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| Christadelphian EJournal |
|  |
| Of Biblical Interpretation |

**Vol. 7, No. 4, Oct 2013**

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**Editorial**

The years come and go and this issue sees the end of Year 7 for the EJournal. The editors have agreed to do another year (GW), a decision we revisit every year. However, we are sorry to see one of our columnists (Jon Davis) step down at this time because of other commitments. This means we are now running two columnist vacancies (Gender and Analysis). We have invited one or two people to fulfil the Gender role over the past year, but so far there have been no takers. One thing that puts some people off is the ‘academic’ nature of the EJournal. This shouldn’t because, although we do publish academic articles, we do like to have non-academic but scriptural treatments of issues to complement the academic material.

The existing long established Christadelphian magazines serve the community well and there is no need for any online magazine to compete with these sources of teaching. However, since they do not seek to publish more technical studies of the Scriptures, apologetics material in philosophy and theology, or engage the world of biblical scholarship, the EJournal endeavours to fill this gap.

It often seems as if the years roll by and nothing much changes except getting older. This isn’t a comment about the world stage which is particularly active in respect of the Middle East at the moment; rather, it is a comment about the EJournal—things like research, reading and writing. As Ecclesiastes says, of the making of many magazines, journals and books, there is, apparently, no end.

Subscriptions to the EJournal have been handled by Google and Yahoo Groups up to this point with an email attachment. Google and now Yahoo have removed the ‘Add Member’ facility for administrators of groups. Consequently, new subscribers via the EJournal website are now handled by Mailchimp but only receive a link to download the latest issue from Mailchimp. If there are any issues with the new group or Google and Yahoo, please email any editor.

Mailchimp allows multiple email lists and this facility means that, upon request, a .docx file link can now be emailed instead of a .pdf link for users of the Logos Bible software package. This package allows users to index .docx files and integrate such files into their Logos libraries. So, if any subscribers have Logos and would like this facility please email the editors. The same offer can be made for Kindle users of Whispernet – a separate Mailchimp list is available for delivering .pdfs to a Whispernet address.

After seven years, the EJournal subscriber base is around 500; it creeps up each month. As we do not advertise, new subscribers usually ‘come across’ the magazine online or have it recommended. We do not believe in marketing which means we do not email ecclesial secretaries asking them to circulate or advertise the EJournal; nor do we ‘advertise’ or ‘push’ the EJournal in Christadelphian magazines, Facebook or other forums (although we do have a Facebook page).

For digital journals and magazines there are (obviously) no costs and so the EJournal remains a free subscription. There is no need for a print edition and, if the world continues to turn on its axis, the time is coming when all magazines will be just online. Since opening up the subscriber list to the general public last year, there has also been a small number take up the journal from this source.

This year we published *One God, the Father*. This, along with our previous publication, *Reasons*, has continued to sell well with royalties being put into the EJournal Book Fund. God-willing, a new book, *More Reasons*, will be published early next year. Again, the EJournal seeks to sponsor multi-author volumes with more advanced treatments of topics, books that do not fall within the publishing guidelines of existing established Christadelphian publishers.

New **2013 Annual** available from [www.lulu.com/willowpublications](http://www.lulu.com/willowpublications) 335 pages, £9.50 GBP or local equivalent.

**Articles**

**Song of Songs (Part 2)**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

The previous article concluded that language alone cannot establish the date of a particular book – any linguistic evidence needs to be supported by intertextual and socio-historical evidence. Our hypothesis is that Song belongs to the Hezekiah period and this is supported by linguistics, geography, socio-historic context and intertextuality.

**Geography**

The most intriguing geographical mention in Song is the city of Tirzah particularly because she is transposed with Jerusalem. G. L. Archer writes,

The author mentions quite indiscriminately localities to be found in both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms: Engedi, Hermon, Carmel, Lebanon, Heshbon, and Jerusalem. These are spoken of as if they all belonged to the same political realm. Note that Tirzah is mentioned as a city of particular glory and beauty, and that too in the same breath with Jerusalem itself (6:4). If this had been written after the time when Tirzah was chosen as the earliest capital of the Northern Kingdom in rejection of the authority of the dynasty of David, it is scarcely conceivable that it would have been referred to in such favorable terms. On the other hand, it is highly significant that Samaria, the city founded by Omri sometime between 885 and 874, is never mentioned in the Song of Solomon.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The mention of Tirzah (“she is pleasant or fair”) implies that Song was written sometime before 874 when Omri moved the capital to Samaria (1 Kgs 16:23, 24). However, after Omri, Tirzah remained an important provincial city and under Jeroboam II the city enjoyed **renewed prosperity**[[2]](#footnote-2) until the time of the Assyrian conquest in 722 BCE when Tirzah, along with other Northern Kingdom cities like Shechem and Samaria, was destroyed.

The northern Israelite king Jeroboam II (ca.785-745) was a contemporary of the Judean king Uzziah (Azariah) and this takes us into the period of co-regencies from Uzziah to Hezekiah and corresponding prophets (particularly Isaiah in the south and Amos, Jonah and Hosea in the north). Jeroboam II captured Damascus and Hamath and restored to Israel the country from the entrance of Hamath to the Dead Sea. The recovered territory included all of Transjordan as far south as the river Arnon (the border of Moab) capturing important trade routes. Some think Moab itself may be included in this general description. Friendly relations with the Phoenicians, who were the greatest merchants and seafaring people of those days, brought rare things of beauty and luxury into Israel.

Apart from Engedi and Jerusalem all the localities in Song are in the north.[[3]](#footnote-3) Our proposal is that because Hezekiah’s goal was to re-establish centralised worship in Jerusalem, Song idealizes pre-apostate Solomon who presided over a theocratic hegemony. The points in support of this are,

(1) Solomon was called Jedidiah (beloved of Yahweh)[[4]](#footnote-4) by the prophet Nathan (2 Sam 12:25) and this resonates with the “beloved” (*DôD*) of Song (“David” in 4:4) which is found in the same form in Hos 3:5 and Amos 6:5 (also translated as “David”), both northern prophets being contemporary with Hezekiah’s reign.

(2) The Shulamite (“the peaceful”) mentioned in Song (cf. 6:13) is most likely a feminized form of Solomon (“peace”).[[5]](#footnote-5) Both the male and female participants in our poetic drama are based on the word for “peace” (cf. “shalom”) an appropriate sentiment in the troubled times of Assyrian aggression.

Indeed *it was* for *my own* peace *that* I had great bitterness; but you have lovingly *delivered* my soul from the pit of corruption, for you have cast all my sins behind your back. (Isa 38:17)

But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace *was* upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. (Isa 53:5).

Peace and security *were found* (past tense, Song 8:10) in Jerusalem (‘Possession of Peace’) during the Assyrian onslaught. This peace then continued:

So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the Lord which you have spoken *is* good!” For he said, “At least there will be peace and truth in my days.” (Isa 39:7)

Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her; rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her.... Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream.... (Isa 62:10-12).

The ‘many waters’ and the ‘floods’ that cannot drown love (Song 8:7) is an allusion to Isaiah’s prophecy of the Assyrian invasion as overflowing waters (Isa 8:7).

(3) The favourable mention of Tirzah (and the fact that Samaria is ignored) can be accounted for by the focus of Hezekiah’s ‘courtship’ and the poetic-historical resonance of Tirzah (“beautiful or fair”). Song 8 remembers the courting of Tirzah as a figure of **the prospective choice of her as a northern capital** rather than Samaria – it was prospective because she is not yet *spoken for* (Song 8:8).

Tirzah was the “little sister” (cf. Song 8:8) and companion of her “big sister” Jerusalem, Tirzah was beautiful but immature in faith (no breasts) and in danger (like the daughters of Zelophehad) of *losing her inheritance* “in the day when she is spoken for”. This expression refers to the fact that Hezekiah had been and was courting her as a northern capital. The danger she faced was Sennacherib’s army. The question Jerusalem asks is “What shall we do for our sister?” The answer is given in v.9 and depends on how she fares,

If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar. (Song 8:9)

Jerusalem then expresses her confidence,

 I [Jerusalem] *am* a wall, and my breasts like towers; then I became in his eyes as one who found peace. (Song 8:10).

(4) Many from the tribe of **Manasseh** (‘causing to forget’) had earlier responded positively to Hezekiah’s overtures (2 Chron 30:1, 11) and Tirzah *was situated in the territory of Manasseh*. The city was named after one of the daughters of Zelophehad (from tribe of Manasseh) who had five daughters and therefore special arrangements were required, otherwise the inheritance and name of Zelophehad would perish because he “had no sons” (Num 27:4). This bears striking similarities to Hezekiah who nearly died without an heir, and when after his recovery he was blessed with progeny, he named his son ‘Manasseh’![[6]](#footnote-6) The naming of Manasseh supports the recapture of the north after 701.

**Socio-historic Context**

The socio-historic context for the Song of Songs is after the visit of the Babylonian envoys, Hezekiah’s marriage, and the birth of Manasseh. The link between Song and this time-period is the verb ‘desire/delight’ (#px) [*HPc*] in relation to Hezekiah’s wife and Hezekiah himself.

(1) The verb form (“desire/delight” #px) is employed *three times* in Song of Songs (2:7; 3:5; 8:4) in the refrain – “nor awake my love, till he please(#px)[desires - NIV/NIB]”*.*

(2) Hephzibah (‘my delight is in her’) is the wife of Hezekiah and mother of Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:1). The name ‘Hephzibah’ is also figuratively used to describe Jerusalem (Isa 62:4). The name is formed from the verb ‘desire/delight’ (#px) [*HPc*] with the pronominal suffix third person feminine singular, and is used as a proper name (noun), Hb'(-ycip.x, [*Hepcî-bäh*].

(3) The Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 is Hezekiah. The context of the chapter retrospectively reflects his near death experience and the Assyrian invasion. Hezekiah’s death (without an heir) and the capture of Jerusalem would have effectively annulled the Davidic covenant. In this context, D. Talley observes an interesting antonymic use of *HPc* (desire):

However, Isa 53:10 uses the verb *HPc* paradoxically. The sufferings of the servant are graphically described (53:1-9). Strangely, “It was the Lord’s will (*HPc*, lit., his desire) to crush him” (v.10). The paradox is that it is the Lord who crushes the innocent servant, the one for whom he should have acted favourably (i.e., rescued). Even more striking is the play on words within the verse. After the Lord crushes with pleasure (*HPc*) this innocent one, the pleasure (*HëPec*) of the Lord prospers in his (the one who is crushed) hand. An act apparently unjust becomes in the end a delight for the one treated unjustly.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Covenant Love**

Song of Songs is read during the Passover week. In Jewish tradition Passover marks the time when God’s ‘romance’ with the Jewish people officially began; the sages chose this song to celebrate God’s love for his people.

And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover unto the LORD God of Israel. (2 Chron 30:1)

The Passover feast had been largely neglected until Hezekiah’s reformation and his ‘courtship’ of the northern tribes. Although the Passover had to be rescheduled to the following month it proved enormously successful (2 Chron 30:26) and the holiday was in fact extended a further seven days. It seems that Passover celebration became a regular occurrence during his reign, necessitating a yearly pilgrimage from northern Israel to Jerusalem. The final Assyrian onslaught against Jerusalem occurred during the Passover, when the city would have swelled with pilgrims (and refugees). The language of Isaiah certainly suggests Passover deliverance[[8]](#footnote-8) and Song commences with ‘Passover language’ -

Draw (%vm) me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers (rd,x,): we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember (rk;z") thy love more than wine: the upright love thee. (Song 1:4)

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw (%vm) out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover. (Exod 12:21)

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; (a day of remembrance: !ArK'zI cf. rk;z) and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. (Exod 12:14)

Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of *our* soul *is* to thy name, and to the remembrance (rk,zE) of thee”. (Isa 26:8)

Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, (rd,x,) and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. (Isa 26:20)

It is quite clear then that intertextual links exist between the first Passover in Exodus, the opening verses of Songs and the Book of Isaiah,[[9]](#footnote-9),[[10]](#footnote-10) the common thread being the re-inauguration of Passover to commemorate Yahweh’s deliverance of his people – a theme close to Hezekiah’s heart in the light of Assyrian aggression. Passover reminded the people of Yahweh’s covenant love and the King, as Yahweh’s representative, attempted to court the nation and bring them back into the protective embrace of a loving relationship.

**Military Language**

It is unusual for a love poem to contain so many military metaphors: “terrible as an army with banners (6:4, 10)…chariots (1:9; 6:12)…the tower of David builded for an armoury…a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men, valiant men, the valiant of Israel (4:4)…They all hold swords, *being* expert in war: every man *hath* his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night” (3:8).[[11]](#footnote-11)

Another love song, Psalm 45, which has “northern” characteristics, also employs military imagery: “Gird thy sword upon *thy* thigh (45:3)....Thine arrows *are* sharp (45:5)”. C. Schroeder highlights the mixing of military and marital language in Psalm 45[[12]](#footnote-12) and C. Meyers also recognizes the military imagery throughout the Psalm as applied to a woman and concludes,

Its use in the Song in reference to the woman constitutes an unexpected reversal of conventional imagery or of stereotypical gender association.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Of course, the martial overtones are readily explained by Assyrian war mongering and the subsequent defeat of Assyria outside the walls of Jerusalem. After this great victory, King Hezekiah (as Yahweh’s agent), “sits on the throne of God” and as the divine proxy accepts the acclaim, tribute and praise due to Yahweh as he weds his bride.

