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Editorial Policies: The **Christadelphian eJournal of Biblical Interpretation** seeks to fulfil the following objectives:

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

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**Editorial**

Biblical research is carried out by individuals within particular Christian confessions, and their confessional framework influences the theological outcomes of research. A set of confessional prejudices however is only one framework; an individual will start a topic of Biblical research that has already been set within a framework of previous study. Scholars will either have studied the topic directly or constructed an environment for the study of the topic. There is therefore pressure to conform to some received body of results. Originality may therefore be in short supply.

Much research finds its way into articles and monographs, even if some remains somewhat inaccessible in the theses collections of universities. In the course of time, scholars may write broader commentaries for general consumption. However, commentaries suffer more from the “me too” syndrome than periodical and monograph pieces. A law of diminishing returns operates with commentaries; if you have one standard commentary, another standard commentary will share eighty percent of the content, albeit differently expressed. If the commentaries are popular treatments, this percentage is likely to be much higher.

Having one standard commentary is useful, but commentaries lag behind the periodical literature and the research monographs. A case in point would be Isaiah. An older commentary such as that by Westermann on Isaiah 40-66, still widely available, has some value in reporting the German consensus of the 1960s, but since the 1980s, scholars have increasingly destroyed the idea of a Second Isaiah in favour of multiple redactors. These arguments are valuable for what they knock down, but less valuable for what they propose in replacement.

Or again, a conservative commentary such as that by Motyer (1993); this is more valuable than Westermann, but still shares the same outlook in treating Isaiah 40-66 in exilic and post-exilic terms. Conservative and critical commentaries alike share this outlook, even if they differ in their nuances. The question is: can or ought a new commentary to be original when the consensus is so powerful. It is here that an academic consensus is like a confessional belief system, and it influences the thinking of the scholar. The comparison is of interest because Christadelphians have a different confessional belief system, but often reproduce (with one or two exceptions) standard commentary views in their own commentaries.

There is a need within the community to think independently of church commentaries in the same way that the community thinks independently of church systems of doctrine.

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This issue of the eJournal completes the first year, and God-Willing, if Christ remains away, another year of issues beckons. Articles are welcome, and next year it is hoped that the eJournal will carry some “history of church doctrine” pieces. This first year of issues has been “bound together” and produced in book form and is available for any who like to have the magazines in print. The cost is £5.45 or the equivalent in local currency, and £2.75 P&P, available from www.lulu.com/willowpublications.

The policy of the eJournal is to publish short analytical articles; however, the normal standard in journals is for longer studies. We will handle longer pieces as a “supplement” to the eJournal. In this issue, two longer pieces have been included in a supplement.

A further development for this issue is a “report” on the Society for Old Testament Study summer conference and a “discussion” piece on the content of Isaiah 40-66, which is designed to solicit correspondence “to the editors”.

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## **The Son of Man**

**Tom Gaston**

**Introduction**

In this article I consider the historical approach to Jesus and who he claimed to be by looking at the title ‘Son of Man’ in the Gospels. We adopt the historical method of NT scholars (with its limits) in order to see how far this method will take us in our understanding of this title.

Since the nineteenth century historians have been on the quest for the (so-called) ‘historical Jesus’, by which they seek to recover who Jesus ‘truly’ was and not just what the gospels claim for him.[[1]](#footnote-1) This has principally involved using the original sayings of Jesus as found in the hypothetical ‘Q’ source,[[2]](#footnote-2) and the stripping away of many of the “later” key descriptions associated with the “Christ of faith”. For instance, the title ‘Son of God’, though in use by 50’s C.E. (at the latest),[[3]](#footnote-3) is poorly attested amongst the earliest sayings of Jesus[[4]](#footnote-4) and is often dismissed by historians as inauthentic. Though the title ‘Messiah’ (or ‘Christ’) is used frequently in the gospels, in Mark’s gospel Jesus is at pains to keep this knowledge secret.[[5]](#footnote-5) In his book, *The Messianic Secret,* William Wrede put forward the thesis that Mark’s statements were apologetic; Christians believed that Jesus was the Messiah but had never heard Jesus claim to be Messiah, and so Mark accounts for this by asserting that Jesus kept it a secret.[[6]](#footnote-6) This has led many historians to conclude that the Messianic sayings of Jesus are also inauthentic.

This historical ‘quest’ has led to the thesis that Jesus was nothing more than a wandering teacher.[[7]](#footnote-7) However, there is one title used by Jesus in the gospels that is accepted by most scholars to be authentic (though not all think it was a title); this is “the Son of Man”.

### **The Son of Man**

It is significant that ‘the Son of Man’ is by far the most frequent title that Jesus applies to himself, both in the Synoptics and in John, and is also found in the Gospel of Thomas.[[8]](#footnote-8) As a title it never occurs in any of the New Testament epistles, and is used only once in Acts.[[9]](#footnote-9) Though the absence of this title from the writings of Paul has been taken as proof that it was not primitive, the title is included in seven sayings in the (hypothetical) Q source.[[10]](#footnote-10) Rather, if Paul had used the title ‘Son of Man’ to prove some point of doctrine the historians would have greater reason to suspect contrivance. The fact that all the gospel traditions use this title indicates that it is most likely part of the original Jesus tradition. Assuming that the title ‘the Son of Man’ was part of the original Jesus tradition (and used by Jesus himself), our problem is ascertaining what this title would have meant to the first believers (and to Jesus himself). Traditionally, this title has been seen as a synonym for Messiah and also related to the ‘one like a son of man’ from Daniel’s prophecy.[[11]](#footnote-11) However, both these associations are problematic.

**‘Son of Man’ as Messiah**

The idea that the ‘Son of Man’ is a synonym for Messiah rests on particularly shaky ground. The principle reason for this association is the use that Jesus himself makes of this title, which (for our purposes) would make our argument circular. When Jesus asks, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” Peter’s (inspired) reply is “the Christ”,[[12]](#footnote-12) which would imply that that the two titles were not synonymous. The same distinction is demonstrated by the fact that while ‘Christ’ occurs 430 times in the New Testament epistles, ‘the Son of Man’ does not occur once. Also the gospel usage of the two titles is markedly different: Jesus seems to attempt to keep his identity as Messiah a secret[[13]](#footnote-13) and yet he openly refers to himself as ‘the Son of Man’.

There appear to be no pre-Christian references connecting ‘Son of Man’ with the Messiah, unless they are contained in allusions to the Daniel 7.

**Daniel 7**

In this chapter, Daniel recounts a vision he had of four beasts which he is told represent four kingdoms.[[14]](#footnote-14) The fourth beast is “exceedingly dreadful”[[15]](#footnote-15) and from it arises a “little horn”[[16]](#footnote-16) which persecutes “the saints”.[[17]](#footnote-17) Then Daniel sees the throne of “the Ancient of Days” and the “court was seated” and the beast and the horn are destroyed.[[18]](#footnote-18)

I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed. Dan 7:13-14 [NKJV]

While the NKJV renders the Aramaic *bar enash* as “the Son of Man” to associate it with Jesus Christ, there is no definite article in the Aramaic or the Septuagint.[[19]](#footnote-19) The word “like” indicates that Daniel is thinking of a figure of human appearance.[[20]](#footnote-20) It is evident that in Daniel 7 “son of man” is not used as a title. It is possible that the intention was that this manlike figure represented “the saints”, who are also said to be given “the kingdom”.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Maurice Casey attempts to show that no one at the time of Jesus would have interpreted the manlike figure as single individual or associated that symbol with the Messiah. He begins by assuming that the original interpretation of Daniel was that followed by the majority of modern commentators: that the fourth beast is the Seleucid Empire, that the little horn is Antiochus Epiphanes, and that the manlike figure represents the (expected) triumph of the Maccabees.[[22]](#footnote-22) He interprets the prevalence of this interpretation amongst the “later Syrian Christian fathers” as the preservation of this original tradition,[[23]](#footnote-23) while the Messianic interpretations of the Western Fathers and Rabbinical Judaism are later developments in the light of the Jesus tradition.[[24]](#footnote-24) He dismisses the evidence of the *Similitudes of Enoch* given that they identify ‘the Son of Man’ with Enoch[[25]](#footnote-25) and are, in any case, probably later than Jesus’ traditions.[[26]](#footnote-26)Casey concludes that “the Jews had no Son of Man concept”,[[27]](#footnote-27) that is, they were not expecting the coming of one called ‘the Son of Man’.

This conclusion is not as sure as it might appear. We lack examples of how pre-Christian Jewish writers interpreted Daniel 7. The Qumran scrolls make no reference to the ‘one like a son of man’[[28]](#footnote-28) and Josephus gives us few clues, omitting any discussion of Daniel 7 from his overview of those visions.[[29]](#footnote-29) Except for possible allusions in 4 Ezra, the earliest interpretations of the ‘one like a son of man’ are those of the New Testament writers, which universally identify him as Jesus.[[30]](#footnote-30)

However, we have some indications as to how the Jews of Jesus’ day might have interpreted Daniel 7. Josephus does interpret the parallel vision of Daniel 2 and implies that the fourth kingdom was the present empire (i.e. Rome). He does not interpret “the stone”[[31]](#footnote-31) asserting that its fulfillment is still future,[[32]](#footnote-32) though it is likely that he did not want to predict the destruction of Rome given his own situation (living as a pensioner of the emperor). The Qumran fragment 4Q246 alludes frequently to Daniel 7. Though it prophesies that the people of God (plural) will be given “an eternal dominion” and that God “will give peoples into their hands”,[[33]](#footnote-33) it connects this with coming forth of one called “the son of God”.[[34]](#footnote-34)

Casey’s assertion that the Rabbis reinterpreted Daniel 7 in line with Christian concepts is odd when, given the antagonism of Rabbinical Judaism towards Christianity, the contrary seems more likely.[[35]](#footnote-35) When Rabbi Akiba attempted to read in Daniel 7 a reference to the Messiah, he is rebuked for profanity, presumably because his interpretation was too close to that of the Christians.[[36]](#footnote-36) Like Josephus, the Rabbis interpreted the fourth beast as Rome.

We cannot be certain but it is possible that there existed pre-Christian interpretations of Daniel 7 which expected the manifestation of the ‘Son of Man’ figure in a single individual. If this was the case then the use of the title ‘the Son of Man’ to identify someone with that figure would not be unreasonable, even though Daniel 7 does not use such a title.

**‘Who is this Son of Man?’**

The evidence of John’s gospel is that people weren’t expecting the appearance of one called ‘the Son of Man’. When the messengers of Pharisees come to John the Baptist to find out who he is, they ask if he is one of the three figures whom they are expecting to come (that is, the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet).[[37]](#footnote-37) They do not ask him if he is ‘the Son of Man’, presumably because such a figure was not expected. When Jesus preaches to the crowds about his impending death, they question him, saying:

We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?[[38]](#footnote-38)

Even if John’s remarks are not historical (as many scholars believe), they still likely demonstrate beliefs from the first century. But if the Jews were not expecting the coming of one called ‘the Son of Man’ then why does Jesus apply this title to himself so frequently.

In the Old Testament ‘a son of man’ was a common synonym for ‘a man’,[[39]](#footnote-39) generally used to stress the subject’s humanity[[40]](#footnote-40) (often as juxtaposed against the divinity of YHWH).[[41]](#footnote-41) Throughout his visions Ezekiel is styled ‘son of man’.[[42]](#footnote-42) The use of ‘son of man’ in Aramaic was “not uncommon in Jewish writings of the early centuries AD”.[[43]](#footnote-43) In the 1960’s, Vermes demonstrated convincingly the character of the Aramaic phrase ‘son of man’ (*bar enash)* as being quite general and therefore was too general a phrase to be used as title.[[44]](#footnote-44) Therefore the theory was put forward by Vermes and by Casey that ‘son of man’ was a form of self-reference on Jesus’ part (i.e. “I”) which was interpreted as a title when the tradition was translated into Greek. It was only at this point that the association with Daniel 7 was made and the “inauthentic” allusions of Jesus to Daniel 7 were added to gospels.[[45]](#footnote-45) Barnabas Lindars suggested a slightly different theory asserting that Jesus used the phrase ‘son of man’ generally and so the ‘son of man’ sayings were originally intended to refer to all men.[[46]](#footnote-46)

However, despite the extensive Aramaic examples and linguistic arguments in favour of such theories, they are not without their critics. Michael Goulder has pointed out that ‘son of man’ cannot always be general since in many cases the ‘son of man’ sayings can only refer to Jesus.[[47]](#footnote-47) Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz extend this point, asking why “an expression which in principle anyone could use and which could mean anyone” was so clearly connected with Jesus by early Christians, who so soon believed that Jesus was more than a man?[[48]](#footnote-48) Frederick Borsch gives much more extensive criticism, saying:

It was hard to **hear** Jesus so frequently speaking in such a roundabout way, harder still to imagine that all four of the evangelists could have completely misunderstood the idiom when there must still have been a few ear-witnesses who could have corrected the error, or at least several persons who know both Greek and Aramaic.[[49]](#footnote-49)

This last criticism is particularly effective, especially given the likelihood that some of the gospels may have originally been written in Aramaic. It seems then that we cannot ascribe the use of ‘Son of man’ to common parlance.

**Alternatives**

Borsch puts forward the thesis that the title ‘Son of man’ was an allusion to the mythology of the ‘Primal Man’ that has parallels in many cultures.[[50]](#footnote-50) However, Borsch is forced to admit that due to the lack of evidence regarding these mythologies the link between them and ‘Son of man’ in the gospels “must remain tenuous”.[[51]](#footnote-51) A variation on this approach might be that the title ‘Son of man’ meant “the Last Man” in contrast to the First Man (Adam), following the Pauline Adam-Christology.[[52]](#footnote-52) Once again, though, the difficulty is the lack of positive evidence from the gospel tradition.

Goulder suggests that the title ‘Son of Man’ came from the desire of the (Pauline) Christians to justify the incarnation from Scripture. Goulder notes several Pauline allusions to Psalm 8[[53]](#footnote-53) and points out how the writer to the Hebrews uses Psalm 8 to justify the claim that Jesus is greater than the angels (“You have put all things in subjection under his feet”) despite being a man (“You have made him a little lower[[54]](#footnote-54) than the angels”).[[55]](#footnote-55) Since the Psalm says it is “the son of man” that has been made lower than the angels,[[56]](#footnote-56) Goulder sees the use of this Psalm as the source for the title ‘Son of Man’,[[57]](#footnote-57) which the (Pauline) Christians wrote into the gospels “as the title of a pre-existent human spiritual being”.[[58]](#footnote-58) One argument in favour of this thesis might be that, unlike Dan 7:13, in Psalm 8 ‘son of man’ has the definite article in the Septuagint (h' ui`o.j avnqrw,pou). The substantial drawback is that Psalm 8 is never quoted in the any of the four gospels, while ‘Son of Man’ is not used by any later writer (Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, etc) to show that Jesus was “a pre-existent human spiritual being”. Also there seems to be no reason for the writer to the Hebrews to identify Jesus with the ‘son of man’ in this psalm unless that title was already associated with Jesus. In any case this theory presupposes that Jesus did not use the title ‘Son of Man’ which, given the wide attestation in all gospel traditions, seems most unlikely.

**Examining the Gospel Evidence**

It is likely that Jesus used the phrase ‘son of man’ and in the Greek ‘Son of Man’ appears as a title. Unless we suppose that the gospel writers (and their circles) were completely ignorant of Aramaic idiom, the thesis that Jesus meant ‘I’ or ‘a man’ seems unlikely. The fact that there appears to be no precedent for the ‘Son of Man’ title does not undermine the fact that it could have been used as such if defined so. Though it may seem odd that anyone should choose such a common idiom as a title, if they wished to embody some fact about themselves using those words then to turn them into a title would not be unreasonable. As Borsch states:

Even if it is held that *bar nāšā* was a phrase which could have meant ‘I’ or any man, this is no guarantee that in a certain circle it could not have been given a special meaning.[[59]](#footnote-59)

Therefore we are faced with the possibility that Jesus could have created the title ‘Son of Man’ himself.

Trying to determine which gospel material contains ‘authentic’ sayings of Jesus is almost impossible to do without making our argument circular. For instance, Casey states that the gospel sayings alluding to Daniel 7 and Jesus’ role in the Last Days are “inauthentic”[[60]](#footnote-60) but this assertion is based upon his conclusion that there was no pre-Christian ‘Son of Man’ interpretation of Daniel 7. Another common presupposition for the excision of many gospel sayings (including ‘Son of Man’ sayings) is that Jesus did not originally claim to be the Messiah.[[61]](#footnote-61) This led John O’Neill, in his defence of the ‘Son of Man’ sayings, to the rather inconsistent position that Jesus neither claimed nor denied to be the Son of Man.[[62]](#footnote-62) It cannot be acceptable to decide the historicity of the ‘Son of Man’ sayings on such a basis. I will, therefore, make no claims about which sayings are (or are not) authentic but will begin my examination with the bare minimum that scholars (Casey, Lindars, etc) allow to be original, that is, the Q sayings.

The Q sayings do not include the quotation for Dan 7:13. However, they do contain sayings regarding the “coming” of the Son of Man at some point in the future.[[63]](#footnote-63) The following saying is even more significant:

Every one who admits in public that they know me, the son of man will acknowledge before the angels of God. But the one who disowns me in public, the son of man will disown before the angels of God.[[64]](#footnote-64)

This verse implies that the Son of Man will appear before the angels of God, that is, that the Son of Man will ascend into heaven. Daniel 7:13 seems the likely precedent for this concept.[[65]](#footnote-65) Connected with the concept of the ‘coming’ of the Son of Man, we have the elements of the Second Coming tradition recorded in the canonical gospels.

The Gospel of Mark records several ‘Son of Man’ sayings which contain similar concepts.

“For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him **the Son of Man** also will be ashamed **when he comes** in the glory of his Father **with the holy angels**” Mark 8:38 [NKJV].

Then they will see **the Son of Man coming** in the clouds with great power and glory. Mark 13:26 [NKJV].

The first passage connects the two concepts found in the Q sayings of the ‘coming’ of the Son of Man and the appearing before the angels. The second passage undoubtedly alludes to Daniel 7:13 and connects it with the Second Coming.

Matthew and Luke add considerably to both these traditions with frequent references to the Son of Man (1) ‘coming’[[66]](#footnote-66) (2) with angels[[67]](#footnote-67) (3) with the clouds[[68]](#footnote-68) (4) to sit on a throne[[69]](#footnote-69) (5) and to judge the nations.[[70]](#footnote-70) This is without the infamous exclamation before the High Priest.[[71]](#footnote-71)

It is significant that these concepts find acceptance in early Christian literature. Historians may doubt the historicity of Stephen’s vision of Jesus in heaven, but it is significant that Stephen styles him “the Son of Man”.[[72]](#footnote-72) Paul refers to Jesus coming with the clouds[[73]](#footnote-73) and coming with the angels.[[74]](#footnote-74) Paul certainly refers to Jesus judging the nations[[75]](#footnote-75) upon a throne.[[76]](#footnote-76) The Didache likewise refers to the coming of “the Lord” with the angels and with the clouds of heaven.[[77]](#footnote-77) The Gospel of John, while not alluding directly to this tradition, does record Jesus saying that “the Son of Man” will ascend into heaven.[[78]](#footnote-78) By the time Revelation is being written Daniel 7 has been completely (re)interpreted with Jesus as the Son of Man who will return from heaven to judge the nations and claim the Kingdom.[[79]](#footnote-79)

These frequent allusions to Dan 7:13 in the earliest Christian writings, particularly in Paul, suggest that the identification of Jesus with the ‘one like a son of man’ was primitive. The evidence in Q and Mark link the title ‘Son of Man’ with allusions to Dan 7:13. Since it is likely that Jesus used the title ‘Son of Man’ of himself then perhaps the best way to explain both his reason for using it and the early Christian allusions to Dan 7:13 is that Jesus identified himself with the ‘one like a son of man’ and used the title ‘Son of Man’ to express this identity. We have seen that it is likely that the Jews of Jesus’ day associated Daniel’s fourth beast with the Roman Empire and the expectation that one would come to overthrow the Roman Empire was common. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that Jews of Jesus’ day read in Daniel 7 a prophecy of a heavenly conqueror/judge coming to overthrow the Roman beast.[[80]](#footnote-80)

**A ‘Son of Man’ Christology**

If Jesus associated himself with the ‘one like a son of man’ of Daniel 7, as seems likely, then he was claiming to be both a heavenly mediator and an eschatological judge/king. He would have expected his ascension into heaven, to appear before the throne of God and to receive from God all the nations of world to rule over (with ‘the saints’). The return from heaven to the earth at the head of the armies of heaven would have been a natural development of this interpretation, either for Jesus or the early believers. Daniel 7 gives no hint that the ‘one like a son of man’ pre-existed in heaven, his ascension seems to be an entrance (rather than a return) to heaven and this idea is reflected in the gospel usage of the ‘Son of Man’ concept. The prevalence of the ‘Son of Man’ imagery and title implies early belief in the ascension of Jesus into heaven to inherit the world as his kingdom, and therefore, the belief that Jesus, though born a man, had heavenly status.

