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| Of Biblical Interpretation |

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**Editorial**

Another year (10th) is over for the EJournal. If Christ remains away for another thousand years, the solutions put into print to long-standing exegetical problems in the pages of this EJournal will be lost and it will have been so for hundreds of years. In order for a Christian community to persist through time, it has to be big, it has to have great wealth, and it has to have lasting physical structures, such as churches, colleges, libraries and land; it has to have an establishment status and be tied into the structures of the state. Nations rise and fall, but a Christian community that is tied to the nation can adapt to the ebb and flow of history and ally itself to any state.

Of course, this does not mean that such communities are ‘Christian’ in a New Testament sense; we are using the term ‘Christian’ in a modern cultural sense. Our point is simply that the truth is found and lost and then found and lost as generation succeeds generation. If you know where to look, you can find the correct exegesis of many difficult passages in the Bible in the back catalogue of Christadelphian writings since John Thomas. But the chances are that you have no idea where to look in the writings of, say, the Racovian Brethren. Their writings are not completely lost but they are obscure and difficult to access. Whether you live in a country and a generation that has the truth is a matter of providence. Unless truth does not matter that much, and any church will do, the chances of getting to know the truth over the last two thousand years have been slim.

This line of thought raises the question of whether all Christians of whatever hue should not just agree that they are part of the one worldwide church which for better or worse recognises the primacy of Rome. This would in effect be a World Council of Churches considered as ‘the Church’. Christians just accept their differences and associations while rejecting any idea that they are all not just ‘one Church’. The problem with this is that such a conception doesn’t fit with the apostolic concern for truth in matters of doctrine nor does it fit with Christ’s example in Revelation of discriminating between churches and threatening to cast wayward churches aside.

Another question is therefore raised. Can there be a *genuinely new* theology of the church in this day and age? Can there be anything new under the sun? If the truth is lost and found and then lost and found, then after two thousand years, nothing is new in theology but there might be something to find again. Accordingly, if the church is only a ‘last-days’ building work of Christ, then this is a genuinely **new idea** because *all* churches presume that **they are the church** that Christ **began** to build in the days of the apostles. Furthermore, this idea would now be of its time if these are (soon to be) the Last Days. For lovers of jargon, this idea would be an *a-ecclesial* theology. This may not be a new idea, but was it discovered by John Thomas and manifested in his reluctance to adopt the name ‘Christadelphians’? Has the idea been lost since his day?

A lot of theology gets rewritten if this basis is accepted - areas such as the understanding of the Spirit, the way in which Scripture, and particularly the New Testament, is to be applied before the Last Days are upon the world, the position of Israel in God’s purpose, and the relation of any true followers of Jesus to Israel before Jesus once again builds his church. It also provides an explanation of the rise and fall of communities that have held the apostolic faith down the centuries. This is just a matter of the vicissitudes of history and not a matter of Church History. It also places the *response* of individuals to the apostolic faith centre-stage rather than membership of a church.

**AP**

At the end of every volume, the editors ask themselves the question whether it is time to draw the EJournal to a close. Hopefully, it will close at the end of a publication year, (rather than suddenly in the middle of a year), after which it will exist as an archive online, probably in more than one location. We plan (D.V.) to continue next year with volume 11, but it is worth noting that, spiritually, work needs to have an end (This is the ‘It is finished’ guidance in Scripture); those who do the work need to have completion and move on so as to re-balance the spiritual life with other things.

The new challenge facing Christadelphians today is the easy availability of information on the Internet. This comes from various sources and is of varying quality. There isn’t actually a need to own any physical books these days or consult a library when studying the Bible. A quick Google search will produce several articles on your topic including some that have been done in an academic context. For example, if you were preparing a Bible talk on some topic, its easily possible to cut and paste a PowerPoint presentation and a script for the talk in under an hour. (On the other hand, it’s also possible to avoid any research and rely on your own powers of waffle.) This situation impacts the question of how you should approach the Bible Class. Is the traditional ‘talk’ the right format today? Probably not.

**AP**

**Articles**

**Evaluating Other Texts about Creation**

**P. Wyns and A. Perry**

**Text evaluation and the interpretation of Genesis**

Elements of Genesis 1 are often interpreted against the background of other Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) cosmological/creation texts. This is a very different choice to one that confines itself to inter-textual interpretation and which respects the integrity of inspiration. Are any of these comparative texts appropriate? How should we evaluate the sources? This article will look at the issue and argue that *uncritical* usage of such texts is methodologically unsound and that intertextual analysis is the primary method of biblical interpretation.

E. C. Kaiser writes, “...the basic teaching of all of sacred theology is inseparably connected with the results of our hermeneutics; for what is that theology except what Scripture teaches? And the way to ascertain what scripture teaches is to apply the rules and principles of interpretation. Therefore, it is imperative that that these rules be properly grounded and that their application be skilfully and faithfully applied. If the foundation itself is conjecture, imagination, or error, what more can be hoped for what is built on it?”[[1]](#footnote-1)

It is always desirable to place writings in a context. Is the writing exegetical, philosophical, allegorical or mystic/apocalyptic? When was it written and who was the intended audience? Failure to follow methodological discipline will result in questionable conclusions. To these basic conventions of good scholarship, we might ask if the particular writing is normative. In other words – does it represent a consensus view of a common culture or is it a sectarian position? Was there even a consensus viewpoint? It is possible that no homogenous tradition existed at the time that a particular piece was written.