If Song of Songs and Psalm 45 (Song of Loves) are linked, then Hephzibah is perhaps of Phoenician ancestry[[14]](#footnote-14) (Ps 45:12, a Tyrian Princess), as the northern Kingdom inter-married with Phoenician royalty. The reference in the Psalm to “forget also thine own people” (45:10) is a play on the meaning of Manasseh, possibly indicating the foreign origins of Hezekiah’s wife.[[15]](#footnote-15) If Hephzibah is indeed a northern Israelite Princess with Phoenician ancestry, then the marriage allegory evokes Yahweh bringing both Israel and the gentiles into the Davidic ‘Love Covenant’.

**Intertextuality**

R. Dargie recognizes parallels between Isaiah 5 (the parable of the vineyard) and Songs of Songs.[[16]](#footnote-16) This is what we would expect if Songs belonged to the Hezekiah/Isaiah period, indeed a number of contrasts and parallels can be recognized:

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| **Song 8** | **Isaiah (Hezekiah)** |
| [1] O that thou wert as my brother.....yea, I should not be despised. | **Contrast:** He was despised and we esteemed him not (Isa 53:3) |
| [2] I would lead thee, *and* bring thee into my mother’s house  | As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. (Isa 66:13) |
| [3] His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.  | For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. (Isa 41:13 cf.42:6) |
| [4] I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please. | **Contrast:** It pleased the Lord to crush him.... the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand (Isa 53:10) |
| [6] Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death.... | Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.....(Isa 38:1)... I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city. (Isa 38:5-6) |
| [7] Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it....... | Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria.... (Isa 8:7) |

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| **Song 8** | **Isaiah (Hezekiah)** |
| [11] Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver. [12] My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred. | My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill (Isa 5:1)And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall even be for briers and thorns. (Isa 7:23) |
| [13] Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear *it*. | **Contrast:** ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen (Isa 1:29) |
| [14] Make haste, my beloved.... | Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard (Isa 5:1) |

 **Sister-Wife**

Song of Songs employs the sister-wife motif that is found in the patriarchal narratives. The sister-wife narratives in Genesis typify the outworking of covenant love at different stages of the nation’s history. Although allusions to all three sister-wife (A, B, C) narratives[[17]](#footnote-17) are interwoven throughout the Song of Songs, the allusions to (C) are particularly relevant, for Isaac, similar to Hezekiah, functions as a Messianic type.Isaac’s open display of affection towards his wife is a metaphor for ‘covenant love in action’ and is paradigmatic for Yahweh’s love for Israel expressed through his Messiah.

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| **Song** | **Sister-wife (Genesis 26)** |
| [8:1] O that thou wert as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother! | She is my sister (26:7) |
| [3:4] I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother’s house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me. | Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. (24:67) |

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| **Song** | **Sister-wife (Genesis 26)** |
| [4:1] Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; | Because she (Rebekah) was fair to look upon (26:7) |
| [2:9] He looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice | Contrast: Abimelech …looked out at a window, and saw…(26:8) |
| [4:9] Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse | …. and he (Isaac) said, She *is* my sister (26:7)… Isaac was sporting (fondling) with Rebekah his wife (26:8) |
| [4:12] A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. | All Abraham’s wells blocked but unsealed by Isaac (26:15-18) |

Song of Songs echoes account (A) with reference to Solomon’s vineyard (8:11) at Baal-hamon (Husband of a multitude; cf. Abraham; father of a multitude). The thousand pieces of silver (8:12) is equivalent to the restitution paid to Abraham (Gen 20:6). Moreover, Abraham and the nation that he fathered came out of Egypt with “great substance (vWkr>)” (Gen 15:14; cf.12:16).

And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour.... for God had given him substance (vWkr>) very much. (2 Chron 32:27-29).

However, Hezekiah was warned that his substance would be acquired by Babylon (Isa 39:1-8) – but covenant love could not be drowned by worldly aggression (Assyria) and neither could it be valued in worldly substance because although both would vanish love would remain:

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if *a* man would give all the substance (!Ah) of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned. (Song 8:7)

**Conclusion**

Song of Songs and Psalm 45 were made to be performed, probably at the wedding of Hezekiah and northern idiosyncrasies in these and other books from the period can be explained by the influx of northern refugees, by cultural exchange, and by Hezekiah’s reformation. This period saw a flowering of literary art with a large portion of the Bible either written or edited/arranged by “Hezekiah’s men” (cf. Prov 25:1) and it is highly likely that the small scribal class was highly in demand and northern scribes open to recruitment.

Under the reading offered here, Song of Songs is placed in the context of Hezekiah’s reign. The Shepherd is Hezekiah and the Shulamite is the faithful element in the northern kingdom. Hezekiah’s wooing campaign is the reformation early in his reign and the ‘betrothal’ is the great Passover that he organised. The Shepherd’s disappearance coincides with Hezekiah’s illness and the Assyrian invasion, which causes the maiden’s dreams and nightmares. The story concludes with ‘Solomon’ (Hezekiah) coming to claim his bride – no longer depicted as a shepherd but as a victorious and splendid King.

It was Hezekiah’s desire to reinvigorate worship and centralise the cult in Jerusalem and the ‘beloved’ is described in high priestly terms (cf. 5:10-16), the “mountains of spices” (8:14) referring to the sacred perfumed priestly anointing oil (cf. Psalm 133) that would bring unity to the “mountains of division” (2:17). The northern kingdom had “put of my coat” (priestly garment) and many had ceased worshiping Yahweh…“how shall I put it on?” (5:3). But Yahweh had sent them a Messiah in the form of the Suffering Servant and this servant would not die childless (without an heir):

Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations... (Ps 45:16-17)

No longer would they need to look backwards to the ‘fathers’ (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) to see the outworking of ‘covenant love’, for Yahweh would not annul the Davidic covenant but would provide Hezekiah (and the nation) with offspring:

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. (Isa 53:10)

**The Curse on the Woman – ‘multiplying I will multiply’**

**Rachel Madden**

**Introduction**

Adam and Eve were given a clear command that they disobeyed. They had been told that the punishment for disobedience was death. In NT comment on the events in the Garden of Eden we have confirmed that by one man came death and death by sin. (Rom 5:12) In addition to this punishment, each of the three characters in the narrative are the subject of a specific ruling. The serpent is cursed to go on its belly, to eat dust and to have enmity with the woman’s seed (Gen 3:14-15). The man is told he would have difficulty in growing and harvesting food (Gen 3:17-19). The consequence for the woman’s sin was pain in childbirth, along with rulership by her husband.

The interpretation of the second clause of the pronouncement for the woman’s is not obvious. It has commonly been supposed that by this ruling God institutes the patriarchal configuration of human societies. Some even interpret these words as being directive so that wives are obliged to be “ruled” by their husbands. In this essay I will explore the interpretation of the pronouncement on the woman and argue that this clause is not directive.

**Not Universal**

Are the words to the woman a ‘curse’ for all time for all women or only a punishment for Eve? Is the fact that women can relate to the words spoken to Eve indication that it is a ‘punishment’ inherited by them from Eve? It is important to separate Eve’s punishment from the nature we inherit from her. This is a subtle difference, but a difference with important ramifications. To view Eve’s punishment as **causative** for all the pain and sorrow of childbirth that women experience today is to take the inherited nature we share beyond the application the NT authors give it in places like Romans.

This universal application is not traditionally applied to any other similar pronouncements. The curse on Cain we interpret as a simple curse on Cain. The curses on the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy we read as curses on a nation. We apply them to ourselves by acknowledging that these curses show a correlation between good living and blessing, and forsaking God and cursing, yet we do not believe we inherit them. What justification do we have for believing we inherit the words spoken to Eve?

The word curse is used in relation to the serpent and the ground that Adam would till. The curse on the ground is reinforced in passages relating to the birth of Noah (Gen 5:29) and after the flood where God promises he would never again curse the ground. (Gen 8:21). The word ‘curse’ is not directed to the woman or Adam. Some have suggested that since the words to the woman and Adam follow on from the serpent’s curse, this is implied. The English understanding of the word ‘curse’ is a prophetic punishment which is unavoidable. To apply this to the words spoken to the woman does not permit an interpretation which sees this as a **non-directive** consequence of action rather than a universal punishment for all time. Genesis 1:28 gave the directive to ‘multiply and fill the earth’ and this command is not superseded by the pronouncements to the three parties. The Gen 1:28 passage is a directive, but the ‘curse’ of Gen 3:16 takes the form of a plain statement of consequence. ‘Because you have done this’ are the words God uses to the man and the serpent.[[18]](#footnote-18) The command to fill the earth and populate was a positive one, but their sin would make the whole experience difficult. The pronouncements explain the effect of sin on them and their subsequent knowledge of good and evil. Previously they understood ‘good.’ Now they would understand ‘evil’.

**‘Crime’ and Punishment**

It has been suggested that Eve’s punishment was because she usurped her husband’s authority when taking the fruit, but contextually none of the other pronouncements relate to the sin of the individual. The serpent’s curse of going on his belly has little to do with his lie, and Adam’s sin of difficulty in work does not correlate at all with his sin. Eve was as well versed in the commandment as Adam, even though she diminishes it and turns a certainty (dying you shall die) to a contingency (lest you die). She did not need to confer with her husband about the details before eating the fruit. Eve’s sin was as simple as Adam’s: disobedience to a command of God. The nature of her failing was different to her husband’s in that she was deceived, yet this weakness was not the basis for her punishment, as some have suggested.

In the NT, much is made of the process of Eve’s temptation that involved her being deceived (1 Tim 2:14). She is also mentioned as being beguiled by the serpent’s cunning in 2 Cor 11:3. The order of creation is used in 1 Corinthians 11 and in 1 Timothy 2 to prove that woman is subordinate to man, but nowhere is she condemned for usurping her husband’s authority in the garden. Some believe this is implied by the nature of her punishment, but this is not matched by the words to either the man or the serpent, in whose punishments no corresponding link between the nature of their sin and the subject of their punishment can be found. It is not that the man or woman is not linked to their punishment; rather that their sin is not linked to the punishment. The nature of their sin does not form the basis of the subject of their punishment. [[19]](#footnote-19)

The NIV, ESV, NASB and RSV all display Gen 3:14-19 as poetry, and the NIV commentary on Genesis identifies it as such.

…the narrative style of the Hebrew authors uses poetry-like conventions to which modern authors must be sensitive. It is historical narrative, but it does not share the interests of modern historians. Genesis is written almost entirely in prose, not poetry. But at times that prose is so highly structured that it takes on some of the characteristics of Hebrew poetry. Herder called it ‘narrative poetic.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Some of the descriptions in the pronouncements are clearly poetic. The idea of crushing foes is used in other parts of the Bible such as “with God we shall do valiantly, with God we will tread down our foes” (Ps 44:5). Based on this assessment, we should not be surprised to find various features of Hebrew poetry employed.

Broadly, in each of the punishments a statement is made followed by an explanatory statement. ‘On your belly you shall go (and dust you shall eat all the days of your life)’. In the case of the woman this forms the punishment.

‘multiplying I will multiply your pain and childbirth

(in pain you shall bring forth children).

Your desire shall be to your husband

(yet he shall rule over you).

More specifically, we have the use of a homogene in the idea of multiplying pain and childbirth. This is where a verb and its participle are used in combination in order to add an intensity or superlative quality. It can be used to add strong and emphatic affirmation as it does in the following passages of Genesis:

Gen 2:16 ‘**eating thou shalt eat’**. The conjugated verb is strengthened and emphasized by the infinitive preceding it. This infinitive Eve omitted in Gen 3:2 and thus ‘diminished’ from the word of God.

Gen 2:17 ‘**dying thou shalt die’** Eve alters the Word of God by saying ‘lest ye die’. Thus she changes a certainty into a contingency.

Gen 3:16 ‘unto the woman he said, **multiplying, I will multiply** thy sorrow’

And in a strong negation in Genesis 3:

Gen 3:4 ‘ye shall not surely die (Heb: **dying thou shalt not die**)

Eve’s punishment directly related to the command of Gen 1.28 to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Her desire to know good and evil had resulted in a different outcome than she had supposed. Instead of the idyllic multiplying of Gen 1:28, she would have ‘multiple multiplied’ sorrow.

The phrase ‘pain in childbearing’ is usually seen as a hendiadys, that is, two nouns in which identical ideas are expressed (e.g. nice and warm). The description takes the form of parallelism – one arm pronouncing the sentence, the other spelling it out. Pain in childbirth in subsequent Bible passages is always synonymous with the most extreme and inescapable pain that the human vocabulary can describe, and thus is a fitting description of the most extreme aspect of sorrow relating to a woman’s life. Despite the fact the word is translated ‘childbearing’ it is actually the word for ‘conception’ but considering pain does not accompany conception the word is used to represent the whole process of having children.

