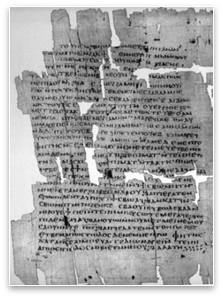
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**Editors:**

T. Gaston, A. Perry, P. Wyns.

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**Editorial**

The Internet is not going to go away. The thought might seem odd. The point though is that smartphones, laptops and tablets have changed ecclesias and individuals because of the quick and easy access they afford to ‘knowledge’. The era in which knowledge in the community might be controlled and disseminated through magazines and speakers is over and has been for about fifteen years. There is now a much bigger third voice on the Internet and it is not just made up of brethren and sisters; it is comprised of any source of knowledge from any Christian church and includes their professional scholars.

Anyone can directly access the Internet during meetings and at home to get information and opinions, but it would be premature at this point to sound a note of caution. Our first point is that this access isn’t necessary in order to be a Christian but it is ubiquitous. It isn’t necessary because it is possible to conduct Bible study/reading intertextually with nothing more than a concordance and a lexicon. In fact, the best Christadelphian writing is grounded in this method. (The worst talks have been by brethren copying American TV evangelists, and the worst writing has followed suit and been ‘dumbed-down’.)

Anyone trained in biblical scholarship will readily recognise a difference of method and results between the best Christadelphian studies of the past and conventional scholarship. This difference arises from a belief in inspiration (i.e. that the Bible is the Word of God and should be treated with respect) and the outworking of that belief in a harmonic, synchronic and intertextual way of handling the Bible. For example, in scholarship you never hear things like, ‘The Spirit through Paul says…’, because their frame of reference is always to approach the text on an exclusively human level. Thus, the only contribution that the community could make to scholarship (if it wanted to make any) would be its original, synchronic, intertextual exegesis, which is largely the product of its doctrine. (Of course, its doctrine is largely the product of its exegesis – it has been a two-way street.)

This contribution isn’t happening because the Christadelphian presence on the Internet is almost exclusively preaching. A new generation have an opportunity to address this imbalance. The danger here is that the new generation will just swallow scholarship uncritically and follow the humanism of the churches. (I see evidence of this happening online because the pendulum usually swings too far in one direction.) The other danger is that the older generation will try and train-up the new generation in their own ‘image’. This image has been an exclusive emphasis on the simple, the devotional, and the homiletical gospel. (I see this reinforcement happening through the training and patronage of certain kinds of speakers.) Either the new generation will see both dangers for what they are and they will go forward and renew the community, returning it to its intertextual pioneer roots, pioneers that were far more aware of the scholarship of their own day than the speakers and writers of recent times; or they will follow the older generation and allow themselves to be moulded in their image.

In the UK, there is concern about decline in community numbers, an ageing demographic and reduced numbers being baptised and staying after baptism. No doubt the reasons for this are complex. However, one major reason we see for the decline has been the exclusive emphasis on the simple, the devotional, and the homiletical gospel that has taken place over recent decades. This has resulted in a diminution in the consciousness of our distinctive identity and hence a reduction in the numbers being baptised and staying. The way to arrest the decline is to return to the emphasis of rigorous doctrine and study.

**AP**

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This is the last issue of *Volume Nine* of the EJournal and the years have gone by quickly.

It is natural to look back and do a review of the year. First off, our thanks go to the columnists and contributors for their submissions. The major highlight was the publication of the fourth multi-author volume on the topic of mortality edited by Tom (*Who Through Jesus Sleep*). This will probably be the last multi-author volume for a while. It was also good to see the Chinese version of *Reasons* go to print. Apart from these ‘events’, it has been ‘business as usual’. It’s not much of a ‘review’ to say, ‘last year we did some articles like the year before’, and looking back over the articles that were published, it would be inappropriate to pick out any highlights (it would be prideful). Suffice it to say that they add to a growing stock of articles on the website that continues to serve as a useful resource. One hiccup worth noting in passing though is the publication of one article in January here and in D & C which then appeared some months later in *The Christadelphian*. This taught us the lesson to check with authors that a submission was not under consideration elsewhere.

There will always be a need to think originally about the text and to engage with what people (scholars) say about God’s Word. If we were to gaze into a crystal ball and predict the future, what would we identify as the intellectual problems on the horizon? Devotional co-equality of the Father and the Son and more liberal views of the Bible would be our two prognostications. **AP**

**Articles**

**Ecclesiastes (Part 2)**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

The ‘king’ of Qoheleth is Uzziah (otherwise known as Azariah) and his history is recorded in 1 Kgs 15:1-8 and 2 Chronicles 26.[[1]](#footnote-1) The prophet Isaiah (1:1) was his contemporary as were the northern prophets Amos and Hosea. A great earthquake occurred during Uzziah’s reign (Zech 14:5) and Isaiah was commissioned in the year that king Uzziah died (Isa 6:1). Amos commenced his career two years before the earthquake (Amos 1:1).[[2]](#footnote-2)  Josephus has the great earthquake occurring when Uzziah forcefully entered the temple (*Ant*. 9:225; LCL 6:119)[[3]](#footnote-3) and we can date the earthquake to 750 BC[[4]](#footnote-4) with Uzziah dying 15 years later in 735 BC.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The outline of the life and times of Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26) is as follows:

A. Introduction. 26:1-5.

B. The prosperity of King Uzziah. 26:6-15.

Material possessions. 26:6-10.

Military preparations. 26:11-15.

C. The pride of King Uzziah. 26:16-19; cf. Deut. 8:6-18; Prov. 16:18.

D. The punishment of King Uzziah. 26:20-23.

**Profiling Uzziah**

From the accounts of his reign we can develop a “psychological profile” of Uzziah and deduce that he wanted to rival his progenitor Solomon for wisdom and glory, and also wanted to equal David, who acted as a Melchizedek king-priest and sat before the Lord (2 Sam 7:18). However, unlike David, who was *invited* into the divine presence (fully aware of his non-Levitical status), Uzziah attempted to force his way and was struck down with leprosy[[6]](#footnote-6) for his hubris. Henceforth, Uzziah was quarantined and separated from his subjects and excluded from attending the temple services (2 Chron 26:21). This would allow Uzziah ample time for reflection and to record his memoirs. Uzziah, the longest reigning king of Judah, reigned for 52 years, but for much of the latter part of his reign he was only the titular head of state as his son Jotham (2 Kgs 15:5), and subsequently his grandson Ahaz were co-regents. At the commencement of his reign Uzziah feared God (2 Chron 26:16a); he observed the statutes (26:16b); his heart was not lifted up (26:16b); nor did he turn away from the Lord (26:18); thus his days were prolonged (26:21). However, after he conquered Eilat, he expanded his military and cavalry (multiplying horses for his army). This allowed him to control the trade routes[[7]](#footnote-7) and receive tribute; he multiplied gold and silver to himself. The Prophet Isaiah acknowledged this state of affairs. “Their land (Judah) is also full of silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is also full of horses, and there is no end to their chariots” (Isa. 2:7). Compare, “I gathered me also silver and gold...” (Ecc 2:8), but in the end silver was “vanity” (Ecc 5:10).[[8]](#footnote-8) It is obvious that Uzziah attempted to imitate Solomon particularly with regards to the possession of Eilat, which was an important sea port adjacent to the place where Solomon launched his fleet,[[9]](#footnote-9) and in his penchant for the multiplication of horses.

Whatever the composition history of Chronicles might be, it seems that the chronicler(s) had access to Isaiah’s records of Uzziah’ reign,[[10]](#footnote-10) and it is relevant to note that whatever linguistic developments lie behind Qoheleth, the only places that !AbV'xi (HiššäBôn) occurs is in Chron 26:15 (‘engines’ KJV) and Ecc 7:25 (‘inventions’ KJV[[11]](#footnote-11)). In Chronicles, it stands for a brilliant military invention such as depicted in artwork from Lachish – a defensive structure to protect archers.[[12]](#footnote-12) The accomplishments of Qoheleth were all done for his own benefit (‘I made myself’, ‘I acquired’, ‘I gathered....’) not out of public largess but almost for narcissistic pleasure (‘I said in my heart’, 2:1). The list of his accomplishments matches the summary of Uzziah’s reign in 2 Chronicles 26,

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ecclesiastes 2** | **2 Chronicles 26** |
| I made me great works | And he made in Jerusalem engines[[13]](#footnote-13) |
| I planted me vineyards | husbandmen *also*, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry |
| I made me pools of water | .....and digged many wells |
| I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me | for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains |
| I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces | And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah |

Qoheleth’s love of husbandry extended beyond viticulture to general horticulture; “gardens and orchards” (Ecc 2:5), [[14]](#footnote-14) his own assessment is - “So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me” (Ecc 2:9). Qoheleth did not want to rival Solomon; he wanted to surpass Solomon’s wealth, wisdom and prestige. Similar to Solomon, he installed a “harem”, and like David, he showed an interest in music (Ecc 2:8 NIB/NIV). He withheld nothing in his attempt to rival his ancestors and he was willing to test every extreme (wisdom and folly) in this pursuit.

Uzziah reigned during a “golden period” as Aramaean dominance came to an end with the resurgence of Assyria under Adad-nirari III. This inaugurated a period of national restoration and prosperity in Israel and Judah that lasted nearly fifty years.[[15]](#footnote-15) As long as Assyria maintained a strong presence in the west, its loyal vassals reaped the benefits of renewed stability. However, Assyria went into decline during the reigns of the three subsequent rulers and once again Aram-Damascus began to reassert its influence. The ascension of Tiglath-Pileser III to the Assyrian throne and his campaigns of consolidation brought further instability and in the years following 750 BC (about the time of the major earthquake),[[16]](#footnote-16) Israel and Judah were once again caught up in a maelstrom of opposing forces from Assyria, Egypt and Damascus.

Israel (Samaria) had to choose with which state to align and a period of instability, intrigue and turmoil ensued with four kings ruling in quick succession (three of the four were assassinated after only brief reigns). However, for a large portion of this period Judah was peaceful and prosperous and functioned as a regional (or at least a local) power. Uzziah organized the army, improved their weaponry, refortified Jerusalem and built war engines. He gained important victories over the Philistines and the Arabs, razed the walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod, and received tribute from the Ammonites and other foes. Uzziah lived to see the decline of Israel and the title “king over Israel” (Ecc 1:12) may have been due to self-aggrandizement (or, possibly a gloss), however, his deteriorating health ended his hubris and saw his sons become co-regents.

The reign of Jotham was contemporaneous with his father Uzziah as was that of his grandson Ahaz.[[17]](#footnote-17) Jotham became coregent (four years after the major earthquake) in the forty-first year of Uzziah; power sharing was necessary because Uzziah was too ill to meet with new challenges (the ascension of Jeroboam II). The earthquake language of Amos 9:1 can be dated two years before the 750 BC earthquake and is similar to that found at the death of Uzziah (Isa.6:4), which occurred fifteen years later in 735 BC. Similar to Amos, Isaiah also describes the “posts (of the temple) door moving”, but unlike Amos, Isaiah places the event at the death of Uzziah. However, the movement of the posts in Isaiah is theophanic (caused by the voice). The time line is, (752): Amos commissioned; (750): Earthquake – Uzziah quarantined for leprosy; (746): Jotham co-regency at death of Jeroboam of Israel; (735): Theophany – death of Uzziah – Isaiah commissioned. This means that the major earthquake occurred in the year that Uzziah *sinned* *and became leprous* and that Uzziah was quarantined for 15 years. Uzziah lived to see the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz and the birth of Hezekiah.

Ahaz was particularly syncretistic and fawning towards the Assyrians and even installed an Assyrian altar in the temple. Ahaz was an idolater, causing his son to pass through the fire, and sacrificing and burning incense on high places and under green trees (2 Kgs 16:3, 4).[[18]](#footnote-18) He was unsuccessfully besieged in Jerusalem by the army of Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel (2 Kgs 16:5; Isa 7:1). In connection with this crisis, before the invading force arrived, Isaiah was sent to exhort Ahaz to rely upon *Yahweh* and not to appeal for foreign support. Thereupon the prophet uttered the celebrated prophecy relative to the birth of Immanuel (Isa 7:1-16). Despite the admonition, Ahaz turned to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, and purchased his aid with the treasures of the temple and the palace (2 Kgs 16:2; Chron. 28). Ahaz travelled to Damascus to pay homage to Tiglath-Pileser and while he was there he had a copy made of a heathen altar that he admired, and then subsequently installed in the Temple at Jerusalem. He reigned 16 years and was succeeded by Hezekiah who was probably born in the forty-seventh year of Uzziah’s reign (740 BC).[[19]](#footnote-19) In this case Uzziah lived to see the birth of his great grandson. Against this background, read the following texts from Ecclesiastes:

“…for what can the man do that cometh after the king?” (2:12)

“….the fool walketh in darkness...” (2:13)

“Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have laboured under the sun. This is also vanity. Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun.” (2:18-20)

“And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment that wickedness was there.” (3:16)

“A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it [tribute to Assyria paid by Ahaz]: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.” (6:2)

Qoheleth does not promote a cynical view; it records the struggle of a troubled mind coming to terms not only with disease, but also with his impotence to prevent his legacy being eroded and ultimately destroyed (It is surely the final irony that he is not even acknowledged as the author of Ecclesiastes). From his position in the Lazar house, Uzziah watched with dismay as his grandson Ahaz slowly undermined his labours. Even his great defensive reinforcements and building work would have been damaged by the great earthquake -- it was all meaningless.......his life’s work was “vanity”.

Moreover, the “theophanic earthquake” at the death of Uzziah (described in Isa 6:1) acts as a divine obituary, censuring Uzziah for his earlier sin (which caused the major earthquake in 750 BC) but it was also a reproach on the “leprous” nation. Uzziah attempted to force his way into the holy place to burn incense but was prevented by the priests, this made him furious and while he was still angry leprosy broke out on his forehead. Uzziah was full of pride, (“his heart was lifted up”, 2 Chron 26:16) but now Isaiah saw “Yahweh... high and lifted up” (6:1), Isaiah is called a “man of unclean lips” (6:5), language suggestive of leprosy (cf. Lev 13:45), and Isaiah is cleansed with a coal from the altar of incense (v. 6) as the temple is filled with smoke (incense); Uzziah attempted to defile the altar of incense.[[20]](#footnote-20) Uzziah typified the state of the diseased nation (similarly a faithful remnant was represented by the suffering servant Hezekiah). The prophet Isaiah declared the whole nation leprous, like its king,[[21]](#footnote-21)

“….the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and festering sores…” (Isa 2:7)

Ecclesiastes is not an abstract discourse on wisdom, or an amorphous theological or philosophical tract; rather it is based on concrete reflections drawn from real life experiences.[[22]](#footnote-22) As he sat in the isolation of quarantine, king Uzziah was able to dispassionately review his life in an attempt to draw conclusions on the meaning of life;

“Better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.” (Ecc 4:13)

“Then said I in my heart, as it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then wiser?” (Ecc 1:15)

The major theme in Qoheleth, largely unrecognised by scholarship, is the humbling and humiliation of a king – this within the context of covenant breaking and rebellion. It is linked to the adamic sin of hubris and self-divinization.

**Applying Qoheleth**

Qoheleth demonstrates knowledge of Persian era writings and the framework of the intertextual connections suggests that the direction of dependency is from Qoheleth to the Persian era. In other words, Qoheleth is alluding to Persian era books (and not the other way around). The ramifications that this has for the composition and redaction of Qoheleth will be discussed in the next article on *The Language of Qoheleth* but for now we simply state that later redaction does not detract from the original sentiments expressed in Uzziah’s memoirs. Qoheleth is theological wisdom literature based on real events and the *inspired* author has the literary and theological freedom to interpret and present those memoirs in such a way that they are integrated within the wider canon.