E. D. Hirsch spoke[[2]](#footnote-2) to this issue warning of “three relativistic fallacies. The three still apply to thinking about the writers of the past. The first is the fallacy of the inscrutable past” (p. 39). He basically warned about assuming only a few people can actually sympathize with the past and, therefore, really know it. Accepting this fallacy undermines all historical investigation and few actually want to go there. The second is “the fallacy of the homogeneous past” (p. 40). This assumes that all who lived in a certain age shared a common perspective imposed by culture and worldview. Accepting this confines all writers to their ages so that they cannot think, speak, or write differently from their age as it is perceived by the interpreter. Hirsch’s third fallacy is equally powerful: “the fallacy of the homogeneous present-day perspective” (p. 41). Today, there are a wide variety of perspectives within any culture and across cultures.

These are methodological warnings and they can be used to guide one’s own study of comparative texts but, more importantly, also how they are interpreted and used by commentators.

**Evaluating Ancient Sources**

Perhaps we can achieve some success in interpreting Genesis 1 in the context of other ANE cosmologies as they are nearer in time to the Genesis material. The obvious and usual place to start is with Egyptian, Babylonian, Ugaritic and Sumerian creation myths as these are most of the locally relevant material. However, the difficulties in understanding such texts that we will encounter are that these other ANE cosmologies are not uniform and they need to be reconstructed from disparate sources (i.e. we have different stories from different tablets).[[3]](#footnote-3) There is also the question of dating the texts and their traditions in relation to the date of Genesis 1. Further, such texts are not necessarily written to explain the *origins* of the cosmos, but the origins of the gods, or as an explanation of how conditions on earth have come about through the interaction of the gods with each other and the earth. Finally, the cosmology that they present or presume has notable differences from that we might construct from Genesis. For example, the standard work on Mesopotamian Cosmology[[4]](#footnote-4) offers the analysis that “Mesopotamians believed in six flat heavens, suspended one above the other by cables. When it came to interpreting the stars and the heavens, the Mesopotamians were more interested in astrology (i.e., what the gods were doing and what it meant for humanity) than they were in cosmology.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

In contrast with other ANE cosmologies, some have argued that Genesis acts as a polemical corrective[[6]](#footnote-6) and demythologizes the physical world from the “world of the gods”. The sun and the moon (gods to the ancient Babylonians, Egyptians etc.) are not even named in the Genesis account and only make their appearance (they are not said to be created) when they are introduced on the fourth day. Therefore, the sun and the moon are excluded (as ‘gods’) from any creative activity – even from the introduction of light! This would have been challenging at the time when Gen 1:1-2:4a was composed, whether we take this to be by Moses (the traditional Jewish view), or in the Exile (a scholarly view). Genesis is subordinating the common ‘gods’ of the sun and moon to mere physical objects.

**Genesis 1 is unique**

Looking at other texts, we can say that Genesis 1 is unique. How then can we evaluate the creation account when we have no like-for-like sources? The only way to evaluate Genesis is *on its own terms* – through intertextual exegesis.[[7]](#footnote-7) Ancient Near Eastern texts can provide some ideas but we need to take care as we cannot simply transfer these ideas uncritically to Genesis. A good example of this mistake is to take differing ideas about the structure of the sky and uncritically transfer one (or more) of these to interpret the Genesis ‘firmament’, completely overlooking the context of God-manifestation set by Ezekiel 1 for the use of this term.[[8]](#footnote-8) Context **contributes** meaning but texts have a reciprocal relationship with their contexts and are equally capable of **creating** meaning.

Two illustrations of this point about meaning can be given. The first is that interpreters are either too literal or too poetic in their reading of Genesis and overlook the simple phenomenological language. The second is that interpreters don’t see how the intertextual usage of a term (within the immediate context and more widely) defines the meaning of a term.

**The use of phenomenological language**

Interpreters ignore phenomenological language at their peril. Phenomenological language is not metaphor or simile, it is the language of perspective and observation and it is timeless and therefore cross-cultural. The science behind the language might change but the language itself remains valid. When a biblical author speaks of the ‘sunrise’, he is providing what we now recognize as a phenomenological description of an event. The sun does not ‘literally’ rise. The rotation of the earth creates the experiential phenomenon which we call a sunrise. The reality of the sun and the earth, along with their spatial relationship and relative movement, creates the phenomenon of the sunrise. When a weather reporter speaks of the time of sun rise we do not conclude that the reporter believes that the sun revolves around the earth. The word ‘sunrise’ is as irrelevant to a geocentric conception as it is to a heliocentric one. Taking the Bible literally or at face value in such situations means accepting the phenomenological description. Scriptures have been understood throughout history in all cultures because they describe things the way they appear. Phenomenological language is not a vestige of primitive thought – it is the discourse of observation. The interpreter must also be careful not confuse phenomenological language with poetic or literal description.

**Intertextual Definition**

Instances of the need for careful intertextual definition are plentiful. This is the business of exegesis. Two examples are given here:

(1) A facile interpretation of Gen 1:17 would be to say that it reflects Mesopotamian cosmology and that it says the stars were ‘set/fixed’ in the firmament of heaven composed of solid stone like jasper.[[9]](#footnote-9) The Hebrew is the common !tn which is ‘give/set’. The idea of ‘fixing’ is not within the semantic range of !tn - if the Hebrew wanted to express ‘embedding’ or ‘fixing’ it would use ~yaiwlmi as in Exod 25:7, “and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate”. Instead, elsewhere, where translators have discerned the sense of ‘to set’ for the verb ‘to give’, it has been in such contexts as the following:

I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Gen 9:13 (RSV)

Then he took curds, and milk, and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. Gen 18:8 (RSV)

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Behold, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” Gen 41:41 (RSV)

This pattern of use for ‘to give/set’ shows that the Fourth Day summary statement is not about a physical cosmology—it is about what God is *doing* for the human being that he is soon to create, and what he is doing is to set the sun and the moon **for** times and seasons (a function).