**Cultural Relevance**

We make a mistake if we read the text to find answers to the cultural issues around us. The pronouncement is not a treatise on the role of woman. It is a comment on the pain and anguish that would form the part of the lives of sinners. Eve’s pronouncement about the effects on her relationship with her husband and childbearing indicates nothing more than that this was the sphere in which she would be working. In this way it forms a subtle confirmation of her role as helper and rejuvenator of the empty earth through childbearing, just as Adam’s curse relates to the areas of life in which he would be involved.

Some suggest the ‘fall’ describes a change in state from the previous relationship of Adam and Eve. They argue that woman was changed from helper (Gen 2:18) to a subordinate position where her husband would now rule her. Alternatively, others suggest the ‘fall’ indicates that rulership by husbands is not the intention as it takes the form of a punishment, and it is our duty to reverse it today. Both of these ideas have an element of truth. The first idea suggests woman became subordinate at this point. To say that she became subordinate as a result of her failing is to deny passages relating to the purpose of her creation. She was created second and as a helper for Adam. There is no denying this fact, which is touched upon in the NT. This supports a hierarchical view which is the theme of NT passages such as 1 Corinthians 11. The pronouncement references subordination not as a new idea, but to indicate that oppressiveness in that subordination would now be a feature of her life - subordination is presupposed.

It can be damaging to view ‘he shall rule over you’ as a directive instead of a statement of consequence for Eve’s action. The suggestion that rulership is not the ideal also has an element of truth, because oppressive rulership and dictatorship is not the leadership which Christ espoused. The comment to Eve was consequential, that is, a consequence of her failing. There is no denying that it happened, and does happen. This does not mean it should happen, but the fact that it does shows that rulership by husbands can become oppressive. To deny leadership roles for men because of oppressive leadership is to annul the concept of the order of creation. Dysfunction in practice does not make the principle wrong. The very point the angel is making is that dysfunction in practice would now occur. This is the sense of the introduction of ‘evil’.

The passage in (Gen 2:18) and subsequent conversation with the woman in (Gen 3:16) is sometimes seen as a ‘before’ and ‘after’ scenario in relation to the occupation of Eve. In reality it is a different perspective on the same person who stands in the same place. Prior to her sin, Eve had unmitigated pleasure in her role as wife, now this pleasure would be checked. Instead of perfection and fulfilment, she would find pain, burden, and oppressiveness in her subordination as part and parcel of the moral course she had chosen. Her action had changed her irrevocably and this would cross into the most intimate parts of her life and involve her relationship with her husband and the birth of her children. The punishment relates strongly to the labour and effort involved in her activities, a point also emphasised to Adam. The punishment is not a comment on the role she occupied, just as it is not a comment on Adam’s. The role she occupied is implied rather than explicit. It is not a question of whether Eve ‘should’ or ‘should not’ be a helper or childbearer. Eve IS a helper and childbearer. Her failing would make this occupation more difficult. It’s not a question of whether Adam ‘should’ or ‘should not’ rule her. Adam will rule her.

Rulership is seen negatively in today’s world, almost implying oppression just by using the term, but biblically, right rulership is a positive construct. Passages like Psalm 72 look forward to the right rulership of Christ in the kingdom, his breaking in pieces the oppressor, his judgment with justice, his defence of the poor and needy, his deliverance of the children of the needy. Yet Eve’s pronouncement is negative, so in this instance the rulership by her husband must be seen to be in some way oppressive.

**‘desire to thy husband’**.

The word ‘desire’ is Hebrew ‘tsuqah’ and only used three times in the OT, Gen 3:16, 4:7; and Song 7:10.

Scholars are divided over its interpretation. Feminist interpretations see it either as exposing patriarchy which they believe God tolerated rather than intended and thereby attempt to rehabilitate the woman. A. J. Bledstein interprets ‘he shall rule over you’ as ‘he can rule over you’.[[21]](#footnote-21) J. Galambush suggests that the punishments reflect origins, the man from the ground and the woman from the man.[[22]](#footnote-22) The difficulty with feminist interpretations become apparent. If both men and women have the same function at creation, and are equally responsible for any sin then why is the putative subordination the punishment for the woman? Invariably feminist interpretations of ‘desire’ are purely sexual, although they are quick to complain about Adam’s objectifying Eve in Gen 2:23 where he uses ‘this’ three times.[[23]](#footnote-23)

Others have taken the context of the other occurrences of the word to determine the meaning of ‘desire’. S. T. Foh suggests the desire is something that is to be contended over as a wife attempts to dominate a husband who has to fight for leadership just as sin ‘desired’ to dominate Cain. It is not surprising that her viewpoint has devotees, with the NET Bible mentioning it in their notes. An interpretation that favours a battle between the sexes seems a logical one in the climate of the culture in which we find ourselves.[[24]](#footnote-24) M. F. Stitzinger refutes this idea on the basis that this makes assumptions about the nature of the transgression which does not see Eve forcing her husband to eat the fruit or Adam fighting to take the lead in the transgression. It also does not work consistently with the other occurrence of the word because Song 7:10 cannot allow an interpretation of forced desire.[[25]](#footnote-25) Some have suggested the desire is sexual, a fact K. C. Bushnell refutes, although earliest English translations gave this sense in translating with “thy lust shall pertayne to thy husband”.[[26]](#footnote-26)

J. Skinner sees it as “the desire that makes her the willing slave of man”,[[27]](#footnote-27) G. Andrews the “immense, clinging, psychological dependence on man.”[[28]](#footnote-28) C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch see desire as a “morbid yearning”[[29]](#footnote-29) and C. J. Vos, not willing to limit the scope of ‘desire’ to sexual appetite, adds the woman’s desire for the man’s protection.[[30]](#footnote-30) J. Calvin suggests the woman will desire only what the husband desires and that she will have no command over herself.[[31]](#footnote-31) The woman’s desires are wholly subservient to her husband’s as a result of God’s judgment is a suggestion that finds credibility with U. Cassuto and E. J. Young.[[32]](#footnote-32)

Finally, we may note Stitzinger’s suggestion that ‘desire’ is best translated with reference to the traditional root,

It refers to the ‘woman’s longing or yearning that she may have about the affairs of life’….the phrase ‘your desire is to your husband’, is best regarded as a statement of fact, reminding the first woman that the subordinate principle still remains in effect. However, it is not a pronouncement that all women will submit all their desires to their husbands. Their sin nature precludes that they will do this……..The statement regarding the woman’s desire is not a curse in and of itself, but it becomes one when it is treated in relation to the man’s sinful rule.[[33]](#footnote-33)

The second part of the pronouncement on Eve relates to her treatment by her husband. The subject of this section is her husband: she will desire her husband, but he will rule over her. Eve’s punishment does not focus on the morality of the husband but the experience of the woman. Later, the NT addresses the morality of leadership in its comments about Christian marriages. Since the NT is consistently reminding husbands to be gentle in their leadership, to use Christ as a model and avoid being ‘harsh’ with their wives, it seems that some abuse of leadership by husbands has been a problem for all sinners inheriting human nature.

In its most basic understanding, the pronouncements on the man and woman indicate that their duty to fill the earth and subdue it would be more difficult. Their subsequent expulsion from the Garden have led some to see the blessings of Abraham as the answer to Genesis 3:14-19.

The blessing of Abraham promised seed, land, and blessing. The promise of seed overcomes the cursed difficulty of childbearing and the loss of harmony between the man and the woman. The promise of land hints at a place where God will once again dwell with his people. The promise of blessing heralds the triumph of the seed of the woman over the seed of the serpent. The blessing is not only for Israel, but for all the families of the earth. These promises fed the hopes, the eschatological hopes, of those who followed in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham, those who considered themselves seed of the woman. The sustenance of these hopes seems to have been the reason the accounts were recorded and passed down, as those who believed God’s promises held to the faith that he would make good on his word.’[[34]](#footnote-34)

Seen in this way, we see that the ideas of promised seed after pain, promised land after expulsion, and promised blessing after ‘cursing’ is the positive message of the Abrahamic promise.

**Conclusion**

The words to Eve have an incidental application to women for all time in that they also experience similar difficulties as sharing part of Eve’s nature. However, women today should not view it as a directive; women are under no more obligation to be ‘ruled’ by their husband than they are to refuse pain medication in labour.

The promise women are invited to share in is Abrahamic, which expands on the seed nature of the comments to the serpent. ‘The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and He adds no sorrow to it,’ says Proverbs 10:33. The word ‘sorrow’ here is the same as the word used in Genesis 3:16 and Genesis 3:17. God’s blessing is pure and untarnished, it does not bring physical pain or emotional sorrow. The sorrow of a woman in childbirth is turned to joy, because when a child is born a mother forgets her pain and has joy. This theme is begun by the Abraham and Sarah story, and a picture Jesus shares with his disciples in the last supper. We experience the same kind of sorrow at the absence of our Lord.

‘So you also have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.’ (John 16:21)

**The Cessation of the Spirit**

**A. Perry**

**Introduction**

The Jewish scriptures are called ‘the Old Testament’ by Christians because they believe that other books are also ‘scripture’—viz., the New Testament. The implicit claim of the Christian church of the second century CE was that there had been a resurgence of prophecy within a sect of Judaism (their sect—the first Christians). This claim stands in contrast to the rabbinical view of the time that prophecy had ceased with the canonical prophets.

**Rabbinical View**

The Rabbis of the second century CE (who are called ‘the Tannaim’) give the opinion that prophecy ceased either upon the destruction of the First Temple (586 BCE) or after the end of the canonical prophets, although some rabbinical texts admit some *ad hoc* continuation of prophecy.

i) Texts which indicate the cessation of prophecy upon the destruction of the First Temple include *Mekilta Pisha* 1.4.6. In this text, Rabbi Simon ben Azzai (a disciple of Akiba, (2c. CE)) reproduces a comment of Baruch, Jeremiah’s disciple, “Joshua served Moses, then the Holy Spirit rested on him; Elisha served Elijah, then the Holy Spirit came to rest on him. But as for me, why have I been treated differently from all of the other disciples of the prophets”? The reply to Baruch is, “Baruch b. Neriah, if there is no vineyard, what need for a fence? If there is no flock, what need for a shepherd?” and, “You find therefore that the prophets prophesy only on account of the merit of Israel”. The point here is that the phenomenon of prophecy is linked to **the continued existence of Israel** as a nation state, and in Baruch’s time this was coming to an end.

The same point of view is put forward in *Mekilta Pisha* 1.3 which is an extended presentation about how God had restrictively chosen, first the land, then Jerusalem, and finally the temple for the Divine Presence. Such a selection created a problem of how to explain the incidence of prophecy outside the land, which the text then goes on to address.[[35]](#footnote-35) More particularly, it created the problem of how to explain the inspiration of the prophets of the restoration (i.e. the post-exilic prophets), which the text does not address, the fact of which led the Rabbis to assert more generally that prophecy ceased after the death of the restoration prophets.

ii) Texts which indicate the cessation of prophecy after the canonical prophets are in the majority, the main one of which is the anonymous *Tosefta Sotah* 13.3, “When the later prophets died, that is, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, then the Holy Spirit came to an end in Israel. But even so, they made them hear [Heavenly Messages] through an echo”.[[36]](#footnote-36) This opinion has a precursor in 1 Macc 9:27, “So was there a great affliction in Israel, the like whereof was not since the time (avfV h-j h`me,raj) that a prophet was not seen among them”.[[37]](#footnote-37) N. N. Glatzer, a Jewish scholar, notes[[38]](#footnote-38) that this view is also reflected in the process of the canonization of the prophetic books in the Maccabean period.

Nevertheless, *ad hoc* communication did continue through other means after the canonical prophets, principally through an “echo”.[[39]](#footnote-39) Such communication though was not certain. In *Genesis Rabbah* 37.7, a comment of R. Simeon ben Gamaliel (2c.) is recorded: “The ancients, because they could avail themselves of the Holy Spirit, named themselves in reference to [forthcoming] events; but we, who cannot avail ourselves of the Holy Spirit, are named after our fathers.” On the other hand, *Numbers Rabbah* 9.20 records a tale from R. Zechariah, son-in-law to R. Meir (2c.) that R. Meir anticipated an assault by a woman “by means of the Holy Spirit”.[[40]](#footnote-40) J. Neusner summarizes this evidence by saying,

In the view of rabbinic Judaism, nothing ended with the cessation of prophecy—not direct communication from heaven to earth, not prediction of the future, not divine guidance for especially favoured persons concerning the affairs of the day. Canonical prophecy ended, but the works of prophecy continued in other forms, both on heaven’s side with the Holy Spirit and later on with the echo, and on the earth’s side with the sages joining in conversation through the echo, on the one side, and through Torah learning, on the other.[[41]](#footnote-41)

The rabbinical opinions that the holy Spirit ceased upon the destruction of the First Temple, or subsequently upon the ending of the canonical prophets, are not necessarily inconsistent views, once it is recognized that the return from exile and the rebuilding the temple imply a need for the restoration of the Spirit. Accordingly, when the Rabbis assert that prophecy ended with the canonical prophets, they are recognising that the post-exilic restoration of the nation *broke down*: the Davidic monarchy was not restored, the presence of God did not return to the temple, and therefore the restoration of prophecy faded away.

