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**Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation**

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

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

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**Editorial**

This issue brings to a close the fourth year of the EJournal. As each year finishes, the editors ask themselves whether they can commit for another year, whether it is time to end the project, and/or if they should change anything. The justification for the journal is the same as in 2007, and so in 2011 we hope to continue fulfilling these objectives. In the last issue we avoided any reference to Biblical scholarship.

One of the objectives for the EJournal is to engage such scholarship. The reasons for this are several. First, we live in a world where there is a large body of scholarship and there is interesting and enlightening material in such writing. Secondly, there is a lot that is wrong in such scholarship; wrong because of the use of humanistic methods of interpretation of the Bible; wrong because of philosophy and theology; and wrong because it is judgmental and sceptical of the Bible. The prophets “engaged the wrong” and this is our precedent.

A final objective for engaging scholarship is this: anyone in the community preparing a talk or a piece of writing may pick up what is wrong from their own selective reading of scholarship, from commentaries, from Bible dictionaries, or any number of other works. So, a vehicle in the community where there is explicit engagement of scholarship over what is wrong and what is right is therefore valuable as a place where there might be necessary and/or useful correction. We see through a glass darkly, and precision in exposition is difficult to achieve, in particular, balanced precision. While there is an obvious need for general writing in the brotherhood, there is also a need for precise and detailed writing that tackles topics such as God’s name; the two types of writing should trade off one another, with the general reflecting the detailed expositions, summarizing and simplifying what can be complex and complicated. In this way mistakes in general writing can be avoided.

We have produced another “Annual” of the year’s issues (2010) which is now available from www.lulu.com/willowpublications (Price £8+p&p). Although the quarterly issues remain on the password protected website, ecclesial librarians might like to consider purchasing the paperback Annuals for ecclesial libraries as older quarterly PDF issues may be removed from the website as we keep the limited space we have up-to-date.

## **Galatians 3:28: an ‘equality text’?[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**J. Burke**

**Introduction**

A point raised by those egalitarians who do not see Gal 3:28 as an ‘equality text’ is the simple fact that the verse says nothing about equality. The subject is unity, ‘all **one**’, not equality, ‘all **equal**’, as has been pointed out by both egalitarians and complementarians.[[2]](#footnote-2) This article reviews the points that are made by such scholars.

**Equality or Unity?**

Complementarian R. W. Hove notes that there are two key reasons why the ‘all one’ phrase does not mean ‘all equal’. One reason is the fact that the Greek word for ‘one’ here simply does not mean ‘equal’:

As noted in the previous chapter, there are two critical reasons why “you are all one” does not mean “you are all equal”.

I will review these two reasons briefly. The first reason is the **lexical range** of the word ‘one’. **Lexically this word cannot mean “equal.”** Our overview of BAGD confirmed this, as we found that **there is no known example of ‘one’ being used this way**. [[3]](#footnote-3)

The other reason is the fact that uses in other Greek literature of this same ‘all one’ phrase indicates that it was not used to refer to equality, but unity; Hove states:

The second reason “you are all one” does not mean “you are all equal” is that the phrase was not used in that way in the era of the New Testament. As we have seen, a study of every parallel use of the phrase “we/you/they are one” in the 300 years surrounding the New Testament reveals that this expression fails to express the concept of unqualified equality.

In fact, “you are all one” is used of diverse objects to denote one element they share in common; it is not used of similar objects to denote that they are the same.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Likewise, egalitarian scholar F. Watson argues that Paul is not addressing hierarchy and equality in this passage, but that the ‘all one’ phrase refers to unity in Christ:

In baptism, Jew, Greek, slave, free, male, female receive a new identity as they ‘put on Christ’ (3:27): **the emphasis lies not on their ‘equality’ but on their belonging together** as they participate in the new identity and the new practices and modes of interaction that this will entail.

Paul could have assumed that the three distinctions he mentions were hierarchical ones, and that in Christ these are replaced by an egalitarian oneness, **but there is nothing in the wording of his statement** (or in the hypothetical baptismal formula supposed to underlie it) **to suggest that he actually did so**. The polarity of hierarchy and equality is an exceedinglyblunt instrument for interpreting this text.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Hove provides several Biblical examples of the use of ‘one’ to denote unity rather than equality or the same roles:

In 1 Corinthians 3:8 Paul writes that the one who waters and the one who plants **are one**. Both of these individuals h**ave different roles and different rewards**, but Paul uses the expression “you are one” t**o show that they share one thing in common**— that they have a common purpose.

In Romans 12:5 Paul writes that, “**We who are many form one body**, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts…” Again, the expression “**we are one**” is an expression **that denotes what different people, with different gifts, have in common—one body in Christ.** The pattern is thesame with the Father and Son (John 10:30) and the husband and wife(Mark 10:8). In both cases the expression “you are one” highlights anelement that **diverse objects share in common**.[[6]](#footnote-6)

He also notes that in such cases the roles of those who are ‘one’ are different:

The New Testament examples of “we/you/they are one,” where a plurality of people are called one, are: the planter and waterer (1 Cor. 3:8); Father and Son (John 10:30; 17:11, 21, 22 [2x], 23); husband and wife (Matt. 19:6; Mark 10:8); **and different believers with different gifts** (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 10:17).

**In every instance the groups of people in these pairs have different roles**. Given these expressions, which formally are directly parallel with Galatians 3:28, **it is difficult to see** how the meaning of “you are all one” can be “there are no distinctions of role between you”.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Watson argues against an egalitarian reading of Gal 3:28 on the basis that none of the three relationships referred to by Paul are hierarchical, so the passage cannot be arguing for their abolition on the basis of equality:

In Gal 3.28, for example, the three distinctions (Jew/Greek, slave/free, male/female) **do not straightforwardly represent a series of hierarchical relationships**. The distinction between Jew and Greek **does not constitute a hierarchical relationship**, since each party regards itself **as superior to the other**.[[8]](#footnote-8)

As for the second distinction, the terms ‘slave’ and ‘free’ refer l**ess clearly to a hierarchical relationship than if Paul had written ‘slave or master’**. ‘Male and female(a;rsen kai. qh/lu)’ is an allusion to Gen 1:27, as the substitution of kai. for ouvde.indicates, **and there is no suggestion in the Genesis text that this relationship is understood hierarchically**.[[9]](#footnote-9)

This being the case, Watson points out, the purpose of Gal 3:28 is to identify unity, not to argue for egalitarianism:

If the distinctions of Gal 3.28a do not refer to ‘hierarchical’ relationships, then the ‘oneness in Christ Jesus’, in the face of which the distinctions are declared to be irrelevant, **is not to be understood as an ‘egalitarian’ oneness**.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Egalitarian scholar N. T. Wright says the same:

The point Paul is making overall in this passage **is that God has one family, not two, and that this family consists of all those who believe in Jesus**; that this is the family God promised to Abraham, and that nothing in the Torah can stand in the way of this unity which is now revealed through the faithfulness of the Messiah. **This is not at all about how we relate to one another within this single family**; it is about the fact, as we often say, that the ground is even at the foot of the cross.[[11]](#footnote-11)

M. E. Glasswell further comments,

The three pairs do not have precisely the same significance if one looks at other places where Paul discusses them separately. The differences within each pair are seen as being overcome in Christ but not abolished completely, though this is true of each pair differently.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Hove quotes another commentator who demonstrates that Paul’s treatment of certain relationships actually contradicts the egalitarian claim. Paul does not use Biblical arguments to support the Jew/Gentile and slave/master relationships of his era, but **does** use Biblical arguments to support other social relationships, such as male/female and husband/wife:

Colin Kruse, investigating human relationships in the Pauline epistles, comes to a similar conclusion. Kruse examined Paul’s treatment of six pairs of human relationships throughout the Pauline corpus: Jew/Gentile, master/slave, male/female, husband/wife, parent/child, and citizen/state. He concludes:

No common pattern emerges as far as the retention in principle of all six human relationships surveyed is concerned. On the one hand, theologicalsupport **was not offered for the retention in principle of Jew-Gentile and slave-master relationships**.

On the other hand, however,theological reasons **were provided** which imply the necessity of theretention in principle **of the male-female, husband-wife, parent-child and citizen-state relationships**.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Wright insists that Gal 3:28 is being misread by other egalitarians, that it is not about the position women have in ‘church ministry’, nor does it speak about the relationship of brothers and sisters within the ecclesia. He objects to misuse of this passage by his fellow egalitarians in strong terms:

The first thing to say is fairly obvious but needs saying anyway. Galatians 3 is not about ministry. Nor is it the only word Paul says about being male and female, and instead of taking texts in a vacuum and then arranging them in a hierarchy, for instance by quoting this verse and then saying that it trumps every other verse in a kind of fight to be the senior bull in the herd (what a very masculine way of approaching exegesis, by the way!), we need to do justice to what Paul is actually saying at this point.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Wright also identifies a common egalitarian straw man:

I am surprised to see, in some of your literature, the insistence that women and men are equally saved and justified; **that is, I’m surprised because I’ve never heard anyone denying it**. Of course, there may well be some who do, but I just haven’t met them.[[15]](#footnote-15)

He also notes a mistranslation of the verse which is commonly used by egalitarians:

First, a note about translation and exegesis. I **notice that on one of your leaflets you adopt what is actually a mistranslation of this verse**: neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female. That is precisely what Paul does ***not*** say; and as it’s what we expect he’s going to say, we should note quite carefully what he has said instead, since he presumably means to make a point by doing so, a point which is missed when the translation is flattened out as in that version. What he says is that there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, no ‘*male and female*’.[[16]](#footnote-16)

G. P. Hugenberger (a moderate egalitarian who considers women are free to speak and teach in the ecclesia if the male eldership approves them), objects to the typical egalitarian use of Gal 3:28 on several grounds. Most significantly, Hugenberger observes that the passage is simply being taken out of context (it has to do with salvation rather than roles in ecclesial organization), and points out that this is becoming recognized even by other egalitarians, such as B. Witherington III:

Perhaps more compelling, however, is an objection being raised with increasing conviction: Galatians 3:28 and the other so-called “equality texts” actually have less to do with ecclesiology than with soteriology and are in fact concerned to assert not equality but salvific unity within the body of Christ.[[17]](#footnote-17)

This is of course the same interpretation which complementarians have held all along. Another egalitarian who does not agree with the common egalitarian reading of this passage is E. L. Miller. He affirms that the passage teaches a union with Christ which is available to all, regardless of social, ethnic, and gender distinction:

The good news is that this passage does indeed teach that at some level and in some sense such distinctions as Jew/Greek, bond/free, male/female, fall away and prove irrelevant from the standpoint of Christian faith. At this level, **the soteriological level**, all believers enjoy **a salvific union with Christ**.[[18]](#footnote-18)

However, he points out that the distinctions referred to by Paul are not eliminated, despite the fact that they are no barrier to salvation. On the contrary, Miller insists that these distinctions are reinforced:

The bad news is that there is another level presupposed by the passage, and it turns out that at this other level **such distinctions, far from being abrogated, are actually reinforced**.This is the ordinary, everyday level ofpractical, social life.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Miller recognizes that this conclusion will not be viewed favourably by other egalitarians:

**This may be a disappointing interpretation of this celebrated ’egalitarian’ passage**, for it turns out at one level to be only another proof-text for those very elements in Paul that many are struggling to get rid of - sexism and patriarchalism, for example.[[20]](#footnote-20)

However, he insists that this reading of the passage is in agreement with its context, and with Paul’s overall teaching:

It must be admitted, though, for better or for worse, **that this view of Galatians 3:28 coheres both with its immediate context and with the rest of what we know of Paul**. This includes his notion of the priorityof the true Israel over Gentile Christians who aremerely grafted on to it, his implicit condoning ofslavery, **and his hierarchical view of husband-wife relations**.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Miller acknowledges that it is possible to extrapolate beyond what Paul wrote and apply the passage in an egalitarian manner, but he still declares that Christians must be honest about the fact that Paul’s teaching in this passage did not have an egalitarian aim:

That is not to say that wetoday, as others before us, cannot work that out anddraw the implication on Paul’s behalf. But it seemsnot to have been done in the Pauline texts themselves,and certainly **not the one before us**. We have **to try to be honest about that**.[[22]](#footnote-22)

**Conclusion**

What would an ‘egalitarian’ Gal 3:28 look like? While observing that arguments should not be based on what **was not** written,[[23]](#footnote-23) Hove notes that it was entirely possible for Paul to have written such a passage which spoke of brothers and sisters as ‘equal’ in some way if that was the point of the passage, and provides a relevant 1st century parallel:

Philo, **writing at about the same time as Paul**, uses the phrase pa,ntej evste. ivso,timoi (“you are **all entitled to equal honor**”), which is **almost directly parallel to Galatians 3:28** u`mei/j ei-j evste (“you are all one”).[[24]](#footnote-24)

Moses’ argument here is much like Galatians 3:28. The parts (Jew/Greek, slave/free, male/female) **have inheritance only because of the whole** (being in Christ).[[25]](#footnote-25)

However, Hove also notes that even such a term as Philo uses here would not necessarily mean that those referred to by it would have identical roles:

But notice, while each tribe has equal honor, and each is treated the same way when it comes to fighting battles or settling land, **not all the tribes have the same roles** (e.g., Gen. 49:10, “the scepter will not depart from Judah,” and Numbers 3, which details the unique role of the tribe of Levi). Thus, even if Paul had used an i;soj(“equal”) word in Galatians 3:28, **it would not follow that Jew/Greek, slave/free, male/female have the same roles**.

In addition, the fact that Paul did not use an i;sojroot word, when it was available, is evidence, though admittedly not weighty, that his intent was not to emphasize the equality of Jew/Greek, slave/free, male/female.'’[[26]](#footnote-26)

**The Philippians Hymn and Pauline Theology**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

The hymn[[27]](#footnote-27) in Philippians 2 (vv. 6-11) is usually employed to establish both the pre-existence and incarnation of Christ. Scholars believe that the hymn is based either on Adam (Adam Christology) or on Isaiah’s Suffering Servant. The following article suggests an incident that inspired Paul to write the hymn and examines whether the hymn draws on Servant Theology or Adam Christology.

**The Setting**

The NT background to the Philippians hymn can be found in John 13:3-7 a suggestion first noted by Hawthorne: [[28]](#footnote-28)

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God,rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded.Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, “Lord, are You washing my feet?”Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this” John 13:3-7 (NKJV)

The entire hymn in Philippians preserves the descent-ascent motif that is prominent in the Gospel story (John13:3-17//Luke 22:24-30). Moreover, the context is complementary, for the background to the gospel story is rivalry among the disciples. A struggle for leadership and pre-eminence had been a continuing cause of friction amongst the disciples (Mark 9:34; 10:37), so much so that Jesus warned against power struggles and the desire for prominence (Luke 14:7-11; cf. Mark 9:34, 35). And later this very incident is referred to by Peter (1 Pet 5:3, 5). It is suggested that Jesus washed the disciples’ feet because they were arguing about the priority of the seating arrangements at the Last Supper. Unlike the selfish attitude of the disciples, fired as it was by personal ambition, Jesus voluntarily took the position of a servant. This is a key theme in Philippians and the context of the hymn, “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (vv. 4, 5).