(2) The stars are set in the ‘firmament’ which is the Hebrew [yqr (*raqia*). This is then called ~yImv (*samayim*) - ‘heaven(s)’. The choice of this term for that which separates the waters is clearly based on the Hebrew for ‘waters’ which is ~yIm (*mayim*). This play on words in turn shows that Gen 1:1 is a title statement introducing the creation account because only in vv. 6-8 does God make the heavens.

The common proposal is made that the *raqia* is a solid dome or vault, reflecting ANE cosmological ideas (Egyptian and Mesopotamian ideas are different).[[10]](#footnote-10) However, the intertextual data would suggest that the *raqia* is a phenomenon seen in relation to God’s presence:

When the reality of God’s presence is revealed in visions that penetrate the cloud(s) (‘the waters’; the ‘dark waters’), we get a mention a ‘firmament’:

And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Ezek 1:4 (KJV)

And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above. Ezek 1:22 (KJV)

And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings. Ezek 1:24 (KJV)

And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. Ezek 1:26 (KJV)

If we go to ANE texts to understand the firmament, we ignore the context of God-manifestation set by Ezekiel. This context opens up the Genesis account in a way that cuts through the debate between old and young earth creationism. The firmament that separates the living creatures from the throne **is reflected on earth in the firmament that separates God’s presence in the dark waters of v. 2 from the waters of the deep**. There isn’t an identity between the two firmaments but a relation of representation; they both represent separation.

This intertextual line of thought settles, in turn, the question of whether the firmament is a physical structure to be correlated with an ANE conception about the sky. Any of the physical structures on offer in the ANE myths are a **cover** over **land** and water and are unrelated to separating the localised presence of God in waters from waters. The firmament that divides the waters in Genesis therefore can only be an ‘expanse’, a meaning that some translations choose and one which falls within the range of the related verb.[[11]](#footnote-11)

**Conclusion**

Genesis 1 is a unique revelation[[12]](#footnote-12) and this is evidenced by its polemical and demythologizing nature. Therefore, Genesis 1 requires interpreting on its *own terms* employing semantic and intertextual analysis rather than comparative analysis with other (reconstructed) ANE cosmologies of varying quality, written for different purposes. Unlike ANE creation myths, there is no theomacy or theogenic element in Israelite cosmology, so why should we turn to such accounts to explain Genesis? They are only helpful by way of comparison and contrast, but even then care must be taken as Genesis reserves the right to radically redefine ancient conventions. As always, *context is king* – and any deviation from this truism leads to spurious results. Primary sources require accurate evaluation - if that does not occur we are dealing with “scholarship” that is deliberately tendentious and therefore without interpretive value.

**Galatians 4 – Made of a Woman**

**A. Perry**

**Introduction**

What is Paul’s most basic statement about Christ? The difficulty in choosing such a foundation lies in how to balance the difficult pronouncements of passages such as Phil 2:5-11 and Col 1:15-20 with the more straightforward statements to give a rounded presentation. It is possible to over-emphasize the divine against the human and to completely misconstrue the divine to the extent that Paul is made into someone from a later Christian century rather than a first-century Jew. Galatians 4:4 doesn’t appear to be a difficult text but it has often been used to teach about an incarnation in the person of Jesus Christ. It is not a very strong text to use for teaching such a doctrine, and the fact that it is so used reflects later Christian thinking rather than any first century (Jewish) context of ideas. Nevertheless, it is a good candidate for Paul’s most basic statement about Christ – namely, that he is the **son of God**.

**Son of God – the Background**[[13]](#footnote-13)

Paul obviously thinks that Jesus was the son of God, but we might well ask *from our vantage point* whether God could have a son in any literal sense? Israel were his son (Exodus 4; Jeremiah 31; Hosea 11), as were the kings of Judah (2 Samuel 7; Psalm 2, Isaiah 9), and perhaps an individual angel could be a son of the gods (Dan 3:25, RSV), but all these uses are metaphor. If there was only one God, could such a God actually have a son? There were no female deities in a Jewish pantheon for there to be the birth of a son from them who could then be sent to the earth. On the other hand, the Greek legendary heroes such as Dionysius were born of Zeus and a human mother.[[14]](#footnote-14) So, it is not entirely out of the ball-park for Paul to state that, “God sent his son, **made of a woman**, made under the Law” (Gal 4:4), or that God’s son was “**made of the seed of David**, according to the flesh” (Rom 1:3; cf. Acts 13:22-23) and “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom 8:3). In a monotheistic framework, and with no female deities, and against a Hellenistic cultural background, this was the only way that God could have a son.

However, incarnation is precluded here because the available Hellenistic cultural models do not offer it and because the scriptural idiom of God ‘sending forth’ would not imply for a Jew any pre-existence for a man. Such an idiom describes how God relates to the world: he *sends* prophets and leaders (e.g. Exod 3:12; Judg 6:8; John 1:33); he *sends* his spirit (e.g. Judg 9:23; Zech 7:12); and he sends angels (e.g. Gen 24:40; Ps 151:4). In addition, pre-existence is actually excluded by Gal 4:4 because God’s son is ‘made’ or ‘came to be’ (gi,nomai) *of a woman*. This might have been a radical idea for the Jews of Paul’s day, but it is anticipated in the Jewish Scriptures.