**New Testament**

For our purposes, it is not the rabbinical claim of cessation that is important, but rather their recognition of the historical limit to their own canon. This is significant because it excludes deutero-canonical books from being in Jesus’ likely scriptures. After the apostolic period, the Christian church was not of one mind and did not immediately agree on what further books should be accepted alongside the Jewish scriptures, and the range of books that are put forward by one Christian individual/group/region or another included both Jewish and Christian works.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Various factors are involved in a consideration of the canonization of the NT and different hypothetical reconstructions are debated by historians who specialize in the patristic period of the church. While NT scholars debate the date and authorship of the NT books, their hypotheses are not a significant issue for history of the canon.[[43]](#footnote-43) Within the patristic period, traditional authorship of the NT books is put forward as a reason for their acceptance. Tracing the development of the canon is a matter of, (a) appraising the manuscript evidence and their grouping of texts; (b) evaluating the lists of ‘scripture’ books; and (c) assessing the use of books and comments about them by the Apostolic Fathers, the Apologists, and the Ante-Nicene Fathers. The use of the texts by the fathers of the church and by heterodox[[44]](#footnote-44) groups doesn’t show a unanimous picture of acceptance. Some books were more contested and not as widely accepted, with differences to note between the Eastern and the Western churches.

The concept of a New Testament canon of writings is **not apostolic**. Our evidence for the use of the expression ‘New Testament’ as a title for a collection of writings is from the late second century at the earliest.[[45]](#footnote-45) The question is this: did the apostles think they were creating a ‘New Testament’ body of writings or *just adding to the Jewish Scriptures*? If the apostles and their companions thought that they were just adding writings onto the end of Malachi, then there isn’t as such an ‘Old Testament’ body of scripture and a ‘New Testament’ body of scripture, even though there are (obviously) old and new covenants (2 Corinthians 3). The legitimacy of there being a ‘New Testament’ canon as opposed to just a larger canon of Jewish Scriptures is not a problem *unless* we read second century church history in terms of a turning away from the apostolic faith (**an apostasy**). On this latter view,[[46]](#footnote-46) the division between the testaments is actually a false (or optional) teaching of the apostate Christian churches. Instead, all the books of the ‘Bible’ hang together in the one Jewish Scriptures.

**Conclusion**

Our thesis is that the apostles and their companions knew that they were writing scripture, but the scripture they thought they were writing was Jewish—they were after all (excepting possibly Luke)—Jews. Thus, theologically, there isn’t a ‘problem of the New Testament canon’ *except* for orthodox Christianity. There is instead a problem of deciding why the four gospels, Acts and the General Epistles, the Letters of Paul and Revelation are **Jewish Scripture**. The most general reason why they are part of the Jewish Scriptures is that there was a bestowal of the Spirit in the apostolic era which came to an end.

**Interview**

**Living on the Edge**

Bro. J. Burke has a new book coming out. As a preview, we ‘interviewed’ him on why he wrote it, what’s in it, and what audience he has in mind.

**TG Q**. Why do you write books?

**J**. As tools for others to use in their own Bible study and preaching. Two other books of mine currently available are '[Sleeping In The Dust](http://www.lulu.com/shop/jonathan-burke/sleeping-in-the-dust/paperback/product-20353459.html)', and '[Rightly Dividing The Word](http://www.lulu.com/shop/jonathan-burke/rightly-dividing-the-word/paperback/product-20353489.html)'.

**TG Q**. What is your latest book? Why that title?

**J**. The title of my latest book, 'Living On the Edge: challenges to faith', reflects the most serious challenge facing our community. Informal surveys report many Christadelphians feel on the edge of abandoning their belief in God. In Australia there is an openly recognized problem of Christadelphians between 18 and 35 losing their faith and becoming atheists.

**TG Q**. In a sentence or two, what is this book about?

**J**. Upholding and defending our beliefs and values, and proving they are relevant to the modern world, is very difficult without the kind of evidence evidence which non-religious people will find convincing. This book aims to provide that evidence.

**TG Q**. Why did you write this particular book?

**J**. Because so many people kept asking me to. Every week I receive emails from people asking for help addressing the issues covered in this book, and putting all my research into one resource will clearly help a lot of people. I've already received pre-orders for 30 copies of the book.

**TG Q**. How did you go about writing it?

**J**. Since 2007 I've been writing articles regularly on the subjects covered in this book, and posting them on a couple of blogs I own, as well as on Christadelphian email lists. The responses have been very encouraging. In 2009 I decided to write a book which would develop those articles further, and incorporate additional research and writings I have produced as a result of my own personal Bible study and preaching.

**TG Q**. What are the chapters in it called and in a sentence or two what are they about?

**J**. The main section headings are 'Living on the edge of certainty', addressing doubts about our beliefs, 'Living on the edge of credibility', addressing the challenge of defending our beliefs and preaching to other religious people and atheists, and 'Living on the edge of society', addressing the challenge of belonging to a tiny Christian community with beliefs and values typically rejected by modern society.

**TG Q**. How long is the book?

**J**. It's 600 pages long in standard US trade paperback format (6x9 inches), including a 100 page bibliography.

**TG Q**. Who is it aimed at?

**J**. Anyone interested in evidence supporting belief in God, faith in the Bible, and trust in the gospel. It's especially aimed at anyone losing their faith, or finding it hard to present and defend their faith credibly to non-Christadelphians (religious or not). Although written mainly for our community, I have included an introduction for non-Christadelphian readers. I hope the book will help introduce them to our community and our understanding of the gospel (which some of them may even share).

**TG Q**. Will any of it be controversial?

**J**. The book upholds the views of the earliest Christadelphian commentators on issues such as the relationship of Science and Scripture, the age of the universe and the earth, whether the flood was local or global, and the authorship of various books of the Bible. That will be controversial for those who disagree with the pioneers, or who are unaware of views held by our earliest expositors. However, I aim to minimize controversy. For example, since evolution is a highly divisive issue in our community the book does not address it at all.

**TG Q**. How are you publishing it? How much is it? Where do people get it?

**J**. It will be printed locally in Taiwan, and posted internationally; see <http://facebook.com/LOTE.book> for additional details. The price will be US$15 per hardcopy (a free eBook version is included with every hardcopy), and it will be launched on a crowd sourced funding site (<http://fuudai.com/>).

**TG Q**. What is crowd-sourcing and why did you choose that route?

**J**. Crowd sourced funding involves presenting a project with a budget to the public, and inviting people to pledge funds for the products or services the project offers. Fundraising takes place over a limited time (30 days is typical), at the end of which the project may or may not have raised enough money to cover its budget. No one is charged any money if the project fails to raise its budget. I chose this route since I do not have a publisher for this book, which means I need to pay for the printing myself up front. Crowd sourced funding is a safe way to see if I can raise the capital for an initial minimum print run of 500 copies.

**Columnists**



**Intertextuality**

**R. Dargie**

# Why Did John Write His Gospel?

**Introduction**

The unique style and content of John’s Gospel has generated a huge body of scholarly comment and opinion. There are innumerable commentaries and articles researching issues of language, authorship, date, and much more besides. Many eminent scholars have been engaged in the enterprise of answering the multitude of questions raised by the existence of John’s Gospel.

This article however, will not look at the ‘who, when, or where’ but address the singular question of ‘why’. Why did John write his Gospel? The early Christians were seemingly well served with three excellent synoptic gospels covering the many incidents in the life of Jesus.[[47]](#footnote-47) So why did the Apostle John feel the need to add one more?

This article will answer this question.

**Some Basics**

We start with some necessary basic statements of our position.

* John 21:20-25 plus other internal evidences supports the view that the Author is John the Apostle.[[48]](#footnote-48)
* We tend to an early date of writing (between 50-70 CE)[[49]](#footnote-49) on the basis that (1) the Gospel contains passages characteristic of an eyewitness; and (2) the Gospel is silent on the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.
* We also rely on the evident similarity of concept and idiom between the Gospel and certain of the Dead Sea Scrolls, such as the Essene Scroll but particularly the Rule of the Community.[[50]](#footnote-50)

So, we will review the Gospel (in summary) to see if we can define John’s purpose in writing. We take the view that we can determine the question as to why John wrote his Gospel without the need to look into the Greek text.

**Overview**

Gospel analysts have long identified that John’s record is almost unique from the other three Synoptic Gospels. Indeed, it is reckoned that the Synoptic Gospels share only a 10% factor of commonality with John’s record.[[51]](#footnote-51)

This fact alone should alert us to the view that whatever John’s purpose was, it wasn’t to provide another ‘synoptic’ account on the life of Jesus. It seems John was more interested in making an impact on his readers with respect to certain key features of Jesus’ life (written from an alternative viewpoint of course), rather than producing a holistic account of his life i.e. a ‘synoptic’ record.

There are for example no references to the healing of demoniacs or any parables. John appears to selectively focus on only seven of Jesus’ miracles. The greatest of these was without doubt the raising of Lazarus—the supreme miracle which provided the catalyst for the plot to kill Jesus.

R. E. Brown, a scholar of the social environment where the Gospel and Letters of John emerged, has labeled chapter 1:1-12:50 “The Book of 7 Signs”, and 13:1-21:25 “The Book of Glory”.[[52]](#footnote-52) Some other commentators divide the text even further. So it would appear that John reduced the many incidents in the life of Jesus to a select few. From this selection John has produced a text that concentrates on arguably the most powerful of Jesus’ sayings and miracles. This text then forms a most potent epitome of the life of Jesus. And from the research of scholars like Brown we conclude that John purposefully organized these incidents and sub-divided them into “Books” of learning. Each of these books formed a group of teaching materials or tableaus. These teaching tableaus in their condensed form provided the reader with material of great simplicity and yet enormous persuasive power on both an emotional and intellectual level.

**The ‘Commentary’ of John**

But there is another feature unique to John that gives credence to the thesis we are forming about the purpose of this Gospel. A review of the text quickly establishes that whilst incidents are described in detail, John also adds his own ‘commentary’ on the events he writes about. It seems as though John ‘stands back’ from the incident he is describing to provide his readers with further helpful comments and insights to aid their greater understanding of the matters he is putting before them. It rather seems as though the teacher going the extra mile as it were, to assist the students understanding.

Very often these comments put the actions of Jesus into context or explain background information. Sometimes they focus on the spiritual significance of an event—again so the reader can gain a better understanding. The table below details the comments/asides made by John. For the sake of brevity we have summarized the content of this ‘commentary’ in the right hand column of the table on a case by case basis. And where John has used only a short comment we have attempted a paraphrase. You will note we have drawn attention to those comments where John directly or impliedly uses the word or concept of belief (or believing) by italicizing and using a bold script.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Verse** | **Summary of Verse / Paraphrase** |
| 1:1-18 | The Messiahship of Jesus explained and evidenced (v. 12 ***believe***) |
| 2:11 | The Disciples ***believed*** him |
| 2:21-22 | The Disciples ***believed*** |
| 2:23-35 | Many ***believed*** |
| 3:16-21 | Whosoever ***believeth*** |
| 6:64 | Those not ***believing*** |
| 6:71 | Judas the betrayer |
| 7:5 | ***Unbelief*** of Jesus’ brothers |
| 7:39-44 | Holy Spirit and ***belief*** |
| 10:6 | They understood not |
| 10:19-21 | Jesus divides the Jews |
| 11:51-53 | Caiaphas prophecy |
| 11:54-57 | Would Jesus appear? |
| 12:6 | Judas a thief |
| 12:9-11 | Lazarus and ***belief*** in Jesus |
| 12:16-19 | The world is for Jesus |
| 12:36-43 | Isaiah and men’s praise |
| 13:26-27 | Satan enters Judas |
| 13:28-29 | Explanation of Jesus’ words to Judas as he left the upper room |
| 19:35-37 | The OT scripture fulfilled |
| 20:30-31 | ***Believe*** that Jesus is Christ |
| 21:14 | John the ‘beloved’ |
| 21:24-25 | John’s testimony is true |

In the 24 comments made by John as set out in the table above, there are at least 9 comments by John which positively affirm the manifestation of belief in those who heard Jesus or witnessed the events of which he writes. In the other instances, John exhorts the requirement for belief upon his readers. The one negative view of unbelief is recorded of Jesus’ brothers.

It is significant that nearly 40% of John’s comments are to do with belief in both its positive and negative forms. We can only conclude from this that John was emphasising the importance of belief in:

* The credentials of Jesus as the ‘Word made flesh’
* That Jesus is the Son of God with full power
* That he was the Lamb of God, i.e. his sacrificial death brought salvation for man.
* That the life of Jesus and his ministry, death and resurrection were all pre-ordained in numerous O.T. prophecies which Jesus fulfilled to the letter.

**Conclusion - Why did John write his Gospel?**

The answer to the question we have posed will be in 2 parts.