If the ‘historical’ Jesus claimed heavenly status then it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Son of God sayings are authentic. If the ‘historical’ Jesus claimed to be the one coming to claim the Kingdom then it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Messiah sayings are authentic. If Jesus identified himself with the Son of Man from Daniel 7 then perhaps the ‘historical Jesus’ and the ‘Christ of faith’ are not so different after all.

**Danielic Apocalyptic and the Son of Man**

**Paul Wyns**

**Introduction**

The expression “Son of Man” is employed by Jesus as a self-reference[[81]](#footnote-81), and is explicitly quoted by him during his trial (from Daniel 7:13-14) as a messianic self-designation.[[82]](#footnote-82) Geza Vermes [[83]](#footnote-83) believes that at the level of the historical Jesus the phrase in the gospels was little more than a form of self-referential circumlocution. He suggests that the term originates from the Aramaic[[84]](#footnote-84) *bar nash(a)* and that it is used in a generic sense (someone like me, or “I”) as opposed to a titular usage in the Greek - *ho huios tou anthropou* (“**the** Son of Man”). Vermes argues that “son of man” is simply a synonym for man or humanity, and a substitute for the indefinite pronoun (“one”) and does not imply a messianic title.

However, Christopher Tuckett understands “Son of Man” on the lips of Jesus as a self-reference to a corporate entity embodied in a single individual who experiences suffering and rejection and is clearly indebted to the mysterious figure of Daniel 7. Tuckett asks: “Does not the language barrier militate strongly against such a view? Is it not the case that (assuming Jesus spoke in Aramaic) and the Aramaic phrase *bar nasha(a)* is such an ordinary, common place phrase that it simply will not bear the weight that the interpretation suggested above places on it. Are we entitled to try to work backwards from the Greek forms of the saying to any ‘historical Jesus’ without first re-translating such sayings back into Aramaic and asking what such words would have meant to an Aramaic speaker or hearer? The argument has some force but, I believe, is not entirely persuasive ... Nevertheless it is now widely agreed in studies of semantics that words, or indeed phrases do not derive their meanings exclusively from themselves: meaning is **often derived as much from the context in which words or phrases are used**”.[[85]](#footnote-85)

Is “Son of Man” used generically or indefinitely? Is the expression messianic? Does it designate a corporate reality (collectively the saints) or an individual? Is New Testament adoption of the *Son of Man* legitimized by Old Testament or/and Enochic usage? These and other considerations will be partly answered by our investigation **into the most important context** in which these particular words or phrases are employed, namely at the prosecution of Jesus and of Stephen.

**Son of Man as a Self-Designation of Jesus**

Two lines of argument are countered against the use of *Son of Man* as a self-designation by Jesus: (1) that Daniel 7 does not employ the expression as a title but rather as a description; and (2) that the expression is an Aramaic idiom of self reference and not a title. Different mechanisms for understanding the terms of self reference have been proposed – from the general to the specific (M. Casey),[[86]](#footnote-86) as a generic reference (G. Vermes) or to stress that the referent belongs to a particular class or group (B. Lindars).

Current opinion seems to favour the last view as the appropriate explanation of the idiom. The authenticity of the Son of Man sayings have been evaluated by the three main scholars that have done work in this field – but their selection **is reached by rejecting the sayings which reflect the influence of Daniel 7.** The authenticity of the *Son of Man* sayings according to Casey, Vermes and Lindars are given in the following table:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Text | | Casey | Lindars | Vermes |
| Mark | 2:10 | \* | \* | \* |
|  | 2:28 | \* |  | \* |
|  | 8:31 |  |  | \* |
|  | 8:38 | \* |  |  |
|  | 9:9 |  |  | \* |
|  | 9:12 | \* |  | \* |
|  | 9:31 |  | \* | \* |
|  | 10:33 |  |  | \* |
|  | 10:45 | \* | \* | \* |
|  | 14:21a,b | \* | \* | \* |
|  | 14:41 |  |  | \* |
| Matthew | 8:20 | \* | \* | \* |
|  | 11:19 | \* | \* | \* |
|  | 16:13 |  |  | \* |
|  | 26:22 |  |  | \* |
| Luke | 11:30 |  | \* | \* |
|  | 12:8 | \* | \* |  |
|  | 12:10 | \* | \* | \* |
|  | 19:10 |  |  | \* |
|  | 22:48 | \* |  |  |
|  | 24:7 |  |  | \* |

The effect of the approach in question is to deny that Jesus thought of himself in terms of the *Son of Man* of Daniel 7. According to Lindars, *“it carried no Christological meaning as such.”* [[87]](#footnote-87)

**The Trial of Jesus and Stephen**

Acts 7:56 [[88]](#footnote-88) is one of the only places in the NT (outside the gospels) where “Son of Man” is used to refer to Jesus. This is particularly relevant as the trial of Stephen in Acts 7 bears many similarities with that of Jesus. Both were tried before the Jerusalem Council; both were falsely accused; both were accused of blasphemy; both were accused of threatening the temple; both [in death] committed their spirits; both asked forgiveness for those who were responsible for their deaths. James D. G. Dunn believes that the Son of Man tradition in Acts 7:56 is probably secondary and directly based on Daniel itself.[[89]](#footnote-89) Hyam Maccoby in *The Mythmaker,* *Paul and the Invention of Christianity* regards the trials as doublets:

“The pattern of both trials, then, is that the defendant is charged with the offence of speaking against the Temple, but this charge is forgotten when the defendant bursts out during the trial with what is regarded as a blasphemous statement. Formal procedures are then thrown to the winds and the defendant is found guilty of an alleged crime committed during the trial itself, and different from the crime for which he was brought to trial in the first instance. The ‘trials’ of Jesus and of Stephen are incredible, because they depend on a definition of the terms “Messiah’, ‘Son of God’ and “Son of Man’ that did not exist in the Jewish religion of the time, but did exist in the later doctrines of the Christian Church, when all three expressions had been given a connotation of divinity”.[[90]](#footnote-90)

Even though *The Mythmaker* is an outrageously tendentious piece of revisionism the observation remains valid and will be countered later in the article. For our purpose, both trials will be treated as essentially the same, motivated and engineered for the same reasons, and heavily influenced by apocalyptic Son of Man traditions and first century Danielic eschatological expectations.

**Danielic Apocalyptic**

Although it is certain that first century Judaism interpreted the fourth kingdom of Daniel 2 (and possibly the fourth beast of Daniel 7) as Rome,[[91]](#footnote-91) and in Matt.24:15 Jesus (alluding to Dan 9: 27) indicates that *‘the abomination that causes desolation’* is at least connected with the Roman invasion, it is also apparent that this hermeneutical paradigm shift occurred after the time of Antiochus. This can be observed by Josephus’ interpretation of Daniel 8 which canvases two interpretations.

“And indeed it so came to pass, that our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphanes, according to Daniel’s vision, and what he wrote many years before they came to pass. In the very same manner Daniel **also wrote** concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them” *Ant.* 10.11.7.

Critical scholarship largely regards Daniel as a Maccabean product. The Maccabean interpretation, accepted by the majority scholarly consensus, is that Daniel presents a record of past events which transpired during the Maccabean period, i.e., the persecutions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (170 to 164). H. L. Ginsberg regards Daniel 2 as pre-Epiphanian as it speaks of a worldwide kingdom with scant regard to Jewish dominance, whereas Daniel 7 (regarded by Ginsberg as Epiphanian) asserts perpetual Jewish sovereignty over the nations[[92]](#footnote-92) - many other commentators would regard Daniel 2 and 7 as at least partly parallel. Despite Ginsberg’s detection of different strata within the chapter, the unity of Daniel 7 has generally been held by scholars of all shades of opinion. Can the Roman and Maccabean views be reconciled?

The eschatological vision of Daniel 7 was not fulfilled in the time of Antiochus, but neither was it completely fulfilled in the first century Roman invasion. Evangelical interpreters circumvent the problem by introducing the concept of prophetic postponement into a dispensationalist framework. This has some validity, but the prophecy (here we think particularly of Daniel 9) is deliberately fluid and multifaceted and intended to incorporate short term and longer term fulfilment – such as the immediate return from exile, the Hasmonean period, the Roman occupation and the eschatological culmination. This will be elucidated in a future article. For our purpose we propose that first century Jewish opinion on Daniel was probably not unanimous and possibly confused, with the added complication of establishment pressure (exercised by the Roman appointed priestly class) to avoid any derogatory identification of the fourth kingdom/beast (particularly by messianic movements)[[93]](#footnote-93) with Rome.

**Danielic Motifs in the Trials of Jesus and Stephen**

A simplified summary of the characteristics of the persecutor, who was *pre-figured* by Antiochus, will demonstrate the importance of Danielic motifs to the trials of Jesus and Stephen and contextualize the *Son of Man* traditions utilized by Jesus (and Stephen):

1) Antiochus attempted to Hellenize the Jews by changing their customs. He was determined to take their identity away by challenging their religion and forbidding the Torah and changing the feast days:

“And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and think to change times and laws…” (Dan 7:25)

“And after two years fully expired **(this was the 145th year)** the king sent his chief collector of tribute unto the cities of Judah, who came unto Jerusalem with a great multitude…For the king had sent letters by messengers unto Jerusalem and the cities of Judah that they should follow the strange laws of the land**.** And **forbid burnt offerings**, and sacrifice, and drink offerings, in the temple; and that they should profane the Sabbaths and festival days” (1 Macc 1: 29, 44-45).

2) He destroyed the city and the sanctuary (Dan 9:27), and this involved the taking away of the daily sacrifice which had been prophesied by Daniel (Dan 8:12, 9:27). Josephus records,

“Now it came to pass after two years in the **hundred and forty-fifth year**, on the twenty-fifth day of that month which is by us called Chasleu, and by the Macedonians Apelleus, in the hundred and fifty-third Olympiad, that the king came up to Jerusalem, and, pretending peace, he got possession of the city by treachery…’ [Ant.12.5.4] ............And this desolation came to pass according to the prophecy of Daniel, which was given four hundred and eighty years before; for he declared that the Macedonians would dissolve the worship [for some] time.” [Ant. 12.7.6].

The parallels between Daniel 8:24 and 9:27 are obvious:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Chapter 8:24** | **Chapter 9:27** |
| v.24) He will become **very strong** but not by his own power (NIV) | He will **strengthen** a covenant with many for one ‘seven’ |
| v.24) He will cause astounding destruction | War will continue to the end, and desolations have been decreed |
| v.24) He will destroy the mighty men and the Holy people | Will destroy the city and the sanctuary |

Antiochus IV Epiphanes[[94]](#footnote-94) induced the collaboration of the priestly class in order to stabilize his grip on Judea. B. K. Waltke sums it up as follows; “His intervention in Jerusalem was brought about in part by the factions within the Jewish high-priestly state. The personal strife between Honya III (Gk: Onias), his brother Yeshua (Jesus, called Jason by the Greeks), and a certain Menelaus of the tribe of Benjamin supported by the powerful house of Tobiah, was exacerbated by the fact that Jason and Menelaus wished to introduce Hellenistic culture while Onias stood by the traditional custom and law. By the promise both of larger tribute and of habituating the Jews to Greek customs Jason induced Antiochus, an intense champion of Hellenization, to establish him as high priest in place of his brother (2 Macc.4:7-20)”.[[95]](#footnote-95) Parallels with the first century situation regarding collaboration between the priestly class and the Roman authorities are obvious.

3) Finally, he possessed the opposite characteristics of Immanuel:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Antichrist** | **Christ** |
| “Shall destroy (corrupt) wonderfully” (Dan.8:24). | “His name shall be wonderful counsellor” (Isa. 9:6). |
| “By peace destroy (corrupt) many” (Dan.8:25). | “Prince of peace” (Isa. 9:6). |
| “And his power shall be mighty” (Dan.8:24). | “Mighty God” (Isa. 9:6). |

Jews of the Hellenistic period sought a messiah to restore Israel’s independence and righteousness. However, there seems to have been considerable variation in eschatological expectations (sometimes both a royal and a priestly messiah were expected) and the initial fulfillment in Daniel was probably by the high priest.

**The Accusations against Jesus and Stephen**

The chief accusation against both Jesus and Stephen was that they desired to destroy the Temple and sought to change the traditions and laws associated with Judaism:

“But they did not find anything, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward and declared; “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’” the high priest stood up and said to him, “Have you no answer? What is this that they are testifying against you?” But Jesus was silent. The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus said to him, “You have said it yourself. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes and declared, “He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? Now you have heard the blasphemy! (Matt 26:60-65)

“They brought forward false witnesses who said, ‘This man does not stop saying things against this holy place and the law. For we have heard him saying that Jesus the Nazarene will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us.’ All who were sitting in the council looked intently at Stephen and saw his face was like the face of an angel.” (Acts 6:13-15)

The priestly authorities equated the actions of Jesus (along with his disciple Stephen) with that of the antichrist - Antiochus Epiphanes, who wished to destroy the temple and abolish the traditions. As far as they were concerned, Jesus was the antichrist spoken of by Daniel. His words and actions, in cleansing the temple, were deliberately misconstrued (John 2:13-22) as the actions of a man who thought of himself as “God manifest” [[96]](#footnote-96) (like Antiochus), and who would either lead a rebel movement to overthrow the ruling elite, or undermine their authority with the people thereby rendering their position (as Roman agents) superfluous. Those present may have thought they were his judges but, in fact, the reverse was true. Jesus answered them on their own terms – that of the Daniel prophecy. He was the “Son of Man”, who would be vindicated and return as their Judge (Dan.7:13). Their position as servants of Rome would share the same fate as the fourth beast of Daniel (cf. “But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end” Dan 7:26). Hence, Jesus’ reply was regarded as blasphemy by the high priest (another Danielic response referring to Antiochus: “a mouth that spake very great things”, Dan 7:20).

Stephen’s rambling defence now makes sense; it was not an irrelevant account of Israelite history, but rather a demonstration that the most important revelations to Israel had occurred outside the temple, even outside the land (to Abraham in Ur and Moses in Sinai), in fact God did not even demand a permanent residence, as He was completely satisfied with a temporary abode. The priests (their proxies) alleged that Jesus and his followers had come to destroy the temple (like the antichrist); Stephen answers that the temple is not important as a vehicle for revelation. Jesus has replaced the temple and is now the most holy place: “Howbeit, the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 7:48).[[97]](#footnote-97)

The impact of Jesus’ resurrection and the temple’s centrality to Jewish worship was the issue. The demotion of the position of the temple (and especially the erosion of priestly authority) bore the equivalence (to the ruling elite) of destroying the temple in Daniel’s vision:

“The people of the Prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary”(Dan.9:26)

Stephen completes his apologetic with a vision of Jesus in the heavenly temple,

“But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked intently toward heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look!” he said. “I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” (Acts 7:55-56).

Stephen combines the language of the royal Psalms (2:7-8 and 110: 1) with Danielic Son of Man traditions. This would have indicated to his audience that Jesus, as a king-priest (Melchizidek- Pss 110), had replaced the priesthood; that he was standing (instead of sitting) to ask for the heathen as his inheritance*,* (side-lining the Jews because *‘they took counsel against the Lord and his Messiah’ -* Pss 2); and that he would return as God’s vindicated and appointed judge (Son of Man - Dan.7) to receive the kingdom on behalf of the saints. This explains the hostile reaction. They had accused Stephen of wanting to destroy the institution. Stephen argued that the institution (and their position) was largely irrelevant, as God had demoted the Temple and the priesthood from their privileged position. God had chosen a new Temple and priest. Priestly opposition to Jesus made *them* collectively the antichrist and God would punish them by removing all their beloved institutions and even themselves from the land.

There are other Danielic allusions in the trial narrative. When Stephen commences his defence we are told that the council, “saw his face as it had been the face of an angel” (Acts 6:15). Stephen had previously supplied the widow’s food. Likewise, the book of Daniel commences with Daniel and his friends refusing the kings meat and being visually assessed for the effects of their new diet: “let our countenance be looked upon before thee” The result was positive; “At the end of ten days their countenance appeared fairer and fatter in flesh…”(Dan 1:13-15). The face of Stephen had therefore become like the face of his master (the Son of Man) as he also refused the ‘kings meat’ and shared the meagre diet of the widows and yet he was seen to prosper.

**Who is the Son of Man in Daniel?**

This is a difficult question. In recent times C. H. Dodd has given voice to the corporate interpretation. Dunn is largely in accord, perceiving that ‘one like a son of man’ is *identical* with the ‘saints of the Most High’,[[98]](#footnote-98) concluding that *the man-like figure represents the people of Israel,* just as the beast-like figures represent the enemies of Israel. With regard to the New Testament individualizing interpretation Dodd says, ‘The New Testament use of the title “Son of Man” for Christ results from the individuation of this corporate conception’.[[99]](#footnote-99)

The context of the “son of man” in Daniel 7 seems to demand a corporate interpretation; however, we must take care that we are not peering through the wrong end of the telescope. There seems to be fluidity between corporate and individual conceptualization. J. Dunn argues; “It is certainly true that Dan. 7 itself interprets the four beasts as ‘four kings’ (7.17), but this was not unnatural where ‘king’ was a widely recognised metonymy for ‘kingdom’ (cf. e.g. 2.44;8.21f.)”.[[100]](#footnote-100) However, against this we must place Daniel’s statement to Nebuchadnezzar – *“Thou art this head of gold”* (2:38). This opens up the prospect of representation. The individual (in this case Nebuchadnezzar) represented Babylon and embodied all the characteristics of the empire in his person – as a consequence the individual was literally changed into a beast (Dan 4:30-37). Certain individuals in Israel had a representative role – for example the anointed high priest; here we think particularly of the Day of Atonement, where the priest acted on behalf of the nation. Similarly, the Suffering Servant in Isaiah is demonstrably King Hezekiah, who represented in his person the idealized corporate identity that the nation (as Yahweh’s servant) should have manifested.

Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis offers fruitful suggestion when he observes, “That the individual angelomorphic human in mind in this passage is the High Priest. In this case there is a reuse of the ancient Near East and Biblical Chaoskampf tradition within the context of the cult, the New Year festivals and the Day of Atonement in particular: the human figure comes to the Ancient of Days carried by clouds just as the high priest on the Day of Atonement enters the Holy of Holies surrounded by clouds of incense. This reading makes good sense of the literary structure of Daniel 2-7 and chapter 7 itself; parallels with the Enochic ascent in 1Enoch 14 and may shed important light on a debate between the Sadducees and the Pharisees regarding the use of incense by the high priest at Yom Kippur”.[[101]](#footnote-101)

The similarities with the post-exilic high priest Joshua are informative. Joshua is also brought into the heavenly council where he is vindicated. In Zechariah’s vision (Zech 3:1-10) we see Joshua the high priest in a state of absolute cultic and spiritual disqualification; dressed in garments, stained with excrement. He is accused in the heavenly ‘court room’ with Satan acting as agent for the prosecution, Michael as angel for the defence, and God as the Judge. The question is whether the Zadokite priesthood had become so corrupted by the exile that it was no longer fit for office. This probably reflects the power struggle and rivalries between the hierocratic movement of Zadokite priests and those who opposed the Zadokite priesthood.[[102]](#footnote-102) The situation is resolved when God effectively cleanses the priesthood and clothes Joshua with a clean garment. Typologically Joshua represents Jesus, who as “a son of man” shared our weak human nature – the charge against Jesus (and mankind) of wanting equality with God (cf. Michael: who is like God?) is thrown out of the heavenly court and Joshua/Jesus receives the resurrection garments of immortality.

**Conclusions**

Dunn concludes that, “we lack any sort of firm evidence that the ‘one like a son of man’ in Dan.7 was understood in pre-Christian Judaism as the Messiah, pre-existent or otherwise.” [[103]](#footnote-103) **Therefore the use of the son of man tradition originated with Jesus himself** – a logical conclusion when we consider his unique grasp of the Old Testament. Dunn has suggested that Jesus began by using the Aramaic idiom to refer to himself and then recognized in the use of the same phrase in Daniel 7 an allusion to the vindication which he expected from God. This led to the use of Daniel 7 on a broader scale in his sayings, and to the development of the term as a means of referring to himself as the authoritative messianic figure. Thus, in some sayings Jesus will simply have used a self-designation, but in others he was making a conscious allusion to Daniel 7.[[104]](#footnote-104)

The suggestion made by Dunn allows for a natural evolution of the phrase – its meaning developed alongside the growing self-consciousness of Jesus. It may be of consequence that the Son of Man sayings all occur *after* the synoptic narrative relays the news of John’s imprisonment (Matt 4:12, Mark 1:4, Luke 3:20) although it must be added that this event is recorded as occurring early in the public ministry in all three accounts. The saying is most prolific in Luke 9[[105]](#footnote-105) *after* we are informed how Jesus is identified as the risen Baptist (v. 7). The saying in Matt 11:19 also follows John’s question from prison in Matt 11:4. Is it possible that the imprisonment and death of John acted as the prompt to adopt the term? The imprisonment and death of John would have had a profound effect on his mission and his messianic self-consciousness. Would the growing realization that his mission would end in rejection and death (like that of John) caused him to employ a term that was associated with corporate suffering and vindication – thereby individualizing the term in recognition of his representative role (like that of the priest or king )?