You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for [*so*]I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. John 13:13-17 (NKJV)

The Greek of John 13:13 (le,gete\ eivmi. ga,r) does not contain the adverb *so* (placed here between parenthesis) and is the more emphatic *I am* – translated by Young’s Literal Translation as,“ye call me, The Teacher and The Lord, and ye say well, for I am”.[[29]](#footnote-29) Significantly, Jesus does not rebuke them for calling him ‘Teacher and Lord’. Is Jesus claiming to be God? Obviously not, because “A servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him”.

Jesus Christ is not claiming to be God, but rather he is the covenant manifestation and embodiment of the divine character revealed in the name. Hence, he can affirm ‘I am’ and confirm what is implicitly anticipated in Yahweh’s use of ‘I will be’*—*he is the present (‘I am’) and full manifestation (*phanerosis*) of the promised covenant self-revelation (“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion”, Rom 9: 15).

Jesus’ use of ‘I am’ in John is a circumlocution linked to the revelation of the divine name and Philippians expressly notes that, “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord” (Phil 2:10, 11). Jesus was the perfect embodiment of the name of *Yahweh* but both Philippians and John 13 stress his subordination to the Father.

It is this future manifestation that R. Bauckham latches onto and for which he coins the phrase ‘eschatological monotheism’:

This means that it is often in scriptural texts that refer to the final and universal manifestation of the unique identity of the one God that Paul understands Jesus to be YHWH. Jesus himself is the eschatological manifestation of YHWH’s unique identity[[30]](#footnote-30) to the whole world, so that those who call on Jesus’ name and confess Jesus as Lord are acknowledging YHWH the God of Israel to be the one and only true God.[[31]](#footnote-31)

Bauckham has sensed something correct in his analysis of the application of the Yahweh name to Jesus (as the “eschatological manifestation of YHWH’s unique identity”); however, he then proceeds to negate the implications of his analysis by forcing it into a Trinitarian paradigm:

It [the name] is given to Jesus in recognition of his identity as Lord of all creation, but at the same time it rebounds to the glory of God the Father ([Phil]2:11) because Jesus is not an alternative object of worship in competition with the one God but himself belongs to the unique identity of that one God. Thus the passage ([Phil]vv 9-11), to which we have so far confined our comments, refers to the incarnate and risen Christ exercising the divine sovereignty not simply as such, but as the eschatological role of achieving and receiving the recognition of that unique sovereignty by all creation. Rather only one who already belonged to the divine identity could occupy this position of eschatological supremacy. It is part of the function of the opening words of the passage ([Phil]2:6), which I understand, with the majority of scholars, as depicting the pre-existence of Christ, to make clear his identity with the one God from the beginning.[[32]](#footnote-32),[[33]](#footnote-33)

The reading of pre-existence into the hymn is caused by a failure to correctly recognise the typology that forms the basis of Pauline thought.

**Is the Hymn based on the Suffering Servant or on Adam?**

Both viewpoints are represented in scholarship but J. D. G. Dunn, who proposes an Adam Christology as the basis for the hymn, found that he had to defend his position[[34]](#footnote-34) because the Adam paradigm challenges the notion of a pre-existent Christ. New Testament scholar N. T. Wright offers the following critique on ‘Adam Christology’:

To begin with, this background [Adam Christology] depends heavily on a rejection of pre-existence in the hymn (see Hurst, 449). Therefore, if one accepts pre-existence, its appeal diminishes greatly. Even if one does not, there are still problems, such as why Adam’s fall should prompt the idea of slavery in 2:7 (see Hurst, 451-52; Wanamaker, 181-83). Also, the language of 2:7-8a suggests something more comprehensive even than Adam’s fall (Hurst, 451). Similarly, how would the general idea of Adam’s disgrace prompt the particulars of Phil 2:9-11? For instance, what is the connection between Adam speculation and Isa 45:23, which Phil 2:9-11 clearly reflects? In the end, he [Dunn] seems almost to abandon Adam speculation by concluding that “the nearest antecedents” to a Christology of pre-existence are personifications of Wisdom or Torah”. [[35]](#footnote-35)

Dunn observes the following connections with Adam in Phil 2:6-11:

**v.6a** – in the form of God (cf. Gen 1.27);

**v.6b** – tempted to grasp equality with God (cf. Gen. 3.5);

**v.7** – enslavement to corruption and sin – humanity as it now is (cf. Gen 2.19, 22-24; Ps 8.5a; Wisd 2.23; Rom 8.3; Gal 4.4; Heb 2.7a, 9a);

**v.8** – submission to death (cf. Wisd 2.24; Rom 5.12-21; 7.7-11: 1 Cor 15.21-22)

**vv.9-11** – exalted and glorified (cf. Ps 8.5b-6; I Cor.15.27, 45; Heb.2.7b-8, 9b)

Dunn concludes that, “It is the Adamic significance of Christ which the hymn brings out, of his life and death and exaltation (as in Rom. 5, I Cor. 15 and Heb. 2), not necessarily a chronological parallel phase by phase. This is why it still seems to me an open question as to whether the hymn carries any thought of pre-existence, other than the pre-existence involved in the paradigm – that is, the metahistorical character of the Adam myth”.

Other scholars contend that the basis of the hymn is not Adam Christology but rather the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. They are no doubt correct in this insight, but there is no reason why one paradigm should preclude the other. In fact even Dunn recognizes the limitations of his Adam Christology when he states that the “fit is not exact or precise”, but there is no reason why both models cannot operate in a complementary fashion. It is therefore entirely plausible that Paul combined Adam Christology with Suffering Servant theology. The following connections are suggested:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Isaiah (NKJV)** | **Philippians 2 (KJV)** |
| Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; Besides Me *there is* no God’ (44:6 cf. 40:18). | He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped (v.6 RSV) |
| My righteous servant (53:11)… His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men (52:14 cf. 53:2) | But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men (v.7) |
| …. He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors (53:12). I will ….give thee for a covenant of the people…. (49:8) | And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (v.8) |
| Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. (52: 13) | Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: (v.9) |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Isaiah (NKJV)** | **Philippians 2 (KJV)** |
|  I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth *in* righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath. (45:23) | And that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; (v.10) *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (v. 11) |

The connections with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah are obvious although there are different languages involved (Hebrew and Greek).

R. P. Martin detects a parallelism in the lines of verse 7 in which morfh.n dou,lou [form of a slave] is parallel with evn o`moiw,mati avnqrw,pwn **[in the likeness of a man].**[[36]](#footnote-36) **This parallelism is a good example of how Adam Christology is subtly combined with Suffering Servant terminology. Genesis narrates how Adam, who was *‘*created in the likeness of God’ (Gen 5:1) *‘*begat a son in his own likeness, after his image’(Gen 5:3). The son of Adam inherited the sin-prone nature of his father and became metaphorically a ‘servant’ to sin.**

The phrase “made himself of no reputation” is literally “emptied (keno,w) himself” and has given rise to kenotic theology, now almost universally rejected. Martin comments that, “linguistically the self-emptying is related to the taking of the form of a servant and the verse teaches nothing about the abandonment of divine attributes”. He also adds that, “the phrase...which is found nowhere else in Greek, and is grammatically harsh, may go back to a Semitic original in Isaiah 53:12, ‘he poured his soul unto death (RV)’”.[[37]](#footnote-37)

**Conclusion**

Philippians 2 employs the Hebrew Scriptures in a characteristically Pauline manner which is complex, subtle and polyvalent **by combining Adam Christology with Suffering Servant theology.** L. D. Hurst and C. A. Wanamaker also favour a combined model as the basis of the hymn.[[38]](#footnote-38) Paul deliberately contrasts the actions of Adam with the actions of the Suffering Servant. The Suffering Servant offered himself as an atoning sacrifice for the nation. Adam joined his wife in sin (instead of atoning for her). The Suffering Servant (although Yahweh’s agent) humbled himself and was numbered with the transgressors. Adam exalted himself by seeking equality with God. The contrast is between “my righteous servant” and the “servant of sin”…for, “Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin” (John 8:34). The apostle Paul illuminates the Genesis “fall” through the lens of Isaiah and presents the reader with a number of contrasts. This begs the question of the historical identity of the Suffering Servant a question that has been completely obfuscated by a liberal scholarship that asserts that the Servant Songs in Isa 42:1-53:12 are the product of an unknown post-exilic author styled “Deutero-Isaiah”. However, the correct setting of the Servant Songs is the reign of Hezekiah,[[39]](#footnote-39) and failure to correctly contextualize the oracles leads to aberrant understandings. The oracles seem to admit of both a collective and an individual role for the Servant. Collectively, the Servant is the faithful Judean remnant but the passages that speak of individual suffering are based on Hezekiah. As the king, he was not only the divine agent, but also the representative of the people; in other words, a mediator and type of the messiah.

No one would insist that either Adam or the Suffering Servant pre-existed. The ideas of agency and God manifestation (not incarnation) are integral to both roles—especially in the account of Adam’s “fall”. Even though Paul types Christ as the “second Adam” (1 Cor 15:47), Trinitarians fiercely resist “Adam Christology” because the parallel with Adam places Christ in a role that is subordinate to the Father. However, it is the “natural” that is first and then the “spiritual” (1 Cor 15:46). If Christ existed before Adam the contrast breaks down. As the “second Adam” Jesus refused to follow in the footsteps of the “first Adam” instead embracing the role of the suffering servant.

The Philippians are not being exhorted to forego a pre-existent “god-like” status in exchange for a humbler “human” form.[[40]](#footnote-40) Instead, the community, who already had an exalted status in Christ and the powers of the future age, should follow his example (not the example of Adam’s overweening ambition), who although made in the express image of God, did not snatch at divinity. Nor did he selfishly abuse his powers, nor did he claim his rightful place as King of the Jews, nor did he lord it over his brethren. He put to one side the privileges of a son for those of a servant. Adam blamed God for his fall; “The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate” (Gen 3:12) but Christ declared;“Those whom You gave Me I have kept....” (John 17:12). Jesus humbled himself to death on the cross in order to save his bride...be ye likeminded.

**An Aside**: Theologians, and especially philosophical theologians, are fond of categories like “reality” and “being” in their descriptions of God. Paul Tillich, a New York theologian popular in the 1960s, affirmed that God was the “ground of all being”. You may hear theologians say that God is “Ultimate Reality” or a “necessary being”. The Bible does not have this kind of language. The nearest you get is “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” (Rev 4:8, RSV), which uses the verbs “to be” and “to come” of God. To use the verb “to be” in relation to God does not involve the notion of reality or make a comment about God’s being. Scripture does not elaborate very much upon the nature of God. Instead, Scripture presents God as a person to whom we can relate. To think of God as a person whom we can trust and who makes promises to us is far better thinking than any description of him in terms of the concepts of “being” or “reality”. (AP)

**P. Heavyside**

**The Spirit of the Lord in the History Books**

**A. Perry**

**Introduction**

Various OT accounts use “Spirit of the Lord”.[[41]](#footnote-41) In the collected state of these traditions, they combine to produce a composite picture of the Spirit of the Lord as an “agent” in the narrative—a kind of hypostatization of the power of God.

**History Books**

In the history books, the narrative pattern is that the Spirit of the Lord comes upon a deliverer or king (Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Saul and David) who is then empowered to act on behalf of the Lord. This pattern is reinforced with allusions to the Exodus and an implicit comparison is struck between the deliverer-judge and Moses The people “cry” unto the Lord (Jud 3:9; 6:6; 10:10; Exod 2:23; 3:7), “groan” (Jud 2:18; Exod 2:24), and the Lord “raises up” (Jud 3:9; cf. Deut 18:15) a judge to deliver them (Jud 13:5).

The Spirit of the Lord acts in regular ways: i) coming upon the judge (Jud 3:10; 11:29); ii) clothing[[42]](#footnote-42) Gideon prior to battle (Jud 6:34); iii) initiating the troubling through dreams of a judge to action (Jud 13:25; cf. Gen 41:8; Ps 77:5; Dan 2:1, 2); iv) rushing suddenly upon a judge prior to acts of physical prowess (Jud 14:6, 14:19; 15:14); and v) transporting a prophet (“taking up” and “casting down”, 2 Kgs 2:16).

In traditions about Saul, there is a similar “deliverance” motif and allusions to Exodus traditions are employed. Thus, God “looks” upon the people when he hears their “cry” (1 Sam 9:16; Exod 2:25; 3:7); Saul is selected to perform a “Moses” role; his choice is confirmed with “signs”; and God is “with” him (1 Sam 10:7; Exod 3:12). One of the signs is that the Spirit of the Lord will come suddenly upon Saul and he will prophesy (1 Sam 10:6, 10; 11:6). The Spirit of the Lord subsequently departs from Saul and comes upon David (1 Sam 16:13-14), and speaks by him, and places his word in his tongue (2 Sam 23:2).

The first information the reader is presented with in Judges is that the Spirit of the Lord comes upon a judge and he is thereby empowered to lead the people (Jud 3:10; 6:34; 11:29). No specific actions are specifically attributed to the Spirit in the cases of Othniel, Gideon or Jephthah—there is no instrumental statement to the effect that the Spirit caused Othniel to go out to war, but insofar as Hebrew narrative regularly indicates causation by conjunction, it is the conjunction of a statement that the Spirit of the Lord came upon a judge followed immediately by a statement about what the judge did that secures the causal link. The metaphor here of “coming upon” is that of the “Spirit-as-agent” because the action of the Spirit is what the judge immediately does in the story.

With Samson, the narrator does not initially say that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, but instead he ascribes an action to the Spirit of the Lord.

And the Spirit of the Lord began[[43]](#footnote-43) to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol. Jud 13:25 (NASB)

Against the backdrop of Othniel, Gideon and Jephthah, this statement is describing the Spirit *as it is already in Samson*; this kind of phraseology refers to *what* stirs Samson to action, and the metaphor is one of agency. The LXX translators read the metaphor in this way,

And the Spirit of the Lord began to go out with him in the camp of Dan, and between Saraa and Esthaol. Judg 13:25 (LXX-A)

*Targum Jonathan* has “a spirit of power from before the Lord began to strengthen him”, but this seems to be motivated by Samson’s subsequent behaviour rather than the sense of “troubling” which is linked to the “trouble” caused by dreams in MT usage and therefore prophetic inspiration. The LXX has sunekporeu,omai—“the Spirit of the Lord began to go out with him” which likewise does not render “troubling” but retains a notion of agency.

In later stories about Samson, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon him mightily so that he performs feats of strength (Jud 14:6; 15:14). This idea of “coming mightily upon Samson” indicates that the Spirit of the Lord is an agent coming mightily upon Samson. The same close connection between the Spirit of the Lord and behaviour is seen in David’s claim that the Spirit spoke by him (2 Sam 23:2). This description is an example of agency: the Spirit is in David but David refers to the Spirit as if it is an agent speaking through him.