**Answer Part 1**.

From the evidence above, it seems reasonable to conclude that John wrote and organised his Gospel in a very concentrated form to maximise the persuasive power of its simple but elevating message. Stripped of anything extraneous, and couched in a very personal style, where the reader is almost treated as a ‘confidant’ of the Apostle, it is a treatise written for just one purpose—to convict the conscience of the reader for the wider purpose of **cementing personal belief in the sacrifice of Jesus as being efficacious for salvation**. Indeed, the Apostle betrays this purpose in comments made in John 2:11 and 19:35-37. But pre-eminently in John 20:30-31 where he makes a statement which in our view sums up the whole purpose of the Gospel:

...And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing ye might have life through his name.

In our view John writes in the way he does not because the Synoptics are deficient in some manner, but rather because he wants to focus the reader on the key issue. And the key issue (according to John) is that it is **Jesus himself** as the Lamb of God redeems the world **rather than his philosophy / message**. The personality and intimacy of Jesus which John so brilliantly conveys in his Gospel record is arguably a more muted subject in the Synoptics, which are more redolent of the message than the man himself.

**Answer Part 2.**

Finally, we should attempt to answer a consequential question which arises from having answered the question we set ourselves at the outset. The consequential question is this: having focused on the fact that it is belief in the atoning work of Jesus that is at the crux of salvation, at whom was John aiming this message?

The intimacy of language which John uses in his Gospel suggests to us that the target audience were known to him and sympathetic to his message. It is known that John spent time in Ephesus. Could it be that John wrote this Gospel for them? We know that the Church in Ephesus was established very early possibly from converts who had witnessed and been baptised into the ‘baptism of John Baptist’. Is it possible that in his flight from Rome circa 49 CE, having moved to the relative safety of Ephesus, he came across a body of believers steeped in John the Baptist’s teaching but not yet fully aware of Jesus?

With respect to this last point we would like to comment on how seamlessly the Apostle John transitions the prologue in chapter 1:1-18, into the life and work of John the Baptist in verse 19. It seems that, unlike the Synoptics, there is very little introduction in John’s gospel as to who the Baptist was and why he was working. Is this lack of formal introduction of the Baptist in the narrative because the Ephesus Church was already familiar with him—given that their basis of fellowship was his baptism?

Also, when we consider what John the Apostle has chosen **not to write about**, it makes it all the more remarkable that he records a very detailed set of exchanges between John Baptist and Jesus spanning a period of 2 days. Is the relatively copious coverage of the ‘John the Baptist episode’ written because John had the Ephesus Church in view with its clear Baptist origins? Clearly all this is a speculation which may never be proven—but it is certainly an interesting train of thought.

In aggregate then, we would argue that John wrote his Gospel for the sole purpose of persuading those who were already enlightened (possibly into the ways of the Baptist), that Jesus was not only a greater prophet than John Baptist (Jesus’ forerunner), but was so much more. Was John at pains to teach his flock that this man Jesus was not only the Messiah the Son of God with power, but through his obedience to God he made himself the sacrificial ‘Lamb of God’ which took away the sin of the world? And that it was through belief in the life and work of the man as opposed to his message, that salvation was made available to all mankind?

John records in his Gospel that when the officers of the High Priest returned empty handed without Jesus as their prisoner the justification the officers gave was “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46). This is certainly true, but could it also be said of John the Apostle that within the NT genre “Never man wrote about Jesus with such passion and insight as this man”.

**Archaeology**

**J. Burke**

**The Date of the Exodus (2)**

This article is the second of two in a consideration of the date of the Exodus. Typically, only two dates are considered viable: c.1440 BCE (the ‘early date’),[[53]](#footnote-53) and c.1280 BCE (the ‘late date’). Arguments for these dates are here reviewed and compared.

**Summary of Key Arguments**

The following tables summarize the key arguments for the early date, together with criticisms, along with relevant quotations in footnotes and my emphasis.

|  |
| --- |
| Arguments For an Early Date Exodus (c. 1440 BCE) |
| Argument | Criticism |
| The 480 years of 1 Kings 1:6 indicates an early date | * This is only a relative chronology, and the number does not agree with the years recorded in the Judges[[54]](#footnote-54) [[55]](#footnote-55)
* The number may be symbolic for 12 generations[[56]](#footnote-56)
* This disagrees with the date for Abraham[[57]](#footnote-57)
 |
| Arguments For an Early Date Exodus (c. 1440 BCE) |
| Argument | Criticism |
| Some destruction layers in Canaan support an early date[[58]](#footnote-58) | * Destruction and occupation layers provide more support for a late date[[59]](#footnote-59)
* No evidence for Edom and Moab existing at an early date[[60]](#footnote-60)
 |
| Arguments For an Early Date Exodus (c. 1440 BCE) |
| Argument | Criticism |
| Reference to the Habiru in the 14th century Amarna letters[[61]](#footnote-61) | * Extensive study has revealed no direct correspondence between the Habiru and the Hebrews, thus the Armana letters do not support the early date[[62]](#footnote-62),[[63]](#footnote-63)
* Armarna correspondence contradicts early date destruction of Hazor[[64]](#footnote-64)
 |

|  |
| --- |
| Arguments For an Early Date Exodus (c. 1440 BCE) |
| Argument | Criticism |
| No evidence for 13th century occupation or destruction of Jericho, Ai, or Hazor[[65]](#footnote-65) | * Hazor was occupied and destroyed in the 13th century,[[66]](#footnote-66) reliable excavation of 13th century Jericho is challenged by extensive erosion,[[67]](#footnote-67) and the archaeological data for Ai is difficult to reconcile with both early and late dates;[[68]](#footnote-68) these are insignificant archaeological challenges for the late date
 |

The following tables summarize the key arguments for the late date, together with criticisms.

|  |
| --- |
| Arguments For a Late Date Exodus (c. 1280 BCE) |
| Argument | Criticism |
| Destruction of Hazor in 13th century[[69]](#footnote-69) | * The archaeological evidence may indicate the destruction in Judges 4:24[[70]](#footnote-70)
 |
| Pithom and Rameses in Exodus 1:11 are evidence for events under Pharaoh Rameses II (1279-1213 BCE)[[71]](#footnote-71) [[72]](#footnote-72) | * This requires Rameses to be built before Rameses II even began to rule[[73]](#footnote-73)
* Unlike the pharaoh of the Exodus, Rameses II did not die in the Red Sea[[74]](#footnote-74)
* The sites were built earlier; one was later renamed ‘Rameses’, and an editor of the book of Exodus updated the text with this name[[75]](#footnote-75)
 |
| Arguments For a Late Date Exodus (c. 1280 BCE) |
| Argument | Criticism |
| Covenant formulas in the Law of Moses closely match those from 1400-1200 BCE[[76]](#footnote-76) | * There is an insufficient match to date the Biblical covenants precisely[[77]](#footnote-77)
 |
| Arguments For a Late Date Exodus (c. 1280 BCE) |
| Argument | Criticism |
| The Merneptah Stele (13th century), is the earliest reference to Israel in Canaan[[78]](#footnote-78) | * Egyptologist Manfred Görg has suggested an Egyptian inscription he dates to the 13th century, contains a reference to Israel which may have been copied from an 18th Dynasty record (16th-13th centuries BCE), implying Israel was in Canaan before the 13th century[[79]](#footnote-79)
 |
| Egypt occupied Canaan until the 12th century[[80]](#footnote-80) | * This remains unaddressed by key proponents of the early date;[[81]](#footnote-81) this contradicts completely a late date for the Exodus
 |
| Arguments For a Late Date Exodus (c. 1280 BCE) |
| Argument | Criticism |
| A very large population entered Canaan in the late 13th century[[82]](#footnote-82) | * This remains unaddressed by key proponents of the early date;[[83]](#footnote-83) there is no evidence for such a population entering Canaan in the 15th century
 |

**Review of Arguments**

The early date is highly vulnerable to a range of criticisms, and has the least archaeological support. In particular, the occupation and control of Canaan by Egypt until the end of the 13th century, the lack of any evidence for a new population entering Canaan in the 15th century, the Armana correspondence, the non-existence of Edom and Moab in the 15th century, and the evidence for destruction of Canaanite sites matching a 13th century conquest rather than a 15th century conquest, are formidable challenges to the traditional late date.

Objections to the late date are less substantial. There is no evidence that Rameses as a place name in Exodus 1 is a later editorial gloss.[[84]](#footnote-84) Görg’s suggestion of an Egyptian reference to Israel earlier than the Merneptah Stele is problematic. [[85]](#footnote-85),[[86]](#footnote-86) Wood’s attribution of the 13th century Hazor destruction level to Deborah and Barak fails to provide evidence.[[87]](#footnote-87),[[88]](#footnote-88) His dating of Pithom and Rameses on the basis of the birth of Moses being described later in Exodus 1, assumes an unnecessarily strict chronological sequence for the narrative.

The pharaoh under whom Pithom and Rameses were built died while Moses was in the wilderness before the Exodus[[89]](#footnote-89) (matching Rameses II and a late date Exodus). Additionally, Hoffmeier argues Exodus does not represent the pharaoh of the Exodus as dying in the Red Sea,[[90]](#footnote-90) whereas an early date pharaoh would have to be Thutmose III or Amenhotep II, neither of whom died by drowning.[[91]](#footnote-91)

**Conclusion**

Although vigorous debate over date of the Exodus is ongoing,[[92]](#footnote-92) the 13th century date continues to be held widely among those scholars who accept the historicity of the Exodus.[[93]](#footnote-93) As early as 1999, Hoffmeier observed, “Dating the period of the oppression and exodus to the fifteenth century B.C. has largely been replaced in favor of a thirteenth-century date”.[[94]](#footnote-94)

**News**

**New Books**

This is an opening extract from M. Allfree’s new book (with permission), *The Prophecy of Joel*, £4.99 plus P&P available from www.lulu.com/BibleStudyPublications.

**Prophecy of Joel**

**M. Allfree**

**Introduction**

Joel is a fascinating little book. Whilst his prophecy consists of only three chapters - a total of 73 verses - it has a very wide-ranging scope. Not only did Joel speak of momentous, earth-shattering events that were taking place in his own days, but through the Spirit he was also able to foresee significant events that were to have a tremendous impact upon the early New Testament ecclesias, in particular how the Jewish nation would be overthrown for its disobedience, and the purpose of God would be opened up to incorporate the Gentiles. Joel’s prophecy also speaks in great detail about the days in which we live, leading up to the most dramatic event of all time - the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth.

**The prophet Joel**

It is a fundamental principle of scripture truth that *“all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16)*, and that *“the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).* This is no less true of the prophecy of Joel. Every single word of this prophecy is God-given, and therefore profitable to us, and this must include the title of the book. So we begin our study by enquiring why this particular prophecy bears the name that it does. Why is it the prophecy of *Joel?*

The names of the prophets are very often relevant to the message that they spoke. Elijah the Tishbite is a good example. His ministry was to a large extent a campaign for the vindication of the God of Israel. Ahab and Jezebel, and many of the inhabitants of the ten tribe kingdom had turned their backs on the true God, in favour of Baal, and so Elijah was sent by God to oppose such, and to show them by his ministry that Yahweh was indeed the true God - and the prophet’s name means *“My God is Yah”.* His name summarised the purpose of his ministry. Things came to a head on Mount Carmel, with the great contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, at the end of which the people themselves were provoked to cry out, *“Yahweh, he is the God; Yahweh, he is the God” (1 Kings 18:39).* By Divine appointment, the name of Elijah the prophet was most appropriate to the whole substance of his ministry.

The same is true of the prophet Joel. In fact, it is an interesting observation that Joel’s name is really simply the reverse of the name of Elijah. Joel means *“Yah is God”*, and he prophesied at a time when once again the authority of Israel’s God was being called into question, just as it had been in the days of Elijah the Tishbite. A proud Gentile monarch had invaded the land, and was threatening the very existence of the kingdom of Judah, and he was boasting that the God of Israel was proving unable to deliver His people: *“Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?” (Joel 2:17).* As for the inhabitants of Judah themselves, they had become complacent. They had become wealthy, and they were living lives of luxury, such that their dependance upon God was diminished. Their faith in God was weak through self-indulgence, and neglect of God’s ways, and they looked at the military successes that the Gentile monarch was having as he swept through the land of Judah like a plague of locusts, and they were calling into question who really was the true God - was it Yahweh, or the god of the Gentiles? They were beginning to doubt the very existence of the God of heaven, and that He was dwelling in their midst.

The prophet Joel was thus sent to stir them up to repentance, and to encourage them that if they held fast to the faith, God would not forsake them: *“And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am Yahweh your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed” (Joel 2:27).*

This is the burden of the prophecy of Joel, and it has important lessons to teach us, even though we live over two thousand years after the days of Joel. We also live in a very materialistic age, and in the western world we enjoy lives of ease and plenty. It is very easy for us to become swept up in the spirit of the age, and to lose sight of the fact that what should matter to us more than anything else is the Truth. So this prophecy is relevant to us, and one of the objectives of this study is to dispel any doubts that the God that we worship - the God of Israel - is indeed the true God.