Questions remain; why is the term not employed in early Christian writings? The Epistles refer to Jesus as “Christ” (messiah/anointed), but not as the “Son of Man”. Is it because it became too heavily associated with his sufferings (rather than his triumph), or do other, more sinister, reasons lie behind the omission?[[106]](#footnote-106) Why is no Davidic Messiah mentioned in Daniel?

Despite the remaining questions, one thing is clear; the use of Dan 7:13 by Jesus (and Stephen) during the trial was not arbitrary or accidental, nor is it attributable to church tradition, but rather it was a deliberate response by the historical Jesus (and Stephen) to prosecution charges which drew their theological warrant from Danielic apocalyptic – not only is the trial saying the *crux interpretum* of the debate; it is the most authentic of all the Son of Man traditions.

**Making the World**

**Andrew Perry**

In this article, the exegetical question is: how can Jesus be said to be the one *through* whom the world was made (John 1:10).

In the prologue of John, v. 10 is a transitional verse in which the text moves from a consideration of ‘the Light’ as a type of Christ (vv. 7-9) to a consideration of Jesus as the Passover lamb.

“He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not.” John 1:10 (KJV revised)

This transition is indicated by the pronouns. In English versions, John writes that the world did not know “him”, and the world that did not know “him” was the very same world into which “he” came and it is *this* world that was made through “him” (John 1:10). In Greek, some pronominal forms may be either masculine or neuter. Here in v. 10, any ambiguity in one pronoun is settled by the unambiguous masculine form of the other pronouns. However, “the Light” is a neuter noun, and the pronouns of v. 10 are best taken as implicitly referring to Jesus, even though he is the anti-typical Light.

The first detail to examine in v. 10 is “through him” (diV auvtou/, RSV). This expression is used of an agency: someone does something through someone else. Thus, God sent his son into the world so that the world might be saved *through* him (John 3:16); or again, God did signs and wonders *through* Christ (Acts 2:22). The same expression is used in John 1:3—the new creation comes about by God acting *through* Christ; or again, in John 1:7, men believe in Christ *through* John the Baptist. Accordingly, John 1:10 is not affirming that Jesus is the maker of the world, but that the world was made *through* “him”. This is clearer in the RSV than the KJV which has ‘made by him’.

The question is: who made the world through Jesus? While ‘God’ is an obvious answer, the text so far has presented John the Baptist and the Light. This relationship echoes the relationship of Moses and the Angel of the Lord: Moses was “the man” sent from God who bore witness to the Light of the Burning Bush. This echo supplies the clue for interpreting how the world was made through Jesus.

Many types of Jesus are presented in the story of the exodus. Jesus is prefigured by the Angel of the Lord, by Moses, and by the Passover Lamb, to name only three types. In the account of the exodus, the Angel of the Lord is said to “make” Israel (Exod 32:10, Num 14:12). The “world” into which Jesus entered was the people of God—Israel, and this was a people made by the Angel of the Lord in bringing them up from Egypt. While Yahweh is the agency behind the Angel of the Lord, we should focus on the Angel of the Lord and ask the question: how did the Angel of the Lord make the world through Jesus?

The Angel of the Lord prevented the destroy­ing angel from annihilat­ing the firstborn of Israel, by not allowing the destroyer to enter houses where the blood of the Passover Lamb was on the lintels. (Exod 12:23). This blood showed that there had already been death in the house, and as a result there was no need for the destroying angel to enter the house. In a sense therefore it was *this blood* that saved Israel, and it was because of this sacrifice that Israel could be re-born through the waters of the Red Sea. John’s statement that ‘the world was made *through him*’ is a reference to *this* particular Passover sacrifice as “Jesus” and the means through which the “world” was made.

A sacrifice stands at the Exodus beginning, as is generally the case with other OT beginnings. This sacrifice is of supreme importance, and easily overshadowed by the various typical sacrifices of the Law. Its importance is secured by the Book of Revelation and the description there of the beginnings of the millennium. In that book Christ is chiefly portrayed as ‘the Lamb’ at every point. Such an emphasis in the Apocalypse is matched by John’s use of Exodus typology.

Just as a Passover sacrifice stood at the beginning of the Mosaic “world”, a renewed Passover sacrifice is the starting point for the New Cre­ation of those who would be part of the “all things”. It is stressed by John: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29-36, 3:17).

That “made through him” is a reference to a sacrifice is shown two other texts:

1) In John 3:17, the world is “saved” through him.

2) In Rms 5:9, believers are justified by his blood and thereby “saved” through him (cf. Col 1:20).

This way of drawing types is characteristic of John’s writings. John places Jesus into the middle of some other typical situations, for instance, the offering of Isaac, the giving of the manna, and Moses’ ascents up Mt. Sinai. The same thing can be seen in Paul’s writings in connection with a type based on the reconciliation of Jacob and Esau. By placing him into the middle of such situations, it can appear as if Jesus had some manner of existence before his birth of the Virgin Mary, but a proper appreciation of typology prevents this reading. The basic mistake that Trinitarians make with the Gospel of John, when they argue for the pre-existence of Christ is to misconstrue the typical language.[[107]](#footnote-107)

That John is using language typologically is indicated by his description of Jesus or the Word as the ‘*true* Light’, for ‘true’ here denotes, not the opposite of false, but rather the measure of the standard. It is like saying of a right angle that it is true if it conforms to the *definition* of a right angle. In typology it amounts to saying that Christ is the archetype for the typical Light. Other examples of this use of ‘true’ which involve typol­ogy include ‘true riches’ (Luke 16:11), ‘true bread’ (John 6:32), ‘true vine’ (John 15:1), ‘true tabernacle’ (Heb 8:2), ‘figures of the true’ (Heb 9:24) and ‘true witness’ (Rev 3:14).[[108]](#footnote-108) With John having introduced the ‘true’ Light, he reminds his readers that it was through Jesus that the Angel of the Lord also made the world.[[109]](#footnote-109)

This deployment of typology is similar to Paul’s use of ‘the rock’ (1 Cor 10:1-5). The people journeyed through the wilderness with a rock, and Paul comments that this rock was Christ. So they journeyed with Christ through the desert. But the rock that was struck was a literal rock, and the water was provided by the Angel of the Lord who led them through the wilderness. He sustained them by day with manna (also Christ) and water. So Christ went with them and sustained them, if only they had eyes to see the doctrine being taught in their midst. Christ was there *in type*, as Paul says, the Exodus was a type, and the things that happened to the Israelites were types.[[110]](#footnote-110)

**Discussion—Did Isaiah mention Cyrus?**

**An Ironic Cyrus**

**Andrew Perry**

**Introduction**

Critical commentators view the mention of Cyrus as proof that Isaiah 40-48 was written by a prophetic hand other than Isaiah of Jerusalem. Conservative scholars, on the other hand, think that Isaiah could have predicted the rise of Cyrus, but they are in the minority.

The issues are complex and some conservative commentators regard the mention of Cyrus to be a corruption of the text. In this way they are able to ascribe all of Isaiah 40-66 to Isaiah of Jerusalem. However, it is more common for conservative critics to accept that Cyrus is mentioned and that Isaiah has “thought himself” into the situation of the Babylonian exiles and predicted the downfall of Babylon and the return of the exiles to Judah.

The problem with the conservative approach is that generally a prophet speaks to his own generation; God raises up prophets to address his people and the situation that they are facing. Why would Isaiah of Jerusalem mention Cyrus? Of what relevance is Cyrus to the Jerusalem of his day? In order to answer this question we have to read all of Isaiah 40-66 and get a picture of the events that Isaiah is addressing in Jerusalem.

The proposal of this article is that Cyrus is presented as an ironic “fulfillment” of the purpose that God had originally sought to carry out with his Servant Hezekiah.

**Describing Cyrus with Irony**

The evidence for irony in the description of Cyrus can be set out as follows:

1) Yahweh addresses Cyrus, “to his anointed to Cyrus” (Isa 45:1) and this cites the Davidic formula, “to his anointed to David” (2 Sam 22:51, Pss 18:51).[[111]](#footnote-111) Since Cyrus is not someone anointed by a priest or prophet, the assertion is ironic and a contrast with the Davidic king in Jerusalem. The implication is that the Davidic king had failed, and a “foreign” Davidic replacement was necessary. The criticism is severe, but it reflects the gravity of the prediction of the Babylonian captivity of the royal house in Isa 39:6, which came after the deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrian army.

2) A word-play is made on Hezekiah’s name in the assertion, “whose right hand I have strengthened” (Isa 45:1, KJV mg.). Hezekiah’s name is embedded in the verb “to strengthen”—*hzqyyh*/*hzq*. Such word-play is appropriate for ironical invective directed towards an individual: their name is used against them.

The strengthening of Cyrus’ right hand picks up a further Davidic element in the strengthening of the Davidic king’s right hand (Pss 16:8, 73:23, Isa 41:13). The motif of the right hand is not used elsewhere in relation to foreign conquerors. Where God brings a conqueror against the land, this is not elsewhere described in terms of God holding the conqueror’s right hand. The target of this prediction could be the Babylonian envoys if the point of the rhetoric is that Yahweh will raise up Cyrus and “take the hand” of a ruler who will subdue nations including Babylon.

3) Cyrus is addressed in person in Isa 45:1-7, but the scene includes others (the audience) because Cyrus is spoken about in the third person a parenthesis:

“…to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut…” Isa 45:1 (KJV)

The verb for “to subdue” is rare and is used here in an allusion to Isa 41:2,

“Who raised up righteousnessfrom the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and let him subdue kings?” Isa 41:2 (KJV revised)

The links between Isa 45:1 and Isa 41:2 have caused commentators to identify the “righteousness from the east” in Isa 41:2 as Cyrus. However, the linkage could be one of an ironical contrast between *two* individuals rather than expressing the same reference. If Isa 41:2 is about Hezekiah, pictured as an anti-typical Abraham,[[112]](#footnote-112) these links establish an ironic contrast between Hezekiah and Cyrus.

4) The “loosing” of the loins of kings uses a common verb (Isa 45:1); the figure seems to be that the power of kings will be weakened before Cyrus (cf. Nah 2:2). The result of this will be to open the gates and the gates will not be shut. This idea resonates with Isa 60:11,

“Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut[[113]](#footnote-113) day nor night; that *men* may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and *that* their kings *may be* brought.” Isa 60:11 (KJV)

This text describes the preeminence of Jerusalem over the nations, but it ascribes this achievement to the redeemer who comes to Zion (Isa 59:20) as the “light” of Zion (Isa 60:1). If Isa 45:1 is expressing the same idea in shorthand, it is ascribing the opening of the gates of Jerusalem (cf. Ezek 26:2) to Cyrus and asserting that kings will be brought to Jerusalem. However, such a prediction would be *ironic* if it is parasitic upon the redemptive hope expressed in Isaiah 60, as such a hope would be expected through a messianic figure (Isa 61:1).

5) Yahweh addresses Cyrus, “I will go before you” (Isa 45:2), and this echoes older traditions of the Angel of the Lord (Exod 23:20, 23, 32:34, 33:2) going before the people. The role adopted by Yahweh, however, is not the former role of the Angel of the Lord, which was to drive out the nations so that Israel might inherit the land; the role would be to *straighten* something.

The AV, NASB and RSV convey different ideas about what is straightened:

“I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight…” Isa 45:2 (KJV)

“I will go before you and make the rough places smooth...” Isa 45:2 (NAS)

“I will go before you and level the mountains …” Isa 45:2 (RSV)

The Hebrew word, translated “crooked places” in the KJV means “honourable” (7x, Exod 23:3, Lev 19:15, 32, Prov 25:6, Isa 63:1, Lam 5:12), and there is no reason to posit a different sense for Isa 45:2. The translators have seen a connection with Isa 40:3, because of the shared claim to “straighten” something. In Isa 40:4, the “crooked” (cf. Jer 17:9, Hos 6:8) are made “straight”, which uses the corresponding noun for the verb “to straighten”, and such a group could well be those in positions of honour as suggested by Isa 45:2.

The link with Isa 40:3-4 sets the rhetorical tone for this assertion about Cyrus. In Isa 40:3-4, the people are exhorted to prepare a way for the Lord and “straighten” his highway; here this work is going to be done by Yahweh for Cyrus. The contrast could not be greater, but it signifies the *deeply ironical* nature of the prediction. If the honourable among the people would not straighten their “paths” and prepare a highway for Yahweh, this would be done by God himself—*he* would straighten the honourable *for* Cyrus.

6) The next prediction cites Pss 107:16,

“I will break in pieces the doors of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron…” Isa 45:2 (KJV revised)

“For he hath broken the doors of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.” Pss 107:16 (KJV)

The point being made in this clause is not equivalent to the earlier assertion that the gates will not be shut (Isa 45:1). If doors are opened, there is no need to break them down. Also, this characteristic does not fit Cyrus’ conquest of Babylon; it is not the city gates that are broken down, as that city was captured without a battle; it could fit Cyrus’ capture of other cities.

The psalmist supplies the clue. Yahweh has broken down the doors of brass and bars of iron in order to release men from prison (Pss 107:10, 14, cf. Isa 42:22). Isaiah is predicting the same action will be carried out by Cyrus, i.e. Cyrus will release men from prison. However, the contrast is *ironic* because this is the action that had been appointed to the Servant, who was to bring out “those that sit in darkness” (Isa 42:7, Pss 107:10).

7) While any conqueror would acquire treasure, this does not explain the choice of expression “treasures of darkness” (Isa 45:3). The emphasis in the account of the visit of the Babylonian envoys was on Hezekiah showing off his treasure (Isa 39:2, 4). It would be *ironic* therefore for that treasure to be given to a foreign king who was fulfilling a Davidic role. Hezekiah’s treasures were taken to Babylon (Jer 20:5), and would have ended up in the possession of Cyrus when he took Babylon. Hezekiah’s treasures would be “treasures of darkness” for Cyrus because they would have been placed in the “darkness” of captivity as a consequence of thinking in darkness.

8) Cyrus is “called”—“I, the Lord, call thee” (Isa 45:3), which is language used of the Servant (Isa 42:6); a stress on the “name” of the Servant is also featured (Isa 49:1). The assertion, “I, the Lord, which call *thee* by thy name”, cites Isa 43:1, “I have called *thee* by thy name”, which is addressed to Jacob/Israel. This duplication in language is a clear indication that Cyrus is an *ironic substitution* for the Servant; it also supplies the background as to why Cyrus was named in the first place.

The Servant was named from the womb,

“The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.” Isa 49:1 (KJV)

This pattern of parental naming is also illustrated in the naming of Immanuel (Isa 7:14). It follows from this pattern that *naming* would be involved in any ironic critique of God’s Servant in order to establish that person as a comparable named figure. Thus, while scholars have thought it implausible that Isaiah of Jerusalem would have named a Persian ruler 150 years ahead of time, in fact, an “ironic servant” *would require* a name to complete the irony.

Cyrus is also “surnamed” by Yahweh (Isa 45:4), but the surname or title is not stated. The Hebrew verb is rare (4x) and occurs in Isaiah[[114]](#footnote-114) only in Isa 44:5, “and surname *himself* by the name of Israel” (KJV). If “Cyrus” and “anointed” are not considered titles, the implication of this intertext is that Yahweh surnamed Cyrus by the name of Israel for the sake of Jacob his servant.[[115]](#footnote-115)

9) The final *ironic* characteristic of Cyrus is his “girding” by Yahweh. The echo here is to the “girding” of David,

“For thou hast girded me with strength to battle: them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me.” 2 Sam 22:40 (KJV), cf. Pss 18:40

This oracle displays a nationalistic perspective. Cyrus is a foreign king, but his function serves national goals.

The role of Cyrus as “David” is to cause the dispersed of Israel to know that Yahweh is God (Isa 45:6). They have been scattered to the east and to the west (Isa 43:5), and with the rise of Cyrus, they will know in the east and in the west that Yahweh is God. In this sense Cyrus was “for” Jacob/Israel—to bring about their return.

**The Motivation for Irony**

If Cyrus is an ironic individual, he has to be ironic in relation to someone or something—some situation. His description indicates that he is ironic in relation to the Davidic king in Jerusalem. It follows therefore that this prophecy is being uttered *at a time* when there is a king in Jerusalem and not by an anonymous prophet living at the end of the exile as suggested by most critical commentators. If the purpose of God for Judah in Isaiah’s day rested with the Servant and that servant failed, God could have deferred his plans and introduced Cyrus as an ironic fulfillment of aspects of those plans.

The evidence for a failure on the part of the Servant is indicated by Isaiah in the reference to the sin of Judah’s first father (Isa 43:27-28, cf. Isa 9:6). The honourable of Jerusalem were also involved in this sin (Isa 43:28). Such a “sin” could well be the diplomatic overtures to Babylon, and this would also explain the anti-Babylon statements in Isaiah 40-48 which have natural fulfillments in the campaigns of Sennacherib against Babylon in 700 and 689. Nevertheless, the “sin” of Hezekiah at this time only led to a deferral of God’s anger (Isa 48:9); the people were not “cut off”. The prediction of Cyrus is therefore a natural critique of Hezekiah and an illustration of God-in-control.

The thrust of Cyrus’ work was to promote the laying of the foundation of the temple and building of Jerusalem. In keeping with the *irony* of announcing a future builder in the person of Cyrus, it is implied that the city is in a state of disrepair at the time of the announcement. The city was in a state of disrepair after the siege of 701. In order to bolster the defences of Jerusalem, a wall had been built from existing buildings in the city (2 Chron 32:5, Isa 22:10), and during the siege damage was inflicted on the wall (Isa 22:5). The temple was also denuded of its silver and gold (2 Kgs 18:15-16), and it was also the subject of fire (Isa 64:10, “has been burned with fire”, RSV); furthermore, the sacrifices had stopped (Isa 43:23-24). Such damage led to talk of a new temple (Isa 66:1). This talk was encouraged by Yahweh in his declaration that he was laying the foundation of a metaphorical temple in the trying of Hezekiah (Isa 28:16). Against this background, it is entirely plausible that Isaiah should inveigh against Hezekiah with a prediction that *another king* would lay the foundation of a temple as a consequence of his entertaining a Babylonian alliance. These details offer a context in which a long-range prophecy might be made offering a solution to the problems of the moment in 700.

**Conclusion**

It has been shown that it is entirely plausible that Isaiah of Jerusalem could have predicted the rise of Cyrus as part of a prophetic critique directed against Hezekiah. However, this does not answer the question of why Isaiah picked a Persian king and named him. Could Isaiah of Jerusalem actually have foreseen the rise of Persia?

**The Cyrus Problem**

**Paul Wyns**

The *crux interpretum* that defines much of the liberal critical approach to Isaiah is the Cyrus prophecy in Isaiah 44-45. Dennis Bratcher sums it up as follows: “From such a perspective, the “prediction” of the coming of Cyrus in Isaiah 44-45 became the crux of the issue. Either a person believed that this was accurately predicted by Isaiah of Jerusalem 200 years before it happened or one didn’t believe any of the Bible. However, this is really arguing an idea of what the Bible ought to be rather than looking at the text on its own terms. Unfortunately, this is still preached from some pulpits, even though it simply is not true. Many people hold the Bible in high regard as the authoritative word of God and cherish it as the basic source for the faith and practice of the church, and yet do not believe that these chapters were written by Isaiah of Jerusalem in 700 BC”.[[116]](#footnote-116) Mention of “Babylon”, the release of captives and the destruction/restoration of the Temple only serve to further complicate the issue and lend weight to exilic/post-exilic authorship. J. W. Thirtle has made a contribution[[117]](#footnote-117) to this debate which has often been dismissed (even by conservative scholars such as J. Barton Payne) even though his critical reconstruction offers a historically *and* exegetically credible solution.

**The Cyrus Problem Resolved?**

To suggest that Thirtle simply posits that the name “Cyrus” should be treated as a mere appellative does not do justice to his arguments. He presents a methodically researched position that demonstrates the textual continuity of Isaiah 44-45 with earlier ‘Hezekiah’ prophecies; moreover, he provides the politically motivated reason behind the change and offers a plausible philology for the transformation.