There is an *historical argument* here about what is a plausible development in Paul’s thought-world for his readers. The combination of the ideas of a personal incarnation, a pre-earthly existence, and being a son (let alone being *of* the Godhead) would be exceptionally new as well as radical within Judaism regardless of what flavour we chose to highlight as a background. So, for example, if we were to consider texts about *Wisdom* existing with God in the beginning and being sent forth (e.g. Prov 8:22; Wisd 9:10), we don’t have the ingredients of sonship (Wisdom is female) or a personal[[15]](#footnote-15) incarnation in such traditions.

This point also applies to the *logos* of God, a common idea in Greek philosophy and Jewish literature of the inter-testamental period, of which the Jewish philosopher, Philo (c. 20 – 50 CE) is the main exponent.[[16]](#footnote-16) For Philo, the *logos* is God’s son (*Conf*. 146; *Som*. 1.215), but so too is the cosmos (*Immut*. 31f; Sec. 1.96). It is a matter of scholarly dispute as to whether Philo actually thought of the *logos* as a heavenly being, or whether he uses the language of such an intermedi­ary in heaven as a *way of talking* about God.[[17]](#footnote-17) The difficulty in making a comparison between Paul and Philo lies in the fact that there isn’t much material about the *logos* of God in Paul; we don’t have much to develop as a parallel to Philo. Moreover, Philo doesn’t develop an idea of a personal incarnation of the *logos*.

Jewish thinking about the attributes of God (such as Wisdom and the *logos*) is one background brought to bear on Paul’s statements about Christ. There are disagreements amongst scholars on how to understand the language of personification and hypostatization, but in any event the combination of ideas of a personal incarnation, a pre-earthly existence, and being a son is absent. As well as the attributes of God, God sends forth his angelic agents, but, again, none are picked out individually as a son of God and there is no idea of a personal incarnation; the angels, as a group, are called ‘sons of the God of heaven’ (1 Enoch 13.8); they are the heavenly assembly (Psalms 29, 89); but they remain angels performing their work on behalf of God with mortals.

If we turn our attention from heaven to earth, it is well known that the people of Israel are God’s son (Hos 11:1), but a better background for Paul’s thought is God’s dealings with recognizable individuals. Prophets and leaders of the past are sent forth by God (e.g. Moses, Exod 3:14; Gideon, Judg 6:14), but they are not distinguished as a son of God. The kings of Judah are addressed as ‘son’ by God, and this is the basis for referring to the future Davidic king as God’s son (2 Samuel 7; Psalm 2) or even ‘god’ (Isaiah 9). Worthy individuals of old such as Elijah and Enoch were thought of as in heaven and given an eschatological role – but the point is that they have this role *as* Elijah or Enoch. Scholarly comparisons can be made between Jesus and Enoch in their eschatological role, but these are not found in Paul and, crucially, they pertain to Jesus’ **exaltation** rather than his **origin**.[[18]](#footnote-18)

The ‘son of God’ at Qumran is probably the messiah. 1QSa 2.11 expects a time “when God engenders the Messiah”[[19]](#footnote-19) but this understanding of ‘begettal’ is no more than that expressed about the messiah in a text like 2 Samuel 7, to which it alludes (cf. 4Q174 1.10f). Another text, 4Q246 2.1f, “The Son of God, he will be proclaimed and the son of the Most High they will call him”, is contested by scholars over whether it is best taken as a prediction about a king falsely so-proclaimed or to the messiah.[[20]](#footnote-20) The similarity of expression to Luke is noteworthy, but Luke uses ‘son of the Most High’ **within a birth story** and not just as a comment alluding to Daniel 7. Whatever the interpretation of these DSS texts, there isn’t a parallel here to Paul’s stress on the *making* of the son of God.

In Jewish writings of the period individuals who follow a wise and just course of life are commended as God’s son (Ecclus 4:10; Wisd 2:17-18; *Jub*. 1:24-25; *Ps. Sol*. 17:26-27; Philo *Spec*. 1.318, *Sobr*. 56). Also, historical figures of note might be thought of as sons of God, such as the Maccabean martyrs (2 Macc 7:34) or figures such as Moses and Joseph (*Jos*. *Asen*. 6:2-6; Josephus *Ant*. 3.96f; 4.326). These kinds of usage are in line with metaphorical scriptural usage. The most relevant parallel to Jesus is that of Galilean charismatic individuals who might be addressed as a ‘son’ of God. Rabbi Ḥanina b. Dosa, a devout miracle worker of the 1c. CE was addressed in a heavenly voice as ‘my son’ (*b.Ta’an* 24b; *b.Ber* 17b; *b.Ḥul*. 86a).[[21]](#footnote-21) Honi the Circle-Drawer (again 1c. CE) claimed to be a ‘son’ of God’s house (*m.Taanit* 3.8).[[22]](#footnote-22) Obviously, Paul’s claim for Jesus goes much further than the divinity attached to miracle-working.

Of less relevance is the fact that emperors and kings also appropriated the title ‘son of God’, or something similar, like ‘divine man’ or just ‘god’. The Ptolemys were known as the sons of the sun-god, Helios; Augustus was the son of a god insofar as he was the son of the deified Julius Caesar.[[23]](#footnote-23) Whether this kind of political conceit is on the radar for Paul is doubtful simply because he makes no comparisons between Jesus and kings and emperors. There would be little point since Jesus was only an itinerant preacher that came to the notice of the political class because of the ‘trouble’ he caused among the Jews.