To illustrate this point, consider,

(1)

Who *is* as the wise *man*? And who knoweth the **interpretation** of a thing? A man’s wisdom maketh **his face to shine**, and the boldness of his face shall be changed. I *counsel thee* to keep **the king’s commandment**, and *that* in regard of the oath of God. Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him. Where the word of a king *is, there is* power: and who may say unto him, **What doest thou?** (Ecc 8:1-4)

We suggest that “the king” in the above verses is Yahweh and that the references are all intertextually linked with either the theme of coming into the presence of God, or to the theme of the humbling of human pride. The main links are as follows:

* Humbling of pride = king Nebuchadnezzar
* Face to shine = Moses in the divine presence
* Commandment of the king = Esther enters into the presence of the king

The **wise man** is Daniel who was also the **interpreter**of the dream that preceded the humbling of Nebuchadnezzar’s pride (Daniel 4).[[23]](#footnote-23) Upon his recovery Nebuchadnezzar uses the following words in his doxology,

“And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, ‘**What doest thou?**’” (Dan 4:35).

When Moses had been in the presence of Yahweh, **his face shone** (Exod 34:29-35);[[24]](#footnote-24) in contrast Uzziah’s face became leprous.

(2)

Or again, consider the phrase, “commandment of the king”, which occurs repeatedly in Esther, but the English translations often do not differentiate between the various nuances in the original language (speech, word, statute, law, decree, command, order, etc.); nevertheless, many of the expressions are virtually synonymous.

Esther relates how queen Vashti refused the commandment of the king to enter into his presence (Est 1:15), in contrast Esther risked her life by entering into the presence of the king in order to save her people (Est 4:11). In this story, the motive is all important – acting out of pride or out of love – all connected with ‘the presence’. Ecclesiastes does not employ “command” in Ecc 8:2 - but literally “mouth” hP, (*peh*) as in “keeping the kings mouth” (i.e., his word/command) the same expression is encountered in Est 7:8,

“As the word went out of the king’s mouth (*peh*), **they covered Haman’s face**”.

It is difficult to make sense of this phrase (covered his face); the LXX has dietra,ph tw/| prosw,pw| (‘he changed countenance’), which is probably a paraphrase as the Hebrew is doubtless meant to convey the covering of the upper lip **proscribed for the leprous** (Lev 13:45).[[25]](#footnote-25) The word ‘mouth’ (*peh*) is also used by Solomon at the inauguration of the temple,

“Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promised him: thou spakest also **with thy mouth** (*peh*), and hast fulfilled *it* with thine hand, as *it is* this day (1 Kgs 8:24).

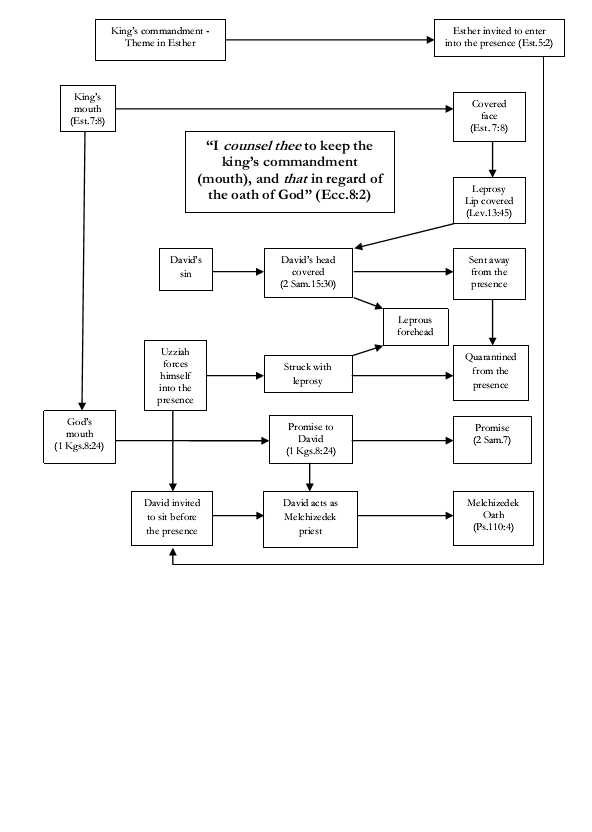
The promise that Solomon refers to is a reference to 2 Samuel 7 regarding the Davidic dynasty on the occasion when David entered the divine presence. Psalm 110:4 describes the vision that David saw,

“The Lord **hath sworn**, and will not repent, ‘Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.’”

The swearing refers to an oath used for affirming a priest (Heb 7:20). We can see, therefore, that Ecc 8:2 has a multivalent matrix of thematic and intertextual connections which we have set out in the diagram on the next page. The advice of Ecc 8:3, “Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him” (KJV) should rather read (as in the NRS) as, “Do not be **terrified**;[[26]](#footnote-26) go from his presence, do not delay when the matter is unpleasant, for he does whatever he pleases”. This is a better fit for Uzziah’s situation – he is so paralysed with fear that he cannot even move to leave the presence of the king!

The epilogue is often thought to be by a different hand – a “corrective” on Qoheleth’s philosophy, however, careful examination demonstrates that it is a continuation of the theme of the “king’s commandment” of Ecc 8:1-4,

“And moreover, because the preacher was wise, he still **taught the people** knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, *and* set in order many proverbs. The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and *that which was* written *was* upright, *even* **words of truth**. The words of the wise *are* as goads, and as nails fastened *by* the masters of assemblies, *which* are given from one shepherd. And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of making many books *there is* no end; and much study *is* a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **fear God**, and **keep his commandments**: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.” (Ecc. :9-14)



The duty of man is to “keep his commandments” and to “fear God” these are the very matters that Uzziah neglected. Qoheleth will “teach” the people “truth”. Intertextual links direct us to the speech given by Samuel *when the first king was anointed*:

“If ye will **fear the Lord**, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against **the commandment of the Lord**, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God...........but **I will teach you the good and the right way**: Only **fear the Lord**, and serve **him in truth** with all your heart: for consider how great *things* he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.” (1 Sam 12:14; 23b-25)

In the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah (Mic 1:1) “truth” became a technical term for the *covenant promises* (cf. Mic 7:20).[[27]](#footnote-27) The “truth” delivered to Abraham concerned a particular “seed” and the hope for that seed was further concentrated in the Davidic line. Qoheleth would teach words of truth – the truth that he had learned concerning the covenant was that man cannot grasp at divinity as if by right – even a Davidic king could not presume to crown himself a Melchizedek priest – a messianic role **sworn by a divine oath** and promised to a “son of David”. His pride and sense of entitlement had led him to disrespect God and love himself more than God (*The* commandment....Love the Lord thy God). Uzziah’s service was driven by self-interest (I built...I made etc.) unlike the “suffering servant” of Isaiah 53 (despised and rejected of men[[28]](#footnote-28)) who acted as a type of the true messianic priest;

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”(Isa 57:6)

After his humiliation Uzziah used his fall from grace to teach the people knowledge and show them *truth*, as instructed by Samuel.

**Priestly Sin**

The priests were guardians of God’s holiness. There are two incidents that reflected badly on the priesthood and they are alluded to in Ecclesiastes. One might inquire why this subject was of interest to Qoheleth. In the case of Uzziah, the priests acted entirely correctly and manhandled the king in order to prevent his folly. However, in the past the priests themselves had to be taught lessons concerning the holiness of God and the sanctity of his covenants.

“Dead flies cause the ointment[[29]](#footnote-29) of the apothecary to send forth a **stinking** savour: *so doth* a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom *and* **honour**” (Ecc 10:1).

“A **good name** *is* better than **precious ointment**; and the day of death than the day of one’s birth” (Ecc 7:1).

The “ointment of the apothecary” was the perfumed *holy anointing oil* used to consecrate priests and the *perfumed incense* was burned every morning; the manufacture of the anointing oil was closely guarded, and it was strictly kept for holy purposes and not for personal use. Also, the priests were forbidden to burn any perfumed incense (strange incense) other than the proscribed recipe (Exod 30:25-35; 37:29). When the priests Nadab and Abihu burnt “strange incense” they were consumed and the people were instructed to mourn their deaths – it is this very incident that necessitated the introduction of the Day of Atonement – the sanctuary had been defiled by the actions of the priests and made unclean by their dead bodies. From henceforth, the Jews would commemorate a Day of Atonement for national transgression because the priests (the representatives of the people) did not fear God. The high priest would enter the inner sanctum once a year surrounded by incense clouds to make atonement for the nation.

There is a matrix of intertextual connections between Ecc 10:1 and Ecc 7:1 and *bad priestly behaviour*. The progenitor of the priestly tribe, Levi, was reprimanded by his father Jacob for abusing the covenant (of circumcision) in order to murder a young prince:

“Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my **honour** be united to their **assembly**; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they hamstrung an ox” (Gen 49:6 NKJV).

The latter part of the verse is dynamically rendered by the YLT; “Into their secret, come not, O my soul! Unto their assembly be not united, O mine honour; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will eradicated a prince” (i.e., circumcising the prince so as to make him immobile, he was like a hamstrung ox; cutting the beasts tendons to immobilize it). This incident had caused Jacob’s name “to **stink** among the inhabitants of the land” (Gen 34:30). Jacob did not want his honour (glory) associated with **their assembly** (49:6).

The same Hebrew words are employed in Ecc 10:1 (stink/honour). Moreover, the Hebrew word for **assembly** lh'q' (qähäl) is the root of our word for Preacher (tl,h,qo) or “assembler”[[30]](#footnote-30) (qöheºlet) in Ecc 1:1f, 12; 7:27; 12:8ff. Similarly, in Ecc 7:1 a “good name” (contrast a stinking name) is worth more than pleasantly perfumed priestly anointing oil.

Qoheleth is interested in the covenant-breaking of the priestly tribe of Levi because Qoheleth himself had attempted to usurp the priestly function. He had made his good name to stink (literally with leprosy) by “anointing himself with the precious priestly oil” (making himself a priest) – he had joined his “honour” and good reputation to the assembly of the covenant-breakers......Levi! The priests warned Uzziah not to proceed with the following words:

“Neither shall it be to **thine honour**” (2 Chron 26: 18)

“Unto their **assembly** mine **honour** be thou not united” (Gen 49: 6)

The Genesis reprimand was delivered to Levi and Simeon, the patriarchs of the priestly and scribal tribes, for violating the covenant – it is fitting then that it is referred to by the descendants of Levi as a reminder to Uzziah not to unite his honour with the **assembly** of the wicked (like the Korathites did in Numbers 16). Uzziah was engaged in an act of rebellion, possibly self-divinisation, but instead of acquiring the priestly crown (worn on the forehead Exod 28:38) he was struck with a leprous forehead.

Qoheleth declares that the “day of death is better than the day of one’s birth” (7:1) and his obsession with death (3:2; 7:1, 26; 8:8; 9:5) is easily explained by leprosy, which was a living death. When Miriam was struck with leprosy as punishment for her rebellion against God (i.e., against the authority of Moses as God’s representative) Aaron pleaded; “Let her not be **as one dead**, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother’s womb” (Num 12:12). Qoheleth’s rebellious challenge to divine authority was similar to that of Korah, Dathan and Abiram in Numbers 16. These Levites also challenged Moses’ and Aaron’s authority and declared that they were also holy (and therefore should be accorded the same rights of access); they were instructed to fill their censers and assemble at the tabernacle. God consumed them and swallowed them up **with an earthquake**. Their censers were beaten flat and used as a covering for the altar (of incense),

“*To be* a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which *is* not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the Lord; that he be not as Korah, and as his company” (Num 16:30).

Surely, Uzziah would have seen this covering? One suspects that his censer (2 Chron 26:19) was also beaten flat and added to the memorial covering.

Uzziah’s sin also has intertextual links with the sin of Cain, who like Uzziah is described as a “tiller of the ground” (Gen 4:2; cf. Uzziah loved husbandry) and who was “very wroth” (Gen 4:5; cf. 2 Chron 26:19) when his sacrifice was rejected, like Cain he received a “mark” (cf. leprosy) and was sent away from the sanctuary (Gen 4:15-16). The story of Cain and Abel (cf. Hebel; “vanity) is a metaphor for the two atonement goats – one slaughtered and the other sent away as the scapegoat (bearing sin). It is highly probable that Uzziah attempted his foray into the inner sanctum on the Day of Atonement.

**Under the Sun**

One of the favourite catch phrases of Qoheleth is “under the sun” employed some twenty seven times in Ecclesiastes. The phrase “under the sun” is only approximated elsewhere in relation to David’s sin with Bathsheba. David sin was hidden from public sight but his punishment would be publicly exposed and traumatic – literally, “in sight of this sun” and “before this sun” (2 Sam 12:11-15). This is the only occasion that a similar phrase is employed; in the case of hidden sin and public humiliation. In contrast, Uzziah’s sin was public (under the sun) but his punishment was hidden. He had conducted all his experiments “under the sun” and explored all that wisdom and folly had to offer “under the sun”; his rebellion had occurred “under the sun”, but the remainder of his life was spent in darkness - not allowing the light of the sun to touch his ravaged skin. Henceforth, he would be in the “house of mourning”;

*“It is* better to go to the **house of mourning**, than to go to the house of feasting: for that *is* the end of all men; and the living will lay *it* to his heart” (Ecc 7:2, 4)

He spent the last fifteen years of his life **in quarantine** (in the “lazar” house) contemplating his misspent youth; “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them”(Ecc 12:1).

**Difficult texts**

Some texts are difficult to understand but once they are placed in the context of Uzziah’s life and times, and given wider intertextual treatment, suggestions can be made as to how they should be interpreted. It is sometimes stated that Qoheleth was a misogynist as he supposedly had a low opinion of women. For example (Ecc 7:25-28),

“I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness: And I find more bitter than death the woman, whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher, counting one by one, to find out the account: Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found”.

Firstly, in wisdom literature the “woman” is employed as a metaphoric personification for either wisdom or folly, particular in Proverbs. In Prov 5:1-23, the “strange woman” is a personification of the seduction of folly: “Lest thou give **thine honour** unto others, and **thy years unto the cruel**[[31]](#footnote-31) - “Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger; And thou **mourn at the last**, when **thy flesh and thy body are consumed**” (vv. 10-11). This could stand as a summary of Uzziah’s life and was probably composed by Hezekiah’s scribes (Prov 25:1).[[32]](#footnote-32)

Furthermore, the idea of “counting” and finding “one righteous man” in a thousand, and not one woman, is an allusion to the Sodom incident in Genesis 18-19, where after “counting” (and bargaining) only Lot was found righteous, but both his wife and two daughters proved to be lacking. Why did Uzziah refer to this incident? Probably because he had conquered the Ammonites (2 Chron 26:18; Gen 19:38), who were the product of an incestuous union between Lot and one of his daughters; the “strange woman” (folly) is then represented by the folly of Lot’s daughter, moreover, the incident at Sodom represented a boundary which should not be crossed – a boundary between the holy (the angels) and the profane (the men of Sodom), who wanted to forcefully establish their dominance by abusing divinity and this act of presumption would have spoken powerfully to Uzziah.

Moreover, towards the end of Uzziah’s reign, when Ahaz was co-regent, the temple service deteriorated into an erotic beauty pageant (Isaiah 3). The “daughters of Zion” are compared with the leprous condition of Uzziah - “The Lord will strike with a scab the crown of the head....Instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench”, and of the nation it is said that,“they declare their sin as Sodom” (Isa 3:9) - their pride and hubris. Isaiah says, “they which **lead**[[33]](#footnote-33) thee cause *thee* to err” (Isa 3:12), which may be a reference to the *asherah* cult of temple prostitution. Another difficult text is Ecc.10:9,

“Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; *and* he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby”.

Our suggestion is that Uzziah is referring to the stones of the pagan Assyrian altar that Ahaz had his priests copy from an example in Damascus. He rearranged the temple layout in order to install it in the temple court. The wood is a reference to the fuel needed for the sacrifices (2 Kings 16; 2 Chronicles 28). Although Uzziah sinned when he acted presumptuously, he was a faithful king; Ahaz, on the other hand, chose a path of defiance and unfaithfulness – he purged his court by promoting undesirable cronies: “Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in low place” (Ecc 10: 6).