However, other actions related to the Spirit of the Lord imply the Spirit is a **spirit-being** because the action is *external* to the individual (it relates to the body of a person):

* Lifting up Elijah and carrying him off (1 Kgs 18:12)
* Taking Elijah up to a mountain and casting him down (2 Kgs 2:16)

These actions indicate transport by a being and are thereby marked out as different. The transport of Elijah is described in vigorous terms as a “casting down” upon a mountain. This detail is sufficient to indicate the Spirit of the Lord here is a spirit-being from the Lord.[[44]](#footnote-44)

The final case in the history books is the example of Micaiah’s prophecy (1 Kgs 22:24; 2 Chron 18:23). Here a spirit goes from the throne of God in heaven to be a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab’s prophets. It is this spirit about whom Zedekiah asks: “Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak to thee”? This is another example in which the Spirit is described as a spirit-being.

These last two examples do not indicate metaphorical presentation of the Spirit as an agent; it is not the spirit *in* Elijah that carries him off and casts him down, and the cosmology of Micaiah’s vision also clearly indicates spirit-beings.

**Discussion**

The data so far presents a varied picture and it blocks certain interpretations. Standard literary treatments of the notion of “character” or “agent” offer a basis for distinguishing these terms. Formalist and Structuralist theory works with more austere definitions of “character”.[[45]](#footnote-45) Theorists emphasize plot and make characters into products of the plot.[[46]](#footnote-46) They have a functional status, and their actions are their defining quality. Aristotle[[47]](#footnote-47) gave primacy to the notions of an “agent” and “action” in a story, and regarded “character” as a superimposition. This allows theorists to reserve the term “agent” for a case where there is no development of character.

The textual data we have so far considered does not support the interpretation that the Spirit of the Lord is presented with a metaphor of a mimetic character.[[48]](#footnote-48) Psychological and mimetic aspects of characterization are not mirrored in Spirit of the Lord traditions. Thus, there are no grounds for asserting a full-blown personification. Using J. Paxson’s terms, the metaphor lacks “voice and face”; only David’s claim to inspiration adds voice.[[49]](#footnote-49)

In terms of plot and story-form, the Spirit of the Lord is a “helper” or a “donor”,[[50]](#footnote-50) and there is a sense of empowering individuals. Furthermore, there are uses of the expression as a term of reference for a spirit-being.

**Conclusion**

Our conclusion is that the narrative historical traditions of the OT are describing extraordinary human behaviour and referring to the Spirit of the Lord as the cause of this behaviour. In order to secure an informative reference to the Spirit, the narrator uses an ontological metaphor of agency—the Spirit-as-agent. The austerity of the predicates associated with the expression “Spirit of the Lord” gives no basis for anything more substantial, such as a Trinitarian conception.

**Quirinius**

**A. Perry**

There are many characteristics of the gospels that indicate their accuracy; additionally, there are a small number of well-known so-called inaccuracies. Positive assessments of the nuts and bolts of the gospel records have been written by conservative scholars. Since the gospels are a social history of a charismatic teacher and his followers, any inaccuracies would be limited to the “public” side of Jesus’ ministry—names, dates, places and the cultural environment. Thus, for example, we are able to verify Luke’s political facts—the emperor Augustus, Herod the Great, Quirinius and Pilate, or Annas, Caiaphas and Ananias. Furthermore, we are able to verify Luke’s reliability as a historian by examining his follow-up book, Acts.

Inaccuracies in historical texts are expected by the historico-critical method; there is no presumption that the gospel texts are divinely inspired in such a method and so historians will point out errors where there is other evidence that points to different facts of the matter. For example, the reference to a tax census of Quirinius sometime in 6-4 B.C.E. has been dubbed an error because he is known to have become the legate of Syria in 6 C.E. and initiated a census in that year (Josephus, *Ant*. 18.1.1; cf. Tacitus, *Annals* 3.48).[[51]](#footnote-51)

There are two preliminary points to make about this “error”: first, it is representative of the type of error that could be identified in the gospel records, i.e. errors to do with the more public facts of names, dates and places—the possible errors in this regard are very few indeed; secondly, where there is a conflict between two different sources (Josephus and Luke), critical scholars will favour the non-Biblical evidence and conservative scholars will favour the biblical evidence.

It is accepted by conservative scholars[[52]](#footnote-52) that Quirinius was a legate of Syria in 6-7 C.E. and that there was a census then, which caused unrest in Judea (a province of Syria), and which is referred to by Luke in Acts 5:37 “After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away *some* people after him; he too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered” (NASB). Luke’s use of the expression “the census” and his reference to Judas the Galilean establishes that he is referring to the census of 6-7 C.E. against which Judas led a rebellion.

The census at the time of Jesus’ birth is mentioned in this way:

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (*And* this taxing was first made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. Luke 2:1-3 (KJV revised)

In this narrative aside[[53]](#footnote-53) Luke refers to a first census, or a “former” or “earlier” census than the one made in 6-7 C.E. This is an important qualification as it coheres with Acts 5:37 which refers to the later and more famous census. Since there is no record of any more census enrolments happening after 6-7 C.E. in relation to Quirinius, we can deduce that the census of Luke 2:2 is not that of 6-7 C.E. but an earlier one. Because Josephus does not record two such census enrolments, critical scholars work with just one and infer that Luke makes a mistake with his placement of a first census at the end of the reign of Herod the Great.

However, an incidental detail of Luke’s account makes it unlikely that he is making a simple mistake (after all, his chronology in Luke 3:1 is flawless). Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem of Judea to enrol for tax purposes. Just before the birth of Jesus, Herod was ruler of Judea and Galilee and a census initiated in his region could have been one that required travel to Judea for those born in the south. After Herod’s death, the kingdom of Judea was divided and Galilee came under the jurisdiction of Antipas. In the census of 6-7 C.E. there is no particular reason why those residents in the north would have been required to travel south for enrolment. This makes the census of Luke 2:2 more likely to have been a different and earlier one than that of 6-7 C.E.

Although no extant record other than Luke’s requires the suggestion, some scholars have therefore proposed that Quirinius could have been a special military legate anytime between 6-4 B.C.E. in addition to the domestic governor of Syria at the time (who was Sentius Saturninius until 6 B.C.E. and thereafter Quintilius Varus between 6-4 B.C.E.[[54]](#footnote-54)). It is known that Quirinius was conducting a long campaign from the north of Syria (and maybe Galatia) against the Homonadensus at this time and had been since about 10 B.C.E. He could have assumed a temporary legateship in Syria during any interim period between the two documented governors.

Upon hearing of Jesus from the Wise Men, Herod sought to kill the children in Bethlehem up to two years of age, but Mary and Joseph had been warned to flee this danger. They fled to Egypt and only returned when Herod had died which is dated to 4 B.C.E. The inference therefore is that Jesus was born most likely in the years 6-5 B.C.E. and that the census Luke mentions took place in one of these years.[[55]](#footnote-55) A temporary interim military governorship on the part of Quirinius (possibly during a handover period between Sentius Saturninius and Quintilius Varus in 6 B.C.E.) is not implausible. Herod’s relationship with Augustus had broken down by the end of his reign and a direction from the military legate of Syria to conduct a census would have been heeded.

Our discussion of Luke’s chronology is an example of the kind of discussion that conservative and critical scholars have about the reliability of the gospel records. It is a choice to allow Luke’s evidence to stand in a reconstruction of Roman History, but it is because Luke shows himself to be reliable on other names and dates that it is best to do so in this case and conjecture a second interim legateship on the part of Quirinius. In the relatively few cases where the historical veracity of the gospels can be challenged with apparently contrary external evidence,[[56]](#footnote-56) conservative scholarship has provided plausible harmonisations of the data.

**Pre-historic Genealogies**

**A. Perry**

The Old Testament scholar, K. A. Kitchen, offers a standard discussion of the genealogy of Genesis 5 in relation to the king lists and reign lengths of Mesopotamian monarchs. In Sumerian and Akkadian king lists, for the period prior to the Flood, there are 8 or 10 kings stretching back until kingship was “lowered from the heavens”. In the Sumerian King List, for example, the total number of years for the reigns of the eight kings is 241,000 years whereas the total number of years for the reigns of the kings after the flood is 24,510 and 2310 years for a sequence of 23 and then 12 kings.[[57]](#footnote-57) Whereas the Sumerian King List documents a long pre-history before the Flood in terms of an 8 to 10 series of kings and their reigns (depending on the tablet), the genealogy of Genesis 5 works with 10 generations and less years.[[58]](#footnote-58) Both counts break at the Flood, each has large numbers and the years decline dramatically after the Flood. Their “8/10” framework[[59]](#footnote-59) allows the suggestion that we have here a notional use of numbers to structure an unknown and long period of time.

A second point to make here is that the genealogy in Genesis 5 is not necessarily consecutive—the father-son relationship may in some instances be a father-grandson relationship or there may be a multiple of intervening generations. The opening entries of the genealogy are,

And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died. And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos: And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died. And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan: And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died. Gen 8:3-1 (KJV)

We would normally read this today as a consecutive sequence without any gaps. However, the early story of Genesis 4 documents the birth of Cain and Abel before Seth. The genealogy of Genesis 5 gives no hint of a Cain or an Abel or any other sons and daughters before Seth, but a reader should take this information and use it to condition his understanding of the genealogy of Genesis 5. Seth is a first generation son of Adam (Gen 4:25), and Enos is likewise a first generation son of Seth (Gen 4:26); but Cainan may be a grandson, or a great-grandson, or a more distant “son” of Enos; the genealogy may therefore have gaps. The fixing of the birth of Cainan to Enos’ age at 90 may be a fixing of a *forbear* of Cainan, the individual in whose line Cainan was born.

An extensive time period after Enos, in which men and women multiply on the earth, is implied in the conclusion to Genesis 4,

To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enos. At that time men began to call upon the name of the Lord. Gen 4:26 (RSV)

If we read the genealogy of Genesis 5 as a literal consecutive sequence, this change in the “times” is not given enough time to develop between the generations of Enos and Cainan. The time marked by “Enos” is one where there are men (some but not all) who call upon the name of the Lord. This conclusion to Genesis 4 is deliberately placed after the genealogy of Cain[[60]](#footnote-60) in which the development of human skills is recorded rather than any “walking with God”. In the light of this development in human history, the characterization of the era after Enos’ birth is about a return to God on the part of some, and this implies that there had been an apostasy from God by men and women generally. This information is important as it should prevent a reader from treating the genealogy of Genesis 5 as a simple consecutive sequence of father-son relationships—there is a great deal of time after Enos and before Cainan.

This interpretation makes sense in the light of the nomination of only 10 generations; there are ten names that structure the family history of Noah. The colophon in Gen 6:9, “These are the records of the generations of Noah” (NASB), makes the genealogy part of Noah’s ancestry.[[61]](#footnote-61) The ten-fold stylised arrangement is mirrored in the genealogy of Cain: although it is a 6 generation framework, both end with an individual who has three sons, and both have similarly named ancestors.

A further indication that the genealogy of Genesis 5 is to be read in a non-consecutive way is the absence of the added information of “calling the name of the son”: this detail is recorded for Seth in Gen 5:3, Enos in Gen 4:26, and for Noah in Gen 5:29 but not for the other “sons”; the number of generations in the middle of the genealogy is therefore unknown.

The other difficulty that modern readers have with the genealogy is the longevity of the individuals; the oldest man lived for 969 years and this is dismissed as an unbelievable “fantastic” number. Again, a modern reader is assuming that the ages given are literal, but the case against the ages being real consists simply of the estimates of death given by archaeological anthropologists of the dead that they uncover in grave sites in the Near East from any point in the past. Furthermore, there is no basis in paleo-biology for supposing that human life-spans were much different 10,000 years ago. If we assume that men and women lived to what we regard as normal ages, we should ask: *why* are long ages given here in Genesis 5 and in the Mesopotamian king lists?

One kind of response would be to reject the ages given as ‘real’ and regard the numbers as false; we could then reject the historicity of the genealogy as a whole, and use this conclusion to cast doubt on the historical value of the primeval history. This kind of reaction would be extreme, and we should instead ask: if those who composed the genealogy knew very well how long humans typically lived, *why* would they employ long ages? A preliminary point would be that we are assuming the long ages given were ubiquitous among humans, but the only data we have relates to ten individuals. Equally, we are assuming that archaeological anthropologists are right to assume the same rate of ageing for the past as we have today.

Some conservative scholars see literal ages in the genealogy and they observe that long ages are given for the birth of the “sons” as well as the death of the “fathers” in the genealogy; further, Enoch lives for 365 years and Lamech’s 777 years are cut short by the Flood—these ages are determined by external events and are not easy to dismiss. Moreover, the reduction of human ages after the Flood to between 100-200 years and then to around 70 years was gradual over a few generations. Thus, it is suggested that God intervened after the Flood so that human beings had shorter life-spans; the precedent for this is Gen 6:3, “And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (KJV).

This approach is problematic for critical scholars of the Bible because it involves the idea of divine intervention. This is a “problem” that occurs in several other places in the Old Testament where the miraculous is recorded or implied. In response, other conservative scholars have tried different approaches. For example, it has been said that the Hebrew digits are not decimal (Base-10) but Base-2 or some other base; or, the numbers are aligned with an old cosmological scheme related to the planets; and, even, the years are not solar years but some other (perhaps lunar) “year”. These suggestions, and others, show that scholars do not dismiss the genealogy as poor history; there is a good case[[62]](#footnote-62) to be made for it being older than Mesopotamian king lists in composition. Rather, they seek to explain the *use* of large numbers in the genealogy. Of these approaches, the best harmonizing suggestion is that the numbers are **notional** and serve the purpose of structuring an unknown long period of time. Can we expand on this suggestion?

The ages that are given mostly cluster above the 900 mark—just short of a thousand years. Lamech’s life is cut short because of the Flood and Enoch is a special case, but otherwise the 900 +/- pattern is carefully chosen, because the choice of a “thousand years” as a limiting period isn’t arbitrary. In the “Prayer of Moses”, it is said that, “…a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night” (Ps 90:4, KJV). The comment is, no doubt, a metaphor for the passage of time and how the ages are marked by God. The New Testament writer, Peter, makes a comment with this verse when he says, “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Pet 3:8, KJV).

This language is relevant to Genesis 5 because in Genesis 2 God had declared that were Adam to sin, he would die in the day that he sinned (Gen 2:17). If the poetic understanding of time expressed in the Prayer of Moses is at work in Genesis 5, the limitation of the antediluvian ages to just under a thousand years is one way in which the compiler of these traditions (traditionally Moses) shows the fulfilment of God’s edict of death: the refrain of the genealogy is “and he died” (8x). If a thousand years are as a day in God’s eyes, all these men did die in the kind of “day” that God had decreed for Adam’s dying.