The idea of a ‘son of God’ is common enough in Hellenistic and Jewish culture; the questions, however, are whether this concept is the same as that used by Paul and whether it should be invoked as an explanatory background for Paul’s christology. Paul’s language ‘made of a woman’ and ‘made of the seed of David’ shows reasonable knowledge of the gospel traditions concerning Jesus’ birth and genealogy. Hence, in contrast to the cultural ideas of the time, we might say that for Paul Jesus was an **actual** son, whereas other ideas of divine sonship were not so literal and down-to-earth; this would seem to be the point of Paul’s claim for Jesus in Gal 4:4. In sum: the difference to note with regard to this background is, first, there are no allusions nor any explicit comparison with it in Paul. Secondly, there is more to the title ‘son of God’ in Paul than an affirmation that Jesus was the Jewish messiah, a king in waiting. And thirdly, the claim for Jesus’ sonship is grounded by Paul **in his birth**. Jesus would not have been declared to be the son of God with power in his resurrection (Rom 1:4) were it not for the fact of his virgin birth.

**Lordship**

There is a constant emphasis in Paul on Jesus as ‘the Lord Jesus’. For example, Paul states that he counted everything as dung compared to “the knowledge of Christ Jesus **my lord**” (Phil 3:7). He often uses the refrain ‘God our Father and the lord Jesus Christ’ (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; etc.) This bespeaks a **close association** of Jesus as ‘the lord’ with God who is ‘the Father’. Today, in a Christian environment, it may be difficult to appreciate the radical nature of this association for first century Jews – that grace came from *both* God the Father and Jesus, who was a lord. The confession that **Jesus is Lord** was fundamental for Christians (1 Cor 12:3; Phil 2:11) but this was a significant challenge to first century Jews. This is because, for Paul, Jesus’ lordship is not merely that of a *master* with disciples; it is a lordship over all things in heaven and earth (Phil 2:9-11). Recognition of Jesus as their lord on the part of believers led to obeisance and the ascription of honour to him, albeit with this allegiance and devotion being **to the glory of God the Father** (cf. Rom 16:27; Gal 1:5; Eph 1:12, 14; 3:21; Phil 1:11; 4:20; 1 Tim 1:17).

The categories that a NT historian applies to describe these attitudes to Jesus can reflect his/her own intellectual environment rather than that of Paul. An example of this is the way NT scholars use the term ‘monotheism’. If we say that Paul accommodated Christ *within* his monotheism, we are applying our own framework to Paul’s thinking and behaviour.[[24]](#footnote-24) Unless we can derive the concept of ‘within monotheism’ from Paul’s language about Christ and God, we are more accurate in saying that Paul placed Christ *alongside* God in a **cosmological** framework. The recourse to an ‘ism in our description of Paul’s thought betrays our concerns rather than Paul’s thinking. Paul’s monotheism, if he is a Jew, pertains to God the Father; placing Jesus *alongside* God the Father does not therefore bring Jesus *within* that monotheism.

The devotion implicit in a recognition of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ isn’t characterized by Paul as monotheistic, nor does he say it is a distinctive form of Christian monotheism; these are the claims of theologically minded NT scholars working from a modern Christian standpoint with an eye on the development of early church doctrine. Rather, historically, we should only use ‘monotheism’ to describe the **belief** about there being one God, the God of Israel. The praxis or worship arises from this belief and the new inclusion of Christ in the devotion of Paul and his churches is expressed in a way that is consistent with this belief.

For Paul, devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ is **to** the glory of God the Father and this betrays a structure and a purpose to that devotion consistent with Jewish Monotheism. Paul never expresses it the other way – that devotion to God the Father is to the glory of Christ. The devotion that flows from a recognition of Jesus’ lordship is **part** of a wider devotion to God the Father. This is not an *equality* of devotion to the Father and the Son which might justify the phrase ‘binitarian’; rather it is devotion to a lord who is subordinate to God and for whom that devotion is ultimately expressed.

It is a self-serving analysis to say that in Paul we have a binitarian form of ‘worship’; what we have is recognition of the lordship of Jesus Christ *alongside* recognition that the Father is God. This reflects a ‘togetherness’ of the Father and the Son that is radical vis-à-vis Judaism, but it is not radical as regards monotheism. So, for example, in the opening words of his letters, Paul expresses the blessing that grace comes to his readers from God the Father *and* the lord Jesus Christ. For a Jew, this togetherness, for a ‘prophet’ recently walking among them, would be a radical challenge, but Paul’s order of expression, always placing Christ second, shows his subordinate Christology. The grace comes from God the Father *through* the lord Jesus Christ. The corresponding attitudes of mind therefore flow *through* Christ *to* the glory of God (Rom 1:8; 5:1, 11; 6:11; 7:25; 15:17).

Paul develops but continues the monotheism of the Torah in four ways: first, he retains the common nomenclature for ‘God’ for the single person of the Father; secondly, he orders his devotional language placing the Father first; thirdly, he introduces a *direction* in the devotion towards Christ – this goes *through* Christ *to* the Father so that he alone is thereby glorified; finally, he makes it clear that it is the Father who is the ultimate *source* of all things that are happening *through* Christ.