Ahaz eventually abandoned the temple to neglect: “By much slothfulness the building (i.e., the temple) decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through” (Ecc 10:18) and it required the reformation of Hezekiah to repair the damage.[[34]](#footnote-34) Instead of relying on God, Ahaz strengthened the defences of Jerusalem and appealed to Assyria for deliverance. It was during such an inspection tour of the backbreaking labour needed to protect the city that he encountered the prophet Isaiah:

“And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to **weary men**, but **will ye weary** my God also?” (Isa 7: 16)

This agrees with the sentiments of the Preacher:

“The labour of the foolish **wearieth** every one of them, because he knoweth not how to lead the city.” (Ecc 10:15)[[35]](#footnote-35)

The syncretism of Ahaz was foolish; chopping wood for an Assyrian altar was dangerous as the “axe” of Assyria (cf. Isa 10:15) could easily rebound to their injury.

**Isaiah and Qoheleth**

The prophet Isaiah, who recorded Uzziah’s reign (2 Chron 26:22), seems to continue a dialogue with Qoheleth. We can hypothesise that a first draft of Qoheleth’s memoirs would have existed then and that aspects of the preacher’s life would have been employed to illustrate the “health” of the nation;

**Qoheleth:** “What profit has the worker from that in which he labors?I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied” (Ecc 3:9-10)

**Isaiah:** “Then I said, ‘I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; yet surely my just reward *is* with the Lord, and my work with my God.” (Isa 49:4)

**Qoheleth:** “He has made everything beautiful in its time....” (Ecc 3:11)

**Isaiah:** “...*There is* no beauty that we should desire Him (Hezekiah).” (Isa 53: 2)[[36]](#footnote-36)

**Qoheleth:** “......every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor -- it *is* the gift of God”(Ecc 3:12-13)[[37]](#footnote-37)

**Isaiah:** “He (Hezekiah) shall see the labor of his soul, *and* be satisfied.” (Isa 53:11)

**The conclusion of the whole matter**

Three phrases reoccur in Qoheleth: “vanity of vanities! All is vanity”, “…under the sun” “….striving after wind”.These phrases emphasize the meaningless and emptiness of life in the temporal realm (under the sun). This prompts the ‘Introduction’ to The Anchor Commentary edition[[38]](#footnote-38) of the book to comment:

“Ecclesiastes is the strangest book in the Bible . . . in place of religion of faith and hope and obedience, this writer expresses a mood of disillusionment and proffers a philosophy of resignation. His ethic has no relationship to divine commandments, for there are none. . . .The author is a rationalist, an agnostic, a skeptic, a pessimist, and a fatalist.”[[39]](#footnote-39)

However, we do not share that view, for Ecclesiastes is a penetratingly honest account of a troubled mind coming to terms with the meaning of life. The Preacher does not, for example, reject wisdom – he merely recognises the limitations of human wisdom. The Preacher does not advocate a hedonistic lifestyle, but rather a life of moderation – in which one enjoys the fruits of labours.

Although he has not identified Qoheleth, John H. Choi has correctly understood the theology of Qoheleth. Choi believes that Ecc 7:15-18 (in which a course of moderation is prescribed as the ideal) is the key to the Preacher’s theology:

“A pursuit of hyper-righteousness, then, is the ultimate act of ‘presumption’, and ‘hubris’, because it is more than an effort to please the divine. It is an endeavour to span the great divide between humanity and divinity. The warning is a reminder that one must live life happy in the lot that God has given, and not strive for what lies beyond the mortal’s grasp.”[[40]](#footnote-40)

King Uzziah, in his leprous state, was not even accorded a royal burial: “If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he” (Ecc 6:3). He was buried in a separate grave “in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings” (2 Kgs 15:7; 2 Chron 26:23).

“That lonely grave in the royal necropolis would eloquently testify to coming generations that all earthly monarchy must bow before the inviolable order of the divine will, and that no interference could be tolerated with that unfolding of the purposes of God, which, in the fullness of time, would reveal the Christ, the true High Priest and King for evermore.”[[41]](#footnote-41)

**The Vision of the Ephah**

**A. Perry**

The word ‘ephah’ is an English transliteration of the Hebrew hp'yae. It is a measure for a quantity of dry cereals.

Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt. Lev 19:36

The correct translation of the Hebrew is to transliterate the word as it is a technical name of a measurement of quantity; so while an ‘ephah’ was no doubt a container into which grain or flour was poured for measuring, it is wrong to translate the Hebrew as ‘basket’ (as with the NRSV),

I said, ‘What is it?’ He said, ‘This is a basket coming out.’ And he said, ‘This is their iniquity in all the land.’ Zech 5:6 (NRSV)

The whole point of the vision is that something is **quantified**. An example of a container-ephah being used would be that of Ruth,

So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley. Ruth 2:17 (KJV)

We could estimate the quantity that an ephah represented by adding how much flour is needed to make a flat loaf because for that a tenth of an ephah was required.

You shall bring in from your dwelling places two *loaves* of bread for a wave offering, made of two-tenths *of an ephah*; they shall be of a fine flour, baked with leaven as first fruits to the Lord. Lev 23:17 (NASB)

The NASB has ‘of an ephah’ in italics indicating the words are not in the Hebrew, but this is a natural elision, as shown by the common expression ‘tenth part of an ephah’ (e.g. Exod 16:36).

There is no certainty over the exact quantity that an ephah measured. The *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (the standard academic dictionary) offers 12 litres; Wikipedia goes for 36.4 litres but offers no evidence.[[42]](#footnote-42) The problem of determining the quantity of an ephah is compounded by time and cultural influences. We shouldn’t assume that an ephah in pre-exilic Judah was the same as an ephah during the Babylonian Exile or afterwards. Further, we shouldn’t assume that an ephah is the same size basket for all the types of grain and flour; we could well have a system in which an ephah of flour was a small basket and an ephah of grain was a larger basket.

For our text, it is important to see and think of an ephah and not a basket because quantity is placed in the foreground of the vision – a quantity to do with wickedness. There are four details about the ephah in this vision:

a) It is large enough to have a figurine thrown down into it.

b) It is shaped and made of a material that can bear a mouth and a lead lid.

c) It can be carried by two women.

d) It can have a base.

We can infer that the ephah of Zechariah is not like a picnic basket or a shopping basket or anything we would call a basket because it was capable of holding up a lead lid and having something thrown down into it – we should be thinking in terms of a **storage jar** with handles.

Trade and commerce and the tax interests of government in trade and commerce is at the heart of this vision.

The angel ‘comes forward’ just as the ephah ‘goes forward’ – the Hebrew verb is the same and very common. There is also a contrast to note between ‘lift up your eyes’ spoken to Zechariah and ‘This is their eye through all the land’ spoken of the ephah.

The translations differ: the KJV and NASB follow the MT and the NASB has,

I said, ‘What is it?’ And he said, ‘This is the ephah going forth.’ Again he said, ‘This is their appearance in all the land.’ Zech 5:6 (NASB)

The RSV has,

And I said, ‘What is it?’ He said, ‘This is the ephah that goes forth.’ And he said, ‘This is their iniquity in all the land.’ Zech 5:6 (RSV)

The Hebrew is the ordinary word for ‘eye, appearance’ and there is a homonym meaning ‘spring’. The RSV is following the LXX with ‘iniquity’ and amending the MT, but the MT is preferable. We can, however, make sense of the association of eyes and movement through all the land.

For who hath despised the day of small things? For they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with* those seven; they *are* the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth. Zech 4:10 (KJV)

The seven eyes run to and fro through the whole land and here in the vision of the Ephah, the ephah is ‘their eye’ in all the land. What we need to do is trace the motif of ‘eyes’ through the visions which supports a revision of the NASB as follows:

I said, ‘What is it?’ And he said, ‘This is the ephah (fem.) going forth.’ Again he said, ‘This (fem.) is their eye (masc.) in all the land.’ Zech 5:6 (NASB revised)

So, the vision assumes that we know the reference of ‘their’ in ‘their eye’, but clearly they are not the eyes of the Lord or even on the side of the Lord. If we track back through the visions, there are those who despise the day of small things (Zech 4:10). And then further back there is ‘the Satan’ standing beside Joshua (Zech 3:1) opposing him.

These opponents are identified in Ezra 5:3,

At the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shetharboznai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, ‘Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?’ Ezra 5:3 (KJV)

And a further intertextual link with Zechariah is in v. 5 where have,

But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned answer by letter concerning this *matter*. Ezra 5:5 (KJV)

We can identify ‘their eye’ in Zech 5:6 to be the eye opposing the eye of Yahweh and to comprise Tatnai, Shetharboznai and their companions. The ‘eye’ of the governor through all the land would be the officials who raise taxes and oversee the local elders of Yehud. The reason for the use of ‘eye’ is that this network of government is seen as a network of hostile intelligence gathering and opposition to Yehud and Jerusalem.

We can see why Zechariah sees an ephah: it is a symbol of the governor and it represents his interests in Yehud, which would concern the raising of taxes and the produce of the land. An ephah is a measure around which taxes would have been calculated. The account in Ezra reads as a neutral enquiry sent to Darius, but the vision sees ‘wickedness’ in the ephah. The political motives of the governor and his companions are wicked – self-serving.

The ephah moves twice: at the beginning of the vision it ‘goes forth’ or ‘comes forth’ and at the end of the vision it is carried to Shinar. This obviously corresponds to the coming to Jerusalem of those opposed to building the temple and then their sending of a letter to Darius in Shinar, carried in the vision by two women.

The description of what the messengers aim to achieve in Shinar is stated as,

And he said unto me: ‘To build it a house in the land of Shinar, and it shall be established, and set there upon its own base’. Zech 5:11 (KJV revised)

This is an expression of intention. The intention of the women is to validate the ephah: the NASB is a little clearer

Then he said to me, "To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal." Zech 5:11 (NASB)

What we have here is a metaphorical description of diplomacy and the presentation of policy. The intention of the women is clear. They will prepare the ground for presenting the proposals of the governor concerning the Jerusalem temple. This is the building of a 'temple'. They will then present the concerns – and this is the setting up of the ephah on a pedestal in the 'temple'. The metaphor is chosen because the historical context revolves around the Jerusalem temple.

The challenge of Tatnai, Shetharboznai, and their companions was about the ‘house’ of Yahweh, that it shouldn’t be built. The outcome of their diplomacy is the opposite of what they wanted. A decree was found in “the house of the rolls” in (Ezra 6:1) to the effect that the temple foundations should be laid and the temple built. Moreover, the governor would have to provide supplies and funds for the completion of the task.

We can now answer some supplementary questions.

The ‘cover of lead’ (NASB) is the round lid of the ephah-jar, but the translation ‘talent’ (KJV) is implausible because this common translation is usually associated with gold and silver. We might well ask why there is this detail. Is it just colour for the vision or is there symbolic significance? The other uses of the word ‘lead’ (not common) offer no help, but there may be an echo with the specification of the composition of the tabernacle vessels which are made with talents of gold and silver. The ephah is to stand on a pedestal in a house and this is clearly a temple metaphor, but ‘lead’ would be a un-temple-like metal and a way of making a scathing comment about the wickedness that was in the ephah.

The NASB renders v. 7 as follows,

… (and behold, a lead cover was lifted up); and this is one woman sitting inside the ephah.

I have revised the translation to add the word ‘one’ which is in the Hebrew. Literally, it reads, ‘and this, a woman, one, sitting in the middle of the ephah’. The woman is a figurine which the angel picks up and then throws back into the ephah-jar. And she is given a name ‘Wickedness’. The Hebrew is h['v.rI. This word occurs 15x and it carries a sense of civil and societal wickedness. Other texts refer to the ‘wickedness of the nations’ or the ‘fault’ that is brought before the judge.

And it shall be, if the wicked man *be* worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Deut 25:2 (KJV)

And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that *are* round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them. Ezek 5:6 (KJV)

This is a suitable word to describe the intentions and behaviour towards the Jerusalem temple of the governor of the land beyond the river and his companions – it is civil and societal in its intent and effect.

The ‘two women’ that come for the ephah would represent two cities and we can well hypothesize that they are cities that resent the work in rebuilding Jerusalem. The only other use of ‘two women’ as a symbol is that of Aholah, and Aholibah (Ezekiel 23), but obviously here in Zechariah we don’t know the identity of the two cities that would take the ephah to Shinar. They have the wings of a stork which is one of the abominable unclean birds of the Law of Moses (Lev 11:13-19). It’s a negative characterization of these women. Since the whole episode concerns the Jerusalem temple, the cities are likely other cultic centres with a vested interest in seeing the temple in Jerusalem not rebuilt (cf. the Samaritans of Ezra 4). This means that the one woman in the ephah is also a city and presumably the leading city delegation in opposing the building of the temple. It’s obviously commonplace for cities to make representations to governors in pursuing their interests and these might well be against other cities.

**Logical Topics (4)**

**Intellectual Honesty**

**A. Perry**

**Introduction**

Wikipedia [Sept 2015] introduces intellectual honesty as follows:

Begin Quote

**Intellectual honesty** is an applied method of problem solving, characterized by an unbiased, honest attitude, which can be demonstrated in a number of different ways:

* One's personal beliefs do not interfere with the pursuit of truth;
* Formal Communication Layouts are used on paper, tv, radio and internet;
* Relevant facts and information are not purposefully omitted even when such things may contradict one's hypothesis;
* Facts are presented in an unbiased manner, and not twisted to give misleading impressions or to support one view over another;
* References, or earlier work, are acknowledged where possible, and plagiarism is avoided.

End Quote

Wikipedia defines intellectual honesty but our topic is its converse ‘intellectual dishonesty’. We can take its five characteristics of intellectual honesty and read their converses as characteristics of intellectual dishonesty. The sceptic website, RationalWiki, defines intellectual honesty as,

“**Intellectual honesty** is honesty in the acquisition, analysis, and transmission of ideas. A person is being intellectually honest when he or she, knowing the truth, states that truth.” [Sept 2015]

It describes intellectual dishonesty as omitting relevant facts and information when such things contradict one’s hypothesis, presenting facts in a biased manner, deliberately ignoring facts and arguments that would undermine one’s position, and knowingly using a logical fallacy such as a straw man argument or poisoning the well.

These failings are certainly that, and if they are *knowingly* practised, the person is intellectually dishonest. If they are carried out *unknowingly*, then the person needs education and hasn’t been intentionally dishonest.

In debate, you may be accused of being intellectually dishonest and this may be a charge centred more or less on one of the failings listed above. In an argument, such a charge is *ad hominem* – against the person – and it avoids the point you have put forward. The charge may be true or false, but it may be a debating tactic to avoid your point. The charge may be levelled against you because you have presented a strong point and the other person finds your argument uncomfortable. When presented with an *ad hominem* charge like this, you could equally hypothesize about why your dialogue partner has made the charge and your wonderings are potentially *ad hominem* – against your partner.

**Beliefs and Bias**

As we have said in earlier articles in this series – *ad hominem* argument is not about logic – it is about psychology. If you respond by asking your opponent in what we way you are being intellectually dishonest, they may be precise or vague in their explanation. For example, suppose they say that you are presenting facts in a biased way. You object. They give an example. You defend your presentation of the facts and suggest that they understand the facts incorrectly. They counter-object. The upshot is that you have been deflected away from having your opponent counter the substance of your original point into a defence of yourself and your treatment of the facts. What has happened is that your original point has been lost and you are somewhere in a morass of vague poorly thought out defensive responses.

Let us suppose that you are biased and you have twisted the facts. You may have done this knowingly, in which case this is dishonest, but let us suppose that you did not do it knowingly – in this case, you have a failing but it is not dishonest. What about the situation where the facts are the issue? ‘What are the facts?’ is the question. The facts are disputed. In this case, a charge of intellectual dishonesty over the facts at issue is a fallacy. As yet the facts have not been established.