**Book Reviews – all by Tom Gaston**

***Do Historical Matters Matter To Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture.* Edited by James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012. 542pp. ISBN: 978-1-4335-2571-1.**

This collection of twenty-two essays by respected conservative archaeologists and biblical scholars, like Alan Millard and Craig Blomberg, was occasioned by the publication of *God’s Word in Human Words* by Kenton Sparks. In that book Sparks queries the inerrancy of the Bible and argues that evangelical Christians (amongst whom he includes himself) should accept the conclusions of critical scholars. Readers, however, do not need to be acquainted with Spark’s book as the engagement of the present volume with that book is symptomatic of wider discussion: should Christians accept the results of critical scholarship?[[95]](#footnote-95)

The book is divided into four parts. The first part treats the theological implications of treating the bible as errant or ahistorical. This would be the most appropriate part of the book to address the titular question and yet none of the essayists quite grasp that nettle. For example, in the first chapter Thomas H. McCall briefly summarises various epistemologies and explains to what degree a believer’s acceptance of scripture is based on tackling the challenge of critical scholarship under each epistemology. Yet this consideration is too brief to give any firm direction on this issue. Similarly I do not think James Hoffmeier fulfils his brief of demonstrating that “a historical exodus is essential for theology” (chapter four). An essay on Irenaeus’ view of scripture (chapter five) feels out of place in this collection.

The remaining three parts of the book address issues arising from critical scholarship and the minimalist approach to biblical history. In part two these include the source critical approach to the Torah (chapter six) and Isaiah (chapter ten), and the historicity of Daniel (chapter eleven). There are some weaker chapters. I am not sure that Robert Bergen’s analysis of word distribution (chapter eight) is helpful or even coherent, and I suspicious how Jens Bruun Koroed’s construction of the Old Testament as cultural memory (chapter thirteen) would be applied in historical studies. The essay on the authenticity of psalm titles (chapter twelve) makes an interesting test case for the way evangelicals can engage with critical scholarship, nevertheless the “critical-realistic” reading the authors suggest feels unnecessary and retrograde.

The New Testament section (part three) is shorter and more straightforward, presumably because the challenges to inerrancy are less pronounced here. The section opens with a useful summary of interaction of critical scholarship with biblical studies, and how Sparks’ book fits into that dialogue (chapter fourteen). Then two essays dealing with how the inerrantist can utilise critical scholarship in study of the New Testament (chapters fifteen and sixteen); both these essays include some useful proposals for addressing alleged inaccuracies or contradictions. Chapter seventeen is review of the evidence relating to the authorship of the Pastorals, arguing that there are good reasons for doubting the (self-confirming) consensus that these epistles are pseudonymous.

The final part concerns the Old Testament and archaeology. It is not clear why this is separated from part two or placed after the section on the New Testament. These essays tackle three known problems in biblical archaeology, which are the veracity of Joshua’s conquest (chapter nineteen), the evidence of Israelite monotheism (chapter twenty) and historicity of the kingdoms of David and Solomon (chapters twenty-one and twenty-two). In each case the essayists show how minimalists have misused absence of evidence to draw positive conclusions.

Despite its problems, this collection of essays is a strong rejoinder to some of the challenges to biblical inerrancy and an interesting contribution to the question of how scholarship interacts with faith. It is also a good sounding for the state of play regarding major issues in biblical scholarship, both archaeological and textual. This will certainly be essential reading for any scholar who also accepts the inerrancy of scripture. It may, however, be too technical (and in places, too abstract) for the general reader.

 **Craig A. Evans, *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-8308-3318-4. 290pp.**

Craig Evans is a distinguished New Testament scholar who has written extensively on the historical Jesus and served on the advisory board on the *Gospel of Judas* for the National Geographic Society. He is well placed to evaluate the various theories propounded by both scholars and popular writers, from Bart Ehrman’s *Misquoting Jesus* to Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code.*

He begins by commenting on his amazement and concern that these theories are even taken seriously by both those who write them and the publishers that release them. He says, “We live in a strange time that indulges, even encourages, some of the strangest thinking ... what I find particularly troubling is that a lot of the nonsense comes from scholars” (p. 15-16). He speculates that it is the “never-ending quest to find something new” that motivates scholars to reject firm evidence in favour of questionable sources and bogus history.

The book does not attempt an individual assessment and dismantling of every book about Jesus. Instead Evans has tried to identify the methodological errors perpetrated by these writers and address them. The first chapter concerns misguided suspicions, those forms of hypercriticism that assume that the NT writers were too forgetful, too illiterate or too disinterested to record accurately their memories of Jesus. The second chapter concerns “cramped starting points”, that is, assumptions made by critics that becoming self-confirming when contrary evidence is dismissed as inauthentic. Both these chapters deal with the criteria one uses to assess whether the canonical gospels are accurate or not; Evans ends the second chapter with a useful discussion of the key criteria used in the study of the historical Jesus. The practical consequences of the misuse of these criteria of authenticity are seen in chapters six and seven, where Evans discussed the scholars (particularly from the inter-university ‘Jesus Seminar’ research group) who attempt to excise sayings of Jesus from the canonical context or separate Jesus from his miraculous deeds.

Chapters three and four concern the use of non-canonical gospels as historical sources for the life of Jesus. These include Gnostic gospels like those ascribed to Thomas and Mary, and the forgery called the *Secret Gospel of Mark.* In each case Evans demonstrates that the use of these late and polemical texts for historical purposes is highly dubious. A further discussion of historical sources is found in chapter eight, where Evans responds to claims that Josephus’ portrayal of key characters conflicts with that of the gospels.

In chapter five Evans discusses the portrayal of Jesus as a Mediterranean Cynic (which makes out Jesus to be kind of hippy). Chapter nine concerns exaggerated claims, particularly that early Christianity was diverse and multi-form. Evans notes how these claims often “conclude with pleas for greater tolerance and openness to new forms of Christian experience” (p. 180). Chapter ten comments on the remarkable leaps of guesswork made by popular writers who claim to have unearthed secret conspiracies that overturn treasured views about Jesus. Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code* is probably the most famous and successful of this kind of “hokum history”. Here Evans has some fun demonstrating how flimsy these “historical” findings are.

Evans concludes his book with a final chapter entitled “Will the real Jesus please stand up?”, in which he reviews what is known about the historical Jesus based on reliable evidence and sensible historical methods. He writers, “thus far these [recent] discoveries have tended to confirm the reliability of the Gospels and disprove novel theories. I suspect that ongoing honest, competent research will do more of the same” (p. 235).

**Tom Barling, *Paul’s Epic Journey to Rome.* Birmingham: The Testimony, 2013. ISBN 0-9517992-9-0. 137pp.**

This book brings together a number of articles by the late Brother Tom Barling originally published in *The Testimony* magazine. The book is lovingly introduced by Reg Carr, who writes of Brother Barling’s “lasting legacy of Bible scholarship” of which this book is just part (p. 3).

The book follows the apostle Paul’s journey from Caesarea (chapter 1) to Rome (chapter 14), tracing each stage of the several voyages. Along the way the author notes various interesting details, whether about the Roman dependency on grain from Egypt, or the size and capacity of ancient vessels, or the occasion and ferocity of storms in the Mediterranean. The main purpose of the book is retell in the journey of Paul in its historical context, but there is subsidiary purpose of demonstrating that Luke’s account coheres with historical and geographical information. Once again we have evidence of the veracity of *Acts* and of Luke’s skill as documenter.

The book is well researched, drawing on both ancient and modern sources. The author considers with balance and care issues that have sometimes drawn confusion or even scepticism. Yet the book is neither dry nor dull. The author engages with the reader into the story of Paul’s journey and drops into his narrative comments about the character of Paul, Luke and others in the account. The short chapters make it an easy read and the book is aided by maps and photos printed on gloss pages in the centre of the book.

The book is accompanied by three appendices: firstly, Brother Barling’s account of his own journey across the Aegean (reprinted from *The Christadelphian*) and two short essays by Tony Benson and Ed Wright respectively. It is also worth noting the cover design, which, consistent with *The Testimony*’s recent covers, is well-judged and attractive.

The only minor criticism is that chapters sixteen to twenty-five are titled only “Supplementary study (x)”, which is uninformative and belies the interesting content of these essays. It might have been preferable to either edit these essays into the other chapters, or at least title them appropriately.

**Sandra Menssen and Thomas D. Sullivan, The Agnostic Inquirer: Revelation from a Philosophical Standpoint. Eerdmans, 2007. 331pp., ISBN 978080280394**

Menssen and Sullivan are two former agnostic philosophers who converted to Christianity. They should, therefore, be cognizant of the concerns of agnostics and the sort of apologetic strategies that agnostics might find appealing or convincing. This book is not written for agnostics but uses the hypothetical agnostic inquirer as foil for their meta-level inquiry into Christian apologetics.

The book begins with a dismissal of natural theology. Menssen and Sullivan contend that conventional apologetic approaches of first providing arguments for God’s existence, then for Jesus and other fundamentals, and only latterly turning to divine revelation (i.e. the Bible) is unlikely to prove convincing. This is because the principle objection to belief in God, the problem of evil, can only be countered by an adequate theodicy that justifies present suffering as a temporary expediency against the surety of everlasting blessings. Such a theodicy cannot be established by natural theology (that is, by reason alone) but is necessarily grounded in divine revelation. So the authors argue that a convincing apologetic must start with divine revelation. They reason that the proposition “God has revealed himself” can be considered directly without first considering the proposition “God exists” because the latter proposition is embedded in the former. They give examples of other embedded propositions that are investigation in this way, such as “a planet is affecting the orbits of Uranus and Neptune”, which presupposes the proposition “a planet [Pluto] exists”.

Having established this rationale for this immediate consideration of divine revelation, Menssen and Sullivan spend the rest of the book articulating how one might assess the claims of any particular text to be a divine revelation by considering a number of possible objections to divine revelation. As far as I can diagnose their suggested approach is as follows. We would be justified in taking a text as divine revelation if this was the best explanation of putative facts made by that text. The example they give is moral values, which, they argue, cannot be explained under atheism and are best explained by divine revelation. Though they are generally coy about working through their approach with reference to the Bible, they would argue that the Bible provides the principles on which to ground morality and this justifies its claim to be divine revelation.

This book is heavy-going as it is saturated with philosophy, some of which is extraneous to the argument being presented. Indeed one feels that the major moves in the argument could have been argued far more succinctly.

Whilst I agree with the authors that the problem of evil is a significant stumbling-block for seekers and that a full theodicy requires divine revelation, reason can at least demonstrate that evil is not logically inconsistent with God’s existence. In any case, seekers are unlikely to approach Christianity in such a granular way – even while focusing on natural theology, the seeker will be aware of Christianity’s other claims. Menssen and Sullivan seem to undermine their claim about the priority of divine revelation since they begin by seeking to demonstrate the probability of there being a God through the cosmological argument.

I think there is some value is the suggested route for justifying a text’s claim to be divine revelation. The explanatory power of the Bible as a ground of moral values is powerful and could form part of a cumulative case for its divine origin. However I wonder if, by itself, it is convincing. Whilst the seeker may appreciate the need to ground morality in something and whilst s/he may perceive the high moral principles given in the Bible, s/he may also be perturbed by examples of gross indecency, vice and malice displayed within the narratives of the Bible. S/he may also object to some of the Bible’s moral principles if they disagree with the social norms of her peers.

Menssen and Sullivan have undertaken an important project in a serious philosophical consideration of divine revelation and its role in apologetics and epistemology. However, though there are some useful insights here, I think further work is needed.

**Thomas Nagel, Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False. Oxford University Press, 2012.**

This book will please very few. Atheists will be, and have been, upset or bemused by one of their own rejecting the standard line of materialist reductionism and arguing instead for the irreducibility of consciousness, intentionality and value. They will certainly be perturbed by Nagel citing favourably members of the Intelligent Design community (p. 10) and overtly Christian philosophers, like Alvin Plantinga (p. 27). Nagel seems to be renouncing the sacred cows of materialism, such as intentionality being illusory and the universe being essentially valueless.

However Nagel is not converting. This is not his Damascus Road book. He says that he does not find theism credible, that he lacks the sense of the divine and that theism offers an incomplete explanation of the universe. This reaction is significant because most who see the implausibility of materialism feel compelled to adopt theism (or, at least, some form idealism) instead. However Nagel does not feel this compulsion. He will accept neither materialism nor theism: “that, at any rate, is my ungrounded intellectual preference” (p. 26).

What Nagel would like is a third way: something that, on the one hand, recognises the place of Mind and does not seek to reduce it to Matter and, on the other hand, does not require one to believe in God. As yet Nagel does not have a third way to articulate and has difficulty even sketching out what it would look like. He comments that it “will probably require a much more radical departure from the familiar forms of naturalistic explanation than I am at present able to conceive” (p. 127). Yet given his failure to specify any particular problem with theism, except his general lack of belief in God, one wonders whether Nagel doesn’t protest too much. Perhaps thus we find agreement with his final remark (aimed at the current materialist consensus): “the human will to believe is inexhaustible” (p. 128).

**Postscript**

What is more important—the Old Testament (OT) or the New Testament (NT)? Some will immediately say that the NT is the interpretative key to the OT—all things in the OT point to Christ and what we know of Christ from the NT should guide our understanding of the OT. The OT is therefore subordinate to the NT.