So, we might well ask: could God actually have a son within the Jewish thinking of the time? Obviously, there was room for a metaphorical sense of sonship, but were Jews conditioned in their thinking in such a way that they could not countenance God having a son born of a woman? Adam was made of the dust of the ground and might be regarded as a son of God. The messiah might be thought of in terms of being a son of God very much as the kings of old were called a son of God. These are different concepts and trade on metaphor. Paul believes that Jesus is God’s son because he was made of a woman. This in turn provides the foundation for the togetherness that Paul presents. It is not just a result of Christ’s obedience unto death and a consequent exaltation; it is also because he is *actually* God’s son that he is with God. Paul is changing Jewish Cosmology and not Jewish Monotheism.[[25]](#footnote-25)

It might be thought that in order to be a son of God in a literal sense, a person has to be of the same *nature* as well as being related to God by *descent*. However, the opposite is the case if the concept of ‘son’ is a ‘creature’ concept centred in human procreation. It might then be said that a person cannot be a ‘son’ if there are not two human parents. But this is the point at issue: can a person be a ‘son’ with only a mother for a human parent and with God as the father? We might ask this question, but Paul does not; he states that God sent his son *made* of a woman. Part of the reason for the constant use of the common expression, ‘God the Father’, by Paul, is the belief that he has a son.

Trinitarian Christians have a different mind-set to Biblical Unitarian[[26]](#footnote-26) Christians. The tendency for the early church fathers was to cash out ‘son of God’ in terms of divine nature; i.e. in philosophical theology, to say that Christ was fully God and fully man. But the ‘nature’ question is a three-way choice: God, man, or God-man. Paul is quite clear, “There is one God and mediator between God and man, **the man** Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5). This preserves Jewish Monotheism and it secures the atonement because, contrary to popular preaching, **an atoning sacrifice could only be by the death of a man** (Rom 5:12-21).

Whether Trinitarian Christians can legitimately be said to believe Jesus is the son of God in Paul’s sense is questionable. However, the danger for Biblical Unitarian Christians is that they under-appreciate what it means for a man to be the son of God because the idea is so familiar.[[27]](#footnote-27) The way to counter this danger is to think about or meditate upon Jesus’ self-conscious awareness of being the son of God. What must it have been like for Jesus to know that he was the son of God and not the son of Joseph?

The ‘divinity’ of Christ consists of his possession of the Spirit and his **relationship** to God the Father, i.e. in his being God’s son (rather than in a distinctive kind of nature). This fact has an implication for our theology and anthropology. That God could have a son who was a man says something about the *closeness* of God to man. That a man could be a son of God likewise says something about the potential inherent in man as an image of God (cf. Col 1:15). This is not a ‘High Christology’ explaining divinity in terms of incarnation and nature, but a ‘High Anthropology’ and a ‘Low Theology’ that shows how God the Father has loved his creation from the beginning. The Father and the Son are close because God can be and is close to humankind.

**Galatians 4:4**

J. D. G. Dunn’s comment on his survey of the same background material that we have catalogued is that there is a “…surprising absence within the range of materials surveyed above of the idea of a son of God or divine individual who descends from heaven to earth.”[[28]](#footnote-28) What we have instead are examples of men being *exalted* to divine status. In Gal 4:4, Paul does not use a verb of descent but one of ‘sending forth’ (evxaposte,llw), and what Dunn’s comment shows is that the idea of ‘sending forth’ isn’t part of a cultural matrix of individuals descending from heaven; rather, it is rooted in the scriptural pattern of God sending prophets, angels or his Spirit (i.e. not a Son).[[29]](#footnote-29)

It might be thought that ‘sending forth’ is just the same idea as ‘to send’ (e.g. John 1:6, avposte,llw; John 5:23, pe,mpw), but there is a nuance in Paul’s choice of verb that connects up with the story of the exodus. Moses was sent forth to bring Israel out of Egypt (Exod 3:12, LXX, evxaposte,llw; cf. Ps 105:26; Mic 6:4). Paul is presenting Jesus as a **new Moses** in his use of this verb. In fact, God has sent forth a myriad of prophets down the ages.[[30]](#footnote-30) For God to send forth **a** **man** implies nothing about a heavenly location of origin, but rather the opposite: Jesus *came to be* of a woman. Equally, we shouldn’t equate the sending forth of Jesus as a ‘commission’ because there is no dialogue making up the commissioning. We have examples of prophets being commissioned and these involve God addressing the prophet.

Paul makes the point that in the fulness of time[[31]](#footnote-31) God sent forth his Son. This is not about there being a point in the purpose of God for the sending of the Son; it is about there being a point in the purpose of God **for the ending of the Law**.[[32]](#footnote-32) Jews were under the Law until a time appointed of the Father (Gal 4:2). The time for the Law to end had come and so God had sent his son (Christ was the end of the Law to everyone that believed (Rom 10:4)). However, Paul adds a reason for why God has a son, and this is that believers might receive an adoption as sons.

But when the fulness of the time was come,

(A) God sent forth his son, made of a woman,

(B) made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law,

(A’) that we might receive the adoption of sons.

(Gal 4:4)

There is a small chiastic structure here which points up the association of Jesus being a son and believers’ adoption as sons. Their sonship is parallel to Jesus’ sonship. Why does Paul use the expression ‘made of woman’? The Greek word translated ‘made of’ (gi,nomai) is not the more specific word for giving birth, which he uses in respect of Abraham’s sons (Gal 4:13, genna,w). But rather it is the more general word for *becoming*, (literally, the Greek is *being out of a woman being under law*). Typology supplies the reason for Paul’s choice of language.

The scriptural background to Paul’s statement is the promise about the seed of **the woman** (Gen 3:15). The original promise to Eve was that she would give birth to a seed that would bruise the head of the Serpent. Paul is certainly familiar with the typological significance of the Serpent in Eden (Rom 16:20; 2 Cor 11:3) and the role of Christ in relation to the Serpent. Moreover, there had been a long line of ‘barren’ women who had given birth to a son in God-guided circum­stances — women such as Sarah, Rachael, Jochebed and Hannah. This is another typology that Paul is drawing upon in his emphasis that the Son was made of a woman. Further, we cannot exclude an echo of Isa 7:14 and its prophecy of a young woman conceiving a child that was to be called ‘Immanuel’.