It is beyond the scope of this essay, but there is a good case supporting the view that Moses compiled or collected together the early traditions of Genesis which are dubbed “historical records” (Gen 2:4; 5;1; 6:9; 10:1, 32; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 13, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2),[[63]](#footnote-63) and so the understanding implicit in the Prayer of Moses is relevant to our reading of Genesis 5. Furthermore, the prayer starts off (vv. 1-5) as a meditation on the early chapters of Genesis with its references to “all generations”, “giving birth to the earth”, “children of Adam”, “destruction” and a “flood”. If a long and unknown period of time was going to be structured with ten generations, ages just under a thousand years would be chosen to conform to God’s attitude to the passage of time and the edict that Adam was to die in the “day” that he sinned. The opening verses of Moses’ prayer reconcile the apparent contradiction between Genesis 2 and 5 in its meditation.

The Old Testament account of creation is often ridiculed because the genealogy of Genesis 5 is totalled up to give an age for the earth of around 6000 years. The historical reliability of the whole of the Old Testament is then thrown into doubt. This is a poor stance to adopt. The genealogy is “of its times” in using large numbers, if we reject the literality of the numbers, this does not mean the individuals are not historical individuals. However, once we observe that there is no name-calling from Cainan onwards until Noah, we have a basis for treating the genealogy as having substantial gaps and the pre-history of Genesis becomes an indeterminate period. The genealogy itself does not engage in totalling up. Whether we treat the ages mentioned in a literal way or a notional way is an open question.

**Was the Ark a practical size?**

**J. Burke**

Sceptics objecting to the size of Noah’s Ark frequently point to smaller 19th century timber ships which were unseaworthy due to their large size, such as the 19th century American schooners 'Wyoming’ and ‘Great Republic, two of the largest all timber vessels ever built. It is claimed that the chronic leaking, warping, and hull separation from which such ships suffered (despite reinforcement with iron bracing), proves the Ark could not have survived the flood.

Though frequently compared with sailing ships, or even ships with steam engines, the Ark was actually a barge. Barges are not subject to the same stresses as a sailing ship, such as the weight of sails and rigging, and they are not subject to hull stresses caused by the wind bending the masts. The Ark did not have to carry the tremendous weight of cannon which burdened the timber ships with which it is often compared, nor did it have to deal with the weight and stresses of a steam engine or steam bilge pumps, or the rigors of sea travel (it stayed within the Mesopotamian flood plain).

One of the largest wooden ships, the Appomattox, is often compared with the Ark. Measuring 97.2 metres long (319 feet), with a beam of 12.8 metres (42 feet), it had to be reinforced with steel bracing just to stay together, and pumped continuously by steam bilge pumps due to constant leaking, as stresses on the hull caused the timbers to separate. Sceptics frequently point to this as an example of the vulnerability of wooden ships over 300 feet long, and argue that this demonstrates Noah’s Ark could not possibly have been practical.

However, the Appomattox was designed completely differently to the Ark, being a steam powered ship not a barge. It was also subjected to other stresses caused by having to tow a large unpowered barge behind it. This barge, the Santiago, is a far more relevant vessel with which to compare the Ark. Like the Ark it was made entirely of timber, carrying no steel bracing, and was not powered either by steam or sail. It was even larger than the Appomattox, 102.4 metres long (336 feet), with a beam of 14 metres (46 feet). Its service history (1899-1918), was over twice as long as that of the Appomattox, despite serving on the Great Lakes, notorious for their storm conditions and unpredictable waters.

From as early as the 17th century, comparisons have been drawn between the Ark and various ancient vessels considered similar in dimensions and construction. Defending the practicality of the Ark, Walter Raleigh argued that it was smaller than a ship built in the reign of Hiero II of Syracuse (3rd century BC), and smaller than the giant fighting ship Tessarakonteres built by Ptolemy IV Philopater (3rd century BC). The Tessarakonteres remained a common point of comparison to the Ark throughout the 19th century for Christian apologists, naval historians, nautical engineers, and scientific journals.

Historians recognize a number of ancient large ships comparable to the Ark as genuine vessels.

* **1,480 BC**: An obelisk barge built in Egypt for Queen Hatshepsut, 95-140m long (311-459ft), 32m wide (104 ft);[[64]](#footnote-64) a wall relief shows it carrying two obelisks end to end, indicating a length well over 100 metres.
* **c. 200 BC**: The Thalamagos, a large pleasure barge built Ptolemy IV Philopater, 114m long (377 ft), described by the Greek historian Athenaeus.
* **c. 200 BC**: The Tessarakonteres, a warship built for Ptolemy IV Philopater, 128m long (420ft), described by the 1st century Roman historian Plutarch.
* **c. 200 BC**: A timber warship described by the 1st century Greek historian Memnon of Heraclea, 100m long (300ft).
* **1st century**: The ‘Nemi Ships’, two timber barges built for the Roman emperor Caligua, 70m long (229ft), 18m wide (60ft).
* **1st century**: A large cargo barge built for Caligula, used to transport an obelisk from Egypt to Rome, 104m long (341ft), 20.3m wide (66ft).

The successful wooden ships of this size required nothing more sophisticated than such timber technology as mortise and tenon joinery, tension cables (called ‘hogging trusses’), and bulkheads or internal bracing, such as transverse lashing and lateral or longitudinal strength beams. In some cases, only three out of these five techniques were used, whereas Noah’s ark demonstrably used at least four of these techniques.

Noah was a Mesopotamian, who would have used contemporary Mesopotamian construction techniques, meaning the Ark would have used mortise and tenon joinery, longitudinal strength beams, tension trusses, and hogging trusses, just like other ships built in the Bronze Age. In Mesopotamia, copper was used to make hammers and nails, adzes, chisels, axes, and drill bits from before 3,500 B.C.E, mortise and tenon joinery was used from at least the same time, whilst timber boats using sails and copper nails appear as early as 3,500 B.C.E.

Egyptian inscriptions as early as the reign of Khufu I (2,589-2,566 B.C.E.), show ships built with internal bracing techniques such as lateral and longitudinal strength beams, and transverse lashing. Longitudinal strength bulkheads are found in the Egyptian Middle Kingdom era (between 1,991 BCE and 1,648 B.C.E.), showing that this technology was used from a very early date in the Ancient Near East.

While only the obelisk barge of Hatshepsut is chronologically proximate to the Ark, these vessels prove that pre-modern societies were capable of building timber ships far larger than even their Industrial Age counterparts. It can be proved that the technology used by these cultures was capable of building such large vessels.

Importantly, these ships were built using the same construction techniques used in the Early and Middle Bronze Age, including mortise and tenon joinery and a ‘hull first’ construction method, rather than the ‘frame first’ construction method used by later Western maritime engineers.

Even more significant is Caligula’s ‘Giant Ship‘, mentioned previously. It had six decks, displaced between 7,000 and 8,000 tons, and carried a crew of 700-800. It was built using the same construction method as the two pleasure barges (the ‘Nemi Ships’). The dimensions of this ship are not contested, since its physical remains have been found at Port Claudius in Italy (near Rome International Airport), where it was sunk and filled with stones to create a foundation for the port’s lighthouse.

Prior to this discovery, mention of super barges in Roman historical literature (such as Pliny the Elder), had been dismissed as either legend or wild exaggeration. Not only was it considered impossible to build such a large vessel from timber, it was also considered impossible that the Romans had the technology necessary for such an achievement. But the physical evidence overturned these preconceptions.

It became clear that the simple maritime techniques known not only by the Romans but by the Ancient Near East in the Early Middle Bronze Age were more than enough to construct sea going vessels larger than any Western timber ship up to the mid-19th century. Even more startling was the fact that this super barge of Caligula’s was a reliable sea-going vessel, unlike many 19th century timber ships over 90 metres long (295 feet).

It is therefore clear that the technology required to build a timber ship the size of Noah’s Ark was already available long before the 19th century, and had been used to construct vessels almost as large as the Ark.

**Marginal Notes**

**Isa 41:3 – AP**

He pursued them, *and* passed safely; *even* by the way *that* he had not gone with his feet. Isa 41:3 (KJV)

The reference to “by the way *that* he had not gone with his feet” is a puzzle to commentators. The RSV has “by paths his feet have not trod” and the NASB has “By a way he had not been traversing with his feet”. The Hebrew is singular “a way/path” and the verb is very common and translated mostly as a variant of “come” (KJV, 1435x), although a variant of “go” is also used (KJV, 123x). The verb is Imperfect, but the tense is determined by the opening verb of this passage, “Who **raised** up righteousness from the east…” which is Perfect. Hence, the KJV is to be preferred which translates the Hebrew verbs that follow “raised” as past tense. The claims of Isa 41:2-3 are about something that has been done by Yahweh,

Who hath wrought and done *it*… Isa 41:4 (KJV)

The verbal form changes back here to the Perfect. We can therefore translate v. 3 as,

He pursued them, *and* passed safely; *even* by a way *that* he did not go with his feet. Isa 41:3 (KJV revised)

A conqueror had gone but not with his feet; he had pursued kings but not with his feet. A common suggestion is that he made his pursuit on mounted cavalry, but since cavalry and infantry were common in the armies of the day, it hardly seems something worthy for notice in an oracle. Furthermore, given that we have a “pursuit” being mentioned, one would *expect* cavalry. A text from Sennacherib’s Annals casts light on the oracle:

I led the way like a fierce wild bull with my picked bodyguards and merciless battle troops. I traversed wadis, torrents, ravines, and dangerous slopes in my sedan chair. Where it was too hard going for my sedan chair, I took to my feet and went on in pursuit to the high peaks, like a gazelle.[[65]](#footnote-65)

This text coincidently has the same ingredients as the oracle: a way; a pursuit; and not using the feet. The boast of Sennacherib is that he pursued his prey at a sedate pace in a sedan chair; it was measured and certain because it was safe to do so – his troops controlled the area. This connection is one of the many indications that the oracles of Isaiah 40-48 relate to the days of Hezekiah rather than that of the Babylonian Exile.

**Book Notice – Coming in 2011**

**Reasons (Editor: Thomas Gaston)**

The objective for this book is to present reasons for seeking God and for believing in the God of the Bible, Jesus as his son and the saviour of men and women, and the Bible as the Word of God. The book will be a compilation of essays by various authors, supported by a team of reviewers, all committed Christadelphians with relevant expertise.

This work will fill a current gap in the writings of our community with an up-to-date overview of relevant issues from philosophy, science, history and biblical studies. It is hoped that this will serve as useful primer and positive reinforcement for young Christadelphians facing a world increasingly hostile to religious faith. It is also hoped that this book will function as a preaching tool to help encourage others to seek after God.

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**New Book out now: Obadiah by T. Gaston**

87 pages, a commentary on the shortest book of the Old Testament, developing the sixth century approach. Available for £5.99+p&p from http://stores.lulu.com/taanathshiloh.

**Letters**

Dear Editor,

Thanks for the latest edition of EJournal which I enjoyed reading. The omission of ‘scholarship’ content certainly makes for easier reading but I realize that footnotes and reference to scholars is necessary for a complete treatment of the subject.

Your discursive essay “The New Age” (July 2010) highlights some interesting topics and your comments on the new covenant were of particular interest.

The reference to a new covenant in Jeremiah 31 is repeated in all the prophets either explicitly or implied. The writer to the Hebrews in chapter eight is clearly referring to this new covenant. The covenant referred to in Heb 9:14 involves both the Abrahamic covenant and the new covenant with Israel. There appears to be some ambiguity as to which covenant is new. There is no new Abrahamic covenant but it might be considered as a two part covenant: the first part concerns Christ as the promised ‘seed’ and all those who are Christ’s at his coming; the second part which will be new, concerns the mortal descendants of Abraham and the literal possession of the land. The literal defining of the boundaries of the land in the promise to Abraham apply only to the mortal descendants of Abraham. When Abraham and his seed receive the promise of immortality, being spirit beings, they will not need to dwell in the land in the same way as mortal beings, which exist in a two dimensional space and time.

The two parts of the covenant are rarely mentioned, yet the symbolic representation of God’s kingdom with the ‘Heavens & Earth’ clearly illustrates this twofold aspect. The Earth is defined in Genesis 1 as the dry land which was separated from the waters that covered the surface of the planet, designated as the seas. The symbol Earth aptly describes Israel whom God separated from the sea of nations. The Heavens are defined in Genesis 1 as the space between the water covering the planet and the waters above. This is generally understood to mean the atmosphere. The atmosphere is the complete life support system for all living things on the planet. It provides the air for all creatures living on the dry land, it acts as a filter for all dangerous cosmic radiation, which would destroy living things, and it ensures an equitable temperature and provides the vital element of water, to name but a few of the marvels of this extraordinary element. The Heavens in a symbolic application would be the complete life support system for the nation of Israel and I believe the angels under God’s direction fulfilled this function. The kingdom came to an end and it is characterised as such in 2 Peter 3:12, and a new Heaven and Earth is promised in Isa 55:17. It is clear from Heb 2:5 that the restored kingdom will not be in subjection to angels, but to Christ and his princes, i.e. all who are granted immortality at the second coming of Christ and constitute the new Heavens. The new age begins when the new Heavens and Earth are installed and this can only be at the return of Christ. The key element to the fulfilment of the covenant is the life, death and resurrection of Jesus which ratified the covenant, the complete fulfilment being realised during the Millennium.

**T. Evans**

**Web Resources**

**Codex Vaticanus**

A collection of photos of all pages from the old photo
facsimile of Codex Vaticanus is available online. It is a large download broken up into ZIP/RAR files. The black and white photos are taken at an angle to the codex and at a fairly high resolution (about 4,000 by 3,000 pixels).

http://www.mediafire.com/?sharekey=a63c12e4771ee14fa0f2f20c509059d97730a72b63f0eb48b8eada0a1ae8665a

The older photos can be compared with the more recent colour photographs at www.codexsinaiticus.org.

**Peer Review**

In an article “Scholars test Web Alternative to Peer Review” in the NY Times, (http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/24/arts/24peer.html?\_r=1), P. Cohen observes that the traditional peer review of articles for academic journals has in a couple of recent cases given way to experiments in web-based review. She says,

Instead of relying on a few experts selected by leading publications, they advocate using the Internet to expose scholarly thinking to the swift collective judgment of a much broader interested audience.

and,

Today a small vanguard of digitally adept scholars is rethinking how knowledge is understood and judged by inviting online readers to comment on books in progress, compiling journals from blog posts and sometimes successfully petitioning their universities to grant promotions and tenure on the basis of non-peer-reviewed projects.

Her comments are apposite for the Christadelphian EJournal as we rely on the audience for peer review, and have made small changes to published material as a result.

**News**

A **new editor** has joined the EJournal and will be involved from January 2011 issue onwards, viz., Bro. D. Burke, responsible for “Theology and Apologetics”. He is taking a degree in Theology at Tabor College, Adelaide, which is a Christian college with a conservative evangelical ethos.