Alternatively, some will argue that we need to know the OT in order to understand the context for the ministry of Christ on earth and through the apostles. The promises and prophecies about the hope of Israel need to be understood before we know what is going on in the NT. The OT therefore controls our understanding of the NT.

It seems like a ‘which came first—the chicken or the egg’ dilemma. However, the concept of a New Testament canon of writings is not exactly apostolic. Our evidence for the use of the expression ‘New Testament’ is from the second century at the earliest. The question is this: did the apostles think they were creating a ‘New Testament’ or adding to the Jewish Scriptures?

The answer to this question cuts through the dilemma. If the apostles and their companions thought that they were adding writings onto the end of Malachi, then there isn’t as such an ‘Old Testament’ and a ‘New Testament’, even though there are (obviously) old and new covenants. The legitimacy of there being a ‘New Testament’ canon as opposed to just a larger canon of Jewish Scriptures is worth questioning especially if we read second century church history in terms of a turning away from the apostolic faith (an apostasy). Is the division between the testaments actually a false teaching of the apostate Christian church?

The question of what comes first—‘the NT or the OT?’ is therefore no more sensible than asking whether the Former Prophets are subordinate to the Latter Prophets (or vice versa). Instead, all the books of the Bible hang together in the one Jewish Scriptures. We can certainly argue that the apostles and their companions knew that they were writing scripture, but the scripture they thought they were writing was Jewish—they were after all (excepting possibly Luke)—Jews. Theologically, there isn’t a ‘problem of the New Testament canon’ except for orthodox Christianity. There is instead a problem of deciding why the four gospels, Acts and the General Epistles, the Letters of Paul and Revelation are **Jewish Scripture**. The interpretation of this body of writing is a back and forth process that begins with Genesis. **AP**

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1. Gleason L. Archer, Jr. *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody press, 1994), 497. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ##  K. A. Kitchen, *On The Reliability Of The Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans: 2003), 56.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Sharon (2:1), Lebanon (3:9; 4:8,11,15; 5:15; 7:4), Gilead (4:1; 6:5), Amana (4:8), Shenir (4:8), Hermon (4:8), Mahanaim (6:13), Heshbon (7:4), Bath-Rabbim (7:4), Carmel (7:5), Baal-hamon (8:11), Kedar (1:5). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For *yäDîD* (beloved) and *DôD* (beloved, father’s brother, love), see *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (4 vols; ed., W. A. VanGemeren; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), entries 3351 (vol. 2) and 1856 (vol. 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. For alternative explanations of ‘Shulamite’ see the Net Bible footnote on Song 6:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [ED AP]: The naming could also reflect Hezekiah’s policy of unifying the tribes. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. D. Talley, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (4 vols; ed., W. A. VanGemeren; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997), entry 2911 vol. 2 pp. 231-34. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See P. Wyns “Passover Deliverance in 701” and an opposing view A. Perry, “Dating the Deliverance of Jerusalem” in *The Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation*, 5/1 (2011): 50-70. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See Wyns “Passover Deliverance in 701”, 58-61 where in Isaiah 26 the themes of Passover and resurrection occur against the background of Assyrian aggression. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [Ed AP]: However, comparison of one deliverance to an earlier one does not mean they share the same month of the year; see the Wyns-Perry discussion above. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Compare “fear (dx;P;) in the night” (Song 3:8) with “terror (dx;P;) by night.....pestilence *that* walketh in darkness” (Ps 91:5, 6). This is a reference to the destroying angel: “And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses”. (2 Kgs 19:35). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. C. Schroeder, “‘A Love Song’: Psalm 45 in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Marriage Texts” *CBQ* 58 (1996): 417-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. C. Meyers, “Gender Imagery in the Song of Songs” *HAR* 10 (1986): 209-223 (215). See also T. Longman, *Song of Songs* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, NICOT; 2001), 180. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The root *HPc* is attested in Phoenician *mHPc*, desirable and *šHPcB*’ (*KAI*, 12) The Israelite king Omri had allied himself with the Phoenician cities of the coast, and his son Ahab was married to the infamous Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre and Sidon. King Hiram (reigned 969-936 BCE), appears in the Bible as an ally of the Israelite kings David and Solomon. So from very early on there was contact (and royal marriages) between Judah, Israel and Phoenicia. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Originally Manasseh was the name given by Joseph to his son by his Egyptian wife Asenath. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. R. Dargie, “Isaiah 5 -The Song of Isaiah” in *The Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation* 7/ 2, (2013): 30-34. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. For ease of reference, the three accounts (Genesis 12, 20, 26) will be A, B, and C, referring to the first, second, and third, respectively. See, P. Wyns, “Sister-Wife” in *The Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation*, 6/2 (2012): 3-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. [ED AP]: It is worth emphasizing this lack of ‘Because you have done this’ in God’s words to Eve. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. [ED AP]: It can be argued that the words ‘for your sake’ link to the sanction addressed to the man which makes ‘cursed is the ground’ (among other things) something to do with death. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. P. J. Kissling, *Genesis* (The College Press NIV Commentary Series; 2 vols; Missouri: College Press Publishing Company, 2004, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. A. J. Bledstein, “Was Eve Cursed? (Or Did a Woman Write Genesis?)” *Bible Review* 9/1 (1993): 42-45.