1) Firstly Thirtle observes the unusual format of the prophecy–Cyrus is spoken to in the present tense: “The passage is not in the form of a prediction: it presents the king as being addressed, as one **then living and present** to the prophet, just as plainly as ‘Jacob my servant’ is employed with reference to the chosen people…”.[[118]](#footnote-118) To understand this as purely prophetic will simply not do – God (Isaiah) is speaking to ‘His anointed’, not to someone who is still 200 years in the future. Thirtle also points out a parallelism between Isaiah 44 and 45:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Isaiah 44** | **Isaiah 45** |
| The workmen [*chârâsh*]…shall be ashamed together (v.11) | Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus [*kôrêsh*]… |
| Is there not a lie in my right hand? (v.20) | Whose right hand I have strengthened [*châzaq*] (v.1) |

Thirtle remarks that, “There is cohesion and cogency in the prophecy as a whole, as compromising the two chapters. There is, however, not allusion, but contrast as well. The ‘workman’ who makes idols has ‘a lie in his right hand’ (44.20); the one whom the Lord addressed through the prophet is subject to another influence – the Lord ‘holds his right hand’ (45.1).[[119]](#footnote-119) The contrast is between the workmen[[120]](#footnote-120) who are ashamed because their right hand trusts in a lie (idol) and the Lord’s anointed whose right hand is strengthened by *Yahweh.*

The correspondences noted by Thirtle that demonstrate continuity with earlier Hezekiah material are best illustrated in tabular form:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Isaiah 45** | **Hezekiah** |
| His anointed (v. 1) | Hezekiah the anointed king |
| Whose right hand I have strengthened [*châzaq*] (v. 1) | Play on Hezekiah’s name [*Chizqîyâh*] |
| …that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which **call thee by thy name**, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. (v. 3b,4) | Hezekiah – a prototype of the Messiah –**named Immanuel** before he was even born (though thou hast not known me) He was the *Prince of peace* and the *Wonderful Counsellor* (Isa 9:6,7) the branch out of the root of Jesse (Isa 11:1-5) |
| …they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, **Surely God is in thee**; and there is none else, there is no God. (v. 14) | Immanuel - God with us |

The word for strengthened [*châzaq*] is an obvious play on the name of Hezekiah.[[121]](#footnote-121) Thirtle remarks on the absurdity of such language being applied to a heathen king, particularly after Isaiah’s diatribe against idolaters: Cyrus claimed to be a successor of the Babylonian kings, and acknowledged the supremacy of Bel-Merodach, the Babylonian god. Hence, the restoration of the Jewish exiles was not due to any sympathy with monotheism, but rather was part of a general policy on the part of the monarch.[[122]](#footnote-122) 2) Secondly, Thirtle proposes that “Cyrus” is a corruption of the text from *chârâsh* to *kôrêsh* as follows: “The process of reasoning would be something like this: *First,* the passage would be *applied* to Cyrus, who, in presence of the people, realized parts which in some measure corresponded with those set forth in the passage about the Lord’s anointed. *Second*, Cyrus was hopefully regarded as the workman, or artificer vrx whom Jehovah had empowered to do great things in the interests of the Jews. Third, seeing that the word vrx thus implied, or stood for Cyrus, it would seem right or desirable to conform the letters to a more correct representation in Hebrew of the Persian word – hence vrk, afterwards vrwk. By these measures and mutations the word came to speak of King Cyrus and of him only. There was no intention to introduce disorder into the text –only a purpose to reduce the spelling to a form which was believed to be right. In the judgment of some leader, or leaders, of the people, vrx was intended to indicate vrk, and effect was given to this belief by the alteration of the initial letter. Thus a common appellation was made into a proper name, and a seed of misunderstanding was sown in the Isaiah prophecies.” [[123]](#footnote-123)

**Political Expediency**

Thirtle cites historical examples where prophetic writings were used to influence Gentile authorities. The high-priest Jaddua won favour for the Jewish people by meeting Alexander the Great as he approached Jerusalem and showing him the Daniel prophecies.[[124]](#footnote-124) Similarly, Onias IV, the high-priest (*ca.*150 B.C.) acquired permission from King Ptolemy and his Queen Cleopatra to build a temple at Leontopolis in Egypt by referring to Isa.19:19. In more recent times we might think of political-Zionism whose justification for the possession of the land and return of the Jews is often supported (by both Jews and Christians) by prophetic passages. The British Diplomat Sir Charles Webster who knew Chaim Weizman (the second great leader of the Zionist movement) described his diplomacy in promoting the Zionist programme as follows: “With unerring skill he adapted his arguments to the special circumstances of each statesman. To the British and Americans he could use *biblical language* and awake a deep emotional undertone; to other nationalities he more often talked in terms of interest. Mr Lloyd George was told that Palestine was a little mountainous country not unlike Wales….” [[125]](#footnote-125) We can therefore concur with Thirtle’s statement: “That the Jews should have sought a political favour by calling the attention of Gentile authorities to the things written by the prophets of their nation, need not surprise us”.[[126]](#footnote-126)

**Exilic (or post-exilic) Passages?**

Major critical objections to Thirtle’s approach are found in passages such as Isaiah 44:26-28 and 45:13-14 that can be construed as exilic/post-exilic references to the Babylonian captivity:

“That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith **to Jerusalem**, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That saith of **Cyrus**, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying **to Jerusalem**, Thou shalt be built; and **to the temple,** Thy foundation shall be laid.” (Isa 44: 26-28)

Thirtle comments: “The statement of *v*. 26: ‘That saith of Jerusalem, She shall be inhabited; and of the cities of Judah, They shall be built and I will raise up the waste places thereof’, unquestionably sustained the faithful in the time of Hezekiah, when, with the Assyrian in the land, Jerusalem was a prison-house rather than a place of habitation; and, as a result of Sennacherib’s campaign, many cities of Judah were in ruins and were places of desolation (cp. ch. 65.9). The two following verses, however, came in as a gloss at the time of the Return:

“That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: that saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built; and to the Temple, Thy fountain shall be laid.” (Isa 44:27-28)

In the time of Isaiah, these verses could have no meaning; but the work undertaken by Cyrus, a century and a half later, suggested them most naturally. The interpolation is, indeed, transparent. We have already read that Jerusalem shall be ‘inhabited’, that the cities of Judah shall be ‘built.’ Now however, and obviously with reference to Cyrus, whose name is anticipated from the following chapter, we read something different –namely, that Jerusalem ‘shall be built’; while to the Temple it shall be said, ‘Thy foundation shall be laid.’ The statements of the last verse do not agree with those of *v*.26. But the Persian having been introduced in ch. 45.1, we might well look for some such a leading recital of facts pertinent to his day – the time of the Return”.[[127]](#footnote-127)

Thirtle’s analysis may well be correct, however, it is possible that a Targum (recorded as a marginal note?) entered the text at a later stage of transmission. [[128]](#footnote-128) For example, the Assyrian invasion is described as a **“flood”** in the book of Isaiah, and Hezekiah is described as a **“sure foundation”** – the rock that will not be moved by the inundation:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CYRUS? - Isaiah 44 | HEZEKIAH - Isaiah 28 |
| That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers (v. 27) | Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, [= the Assyrians] which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a **flood** **of mighty waters overflowing,** shall cast down to the earth with the hand. (v. 2) |
| Thy **foundation** shall be laid. (v. 28) | Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner [stone], **a sure foundation**:[Hezekiah] he that believeth shall not make haste. (v. 16) |

Young’s Literal Translation renders the verse as follows (Isa 28: 16): Therefore, thus said the Lord Jehovah: `Lo, I am laying a foundation in Zion, A stone -- a tried stone, a corner stone precious, a settled foundation, He who is believing doth not make haste. The phrase ‘doth not make haste’ (vyxi(y" al{ï, lo ya.khish) is rather unusual but is probably intended as a word play on Lachish (vykil', la.khish) as the transliterated verse demonstrates.[[129]](#footnote-129)

While Sennacherib personally supervised the siege of Lachish, Jerusalem only merited the attention of his lieutenants (2 Chron 32: 9) – a sign of contempt. Lachish fell but Jerusalem did not fall in the siege. Jerusalem survived because it had, ‘a tried leader or captain (not corner), a precious and sure foundation.’ The *‘tried leader’* was the *‘suffering servant’* king Hezekiah, who became *‘a precious and sure foundation’* to them that believed. In contrast, those who did not believe in the sign of Messiah would perish; *If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.* (Isa 7: 9). Ahaz had not believed, instead he replaced the Temple altar with an Assyrian altar. However, Ahaz could not remove the base –the threshing floor (*‘a rock of offence’*: Isa 8: 14) – faithful Hezekiah, who did believe, typified this foundation and consequently his dynasty was established.

The metaphor used in Isaiah 28 is very similar to that of Isaiah 44 the depiction of the Assyrian invasion as a ‘flood’ and Hezekiah as a ‘foundation’ is very similar to Isa 59:19:

“So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in **like a flood**, the Spirit of the Lord shall **lift up a standard** against him.” (Isa.59: 19)

The ‘standard’ was of course Hezekiah (who prefigured the ‘lifted up’ Messiah). Psalm 74, also a Hezekiah psalm, says: “Thou didst cleave the fountain and the **flood**: thou driedst up mighty rivers.” (Pss 74: 15)

In the Davidic covenant Yahweh had promised to **build a house** for David *(‘The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you’* —2 Sam.7: 11, NIV); but Hezekiah was about to die childless, leaving the throne without a Davidic heir, thereby nullifying the covenant. However, Hezekiah’s faithfulness and reliance on Yahweh was rewarded by a miraculous deliverance on a personal and national level. Hezekiah typified the faithful remnant both corporately and corporally – his illness and suffering mirrored the national death throes. Hezekiah recovered (on the third day) and was therefore able to produce progeny:

“Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, **he will see his offspring and prolong his days**, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.” (Isa.53: 10, NIV).

Hezekiah’s choice of the Solomonic Psalm, 127, for his “Songs of Degrees” collection is explained by Hezekiah’s wonderful recovery which coincided with national deliverance:

“Unless the Lord **builds the house**, its builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord **watches over the city**, the watchmen stand guard in vain” (Pss 127: 1, NIV).

If we apply these insights to the text in question (Isa 44: 26-28) and leave out the glosses, an original reconstruction might look something like this:

“That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to **the earth,** Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That saith of **my workman**, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying, **Thy house** shalt be built; Thy foundation shall be laid.” (Isa 44: 26, 28 reconstructed)

A comparison demonstrates that the changes are minimal. In this reconstruction ‘earth’ substitutes for ‘Jerusalem’. The ‘earth’ is often used as a metaphor for the land of Israel. Note the natural parallelism that now exists between the earth and the deep. The waters of the flood have now dried up and made the land habitable once again: an allusion to Noah’s flood and the Genesis creation narrative. Isaiah uses virtually the same figure in Isa 45:18:

“For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself **that formed the earth** and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.” (Isa 45:18)

If the verses (Isa 44:27-28, 45:1) are a post-exilic gloss (as suggested by Thirtle) then it is relatively easy to see how the text was adapted to suit the needs of the exiles – these glosses were added as explanatory notes and slowly became incorporated in the text. Herodotus has a dramatic account of how Cyrus captured the city of Babylon. He says that first it was unsuccessfully besieged, but that Cyrus then managed to force an entrance by diverting the course of the Euphrates. Consequently the water-level dropped so low that his men were able to wade along the river-bed and so into the city. This would naturally suggest to the exilic reader, who was examining the prophecy of Isaiah – and who was looking for a fulfillment of the return prophesied by Jeremiah – that the ‘workman’ (*chârâsh*) was actually Cyrus (*kôrêsh*) and that he would restore the exiles to Jerusalem – thus an interpretive gloss became embedded in the text.

**Isaiah 45:13-14**

A similar problem is encountered in Isa 45:13, 14 – do these ‘exilic’ or ‘post-exilic’ references favour a ‘Cyrus’ scenario?

“I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: **he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives,** not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts. Thus saith the Lord, The labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee…” (Isa 45:13, 14)

Is the phrase ‘he shall build my city’a reference to Cyrus? If that is the case then the prophecy was not fulfilled by Cyrus, for the city was still in ruins in the second year of Darius (Hag.1:1, 9); in fact Nehemiah found the city still in ruins in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes.

However, we know that Hezekiah performed defensive work on the city’s water supply (Isa.22:9-11; 2 Chron.32: 2-7) celebrated in Isaiah 12 as ‘the wells of salvation.’ The reference to the release of captives is also applicable to the Assyrian invasion. In the time of Hezekiah. Sennacheribtook away from Judea no less than 200,000 heads, and settled some of them (possibly most of them) in Babylon(Taylor Prism; cp. Mic. 4:10), which he had recently captured and in fact depopulated, a process begun by his predecessors (2 Kings 17:24).

The return of this captivity was anticipated by Isaiah (Isa 7:3) who gave his son the long, multi-syllable name She’ar-Yashuv (which means “a remnant will return”). The prisoners of war (who were in the process of deportation) were sent home by the Assyrians and escaped when their army was destroyed overnight. These captives included people from the surrounding nations who were amongst those to pay tribute to Hezekiah. He was exalted in the eyes of the nations:

“Many gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he (Yahweh?) was magnified in the sight of all nation from thenceforth” (2 Chron.32:23).[[130]](#footnote-130)

Furthermore, Isa 45:13 has an obvious Messianic application – God has “raised up (awakened-out of death?) in all righteousness, and all his ways are right (LXX): he shall build my city (the New Jerusalem), and he shall let go my captives”. The captives are *“those who for their iniquities have sold themselves”* (Isa 50:1). This is redemption *“not for price or reward”,* as judged by human captors and slave-traders; *“Ye have sold yourselves for nought, and ye shall be redeemed without money”* (Isa.52:3). The price was paid by the Suffering Servant and that Servant was not pre-figured by Cyrus.

There is often no need to resort to the solution of exilic or post-exilic authorship in order to explain difficult Isaiah passages as they complement the *Sitz im Leben* found during Hezekiah’s reign. However, some references are obviously exilic or post-exilic:

“Thy holy cities are become a wilderness, Zion is become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.” (Isa 64:10, 11)

Thirtle believes this to be a blatant example of interpolation. He says, “The cities of Judah having been destroyed, and the Assyrian being at the walls of Jerusalem, Isaiah might well use the language of *v.*10: ‘Thy holy cities are become a wilderness, Zion is become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.’ Also he might conclude his prayer with *v.*12: ‘Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord? Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?’ Not so as to *v.* 11: ‘Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste.’ This obviously belongs to a later age. And we can easily understand as the time for the Return approached, that such a chapter as this would be used as a prayer by mourning exiles; and then the terms of *v.*11 would be quite seasonable. The verse cannot, however, be by Isaiah. It bears evidence of some such ‘adaptation’ as we have found in the Psalter, but not so easily to be justified”.[[131]](#footnote-131)

Bullinger believes Isa 64:10-11 to be an example of prophetic prolepsis[[132]](#footnote-132) but perhaps the explanation is even simpler – the passage expresses **the intention** of the enemy, but was never fulfilled. The passage finds a parallel in Psalm 74 (attributed by Thirtle to the Hezekiah period):

“They said in their heart, Let us destroy them together: They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.” (Pss 74:8)

The word ‘synagogues’ (*mô’ ēd*) is misleading. The LXX has, “let us abolish the feasts of the Lord”,andthe cultic use always associates the word *mô’ ēd* with religious festivals. The same word is translated as ‘congregations’ in v. 4 of the psalm; “Thine enemies **roar** in the midst of thy congregations (*mô’ ēd*)”; again, the LXX has, “and they that hate thee have boasted in the midst of thy feasts”.

However, several allusions in Isaiah show that the duration of the siege of Jerusalem included Passover (Isa 26:20, 21; 30:29; 31:5; 33:19, 20). Moreover, the “roaring [lion]” and the “axe” that function metaphorically for the enemy in this psalm (Pss 74: 4, 5) are also used by Isaiah as symbols of Assyria (Isa 5:29; 10:15). It seems from Pss 74:6-7 that some sort of destruction was wrought in the Sanctuary, and it can be proposed that this was partially fulfilled during the siege by internal riots.

**Argumentum ex silento?**

It might be objected that Cyrus is referred to in sympathetic terms by Ezra:

“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord **by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah might be fulfilled,** the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” (Ezra 1:1-2)

Thirtle says very little about this passage but remarks: “Meantime, it is necessary to observe that no such language as is found in Isa 44.28/45 1-4 is used in any other of the Hebrew writings in regard to Cyrus. We meet the name in 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Daniel, and the style is sometimes ‘the king of Persia’, at another time ‘the king of Babylon,’ yet again, baldly, ‘Cyrus the Persian’ or ‘the king.’ [[133]](#footnote-133)

Thirtle is entirely correct, none of the magnificent epithets found in Isa 44-45 are applied to Cyrus (‘the Lord’s anointed’, ‘His shepherd’, the one ‘strengthened’, ‘called by name’ etc) by Ezra. But more importantly **the prophecy of Jeremiah is referred to** **and** **not the prophecy of Isaiah.** If Isaiah speaks so powerfully (in messianic terms) of the divine purpose embodied in Cyrus, then why does Ezra (or anyone else) neglect to mention it? It is conspicuous by its absence. *The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus* is hardly the equivalent of *‘I have called thee by thy name’.*

Although this is an argument by omission (*argumentum ex silento*) it provides circumstantial evidence that Cyrus was not in the original text of Isaiah. This supports Thirtle’s suggestion that the word ‘Cyrus’ in Isa 45:1 was originally an alternative reading that was adopted for political reasons and that it slowly hardened into a textual variant that was uniformly accepted and incorporated. It is obvious that although a *reading* of Isa 45:1 may have been presented to Cyrus as corroborative evidence that **he** was the king chosen to release the Jews after seventy years exile (as spoken by Jeremiah the prophet); even at the later period of Ezra it had not yet solidified into the *textual* form that we now have.

Cyrus was known for his religious tolerance towards all his conquered peoples and his treatment of the Jews was not exceptional. Cyrus claimed to be the agent of Marduk, the god who had been shamefully wronged by Nabonidus, when he conquered Babylon (this was an attempt to ingratiate himself with the local population for Nabonidus had been absent in Arabia for much of his reign and had neglected his religious duties, including the New Year Festival in Babylon). John Curtis comments; “In matters of religion Cyrus does seem to have been remarkably tolerant. About his own beliefs we can say little: he may have been an early follower of the prophet Zoroaster, or he may have supported the ‘daivas’, the old Iranian gods of war and strife rejected by Zoroaster. The evidence is inconclusive. In any event, he does not seem to have forced his own views on any of his subject peoples, but of course this religious tolerance may well have been dictated by political expediency. For it seems to have been the hallmark of Cyrus’s rule to observe local customs wherever he went, to preserve local institutions if possible and in general to avoid creating disruption”.[[134]](#footnote-134)

Moreover, the prediction of the return of the exiles under Cyrus is again conspicuous by its absence in Isaiah’s reprimand to Hezekiah: “Of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they (the Babylonians) take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon” (2 Chron.33:11-13). He did not, however, add that they would be released by ‘the Lord’s anointed Cyrus.’ Even Jeremiah, when reminding the people of the destruction of Zion prophesied by Micah the Morashite (a contemporary of Isaiah) does not mention Cyrus (Jer.26:18).

**The ‘Suffering Servant’**

Perhaps the strongest argument against reading ‘Cyrus’ in Isaiah 45 is the ‘Suffering Servant’ prophecy of Isaiah 53 *that finds its original fulfilment in the life of Hezekiah.* It is the New Testament hymn in Philippians that connects the motif of the ‘Suffering Servant’ of Isaiah 53 with the “Cyrus prophecy” of Isaiah 45 by citing Isa 45:23:

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:10, 11)

We might well ask who it was that functioned as a messianic prototype. Was it Cyrus the pagan king and idol worshipper, or, Hezekiah the faithful descendant of David – the man who embodied the covenant promises and rose from his sickbed on the third day – the man who carried the burden of the faithful nation that he attempted to reform – the man who was delivered at Passover (together with the nation) –the man whose birth was prophesied by Isaiah –the man whose name was Immanuel? Hezekiah was the mediator; the ‘Suffering Servant’ who acted on behalf of the faithful remnant (Jacob who was also Yahweh’s servant....Israel whom I have chosen: Isa 44:1) and *who also* acted as God’s agent (Immanuel –God with us –named by God: Isa 45:4 *cf.* 7:14) to the faithful remnant.

Thus Hezekiah *represented* both parties –Yahweh to the people and the people to Yahweh. Thirtle comments: “The New Testament application of these great words is by no means called in question by the immediate (or initial) interpretation. Holy Scripture continually shows its distinctive vitality and inspiration in the fact that its statements are capable of applications that are far-reaching beyond anything suggested by their primary purpose. All the same, it is important to observe the immediate reference, even in forms which are of the deepest significance when viewed in their relation to the larger unfoldings of the Divine plan”.[[135]](#footnote-135) Who then functioned in an archetypical messianic role – Hezekiah or Cyrus?[[136]](#footnote-136)

**Report on SOTS Summer 2007**

The summer meeting of the Society for Old Testament Study was held at Tap ton Hall, Sheffield University. This was a two and a half day event attended by a good proportion of the UK professors and lecturers (active and retired) in the OT, along with overseas visitors and graduate students. Presentations by speakers were of mixed value. It was the ninetieth anniversary meeting and a biographical lecture about A. S. Peake was given on the opening night by Prof John Rogerson of Sheffield; Peake was a founder member of the society. Evening lectures at such events tend to be lighter material.