**Postscript**

**A. Perry**

Speakers are not necessarily good writers and writers are not necessarily good speakers. The apostle Paul was evidently a good writer but not a good speaker (2 Cor 10:10); Moses was a good writer but somewhat diffident about speaking (Exod 4:10). This is not to deny inspiration, but just to observe something about the human dynamics. The problem here is that good speakers need good content, and this is why, in the world, a good speaker will often use a speech writer.

The community is a social organisation and speaking dominates its formal structures: fraternals, exhortations, bible classes, and lectures. Most meetings are a one-to-many speaking-listening arrangement. Oratory is therefore very important in the community; if you are good at oratory, then you will get asked to speak far and wide. As an orator you get to know other orators and a kind of elite is created in which orators recommend each other and the silent many have to continually listen to a small group of good speakers.

The structure is inherited from the cultural origins of the community as this system is common in the churches. The question is this: is the dominance of a one-to-many speaking structure a good thing? There is obviously nothing wrong with one-to-many speaking, we can cite biblical precedent; the question is whether the **dominance** of this structure is damaging to the community.

It is not too difficult to think of disadvantages to the current situation but there is no need to do this now. More importantly, at congregation (the memorial meeting), there is biblical precedent for many-to-many:

If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues… But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all… How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying… If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret… Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge… For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted… 1 Cor 14:23-31 (KJV)

Although this passage presumes the exercise of the spirit gifts, there is a pattern here for the main ecclesial meeting that involves the many brethren rather than the one brother. The ‘one-speaker’ system is derived from the churches and their preference for priests, vicars and pastors. The biblical model for congregation is for a many-to-many style (or perhaps a ‘few-to-many’). This facilitates the **sharing** of the knowledge of Jesus Christ among equals and helps to avoid the rather human tendency to elevate the orators amongst us.

The orator system militates against the spirit of coming together and spiritual sharing that is essential for growth in Christ, and it does so precisely because it requires a very passive audience week after week. The main meeting of the ecclesia should therefore be one in which the orator system is not commonplace. This may be difficult for the speakers in the community to accept but it is an important change that needs to be considered in the ecclesias. This system would act as a counter-balance to the one-to-many occasions such as large fraternals or Bible schools. Good speakers are a tremendous blessing, although they may not be good writers; their place is the bigger occasion. The weekly day-to-day work of spiritual sharing needs the many-to-many model.

**END**

**Supplement**

In this supplement we present two cases for an early and a late date for the Book of Revelation.

**A Late-Date for Revelation: A Church-Centric Interpretation**

**T. Gaston**

**Introduction**

A common hermeneutic in Biblical Studies is to consider a text alongside its historical context (i.e. “What might the text have meant to its initial readers?”). Many would advocate this hermeneutic for the Book of Revelation and indeed much of modern scholarship has focused on the search for a first-century application. It is partly for this reason that scholarly consensus has moved away from the traditional Preterist-Historicist-Futurist battlegrounds and turned the attention towards the Roman persecution of Christians in the first century as the major catalyst for the composition of the book. The Beast is identified with Nero for a mid-60s dating or Nero-Redivivus (i.e. Domitian) for a mid-90s dating. The author comforts his readers with pipe-dreams of the advent of Christ and renewal of the world. A clear application for the first century reader; as for future generations, well, predictive prophecy isn’t fashionable these days anyway.

I have argued elsewhere that a Nero-centric interpretation will not work, not least because 666 will only equal “Nero” if you choose to spell the name incorrectly.[[66]](#footnote-66) Regrettably, the scholarly consensus is that Nero is the Beast, rendering most modern scholarship useless as to the question of dating the composition of the book. This is not to deny the importance of historical context as a hermeneutic, yet taken to the absolute such a principle binds the message of the book within the constraints of human scholarship. I want to propose that Revelation is bigger than that. The date of composition is just a starting-point; the warning is for all generations.

Almost all OT prophecy, and Jesus’ Olivet Prophecy, is Israel-centric. If we date Revelation to the mid-60s – the Jews are still in the Land, Jerusalem is still standing, the Temple remains intact – then the wealth of OT allusions throughout the book might lead us to an Israel-centric interpretation for the book. However, if the book is dated post-70, i.e. to the mid-90s – the Jews are scattered, Jerusalem is in ruins, the Temple rituals have ceased – then perhaps Spiritual Israel should be our focus.

In this essay, I will put forward the case for a late-date for Revelation, a case based largely upon external evidence.[[67]](#footnote-67) Having done so, I will propose the basis of a Church-centric interpretation.

### Persecution

For many commentators it is the issue of persecution that is central to the dating of Revelation, and specifically which period of persecution best fits the composition of Revelation. Two Roman emperors are accredited with persecuting Christians in the first-century, Nero and Domitian.

The persecution by Nero is well-attested by Roman historians Tacitus (*Annals* XV.44.2-8) and Suetonius (*Life of Nero* XVI.2). According to Tacitus, the reason for the persecution was to fasten the guilt for the burning of Rome on Christians and so deflect accusations that Nero himself had started the blaze. Whatever the excuse, the Christians were clearly hated by the Roman populace and the initial reaction to the state-sanctioned persecution was probably favourable. However, Tacitus records that Nero’s tortures were so cruel that many began to feel compassion for these otherwise despised Christians.

It is probable that it was during this persecution that both the apostles Peter and Paul were put to death.[[68]](#footnote-68) Prior to his death, Peter writes to the Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia of the sufferings being experienced by “your brotherhood in the world” (1 Pet 5:8-9; cf. 1:6, 4:12-13). This confirms that the Neronic persecution was not confined to the city of Rome and implies that some edict for the persecution of Christians was enacted throughout the provinces.

The evidence of persecution during the reign of Domitian is less substantial. Tertullian makes passing reference to Domitian, “who almost equalled Nero in cruelty”, initiating a short persecution of Christians but he gives no particulars (*Apology* 5.1-4). Eusebius records the persecution in greater detail, quoting a story (probably apocryphal) from Hegesippus relating to the grandsons of Jude appearing before Domitian. Eusebius does give some particulars, stating that Flavia Domitilla, niece of a Roman consul, was exiled because she was a Christian (*History of the Church* 3.18.3). However, the Roman historian Dio Cassius records the charge against Domitilla as “atheism” and “Jewish ways” (*Epitome* LXVII.14). There is scarce little evidence of a state-initiated persecution in Asia Minor during this period.

However the emphasis placed upon these two emperors is probably unwarranted. Tertullian seems to indicate that the laws against Christians were never repealed (*Apology* 5.5-8) so that there may have been a legal basis for the persecution of Christians from the reign of Nero onwards. The correspondence between Pliny, governor of Bithynia (c.112), and the emperor Trajan demonstrates that a governor could initiate proceedings against Christians without any edict from Rome, indeed Trajan states that “nothing can be laid down as a general ruling” but that Christians are nevertheless to be punished (*Epistle* X.97). As for individual cases, such as that of the apostle John, a Roman governor was the supreme judicial authority in his province – no governor would need the emperor’s sanction to banish someone deemed to be a trouble maker.

The seven letters to the churches does not reflect a situation of universal persecution. Whilst at Pergamum Antipas has been killed (Rev 2:13) and the church at Smyrna will shortly suffer troubles (Rev 2:10), the other churches seem unaffected – Laodicea is described as being materially rich (Rev 3:17)! Even John’s exile, assuming he was exiled (this is not stated in Revelation), appears to be past (“I **was** on the island of Patmos ...”, Rev 1:9). Persecution, then, was not unique to any particular period(s) during the first century and the sporadic troubles suffered by the seven churches may be consistent with any date (though perhaps less suitable for a Neronic dating).

### External Testimony

Early Christian writings provide important testimony for the dating of Revelation. Though these testimonies are divided between the Neronic and Domitian dating, it is the later date that has the strongest support amongst these writers.

The earliest testimony we have is from Irenaeus of Lyons who writes, regarding the number of Beast (c.174):

However, we will not risk a pronouncement on this or assert positively that he will have this name, for we know that if his name had to be proclaimed openly at present, it would have been spoken by the one who saw the Apocalypse. It was seen not long ago but nearly in our generation, toward the end of the reign of Domitian (*Against Heresies* 5.30.1)

Victorinus of Pettau (c.305) records in his commentary that:

When John said these things he was in the island of Patmos, condemned to the labour of the mines by Caesar Domitian (*Comm. Apoc.* 10.1)

Jerome, also, states that:

In the fourteenth year then after Nero, Domitian having raised a second persecution, he was banished to the island of Patmos, and wrote the Apocalypse, on which Justin Martyr and Irenaeus afterwards wrote commentaries (*Lives* IX)

Other writers concur with this testimony, including Eusebius, Crosius, Sulpicius Severus and Primasius. The weight of this testimony may be called into question by the fact that Irenaeus is the only source for Eusebius’ testimony on this matter. Jerome also appears to be dependent upon the commentaries of Justin and Irenaeus, and it is not clear whether he or Victorinus have independent verification of this detail. Despite this, the testimony of Irenaeus is still significant as he is the earliest witness to the date of Revelation and he, apparently, knew Polycarp who knew John.

The witness to an early date is weak in comparison, and seems confined to the Syriac Church. The Syriac version of the Apocalypse states that John was banished during the reign of Nero, but the earliest known copy to bear this information dates from c.600. An apocryphal work, also written in Syriac, entitled *The History of John the Son of Zebedee,* also records that John was banished during the reign of Nero, presumably based upon the same tradition. Other writers that include this information include Arethas, Theophylact and Photius – all from the Eastern Church and all considerably later than Irenaeus.

### Internal Evidence

Indications from within the book as to its date of composition are less conclusive. It may be argued that the circumstances of the churches described in the seven letters better fits a later date, however, in every case our lack of knowledge is a determining factor.

* The city of Laodicea was devastated by an earthquake in 60 AD. Is six years too short an interval for the church at Laodicea to become materially rich (Rev 3.17)?
* Paul, writing c.61, commends the Ephesians[[69]](#footnote-69) for their faith (Eph 1:15f). Is it conceivable that the church could have left its first love so quickly (Rev 2:4)?
* Some of the churches named in the seven letters are not mentioned in Acts or the other NT writings; it may be that they did not exist at this point. Is the early date too early for the establishment of these churches?

These, and similar arguments, are inconveniences for the argument for the early-date of Revelation but are not real hurdles in themselves. They only lend credibility to the date established by external testimony.

Perhaps more fruitful internal data comes from literary allusions of which Revelation abounds, though mostly alluding to the OT. The tricky part comes from identifying which way the river flows. Take the repeated phrase “he who has an ear, let him hear” (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). It has clear resonances with the gospel sayings of Jesus (cf. Matt 11:15; 13:9, 13:43), but there are a variety of explanations for this resonance. While this may be an allusion to the gospels, it may equally be an allusion to an oral tradition of the sayings of Jesus. Though it is almost certain that Jesus is not alluding to Revelation when he uses these words, it is possible that both are alluding to OT texts (cf. Deut 29:4; Ezek 12:2). More importantly, we cannot rule out the explanation that unity of language is based upon unity of inspiration. Nevertheless, from the perspective of a reader, certain allusions are only meaningful if it is assumed that they imply knowledge of the gospels. For instance, the Seals sequence parallels the Olivet prophecy (cf. Rev 6; Matt 24), the harvest of the earth parallels the judgment parables of Jesus (cf. Rev 14:14-20; e.g. Matt 13:24-30) and the marriage of the Lamb parallels the wedding parable (cf. Rev 19:6-10; Matt 22:1-14). The reference to the Gentiles treading the holy city under foot (Rev 11:2) is almost certainly an allusion to Luke 21:24.

If then Revelation presupposes that its initial readers were familiar with the contents of one or all of the synoptic gospels then this has implications for what date we can reasonable suppose Revelation to have been written. The earliest estimates for the synoptic gospels place their composition in 50s,[[70]](#footnote-70) which might accommodate a mid-60s date for Revelation. However if we date the gospels any later, mid-60s, or even mid-70s, then a late-date for Revelation is more probable. In fact, the UBS/GNT4 appendix finds allusions and parallels with almost every NT book, including all four gospels and later epistles like Hebrews (4:10; cf. Rev 14:13) and 1 John (4:1; cf. Rev 2:2). It seems preferable to suppose that Revelation was one of, if not the, last books of the NT to be written, a fitting corollary for its position as the closing chapter of our Bibles.

### The Continuous-Historic Interpretation

The traditional Christadelphian approach to Revelation has followed the scheme developed by expositors like Joseph Mede and adopted in most of its particulars by John Thomas. The scheme follows a “telescopic” model. The Seals, the Trumpets and the Vials correspond to periods of European history, starting immediately from the book’s composition and ending with return of Christ. The Seventh Seal encompasses the period of the Trumpets; the Seventh Trumpet encompasses the period of the Vials. The seventh instance of each series ends with the establishment of the Kingdom; the “telescopic” scheme means that as we approach the *eschaton* we have more and more detail.

The Continuous-Historic (C-H) interpretation, as detailed in John Thomas’ *Eureka,* presupposes the late-date for the composition of Revelation. The First Seal is identified as the period between the death of Domitian and the accession of Commodus (96-183), apparently a period of peace and righteousness corresponding to the white horse (Rev 6:2). I have outlined elsewhere why I feel this interpretation to be inadequate.[[71]](#footnote-71) In principle, a continuous historical interpretation could begin with another start date and so the date of composition need not determine our general approach to the book.

The C-H interpretation has often been criticised for focusing heavily on secular Western European history. This is a natural consequence of the Western European origins of the C-H interpretation, but it can feel constrictive to those from elsewhere in the world. This criticism is valid, as far as it goes, since there is no reason for the prediction of European history *per se.* However, inasmuch as the history of Christianity is for large part centred on Europe, particularly Rome, it is not incongruous to interpret the symbols in light of European histories if a Church-centric approach is adopted. The late date for the composition of the book forces us to move away from the Israel-centric hermeneutic of OT prophecies and look instead towards a Church-centric interpretation, i.e. focusing on the fortunes of the Church and warning against future corruptions of Lamb’s bride.

### A Church-Centric Approach to Revelation

In the fourth appendix of Graham Pearce’s *The Revelation – Which Interpretation?* an interesting hermeneutic is briefly discussed. The writer (“A.C.”) notes how seven separate lampstands signify the seven churches, evoking the seven-branched lampstand of the Temple. Thus, it is argued, the book directs own attention to the “new constitution” (i.e. Christianity), and away from the Jewish nation, by applying OT symbols to the “Ecclesia of Christ”.[[72]](#footnote-72) I have previously written that this is a “hasty” conclusion but also criticised traditional C-H expositors for not applying this principle, ignoring OT precedents for Revelation’s symbology.[[73]](#footnote-73) Nevertheless, I believe that this is one indication, which, when coupled with several other observations, points to the fact that Revelation concerns the Christian Church and not the Jewish nation.