There is a comparison to be made between Gal 4:4-5 and Gal 3:13-14,[[33]](#footnote-33)

…made (gi,nomai) of a woman, made (gi,nomai) under the Law to redeem (evxagora,zw)…that we might receive…the spirit of his son… Gal 4:4-5

…redeemed us (evxagora,zw)…being made (gi,nomai) a curse for us…that we might receive the promise of the Spirit… Gal 3:13-14

The purpose for which God had a son was to redeem and to give the Spirit which is clarified to involve a spirit of adoption, i.e. a spirit of adopted sonship (Rom 8:15, 23; Eph 1:5).

Enclosed within this teaching about sonship, Paul includes redemption from the Law. The contrast he develops is one between bondage under the Law (Gal 4:3, 9, 24-25) and the freedom of sonship (Gal 5:1). This metaphor of ‘bondage’ harks back to Egypt and it explains why Paul chooses the verb ‘to send forth’ for Jesus. It is more than just a comparison with Moses; it is also a comparison between the bondage from which Moses was sent forth to redeem the children of Israel and the bondage of the Law from which Jesus was sent forth to redeem those who believe in him. Failure to see this typology underpins the mis-reading of God sending forth his son from heaven to become incarnate in Jesus Christ.

**Conclusion**

What was Paul’s view of Christ? The question is all embracing. The Christian church has been very concerned with the nature of Christ and developed a doctrine of the Trinity, but whether Paul was so occupied is doubtful, judging from his letters. There was one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim 2:5). This states Paul’s view, but he doesn’t discuss the topic of Christ’s nature when he says that he is a man. This is a matter-of-fact statement, but it isn’t enough. For Paul, Jesus is also the son of God, made of a woman (Gal 4:4), the Christ, born in the line of David (Rom 1:3), and now the lord (Phil 2:11). These emphases are critical to how Paul sees Jesus, but he doesn’t elaborate on them in terms that talk of any distinctive nature.

For God to actually have a son requires a woman, and for Paul to claim this for Jesus goes well beyond any ideas in his cultural background except for certain early Christian interpretations of Scripture (enshrined in the Gospels). To make the claim for a recently living flesh and blood man that he was God’s son goes beyond what was said of the mythical heroes of Greek legends; it states far more about Jesus than the metaphorical sense of ‘son of God’ as used for the worthies of the past or the kings of Judah. The best background for Gal 4:4 is the tradition about Jesus’ birth which continues the story of Israel and shows the fulfilment of certain prophecies. Why then was this plain reading of Gal 4:4 lost in the Apostolic Fathers? Vermes concludes his survey of the ‘son of God’ material we have reviewed by saying, “When Christianity later set out to define the meaning of son of God in its creed, the paraphrase it produced – ‘God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, consubstantial with the Father’ – drew its inspiration, not from the pure teaching of the Galilean Jesus, nor even Paul the Diaspora Jew, but from a Gentile-Christian interpretation of the Gospel adapted to the mind of the totally alien world of pagan Hellenism.”[[34]](#footnote-34)

**An Intertextual Analysis of Ezekiel 38 (Part 1)**

**P. Wyns**

**Introduction**

For several reasons Ezekiel 38 is a difficult prophecy to understand. It presents difficulties in identifying the protagonists, the ancient geographical regions, the chronology and the initial fulfilment (is there a contemporary fulfilment or is it all placed in the future?). The inherit ambiguity in this prophecy lends itself to various interpretations that are often forced onto current geo-political circumstances. One can speak of eisegesis rather than exegesis. In other words, the interpreter makes the prophecy “fit” his/her worldview rather than letting the prophecy ‘speak’. The intention of this article is to offer a new intertextual approach after which a separate article will discuss some of the more traditional approaches.[[35]](#footnote-35)

**Earlier Prophecies**

A cursory reading of the chapter brings to attention the following enigmatic passage,

“Thus saith the Lord God; *Art* thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days *many* years that I would bring thee against them?” (Ezek 38:17)

The reference to earlier prophecies is affirmatively confirmed in the next chapter:

“Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God; this *is* the day whereof I have spoken.” (Ezek 39:8)

The LXX of Ezek 38.17 actually addresses the protagonist as **the Gog**, leaving no doubt that the subject “he whom I have spoken” is Gog. But which ‘earlier’ prophecy is here being referenced? Sverre Bøe lists three options (1) Unknown prophecies lost to posterity; (2) A reference to Num 24.7; and (3) A reference to similar enemies that do not specifically mention Gog.[[36]](#footnote-36) There is little we can do with option (1) and option (3) is too generic but option (2) requires further examination:

“He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed [Jacob’s] *shall be* in many waters, and his king shall be **higher than Agag**, and his kingdom shall be exalted.” (Num 24:7)

This is the Balaam Oracle when the King of Moab sought to hire the prophet to curse the nation of Israel when they were about to *enter the land*. The prophecy is concerned with the ‘latter days’ (Num 24.14) and the “star out of Jacob” (Num 24.17) is interpreted as a messianic reference. Note the words in v.19: “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it?or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”(Num 23:19) This is very similar to Ezek 39:8, “this *is* the day whereof I have spoken”.