Of the first full day, two lectures were of note. The first was entitled “Genesis among the Exiles” by Dr James McKeown offered an intertextual study of Ezek 21:27 and Gen 49:10. Observing that “until he come whose right it is” (jpvmh wl rva ab d[, Ezek 21:27, KJV) cites “until he comes to whom it belongs” (hlyv aby yk d[, Gen 49:10, RSV), he discussed who the individual is that comes. A messianic interpretation is common, but McKeown proposed that it was Nebuchadnezzar.

McKeown’s argument was that Ezekiel expected an imminent failure of the promise of Gen 49:10; the sceptre was about to depart from Judah and “Shiloh” (hlyv) had not come. Rather than interpret hw[ hw[ hw[ as “A ruin, a ruin, a ruin” (RSV), he offered “Twisted, twisted, twisted” and a reference for the term of the promise in Gen 49:10. Thus the declaration of Ezekiel was that the promise would be twisted. What is then given is not a right, but a judgment (jpvmh) against Jerusalem: “until he comes, which in respect of him, judgment I will give”.

The problem with McKeown’s suggestion is that it changes the nature of “until” (d[); it leaves the preposition hanging: Gen 49:10 has the schematic form “*a* until *b*”, but McKeown’s suggestion does not account for this form in Ezekiel. “Twisted, twisted, twisted, I will make it” is not given the role of “*a*” in an “*a* until *b*” form comparable with Gen 49:10, and so the “until” is left hanging. The twisting of the promise is not until Nebuchadnezzar comes; the twisting of the promise *is* the coming of Nebuchadnezzar for McKeown.

The second lecture was by Dr Ian Young entitled, “Late Language, Loanwords, and Linguistic Dating of Biblical Books”. His thesis, which is due out in text book form, and which was trailed in his 2003 edited collection of essays, is that late biblical Hebrew features can be equally found in early biblical books and the proportion of distribution is insufficient for dating purposes; the use of such features, early or late, is a matter of style. With regard to Persian loanwords, Young argued that the influence of Persian upon Hebrew in the pre-exilic period could be accounted for by the practice of Assyrian deportation from the east to the west.

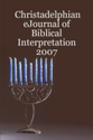
On the second day, Prof McCarthy gave a lecture entitled “The Word is Very Near to You: Some Reflections on BHQ Deuteronomy”. McCarthy is an editor of the new edition of *Biblica Hebraica* abbreviated as BHQ (Quinta). The latest volume (5) is Deuteronomy and has been edited by McCarthy. The lecture explained the manuscripts being used and the text-critical guidelines being followed by the BHQ editorial committee and used Deuteronomy as the illustrative material. This edition will replace the current standard edition (BHS) of Biblica Hebraica. McCarthy’s own work on Deuteronomy, published in June 2007, has lasted fifteen years. The most important principle in the new edition is that it is a diplomatic edition of the MT utilizing three Leningrad Tiberian Masoretic manuscripts. The main purpose of the edition is to supply an up-to-date critical apparatus while treating the integrity of the Tiberian MT in a conservative fashion.

Finally, the conference was capped by a discussion of the future of SOTS which revealed that its members (approx. 300 across the English speaking world; about 70 attend the conferences) wanted (among other things) to retain the “family” atmosphere while developing more of a voice in the mass media and academic circles.

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**Supplement Section**

**Hebrews and Pre-Existence**

**Andrew Perry**

This article will examine the interpretation of Heb 1:10-12 and, after dismissing current interpretations, present a new reading. A corollary of the study is that it is shown that the text does not presuppose the pre-existence of the Son.

**Introduction**

The largest quotation deployed by the author of Hebrews is from Psalm 102,

“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” Heb 1:10-12 (KJV)

“Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens *are* the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end.” Pss 102:25-27 (KJV)

The quotation is a composite quotation[[137]](#footnote-137) from the Psalm because there is added the extra phase “...Thou Lord” from v. 12 of the Psalm, “But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever”. How should this quotation be handled? What does a reader take from Psalm 102 *into* Hebrews 1?

**Interpretations**

There are four interpretations to cover:

1) Some commentators ascribe this utterance to the Messiah who says to the Father that he laid the foundation of the earth. However, this suggestion fits badly with the argument in Hebrews 1 which is centred on things that are *said of the Messiah*. This quotation from Psalm 102 is the largest of the O.T. texts that the author selects, and it would break the structure of his argument to read it as referring to the Father, especially as the author concludes his reasoning with a quote from Psalm 110 which is an undis­puted example of something said to the Messiah. This last quote is tied to the opening quotation of the author’s reasoning by the phrase “said he at any time”, and this link encloses the whole piece as assertions spoken to Christ.

2) This quotation has also been thought by some commentators to ascribe the work of the Genesis creation to Christ.[[138]](#footnote-138) However, the language of creation is used to describe other “beginnings” in God’s purpose, for example, the Flood, the Exodus, and the Gospel.[[139]](#footnote-139) It cannot be assumed that the Genesis creation is the only possible meaning. Literally speaking the earth and the heavens will not perish,[[140]](#footnote-140) and therefore a “Genesis” reading seems unlikely.

3) Another proposal has been that the quotation refers to the creation of Israel, the foundation of that nation viewed as a figurative “heavens and earth”.[[141]](#footnote-141) It is argued that these “heavens and earth” were to “perish” in the sense that the Mosaic order and the state were brought to an end in AD70. The difficulty with this view is that it is unclear *how* Christ could be said to be the one who laid the foundations of the Mosaic order.

4) A further interpretation[[142]](#footnote-142) is that the “heavens and the earth” are a new creation, the foundations of which were laid by Christ in his ministry, in the beginning, and which will be realized upon his return. It is further said that *even* these “heavens and earth” will perish, once the millennium has run its course. The problem with this suggestion is that it looks like an *ad hoc* solution; the post-millennial state of affairs is elsewhere not the subject of prophecy. It is difficult to see why the new heavens and earth of the millennium would perish.

Against these proposals, we offer here a nuanced merger of views (3) and (4), and suggest that Heb 1:10-12 is a typology based on the restoration of Judah under Hezekiah.

### **Quoting Psalm 102**

The presumption in (4) is that the pronoun in “…they shall perish…” (v. 11) refers to the “heavens and earth” of the previous verse (v. 10). If we take the text of Hebrews alone, this may appear to be the only option, but a close reading of Psalm 102 supplies a different reference for what will perish, something other than the “heavens and the earth”. Hence, our suggestion is that the author of Hebrews has taken into his text the reference of the “they shall perish” from Psalm 102; he has not created a new reference. In other words, the author of Hebrews expects his readers to understand the whole of Psalm 102 and to use the references *in that Psalm* for the pronouns in his quotation.

Our proposal is that “the Lord” (Jesus) did lay the foundation of the new heavens and earth in his ministry “in the beginning”, and that this is spoken to “the Lord” at his return. At that time, when the new heavens and new earth are brought to completion, they will replace an old order which will perish. This old order is identified as the Mosaic order in Hebrews 8. Speaking of the Mosaic system the author of the letter says,

“That which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away” (Heb 8:13).

And this is the topic of Heb 1:10-12,

“They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment…” Heb 1:11

In contrast, the salvation of the Messiah would be from genera­tion to gener­ation (Isa 51:8, Pss 102:28, Heb 1:14, 2:3).

In Psalm 102 the same transition is outlined, except that the terms of Psalm 102 refer to a “type” rather than the antitype of Hebrews 1. This type revolves around Hezekiah[[143]](#footnote-143) and the foundation of a new earth that God had laid in his early reign, overturning the idolatry of Ahaz. During the Assyrian invasion and his sickness, power passed to the political enemies of Hezekiah in Jerusalem. It is against this background that the hope of the psalmist is expressed that these men would perish and the new earth laid down by Hezekiah would come to fulfillment.

### **Psalm 102**

Psalm 102 is a “Hezekiah Psalm”, and its language is closely tied to prophecies of the eighth century. At this time, Judah was in mortal danger, facing extinction as a nation and captivity in Assyria. Hezekiah was sick and power had transferred to his opponents in Jerusalem who sought a policy of appeasement with Assyria.

The psalm is both a public and a private prayer, for it is addressed both to God and then published for the people. The prayer begins in v. 1 with a first person address to God. In v. 16 there is a shift to the third person and the psalm addresses an audience describing what “the Lord” will do for Zion. In v. 23 there is a recapitulation of a prayer that has been addressed to God.

### **Hezekiah’s Prayer**

The situation of the prayer is one where Zion is under threat from an external enemy and the one who is praying has opponents inside the city who are advocating a policy of appeasement. In addition, the person is sick unto death. Hezekiah is fearful for the state of the nation and his capital city Jerusalem (v. 20), with enemies without and *within* (v. 8). The contrast in the Psalm is between his declining days[[144]](#footnote-144) and the everlast­ing days of Yahweh. He senses the passing of his generation, he feels the reproach of his political opponents, and so he looks to the next gener­ation, and he writes his words for them — a ‘generation to come’ and a ‘people which shall be created’ (Pss 102:18).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Day of Distress v. 2 (RSV) | A day comparable to the “day of the Lord” |
| Days consumed in smoke v. 3 | Days characterized by the destruction of the cities of Judah, cf. Isa 51:6 |
| My bones are burned as a hearth v. 3 | The “bones” are his kinsman who are being “burned” in the land, cf. Job 30:30, Isa 24:6 |
| I am withered like grass vv. 4, 11 | This is the refrain describing the state of Jerusalem and Judah in Isa 40:6-8 |
| I am like a vulture of the wilderness and an owl of the waste places v. 6 (RSV) | The wilderness and waste places of Jerusalem Isa 51:3 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| My “enemies” have access to me and reproach me all the day v. 8 | These are internal opponents at the Jerusalem court hostile to Hezekiah cf. Isa 51:7 |
| I have been lifted up and cast down v. 10 | The king has been replaced during his sickness |

Hezekiah laments his sickness and contrasts his plight with the everlast­ing days of Yahweh. His days are like a shadow, but the Lord endures for ever (vv. 11-12). Nevertheless, he declares to his God that He (Yahweh) will arise and have mercy upon Zion, because His servants, of whom Hezekiah was one, took pleasure in the stones of Zion (v. 14).

At this juncture the Psalm breaks off from recording Hezekiah’s prayer and records Hezekiah’s own thoughts on the prayer and addresses an audience. Thus v. 16 begins with a confident expression of hope — ‘When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory’. This change of fortune for Zion will come about when the Lord ‘appears’ in His glory. Hezekiah offers his thoughts on his prayer in vv. 17-22 in a soliloquy.

The immediate fulfillment of Hezekiah’s expectations lies in the deliver­ance of Jerusalem from the invading armies of Sennacherib. Hezekiah is confident that God has ‘looked down’ and seen the groaning of the prisoner and determined to loosen those appointed to death (by the Assyrian invaders). In this expected deliverance, Hezekiah anticipates that a people will be gathered together and by this process ‘created’ (vv. 18, 22), and they will praise the Lord in Zion (vv. 18, 21). This ‘genera­tion to come’ (Pss 78:4, cf. Deut 29:22) are described as the children of Yahweh’s servants, who would ‘continue’, indeed the children of these children would also be established before the Lord; this is a picture of stability and long life (Pss 102:14, 28).

The prayer and the address to the audience go together, because the soliloquy emerges out of the prayer (v. 17). It is written for a generation to come and the people who would be created out of the coming deliverance. The Psalm concludes with a recapitulation[[145]](#footnote-145)[[146]](#footnote-146) of the prayer and its occasion (v. 23ff). God had weakened Hezekiah and shortened his days, and in response, Hezekiah had said in prayer, ‘O my God take me not away in the midst of my days’ (v. 24ff, cf. Pss 89:45). Naturally, this review repeats elements of the prayer from vv. 2-15 as well as expanding upon its content. So we learn again that God is throughout all genera­tions (vv. 12, 24), and that He endures for ever (vv. 12, 26). Indeed, Hebrews 1:10 binds the prayer and the recapitulation together because it quotes from v. 12 (of the prayer) and vv. 25-26 (of the recapitulation), ‘And, thou Lord (from v. 12), in the begin­ning hast laid the foun­da­tion of the earth (from v. 25)’.

### **New Heavens and New Earth**

While it is natural to take “heavens and earth” to refer to the Genesis creation, these terms can also carry a poetic reference to God’s people in the land, Jerusalem, and the temple. Isaiah prophesied of a “new heavens and a new earth” in the context of the restoration of Judah after the invasion of 701 B.C.E.,[[147]](#footnote-147)

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.” Isa 65:17-18 (KJV)

The partial interpretation of the figure “new heavens and a new earth” is given in the statement that ‘I create Jerusalem a rejoicing’. The most plausible suggestion is that Jerusalem and in particular its temple and priests are the “new heavens” and the “new earth” is the general population and the civic leaders in a restored land. Such a “new heavens” is indicated by Isaiah in other references to Jerusalem and the temple needing to be re-built at this time:

“Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt thou refrain thyself for these *things*, O Lord? wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?” Isa 64:10-11 (KJV)

“Thus saith the Lord, The heaven *is* my throne, and the earth *is* my footstool: where *is* the house that ye build unto me? and where *is* the place of my rest?” Isa 66:1-2 (KJV)

Isaiah indicates that the work of restoration was not proceeding; but this does not detract from the pleading and encouragement implied in the promise of a “new heavens and a new earth” at this time in Hezekiah’s reign. The intention of Yahweh was that righteousness would go forth from Jerusalem (Isa 62:1).

This (faltering) work of restoration implies that a foundation had been laid for the heavens and the earth. Hence, we read earlier in Isaiah,

“Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I have laid in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.” Isa 28:16 (KJV revised)

This text is interpreted in the NT in relation to Christ, but in its primary application it refers to Hezekiah and his faith in Yahweh. Spoken before the siege of Jerusalem has been lifted, and before Jerusalem has been delivered, it calls the people to have faith in Hezekiah as God’s servant, and to not “make haste” out of the city.

It is this background that informs Hezekiah’s thinking in Psalm 102:10-12. He says two things:

1) Firstly, the foundation of the earth was laid “of old”; the expression (~ynpl) strictly means “from before” and it is generally translated as an expression of temporal priority (e.g. Deut 2:10, Jud 1:10, Job 17:6). In the context of the Jerusalem siege, Hezekiah is saying that God had laid the foundation of the earth *before this crisis*, and this poetic figure is naturally taken as a reference to Hezekiah’s prior reforming reign which was ostensibly the foundation for the future.

2) Secondly, Hezekiah says that the heavens are the work of God’s hands;[[148]](#footnote-148) he does not say that the foundation of the heavens has been laid—he is not making the same point as Isa 28:16. However, he is saying that the work of fashioning the heavens belongs to God. In terms Isaiah’s prophecies, this work has to do with reforming the temple and the priesthood so that righteousness goes forth out of Zion.

These statements are an expression of Hezekiah’s confidence in Yahweh: he contrasts work that God has already done (the foundation of the earth) and work he is currently engaged upon (fashioning a new people—the heavens); he contrasts this work with “those who shall perish”.

### **Garments**

The rhetorical flow of the Psalm identifies the “they” of “they shall perish” as the “they that are mad against me” (v. 8). Apart from his own physical health, and apart from the crisis facing the nation, it is about his “enemies” that Hezekiah offers complaint. His expression of confidence in Yahweh is therefore to be contrasted with the future in store for his enemies. The language that he uses to describe them is echoed in Isaiah.

“They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:” Pss 102:26 (KJV)

“Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall become old like a garment, and its inhabit­ants shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.” Isa 51:6 (KJV)

“Behold, the Lord God will help me; who *is* he *that* shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.” Isa 50:9 (KJV)[[149]](#footnote-149)

These Isaiah prophecies use some of the language of Psalm 102.[[150]](#footnote-150) The problems that Hezekiah had with his enemies in Jerusalem during the Assyrian siege continued after Jerusalem was delivered. At this time these same enemies advocated policies of treaty and alliance with the surrounding nations as a way of bringing stability to the region in the wake of the power vacuum left behind by the Assyrians. Hence, Hezekiah describes the fate of these enemies in the same terms as Isaiah who saw in them the opponents of Yahweh; Isaiah advocated reliance on Yahweh alone.

Isaiah 50 opens with a rhetorical question about a bill of divorcement. Where were the divorce papers, if God had cast away his people? There were none, even though the people had sold themselves into slavery in their efforts to appease the Assyrian Superpower. Now, they were failing to take up arms and re-conquer the land. They had been delivered from Assyria, but they were refusing to take up the task of conquest. Hence, Yahweh was complaining that there was ‘no man’ to lead the forces out of Jerusalem (Isa 50:2, 52:11).

In this context, the Servant of the Lord meditates about his situation (Isa 50:4-9). He was experiencing consider­able dissension inside the city by those in the establish­ment who favoured diplomatic solutions to the political situation. Nevertheless, they would “wax old as a garment” (Isa 50:9), and so the Servant appeals to those who fear Yahweh that they should follow him.

This appeal is continued in Isaiah 51, ‘Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness’ (Isa 51:1, 4). It would seem that Hezekiah’s confidence in God was pilloried and discounted, and his political enemies orches­trated public demon­stra­tions of opposi­tion, during which he (like politicians today) was buffeted and spat on (Isa 50:6-7).[[151]](#footnote-151) In this context, he declares that the earth would ‘wax old as a garment’ (Isa 51:6). The parallelism of Isa 50:9 and Isa 51:6, namely, ‘*they* shall wax old’ (Isa 50:9) and ‘the earth shall wax old’ (Isa 51:6), identifies the poetic reference for “the earth”— it is comprised of those who ruled the land.

The same point is being made in Psalm 102. When Hezekiah says, ‘Mine enemies reproach me all the day, and *they* that are mad against me are sworn against me’ (v. 8), this is the language of political opposition. It is these enemies who are metaphorically “the earth” and who would “wax old” as a garment and perish (Pss 102:26).

### **Hebrews 1 and Psalm 102**

The use of Psalm 102 in Hebrews 1 is typological. The words are spoken to the Davidic messiah when he returns to establish the kingdom. At this time, when God brings again the firstbegotten into the world, it is said that,

“And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up,[[152]](#footnote-152) and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” Heb 1:10-12 (KJV)

At this time, the “beginning” refers back to the beginning of the Gospel ministry; it was at this time that the foundation of the new earth was laid. When the Son returns, those who held sway over the people would perish and wax old as a garment; the kingdom of the Son would not fail.

This use of Psalm 102 reflects the expectations of the author of Hebrews. He was living in the “last days” of the Jewish Commonwealth (v. 2). In these days those who ruled the nation would perish, and the Son would set up his own rule. Speaking of the Mosaic system, the author says, ‘That which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away’ (Heb 8:13), and ‘He taketh away the first, that he may estab­lish the sec­ond’ (Heb 10:9). The salvation of the Messiah’s age would be from generation to gener­ation (Isa 51:8, Pss 102:28, Heb 1:14, 2:3).

This ending of the Jewish Commonwealth is described as the *passing away* of a “heaven and earth” by *other* N.T. writers, but it is important to recognize that the author of Hebrews is not making his point in these precise terms; he is not saying that ‘heaven and earth’ shall perish.

“Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Matt 5:18[[153]](#footnote-153)

“But the day of the Lord will come...in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are in it shall be burned up…Never­theless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness.” 2 Pet 3:10-13

This passage identifies the sequence and the timing of the new heaven and earth: an old heaven and earth passes away, and a new heaven and earth come about in its place. The elements here are the rudiments of the Law of Moses, as is shown by the occurrence of the same Greek word for ‘elements’ in Gal 4:3, 9, Col 2:8, 20 and Heb 5:12. If we combine the teaching of Heb 1:10-12 with 2 Pet 3:10-13, we add the detail that the foundation of the new earth was laid in the beginning of Jesus’ ministry.

## **Conclusion**

In Psalm 102, Hezekiah thinks of Yahweh. The use of Psalm 102 in Hebrews is solely messianic, and the thought is not of the Father but of Christ. A fair amount of biblical reading is required to understand Hebrews 1. It is not correct to read ‘laid the foundation of the earth’ with a 20c. cultural perspective, as if the author was describing the planet. The author is using a Psalm which employs figurative language in referring to a heaven and earth, and this language is descriptive of the restoration of Judah under Hezekiah. The interpretation of the author of Hebrews is that this restoration is typical of the kingdom that Jesus will establish on his return. This kingdom will replace a Jewish leadership which will perish.

The letter to the Hebrews is very much a Jewish letter addressing *Jewish* concerns and issues. One such issue concerned the status of Christ, and the author shows that the superiority of Christ derives from his status as a Son who has *inherited* a most excellent name. None of his argument fits well with Trinitarian or pre-existence claims about Christ; indeed, it is difficult to conceive his readers understanding the idea of an incarnation of a pre-existent Son. Instead of this idea, we have seen that the author sets various Psalms in a context of *inherit­ance* and *delegated* authority. This authority far exceeded anything that had been possessed by the angels.

**Is Hebrews 10:5’s ‘body’ language from the Septuagint?[[154]](#footnote-154)**

**John Adey**

**Introduction**

Hebrews 10:5 is part of a longer quotation of Psalm 40 in Hebrews 10. The Epistle presents Jesus as having cited the Psalm and applied it to himself or his ‘body’ in relation to his sacrifice. However, whilst the term ‘body’ is appropriate to Jesus’ mission in the New Testament context, it is intriguing that in the Hebrew Bible, as represented in the Masoretic Text [MT], from which English Old Testament [OT] versions generally derive, Psa. 40:6 has the body part ‘ears’!

