H. Shanks, “Queries & Comments”, *BAR* 22/04, 2006; the ‘minimalist’ view is that archaeology provides little or no support for the Biblical history, the ‘maximalist’ view is that archaeology overwhelmingly supports the Biblical history, and the moderate view is that archaeology substantially supports the Biblical history, but that not all of the history can be supported directly from archaeology. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. W. Dever, “Face to Face: Biblical Minimalists Meet Their Challengers”, *BAR* 23/04, (1997). Emphasis in all quotes is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. A. Rainey, “The House of David and the House of the Reconstructionists”, *BAR* 20/06, (1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. W. Dever, *What Did The Biblical Writers Know & When Did They Know It?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 128-129. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. P. Lemche, “ ‘House of David’: The Tel Dan Inscription(s)” in *Jerusalem in Ancient History and Tradition* (ed. T. L. Thompson; JSOTSup 381; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. [TG] The Greek word translated ‘so’ is ou[twj. This can be used for emphasis when accompanied by an adjective but there is no adjective in this clause. In this context ou[twj is better translated ‘in this way’, perhaps linking to the previous section regarding the incident of the serpent in the wilderness (John 3:14-15). [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Averil and Ian McHaffie, *All One in Christ Jesus* (Edinburgh: Published by the Authors, 2010), 3 (my emphasis). For a review and (critical) academic assessment, see J. Burke, *All One in Christ Jesus: A Review* available from the EJournal website www.christadelphian-ejbi.org. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Put another way, the text presupposes a **state of affairs** in Corinth and not an attitude of approval or disapproval on the part of the writer. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. First published in *Belief*, a NE UK magazine of the 1990s, and now updated. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)