[Cited Sept 2013; online: www.icanbreathe.com/was\_eve\_cursed.htm]. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. J. Galambush, “Adam’ from ‘adama’, ‘issa’ from ‘is’: Derivation and Subordination in Genesis 2.4b-3.24” in *History and Interpretation: Essays in Honour of John H. Hayes* (eds. M. P. Graham, W. P. Brown and J. K. Kuan; Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series. 173; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 33-46 (45). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. B. J. Stratton, *Out of Eden, Reading Rhetoric and Ideology in Genesis 2-3* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 208; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. S. T. Foh, “What is the Woman’s Desire?” *WTJ* 37 (1975): 376-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. M. F. Stitzinger, “Genesis 1-3 and the male/female role relationship” *Grace Theological Journal* 2/1 (1981): 23-44 (40-44). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. K. C. Bushnell’s research on the word is cited in the entry for “Gen 3:16” in the Bible dictionary, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (eds. W. C. Kaiser Jr., P. H., Davids, F. F, Bruce, & M. T. Brauch; Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press 1996). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. J. Skinner, *Genesis* (International Critical Commentary Series; Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1930), 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. G. Andrews, *Your Half of the Apple: God and the Single Girl* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the OT in Ten Volumes, v1: The Pentateuch* (reprinted; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. C. J. Vos, *Woman in OT Worship* (Delft, NV: & Brinkman, 1968), 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. J. Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis, v1* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part One* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1961), 165; E. J. Young, *Genesis 3: A Devotional and Expository Study* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1955), 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Stitzinger, “Genesis 1-3 and the male/female role relationship”, 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. J. M. Hamilton Jr., “The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham” *Tyndale Bulletin* 58.2 (2007): 253-273 (272-273). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. See also *Mekilta* *Pisha* 1.1.1 and discussion by W. D. Davies, “Reflections on the Spirit in the Mekilta: A Suggestion” in his *Jewish and Pauline Studies* (London: SPCK, 1984), 72-83. Other texts linking the cessation of prophecy to the First Temple include *Numbers Rabbah* 15.10 (R. Levi ben Rabbi late 2c.). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. A. Marmorstein comments in “The Holy Spirit in Rabbinic Legend” in *Studies in Jewish Theology* (eds., J. Rabbinowitz and M. S. Lew; London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 122-144 (123), that this may be the source of *b. Yoma* 9b, *b. Sotah* 48b, *b. Sanh.* 11a, *m. Hor.* 3:5, *m. Sotah* 9:12, and *Cant. R.* 8.9 and his opinion is that these traditions “were almost certainly of Tannaitic origin”, (124). Other texts that are used to make the same point include 1 Macc 4:26; 14:41; *2 Baruch* 85:3; *Prayer of Azariah* 15; and Josephus’ *Against Apion* 1.37-41. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Whether a text refers to a general cessation of prophecy, or the local absence of a prophet, or a local anticipation of the emergence of a prophet, is a matter of interpretation—see J. R. Levison, “Did the Spirit Withdraw from Israel? An Evaluation of the Earliest Jewish Data” *NTS* 43 (1997): 35-57. J. Barton in *Oracles of God* (London: DLT, 1986), 105-116, observes that texts seem to differ in what is thought to have ceased or to be absent—the activity of *ad-hoc* prophesying by individuals, or a more formal type of temple prophet, or the delivery and writing of prophecy by great figures; it is this last category that Barton thinks is the rabbinical view—“there was no prophetic canon, but there was a prophetic age”, 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. N. N. Glatzer, “A Study of the Talmudic-Midrashic Interpretation of Prophecy” in his *Essays in Jewish Thought* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1978), 15-35 (16). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Examples of the “echo” are recounted in *Tosefta Sotah* 13.4-6, *b. Mak.* 23b (R. Eleazar, 2c.). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Other examples of revelation by the Spirit include *Tosefta Pesahim* 2.15 (Gamaliel). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. J. Neusner, “What ‘The Rabbis’ Thought” in *Pursuing the Text* (eds., J. C. Reeves and J. Kampen; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 303-320 (319). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. For example, the Syriac canon developed to exclude some general epistles and Revelation—J. S. Siker “The Canonical Status of the Catholic Epistles in the Syriac New Testament” *JTS* (1987): 311-340. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. The dating scheme for the NT books that we presuppose is that argued by J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1976). [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. The terms ‘orthodox’ and ‘heterodox’ are question-begging for our period; it is arguable that Christianity was varied with differences of doctrine and practice in a state of flux between regions and centres. What became orthodox was only one developing strand in the 2c. On this, see W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1972). Our use of the terms is retrospective in terms of which writers have been ‘claimed’ as the ‘fathers’ of the church. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. The manuscripts typically lack the title page where we might find ‘The New Testament’. Melito of Sardis (late 2c.) refers to the ‘Old Testament’ which implies a collection called ‘New Testament’ around 170 CE (Eusebius, *Haer. Eccl*. 4.26 13-14); Apolinarius of Heirapolis (mid 2c.) refers to ‘the Gospel of the New Testament’ in his anti-Montanist apologetics (Eusebius, *Haer. Eccl*. 5.16.3); Clement of Alexandria (late 2c.) uses the title for a collection in contrast to the ‘Old Testament’ (e.g. *Strom*. 1.5; 2.13); and there are uses by Tertullian and Origen in the same vein. For a discussion see W. Kinzig, “Kainh. diaqh,kh: The Title of the New Testament in the Second and Third Centuries” *JThS* 45 (1994): 519-544. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. It is beyond the scope of this essay to develop this view. D. G. Dunbar, “The Biblical Canon” in *Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon* (eds. D. A. Carson and D. Woodbridge; Leicester: Inter-varsity Press, 1986), 299-360 (321-323), develops the orthodox position that the concept of a ‘New Testament’ was a bulwark against heresy. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. [Ed AP]: This assumes that John was the last to be written. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. C. L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels* (2nd edition; Nashville B&H Publishing Group, 2009, 197-198—“All this adds up to strong circumstantial evidence for equating the beloved disciple with the Apostle John”; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John.* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 68-69—“[Denying Johannine Authorship] also requires their virtual dismissal of the external evidence. This is particularly regrettable. Most scholars of antiquity were they assessing the authorship of some other document could not so easily set aside the evidence as plentiful, consistent and plainly tied to the sources as is the external evidence that supports Johannine authorship”. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. See further M. A. S. McMenamin, “The Historical Jesus” *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* (2008): 6; and T. L. Stegall, “Reconsidering the Date of John’s Gospel” *Theological Seminary Journal* 14/2 (2009): 70-103. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. There are multiple similarities between John’s Gospel and these documents. Consider this extract from the ‘Rule of the Community’ text and compare it with language of John’s Prologue: “And by his knowledge everything has been brought into being. And everything that is he established by his purpose, and apart from him nothing is done”. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. C. B. Marshall, and C. B. Sinclair, *A Guide Through the New Testament* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1994). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. www.reformationtheology.com/2006/12/studies\_in\_john\_lesson\_1\_intro.php. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. [Ed AP]: A book length study for the early date would be J. J. Bimson, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest* (2nd ed.; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1981). [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. The years of the judges, if added sequentially, result in 633-650 years between the exodus and the reign of Solomon, compelling supporters of the early date to read the years in Judges less literally, in order to read the years in 1 Kings 6:1 more literally. “To get around the dilemma caused by the difference between 480 and 633-650 years, advocates of the 15th-century (and the later date) exodus date are forced to harmonize the conflicting data **by proposing some overlap between judgeships to bring the 480-year figure into alignment with the 633–650 year total**. By doing this, one abandons a straightforward, literal reading of the Judges through Exodus narratives.”—J. K. Hoffmeier, “What is the Biblical Date For the Exodus? A Response to Bryant Wood” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 50/2 (2007): 225-247 (228). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. “When one seeks to reconstruct the numbers given in the biblical accounts, consistently and literally, **they do not add up to the number 480 given in 1 Kgs 6:1**.”—R. K. Hawkins, “Propositions For Evangelical Acceptance Of A Late-Date Exodus-Conquest: Biblical Data And The Royal Scarabs From Mt. Ebal” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 50/1 (2007), 31-46 (35). [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. “It has long been thought that the 480-year figure of 1 Kgs 6:1 **might be a symbolic figure that derives from 12 times 40-40 years being a symbolic number for a generation**—thus signifying that 12 generations had elapsed between the exodus and Solomon’s 4th year. Since men were usually married and had children by age 20–25, 60 a period closer to 300 years would be more accurate. When one adds 300 to 967 BC, **an Exodus date around 1267 BC** (20 years into the reign of Ramesses II) **results**.”, Hoffmeier, “What is the Biblical Date For the Exodus? A Response to Bryant Wood”, 236. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. “A 15th-century B.C. date presents problems for the chronology of Abram. Archaeological evidence relating to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah seems to date Abram’s arrival in Canaan around 1900 B.C. The Genesis narratives place Jacob’s migration to Egypt about 215 years later. On the basis of the 430 years of Exodus 12:40 it would seem that Abram came to Canaan about 2086 B.C., some 645 years before the exodus. **That would date his birth (cf. 12:4) about 2161 B.C. If the Sodom and Gomorrah evidence is correct, Abram’s arrival in Canaan would harmonize with a 13th-century B.C. date**.”, Harrison, “Exodus, The”, in Elwell & Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (1988), 743-744. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. “**According to Wood, some archaeological findings—such as destruction layers from Jericho, Ai and Hazor—support a 15th-century exodus** (Wood, “The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory,” 488–89; Wood, “From Ramesses to Shiloh,” 256–82).”, Thornhill, “Exodus”, in Barry & Wentz (eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. “The destruction and occupation layers of **many conquest cities** (e.g., Lachish, Debir, Hazor, Bethel, etc.) **favor the 13th-century dating**.”, ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. “Excavation findings seem to indicate that **Edom and Moab** (compare Exod 13:15; Num 20:14–21) **were not yet established peoples during the mid-14th century**.”, ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. “Wood also cites the mention of the ‘ (‘)apiru in the Canaanite Amarna letters of the mid-14th century, as well as an inscription dating to the 18th Dynasty. This inscription appears to mention Ashkelon, Canaan, and Israel (Wood, “The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory,” 489).”, Thornhill, “Exodus”, in Barry & Wentz (eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. “The relationship between the “Habiru” of the Amarna letters, the “Apiru” in 13th-century B.C. Egypt, and the biblical Hebrews has been examined minutely by scholars. **Widely differing opinions have been offered**. Some believe that the three are variations of the name of one people. To others, however**, it seems far from clear that there was any significant relationship between the names**. Such disagreement also tends to intensify the problem.”, Harrison, “Exodus, The”, in Elwell & Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (1988), 744. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. “The ʿapiru (sometimes ḫapiru or ḫabiru) are considered to be warlords, brigands and disenfranchised peoples on the outskirts of society. **Rainey has demonstrated that the term cannot be etymologically related to “Hebrew,”** and the range of use of the term makes it clear that the ʿapiru **cannot be equated with Israelites**. Nevertheless, some would contend that it does not entirely rule out the possibility that Israelites, along with other peoples, **could have been designated by the term**.”, Walton, “Exodus, Date of”, in Alexander & Baker, *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (2003), 263. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. “**According to the Wood, the marauding Habiru of the Amarna Letters could be the Hebrews**. Abi-Milku, however, makes clear that **Hazor was an ally of the Habiru rather than being the destroyers of Hazor**. This information from the Amarna correspondences demonstrates that **Hazor during the LB IIA was a major player in the region** and does not sound like a city that had **just been demolished and burnt by Joshua and his forces**.”, Hoffmeier, “What is the Biblical Date For the Exodus? A Response to Bryant Wood”, 245. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. “Only three cities are recorded as having been destroyed by fire by the Israelites: Jericho (Josh 6:24); Ai (Josh 8:28); and Hazor (Josh 11:11). **All three pose problems for a late 13th-century conquest. At Jericho and Ai, no evidence has been found for occupation in the late 13th century, let alone for a destruction at that time**.”, B. Wood, “The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory”, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48/3 (2005): 475-489 (477). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. “In Canaan, **the drastic destruction of Hazor (level 13) in the later 13th century B.C.** (despite misconceptions to the contrary) may well reflect Joshua’s exploit.”, Kitchen, “Exodus, The,”, in Freedman (ed.), *Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (1992), 702. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. “…at Jericho, nearly half a millennium of erosion **has long since removed virtually all pertinent evidence**.”, ibid., p. 702. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. “Ai remains an enigma on any view”, ibid., p. 702. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. “In Canaan, **the drastic destruction of Hazor (level 13) in the later 13th century B.C.** (despite misconceptions to the contrary) may well reflect Joshua’s exploit.”, Kitchen, “Exodus, The,”, in Freedman (ed.), *Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (1992), 702. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. “**Following the 1230 bc destruction, there was no urban center there until the time of Solomon in the 10th century bc** (1 Kgs 9:15). The defeat of Jabin, king of Hazor, by a coalition of Hebrew tribes under the leadership of Deborah and Barak is recorded in Judges 4–5. **Judges 4:24 indicates that the Israelites destroyed Hazor at this time:** “**And the hand of the Israelites grew stronger and stronger against Jabin, the Canaanite king, until they destroyed him.**” If Joshua destroyed Hazor in 1230 bc, **then there would be no city for the Jabin of Judges 4 to rule**.”, Wood, “The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory”, 477. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. “Egyptologists have long understood the reference to Rameses **to refer to Pi-Ramesses, the delta metropolis built by Ramesses II, the 19th Dynasty monarch who reigned from 1279–1213 BC**.”, Hoffmeier, “What is the Biblical Date For the Exodus? A Response to Bryant Wood”, 231. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. “The archaeological data is now unequivocal: Pi-Ramesses is located at modern-day Qantir, near Faqus, **and was built by Ramesses II beginning around 1270 BC**”, ibid., pp. 232-233. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. “Since Moses was 80 years of age at the time of the exodus (Exod 7:7), the building of Rameses would have taken place well before Moses’ birth in 1340 bc (according to the 13th-century theory), **long before Rameses came to the throne**.”, Wood, “The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory”, 478. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. “Obviously, Rameses II did not drown in the *yam sup*, [commonly translated ‘Red Sea’] a**s he died of natural causes some 47 years after the presumed exodus date of 1260 bc**.”, ibid., p. 478. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. “It is clear, then, that the name Rameses used in Exod 1:11 **is an editorial updating of an earlier name that went out of use**.”, ibid., p. 478. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. “Scholars have understood for some time, since the work of Mendenhall, Kline, and Kitchen, that the book of Deuteronomy **has the literary and legal form that characterized late second millennium BC Hittite international treaties**.”, J. Niehaus, “Covenant and Narrative, God and Time”, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 53/3 (2010): 535-559 (550). [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. “The format of the biblical material is varied and complex and cannot be dated to a particular time period based on ANE treaty documents”, Wood, “The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory”, 480-481. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. “The Merneptah stela is also cited as evidence for this date, **since Israel is referenced as a people group rather than a nation**.”, Thornhill, “Exodus”, in Barry & Wentz (eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. “Due to the similarity of these names to the names on the Merneptah stela, **Gorg suggests the name list may derive from the time of Rameses II, but adopting an older name sequence from the 18th Dynasty**. This evidence, if it holds up to further scrutiny, **would also support a 15th-century bc exodus-conquest** rather than a 13th-century bc timeframe.”, Wood, “The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory”, 489. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. “In trying to work out an evangelical understanding of the emergence of Israel, Mark Chavalas and Murray Adamthwaite have recently noted that **certain conditions in the archaeology of Palestine appear to mitigate against the traditional early date positioning of the Exodus/Conquest**. They note that, at a series of sites all over Palestine, ‘**the clear picture is that Egyptian occupation continued until the end of the Late Bronze Age (1200 BC**).’”, Hawkins, “Propositions For Evangelical Acceptance Of A Late-Date Exodus-Conquest: Biblical Data And The Royal Scarabs From Mt. Ebal”, 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. For example, it is never mentioned by Bryant Wood (foremost proponent of the early date), in his key articles “The Rise and Fall of the 13th-Century Exodus-Conquest Theory”, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 48/3 (2005), 475-489, and “The Biblical Date For The Exodus Is 1446 BC: A Response To James Hoffmeier”, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 50/2 (2005), 249-258. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. “The implication seemed clear that **a new population group had arrived in the Central Hill-Country during the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age I**.”, Hawkins, “Propositions For Evangelical Acceptance Of A Late-Date Exodus-Conquest: Biblical Data And The Royal Scarabs From Mt. Ebal”, 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. “While this material has seemed to point toward a late date for Israel’s emergence in Canaan, it **has largely gone unnoticed by evangelical scholars writing histories of Israel or commentaries on Joshua**.”, ibid., p. 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. “The toponym Rameses (רַעַמְס) occurs five times in the OT, in Gen 47:11; 53 Exod 1:11; 12:37; and Num 33:3, 5. In none of these cases is the formula “old name +הוא+ new name” used, nor does a longer explanatory gloss with the word לָרִאשֹׁנה—“at the first” occur with any of the five citations. **In other words, there is no evidence within these five passages to suspect that “Rameses” is an editorial gloss**.”, Hoffmeier, “What is the Biblical Date For the Exodus? A Response to Bryant Wood”, 234. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. “Görg’s reading of this name as “Israel” **is plagued by serious linguistic and orthographic problems** that preclude it from being Israel.”, Hoffmeier, “What is the Biblical Date For the Exodus? A Response to Bryant Wood”, 241. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. “Especially given the absence of Israel from the Armana evidence, **this seems intrinsically unlikely, given the early date and lacking a full reading**.”, D. E. Fleming, *The Legacy of Israel in Judah's Bible: History, Politics, and the Reinscribing of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 241. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. “A close reading of the text indicates that God gave Israel victory over her oppressors in a major battle 25 miles away from Hazor, **but the text is absolutely silent regarding any military action against Hazor itself**. Furthermore, the terminology used in 4:23–24 is not found in Joshua or Judges to indicate attacks on cities. Consequently, there is no basis to believe that the destruction of the final LB IIB (late 13th century) city was caused by Deborah and Barak’s triumph over Jabin and Sisera”, Hoffmeier, “What is the Biblical Date For the Exodus? A Response to Bryant Wood”, 244. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. “From the Amarna letters, written to the pharaohs Amernhotep III and Akhenaten between 1390–1340 BC, we learn that Hazor was thriving during this period.”, ibid., p. 245. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Exodus 2:23—“**During that long period of time the king of Egypt died**, and the Israelites groaned because of their slave labour. They cried out, and their desperate cry because of their slave labour went up to God”. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. “Psalm 136:15 may be the closest to suggest that pharaoh drowned in the seas, but that may be due to misleading English translations, e.g. JB: “Drowned Pharaoh and his army”; NIV: “swept pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea”; KJV and NAS: “He overthrew Pharaoh. .. into the Red Sea.” The key word here is נאר, which is the word used in Exod 14:27. נאר, means to “shake off” (Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament [Leiden: Brill, 2001] 707). Nothing in this term suggests that pharaoh drowned in the sea. **In fact, there is nothing to suggest in the various texts, especially in Exodus, that pharaoh led the chariot corps in pursuit of the escaping Hebrews**. Perhaps people have been influenced by Cecil B. DeMille’s portrait of angry Ramesses (Yul Brynner) leading the attack at the sea. But even in The Ten Commandments, Ramesses does not follow the Israelites into the sea!”, Hoffmeier, ‘What is the Biblical Date For the Exodus? A Response to Bryant Wood’, 239. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. “The second problem for Wood’s exodus pharaoh drowning in the sea is that **the mummy of Thutmose III was found in the Deir el-Bahri cache, while Amenhotep IIs was actually discovered in his tomb**, one of only a few royal mummies discovered intact. In fact, all the mummies of the 15th century are accounted for. According to the X-rays and investigations of these mummies, **none indicate a death by drowning**.”, ibid., p. 240. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. [ED AP]: For an example, see A. Gibson, *Text and Tablet: Near Eastern archaeology, the Old Testament and new possibilities* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 173-213; Gibson opens his treatment by saying, “I suppose that the data and questions relating both to early and later dates are more complex, less firmly resolved and much more indeterminate, than the standard theories allow.” (173). [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. “The need for discussing the latter premise is that **many biblical scholars who affirm the historicity of the exodus now date it to the thirteenth century B.C**., questioning concrete numbers in the Bible that taken literally would place the exodus in the fifteenth century B.C.”, D. Petrovich, “Amenhotep II And The Historicity Of The Exodus-Pharaoh”, *The Master’s Seminary Journal*, 17/1 (2006), 81-110 (83). [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. “Dating the period of the oppression and exodus to the fifteenth century B.C. **has largely been replaced in favor of a thirteenth-century date**, although a few adherents to the earlier date have followed Jack’s thesis.”, J. K. Hoffmeier, *Israel In Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. [ED AP]: Another example of the wider discussion would be J. Daryl Charles, *Reading Genesis 1-2: An Evangelical Conversation* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-95)