Psa. 40:6(KJV)[[155]](#footnote-155) Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened. (Some margins give ‘digged’ not ‘opened’. However, ‘prepared’, I suggest, is a possible sense of the Hebrew, which would then match the Greek of Heb 10:5. [[156]](#footnote-156))

Heb 10:5 (KJV) Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.

So, as these texts show, ‘ears’ [Hebrew: ~yIn:z>a' ‘znym] is not reproduced in Heb 10:5, but ‘body’ [Greek: sw/ma / sōma] is given instead.

Faced with this difference, commentators, whether or not they subscribe to a view of Divine inspiration of the Hebrew (OT) or New Testament [NT] writings, do not promote ‘body’ as a(n inspired) NT change, a development *complementary* with the OT/MT’s ‘ears’.[[157]](#footnote-157) Instead, given that MT does not have ‘body’ but (what is referred to as) the ‘Septuagint’ [LXX], a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures begun in the inter-testamental period,[[158]](#footnote-158) does, this is taken to be the source quoted in Hebrew 10:5. ‘The LXX’[[159]](#footnote-159) is thus given the credit for providing ‘body’ for ‘ears’. However, how a pre-NT Greek Psalm translation could have (had) ‘body’ should raise sharp textual or serious Christological (or ‘Messianism’) questions. This question can also be applied to other NT quotations that are said to derive from the LXX or sources other than an ancestor (text-type) of MT.

Since LXX’s Greek terms for other body parts in the Psalm correspond literally with the Hebrew/MT, what would have prompted this sole non-literal divergence, or radical switch of referents, with ‘body’ instead of the body part ‘ears’? (These Psalm 40/(39 LXX) terms cross-correlate literally between MT and the Greek LXX: my feet, my mouth, my bowels[[160]](#footnote-160), my lips, my heart x2, the hairs of mine head.) NT’s ‘body’ is blended in traditional exegesis with incarnation theology and is, of course, a key NT term, or recurrent theme, focused on the (fact of the) Christ-event. There is Christ’s own sacrificial body (about which Hebrews 10 speaks) and there is his metaphorical body, a set of believers with his identity, or image, formed in them: the ecclesial *body* of Christ.

The view I argue for, which some commentators have raised but typically do not pursue, apart from a recent notable example I report on later (Jobes and Silva, 2000), is that Christian scribes inserted ‘body’ into the Psalm text of a Greek OT translation that now survives under the name ‘Septuagint’ (probably coined in the Second Century C.E.[[161]](#footnote-161)) This case and other systematically presented examples that I hope to publish in the future, will cumulatively provide a case for recognising Christian harmonising/scribal editing of the LXX in the light of the NT on a scale greater than is normally allowed. This in turn will require some modification of the (often generalised) view of NT dependence on (what is said to be) the LXX.

Indeed, the recognised importance of textual criticism of the Septuagint itself, before raising issues about (possible) Hebrew sources not now extant that might have had ‘body’, or using ‘LXX’ as an instrument for questioning the integrity of the MT, can be applied to this ‘LXX’ Psalm.[[162]](#footnote-162) Given that ‘body’ has such NT theological implications is it conceivable that this loaded term, otherwise rare in the OT, should have sprung to view whenever or wherever the Psalms were translated?

Alongside this, palaeographical and linguistic issues have a crucial bearing in determining the actual identity of (typically fragmentary) Greek OT translation material, or its (datable) placement within, a (projected) transmission chronology. To-date, no text or Greek Psalms whole or part (and with ‘body’ and not ‘ears’) has turned up datable to before the NT era. So when commentators say ‘body’ is found in the LXX, readers are receiving assumptions passed on uncritically, or without qualification, to their readers. What would be more helpful to say, at the very least, is that ‘body’ occurs in that form of Greek translation traditionally called ‘the LXX’, as represented in the Christian codices Vaticanus, Alexandrinus and Siniaticus, dated no earlier than 4th – 5th centuries C.E.

Though prompted by the case of ‘body’, the following questions also have application to other NT quotations that commentators assume derive from the LXX:

1. What actually is ‘the LXX’ as currently understood?
2. Assumptions aside, how much palaeographical evidence is there for the Greek Psalms, or indeed the whole Old Testament, to have been translated into Greek before Christ?
3. How could this particular divergent rendering in the LXX have come about (especially when, as noted above, the LXX offers literal correspondence for body parts in the Psalm)?
4. Could a translator have swapped ‘ears’ for ‘body’ and so (coincidentally) anticipated the significance (to be) attached to the body of Christ in NT (con)text?
5. Why is it that the writer to the Hebrews makes no mention of this ancient text by Jewish translators as the source for ‘body’?[[163]](#footnote-163)
6. Is there any *proven* reference to the LXX, or its use, in the NT? How would this be established?
7. What relevance has the NT writers’ own viewpoint on OT/NT originals as Divine revelation? That is, are the terms “the lively oracles” (Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2; Heb 5:12; 1 Pet. 4:11), “the holy scriptures” (Rom. 1:2; 2 Tim 3:15,16; 2 Pet. 1:20; 2 Pet. 3:16), or “the word spoken by angels” (Heb.2:2) specific to the revealed Hebrew (and a few parts Aramaic) Bible, our ‘Old Testament’, or do (could) they also include (Divinely unauthorized) Greek translations, or ‘the LXX’?[[164]](#footnote-164)

Though such questions are not exhaustive, perhaps it will be clear enough to readers that this textual divergence – with ‘body’ – in a LXX Psalm, or any ancient translation, would have been a radical theological development before the actual advent of Jesus! Contrast this with the fact that there is no Hebrew word for (a human) ‘body’ directly associated with this messianic sacrificial concept in the Hebrew Bible/OT. Yet, given Jesus’ life and legacy, the NT is particularly focused on his body, both natural and metaphorical. Further, in relation to such NT contextualized perspectives, it is not until Jude v.9 that we find the (hindsight) description ‘*body* of Moses’ applied to what was being disputed over in the OT, as Zechariah records (Zech. 3:1-2).[[165]](#footnote-165) ‘Body’, in this text, is new information provided by the NT. A parallel could be drawn with Heb 10:5 and Jesus’ ‘body’ that it is new (messianic) information provided by the NT.

My task in this article will not be to offer interpretation about the function of the Greek New Testament’s ‘body’, or to provide Christological reasons for the transformation from the Hebrew Psalms’ ‘ears’. I seek merely to clear the path for exegesis.

**Is there such a thing as ‘*the* Septuagint’?**

In their well-received recent book, *Invitation to the Septuagint*[[166]](#footnote-166)*,* Jobes and Silva consider the mixed composition that has come to be known as ‘the LXX’. They are at pains to point out that this name is used in misleading or in ambiguous ways in theological, or other, literature. They draw on the wider criticisms detailed by their colleague, Septuagint scholar Leonard Greenspoon. He observes that Jerome (340-420 C.E.) “was virtually alone among Christian leaders in insisting that the term LXX should properly refer only to the Greek translation of the Torah.”[[167]](#footnote-167) Professor Emmanuel Tov adds to this perspective: “Some four hundred years separate the translation of the Torah from the latest translation contained in ‘LXX’.”[[168]](#footnote-168)

Christian writers from the mid-second century C.E. onwards tend to apply ‘Septuagint’ to the whole OT, but Greenspoon was still able to identify six different possible referents for the term “LXX” in antiquity:

1. The earliest Greek rendering of the Pentateuch.
2. The earliest Greek rendering of the entire OT.
3. Origen’s Koine (Greek).
4. Origen’s completed fifth column (of his *Hexapla* produced in the third century C.E. This text resulted from his manipulation of the Koine.)
5. Any authoritative Greek text; and
6. The entire Greek translation.[[169]](#footnote-169)

Twentieth century commentaries, and some works on NT quotations,[[170]](#footnote-170) have also perpetuated misleading impressions about ‘the LXX’. Especially where, without question, it is cited as if it were a homogeneous version of the whole OT translated into Greek in the inter-testamental period.[[171]](#footnote-171) As Pietersma puts it:

…though various parts of ‘the translation of the seventy’ have many features in common, it is also true that, as modern scholarship has increasingly shown, there is wide-ranging diversity and heterogeneity within the collection – to the point that some scholars now question the continued use of the term ‘Septuagint.’[[172]](#footnote-172)

It is true that *extant* ‘Christian’ codex forms of the Greek version (e.g., Vaticanus, Siniaticus, and Alexandrinus) customarily cited by commentators as ‘the LXX’, do, or did, contain the whole OT (some versions also include apocryphal books and other additions.)[[173]](#footnote-173) However, because these OT books have been compiled into a single codex (book) form (probably innovated by ‘Christian’ scribes)[[174]](#footnote-174), it can give the (false) impression of unity, or textual uniformity, as if this Greek version was always like this.

The original Jewish translations of the OT into Greek would have been (in most cases) of individual books on scrolls of various sizes, by various hands, produced over a considerable period, reflecting various aims and influences. As Würthwein states: “…the history of the transmission of the Septuagint is quite complex. None of the surviving forms of the text has preserved the original form of the version.”[[175]](#footnote-175) To which he adds, acknowledging some reference in antiquity (e.g. in the Prologue to *Ecclesiasticus*) to Greek translations of parts of the OT before the time of the NT:

A long period must be allowed for the translation of the entire Old Testament. This precludes the possibility that it was the work of a single translator or group of translators. A close examination of the version’s character yields the same conclusion. The translations of individual books are not at all uniform...We may say in summary that what we find in LXX is not a single version but a collection of versions made by various writers who differed greatly in their methods, their knowledge of Hebrew, and in other ways. This diversity which makes it necessary to consider each book of the Bible individually is a large part of the problem posed by LXX, making it impossible to formulate the value of the version as a whole for textual criticism in any uniform way.[[176]](#footnote-176)

For these and other reasons, Jobes and Silva (2000) want to encourage their readers to appreciate the implications that arise because of the complex transmission history of the Greek version:

[LXX] was produced by many people unknown to us, over two or three centuries, and almost certainly in more than one location…when the Greek version of a Biblical book survives in more than one form, it is not always possible to know with certainty which is the older. Nor is it possible to know for sure if the oldest surviving form was in fact the first Greek translation made of that book…The reader is cautioned, therefore, that there is really no such thing as *the* Septuagint…We have no evidence that any Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, or even of the Pentateuch, was called the ‘Septuagint’ prior to the second century of this era.[[177]](#footnote-177)

Emmanuel Tov explains how Septuagint scholars now try to apply more precise terms of reference:

Today, the name Septuagint(a) denotes both the original translation of the Bible into Greek and the collection of sacred Greek Writings in their present form. The former use is imprecise, since the name Septuagint(a) is not suitable for a collection which contains, in addition to the original translation, later revisions (recensions) of that translation as well as compositions written in Greek. Because of this, scholars usually distinguish between the collection of sacred writings named Septuagint and the original translation, called the Old Greek [OG] translation. The presumed original is known from two sources: the greater part is included in the collection of sacred Greek writings [LXX] and a smaller segment is reconstructed by modern scholars from various later sources. In places where it is necessary to stress the diverse nature of the collection of books included in the LXX, its name is placed in quotation marks [‘LXX’].[[178]](#footnote-178)

The quotation of Psalm 40:6 in Heb 10:5 as handled by commentators generated the need for this article. However, these matters about the “so-called Septuagint” form a relevant historical and textual backdrop that need to be taken into account in this and other posited connections of the LXX and the NT. For example, with respect to the Psalms, Sailhamer, in his recent technical work on the Greek translation of Psalms 3-41, is aware of the lack of evidence to date its origins. So, although he is working with post-NT ‘LXX’ or C.E.sources, he simply *assumes* that the state of the text(s) of this later date represent(s) a Greek Psalm text earlier than the NT era. In order to assist this assumption, he has also to assume that the Book of Acts and other documents (not named) “appear” to quote from it:

The Septuagint (LXX) of the Book of Psalms is a Greek translation of the Hebrew psalms. The date, provenance and purpose of the translation are not known with any certainty. It is likely that the LXX Psalms were translated sometime during the period of the second Temple because documents from the later part of that period (e.g., Acts 2:25ff) appear to quote from the LXX translation.[[179]](#footnote-179)

Of course, there might have been a Greek translation of the Psalms earlier than the NT, whether or not Acts (or Hebrews) quoted from it. It is important to note, though, whatever significance is attributed to it, that there is a paucity of Greek OT manuscript evidence in Palestine (or anywhere) dating from before the Common Era. This palaeographical picture contrasts with the massive amount of Biblical Hebrew manuscripts that compare well with MT, from the same period. Such finds have engaged scholarly interest in the Semitic -Hebrew and Aramaic - background to the Greek NT.

This background connects with the given Jewish context of the NT, particularly of Jesus’ ministry. Presumably, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (the context of “a body hast thou prepared me”), not only in its name, has some relation to this milieu. Of course, this NT picture, having Hebraic continuity with the OT (text(s) and context(s)), is mediated to us in Greek and not Hebrew. Greek was one of the languages in polyglot Palestine (and beyond) in Jesus’ day. Yet just because Greek is common to both the NT (on its own terms divinely inspired) and some OT translations, this does not of itself prove that the NT interfaced with, or was influenced by, them. Palaeographical data particularly offers insufficient scope for certainty over this posited relation of the Greek LXX and the Greek NT.

Finds of Greek OT material in the Judean Desert, or Egypt, are few and fragmentary. To-date, no Greek (‘LXX’) Psalms’ text has come to light from before the second century C.E.[[180]](#footnote-180): “…it is surprising to note the relative absence of Psalms and prophetic texts, especially from the Major Prophets, among Greek fragments” (Greenspoon. 1998).[[181]](#footnote-181) Parts of the Pentateuch and fragments of some of the Minor Prophets are represented as prior to, or overlapping with, the NT era.[[182]](#footnote-182) Therefore, to lean on the possibility of a pre-NT Greek Psalms[[183]](#footnote-183) despite this lack palaeographical evidence for it is one thing, but quite another to claim that this presumed text would necessarily have translated the Hebrew ‘ears’ with the Greek ‘body’. After all, ‘body’ in a Greek translation of the Biblical text features in fourth century C.E. ‘Christian’ LXX compilations worked-over by editors, including particularly the Alexandrian theologian Origen (*ca.* 185-255 C.E.). By contrast, Greek versions produced by Aquila (*ca.* 130 C.E.), Symmachus (*ca.* 170 C.E.) and Theodotion (end of second century C.E.)[[184]](#footnote-184) have ‘ears’ in their Psalms text, translating the Hebrew text literally. Indeed, they witness to a Hebrew (‘proto-Masoretic’) text that agrees with the consonantal form (later) preserved in the MT, but now also attested in use at Qumran before 70 C.E.

**In sum:** this foregoing perspective has relevance for assessing any claim that a NT quotation, or ‘body’ in particular, came from the LXX. Given the history and evolution of this Greek version, Würthwein’s observation should occasion no surprise as to the possible origin of LXX and NT agreement: “in the course of time Christian insertions crept into [this] text.”[[185]](#footnote-185) Recently, Jobes and Silva have added to this:

…the majority of extant manuscripts of the LXX were transmitted and preserved within the Christian tradition. Such a transmission history raises the possibility that Christian scribes harmonized Greek texts of the OT to agree with the use of those texts in the NT, or that they subtly introduced Christian exegesis into the text of the OT books….[[186]](#footnote-186)

Similarly, as long ago as 1842, the Cambridge Greek scholar T. S. Green was alert to this possibility. Though he held the common view that the NT writers did have contact with the (so-called) LXX, he was actually more cautious about this being confirmed by the NT quotations. His remarks are insightful:

[The NT writers’, *et al.*] acquaintance with the Septuagint or Alexandrian version is here assumed from its high intrinsic probability. A proof drawn from the quotations made in the New Testament could hardly be conclusive, on account of the possibility of an alteration of the text of the Septuagint by Christian hands combined with the fact of the greater agreement between the quotations and the text of the Alexandrian MS than that of the Vatican. This alteration may not have arisen from a fraudulent motive, since there would be less scruple in interfering with a translation than an original, and it might be done with a desire to improve it in particular places on the authority of inspired writers.[[187]](#footnote-187)

Finally, in this assessment of the likelihood of NT influence upon the transmission history and text of the Greek version, there is a major case that ought not to be overlooked. As Fitzmyer[[188]](#footnote-188) is not alone in concluding, no fragment of Greek OT text ±200 C.E. contains the Greek word ‘kurios’ (‘Lord’) as used in the NT as a replacement for God’s name. This shift from OT ‘Yahweh’ to NT ‘Lord’ is most evident in NT quotations of the OT. Translators would naturally transliterate or transcribe names, and this is what the few pre-NT Greek OT fragments reveal. The Divine name is found in the Greek text, usually written in Hebrew (both paleo-Hebrew and Aramaic or ‘Square’) characters, but sometimes with matching Greek letters (e.g. IAW/IAŌ[[189]](#footnote-189)). Fitzmyer observes:

Moreover it seems clear that the *widespread use* of *kurios* in the so-called LXX manuscripts dating from Christian times is to be attributed to the habits of Christian scribes. Indeed, the widespread use may well have been influenced by the use of *kurios* for Yahweh in the NT itself...As far as I know, there is no earlier dated manuscript ± 200 AD of the so-called LXX which uses *kurios* for Yahweh. (Fitzmyer’s italics.)

I recall here that in a Cambridge seminar in 2007 on “The Greek Bible: Transmission and Reception”[[190]](#footnote-190) Emanuel Tov (Jerusalem) publicly stated that the Greek representations of the Divine name, like the aforementioned IAW or paleo-Hebrew (pre-exilic Hebrew script) forms of ‘Yhwh’/hwhy, reflected the Old Greek or original version. Therefore, Tov made it clear that he did not agree with John William Wevers’ published position (following his Toronto colleague Albert Pietersma), since he endeavours to maintain that *kurios* (of later mss or codices) was original.[[191]](#footnote-191) I would couple Tov’s position on these pre-NT era Greek OT translations (fragmentary Pentateuchal remains from the Judean Desert that do not display *kurios*) with an argument for the NT innovating *kurios*, within the presupposed perspective of revelation and theophany, in which the name ‘Jesus’ takes over from ‘Yahweh’ whilst Jesus manifested and came in his Father’s name (John 5:43; 10:25; 17:6).

**Commentators’ Bodily Assumptions**

Commentators generally seem confident that Christ’s ‘body’ derived from ‘the Septuagint’. Yet, evidence has always been available to question this view, not least historical or textual perspectives as sketched above, to do with the transmission history of the Greek version(s). In this section, building on these foregoing perspectives, I will draw attention to more recent work, including the publication of Pietersma’s *A New English Translation of the Septuagint: The Psalms.* This latest English translation, the first in English for over 150 years, has ‘ears’ in the Psalm text and not ‘body’, leaving ‘body’ to originate in Heb 10:5. It will be interesting to see if forthcoming commentaries reflect this development. Below, I consider how commentaries have until recently presented ‘body’, since it is salutary to see how they can mislead (e.g., by what they ignore), or be inconclusive.

A typical comment on Heb 10:5 from a standard commentary, *The Interpreter’s Bible* (1955), is—

…instead of the Hebrew ‘mine ears hast thou opened’…the LXX reads ‘a body hast thou prepared for me.’ This word ‘body’ is essential for the author [of Hebrews], and his dependence on the Greek translation is nowhere more obvious than here.[[192]](#footnote-192)

This brief comment is supposed to suffice. This commentary has a short attention span where detailed analysis or required proof is concerned.

Another approach favouring the LXX reading suggests that it has preserved for us what the Hebrew had originally, and so deems the present Masoretic text corrupt:

…the Hebrew text [‘Ears hast thou dug for me’]…is regarded as corrupt by the majority of modern commentators.[[193]](#footnote-193)

Yet, proof for corruption of the Hebrew text is not advanced. In any case such conjecture is unconvincing and disputed.[[194]](#footnote-194) Indeed, this claim fails to tell that this is conjecture based on the extant LXX’s having ‘body’ *and* the assumption that LXX preserves an original Hebrew reading not represented by MT. We have already noted that other Greek versions of the OT (‘the Three’: Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion) have ‘ears’ suggesting their Hebrew source agreed with the MT, and may well have been its precursor. As a start towards proving this charge of corruption, a missing Hebrew text from antiquity containing ‘body’ would have to be found. Allegations of “Hebrew corrupt” or “uncertain”, found in some English OT versions are typically the legacy of textual emendation, “a most unscientific practice”[[195]](#footnote-195), when “many scholars practically preferred [the LXX] over the Masoretic text.”[[196]](#footnote-196) Today, it is viewed as essential to construct first an ‘original text’ of the LXX, or ‘Old Greek’ form, which could then be compared with MT as a unified whole. The Göttingen editions, starting with Rahlfs’ publication of the Psalms (1931, revised in 1967), attempt to do this, but they are not yet complete for the whole OT, and even then are still likely to be subject to subsequent revision.