Of course, one side may think the facts are established and you may think that they are not. If they charge you with intellectual dishonesty over the facts, and you are disputing the facts, they are showing that they have not accepted the terms of the discussion – which are – what are the facts?

The charge under review here is not that you are mistaken in a point of fact – that is a logical response to your point (even though *you* are the subject). The charge is that you are biased and twisting the facts. This is a vaguer charge with many possibilities. The facts could be any of those that touch on the issue that you are contending. But, as we have noted, a general charge of bias will move the argument away from the specifics of the point you had made into uncharted territory and the argument will get lost.

So, the best response to a charge of intellectual dishonesty in the form of bias is to park it for later consideration and return to the logic of the point you made. You might be biased and you may be unintentionally twisting facts to your case (cf. the earlier article on motivated reasoning). Your opponent is doing you a service by making the charge, but it is a charge for another discussion – one about you and possible failings in your knowledge. The issue at stake is the logic of the point you had put forward. What does your opponent think about it – if anything?

It’s always possible to argue with someone and keep the focus on the actual language being used to express point and counter-point. You could argue that this is the only Christ-like way for those in the ecclesia; perhaps in debate with those outside there is scope for *ad hominem* arguing. (There is plenty of biblical precedent.) When you focus on just the language there is a chance you both may come to agreement. As soon as it gets personal, it’s time to walk away.

When an opponent makes an *ad hominem* point like that of intellectual dishonesty, sometimes it is best to be silent, especially if the ground rules for debate have included an understanding that you both will focus on the point of disagreement between you. Silence can often be the only practical course – you appear to ignore the *ad hominem* charge – or sidestep it – in order to reiterate your original point. This can be the only possible kind of response because once you begin to defend an *ad hominem* charge, it is difficult to stop the dialogue spinning off down that path.

Wikipedia mentions ‘personal beliefs’ and presupposes that they might interfere with the pursuit of truth. In one sense, this is readily understood, but the logic of the presupposition is worth examining. If personal beliefs are true, it is difficult to see how they might *interfere* with the pursuit of truth. It seems intuitively obvious though that false beliefs might interfere because they are false. A second observation is that true beliefs might actually help guide the pursuit of truth because they flag contradictory or contrary propositions that come up in your investigations. The flag might lead you to revise your original beliefs or steer you away from the proposition you are considering.

Wikipedia may have in mind scientific investigation, but in matters of faith and biblical studies, personal beliefs would seem to be pivotal in the pursuit of truth. Are Bible readers intellectually dishonest if they let their personal beliefs guide interpretation? The obvious problem-case would be inspiration, inerrancy and archaeology. What does a personal belief in inerrancy do with archaeological ‘facts’? The question goes to the heart of the historico-critical method.[[43]](#footnote-43)

As a first point, we might ask: could Wikipedia’s actual guidance, “One's personal beliefs do not interfere with the pursuit of truth”, itself be the expression of a personal belief? If so, it would be ruled out in a pursuit of a true method of enquiry.[[44]](#footnote-44) When we consider the values of the historico-critical method, and whether to adopt this method, or whether to limit its scope, Wikipedia’s guidance is of no help, because either side of the possibility of error (we allow or disallow the possibility of error) is a methodological principle.

If a method disallows inerrancy, and you believe in inerrancy, are you being dishonest if you practice that method? It depends. If you allow your belief to influence the results of your historico-critical investigations, then you are not being consistent and this is dishonest. But if you take the hypothetical reconstructions of the historico-critical method and place these alongside an historical reconstruction that uses a pre-critical method that has a commitment to inerrancy,[[45]](#footnote-45) then this is consistent and no more than comparative work using different methodologies. You are then presented with a post-critical choice. In Wikipedia’s terms, your personal belief only influences your post-critical choice because you choose the results of the pre-critical method.

In debate, you may be inter-weaving points that rely on different methodologies, but your opponent may see this as intellectually dishonest if they fail to discriminate between things influenced by your personal beliefs and things dependent on pure historico-critical reasoning. Your dialogue partner may not be very good at following your train of thought. (And to be fair, you may be poor at explaining your points.)

However, we should mark a distinction between the pursuit of truth and hypothetical historical reconstruction as just one particular type of that pursuit. A method might exclude personal beliefs, but the more abstract notion of ‘the pursuit of truth’ has no intrinsic right to exclude personal beliefs.

A lot of biblical scholarship is hypothetical and tentative; scholars lament this situation. But there are harder ‘facts’ that challenge pre-critical reconstructions that assume a personal belief in inerrancy. These are usually about dates, names and numbers as well as the acceptance of the miraculous. It may be about these ‘facts’ that an opponent claims you are being intellectually dishonest because of your personal beliefs (about inerrancy).

The challenge here doesn’t come from the more tendentious hypothetical historical reconstructions about which you might well be sceptical and prefer the straightforward biblical reading. The challenge from the sceptic-opponent is that you should reject your pre-critical reading, because the contrary evidence evaluated alongside the biblical text, on a level playing field,[[46]](#footnote-46) is far too strong to discount. If you refuse to do so, then this just shows that your personal beliefs are influencing your pursuit of truth. The challenge comes from the hard facts.

A sceptic-opponent might want to overthrow the Bible. A liberal-minded Christian will want to argue against inerrancy in favour of a different view of the Bible. In any event, a charge that you are being intellectually dishonest can quickly lead you into a philosophical defence of a method and inerrancy. If you go down this path in an argument, you leave behind the point you were making and your opponent has avoided addressing that point.

The correct response to a charge of intellectual dishonesty based on the influence of your own personal beliefs is to accept that a discussion of methods and beliefs is needed but that this is going to involve philosophy and theology. The question at issue is whether the argument you are making is otherwise logically sound and one that casts doubt on the opposing position. If your opponent doesn’t respond to your point in terms of its logic or its appeal to evidence, then s/he has in effect ended the discussion.

**Conclusion**

We have discussed intellectual dishonesty in the context of debate. A charge of intellectual dishonesty shifts the level in a discussion. You are discussing/arguing about a point and your opponent shifts the level from this *content* to the *form* of your discussion – *how* you’re discussing/arguing. It is a debating tactic. You may be at fault, but that is another kind of discussion. You should return your opponent to the point at hand and park the question of intellectual dishonesty. If your dialogue partner doesn’t follow, then the discussion is ended. It is only by keeping a focus on the *content* in a discussion that you will rigorously stick to matters of logic and evidence.

Charges of intellectual dishonesty should not be made in a public forum between the followers of Christ. They are a matter for private conversation. This is the principle of Matthew 18. This follows because *ad hominem* arguments are ‘against the person’ and if you have something against a fellow-believer, you should talk it over privately. The problem with following this guidance is that skilled debaters mix up arguments that address logic and evidence with arguments ‘against the person’. It takes a concerted effort to distinguish the two, especially if you want to win your point.

### Pre-Existence in the Synoptics?

**T. Gaston**

**Introduction**

I think the broad scholarly consensus is that the notion of the pre-existence of Jesus is not to be found in the Synoptic Gospels.[[47]](#footnote-47) Certainly these gospels do not include any narrative of events that occur before Jesus’ birth, nor any saying of Jesus describing his consciousness of such a time, nor any explicit statement equivalent to “Jesus pre-existed”.

This same scholarly consensus would identify pre-existence in the Pauline epistles (usually dated prior to the Synoptics) and the Gospel of John (usually dated later than the Synoptics).[[48]](#footnote-48) There is an interesting incongruity in the chronology of this evidence, which would seem to disrupt simplistic ideas of Christological development.[[49]](#footnote-49) Such incongruity might be resolved if one allows that Paul did not, in fact, hold that Jesus pre-existed. More on this below. An alternative is that the Synoptics do, in fact, presuppose the pre-existence of Jesus. Though this view is not wildly held amongst scholars, it is worth exploring before moving to the more controversial question of pre-existence in the writings of Paul.

**Pre-existence in the Synoptics**

I will focus in this section on the proposals of Simon Gathercole who has given the most cogent defence of the claim that the Synoptics presuppose the pre-existence of Jesus. His thesis centres on the claim that the “I have come” sayings of Jesus give the “clearest indications” of pre-existence within the Synoptics, though he does consider some other indicators.[[50]](#footnote-50) He rejects attempts to find Wisdom Christology within the Synoptics as a “blind alley”.[[51]](#footnote-51)

Gathercole identifies ten “I have come” sayings within the Synoptics: Mark 1:24 (par. Luke 4:34), Matt 8:29, Mark 1:38 (cf. Luke 4.43), Mark 2:17 (par. Matt 9:13; Luke 5:32), Matt 5:17, Luke 12:49, Matt 10:34 (par. Luke 12:51), Matt 10:35, Mark 10:45 (par. Matt 20:28), and Luke 19:10.[[52]](#footnote-52) He argues that this formula (“I have come” + purpose) implies a deliberative act of coming from somewhere to do something.[[53]](#footnote-53) He draws parallels with the “I have come” sayings used by angels to announce purpose of visit,[[54]](#footnote-54) where the implication is that the angel was previously in heaven and was sent to Earth for a specific purpose. Gathercole argues that when Jesus uses the “I have come” formula he is announcing the purpose of his life’s work and indicating that he has come from somewhere.[[55]](#footnote-55) He concludes,

“…there is a consistent use of the ‘I have come’ + purpose formula which is not conventionally used in early Judaism by human figures to describe the totality of their life’s work. Instead, the formula refers to the totality of the heavenly figure’s earthly visit, and to the purpose of that visit”.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Whilst the implication of the “I have come” sayings is not directly about pre-existence, in the case of Jesus coming from heaven, it would entail pre-existence. Gathercole also argues that “I have been sent” sayings probably argue in the same direction, though these could also be prophetic statements.

Gathercole addresses and dismisses several alternative explanations for the “I have come” sayings. For example, the proposal that “I have come” is a declaration of a prophetic advent is dismissed given the lack of examples of the formula being used in this way. 1 Samuel 16 is rejected as not referring to the prophet’s advent; Pesikta Rabbati 20 is rejected as not being explicitly about prophets.[[57]](#footnote-57) Similarly, Gathercole rejects the proposal that the “I have come” sayings have messianic connotations (“the coming one”), arguing that the emphasis of the “I have come” sayings is on the purpose, not on the coming. He summarizes,

“…the messianic interpretation falls foul of the same problem as both of the prophetic interpretations: they rely heavily on ‘coming’ being a technical or semi-technical term as opposed to referring to a coming from ‘a’ to ‘b’”.[[58]](#footnote-58)

This thesis rests on two ideas. Firstly, that “I have come” + purpose had become idiomatic by the time of the composition of Synoptics. Secondly, that the “I have come” sayings of Jesus are more naturally understood as coming from a location rather than any other sense. The first of these ideas is plausible enough, though “I have come” sayings are not reserved for heavenly beings (cf. Luke 13:7). Yet the second idea flounders on the fact that the concept of coming is used in other senses with reference to Jesus. Mark’s gospel begins with John the Baptist proclaiming “after me comes he who is mightier than I” (Mark 1:7; cf. Matt 3:11; Luke 3:16). Presumably John does not mean come from “a” to “b” because John himself did not come from Nazareth (cf. Mark 1:9) and, though Jesus does come to the Jordan, he only remains there temporarily (cf. Mark 1:12). So in what sense did Jesus “come”? The “after” implies that John (or Mark) is thinking temporally[[59]](#footnote-59) rather than geographically. It also implies that John considers himself to have come in respect of a time, but Mark does not present John as having pre-existed.

Elsewhere in the Synoptic tradition John the Baptist asks Jesus if he is “the one who is to come” (Matt 11:3 / Luke 7:19) and, though Gathercole dismisses this example, presumably it is rooted in this same tradition of John speaking about one who was to come ‘after’. So, in these sayings of John we have a clear example coming used in the sense of a temporal advent of a significant figure. More than that, by introducing his gospel with John predicting the advent of the one who was to come Mark contextualises Jesus’ “I have come” sayings with a clear temporal marker; Jesus was the one to come after John.

There is a response to this and it is as follows: John the Baptist is identified as the Elijah who was to come (Matt 11:14, 17:10-12; Mark 9:11-13) and given the common belief that Elijah was in heaven and would come at some significant moment then John’s talk of Jesus coming after would be consistent with the idea that Jesus had come from heaven. However, this response rests on the assumption that John and/or the synoptic evangelists regarded the Baptist literally as Elijah. It is evident that Luke did not.

Luke describes the circumstances of John’s conception, without any whiff of incarnation or pre-existence. He omits the saying of Jesus that John was the Elijah to come, instead including the prediction that John would go before Jesus “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17). The other two synoptic evangelists are coyer about John’s origins, though again there is no indication that they consider him to be literally Elijah. Rather the impression is given through the events of the transfiguration that Elijah is someone separate from John. When Jesus speaks of the “Elijah who is to come” that very qualification indicates that he is not talking about the person of Elijah but the role of Elijah in prophetic expectation. So the coming of John, even in the context of his being Elijah, does not imply a coming from heaven but an advent at a specific moment in time.

**Conclusion**

So, whilst Gathercole is correct that there does not seem to be strong precedent for the use of “I have come” in the context of prophetic or messianic advent, I think there are strong reasons for thinking this is the way this formula is used in the Synoptics. Consequently, I do not think there are any compelling reasons to think the synoptic evangelists presupposed the pre-existence of Jesus.

**Columnists**

**Benjamin Kent**



**Matthew 13:44-52**

The parables of Matt 13.44-52 are unique to Matthew’s gospel and their interpretation has been subject to much debate. They conclude with the teaching of the ‘old and new treasures’. This teaching is the climax of the parables, the last revelation in the discourse on the kingdom of heaven. This column (and the next two) will use Peter Phillips’ recent interpretation of 13.52 as a parable of ‘expulsion’ to approach 13.44-52 in a new light.

By paying particular attention to the narrative progression of 13.44-52, its role in the overarching narrative, its genres of imagery and its effect on its intended audience, this essay intends to show that, having established a setting of an insider/outsider dichotomy, Matt 13.43-52 challenges its audience with the understanding that true allegiance to the kingdom of heaven demands radical discipleship.

It is important to acknowledge the kind of text we have in Matt 13.44-52. Redaction Criticism approaches the text with a focus on the editorial decisions made in the text’s hypothetical collation. It works to distinguish the traditions of the editor from the original text. Two of the relevant assumptions that redaction criticism makes are that there is an original form of the text and that stylistic traits of the editor reveal the origin of text.[[60]](#footnote-60)

The parables in Matthew’s gospel do seem to be deliberately grouped and arranged (Matthew 13, 18, 20-22, 24-25)[[61]](#footnote-61) and in Matthew 13 they are grouped thematically. Scholars such as Jack Kingsbury view Matthew as entirely redactional. Others view it as an expansion of Mark 4, blended with Matthew’s source and it is suggested to be influenced by the Gospel of Thomas.[[62]](#footnote-62) However, the parables of Matthew 13 are set within a narrative sequence, and without paying sufficient notice to the narrative development, the parables are in danger of becoming just a series of ‘points’.[[63]](#footnote-63) In approaching Matthew 13, it is necessary to consider whether ‘the context given by the Evangelist is the proper framework’ for parable interpretation. However, this is not the aim of this series of columns. We will approach the ‘final form’ of Matt 13.44-52 and examine its impact on its intended audience.

Within 13.44-52 there are some key issues that require discussion. In interpreting 13.52, scholars have historically followed the Vulgate tradition which translates the Greek ἐκβάλλω as ‘bring out from’.

Then he said to them, ‘Therefore every expert in the law who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new and old.’ (Matt 13:52 NET)

The passage is most frequently interpreted as a teaching about the continuity and discontinuity of the old and new, as a teaching about Christian scribes wielding the gospel from both the Old and the New Testaments.