Twice in the seven letters to the churches we find the phrase “those who say they are Jews and are not” (Rev 2:9; 3:9). This phrase distinguishes two types of Jews: there are those who say they are Jews and those who actually are Jews. This reinforces a distinction made elsewhere in the NT between natural Jews and spiritual Jews; “know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham” (cf. Matt 3:9; John 8:39-44; Rom 2:28-9). It is apparent that by the time Revelation was being written there had already been a parting of ways between Jews and Christians. There is now a definite division between the ecclesia of Christ and the “synagogue of Satan”. This corresponds better with a late-date for Revelation, but also indicates that Revelation is not concerned with natural Israel.

We find this principle again when we meet the 144,000. In Revelation 7, these “servants of God” are said to be from “all the tribes of the children of Israel” (Rev 7:4) and so might be supposed to be natural Jews. Yet when we meet the 144,000 again in Revelation 14 they are described as “firstfruits to God and to the Lamb”, who are “redeemed from the earth” and “redeemed from mankind” (Rev 14:3-4). The 144,000 of Israel are not natural Israel but spiritual Israel – “who follow the Lamb wherever he goes”.

Again, this principle is evident in descent from heaven of “the holy Jerusalem”, which is clearly identified by the angel as “the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Rev 21:9-10). The city has twelve gates with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (Rev 21:12) and the foundations are of twelve stones like those of the breastplate of the High Priest (Rev 21:19-21; cf. Exod 28:17-20). The city also bears the names of the twelve apostles, its wall measures 144 cubits, and the city has no temple (Rev 21:14, 17, 22). This city, called both “new Jerusalem” (Rev 21:2) and just “Jerusalem” (Rev 21:10), has nothing to do with natural Israel but is a symbol of spiritual Israel, that is, the ecclesia of Christ.

Now we may choose to take a dispensionalist view of these facts. We might say that the dispensation of Israel is past, and Revelation is concerned with the dispensation of the Church. However, I think something more subtle is going on. We saw that the seven letters refer to “those who say that are Jews but are not”, indicating that true Jews were not defined naturally but spiritually. Followed to its natural conclusion this would mean that true Israel is that continuous line of believers from Abraham to the followers of Christ, including Gentiles. Revelation does not make a distinction between Israel and the Church, but rather makes a distinction between true Israel (i.e. those who follow the Lamb) and false Israel (i.e. “the synagogue of Satan”).

### Applying the Principles

What then do I mean by a Church-centric approach to Revelation? I mean that the book of Revelation is Christ’s warning to his worldwide ecclesia. Revelation as a whole is structured as a letter (cf. Rev 1:1-8; 22:21). More specifically, it follows the structure of the seven letters, beginning with a vision of Christ and ending with a vision of the Kingdom. It should not be surprising then that the book of Revelation contains warnings, just as the seven letters do; warnings of both persecutions without and apostasy within. A good interpretation of Revelation will draw out these warnings for believers. To illustrate this principle, I wish to focus on the two women of Revelation – who I believe are, in fact, one woman.

In Revelation 12 is recounted the vision of the Woman and the Dragon. The Dragon is identified as “the Devil and Satan” (Rev 12:9) and so may reasonably be identified with Sin. However, inasmuch as the Dragon appears to be interacting with the Woman (as well as other characters in the book), I think it necessary to interpret the Dragon as Sin-manifest. The seven heads (Rev 12:3) require some association with Rome (cf. Rev 17:9); the ten horns parallel Daniel’s fourth beast (Dan 7:7) reinforcing this association with Rome.

The twelve stars of the Woman (Rev 12:1) should incline us towards either the twelve tribes of Israel or the twelve apostles. As I have argued above, Revelation is not concerned with natural Israel but spiritual Israel so this Woman may be identified with spiritual Israel accordingly. The allusion to the Song of Solomon (cf. 6:10) may reinforce the point. The offspring of the Woman are those who “have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 12:17) so she cannot be identified otherwise.

As the chapter unfolds, the Woman gives birth to a male child “who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron” (i.e. Jesus Christ; cf. Rev 19:15). The child is caught up to God and his throne (Rev 12:5), a reference to exaltation of Jesus to the right-hand of God. As soon as the child is caught up, war breaks out in heaven and the Dragon (i.e. sin) is cast down; he is overcome by “the blood of the Lamb” (Rev 12:11). The Dragon is not yet defeated, and now persecutes the Woman, who bore the child. So the Woman is given two eagle’s wings to fly into the wilderness and there she remains for a set time (cf. Rev 12:6, 14). The final verse of the chapter is telling; the Woman thus protected, the Dragon makes war on those who “keep” the commandments of God – this might imply that the Woman herself no longer keeps the commandments.

In Revelation 17, John is carried out to wilderness and there we meet the Woman again, but now it is not the radiant mother but the scarlet whore. Once persecuted by the seven-headed dragon, the Woman now sits upon a seven-headed beast (Rev 17:3, 7). Once protected from persecution, the Woman is now drunk with the blood of the saints (Rev 17:6). This Woman has taken the simple nourishment she was given and become rich. This is a Church that has betrayed everything for which it once stood.

### Summary

The date for the composition of Revelation cannot be reliably established by attempting to determine the contemporary situation. The seven letters do not give a consistent picture of persecution, and so persecution cannot be used as a landmark for dating the book. The prophetic portions of the book could only be used to establish the historical situation if a certain interpretation of the book is presupposed AND if the identification of Nero with the Beast could be made to stick. It is my view that the book refers not to contemporary events but mainly future events and so the use of these details to establish the date of the book is impossible. The external testimony for the late date is strong and this is supported by internal evidence, including literary allusions.

The implication of a late date is that Revelation does not refer to the fortunes of natural Israel, despite the plethora of OT allusions, but necessarily refers to something else. It is the Christian community – Spiritual Israel – to whom our attentions are directed. The book as a whole follows very much the paradigm of the seven letters, providing exhortation and warning to the Christian community as a whole.

**Redating Revelation: the case for an early date**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

The dating of Revelation is not merely an academic pursuit, for unlike any other NT writing, the date assigned to the Apocalypse has major interpretive implications; establishing the correct date is therefore crucial for developing an understanding of the message that Jesus Christ gave to his servants.

What do we mean by an *early* or *late* date? An early date is considered to be a date *prior* to AD 70 and a late date is any date *after* AD 70. This is not an arbitrary date as AD 70 marks a cataclysmic event - the destruction of the Second Temple and the commencement of the Jewish *Diaspora.*

**The Destruction of the Temple**

The impact of AD 70 on the psyche of the Jewish nation cannot be under-estimated; J. D. G. Dunn considers it “the most serious single crisis for Jewish identity”.[[74]](#footnote-74) Josephus[[75]](#footnote-75) contended (through a proxy) almost ten years after the event that “...there could not be a Judaism without the temple” – it was an event of the utmost significance in the history of Judaism.[[76]](#footnote-76) J. A. Draper says that, “. . . to most, the loss of the temple must have seemed to be a permanent loss of the presence of God with his people”,[[77]](#footnote-77) and according to M. Goodman there is “…every reason to suppose that the razing of the Temple horrified Diaspora Jews as much as their Judaean compatriots”.[[78]](#footnote-78)

The sacrificial cult may well have continued in an inferior manner after AD 70 and it is known that sacrifice on the temple mount was briefly revived during the revolt of 132–35 BC but the temple itself was no longer present. A. Guttmann maintains that the official cult after AD 70 ended and this is supported in the updated Schürer.[[79]](#footnote-79) The temple building itself was not only the symbol of Yahweh’s presence but also a powerful political and nationalistic Jewish symbol.

The removal of the temple held equal significance for first century Christians, especially Jewish-Christians, as it resolved the perplexing problem of temple-worship. It also proved to be a powerful polemical tool against Judaism- removal of the temple confirmed the ‘New Covenant’. Henceforth, God could only be worshipped in ‘Spirit and Truth’ through Jesus Christ who, along with his church, constituted the eschatological temple. Christians did not support the Jewish revolt against Rome and the destruction of the temple hastened the “parting of the ways” between Christianity and Judaism—in time, essentially, Christianity became a “Gentile religion” after AD 70.[[80]](#footnote-80)

The status of the temple plays a crucial role in the trial of Jesus and Stephen, who are both accused of seeking its destruction. The temples’ status is also a central motif in the epistle to the Hebrews…..even though the temple is not named in the epistle! [[81]](#footnote-81) For rhetorical reasons the author of Hebrews prefers to employ allusions to the ‘tabernacle’ - if he had been more direct his polemic would have constituted “a massive ideological assault on the Jerusalem Temple and cultus”[[82]](#footnote-82) bearing in mind that even veiled criticism of the temple cult by Stephen (Acts 6:13-14) resulted in a violent reaction. Hebrews preference for ‘tabernacle’ allusions over direct mention of the temple stresses the superiority of the nature of the structure that was chosen as Yahweh’s temporary abode (a tent) rather than David’s choice of a permanent ‘house’ (2 Sam 7:5-7 cf. Acts 7:44,49). The temporary nature of a structure that was moved, together with the Ark, in advance of the people in order to seek out a resting place (and that required disassembly and erection) has obvious analogies with Christ. Hebrews stresses the superiority of the ‘heavenly’ sanctuary over the ‘earthly’ sanctuary, an argument that would have been unnecessary if the Second Temple was no longer standing. The removal of the Second Temple ended the debate and the need for Christian apology, for Yahweh demonstrated conclusively that the earthly temple was no longer necessary (cf. Heb 12:25-27). In conclusion, we can be certain that Hebrews was written before the fall of the Second Temple in AD 70, and we can also be sure that the status of the Second Temple was a bone of contention between Jews and Christians as early as the trials of Jesus and Stephen and continued to be a stumbling-block until it was removed.

Most importantly the destruction of the sanctuary was anticipated in Daniel’s 490 year prophecy (Dan 9:24-27) and the same prophecy was employed by Jesus to warn of the coming destruction of the temple by Rome (Matt 24:15). The prophecy was expected to usher in “everlasting righteousness” (Dan 9:24b) the rule of God on earth, shortly after the destruction of the temple. Moreover, it was expected to result in an eschatological Jubilee Day of Atonement—“To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity” (Dan 9:24b).

Rabbinical Judaism adapted the prophecy by compressing the period between the destruction of the first temple (586 BC) and the second temple (AD 70) in the *Seder Olam* chronicle (a Jewish calendar ca. 160 AD) to a mere 490 years, thus effectively revising history by omitting 166 years from the Persian era. With the removal of the temple cult in AD 70 attention was refocused on the codification of the oral traditions know as the Mishna and the conclusion of the ‘Torah era’. This is hardly a satisfactory realization of a prophecy that signified the in-breaking of God’s rule on earth and promised, *“To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy”* (Dan 9:24b). For early Jewish interpreters like Josephus the prophecy found a fulfilment in the destruction of the temple by the Romans; Jewish commentators, such as Rashi and Metzudos, held that the 490 years ended with the destruction of the temple.

In summary, first century Jews expected the destruction of the temple to coincide with the in breaking of God’s rule on earth, Rabbinical Judaism re-interpreted Daniel’s prophecy when this did not occur and refocused their energies away from the temple cult, towards the law and the synagogue. The destruction of the temple was a seminal event for Judaism *and* Christianity, and it marked not only the end of an independent Jewish nation, but the end of an era. The fact that the destruction of the temple is not referred to as a ‘past event’ *in any* of the NT writings is the most forceful argument for dating the *whole* of the NT before AD 70. J. A. T. Robinson sums up the lack of reference to the fall of the temple as follows:

One of the oddest facts about the New Testament is that what on any showing would appear to be the single most datable and climactic event of the period - the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, and with it the collapse of institutional Judaism based on the temple - is never once mentioned as a past fact. It is, of course, predicted; and these predictions are, in some cases at least, assumed to be written (or written up) after the event. But the silence is nevertheless as significant as the silence for Sherlock Holmes of the dog that did not bark.[[83]](#footnote-83)

**Jewish Temple Imagery indicates an Early Date**

Despite prolific Temple imagery/liturgy occurring in the Apocalypse, the impact has been marginal on interpretive approaches and the *topos* is barely noted in commentaries. Recently this neglect has been addressed (1997/1999) by studies from R. Brigg[[84]](#footnote-84) and A. and A. Spatafora,[[85]](#footnote-85) who investigate the use of Temple imagery in apocryphal and OT sources and the subsequent development of the Temple theme in the Apocalypse. The common feature shared by these recent works is recognition of **the importance of** **temple imagery/liturgy** in the Apocalypse, particularly the Day of Atonement, a feature also noted by H. A. Whittaker.[[86]](#footnote-86)

Why is Jewish ‘temple imagery’ (cf. Rev 8:3; 9:13; 14:18; 16:7) so fundamental to the Apocalypse? The vision of the ‘heavenly sanctuary’ was given *before* the destruction of the ‘earthly temple’ and *before* the Neronic persecution in order to reassure Christians. Hebrews *follows the lead given in the Apocalypse* by reminding readers that the ‘earthly tabernacle’ (temple) is but a **copy and shadow** (Heb 8:5) of the heavenly things (i.e., the temple that John ‘entered’ in his vision)—believers now have an ‘open door’ to the heavenly sanctuary (Rev 4:1; cf. Heb 4:16) and become ‘fellow worshipers’ with the angels (Rev 19:10; 22:9); the Jewish temple cult is no longer relevant and therefore Christians (particularly Jewish Christians) need not be distressed when it is removed.

The Apocalypse is structured around a three-and-a-half year cycle of Jewish Feasts, and is replete with implicit and explicit allusions and echoes to the Jewish Feasts. For example, Passover (Rev 5:1f); Tabernacles (Rev 7:15); Hanukkah (Rev 11:4); Purim (Rev 11:10); Atonement (Rev 8:1f); and Tabernacles (Rev 21:3; 21:6; 22:1; cf. the water pouring ceremony of John 7:37). The Fourth Gospel shares the same interest in Feast Days with the narrative punctuated by references to the Jewish calendar (John 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 7:2; 10:22; 11;55ff).

**First Century Expectations indicate an early date**

Whereas many pious first century Jews expected the ‘end of the age’ in the first century, Christians held the expectation that Christ would return during their lifetime (cf. Matt. 10:23; Matt. 24:34; 1 Thess. 4:15;[[87]](#footnote-87) 2 Thess. 2:1-2; 2 Thess. 2:1-2). G. K. Beale has noted[[88]](#footnote-88) that the formula translated in Rev 1:1 (and also 4:1 and 22:6) as **“what must….take place”** is found in only one other place in the Bible, namely in Greek versions of Daniel 2, where it occurs in verses 28, 29 and 45:

 […..]….he showed . . . what things must take place in the latter days

 (Dan 2:28, LXX)

 […..]…to show . . . …what things must take place quickly (Rev 1:1)

According to Beale, the verbs translated “show” are “semantic equivalents”, both used to describe the “role of the prophets in revealing what God has ‘shown’ them”. The important matter to note is the change from the expression “in the latter days” to “quickly,” which “appears to indicate that fulfilment has begun (that it is being fulfilled) or will begin in the near future. Simply put, John understands Daniel’s reference to a distant time as referring to his own era and he updates the text accordingly. What Daniel expected to occur in the distant ‘latter days’ -- the defeat of cosmic evil and the ushering in of the divine kingdom -- John expects to begin ‘quickly,’ in his own generation, if it has not already begun to happen.”