F.F. Bruce, however, is among those scholars who disputed the presence of textual corruption, and offered an alternative approach:

He [the writer of the Epistle of Hebrews] quotes the Septuagint version, in which the Masoretic reading ‘ears hast thou digged for me’ is replaced by the clause ‘a body didst thou prepare for me’. The Greek version cannot well be explained as representing a variant or corrupted Hebrew reading; it [LXX] is rather an interpretative paraphrase of the Hebrew text.[[197]](#footnote-197)

The Roman Catholic *The New* *Jerome Biblical Commentary* (1997 Student Edition) offers a contrast with *The Interpreter’s Bible* cited above. It raises the possibility that ‘body’ is a Christian addition, although it does not follow-up a suggested lead (in an added note) for the benefit of the reader, and there is no further discussion. Clearly, such an outcome would have some impact on interpretation:

The words of Ps 40:7-9a are here attributed to the son at his incarnation. The quotation follows the LXX in substance. In v. 7b of the Ps, the M reads “ears you have dug for me” (to hear and obey God’s will). The majority of LXX mss have the reading given in Heb[rews]: “a body you prepared me.”...Since Jesus’ obedience was expressed by his willing offering of his body (i.e., himself) in death, the LXX reading of v. 7b is peculiarly applicable to him, so much so that it has been thought that the reading was introduced into LXX under influence of Heb[rews].[[198]](#footnote-198)

**In sum**: quests for answers in commentaries can be tedious and what they offer can be of mixed or uncertain value. Small wonder then, that Septuagint scholar Sidney Jellicoe, in his major mid-twentieth century contribution *The Septuagint and Modern Study* could say that ‘body’ in the LXX was “a deviation which has yet to receive satisfactory explanation.”[[199]](#footnote-199) However, his comment highlighted Rahlfs’s (1931) work on the Psalms, and his subsequent (1935) critical edition of the LXX, in both of which Rahlfs considered that the textual evidence favoured ‘ears’ as original to the Greek version. This points the way to a “satisfactory explanation.” Rahlfs seems to have believed that ‘body’ was not likely to have been in the original or OG. Hence, unlike the great fourth/fifth centuries C.E. uncial codices of the LXX (Vaticanus, Siniaticus, and Alexandrinus), Rahlfs’ edition has ‘ears’ in his main text relegating ‘body’ to footnotes.[[200]](#footnote-200) A conclusion influencing Pietersma in the NETS publication mentioned above, to retain ‘ears’ with the Hebrew Psalm.[[201]](#footnote-201)

**Invitation to the Septuagint**

Bagster’s 1851 publication of ‘the LXX’, with Lee Brenton’s English translation is readily available and has been influential. Yet it is not ‘the’ LXX. It is based on the fourth century C.E. (‘Christian’) Codex Vaticanus [LXX*B*], or that form of it reproduced via J. Field’s edition of 1665 and the Sixtine edition of 1587.[[202]](#footnote-202) Bagster is a product of its time and inevitably lacks the wider range of OT Greek translational material now available. Critical, book-by-book, editions of the Septuagint, published or forthcoming from Göttingen in Germany, aim to collate and utilise these wider resources and 20th century (and continuing) endeavours in Septuagint research.

In *Invitation to the Septuagint* Jobes and Silva retain, although with some modifications, the commonly held view that some NT quotations support the use by the NT of the LXX. Jobes and Silva also retain the view that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was using an OT Greek translation, even if they do not regard it as ‘*the* LXX’ of commentators. They believe that ‘body’ originated with the NT, and came into the LXX via Hebrews 10:5. Given this restored agreement of the OT Greek version with the Hebrew Masoretic text, it is a pity that they make nothing further of this. Not least, they could have considered whether the Hebrew text itself had a role in Hebrews! Further, systematic inspection based on their approach, and less referenced through institutional canons, might have led them to question other LXX passages that are said to be quoted by the NT. Perhaps, though, their approach is a start.

This extract rightly records their surprise at the approach taken by commentators over ‘body’:

[The] popular solution assumes that the Psalms text used by the author read sōma [body] - an assumption shared by virtually all Hebrews commentators, many of whom seem not to have even considered the possibility that his LXX text had ōtia [‘ears’][[203]](#footnote-203).

Their surprise particularly relates to commentators’ neglect of textual options offered by Alfred Rahlfs’s available two-volume ‘Septuaginta’:[[204]](#footnote-204)

Indeed, one could read several of the standard commentaries without so much as learning that Rahlfs, both in his handy edition of the LXX and in his critical edition of the Psalms for the Göttingen LXX, accepted ōtia as the original translation. Because the sole basis for this decision is the Latin rendering *aures* (“ears”), found in the Gallic Psalter and OL [Old Latin] manuscript G, NT commentators either express surprise at Rahlfs’s judgement or ignore it altogether. But given the generally literal character of LXX Psalms, Rahlfs must have (rightly) deduced that the use of sōma [body] as a rendering of ’znym [Hebrew: ‘ears’] was out of character for the Greek translator.[[205]](#footnote-205)

Comparing how Hebrews 10 makes use of Psalm 40 (LXX 39), confirms their belief that ‘body’ with other subtle linguistic changes in the NT text, could only result from hindsight of Jesus’ life and sacrifice. They (or Karen Jobes drawing on an article she wrote in 1991[[206]](#footnote-206)) state:

In the light of these considerations, we have good reason to believe that the author of Hebrews had before him a Greek text of Psalms with the reading ōtia [‘ears’] and that therefore he is the one responsible for changing this word to sōma [‘body’], which then spread through nearly the whole tradition. In other words, it was he rather than the LXX translator who came up with the *pars pro toto* metonymy as a means of highlighting the messianic significance of the Psalm.[[207]](#footnote-207)

**Conclusion:**

With the NETS publication, and Jobes and Silva’s *Invitation to the Septuagint*, it will be interesting to see if future commentaries revise their view of how ‘body’ is found in ‘the LXX’. Will its probable insertion into the Greek version influenced by Heb 10:5 be admitted, or even-handedly considered? Will this outcome generate respect for the integrity of the Hebrew text of Psalm 40, over-ruling indecisive text-critical matters, or conjectural emendations? Will exegetes of Heb 10: 5 in the future spend more time considering the significance of (what they are then left with) the transformation of ‘ears’ to ‘body’?

Perhaps, a reminder, or caution is apt to conclude with. It is taken from Sidney Jellicoe’s *The Septuagint and Modern Study*. In the section, “The Hebrew Text and the Septuagint”, having considered a particular, albeit different, case, his remarks can be connected with my own contention in this article. Among other relevant perspectives to be borne in mind when using the LXX, he mentions that not only will some readings be due to Christian modification, but also where this is identified they should be rejected:

We have taken this particular reading as affording an example of the extreme care which must be exercised in deciding against MT in what would seem, quite plausibly, to be in favour of LXX. But when it is recognised, though too often overlooked, that the Greek version was made initially for Jews by Jews - a fact continually underlined by H.M. Orlinsky and constituting Rahlfs’s opening statement in his ‘History of the Septuagint Text’ - we must take into full consideration Barnes’ concluding observation: ‘In weighing readings we must use all the knowledge we can gain of Jewish exegesis and of Haggadic (or Halachic) comment. Some LXX readings which sound strange to Gentiles ears will prove to be right: while some readings **(due to Christian modifications of the text, intentional or accidental)** will have to be rejected as too definitely Christian. [My bold type.][[208]](#footnote-208)