Ulrich Luz argues that the passage is ‘almost entirely redactional’[[64]](#footnote-64) but 13.52 may contain a ‘kernel of tradition’ present in the non-Matthean καινὰ καὶ παλαιά (new and old things), that may originate from a proverb about scribes since turned into a parable.[[65]](#footnote-65) John Nolland argues that 13.51-52 is largely a pastiche of the previous material in chapter 13 because of the repetition of its use of similar vocabulary and therefore shouldn’t be understood as a final parable.[[66]](#footnote-66) Donald Hagner reads the passage as an allegory that sheds light on the nature of the seven previous parables and their tension between the continuity and discontinuity of new and old.[[67]](#footnote-67)

However, in “Casting out the Treasure: A New Reading of Matthew 13.52”Peter Phillips’ reinterpretation of ἐκβάλλω significantly changes the meaning of the passage from a teaching about ‘selection’ to one about ‘expulsion’. Phillips argues that, “traditional interpretations have ignored how words are used in context of the chapter, instead looking to wider usage.”[[68]](#footnote-68) By applying the normal translation of ἐκβάλλω in biblical and non-biblical Greek literature, Phillips argues compellingly for a translation that renders 13.52 in its original form as a parable in which ‘every scribe trained in the kingdom of heaven is like a householder, who casts out of his treasure new and old.’[[69]](#footnote-69) This semantic move from ‘selection’ to ‘expulsion’ conforms the passage to the theme of ‘sacrificial disposal’ common to other treasure parables in the latter part of chapter 13.[[70]](#footnote-70) Philips’ translation also makes sense of the less common word order of ‘new and old’ as it depicts a person clearing out their storehouse, working from the outside in ‘to make way for something else.’[[71]](#footnote-71) Phillips’ translation offers a vivid picture that compliments the previous parables of the Treasure and the Pearl.

Another issue is the meaning of ‘parable’. The word comes from the Greek παραβολή which is to ‘juxtaposition’, or to ‘throw alongside’, thus denoting comparison.[[72]](#footnote-72) However, the Greek usage of παραβολή is broader than English usage. In Greek it is used for riddles, proverbs, making comparisons and allegory. Snodgrass’ definition of a parable is broad enough to encompass most variants, as he describes it as ‘an expanded analogy used to convince and persuade. This is the way Ancient Greeks used the term and is broad enough to see how the Evangelists used them.’[[73]](#footnote-73)

Matthew 13.44-52 is arguably the third and final pericope in this discourse and by now much of the insider/outsider dichotomy has been introduced. The pericope is framed by formulas which affirm the insider/outsider dichotomy. The previous pericope ends with the formula: ‘Let anyone with ears listen!’ This functions to remind the intended audience of the insider/disciple is one who listens. That 13.44 starts a new pericope is indicated by the renewed formula ‘The kingdom of heaven is like [...]’ and announces a new sequence of three parables. The pericope ends at 13.52 with a question of understanding, thus affirming the insider/disciple as one who understands. The end of the pericope is followed by 13.53 which repeats the narrative formula: ‘After these things […]’, marking chapter 13 as one of the five main discourses of Jesus.[[74]](#footnote-74)

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**History**

**Andrew Wilson**

Barry Cunliffe, *Europe Between The Oceans, Themes and Variations: 9000 BC – AD 1000* (Paperback Edition; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

Our final review of 2015, from the list Dr Sheldrake suggested to me, is of Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe’s next to most recent work. Sir Barry Cunliffe is the oldest, most eminent, and the most well-placed of our reviewees. His book is the largest (518 pp), most ambitious, and the newest of them (2008; being paperbacked only in 2011). Cunliffe is also the most interesting, knowledgeable, balanced and thoughtful, certainly of the modern authors we have examined.

The major difference between Cunliffe’s generation of writers, and our first two reviewees – of authors writing over a century ago, is that they had an awareness, which modern writers do not, of the importance, biblically, of identifying Tarshish. In a way, Champion is an oddity here – he seems aware of Tarshish’s importance, but only uses that awareness to goad into anger the Bible-believer by his swashbuckling, sociologically-driven derisiveness of the older Archaeology, and all things connected with the Bible.

We get the best out of Cunliffe by ignoring the issue of the label “Tarshish”, and looking instead at his dealing with issues such as “Cornwall, tin mining”, “Tin, Cornish” and “Tin Islands”. Then we discover a rich vein of information, to assist our studies.

Using our initial criteria, adopted back in the spring, with Smith, we find, then, that Cunliffe wholly ignores the issue of “Tarshish”, as a label.

His awareness of ancient authorities is vast, and he refers to a lot of them in some detail: as well as Classical authors such as Herodotus, Xenophon, Thucydides, Strabo, Tacitus, Diodorus Siculus, Pliny and Polybius, he refers to much more specialist sources, too. Thus, we have details of the Greek geographer Hecataeus, the Phoenician explorers Hanno and Himilco, the traveller and scientist Pytheas of Marseille, and the Greek scholar Eratosthenes. We, thus justifiably, feel ourselves to be in good hands, when Cunliffe makes judgements or generalisations, and, indeed, such comments are redolent with wisdom, insight and balance.

I wish, therefore, to present interesting observations made by Cunliffe, and draw what I believe to be wholly legitimate, and highly significant conclusions from them:

(1) Cunliffe prints maps [p. 5], as designed by Herodotus, with interesting observations by himself. He shows Herodotus’s map, based on Hecataeus. This, in turn, was derived from compiling data from traders’ accounts. The map shows a large area west and north of what is clearly meant, from the cartography, though it is unlabelled by Herodotus, as the Straits of Gibraltar. This large area is labelled, as “Ocean”, and in it, to the North-West of Gibraltar, are the “Tin Islands”. Cunliffe comments: “Herodotus... was careful not to speculate about regions he knew little or nothing about”.

(2) He prints maps drawn up by Eratosthenes, and Strabo [p.9] with interesting observations. The Eratosthenes map was, says Cunliffe, derived from “information brought back by the Atlantic explorer Pytheas”. Pytheas had, in fact, sailed right around the British Isles, in a West-East pattern, taking sun-height measurements on the islands of Man, Lewis and Shetland, and visiting the tin-producing region of Cornwall. The map, based on his work shows “Britannia” quite clearly, with a group of four unlabeled islands, off to the South-west of the mainland.

(3) Strabo’s map is later [first century BC], and is based on sources other than Pytheas. It, too, shows “Britain”, and six islands South-west of the mainland. On Strabo’s map, these are labelled – as “Tin Islands”. In fact, this is a complex issue, even with modern cartographic gear. It is, however, estimated that the Scillies contain 5 inhabited islands, and 140 others!

(4) Cunliffe shows the distribution, in Europe, of Tin, with interesting observations. The distribution of Tin, in Western Europe, is in Portugal, Brittany and in Cornwall, in South-west England. The “Tin Islands”, however, were off Cornwall, and were the places bearing that ascription for the very good reason that they, and Cornwall, were the major source of Tin. And, says Cunliffe, the industry involving tin **did start in Britain**. Once discovered, and its alloy with Copper perfected, says Cunliffe, the alloys of preference, in warfare terms, changed:

“In Europe, once full tin-bronze (c.90% copper and 10 % tin) had been developed, it was adopted universally, replacing unalloyed copper and the arsenical alloys. The earliest appearance of a regular bronze-using economy is to be found in Britain and Ireland in the period 2200 – 2000 BC, after which it spread eastwards and southwards through Europe, reaching all parts by 1400 – 1300 BC. Since the constituents of bronze were not widely found, and tin was and is exceedingly rare, bronze took on value as a prestige commodity. Once established, it became highly desirable and the movement of the metal as ingots or as scrap or finished items became widespread. Many other commodities now entered into the exchange networks in quantity: gold, silver, amber, furs, horses, textiles, oils and exotic stones like lapis and amethyst are all evident in the archaeological record” (pp 181 – 182)

(5) Professor Cunliffe shows the distribution, in Europe, of Bronze artefacts, from his own experience. The European archaeological sites, with Roasting Spits, Flesh Hooks and Cauldrons, of bronze, from the period 1200 – 800 BC, total 89. Of these, the distribution is as follows:-

(a) British Isles 49

[Ireland – 23; England, Scotland & Wales – 25]

[Channel Islands – 1]

(b) Denmark 1

(c) France 14

(d) Iberia 23

(e) Sardinia 1

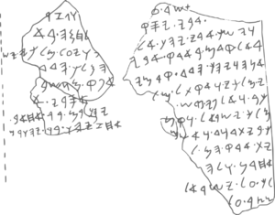
(f) Cyprus 1

Of this distribution, Cunliffe comments as follows:

“The old hard rocks of southern Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, Brittany and the western coastal regions of Iberia were metal-rich, producing abundant copper to service regional needs and tin and gold for export to other parts of Europe. The scale of metal-production during this period can be gauged from the huge number of bronze items preserved in museum collections – axes, swords, spears, and a variety of tools and luxury gear. Axes alone number in the tens of thousands.” (p. 254)

In conclusion, there is much that is useful in Cunliffe’s book, both in technical detail, in up-to-date scholarship, directed research of his subordinates[[75]](#footnote-75)1, and broad and imaginative sweep of generalised judgment. Cunliffe is fully aware of the history of previous scholarship and of what academics of later generations owe to the Rawlinsons of previous periods. Cunliffe makes many more useful comments for the Bible student than does his younger Spanish contemporary, Professor Maria Eugenia Aubet[[76]](#footnote-76)1 of Barcelona University.

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**Archaeology News**

**Kay McGrath**

Our first stop this Issue is at **Ritmeyer Archaeological Design**advising in brief recent Blog updates:

For those using Accordance Bible Software Brother Ritmeyer advises on *The Virtual Bible – a New Visual Resource*[[77]](#footnote-77) Posted on July 13, 2015 by Leen Ritmeyer:

‘Accordance Blog[[78]](#footnote-78) announced the release of:

The Virtual Bible[[79]](#footnote-79), a new visual resource which offers three-dimensional reconstructions of the land of Israel, first-century Jerusalem, the Herodian Temple, and more. The visuals, which include still images and video fly-throughs, were developed by Dr. Daniel Warner of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Dr. James Strange of the University of South Florida, in consultation with Leen Ritmeyer, an archaeological architect who is an expert on the Jerusalem Temple.’

*Secrets of the Temple Mount*[[80]](#footnote-80) Posted on July 31, 2015 by Leen Ritmeyer:

‘Although visiting the Temple Mount is not always a pleasant experience these days, it is still worth the attempt. We have had good feedback from visitors who have used our guidebook[[81]](#footnote-81) to find things which otherwise they would have missed. One of the little known secrets described in our book (which can be purchased here[[82]](#footnote-82)) is a small window near the northwest corner of the Temple Mount. Despite its apparent insignificance, it has a large story to tell.’

*Ancient Mikveh With Rare Inscriptions Found in Jerusalem*[[83]](#footnote-83) Posted on August 5, 2015 by Leen Ritmeyer:

‘Arutz Sheva reports[[84]](#footnote-84) the finding of a 2000 year old Mikveh in Jerusalem. A Mikveh is a Jewish ritual bath used for purification purposes. The newspaper article has a video and many photographs.’

*Stepped podium found in Jerusalem*[[85]](#footnote-85) Posted on August 31, 2015 by Leen Ritmeyer

‘The Israel Antiquities Authority announced[[86]](#footnote-86) today that a stepped podium/auction block has been found in the City of David.

‘An intriguing find consisting of an impressive pyramid-shaped staircase constructed of large ashlar stones was uncovered in an archaeological excavation currently conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority.’’

On our sojourn we are now in **Israel** - discoveries over the past several months range from Roman camps to conservation of early mosaics detailing streets and buildings in Egypt.

At Megiddo, the Jezreel Valley Regional Project teamed up with archaeologist Yotam Tepper and in their second season dig have exposed a Roman camp: ‘During the reign of the Roman emperor Hadrian (117-138 C.E.), two imperial legions were stationed in the province of Judea: Legio X Fretensis in Jerusalem and Legio VI Ferrata in the north. The latter was deployed between the First Jewish Revolt (67-70 C.E.) and the Bar-Kokhba rebellion (132-136 C.E.), and remained stationed in Judea through most of the 3rd century’ further reading can be found here: *Roman Legion Camp Uncovered at Megiddo.*[[87]](#footnote-87)

A headline that caught my attention, *Cattleman Raising Historic Herd of Red Heifers in Israel*,[[88]](#footnote-88) turned out to be ‘The Temple Institute is working together with an Israeli cattleman to raise a red heifer in Israel, in strict accordance with the Biblical commandment. The project is the culmination of years of research at the Temple Institute that fuses ancient religious texts and modern science.’

The Israel Antiquities Authority reported that *The Most Ancient Hebrew Scroll Since the Dead Sea Scrolls Has Been Deciphered*[[89]](#footnote-89)- ‘For the first time, advanced technologies made it possible to read parts of a scroll that was completely burnt c. 1,500 years, inside the Holy Ark of the synagogue at Ein Gedi. At the end of extremely challenging efforts which lasted over a year, the scientists and researchers were amazed to see verses from the beginning of the Book of Leviticus, suddenly coming back to life.’

BiblePlaces Blog has advised about and included an *Interactive Map - Joshua 12 Slain King Town List.*[[90]](#footnote-90)

TaborBlog have provided details and various links under the Heading: *What Did You Find this Summer at the Mount Zion Dig?*[[91]](#footnote-91) – Worth the look.

A momentary detour to **Lithuania** as the Israel Antiquities Authority advised that the *Remains of the Great Synagogue and Shulhof of Vilna are Rediscovered Seventy Years after their Destruction by the Nazis*[[92]](#footnote-92) ‘A Ground Penetrating Radar survey conducted in June 2015 in Vilnius, Lithuania has uncovered the underground remains of the Great Synagogue and Shulhof of Vilna, now lying partially below a modern school. These important remnants of what was before the Holocaust, Lithuania's greatest synagogue, will be exposed in an excavation to commence next year.’

To **Zurich** as Breaking News in Israel reported about ‘A rare coin minted almost 2,000 years ago during the conquest of Jerusalem was recently found at an auction in Zurich, NRG reported. The find has helped shed light upon the Roman attitude at the time over the conquest, resulting in a large commemoration of the Roman victory over the Judean rebels.’ Detail can be found here: *2,000-Year-Old Coin Sheds Light on Important Role of Judea on Roman Psyche*.[[93]](#footnote-93)

**Back in the Land**: ‘A massive gate unearthed in Israel may have marked the entrance to a biblical city that, at its heyday, was the biggest metropolis in the region. The town, called Gath, was occupied until the ninth century B.C. In biblical accounts, the Philistines — the mortal enemies of the Israelites — ruled the city. The Old Testament also describes Gath as the home of Goliath, the giant warrior whom the Israelite King David felled with a slingshot.’ Continued here: *Goliath Gates: Entrance to Famous Biblical Metropolis Uncovered.*[[94]](#footnote-94)

BBC News reported on *'Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions' Baffle Israeli Archaeologists*[[95]](#footnote-95) regarding the ‘writing … found on the walls of a room containing the remains of a Jewish ritual bath, or Mikveh, believed to be about 2,000 years old.’