Therefore, Rev 1:1a anticipates (via Daniel) an imminent fulfilment in the first century. This is reinforced by Rev 1:7, “Behold, He is coming with clouds” (NKJV), an allusion to Dan 7:13, followed by a description of the “Son of man” in Danielic terms in Rev 1:13-17 (cf. Dan 7:9; 10:6). Significantly, Jesus warned the judges at his trial that they, “…**will see** the Son of Man…coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matt 26:64), indicating that they would personally experience *his coming in judgement*. All of the allusions to Daniel in the first chapter of the Apocalypse point to an imminent first century fulfilment of Daniel’s prophecies. The use of Daniel by Jesus in Rev 1:1 corresponds with Jesus’ use of Daniel in the Olivet Prophecy regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The conclusion is inescapable that the prophecy of Daniel/Olivet/Revelation had at least **a partial fulfilment in the first century.**

**The Breach Principle**

The “coming of the Son of Man” in AD 70 was an act of judgment **that only partially** realized the terms of Daniel/Olivet/Revelation.[[89]](#footnote-89) First Century Christians expected the in-breaking of the kingdom to quickly follow. We might ask why the kingdom was not inaugurated immediately and if there is a scriptural precedent for this. Scripture does indeed have a precedent for delaying the promised inheritance….it is known as the breach principle:

After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, *even* forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. Num.14:34 (KJV)[[90]](#footnote-90)

The **same warning** based on the **same incident** was given to first century Jewish-Christians in the epistle to the Hebrews (Heb 4:3-8). The warning was not heeded—the Jewish nation was swept away—the Jewish-Christian church was swept away—the kingdom on earth did not materialise and Christianity became a ‘Gentile religion’. This frustrated first century eschatological expectations of Christians *and* Jews—the prophetic clock *stopped ticking*. All the prophecies *could* (should) have been realized in the first century *but they were not*.

Both 2 Peter and Hebrews (and possibly others) **were aware** of the “Revelation of Jesus Christ”, and were consciously alluding to or echoing the warnings given by Christ regarding the coming judgement on Judaism in AD 70.[[91]](#footnote-91) Jewish-Christians were warned not to apostatize by reverting to Judaism as it would soon be swept away. In this context the words of Heb 1:2 take on new significance and resonate with meaning:

Has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds... Heb 1:2 (KJV)

The first verses of Hebrews should be placed in the context of Heb 12:25,

See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall we not escape* if we turn away from Him who *speaks* from heaven… Heb 12:25 (KJV)

The one who ‘spoke on earth’ was either the Angel of the Presence who spoke on God’s behalf and bore the divine *Yahweh* name (Exod 23:20-23), or it was Moses who was God’s divine agent (cf. Acts 7:35). The one who speaks to the Hebrews from heaven is now the resurrected Christ who speaks with God’s authority through his servant John:

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit. 2 Pet 1:20-21 (KJV)

I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet. Rev 1:10 (KJV)

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority,* but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. John 16:13 (KJV)

In Heb 12:25-27 and 2 Pet 1:17-21 we have different examples to emphasize the same point (the example employed by Hebrews probably appealed more to Jewish-Christians). Hebrews draws on the wilderness experience and the revelation on Mount Sinai, Peter draws on the revelation on the transfiguration Mount:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Exodus 19** | **Hebrews 12** | **2 Peter 1 (Transfiguration)** |
| **18.** Mt. Sinai  | **18.** Mt Sinai  | **18.** The holy mount  |
| **19.** God answers Moses by a voice  | **25.** Him (God) that warneth from heaven  | **18.** This voice (God’s) which came from heaven we heard  |
| **18.** Whole mount quaked greatly  | **26.** Voice shook the earth  |  |
| **19.** The people feared (Exod 20:19). | **21.** Moses feared  | The disciples feared (Luke 9:35) |
| **9, 16.** A thick cloud  | **21.** Tempest  | A cloud (Luke 9:34) |
| If thou shalt indeed obey his voice... (Exod 23:22)(the voice of the angel of the presence who spoke to Moses on earth) | **25.** ...refused Him who spoke on earth | **17.** This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him. (Jesus) (Luke 9:34) |

Both Hebrews and 2 Peter emphasize that the resurrected Jesus now speaks with the full authority of God and has recently given a revelation *from heaven* to his servant John—they would do well to heed Jesus’ warning from heaven regarding the coming judgement on Judaism.

**Internal versus External Evidence**

The late dating of Revelation is usually established by reference to external evidence. The external evidence is by no means unanimous, with the strongest testimony being that of Irenaeus (*ca.* 180), which establishes a date of AD 96 under the persecution of Domitian. This evidence has been challenged: the testimony of Irenaeus is ambiguous and subject to alternative readings,[[92]](#footnote-92) and the persecution under Domitian[[93]](#footnote-93) was localized and not as severe as that under Nero.[[94]](#footnote-94)

Essentially, the question of dating comes down to the relative weight that is placed on the external evidence as opposed to the internal (Biblical) evidence. With external evidence both the motive[[95]](#footnote-95) behind the testimony and the accuracy[[96]](#footnote-96) of the testimony can be challenged. This is not the case with internal evidence—the authority of the testimony is not in question and the motive behind the testimony is pure. Nevertheless, we should remember that internal evidence is subject to other issues, such as direction of quotation (who is quoting whom?) and interpretation.

**When was Revelation written?**

Perhaps the clearest internal indicator for dating is Rev 17:10-11 which places the Apocalypse during the reign of the sixth Roman emperor—Nero (54-68), as the “one that is” (e.g. in power at the time of writing), commencing the count with the first emperor, Julius Caesar. The problem for commentators is identifying the “seventh” emperor, who “has not yet come”, with various candidates being suggested none of whom is particularly relevant.[[97]](#footnote-97) This “other” who, “has not yet come” and will exist for only a “short time” is associated with the re-emergence of the beast. The future protagonist is equated with the “eighth” (head) and is “of the seven” (heads). The problem is caused by the failure to recognise the *prophetic interruption* caused by the *breach of promise*. The “one who is to come” and the reincarnated beast are eschatological figures that appear *right at the end*, just before the appearance of Jesus—the “short time” is analogous with the three-and–one-half year witnessing that sees the “resurrected” beast murder the witnesses (Rev 11:7). The witnessing is *based* *on* the “Faithful Witness” (Rev 1:5) who was murdered in Jerusalem (cf. Rev 11:8) by an imperial power in collusion with an institutionalized religion (beast). First century events act as a kind of transparency through which to view the end and Nero is the archetype for the blaspheming, persecuting “man” (666) who “has not yet come”.

Nero’s persecution of Christians was not accidental. A minority sect like the Christians would not have come to his attention, were it not for the trouble that Judaizersstirred up (cf. Acts 18:2). The suggestion to use Christians as a scapegoat and blame them for the great fire probably came from his mistress, Poppea, who was a recent convert to Judaism.[[98]](#footnote-98)

It is often asserted that Nero’s name does not calculate the gematria value of 666 (Rev 13:18), but the Aramaic spelling of Nero Caesar - *Nrwn Qsr* (attested at Qumran) does, moreover, when the Latin spelling of ‘Nero Caesar’ is transliterated into Hebrew it calculates the alternative numerical value 616 a textual variant found in some manuscripts![[99]](#footnote-99) So both the Aramaic *and* the Latin form indicate the number of **a** man - Nero Caesar. However, the numerical riddle 666 is supra-historical in its significance, going beyond identifying the particular (**a** man) to identifying the universal hubris and self-divinization of **man**.[[100]](#footnote-100)

Such was the tyranny of Nero that myths accreted about his reappearance (that he was possibly not dead) and as early as 69 AD an imposter emerged to be quickly followed by other pseudo-Neroes. Commentators often aver that passages such as Rev 13:3, 14 and 17:8, 11 (describing the beast that survived a mortal wound) form the basis of the *Nero Redivivus* (Nero Returns) myth. The myth is employed by late date advocates (as a prophecy after the event) *and* by early date advocates! K. L. Gentry suggests that the myth was already well established early in the reign of the superstitious Nero, who sought predictions from astrologers.[[101]](#footnote-101)

The explanation offered here is that the Book of Revelation (given early in the reign of Nero) *contributed* to the myth of his “return”. By coincidence (sic) the number of **man** calculated the value of Nero Caesar (who was an archetype) and together with the prophecies concerning the reincarnation (recovery/resurrection) of the beast this encouraged the spread of the *Nero Redivivus* myth amongst pagan pretenders, who acquired (and misunderstood) it from Christian sources. This testifies to the terror that Nero invoked even after his death. The beast with its seven heads equates to the totality of the beast-heads in the vision of Daniel 7 representing the sum total of the “kingdoms of men”. In the first century, the “beast” was Roman and the Harlot (unfaithful woman) supported by imperial power (riding the beast) was Jerusalem— the perfect combination of ruthless Gentile power and institutionalized Jewish religion. This duality (Jerusalem/Rome) found common purpose when they crucified the Lord and threw the Christians to the lions but their agreement did not last and Rome eventually destroyed Jerusalem (cf. Rev 17:16). The events of the first century are a preview of future events.

**Conclusion**

Serious problems exist in accepting a late date for Revelation. The vantage point of the seals is retrospective (just before the Nero persecution), looking backwards to the foot of the cross.[[102]](#footnote-102) This gave first century Christians the reassurance that the ‘resurrected Lamb’ was immediately empowered to lead and encourage his church through the coming tribulations (not 66 years later!). Jesus was aware of all the hardships and martyrdoms endured by the primitive church—persecutions that would “fill up the measure of his sufferings” until the coming retribution of 70.

Of particular interest is the importance of the Day of Atonement which thematically informs the Trumpet section. The Day of Atonement is considered by Jews to be the holiest and most solemn day of the year and is a national holiday. Why does the liturgy of a *Jewish Feast* related to *national atonement* form a central theme in the Book of Revelation? The Day of Atonement has no relevance to any other nation, nor is it relevant to the church or the “church age”. Instead of forgiveness, the Day of Atonement in the Apocalypse results in a process of national punishment and retribution.

In 1973 the nation of Israel suffered a surprise attack **on the Day of Atonement** – it was a war they almost lost. The Day of Atonement war was the divine response to *prayers asking for national forgiveness* and it is this event that *re-started the prophetic clock*.We are now living in the period immediately prior the witnessing to the Jewish nation.

Many interpretations of Revelation are politically motivated - the Continuous-Historic approach originated as Protestant polemic against the Catholic Church[[103]](#footnote-103) and the Catholic response was full Preterism[[104]](#footnote-104) (the notion that it was *completely* realized in 70). Exegetes should move away from politically motivated interpretations and adopt an approach grounded in a biblical hermeneutic. Revelation was obviously not *completely* realized in the first century but it is just as obvious that it was written early and that it had an application to our first century brethren and sisters and to the Jewish nation (and still does).

1. The substance of this article was previously published on BTDF at www.thechristadelphians.org. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Standard modern Bible translations render the text as a statement that those in Christ are all ‘one’, not that they are all ‘equal’; readers are invited to test this themselves, and see if they can find any standard modern translation which renders the text as a statement that those in Christ are ‘all equal’ (of course all those in Christ are equal spiritually speaking, even if not socially, legally, physically or financially, but this passage is not denying that spiritual equality). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. R. W. Hove, *Equality in Christ? Galatians 3:28 and the Gender Dispute* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1999), 108; emphasis is added here and in all subsequent quotations from scholars. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. F. Watson, “The Authority of the Voice: A Theological Reading of 1 Cor 11.2–16” *NTS* 46 (2000): 520-536 (521). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 119 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Watson, “The Authority of the Voice”, 521. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Watson, “The Authority of the Voice”, 521; [Ed. AP]: Whether Gen 1:27 has an hierarchical overtone depends on how you read 1 Cor 11:7 which is also an allusion—Watson betrays his egalitarian preferences in this quote]. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Watson, “The Authority of the Voice”, 521. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. N. T. Wright, “Women’s Service in the Church: The Biblical Basis”, which was a conference paper for the Symposium, ‘Men, Women and the Church’’ held at St. John’s College, Durham, 4 September, 2004; cited from the online copy at N. T. Wright’s website, www.ntwrightpage.com, which has no pagination. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. M. E. Glasswell, “Some Issues of Church and Society in Light of Paul’s Eschatology” in *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*, (eds. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson; London: SPCK, 1982), 315. Cited by Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 94 citing Colin Kruse, “Human Relationships in the Pauline Corpus” in *The Fullness of Time: Biblical Studies in Honour of Archbishop Donald Robinson* (eds. David Peterson and John Pryor; Homebush West, NSW: Anzea Publishers, 1992), 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Wright, “Women’s Service in the Church: The Biblical Basis”. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Wright, “Women’s Service in the Church: The Biblical Basis”. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Wright, “Women’s Service in the Church: The Biblical Basis”. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. G. Hugenberger, “Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis? A Survey Of Approaches To 1 Tim 2:8-15” *JETS* 35 (1992): 341-360 (347); Hugenberger cites the following articles in support: J. J. Davis, “Some Reflections on Gal 3:28, Sexual Roles, and Biblical Hermeneutics,” *JETS* 19 (1976): 201-208 and B. Witherington III, “Rite and Rights for Women—Galatians 3.28,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 593-604. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. E. L. Miller, “Is Galatians 3:28 the Great Egalitarian Text?” *ET* 114 (2002): 9-11 (9). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Miller, “Is Galatians 3:28 the Great Egalitarian Text?”, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Miller, “Is Galatians 3:28 the Great Egalitarian Text?”, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Miller, “Is Galatians 3:28 the Great Egalitarian Text?”, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Miller, “Is Galatians 3:28 the Great Egalitarian Text?”, 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 110; the text is cited from Philo’s *The Life of Moses*, 1.324. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Hove, *Equality in Christ?*, 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss whether the text is a hymn; we just assume this common designation. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. G. F. Hawthorne, *Philippians* (WBC 43; Waco: Word, 1983), 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. UBS/GNT places a full stop after le,gete; the BYZ text has a comma. By this device, UBS/GNT are placing Jesus’ saying within the scope of the other Johannine ‘I am’ sayings. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. [Ed. AP]: R. Bauckham’s popular book, God *Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) introduced the phrases ‘unique identity’ and ‘include in the unique identity’ for Jesus’ relation to God. It is a lamentable failing of the book that he does not include an elementary discussion of his notion of identity; he entirely ignores the work of logicians. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. R. Bauckham, “Paul’s Christology of Divine Identity” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Toronto, Canada, November 25, 2002), 1-26 (11). Available online [cited 21/03/2010]: www.forananswer.org/Top\_JW/Richard\_Bauckham.pdf. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Bauckham, “Paul’s Christology of Divine Identity”, 12: However, some scholars (besides J. D. G. Dunn) do argue that pre-existence and incarnation have no place here (for bibliography, see L. D. Hurst, “Re-enter the Pre-existent Christ in Philippians 2.5-11?” *NTS* 32 (1986): 449-57. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. [Ed. AP]: In this quote we have a formulation of the “worship argument” for the deity of Christ, one which has been popular in academic theology in the last two decades. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. J. D. G. Dunn comments, “The dialogue has probably been more fierce over the christological hymns, Phil 2.6-11 and Col 1.15-20, than anywhere else. It is clear from comment and conversation that some regard the questions I pose and suggestions I make in relation to these texts as insubstantial and wholly implausible, if not absurd, if not perverse”. See his foreword to the second edition of *Christology in the Making* (2nd ed.; London: SCM Press, 1989), xviii-xix and xxxiii-xxxiv. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 91-92, 97. See also P. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 263-68. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. R. P. Martin, *An Early Christian Confession* (Tyndale Press,1961), 57 fn. 48; see online at www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/confession\_martin.pdf [cited 20/03/2010]. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Martin, *An Early Christian Confession*, 23-24. [Ed. JWA]: Re “poured out”. The precise form of Isa 53:12’s Hebrew term hr"Þ[/h,/h`rh translated ‘poured out’ connects with ‘make bare’ or ‘expose’ in Lev 20:18-19 related to ‘uncovering’ (cf. hlg) nakedness. ‘Exposed his soul’ – what Jesus did to himself – would then profoundly benefit from connecting with Col 2:15 and thus better measure the ironic counterpoint in that NT text re Christ’s ‘undressing’ principalities and powers also in his death. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. #####  Hurst, “Re-enter the Pre-existent Christ in Philippians 2.5-11?”, 457 n. 39; C. A. Wanamaker, “Philippians 2.6–11: ‘Son of God or Adamic Christology’?” *NTS* 33 (1987): 179-193 (182).