END

1. For a recent review of the research see D. B. Gowler, *The Historical Jesus* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Q” is the name given to the material common to Matthew and Luke, which is regarded as a now lost source for the Gospel writers; see J. M. Robinson, P. Hoffmann and J. S. Kloppenborg, *The Critical Edition of Q* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000). For an online edition (from which we take our references) see Burton Mack’s translation: [cited 19 July 2007] http://www.cygnus-study.com/pageq.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Rms 1:4, 2 Cor 1:19, Gal 2:20, Eph 4:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Only three references in Mark (1:1, 3:11, 15:39) and none in the Gospel of Thomas. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For example, Mark 8:29-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. W. Wrede, *The Messianic Secret* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. ltd., 1971), 25. For a selection of essays on this topic, see C. Tuckett, ed., *The Messianic Secret* (London: SPCK, 1987). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. For instance, see Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian’s Reading of the Gospels* (London: SCM Press, 1983). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *Gospel of* *Thomas,* 86. For a recent print edition, see M. Myer, *The Gospel of Thomas* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Acts 7:56. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. QS8 (Luke 6:20-23), QS18 (Luke 7:31-35), QS19 (Luke 9:57-62), QS32 (Luke11:16, 29-32), QS37 (Luke 12:8-12), QS41 (Luke 12:39-40), QS60 (Luke 17:23-37). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Dan 7:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Matthew 16:13-16 [ESV], cp. Mark 8:27-29, Luke 9:18-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. For example, Matt 16:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Dan 7:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Dan 7:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Dan 7:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Dan 7:25. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Dan 7:9-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Compare the translations, for instance, the NRSV and ESV. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Michael Goulder, *A Tale of Two Missions* (London: SCM Press, 1994), 150, states that “The phrase just means ‘man’ and it is used when man is contrasted either with God or with animals”. The contrast between the kingdoms of the beasts and the kingdom of the manlike figure would be a way of pointing to the higher moral character of the latter (cp. Daniel 4:16, 7:4). H. E. Tödt, *The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 1965), 23, asserts that “the word ‘like’ (a human being) of the vision hints not only at the similarity to men but even more at a mysterious dissimilarity. It is not a man who is appearing but one like a man”. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Dan 7:22, 27. G. Theissen and A. Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (London: SCM Press, 1998), 543, aver that “Because the beasts in Dan. 7 are symbols for world powers, their counterpart, the ‘one like a man’, has also been seen as a symbol for a collective, the people of Israel”. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. M. Casey, *Son of Man: The Interpretation and Influence of Daniel 7* (London: SPCK, 1979), 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Casey, *Son of Man*, 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Casey, *Son of Man*, 80. He argues that once the Son of Man began to be used by the early Christians as a title for Jesus then the association with Daniel 7 was made and so the reinterpretation of manlike figure was required. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Casey, *Son of Man*, 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. This section of the book of Enoch is only extant in the Ethiopic. Geza Vermes, “Introduction”, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 17, states “Book 2 [of Enoch] … which describes the heavenly apocalyptic figure called ‘son of man’ … is missing at Qumran. Thus the Aramaic Enoch does not support their [i.e. New Testament scholars] speculations any more than do the Greek manuscripts”. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Casey, *Son of Man*, 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Vermes “Introduction”, 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *Ant.* 10.11.7. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Matt 26:64, Mark 14:62, Rev 1:13, 14:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Dan 2:35, 44-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. *Ant.* 10.10.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Compare Dan 7:14, 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. The DSS text is taken from the Vermes edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. F. F. Bruce, *Jesus and Christian Origins outside the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984), 64, states that “In a number of instances interpretations which had formerly been regarded as quite proper and respectable by orthodox Jews were ruled out as inadmissible when Christians began to use them to prove that Jesus was the Messiah”. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. In answer to the question why is ‘thrones’ plural in Daniel 7, Rabbi Akiba responded “one for God and one for David”. Rabbi José responded “Akiba, how long will you profane the Shekinah? It is one for justice and one for righteousness”, *b. Sanhedrin* 38b. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. John 1:19-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. John 12:34; also see John 9:36-37. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Job 35:8, Isa 56:2, Jer 49:18, 33, 50:40, 51:43. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Pss 146:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Num 23:19, Job 25:6, Pss 144:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Ezek 2:6, 8, 3:25, 4:1, 5:1, etc., also see Dan 8:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Goulder, A Tale of Two Missions, 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 168, goes on to assert that “in Galilean Aramaic, i.e. the language of Jesus and his first followers, ‘son of man’ was at least occasionally employed as a circumlocution. By contrast, no trace survives of its titular use, from which it must be inferred that there is no case to be made for an eschatological or Messianic office-holder generally known as ‘the son of man’ ”. See also J. C. O’Neill, *Who Did Jesus Think He Was?* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Casey, *Son of Man*, 238-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. B. Lindars, *Jesus Son of Man* (London: SPCK, 1983), 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Goulder, A Tale of Two Missions, 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 550. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. F. H. Borsch, *The Son of Man in Myth and History* (London: SCM Press, 1967), 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. In *The Son of Man in Myth and History,* Borsch refers to numerous examples of this type of mythology: the *Archanthropos* of the Samothracians, the *Anthropos* of the Valentinians (57), the ‘Man’ of Monoimus the Arabian, ‘Adamus’ of the Barbel-Gnostics (58), the reinterpretation of Adam in certain Jewish sources (68), ‘Gayomart’ of Zoroastrianism (75), ‘Yima’ of Persia (79) and the parallels to Mithra (82). He states that elements of this Man-mythology have been in places “as distant as China or Scandinavia”, 68. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. The Son of Man in Myth and History, 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. 1 Cor 15:45. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. For example, “under his feet” (1 Cor 15:24), “put all thing under his feet” (Eph 1:22); see Goulder, *A Tale of Two Missions*, 154. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Goulder recommends the translation “for a little while was made lower than the angels” since this coheres with his claim that the writer to the Hebrews believed that Jesus was “an eternal being” who became incarnate “for a little while”, 155. The Masoretic text reads “made a little lower” and, while Goulder’s translation is possible from the LXX, there is no reason to suppose that either the Septuagint or the writer to the Hebrews deviated from that idea. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Compare Pss 8:4-6 and Heb 2:5-9. See also Goulder *A Tale of Two Missions*, 154-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Pss 8:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. *A Tale of Two Missions*, 155. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. A Tale of Two Missions, 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. The Son of Man in Myth and History, 26. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Son of Man, 238. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. See Lindars, *Jesus Son of Man*, 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Who Did Jesus Think He Was?, 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. QS41 (Luke 12:39-40), QS60 (Luke 17:23-37). [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. QS37 (Luke 12:8-12). [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Hence, “he came to the Ancient of Days, **and they [i.e. the angels]** brought him near before Him” (Dan 7:13 [NKJV]). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Matt 10:23, 16:27, 24:27, 24:44, 25:13, 25:31, Luke 9:26, 12:40, 18:8, 21:27 (also Luke 17:22-30) cp. “one like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven” (Dan 7:13). [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Matthew 13:41, 16:27, 24:31, 25:31, Luke 9:26, 12:8, cp. “they brought him near before Him” (Dan 7:13). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Matt 24:30, Luke 21:27, cp. “coming with the clouds of heaven” (Dan 7:13). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Matthew 19:28, 25:31, cp. “then to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom” (Daniel 7:14). [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Matt 19:28, 25:32ff, cp. “I watched till thrones were put in place” (Dan 7:9), “the court was seated and the books were opened” (Dan 7:10). [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Matt 26:64, Mark 14:62, Luke 22:69. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Acts 7:55-56. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. 1 Thess 4:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. 1Thess 3:13, 2 Thess 1:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Rms 2:16, 1 Cor 4:5, 2 Tim 4:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Rms 14:10, 2 Cor 5:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. *Didache* 16:1, 7-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. John 3:13, 6:62. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Rev 1:7, 1:3, 2:25, 3:5, 3:21, 4:2-6, 5:6-7, 6:16-17, 7:17, 11:15, 13:1-8, 14:14-16, 19:11-21, 20:4-6, 20:11-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Theissen and Merz present a similar solution. They note the problem that the “heavenly being” of Daniel 7 (‘one like a son of man’) was a future judge which Jesus identified with the events of his second coming, while identifying himself with the ‘Son of Man’ in the present. So they say: “Jesus represents in the present the future Son of Man”, *Historical Jesus*, 552. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. The autobiographical designation is utilized 81 times in the gospels. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Tom Gaston suggests that ‘Son of Man’ is not synonymous with ‘Messiah’ because the gospel usage of the two titles is markedly different; on the one hand Jesus seems to attempt to keep his identity as Messiah a secret and on the other hand he openly refers to himself as ‘the Son of Man’. Gaston concludes that the question Jesus posed Peter in Matt 16:13-16 indicates a differentiation in understanding, demonstrating that ‘Son of Man’ was not synonymous with ‘Messiah’ - “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” (The people had all sorts of answers to this question)..........but Peter’s reply was that the ‘Son of Man’ was the Messiah. See Tom Gaston, *The Son of Man*, (CeJBI Vol.1 no.4 Oct 2007), 3-19. An alternative suggestion is that Jesus deliberately adopted ‘Son of Man’ as a messianic self-reference ***because the term was ambiguous*** (thus keeping his messianic identity secret) and also because of its corporate associations (like the Suffering Servant), thus making him a representative individual (like the Israelite kings and priests). The Son of Man was not a well-known recognizable figure, but an enigmatic one that needed explanation and therefore ideal for concealing his identity – it **was synonymous** with the Messiah but only to those (like Peter) to whom it had been revealed. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (New York: Harper, 1973). [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Hebrew sources have Son of Man not ***the*** Son of Man [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Christopher Tuckett, “The Son of Man and Daniel 7: Inclusive Aspects of Early Christologies” in Christian Origins: Worship, Belief and Society (ed. Kieran J. O’Mahony; *JSNT* Sup 241; London: Continuum, 2004), 182-83. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. M. Casey, *Son of Man*, (London: SPCK, 1979); idem, “General, Generic and Indefinite: The Use of the Term ‘Son of Man’ in Aramaic Sources and in the Teaching of Jesus,” *JSNT* 29 (1978): 21-56. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. B. Lindars, *Jesus Son of Man,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 170 [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Hebrews 2:6 is the other place (quoting Pss 8:5). [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. J. D. G. Dunn argues that Daniel 7 influenced NT traditions, but that it is extremely difficult to identify the origin or first impact of these traditions. He presents three basic possibilities in the Gospels: that use of Daniel 7 began with Jesus’ hope of being vindicated by the heavenly Son of Man figure; that it originated as a post-Easter elaboration of Jesus’ own use of “Son of Man”; or that Jesus himself drew upon Daniel 7 to articulate his own sense of mission. Imagery from Daniel 7 is also used in Revelation, but there is no obvious contact with the Synoptic tradition here. Instead, John was directly influenced by Daniel. James D. G. Dunn, “The Danielic Son of Man in the New Testament”*,* in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* (ed. J. J. Collins and P. W. Flint; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 528-549. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Hyam Maccoby, *The Mythmaker,* *Paul and the Invention of Christianity* (New York: Barnes & Noble Publishing, 1998), 75-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. See: Tom Gaston, “The Son of Man” *CJBI* 1 Oct 2007: 3-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. According to Ginsberg the reference to an eleventh king in verse 24b was inserted by an interpolator who forgot to add mention of an eleventh horn. H. L. Ginsberg, *Studies in Daniel* (New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, 1984), 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. C. A. Evans comments in his essay, “Messianic Hopes and Messianic Figures in Late Antiquity”, that “the Jewish messianism of the intertestamental period and the first two centuries of the Common Era posed a real threat to Roman order. The catastrophic rebellions that occurred in three successive generations (66-70 C.E.., 115-116 C.E., and 132-135 C.E,) well illustrate the prophetic gap between prophetic expectation and militant activism”. Available online in PDF format [cited July 26 2007] <http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/faculties/HUM/RELS/chairs/cchair/lectures/Evans%20Messianic%20Hopes.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Rendered on coins as ‘God Manifest’. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. B. K. Waltke, “Antiochus IV Epiphanes” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, (ed., G.W. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 1:145-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. There is a difference in being the manifestation of God and “God manifest” in the same way that the son of God is not the same as “God the son”. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Compare Dan 9:24;“To anoint the most Holy [place…make an end of sins…and bring in everlasting righteousness” (the kingdom). [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making* (London: SCM Press, 1983),68-69. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures,* (London: Nisbet, 1952), 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, “The Son of Man”*,* (Second Oxford Lecture on the Development of Christology, 1998). Available online in html format <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~www_sd/med_oxford2.html> [cited July 25 2007]. Fletcher-Louis’ doctoral work was in the area of angelomorphic representations of leading human figures such as the patriarchs and the High priest in Second Temple Judaism. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. L. G. Perdue, *Proverbs* (Louisville: WJK Press 2000), 55-58. J. Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel*, (Louisville: WJK Press, 1995), 83-98. G. Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History from Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 43-75, 203-205. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. *Christology*, “On the basis of the evidence available to us it is not possible to speak with any confidence of a pre-Christian Son of Man concept.” [95]; “The earliest dateable interpretation of Daniel’s ‘son of man’ as a particular individual is the Christian identification of the ‘son of man’ with Jesus.” [96]; “The thought of the Son of Man as a pre-existent heavenly figure does not seem to have emerged in Jewish or Christian circles before the last decades of the first century AD.” [96]. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. *Christology*, 86-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Luke 9: 22, 26, 44, 56, 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Aside from the Gospel occurrences, the title “Son of Man” is never used as a title in the intertestamental literature except in the Similitudes of Enoch. Is it possible that Enochic literature hijacked the “Son of Man” title in order to present an alternative to Christianity? Instead of the resurrected Christ we have the myth of a translated Enoch as a pre-existent heavenly “Son of Man”. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. In doing this they copy the Jews, who also did not understand who Jesus was: *the world knew him not*. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Here the true witness is contrasted with the typical witness in the heavens of the rainbow (Pss 89:37) — all covenants require a witness. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. The anti-type can also function as a way of speaking about the type, because you seek to identify the significance of the type in terms of the anti-type — this would be a typical metonymy. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. The Alexandrian Jew, Philo, interpreted the ‘rock’ as an allegory of Wisdom. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. The formula is unique to these texts. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. This cannot be argued at this point, but the Jewish Targum sees Isa 41:2 as a reference to Abraham. There are echoes of Abraham’s “battle of the kings” in Isa 41:2-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. The expression only occurs in Isa 45:1, 60:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. The other uses are Job 32:21-22; one of many rare words shared between Isaiah and Job. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Hence, Cyrus cannot be considered as God’s Servant *per se*. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. “Dennis Bratcher, The Unity and Authorship of Isaiah: A Needless Battle”, [cited July 26 2007] <http://www.cresourcei.org/isaiahunity.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. J. W. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems* (London: Henry Frowde, 1907). [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Thirtle*, Old Testament Problems*, 245. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*, 253. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Thirtle notes the other places in this part of Isaiah in which vrx occurs in connection with the making of idols – ch. 40.19,20 (‘workman’); 41.7 (‘carpenter’). [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Strengthened: *châzaq* [Strongs 2388] is the root for Hezekiah: *Chizqîyâh* [Strongs 2396] – Strengthened of Yah. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*, 247-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*, 254-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Josephus, *Ant.*11.8.4, 5; cf. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*, 256. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Sir Charles Webster, ‘The Art and Practice of Diplomacy’, *The Listener,* 28 February 1952. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*, 255-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*, 257-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. A Targum is an Aramaic paraphrase of the Hebrew Bible. In Synagogues when the Hebrew Bible was read, if the passage was hard to understand or the “congregation” did not know sufficient Hebrew, a member of the Synagogue would give a free translation or paraphrase into the common language, Aramaic. Over time a number of these were written down, and became a form of commentary on the Hebrew Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Cf. Micah 1:13 note the emphasis on haste and compare *Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz* -- quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil-- in Isa.8: 1, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Many of Isaiah’s prophecies have this common theme: The nations bring tribute to Israel (Isa 18:7; 23:18; 60:5ff; 61:6) because *Yahweh* has exalted Israel (Isa 49:7; 60:10; 61:9); and this demonstrates that he is the true God (Isa 40:5; 44:3-5; 48:20; 49:7; 52:10; 59:17; 61:9). [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*, 258. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Marginal notes for Isa.64:10-11 in the Companion Bible. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*, 247, footnote reference to Cyrus: 2 Chron 36.22, 23; Ezra 1:1-8, 3:7, 4:3-5, 5:13-17, 6:3-14; Dan 1:21, 6:28, 10:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. John Curtis, *Cyrus the Great,* *100 Great Lives of Antiquity*, (ed., John Canning; London: Guild Publishing, 1985), 97-98. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Thirtle, *Old Testament Problems*, 249. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. This discussion will continue in the next issue with a critique of Thirtle’s interpolation theory. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Here I eschew the view that the author quotes the LXX text of Pss 102:27 (101:27), which has the expression, “And thou Lord...”; the word order of the LXX in the *Vaticanus* and *Alexandrinu*s editions differs in two places from that of the NT text, and we cannot be certain that the LXX has not been edited to bring it into line with the NT. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. A. T. Lincoln, *Hebrews* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2006), 64, 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. The new creation is mentioned in Heb 1:2 in the mention there of “all things” (John 1:3-4, Heb 2:8). The Son is the ‘heir’ of all things (including the most excellent name (v. 4)), and the scope of ‘all things’ is defined in v. 14 in the reference to the “heirs” of *salvation*. This salvation is grounded in the promises to the patriarchs, because it is these to which the Messiah is an *heir*. Hence, we encounter in the author’s exposition a *beginning* and what “the Lord” did in that beginning, for he says, “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord...” (Heb 2:3). [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. See 1 Chron 16:30, Pss 37:9-11, 115:16, Prov 10:30, Eccl 1:4, Isa 11:19, 45:18, Hab 2:14, Matt 5:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. A. Perry, *Before He Was Born* (1st ed.; Sunderland: Willow Publications, 1995), 193-219. The purpose of the current study is to place into discussion an alternative to this “Israelite” view, which has now been replaced in 2nd edition of *Before He Was Born*. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. J. Carter, *Hebrews* (Birmingham: CMPA Publishing, 1947), 22-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. See G. Booker, *Psalm Studies* (Austin, Texas: Booker Publications, 1988), 592-594. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. His days were ‘like a shadow that declineth’ (v. 11), and so the Lord reverses his decline using the shadow of the sun on a sundial as proof. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. The recapitulative force of Hezekiah’s remark is indicated by the change in tense in v. 24, “I said, O my God”. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. It is possible that the re-capitulation was subsequently added to the Psalm, since Isaiah records that Hezekiah had written similar words when he had recovered from sickness (Isa 38:9-10). [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. We presume here an eighth century reading of Isaiah 40-66, which is contrary to most commentators. For an introduction (albeit with problems), see J. Barton Payne, “Eighth Century Israelitish Background of Isaiah 40-66” *WTJ* 29 (1966-1967): 179-190; 30 (1968): 50-58; 185-203. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. This work of constructing the tabernacle was very much the work of God’s hands, since he set down the pattern for the tabernacle (Exod 25:9, 40), and he gave the spirit-gifts for its completion (Exod 35:30-35). [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. The echo here goes back to the provision of God during the wilderness. The people were not only fed and watered, but they were also clothed, ‘Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee’ (Deut 8:4, 29:5, Neh 9:21). This declaration by Isaiah is tantamount to the statement that the provision of God was to be taken away. In other words, a defining act of their redemption from Egypt is reversed in a description of their destruction. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. For example, the language of heaven and earth, the figure of the garment waxing old, the theme of what was done ‘before’, the loosing of the captive, and the everlasting salvation-righteousness of the kingdom age. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. The messianic focus of Isaiah 50 is the trial of Jesus. It presents Jesus as an obedient son, full of confidence in the Lord God who will justify him in his trial against his adversary (vv. 7-8). His confident assertion is ‘who is he that shall condemn me?’ (v. 9). [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. This description of the Messiah’s work, ‘as a vesture, thou shalt change them’, is chosen because of the way in which his vesture was taken from him and parted (Pss 22:18). It is therefore *his* work to change their vesture. The irony is directed against his priestly accusers (cf. Zech 3:4-5), who laid great store by their own vestures. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. See Matt 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 16:17, 21:33. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. I express my thanks to Dr. Jim Aitken for participation in his weekly Cambridge LXX Reading Group. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. This is v. 7 in the MT. Although English OT versions generally translate from Hebrew Masoretic Text, sometimes verse numbers do not correspond. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. The Greek NT term katērtisō translated ‘prepared’ (in ‘a body hast thou prepared…’) can be used to justify that translation for the Hebrew term kryt which the KJV has rendered by ‘opened’/’digged’. A term of similar construction occurs in 2 Kings 6:23 with the sense of ‘prepared’ (associated with its cognate ‘provision’): “And he prepared great provision for them….” This means that in the NT quotation of Psalm 40:6(MT v. 7) in Heb 10:5, ‘body’ is the only *radically* changed word. Also, ‘prepared’ in the Psalm does not immediately suggest the practice of boring the ear of a slave that is imagined for ‘digging’ ears. Some have also considered that the rendering ‘prepared’ aptly catches the sense of the Hebrew kryt. See F. Delitzsch’s *Biblical Commentary on the Psalm,* II, 45, cited in D. Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 396, n.58. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. J. W. Adey, “Complementary Difference: Why do NT Quotations often differ from their OT source?” (Unpublished manuscript privately circulated, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. The LXX is a Greek translation of the Hebrew text said to have been produced by Jews in Hellenic Alexandria in 250 B.C.E. “The Letter of Aristeas”, perhaps datable to the second century B.C.E., tells of the production of a translation of the Pentateuch (or Torah) into Greek. Though its authenticity is questioned, the letter is thought to convey some pertinent and reliable historical information. See: R. H. Charles, ed., *The Letter Of Aristeas*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913.) According to E. Würthwein, this letter influenced the view that the inter-testamental ‘LXX’ was “a single version of the whole Old Testament.” E. Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1980), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. Brenton’s (1851) English translation of the LXX based (largely) on Codex Vaticanus 1209, or the Sixtine edition, is the source usually referred to by commentators as ‘*the* LXX’. Thus, any claim that the 4th Century C.E. Vaticanus, a ‘Christian’ (codex) compilation, is (necessarily) a copy of some Jewish (scroll) precursor containing ‘body’ before the NT, especially given perspectives on LXX’s transmission history, is taken as not proven in my article. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Some English versions are inconsistent in their rendering, or obscuring of ‘bowels’ (see KJV Psa 22:14 which on this occasion has ‘bowels’, but RSV, ASV, NKJ do not). The KJV is inconsistent in that the same expression ‘in the midst of my bowels’ in Psa 22:14 (15), it renders ‘within my heart’ in Psa 40:8(9). Yet, for comparison, ‘within my heart’ is straightforwardly what the Hebrew has in Psa 36:1. None of this is on the scale of, nor comparable with, a translation that gives ‘body’ for ‘ears’, as has the LXX! [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Würthwein, Text of the Old Testament, 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Change of approach to, and increased respect for, the Hebrew (Masoretic) Text is evident today in the NETS Greek Psalms, translated into English by Albert Pietersma, on which see his “Introduction” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint (And Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title): The Psalms.* (trans. Albert Pietersma; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). This is the first English translation of the Greek versions for over 150 years. This production is sponsored by the *IOSCS* (International Organisation of Septuagint and Cognate Studies.). The acronym NETS represents this project. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. For example, it is said that in Acts 17:28 Paul probably quotes from the 3rd cent. B.C.E. poet Aratus’ *Phenomena* (perhaps influenced by Cleanthes), and in Tit 1:12 from Callimachus. His references are to non-Biblical sources, not naming any individual. Some say that 1 Cor 15:33 is from Menander, yet no mention is made of this being a non-Biblical source. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. See T.R. McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 1 n.1, and 2-4, for raising some of the issues of what constitutes Scripture in terms of NT’s viewpoint, etc. Sometimes one hears the claim that the NT gave the uninspired LXX translation an inspired seal of approval by quoting from it. However, first convincingly prove that the NT uses the LXX, then deal with this claim. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. An additional feature requires further attention, but is outside my present brief, and that is, although LXX/Zechariah agrees with MT in not having the Greek term for ‘body’ (sw,matoj /sōmatos) found in Jude’s “body of Moses”, how did ‘devil’ (Gk. tw/| diabo,lw|/diabolō) find its way into LXX/Zech 3:2? (Via Jude v.9?) It is a fair project in objectivity to raise such questions as: Why has LXX (?OG) not got a Greek transliteration, or translation (e.g., as ‘adversary’) for the Hebrew ‘satan’/!j'F'h;;? Or, why should not the NT, in interpretative mode, be presenting its own originated commentary that characterises ‘the Satan’ back in Zechariah as ‘the devil’? It would then be telling us that the adversary or satan was (politically or behaviourally) diabolical. The LXX really has a problem with the ‘devil’ and ‘satan’! Compare LXX Paralipomenon 21:1 = 1 Chron 21:1 with II Reigns 24:1 = 2 Sam 24:1. Whilst it is Hebraically permissible to apply ‘satan’/’adversary’ to God/Yhwh, in an adversarial role, as an angel was to Balaam (Num. 22:22, 32), the Greek ‘diabolos’/’devil’ of the LXX is a staggering misunderstood application to God in this text. The term ‘diabolos’ connotes the ungodly senses of ‘false accuser’, ‘slanderer’ in NT usage (1 Tim 3:11; 2 Tim 3:3), so, this could only blasphemously and slanderously be applied to God. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Carlisle: Paternoster/Baker Academic. 2000), 30-32ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. L. Greenspoon, “The Use and Abuse of the Term LXX and Related Terminology in Recent Scholarship” *BIOSCS* 20 (1987): 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press. 1992), 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. Greenspoon, “Use and Abuse”, 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. E.g., E.E. Ellis, *Paul’s use of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd, 1957). Although, Ellis does not include Hebrews, of course, nevertheless Barr’s criticism of Ellis’ work, and NT scholarship with respect to LXX is apt, here: “It is difficult to avoid the impression that much New Testament scholarship is insensitive to textual criticism in the LXX…to any specialist in LXX who was interested in the New Testament it was immediately evident that Ellis’ handling of the LXX material was deeply faulty.” J. Barr, “Paul and the LXX: A note on some recent work” *JTS* 45 (1994): 593 -601. K. Thomas, however, does at least admit that “the textual origin of the citations in Hebrews has long been an enigma…most commentators …have concluded that some text of the LXX was used…” K. Thomas, “The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews” in *Studies in The* Se*ptuagint: Origins, Recensions, and Interpretations - Selected Essays with a Prolegomenon* (ed., Sidney Jellicoe Jerusalem: KTAV Publishing, 1974), 507. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. Homogeneity is a characteristic of (the ideology of) the Bible as Divine revelation, or verbally inspired by a single Divine Author. Jesus’ viewpoint, for example, was that Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35). Differences that might seem to fracture this perspective commend our consideration as complementary or counter-intuitive facets of its transcendent (or, what it would be to be, the art of ultimate) Truth. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. Pietersma, “Introduction”, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint: The Psalms,* vii. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. Some accident of history caused the various codices to have missing portions of some of the OT. Nevertheless, overall they combine to show that the whole of the OT was originally represented in them. I make no comment, here, about their apocryphal, or other, additions. *Some* of these do not appear to be translations from the Hebrew (or Aramaic) but composed originally in Greek. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. See Alan Millard’s *Reading And Writing In The Time of Jesus* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), chs. 2 and 3. He shows that the shift from the roll form to the codex (books with pages) was a Christian development, at least as early as the second century C.E. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. Würthwein, Text of the Old Testament, 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. Würthwein, Text of the Old Testament, 51-52. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, (Carlisle: Paternoster/Baker Academic, 2000), 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. *Textual Criticism*, 135. Note, as Greenspoon avers, the term OG (Old Greek) mentioned by Tov is rarely found in commentaries or similar works. He regrets, too, that the informative textual labours of 20th century LXX specialists are rarely cited in such contexts. The OG is what specialists seek: a text that is the nearest approach to the Greek original as it left the hands of the translator(s). Another perspective on the OG would be “the presumed initial version of the Hebrew Bible for books other than the Pentateuch”, see Jobes and Silva, *Invitation*, 326. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. J. H. Sailhamer, The Translational Technique of the Greek Septuagint for the Hebrew Verbs and Participles in Psalms 3-41 (ed., D. A. Carson; New York: Peter Lang, 1991), 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. PBodl5Pss 48-49 (2nd C.E., parchment codex). [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. L. Greenspoon, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Greek Bible” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years: A comprehensive Assessment* (2 vols; eds. P. W. Flint and J. C. Vanderkam; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 1:101-127. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. D. Barthèlemy, “Les Devanciers d’Aquila: Première publication integral du texte des fragments du Dodè-capropheton”, VTSup 10 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963). [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. To-date, no Greek Psalms, only Hebrew Psalms have been discovered at Qumran. 11Q8Psd (frag. 6. Inv. 569) contains Hebrew Psalms 39:13-40:2. No more of Hebrew Psalm 40 has been found, or catalogued, yet. See: *DJD* XXIII (1988) pl. VII. That no Greek Psalms have been found at Qumran is interesting. Especially as some scholars believe that “in all probability, the Greek Psalter did not originate in Egypt but in Palestine”, see Arie Van Der Kooj, “The Origin of the Old Greek Psalms” *VT* 33 (1983): 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. Barthèlemy recognised in “Les Devanciers d’Aquila” that the Minor Prophets Scroll from near Qumran was a revision of an older Greek text in the direction of the Hebrew (MT), which he called the ‘kaige recension’, or “kaige/proto-Theodotion”; it is thus datable as pre-Aquilan. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. Würthwein, *Text of the Old Testament*, 53. On Christian insertions (*additamenta christiana*), cf. A. Rahlfs, *Psalmi cum Odis* (1931), pp. 30-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. Jobes and Silva, *Invitation,* 290. For a particular case of exegesis in the LXX, see D.W. Gooding, *Relics of Ancient Exegesis*: *A study of the miscellanies in 3 Reigns 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976). Jobes and Silva also comment on the significance of this work in *Invitation,* 295-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. T. S. Green, A Treatise on the Grammar of New Testament Dialect (London: 1842), 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Wandering Arameans: Collected Aramaic Essays* (Missoula: Scholars Press,1979), 121; see also his n. 44 & n.51, pp. 138-9.) [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. Cave 4 Levb (1st B.C.E.). [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. A Seminar of the Art & Humanities Research Council Greek Bible in Byzantine Judaism Project (13th February, 2007, University of Cambridge). Prof. Emanuel Tov (Jerusalem), one of the speakers, spoke on: “The Greek texts from the Judean Desert and the early history of the Septuagint”. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. For example, see J. W. Wever’s “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Septuagint”, in *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*, 38 (2005): note on pp. 22-23. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. G. A. Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter’s Bible*, (12 vols; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1951-1957), 11:704 -705. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Psalms* (2 vols; London: SPCK, 1939), 1:233. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. A few Hebrew Biblical scrolls have been found at Qumran which contain a text that at times is closer to the Septuagint. Some scholars think that the LXX is an indirect witness to its *Vorlage*, that is, to a Hebrew parent text from which it was translated that is not identical with the MT. However, none of its extant (divergent) fragments helps in the case for ‘body’ being available in a Hebrew text for LXX translators to adopt. In any case, the (4th Century C.E.) LXX version of the Psalm correlates literally with the MT in Psalm 39/40 except in having ‘body’. So, retroverting from the Greek LXX Psalm to construct a Hebrew ‘original’ would produce a text that matched the MT. As these divergent Hebrew mss cannot assist this case, it is worth bearing in mind what Cambridge Semitic philologist Professor Geoffrey Khan says in an unpublished manuscript he kindly provided me with: “The majority of apparent differences between the [Septuagint] translation and the MCT [Masoretic Consonantal Text] are likely not to be the result of a different Hebrew *Vorlage* but rather due to the exegesis of the translator, a concept of etymology different from our own, or corruptions in the transmission of the Greek text. The style of the translation varies in degrees of literalness. This reflects the approaches of different translators... Retroversions of the Greek into the Hebrew are far safer in the literal sections of the Septuagint” (“The Masoretic Hebrew Bible and Its Background”, 1998, p. 12). Khan does not raise the issue of ‘Christian harmonising’ as having a bearing on the LXX’s divergences from the MCT, where such divergences happen to involve agreement with New Testament quotations. In my argument I would appropriate his “Corruptions in the transmission of the Greek text” and extend it to include deliberate post-NT changes in the LXX in the light of the NT. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. Cited in L. Greenspoon, in “It’s All Greek to Me”, *CurBS* 5(1997): 153-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. Würthwein, *Text of the Old Testament*, 63-64. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott. 1967), 232. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. M. M. Bourke, “Hebrews”, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (eds., R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer and R. E. Murphy; London: Chapman, 1997): 920-941 (938 - section 58). [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 318-319. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. A. Rahlfs, *Psalmi cum Odis*, 143, reads ōtia (‘ears’) in his Psalms’ main text with the sixth-century Old Latin Codex *Lat.* 11947 and the Gallican Psalter. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. Pietersma states in his “Introduction”, xvi: “For the purposes of NETS, the term ‘Septuagint’ is understood to be exemplified by, but not in all respects…congruent with, Alfred Rahlfs’s Septuaginta (1935).” [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. The Roman or Sixtine edition reproduces the “Codex Vaticanus” almost exclusively. Published under the direction of Cardinal Caraffa in 1586, by the authority of Sixtus V, it has become the *textus receptus* of the Greek Old Testament and has had many new editions, such as that of Holmes and Parsons (Oxford, 1798-1827), the seven editions of Tischendorf, which appeared at Leipzig between 1850 and 1887, the last two, published after the death of the author and revised by Nestle, the four editions of Swete (Cambridge, 1887-95, 1901, 1909), etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. Jobes and Silva, *Invitation,* 196 [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. Note that Rahlfs’s critical edition of the Greek version is not accompanied by (a German, or) an English translation. Now, of course, the NETS publication effectively puts Rahlfs’s Psalms text into English. It is thus the first Göttingen Septuagint in English form. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. Jobes and Silva, *Invitation,* 196 [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. Karen H. Jobes, “Rhetorical Achievement in the Hebrews 10 ‘Misquote’ of Psalm 40,” *Biblica* 72 (1991): 387-96. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. Jobes and Silva, *Invitation,* 197-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, 322. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)