At ScienceDaily and in summary of research being conducted by Bar-Ilan University: ‘A new study describes the bio-archaeological remains of the Philistine culture in Israel during the Iron Age (12th century to 7th century BCE). The results of this research indicate that the ca. 600 year presence of the Philistine culture had a major and long-term impact on local floral biodiversity.’ *Philistines Introduced Sycamore, Cumin and Opium Poppy Into Israel During the Iron Age*.[[96]](#footnote-96)

Bar-Ilan University also reports on ‘A group of intrepid Israeli researchers recently went back to the dawn of the Stone Age to make lunch. Using 12,500-year-old conical mortars carved into bedrock, they reconstructed how their ancient ancestors processed wild barley to produce groat meals, as well as a delicacy that might be termed ‘proto-pita’—small loaves of coal-baked, unleavened bread.’ *Palaeolithic Mortars Used to Make 'Natufian Bread'*.[[97]](#footnote-97)

In Ashkelon a 1,800 year old (about) stone sarcophagus has been found *Rare Sarcophagus Exposed in Ashkelon Building Site*.[[98]](#footnote-98)

‘The real location of the Tomb of the Maccabees’?  The Israel Antiquities Authority is currently undertaking research with the assistance of the young and locals in an endeavour to determine: *Is the Large Mausoleum Recently Uncovered by the Israel Antiquities Authority and Residents of the Modi‘in Region Really the Tomb of the Maccabees?*[[99]](#footnote-99)

A *Preliminary Report of the 2015 Jezreel Expedition Field Season is now available*.[[100]](#footnote-100)

The Temple Mount Sifting Project reports on ‘A rare 3,000 year-old seal dating to the period of the Biblical kings David and Solomon of the 10th century BCE was recently discovered at the Temple Mount Sifting Project in Jerusalem.’ *Rare 3,000-Year-Old Seal Discovered within Earth Discarded from Temple Mount.*[[101]](#footnote-101)

The Israel Antiquities Authority also posted recent update about a find of 2 years ago reporting on the conservation: *A Rare 1,500 Year Old Mosaic was Discovered that Depicts Ancient Streets and Buildings in Egypt*.[[102]](#footnote-102)

More News in Brief:

At BiblePlaces Blog they report on a *Murex Map of* **Lebanon**.[[103]](#footnote-103)

National Geographic has an update on **Syria** and the ongoing campaign currently in that region against archaeology *Here Are the Ancient Sites ISIS Has Damaged and Destroyed*.[[104]](#footnote-104)

In **Jordan** and in search of Sodom ‘Now having completed the tenth season of excavations, an archaeological team headed by Steven Collins of Trinity Southwest University, New Mexico, has unearthed a goldmine of ancient monumental structures and artifacts that are revealing a massive Bronze Age city-state that dominated the region of Jordan’s southern Jordan Valley, even during a time when many other great cities of the ‘Holy Land’ region were either abandoned or in serious decline.’ *Possible Site of Ancient Sodom Yields More Finds.*[[105]](#footnote-105)

In **Iraq** ‘Researchers are embarking on an ambitious project to bring part of Iraq's destroyed heritage back to life.’ *Destroyed Iraqi Holy Sites Find New Life Online*.[[106]](#footnote-106)

At BiblePlaces Blog, *More on Neo-Assyrian Inscriptions*.[[107]](#footnote-107)

On Gilgamesh, ‘I was taking photos in the main hall of the Sulaymaniyah Museum and came across a display case containing a small clay tablet. The description beside it said the tablet was part of the Epic of Gilgamesh and a fragment of tablet V. Immediately I thought it was a ‘replica’ as the description was superficial. It did not say the tablet was genuine, that it was newly discovered or even told about the many new pieces of information it had revealed.’ *The Newly Discovered Tablet V of the Epic of Gilgamesh*.[[108]](#footnote-108)

About the City of Kish, ‘A British archaeological team from the Field Museum and Oxford University conducted excavations between 1923 and 1929 in Kish City, 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of Baghdad. Since then, no other excavations have been made in the city, which dates back 5,000 years. The visible ruins of the ancient site have been covered by sand dunes and mounds. According to archaeological records, Kish City survived the Great Flood that happened some 7,600 years ago and was mentioned in Jewish, Christian and Muslim scriptures.’ *Iraq’s Ancient Kish City Lies Buried in Sand*.[[109]](#footnote-109)

Discoveries in **Turkey** ‘A new 120 square meter (1,300 square foot) Byzantine mosaic dating back to the 5-6th century C.E. containing a Bible verse in Greek as well as depictions of various animals living together in peace was discovered at an archeological dig in Turkey’s southern province of Adana.’ *New 120 sq. Meter Mosaic Containing Bible Verses Found in Southern Turkey.*[[110]](#footnote-110)

For other news, see…

*Turks and Ephesians Lived Together*.[[111]](#footnote-111)

*Ancient Hittite Mine Factory Surprises Archaeologists*.[[112]](#footnote-112)

*Symbols of Hittite Goddess of Sexuality Found on 4,000-year-old Tablet Discovered in Central Turkey*.[[113]](#footnote-113)

*Ancient ‘Water Law’ Unearthed in Laodicea*.[[114]](#footnote-114)

*Archaeozoologists Open Bone Lab at Ephesus*.[[115]](#footnote-115)

*Hittite Women’s Hair Tie Discovered*.[[116]](#footnote-116)

*First Roman Christian Church Unearthed in Diyarbakır*.[[117]](#footnote-117)

*Ancient Sea Route Discovered in Mersin*.[[118]](#footnote-118)

*Excavations at Myra Show Ancient Hairstyles Same as Today’s*.[[119]](#footnote-119)

*Discovery of Amulet Changes History of Ephesus*.[[120]](#footnote-120)

In **Egypt** the *Foreign Archaeological Missions Resume Excavating Upper Egypt After 13-Year Ban.*[[121]](#footnote-121)

From Science in Poland: ‘Traces of intentional injury in the form of cuts on the femur have been discovered on the remains of one of the dead found during this year's excavations carried out in the Western Desert in Egypt. It is the first known case of such treatment from the Neolithic period in this part of Africa.’ *Poles Discovered a Unique 6.5 Thousand Years Old Burial in Egypt.*[[122]](#footnote-122)

‘Four pre-dynasty tombs have been uncovered at Tel Al-Farkha in the Nile Delta’ *Naqada Tombs Uncovered in Egypt's Daqahliyah*.[[123]](#footnote-123)

‘A reminder for a dinner invitation and a touching letter from a young man to his mother offer a rare glimpse of daily life in ancient Egypt, thanks to a recent rediscovery at UBC Library.’ ‘*Window on a Lost World’: Rediscovered Papyri at UBC Shed Light on Ancient Egypt.*[[124]](#footnote-124)

‘In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the rubbish dumps of Oxyrhynchus yielded thousands upon thousands of papyrus manuscript fragments that have provided—and continue to provide—a tremendous source of knowledge about the ancient world.’ *Parchment Manuscripts Discovered at Oxyrhynchus.*[[125]](#footnote-125)

More from Polish Science: ‘The gift of the father of the legendary Cleopatra VII for an Egyptian temple, in the form of a linen cloth, has been discovered by Polish archaeologists during excavations in Western Thebes (modern Luxor) in Egypt.’ *Rare Find of Polish Scientists in Egypt.*[[126]](#footnote-126)

‘Three ancient Egyptian stelai (upright stone slab bearing a commemorative inscription) were unearthed in Wadi-al-Hudi, 35km southeast of Aswan, Antiquities Ministry said.’ *4,000-Year-Old Stelai Unearthed South of Aswan.*[[127]](#footnote-127)

‘Dr. Mamdouh El Damaty, Minister of Antiquities, announced … a new discovery at Edfu temple.’ *Egyptian Archaeologists Discover Human Remains and Pottery.*[[128]](#footnote-128)

‘NOTHING has inspired generations of archaeologists like the discovery in 1922 of the treasure-packed tomb of Tutankhamun. What if another untouched Egyptian trove lies buried, not in a distant patch of desert, nor even nearby amid the overlapping tomb-shafts of Luxor’s Valley of the Kings, but instead just a millimetre’s distance from plain view?’ *What Lies Beneath?*[[129]](#footnote-129)

‘Unusual embalming recipes have been identified on two ancient Egyptian mummies, according to new international research.’ *Ancient Egyptian Mummies Embalmed With Unusual Recipes.*[[130]](#footnote-130)

‘Glass-making furnaces dating back to the Roman Egypt period (30B.C.-395A.D.,) have been unearthed in Egypt’s Delta archaeological site of Tell Mutubis, the Antiquities Ministry stated.’ *Roman Glass-Making Furnaces Discovered in Egypt’s Delta.*[[131]](#footnote-131)

‘Does the ancient Egyptian Queen Nefertiti rest in the tomb of the Boy King Tutankhamun, as a British Egyptologist has claimed, asks Nevine El-Aref.’ *Looking for Queen Nefertiti*[[132]](#footnote-132)

Further updates on the search for Queen Nefertiti:

*Egypt approves Radar for Nefertiti Tomb Quest*.[[133]](#footnote-133)

*Search for Nefertiti's Burial Chamber in Tutankhamun Tomb.*[[134]](#footnote-134)

‘Mostly untouched for 100 years, 15 Roman-era Egyptian mummy portraits and panel paintings were literally dusted off by scientists and art conservators from Northwestern University and the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology as they set out to investigate the materials the painters used nearly 2,000 years ago.’ *Unusual Use of Blue Pigment Found in Ancient Mummy Portraits.*[[135]](#footnote-135)

‘Ancient Egyptians were likely to lose some of their front teeth before they could become mummies, says a new research debated at the International Congress of Egyptologists in Florence.’ *Ancient Egyptians Forced Open Mouths During Mummification.*[[136]](#footnote-136)

In Health and Disease ‘The oldest case of acute decompensated heart failure has been found in 3,500-year-old mummified remains, a research team announced at the international congress of Egyptology in Florence.’ *Oldest Case Of Heart Failure Found In Ancient Mummy.*[[137]](#footnote-137)

‘The tomb of the 26th dynasty vizier of Upper Egypt discovered in South Assassif on Luxor's west bank.’ *The Tomb of the 26th Dynasty Ruler of Upper Egypt Uncovered in Assassif, Luxor*.[[138]](#footnote-138)

‘The last meal of a mummified kestrel has much to tell scientists about how the ancient Egyptians handled raptors, and why so many mummies of the birds of prey have been found.’ *Kestrel Mummy Hints at Raptor Breeding in Ancient Egypt*.[[139]](#footnote-139)

Two links to St Catherine’s Monastery:

*Sinai's St. Catherine's Starves, Monastery Shuts Down.*[[140]](#footnote-140)

The Saint Catherine Foundation *Sinaiticus (Newsletter).*[[141]](#footnote-141)

‘The oldest Egyptian leather manuscript has been found in the shelves of the Egyptian museum in Cairo, where it was stored and forgotten for more than 70 years.’ *Oldest, Longest Ancient Egyptian Leather Manuscript Found.*[[142]](#footnote-142)

From the Smithsonian Magazine: ‘Following notes written by an English traveler in the early 19th century and two French pilots in the 1950s, Pierre Tallet made a stunning discovery: a set of 30 caves honeycombed into limestone hills but sealed up and hidden from view in a remote part of the Egyptian desert, a few miles inland from the Red Sea, far from any city, ancient or modern. During his first digging season, in 2011, he established that the caves had served as a kind of boat storage depot during the fourth dynasty of the Old Kingdom, about 4,600 years ago.’ *The World's Oldest Papyrus and What It Can Tell Us About the Great Pyramids.*[[143]](#footnote-143)

More on Health and Disease ‘Over the years, scientists have found evidence of cancers, heart disease, starvation, ulcers, smallpox, tuberculosis and other infections in ancient remains from all over the world. Now, for the first time ever, researchers using CT scans have detected a diseased kidney in an ancient Egyptian mummy.’ *First Kidney of Ancient Egyptian Mummy Was Found Because the Man Was Diseased.*[[144]](#footnote-144)

**Marginal Notes**

**Isa 42:19 – AP**

In an earlier article,[[145]](#footnote-145) “The Blind Servant”, we presented an individual (not a collective) interpretation of the ‘Who is blind but my Servant?’ as a sarcastic question about Hezekiah along the lines of ‘So, who is blind, my Servant, really?’ In this marginal note we want to “correct” the article, or “nuance” the semantics of the question, or put another suggestion into the frame, depending on your point of view. Our proposal is that the question uses ‘blind’ because there are those who are saying Hezekiah is blind, but the question is not about Hezekiah; rather it is directed to a group except Hezekiah, inviting those of the group to positively identify with the ‘blindness’ of Hezekiah.

The fact that the individual servant of Isa 42:1 is evidently not blind is not a sufficient reason to adopt a ‘collective’ reading of v. 19 (the normal commentary position). We know that Jacob/Israel is a ‘my servant’ (Isa 41:8) and from v. 18 we know they are blind (cf. Deut 29:1, 3), but what is v. 19a doing if it is not a contrast between them and a ‘my Servant’ who is an individual? Instead of taking the Servant to be blind, the question could equally be an invitation for people like the Servant to step forward and be counted. The tone of the invitation, however, has an implicit *sarcasm* directed towards those who thought the Servant was blind.

If the leaders of the people think the Servant is blind (and are saying so), but he is not, and they are, this question is one way that you might invite people to reject such leaders and ally themselves to the king. These would be those who think they are like the Servant and like the messenger – ‘blind’ and ‘deaf’. The pragmatics of the situation behind the speech are that the Servant is there at court and Isaiah appeals to the audience to step forward, but he uses the disparagement ‘blind servant’ in making the invite – an implied sarcasm directed towards the princes who rejected Hezekiah.

The question has a construction (~a yk) which conveys an exception/exclusion.[[146]](#footnote-146) This form in which the question is put tells us that the exceptive clause is designed to **restrict the group** whom God is addressing. To appreciate this point we have to recognise the oral quality of the original delivery of these words. The Servant is excluded because it is understood among the audience that he is said to be ‘blind’, and God is inviting similarly ‘blind’ people to listen to him and see what he is doing for the people. The tone behind ‘blind’ is therefore a sarcasm directed towards the leaders of the people.

The tone of what is said and the point of the question are crucial to any interpretation. Commentators see the question as one *about the Servant*; instead, it is a question directed to everybody *except the Servant*: who among them is blind like the Servant? The question is equivalent to, ‘Who is on the Lord’s side?’ What commentaries have missed in the text is the performative character of the question and how it works in a context to elicit a recognition on the part of some of the hearers. Commentaries have been misled by the fact that the people and/or their leaders are openly addressed as blind (v. 18), but this quotes the earlier prophecy of Isa 35:4 which is about the blind and deaf seeing and hearing. Hence, here, people are being invited to think of themselves as blind and deaf *like* God’s Servant and his messenger. The point is precisely that God’s Servant and his messenger are not blind and deaf – and this is shown by *excepting* God’s Servant from those being addressed.

If the tone and point of the question is to elicit agreement that God’s Servant is blind, it doesn’t cohere well with the commendation of the Servant in v. 1. If the tone has an implied sarcasm, then the point of the question is reversed: Israel/Jacob think the Servant is blind, but he is not. The point of the question is to call out those who are ‘blind’ like the Servant and ‘deaf’ like God’s messenger—their so-called blindness and deafness (so-called by those against the Servant) are the qualities that God seeks.

**Isa 38:1 – AP**

The expression ‘in those days’ occurs 31x in the Hebrew Scriptures. Our question is: when are those days? Are they the days that have just been recounted? Are they days coming up about which we are going to be told?

* In Exod 2:11, having been told of Moses’ childhood, we read ‘in those days, when Moses was grown’. The days are ‘the days’ of Moses’ young manhood and not the days of his childhood.
* In the ‘Cities of Refuge’ law, a person could dwell in such a city ‘until the death of the High Priest that shall be in those days’. The days here are those that define the tenure of the High Priest.
* In 1 Sam 3:1 we read that the Word of the Lord was ‘precious in those days’, but these days are those of Eli.
* In Jer 31:29, ‘those days’ are those that pertain to the restoration of the people in the land; it is a prophecy.

From these examples, it is clear that ‘in those days’ is set by the context and our text is ‘In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death’ (2 Kgs 20:1; 2 Chron 32:24; Isa 38:1). The immediately prior verse to 2 Kgs 20:1/Isa 38:1 is Sennacherib’s death and prior to that it is the blockade of Jerusalem and the decimation of the Assyrian army. Obviously, Hezekiah was not sick in the days of Sennacherib’s demise and so it would seem that he was sick in the days of the blockade of Jerusalem. The proof of this is the quotation of Isa 37:35,

For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. Isa 37:35 (KJV)

And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city. Isa 38:6 (KJV)

We might ask: when exactly was Hezekiah sick? Before or after God declared that he would defend the city for his own sake and for David’s sake (Isa 37:35)? Either way, the sickness is happening at the time of Assyrian invasion. But what can we say *pro* and *con*?