 [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. See H. A. Whittaker, *Isaiah* (Cannock: Biblia, 1988),G. Booker and H. A. Whittaker, *Hezekiah the Great: The Songs of Degrees* (Birmingham: CMPA, 1985). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. “For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus”. (Phil 2:21 NKJV) [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. We will present this evidence in terms of the MT rather than the LXX, noting only those instances where the LXX offers significant differences of detail in the episodes. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. J. R. Levison cites Assyro-Babylonian texts to support his interpretation that “clothing” is indicative of possession by a spirit-being—“The Angelic Spirit in Early Judaism” *The Society of Biblical Literature 1995 Seminar Papers*,34 (1995): 464-493, (469). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. The auxiliary Hiphil of llx is regularly used with Qal or Hiphil infinitives to denote the beginning of an action by a character. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Later Jewish writings include the transport of individuals by angels. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. S. Chatman, *Story and Discourse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 111-113. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. This standard distinction and this terminology derive from E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (London: Penguin, 1962), 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. This can be seen throughout his *Poetics*, but it is particularly clear in ch. 6 and the discussion of tragedy. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. For one treatment of mimetic characterization see, R. Scholes and R. Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), ch. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. J. L. Paxson, *The Poetics of Personification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. These terms derive from the folktale analysis of V. Propp, but we use them here as an inference from the story traditions that involve the Spirit of the Lord rather than as a model applied to these traditions; on this see, J. Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (London: RKP, 1975), 230-238. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. This view is defended in the standard academic bible dictionary—D. S. Potter, “Quirinius” *ABD*, 5:588-589. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. A representative treatment is that of W. Brindle, “The Census and Quirinius: Luke 2:2” *JETS* 27/1 (1984): 43-52. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. For a discussion of this narrative aside see S. M. Sheeley, *Narrative Asides in Luke-Acts* (JSNTSup 72; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 102-103. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. It is known from Josephus (*Ant*. 10, 9-10) that Quintilius Varus was legate until at least 4 B.C.E. and the death of Herod but not thereafter—when it is next known that Gaius Julius Caesar was the governor in 1 C.E. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Tertullian, *Adv. Marc*. 4.19, dates the census to the governorship of Sentius Saturninius. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Law and Roman Society in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 162-171 (162) observes that the presence of Quirinius’ name has caused the most controversy in Luke’s Roman History. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. ANET, 265; K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 439f. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. This comparison is true in a general way if both Genesis and the Sumerian King List are using a decimal system; however, the King List is actually using a modified sexagesimal system. J. H. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 127-131, shows how the two decimal and sexagesimal systems align very closely in their totals after conversion, if the original compiler of the Sumerian King List was using the Genesis 5 genealogy and misunderstood its digits as a modified sexagesimal number. In this way, Walton makes a conclusive case for the Genesis genealogy being the older text. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. The use of “ten generations” as a motif to exhaust a period of time is seen in the law, “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever” (Deut 23:3, KJV). [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. The presence of two genealogical traditions in Genesis corresponds to Mesopotamian texts where in addition to the prehistoric listing of kings, there is a tradition of the seven successive wise sages who teach the skills of human wisdom; hence, Cain’s genealogy has a 6-fold listing of human skills. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. R. K. Harrison, “From Adam to Noah: A Reconsideration of the Antediluvian Patriarchs’ Ages” *JETS* 37/2 (1994): 161-168 (162); P. J. Wiseman, *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis* (4th ed.; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1946), chap. 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in its Cultural Context*, 127-131. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. W. C. Kaiser, *The Old Testament Documents: Are they Reliable and Relevant?* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 57-58; Wiseman, *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis*, chap. 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Estimates vary depending on interpretations of the historical evidence. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Cited from H. W. F. Saggs, *The Might That Was Assyria* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1984), 254. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. T. E. Gaston, *Come and See: An Exposition of Revelation* (Hyderabad: Printland Publishers, 2007), 402-416. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Also see *Come and See,* 381-397. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Clement of Rome, *1 Corinthians* 6.1-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. [Ed. AP]: Of course, the date of the Letter to the Ephesians is contested and could be earlier in the Caesarean Captivity. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. [Ed. AP]: A recent doctoral thesis by J. G. Crossley (*The Date of Mark’s Gospel*, London: T&T Clark, 2004) has argued for a date for Mark in the early 40s. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. T. E. Gaston, *The Continuous-Historic Interpretation Examined* (Oxford: Taanathshiloh, 2006), 30-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. A.C., “A Principle of Interpretation” in *The Revelation – Which Interpretation?* (ed., G. Pearce; Torrens Park: Christadelphian Scripture Study Service, 1982), 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Gaston, *The Continuous-Historic Interpretation Examined,* 26-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. “If the emergence of post-exilic Judaism, and the Maccabean crisis provided two of the main crises for Jewish identity, the third most serious single crisis of the second temple period was the destruction of the temple in AD 70 and its aftermath”—J. D. G. Dunn, *Jews and Christians: the parting of the ways, A.D. 70 to 135* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Josephus expresses his own views through the words of his character (Eleazar son of Yair), who contends that there could not be a Judaism without the temple, so that the people in Masada were the final Jews on the earth. (*C. Ap.*  2.193-198) In his summary of the Law in *Contra Apionem* he included the Temple cult as the first item in his list of the essentials of Jewish worship (*C. Ap.* 2.193-198). [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. W. D. Davies, “Reflections on Aspects of the Jewish Background of the Gospel of John,” in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (eds. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 43-64. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. J. A. Draper, “Temple, Tabernacle and Mystical Experience in John,” *Neot* 31/2 (1997): 285 [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. M. Goodman, “Diaspora Reactions to the Destruction of the Temple” in *Jews and Christians* (ed. J. D. G. Dunn; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 27-38 (38). [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. A. Guttmann, “The End of the Jewish Sacrificial Cult” *HUCA* 38 (1967): 137-148. E. Schürer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.- A.D. 135), (revised and edited by G. Vermes and F. Millar (and M. Black (vols. I-II), M . Goodman (vols.III.1-2)); 4 vols; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973-87), I:521-523. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Revelation is addressed to seven churches in Asia Minor as the Lord **anticipates** the demise of the Jewish state and the Jerusalem church. In Rev 2:9 and 3:9—‘Jew’ is employed as an honorific term for the religious ideal. Jesus is warning against false Jewish converts (a fifth column)—they were not true ‘Jews’ but still belonged to the ‘synagogue of Satan’. It is unlikely that the term ‘Jew’ would be employed in this sense after the destruction of the temple (post 70). The seven churches reflect first century circumstances, for example, Laodicea was so rich that they took pride in being able to rebuild the city after the earthquake of 60 without help from imperial funds (Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.27; cf. *Sib. Or.* 4.107f). [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. S. Motyer commences his article on the Temple in Hebrews with the words; “The presence or absence of the Temple in Hebrews is one of the most intriguing and significant exegetical and historical puzzles posed by the letter”—“The Temple in Hebrews: Is it There?” in *Heaven and Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* (eds. T. D. Alexander & S. Gathercole; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 177-189 (177). [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Motyer, “The Temple in Hebrews: Is it There?”, 180 [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: Xpress Reprints, 1976), 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. R. A. Brigg, *Jewish Temple Imagery in the Book of Revelation* (Studies in Biblical Literature; Vol. 10; New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1999). [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. A. and A. Spatafora observe that, “All other studies and commentaries appear to analyse the individual recurrences, but they fail to see a relationship between them”—A. Spatafora and A. Spatafora, *From the ‘Temple of God’ to God as the Temple: A Biblical Theological Study of the Temple in the Book of Revelation* (Rome: Loyola Press, 1997), 7-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. H. A. Whittaker, *Revelation: A Biblical Approach* (Lichfield: Biblia, 1973), 104-105. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. In 1 Thessalonians (an early epistle) Paul expected that at least some of his audience (including himself?) would still be alive when the Lord returned. The immediacy of the problems facing the Thessalonians, including their communal living arrangements, indicated that first century Christians expected an early return. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary of the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 153-4, 1130. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. For connections between the Olivet prophecy and the Seals see, T. Gaston, *Come and See* (Hyderabad: Printland Publishers, 2007), 104-5, and Whittaker, *Revelation: A Biblical Approach*, 67-68. Unlike the synoptics, the Fourth Gospel did not feel it necessary to include the Olivet prophecy because John had already incorporated it into the Seals! [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. [Ed. AP]: Another example of delay is Isa 48:9, “For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off”. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. A strong case has been made for both the epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel of John being directed at the Jewish-Christian community at Ephesus. The epistle to the Hebrews has extensive allusions to the warning given to the Ephesians in Rev 2:1-7. See, P. Wyns, “The Fourth Gospel and Hebrews” and “The Fourth Gospel and Revelation” in *The Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation Annual 2009,* (ed. A. Perry *et al*; Sunderland: Willow Publications, 2009), 154-163, 163-170 (168-169). For intertextual links between 2 Peter and Revelation 2, see Robinson, *Redating*, 227. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. See the alternative reading put forward by Robinson, *Redating*, 221-222. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. A number of late date advocates either contradict themselves or do not even attempt to use the Domitian persecution to establish the date. See J. P. M. Sweet, *Revelation* (London: SCM Press, 1979), 24-25; G. E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 8; R. H. Fuller , *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament* (London: Duckworth, 1966), 187; L. Morris, *Revelation* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press), 36; and D. H. van Daalen, *A Guide to Revelation* (London: SPCK, 1986), 3. L. L. Thompson has demonstrated clearly that there was no empire-wide persecution of Christians inaugurated by Domitian—*The Book of Revelation: Apocalypse and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 95-115. D. Warden concludes, “...a Domitianic persecution based on literary evidence from the milieu of the imperial capital is essentially irrelevant”—“Imperial persecution and the Dating of 1 Peter and Revelation” *JETS* 34/2 (1991): 203-212, (212). See also J. C. Wilson, “The Problem of the Domitianic Date of Revelation” *NTS* 39 (1993): 587-605. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. K. L. Gentry concludes his assessment of the evidence with the words: “The evidence of a general persecution against Christianity under Nero is strong and almost universally recognised. Its cruelty, extent, and length are most compatible with the requirements of the Revelational record. Not only so, but the Domitianic evidence is meagre and, if accepted, Domitian’s persecution pales by comparison”—K. L. Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell: Dating the Book of Revelation. An Exegetical and Historical Argument for a Pre-A.D. 70 Composition* (Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), 298-9; see also 17-18, 24-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. T. B. Slater asserts; “Moreover, Thompson has shown conclusively that the writings of the Roman historians who were Irenaeus’ primary sources had themselves intentionally given a poor depiction of Domitian in order to ingratiate themselves to Trajan and his new imperial family. Thus, for these reasons, Irenaeus is not the most reliable source for dating the Apocalypse to John and can only be used as a supporting witness, if then”—“Dating the Apocalypse to John” *Bib* 84 (2003): 252-258 (254). [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Robinson, *Redating*, 221, remarks, “the external testimony is only as strong as the internal and must be assessed critically”. R. B. Moberley states, “We would not normally regard so distant, belated and second-hand opinion as, by itself, evidence”—“When was Revelation Conceived?” *Bib* 73 (1992): 376-393 (367, 381). [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. See Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, 146-164. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Josephus (*Ant*. 20.8 .11) recounts how Poppea pleaded with Nero on behalf of Ismael the high priest and Helcias the temple treasurer, who were held hostage at Nero’s court, in order to force the Jews to demolish a wall that blocked Herod Agrippa’s view of the Temple precinct. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. For detailed analysis of 666 and 616 see Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, 193-203. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Empire building (cf. the beasts of Daniel’s vision) is an act of human assertion and glorification (cf. Dan 4:30; 1 Kings. 10:14) and something that Jesus refused (Matt 4:8-10).  [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Gentry, *Before Jerusalem Fell*, 300-317 (305). [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. The first seal commenced at Passover, at the resurrection, and the last seal was completed **42 years (?) later** on the day after Passover (Josephus, *Wars* 10.9.1.), with the fall of the last fortress and suicide of the Jewish defenders at Masada. The seals are all related to the church history recorded in Acts and the secular history recorded in Josephus. The conquering Gospel (Rev 6:2; Acts 9:15), Herodian Persecution (Rev 6:4; Acts 12:1-2), Claudian famine (Rev 6:5-6; Acts 11:28), disintegration of the Jewish state (Rev 6:8 cf. *Josephus*, [Thackeray Loeb edition] who reports assassins, robbers, a false prophet [253-70] and the suppression of rebellions in this period [253, 260, 263, 269f]), Nero persecution (Rev 6:9-11; 1 Pet 5:8) and the Jewish war concluding with the fall of Jerusalem and last fortress at Masada (Rev 6:12-17)—six Seals, each lasting approximately seven years. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Martin Luther and John Calvin adopted a Historicist approach during the Reformation. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. A Preterist response was issued during the Counter Reformation by the Jesuit Luis De Alcasar. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)