Isa 37:35 is part of God’s response to Hezekiah’s prayer (Isa 37:16-20) and so the question becomes, was Hezekiah sick and recovered before this prayer? Obviously not, because God’s response in Isa 38:1 is that he will save him and defend the city. We can’t have Hezekiah praying for God to defend the city after he has been told by God that He will defend the city. So, it would seem that the assurance of Isa 38:1 can only follow Isa 37:25 as a repetition of that assurance placed alongside the promise of a recovery.[[147]](#footnote-147) In short, Hezekiah’s prayer for his life followed his prayer for the city.

A final thought: we might ask, could God have taken Hezekiah’s life and still kept the Davidic covenant? The short answer is that he could have provided there were minor branches of the royal family with sons (hence, Isa 11:1).

**Gen 10:25 - PW**

**Genesis 10:25** “And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one *was* Peleg; for **in his days was the earth divided**; and his brother's name *was* Joktan.”

Gen 10:25 is sometimes understood as a scientific comment on plate tectonic movement as indicating a time when the land masses (that once formed a super continent called Pangea) split asunder. In turn this is used to suggest that the earth is “young” (less than 6,000 years old). Apart from the fact that a catastrophic separation of continents in a very short period of time is a geophysical impossibility this is a classic example of bad interpretation.

Even a casual (contextual) reading of this verse suggests that we are dealing with the fall of the tower of Babel (in the very next chapter) when the earth was of “one language” (11:1) and they were “scattered” (11:9) by God. Although a different Hebrew word is employed (not divided), the idea is the same – God scattered and divided the human race in the Levant by confusing the language and there making “global” cooperation more difficult.

If one doubts this interpretation, then one simply has to look at the genealogy of Eber. The genealogy of Eber (or Heber 1 Chron 5:13; 8:22; Luke 3:35) demonstrates that he was a descendant of Shem through Arpaachsad (Gen 10:22, 24); and a progenitor of a group of peoples (v.21), embracing the Hebrews (ch.11:16-26). So we can safely say that the “tower of Babel” incident exactly fits the timeframe of (H)eber’s son Peleg whose very name means “division”. So it was in his days that the earth was dived into separate language communities and the project of globalism was halted. This is relevant (especially today) because a similar global project is underway, not driven by common language but by finance (the language that everyone understands) in the construction of another all-pervasive controlling Babylon.

In conclusion, when we combine very poor Bible interpretation with pseudo-science in order to build “creation theories” we get utter nonsense.

**News**

**British New Testament Society Conference Sept 2015**

**Edinburgh University – Report AP**

About 190 New Testament scholars and PhD students met at Edinburgh University for their annual conference in September. Your editor (AP) and one of your columnists (BK) were in attendance and, indeed, the columnist was giving a paper on the theme of patronage in the seminar group ‘Early World of Christianity’. Sadly, the editor wasn’t able to attend the columnist’s talk, as he was committed to the ‘Acts’ seminar.

It was nice to see some old faces since I haven’t been to a BNTS conference for a few years (I prefer the SOTS conference). As well as two Christadelphians in attendance, there was an ex-Christadelphian, a friend, Philip Law, who is now the editorial director at SPCK (as a commissioning editor for SPCK many years ago, he was responsible for recruiting Tom Wright to the SPCK publishing house, which is kind of ironic). Since he was talking to Wright, I had to wait before renewing our friendship.

As we reminisced about the days of our youth when he was a Christadelphian (he is now CofE), he remarked that without an academic base in university or college, it was difficult to ‘get published’, and this is correct: the academic Christian publishers and secular publishers with an academic religious catalogue look to the academic institutions for their authors and don’t take risks on independent authors. This fact was noted many years ago when Aletheia Books was set up by Bro. A. D. Norris. This means, of course, that the responsibility for publishing a wide variety of Christadelphian authors (academic and non-academic) lies with CMPA.

The BNTS is a cozy self-congratulatory club; this is obviously the view of an outsider (me), but they do lament the fact that within their own churches the laity do not read scholarship. Even the clergy, who are academically trained, usually let scholarly reading slip in favour of pastoral duty. As a result, scholars write for other scholars and for their students and for library shelves (which is a sorry state).

Apart from the advantage to me of book publishers selling their books at substantial discounts at conferences, another benefit of attending is that you get to pick up straws in the wind regarding trends in scholarship and a bit of gossip about who is on the rise and who is on the fall. For example, a trend from over 10 years ago, which lasted a few years was ‘Reception History’ – the trend was marked by the number of papers (oral and written) which begin to appear and then blossom and then die away with a ‘reception’ bias. Trends are also reinforced by PhD students choosing topics in the trend area because it is fashionable. One current trend which has been building for some years now seems to be bedding down as a consensus and this is to see a High Christology in the New Testament. Such a Christology sees Jesus as *fully* *divine* in the pages of the New Testament. So, in his 2015 book, a minor NT scholar, Crispin Fletcher-Louis, (whom I have had the misfortune to hear lecture), says,

“It is an exciting time to be studying NT Christology. There are few subjects in biblical studies where it is possible to say that there is a clear and steady movement towards a consensus. But it is hard to disagree with Andrew Chester who, in a recent critical review of the field describes a newly emerging consensus about the early date and character of a belief in Jesus’ divinity.”[[148]](#footnote-148)

Fletcher-Louis’ doctoral research was in the area of divine agents in Second Temple Judaism and recent research in this area is one of the contributing factors to the emerging consensus, along with an argument that recognition of divinity is implied by the ‘worship’ of Jesus, and advocacy of the proposition that NT writers ‘included’ Jesus in the identity of God (whatever this means).

Prominent scholars whose work is now being taken as the foundation for the new consensus are Larry Hurtado, who is a very pleasant man to talk to over coffee, and Richard Bauckham, to whom in 1981 I sold a first edition of Edward Robinson’s book on the Holy Land and gave a copy of Alan Eyre’s *The Protestors*. He is a very competent lecturer.

The moral of this tale for Christadelphians is that a consensus can wax as well as wane. It can come and dominate for a generation and then it can go. The Low Christology that was the consensus (that NT writers did not have a conception of Jesus as fully divine) was fostered in German scholarship of the mid-20c. and reached its best expression in English in J. D. G. Dunn’s *Christology in the Making* (1980). A second point to make is that scholars are confident of this High Christology and consequently more confident in their Trinitarian faith – and they express this confidence in conference talk. This has been accompanied by a resurgence of Trinitarian writing of late and it is worth sounding a warning that this will impact the Christadelphian community (and other Biblical Unitarian communities) in the course of time.

Onto the talks. The first night was a presentation by Prof. Susan Docherty on the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament and in particular comparing a type of writing in Second Temple Judaism known as ‘Rewritten Bible’. The classification is modern and anachronistic but it refers to such writings as *Jubilees*, *Pseudo-Philo*, the *Genesis Apocryphon* and Josephus’ *Antiquities*. These writings are retelling of the Jewish Scriptures. Her main point was that NT writers are doing very similar things to the writers of the above books. In particular, NT writers have a similar belief in the inspired nature of Scripture and interpret it in typical Second Temple ways. This point is unexceptionable and the interesting question is how the NT writers are different and what marks the NT out as worthy for addition to the Jewish Scriptures. This faith-building question was not explored.

The Acts Seminar talks on the next day were by a German and a Korean, and so their English was thickly accented and difficult to follow. The first talk was by a PhD student, Monique Cuany on ‘Acts 17 and Ignorance’; the second talk was by Deok Hee Jung and again on Acts 17 and the notion of ‘world’.

Cuany made the following points:

Some scholars downplay moral guilt when discussing ignorance, others note the repentance required (Acts 17:30). Downplay comes via a notion of partial excuse – ignorance is a partial excuse. On the other hand, moral culpability is imputed because the ignorance is willful.

We could investigate what theory of knowledge was held by the philosophers whom Paul addresses. Ignorance would then be understood by reference to inadequacies in their epistemology. Philosophers relate ignorance to inadequacies in human cognition to some extent, and this may underlie Paul’s remarks. On the other hand, having reviewed the epistemologies of the Stoics and Epicureans, we may simply come to the point that ‘ignorance’ (KJV) is simply a lack of knowledge about God (NRSV). It is not that God cannot be known, but rather that there are ‘times of ignorance’ and times of revelation. Hence, Paul is arguing that the audience has a perverted view of the divine having misapprehended the divine. But in doing this, he isn’t addressing their espousal of an unknown god, but a conventional condemnation of idol manufacture. Paul in Romans makes a similar point against the Jews – they were also ignorant, i.e. without knowledge, even though the knowledge was there in Scripture – of course their lack of knowledge was about different matters (Rom 10:1-3).

The second talk on Luke’s notion of the ‘world’ made the point that there is a strong pattern of use in Hellenistic texts that the ‘world’ was the Roman Empire. The world consists of the people and their countries under Roman rule. This does not mean that countries outside the Empire were not known or not thought of as the ‘world’. The notion of the ‘world’ may have a more or less restricted reference as determined by contexts of use. Correspondingly, it was pointed out in discussion that the sense of the term embraces the idea of the ‘inhabited’ world and that the reference of the term needs to be sharply distinguished from its sense when thinking about meaning.

After a coffee break, and an interruption by Larry Hurtado banging on the window next to where I was sitting asking me for directions to the front door into the building, there was a panel discussion of a new book on ‘Acts and Christian Beginnings’ edited by Denis Smith, who joined on Skype from the USA where it was 6am. The book summarises research on the historical veracity of Acts over the space of the last 15 years by a group of American scholars. The authors describe the book as a ‘report’ and it is more of a manifesto of propositions rather than a closely argued piece.

The research was conducted along the same lines as the notorious ‘Jesus Seminar’. The main influence on the group seems to have been the work of R. I. Pervo, who has written on Acts as a novel. The book does not address an academic audience; it’s for laity. Its thesis is that Acts is not history. The book offers a new way of reading Acts, and it places the burden of proving otherwise on conservative commentators. This is rather self-serving.

The book assumes a second century date of writing, but Loveday Alexander disagreed with this in her discussion of the book. A late date tends to be the corollary of the view that Acts is poor history. What the book shows to Christadelphians is that liberal scholarship is alive and well and there are plenty of conservative scholars who demur. It is a technical matter in the academic study of Acts to consider criteria for evaluating whether Acts is a first or second century history, but the best way to read the various views is just to see liberal and conservative scholarship as different schools of art. The pattern of sending prophets in the last days of Israel/Judah establishes that Acts is a pre-70 book, a position argued by J. A. T. Robinson in his *Re-Dating the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1976). What was excluded from the panel discussion was any idea of inspiration or the book’s status as the Word of God.

Andrew Gregory from Oxford University noted the lack of evidence for dating Acts. He also said that while the ‘Acts Seminar Report’ was enjoyable, the lack of argumentation was problematic for any reviewer. A review had to fill in the gaps where argument was needed.

Someone might ask whether historical scholarship has any value when they have spent a day listening to liberal scholarship. My approach in seminars where any reverence or respect for the Word is absent is to supply this to myself and reconfigure the hypothetical analysis being offered accordingly. Since historical scholarship is an art form, this reconfiguration is entirely possible and just a matter of work. The result is a different painting of the past. Someone might say that there is no spiritual value in dry historical speculation and they would be right. But information is useful if it is balanced with spiritual exegesis. This is the failing of conferences; they do not have this balance.

After some trivial distinctions about identity, Prof Philip Esler gave the evening talk on the second day on ‘Giving the kingdom to another nation that will bear its fruit’ (Matt 21:43). His discussion centred on ethnicity as a marker of nationhood. What factors make up an ethnic identity? His answer began with Josephus’ discussion in *Contra* *Apion*. He excluded Judaism as a defining aspect of Jewish ethnicity. Further, he said that Christian identity was not ethnic. Markers of Jewish ethnicity include common descent from the fathers, the Law and the promises and possession of a homeland. Christian Jews continued to be ethically Jewish but they were estranged and deployed a ‘them and us’ language. I can’t say that the talk was valuable and the speaker did seem to get a lot of criticism from the audience.

The relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the church and how they are positioned in the purpose of God is a hot topic among NT scholars. N. T. Wright has argued that Jews, although literally in the land thought of themselves metaphorically in exile as the Messiah had not come to liberate them from Rome. This looks like a mistake to me for NT writers, although Second Temple writers may hold this view. Luke presents the bestowal of the Spirit at Pentecost as ‘the Last Days’ and this conception is not exilic but pre-exilic. Sadly, I was not able to attend Wright’s seminar on the topic.

The last day saw two more seminar talks on Acts and a final talk to the whole conference on Galatians. Peter Mansell presented an interesting chiastic analysis of Acts 6-12 which centred on Paul’s conversion. Kylie Crabbe presented a study of Agabus in the light of Valerius Maximus and Josephus. Peter Oakes finished the conference by talking about unity and diversity in Christ.

Was the conference worth the fee? Probably not for me, but everyone else seemed to have a good time. It wasn’t a complete waste of time and the food was rather good, which was a surprise. The problem with conferences is that they rarely approach Scripture as Scripture and usually deal in hypothetical historical reconstructions in areas that I am not studying.

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**Postscript**

In the pecking order of virtue, knowledge is low down on the list, which is kind of ironic, since it is a foundation virtue. The virtues that come higher up the list are the ‘love’ ones, like kindness, giving, helping, or ones like empathizing, compassion and sympathy. Knowledge is dry, austere and cold, like the steel girder framework of a modern building. Work, relationships and pleasure are where people centre their lives; very little attention is given to knowledge, unless it is for work. The spiritual ‘justification’ that supports this life-choice is comprised of the two maxims: ‘faith without works is dead’ and ‘the greatest of these is love.’ So it is that the answer to the question of what a person knows can be ‘hardly anything’. A proof of this is not a failure to know who the seventh king of Israel was, but a failure to have anything to say on a question like how we justify the use of a prophetic text by a NT writer – (this question all about knowing the nature of prophecy). **AP**

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

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1. Uzziah is also mentioned in 2 Kgs 15:30-34; the northern prophet Hosea was also his contemporary (1:1) and he is called Azariah in 2 Kgs 14:21; 15:1-8, 17-27; 1 Chron 3:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See also Isa 2:10-22 and Amos 9:1 for earthquake language. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This information is not supplied in the Biblical account (perhaps Josephus had access to other sources); according to Josephus this occurred on the Day of Atonement. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Evidence for this earthquake has been uncovered by the archaeologists’ spade throughout Israel and Jordan. Graphic evidence can be seen at Hazor and Ein Hazeva (Biblical Tamar). The earthquake is estimated as an 8.2 on the Ritcher scale and the epicentre was located in the Beka Valley, in present day Lebanon - Steven A. Austin, Gordon W. Franz, and Eric G. Frost, “Amos’s Earthquake: An Extraordinary Middle East Seismic Event of 750 B.C.” *International Geology Review* 42 (2000): 657-671. Y. Yadin and I. Finkelstein date the earthquake level at Hazor to 760 BC (plus or minus 25 years) based on stratigraphic analysis of the destruction debris - Y. Yadin, *Hazor, the Rediscovery of a Great Citadel of the Bible* (New York: Random House, 1975); I. Finkelstein, “Hazor and the North in the Iron Age: A Low Chronology Perspective,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 314 (1999): 55-70. Both are cited in Austin *et al*., “Amos’s Earthquake,” 658. Similarly, D. Ussishkin dated the “sudden destruction” level at Lachish to approximately 760 BC - D. Ussishkin, “Lachish” in E. Stern, ed., *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993) vol. 1, 338-342, cited in Austin *et al*., “Amos’s Earthquake,” 660. This article employs the date 750 BC, however, any suggested dates for the earthquake draw on a combination of historical, biblical and archaeo-seismological evidence and therefore precision is difficult and we should probably speak of a *dating range* around the mid-8th century. See further, D. Danzig, *A Contextual Investigation of Archaeological and Textual Evidence for a Purported mid-8th Century BCE Levantine Earthquake*, (Available online at www.academia.edu; cited October 2015) in which he offers a fair minded critique of the methodology of archaeo-seismology as related to the book of Amos. Interestingly he lists 40 references or allusions to the earthquake in the book of Amos. Danzig distinguishes theophanic, phenomenological and literal language. The epicentre seems to have been near the temple (the Beth-el sanctuary?). Zechariah seems to draw on the effects that it had on Jerusalem during Uzziah’s reign. Danzig finds the biblical evidence strong but the archaeo-seismological evidence inconclusive. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. E. Thiele proposes the following timeline: Coregent (with Amaziah of Israel): 791 – 768 BC; Sole reign: 767 – 751 BC; Leprous and coregent: 751 – 740 BC. (The above dates are those of Thiele, except the starting date for the Amaziah/Uzziah co-regency, which is taken as one year later than that given by Thiele, following Leslie McFall. (Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Kregel, 1983) 217, and Leslie McFall, “A Translation Guide to the Chronological Data in Kings and Chronicles” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148 (1991): 3-45 (42) – available online). However, the dating schemas of W. F. Albright, E. R. Thiele and R .H. Pfeiffer are not entirely convincing. This article employs the dating schema proposed by A. Perry, “Kings Chronology” an Excel download with notes @ http://www.christadelphian-ejbi.org/downloads.htm [cited May 2014] Perry has: Coregent (with Amaziah of Israel):787-765 BC; Sole reign: 764-746 BC; Leprous and coregent 750-735 BC. Perry has overlapping co-regencies with Jotham/Ahaz in the period 750-735. Note that Isa 6:1 does not say; *“in the first year of king Jotham....”* but in the year **king** Uzziah died (even though Jotham and Ahaz were coregents whilst Uzziah was alive) –Ahaz is called king when he is the sole ruler– *“...in the year that king Ahaz died”* (Isa 14:28). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. “Leprosy’ is a common translation of the Hebrew but some modern versions (e.g. NET) opt for the more generic ‘skin disease’. We will follow the older translation and postpone any discussion of the Hebrew. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. This is probably why Uzziah built “towers in the desert”, i.e., along the trade routes in order to extract a toll (2 Chron 26:10). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Gold was so plentiful during the reign of Solomon that it made silver seem worthless (1 Kgs 10:21). Uzziah wanted to achieve the same prosperity as Solomon. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongeber, which *is* beside Eloth (Eilat), on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom (1 Kgs 9:26). Some 70-80 years after Solomon (and 70-80 years before Uzziah), Jehoshaphat of Judah attempted a similar excursion but his fleet was destroyed (1 Kgs 22:48). Whether or not Uzziah launched a fleet, possession of Eilat alongside Eziongeber would ensure that he had a monopoly on southern ports and important trade routes and taxing these routes would increase his wealth exponentially. Note that Isaiah 2 condemns *the ships of Tarshhish* (v. 16) and *the proud and lofty* (v. 12 i.e., Uzziah) in the context of “earthquake language” – *And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth* (v. 19). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. “Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write…” (2 Chron 26:22). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See W. A. Van Gemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (5 vols; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), # 3108; hereafter, *NIDOTTE*. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. See Y. Sukenik, “Engines invented by Cunning Men” *BJPES* 13 (1946/47): 19-24; Y. Yadin, *The Art of Warfare* (London: Weidenfield & Nicholson, 1963), 325-28. However, Chronicles says that these devices were able “to shoot arrows and great stones withal” which seems to discount defensive devices (2 Chron 26:15). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The “great works” of Ecc 2:4 are the “inventions” of Ecc 7:29 and the “engines” of 2 Chron 26:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The Hebrew for orchard is *pardēs* (LXX *paradeisos*), probably from the Persian *paridaida* (cf. paradise), it describes royal gardens or parks (*NIDOTTE*, #7236). Uzziah “loved husbandry” (Hebrew; *'adamah*) and the theology of 2 Chronicles 26 presents Uzziah as a type of Adam in Paradise who committed an act of hubris. On the use of Persian words in Qoheleth see the final instalment in this series (“The language of Qoheleth”). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The biblical picture accords well with the broader political context in the Assyrian Empire at this time (see J. Bright, *A History of Israel* (4th ed., Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Perry’s chronology makes 750 BC the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ahaz becomes joint coregent with his father Jotham in Uzziah’s forty-fourth year (Perry). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Despite his sin, Uzziah is recorded as ***“doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord”* (2 Chron 26:4), as was his son Jotham (2 Chron 27:2), but a negative assessment is recorded for his grandson, Ahaz (2 Chron 28:1).** [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Ibid*, Perry. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. [Ed AP]: This correspondence of detail is part of a pattern in Scripture whereby throne-room visions are described with detail that corresponds to the historical situation contemporaneous with the vision. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. [ED AP]: This correspondence helps date this part of Isaiah (chs. 1-6). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. [ED AP]: The parallel with the genre of the Book of Job should not be missed. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The noun rv;P. (*peshar*) is Aramaic for ‘interpretation’. It occurs extensively in Daniel 2 and 4. The word for ‘wise’ in Ecc 8:1 is the Hebrew ~k'x' (*chakam*) synonymous with the Aramaic term ~yKix; (*chakkiym*), which is employed extensively in Daniel 2(9x) and in Daniel 4(4x). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. The Hebrew in Exodus is !r;q' (*qaran*) in the sense of radiating (i.e., rays), Ecclesiastes uses the Hebrew rAa (*'owr*) suggesting light or shining, the same word is used in Dan 9:17 in an appeal for God to cause his face to shine on his sanctuary. The leprosy “rose up” xr;z (*zarach*) in Uzziah’s forehead; the same word is used for the rising or shining of the sun (cf. Ecc 1:5). Moses’ face reflected divine glory that of Uzziah - human sinfulness. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. The Hebrew for ‘covering’ in Lev 13:45 is hj'[' (*`atah*) in Est 7:8 the word hp'x' (*chaphah*) is used, but the same word is applied in 2 Sam 15:30, when David fled Jerusalem weeping “and had his head covered (*chaphah*)”. David’s condition is depicted as leprosy (the sin disease) and he is sent away from the sanctuary (cf. Ps 51:11; “Cast me not away from thy presence”). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. The Hebrew lhB (*bahal*) carries the idea of “terror”. First used in Gen 45:3; “And Joseph said unto his brethren, I *am* Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were **troubled** (*bahal*) **at his presence**”. It carries the idea of being awe-struck or paralysed by fear – they couldn’t even speak! [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. [Ed AP]: Our counter proposal would be that in Isaiah 40-66 ‘truth’ is a technical term for political policy. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The “suffering servant” was king Hezekiah; he represented the faithful remnant and typified the Messiah [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. !m,v, (*shemen*): Hebrew for oil; olive oil ; perfumed and used as anointing oil same word used in Ecc 7:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Assembler of wisdom? Caller of assemblies? Hence, *Ekklesia*/Ecclesiastes –dynamically - preacher/teacher. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Of Levi and Simeon it is said; “**instruments of cruelty** *are in* their habitations” (Gen 49:5); another connection with the theme of the “bad priest”. Taken together with the key word “honour” (from Gen 49:6), mourning (Ecc 7:2), consumption of the flesh (leprosy) and “assembly” this can be none other than Uzziah. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Note, Prov 5:14, another allusion to Qoheleth; “I was almost in all evil in the **midst of the congregation and assembly**”. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. The Hebrew is rv;a' (*'ashar*). The son of Hezekiah (Manasseh) placed an hr'vea] (*'asherah*) in the temple. She was a Canaanite goddess (of fortune and happiness), the supposed consort of Baal. The LXX has here, “that pronounce you blesses” (makes happy). It seems that temple prostitution was rife in the time of Ahaz. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. [ED AP]: This is the reason why temple foundations and rebuilding is such a feature of Isaiah 40-66, (rather than what the church commentaries say – the building of the post-exilic temple). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Nearly all translations have “go to the city” but surely the Hiphil (cause to go, i.e., to lead) is more appropriate? [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. On his death bed Hezekiah resembled Uzziah and was despised....yet his faith saved the nation. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. The only way to profit from personal “works” is through the messiah (**the gift of God**, cf. John 4:10). Hezekiah typified the messiah. Uzziah typifies fallen human nature. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. C. L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes* (Anchor Bible; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Ibid, 191-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. John H. Choi, “The Doctrine of the Golden Mean in Qoh. 7, 15-18: A Universal Human Pursuit” Biblica **83 (2002): 358-374 (362). Available Online.** [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Samuel G. Green, *The Kingdom of Israel and Judah after the Disruption* (2 vols; Publisher: Sunday School Union, 1876). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Wikipedia is unreliable on Old Testament matters and the UK-based *Society of Old Testament Studies* has in the past considered it necessary to do its own ‘Wiki’. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. The main principle of the historico-critical method is to treat the evidence *in the same way*, be this a text from Josephus or The Acts of the Apostles, or an Assyrian inscription or Chronicles. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ruling out the guidance in pursuit of a true method would to be hold that our personal beliefs *may* or *may not* interfere with the pursuit of truth, which seems inane but true. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Someone might ask: Is it reasonable for any method to have a commitment to inerrancy? This is a matter for theology. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. The only level playing field is a human one. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. [ED AP]: This was the consensus and Simon Gathercole is reporting this in 2006 (see Footnote 2), but see the BNTS report in this issue for reasons to think the consensus is changing and that Gathercole is a cause of this change. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Simon Gathercole summarizes this consensus as follows, “a preexistent Messiah is a feature of early Jewish texts such as *1 Enoch* and *4 Ezra* and of some early Christian writers like Paul and John, but is certainly not an idea held by the Synoptic Evangelists”. Simon J. Gathercole, *The Pre-existent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. See Bart Ehrman’s statement “How could Paul embrace ‘higher’ views of Christ than those found in later writings such as Matthew, Mark and Luke? Didn’t Christology develop from ‘low’ Christology to a ‘high’ Christology over time? ... And I simply did not get it, for the longest time” (B. Ehrman, *How Jesus Became God,* (New York: HarperOne, 2014), 251-2). He concludes that Paul and the Synoptics held different Christologies, which were contemporary. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son,* 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son,* 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son,* 84. He dismisses as red herrings Matt 11:19a (par. Luke 7:34), Luke 9:55 and Mark 1:45 (as per the reading of J. K. Elliott). Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son,* 88-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son,* 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Dan 9:22-23; Dan 10:12, 14, 20; 11:2; Tobit 5:5 Sode Raza, Apocalypse of Moses 16:2; 4 Ezra 6:30; 7:2; 2 Baruch 71:3; Testament of Isaac 2; etc. Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son,* 119-137. He also explores the traditions about the coming of Elijah (Mark 15:36; b.Berakoth 4b; Midrash Mishle 9; etc.). “It is noteworthy that here again there is an eschatological ministry that is envisaged as having a cosmic scope, which, again, is difficult to imagine outside of a coming from heaven” (Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son,* 138). [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son,* 117. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son,* 145-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son,* 102-106. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Gathercole, *Pre-existent Son,* 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. [ED AP]: This is a coming within the purpose of God and not a locational coming as Gathercole needs for his reading. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with intent: a comprehensive guide to the parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), .31. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Snodgrass, *Stories*, 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Snodgrass, *Stories*, 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. John P. Heil, “Narrative progression of the Parables Discourse in Matthew 13.1-52”, in Warren Carter, John P. Heil, eds., *Matthew's parables: audience-oriented perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1998,) Catholic Biblical quarterly. Monograph series; 30, 64-95 (65). [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20: A Commentary* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 285. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Luz, *Commentary*, 285-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: a commentary on the Greek text* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans; Bletchley: Paternoster Press, 2005), 570. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Donald Hagner, *Matthew 1-13* (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 401. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Peter Phillips, “Casting out the Treasure: A New Reading of Matthew 13.52” *JSNT* 31/1 (2008): 3-24 (18). [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Phillips, “Casting out the Treasure”, 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Phillips, “Casting out the Treasure”, 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Phillips, “Casting out the Treasure”, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: a socio-political and religious reading* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 281. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Snodgrass, *Stories,* 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Nolland, *Commentary*, 522. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. 1 It is said of Martin Gilbert’s *Atlas of the Holocaust* that his PhD students scoured the vestries of the parishes of Europe, scrutinising records of births, deaths and marriages to show beyond cavil how many Jews had perished in the Shoah – and, indeed, proved by that means that it was of the order, at least, of 5.75 million. Cunliffe seems to have done similarly with his analysis of European archaeological sites, in a way clearly beyond the scope of any single individual, however dedicated and brilliant. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. 1 Aubet’s work – *The Phoenicians and the West* (2nd edition; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) is mentioned, though not reviewed in this series. Aubet’s book is shorter than Cunliffe’s, and double the price [at over £30] is very precise, in the way of offering minutiae comments within her own special sphere of archaeological digs in Tyre, but is not useful to the Bible-student seeking informative broad-brush insights [despite the title her publishers clearly wanted her to work to], since she is forced to rely on the scholarship of others, outside the very narrow confines of her own studies, and does not always choose wisely, even then. As stated in these reviews, for example, she relies for Bible scholarship on a little-known Higher-critical Italian Professor, for her thoughts and opinions on matters of Biblical interest. Aubet’s scholarship – both in her Bibliography, and in her views on the History of Phoenicia in Western Europe – is much too Hispanic, for balance. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. http://www.ritmeyer.com/2015/07/13/the-virtual-bible-a-new-visual-resource/ [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. http://www.accordancebible.com/Virtual-Bible/ [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. http://www.accordancebible.com/store/details/?pid=Virtual+Bible+mods [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. http://www.ritmeyer.com/2015/07/31/secrets-of-the-temple-mount/ [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. http://www.ritmeyer.com/2015/03/18/jerusalem-the-temple-mount-2/ [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. http://www.ritmeyer.com/online-store/books/jerusalem-the-temple-mount/ [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. http://www.ritmeyer.com/2015/08/05/ancient-mikveh-with-rare-inscriptions-found-in-jerusalem/ [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/199055#.VcIEwHhiYrg [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. http://www.ritmeyer.com/2015/08/31/stepped-podium-found-in-jerusalem/ [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. http://www.antiquities.org.il/Article\_eng.aspx?sec\_id=25&subj\_id=240&id=4144 [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/IsraelExperience/History/Pages/Roman-legion-camp-uncovered-at-Megiddo-9-Jul-2015.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. http://www.jspacenews.com/cattleman-raising-historic-herd-red-heifers-israel/ [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. http://www.antiquities.org.il/Article\_eng.aspx?sec\_id=25&subj\_id=240&id=4134 [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. http://blog.bibleplaces.com/2015/07/interactive-map-joshua-12-slain-king.html [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. http://jamestabor.com/2015/07/19/what-did-you-find-this-summer-at-the-mount-zion-dig/ [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. http://www.antiquities.org.il/Article\_eng.aspx?sec\_id=25&subj\_id=240&id=4137 [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/46016/2000-year-old-coin-sheds-light-on-roman-conquest-of-jerusalem/#oWJx8sTdEDD5qsoW.97 [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. http://www.livescience.com/51737-goliath-city-gates-uncovered-israel.html [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33790405 [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/08/150828112741.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. http://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.com.au/2015/08/palaeolithic-mortars-used-to-make.html#.VeJfgvmqpBc [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/IsraelExperience/History/Pages/Rare-sarcophagus-exposed-in-Ashkelon-building-site-3-Sep-2015.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. http://www.antiquities.org.il/article\_eng.aspx?sec\_id=25&subj\_id=240&id=4147 [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/2015/09/fra398015.shtml [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. https://templemount.wordpress.com/2015/09/24/special-media-release-rare-3000-year-old-seal-discovered-within-earth-discarded-from-temple-mount/ [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. http://www.antiquities.org.il/Article\_eng.aspx?sec\_id=25&subj\_id=240&id=4149 [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
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