It might be objected that Num 24:7 mentions **Agag** and not **Gog**, however, both the Septuagint (LXX) and the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) have **Gog** in this prophecy and there is a certain phonetic similarity between Agag and Gog:

“There shall come a man out of his seed, and he shall rule over many nations; and the kingdom of Gog shall be exalted, and his kingdom shall be increased”. (LXE Num 24:7)

Commenting on the work done by Bøe, Myrto Theocharous summarises as follows:

“Bøe notes the early shift from Agag to Gog in the LXX,and possibly in other Greek versions such as Theodotion, in the Vetus Latina and in the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP). As Bøe says of the last-named, “This is surprising since Gog elsewhere is not witnessed in the Pentateuch, but rather in the latter prophets. These writings did not come to hold any canonical position for the Samaritan society.” Nevertheless, in agreement with Gerleman, Bøe recognizes the weight of this tradition in pre-Christian times, meaning that Gog, not Agag, was the common reading. Normally it is a strong indication of a different *Vorlage* when the LXXand the Samaritan Pentateuch agree against the MT. Bøe’s thorough work on Gog and Magog covers a very broad range of extra-biblical tradition…”[[37]](#footnote-37)

Bøe concludes,

“Several of the texts studied read Gog where other versions or manuscripts have names which are quite similar to Gog either phonetically or in written form, such as “Agag” (Num 24,7), “the Agagite” (Esth 3.1 and 9.24), and “Og” (Deut 3.1,13; 4,47). There is no indication that “Goug” in 1 Chr 5.4ever was a part of the Gog and Magog traditions. Other texts referring to Gog may have had a *Vorlage* with Hebrew words that easily could be confused with “Gog”, such as in Amos 7.1 and Sir 48.17.”[[38]](#footnote-38)

Of particular interest to us is Esther (3:1 and 9.24) where Haman is described as an “Agagite” thus linking Esther with Agag in the Baalam oracle of Num 24.7(Gog, LXX). This is interesting as A. Fowler has suggested that a **partial fulfilment** of Ezekiel 38 can be found in the genocide planned by Haman;

“The events recorded in Esther probably occurred in the reign of Xerxes during the 60-year ‘silent period’ between the completion of the temple in B.C. 516 and the return under Ezra in B.C. 458). During this period, Jerusalem was without walls and the Israelites were dwelling safely because the Samaritans had been suppressed by the decree of Darius (Ezra 6:7-13)”.[[39]](#footnote-39)

This suggestion holds merit for several reasons. (1) The restoration “prince” was the legitimate Davidic descendant Zerubbabel; (2) the villages and Jerusalem were without walls;[[40]](#footnote-40) (3) the Jews were extremely wealthy; (4) the surrounding nations were hostile; (5) this was a planned genocide; and (6) the temple was rebuilt.

Of course, there are anomalies as this was but **a partial fulfilment (curtailed because of disobedience) –** the Davidic prince *was not* the Messiah and the rebuilt temple *was not* Ezekiel’s visionary temple and the genocide organised by Haman (the Agagite or Gogite) *was not* the latter day invasion of Gog. However, the incident prefigured the final confrontation and 75,000 of Israel’s enemies perished (Esth 9:16). As Fowler notes, “…there [is no] mention of any loss of life amongst the Jews. It was, therefore, no ordinary war”.[[41]](#footnote-41) Some form of divine intervention (besides Esther’s mediation) must have occurred and the Gog invasion was thwarted on the mountains of Israel but (obviously) also in the dispersed provinces and satrapies of Persia. It seems that a coordinated pogrom was organised to target diaspora Jews as well as those in the land, who would all be extinguished on the same day (the planning of this event took twelve months). It was motivated by greed and jealousy and involved merchant nations (Tarshish) prepared to fence the stolen wealth. As Fowler observes the Jews were the bankers[[42]](#footnote-42) of the Persian Empire, they held important positions and accumulated great wealth: “Haman also had a financial motive for his genocide. He had calculated that the spoils would enable him to offer the king 10,000 talents of silver. Herodotus tells us that the annual revenue of the whole Persian Empire was about two thirds of this sum. This would not have included spoils for Haman and his army.”[[43]](#footnote-43) Although, of course we must make a distinction between poor Jews (some who remained in the land during the exile) and rich diaspora Jews in the satrapies who held properties and wealth throughout the Persian Empire including the wealthy returnees to the land.

In support of this reading we note the similarity between Esth 3:1 (MT[[44]](#footnote-44)) “**Haman** the son of Hammedatha the A**gag**ite” and Ezek 39:11: “They bury **Gog** and all his multitude: and they shall call *it* ‘The valley of **Hamon**gog’”. Although lexicons point here to different roots, the sound of the Hebrew suggests a word-play between Haman-Agag and Hamon-Gog which would be appealing to the Semitic mind.

However, there is more, as M. G. Kline[[45]](#footnote-45) recognises a word play on Abraham’s new name in Gen 17:4, “thou shalt be a father of many nations” or ‘Father of a Great Multitude’ (´ab hámôn Gôyìm). Abraham’s descendants would be like the sand on the sea shore (Gen 22:17) and the hordes of the latter day Gog would number like the sand of the sea (Rev 20:8). Once again, this contrasts with Num 24:7 where Jacob’s descendants are described, “And his seed [Jacob’s] shall be in many waters. His king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted”. Note Num 24:20, “Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perishes for ever”. Amalek was the first nation to war against Israel (in the wilderness) and will be the last nation to war against Israel (at the End of the Age) for, “the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from [the first] generation to [the last] generation”.

It is also worth noting that there is evidence of a link with Medo-Persia, perhaps deriving from earlier deportations from the territory of Amalek. The name of ‘Haman’ as well as ‘Hammedatha’ are Medo-Persian and some scholars have argued that the country or tribe of Agazi in Mesopotamia is related to the Agagites of Amalek.[[46]](#footnote-46) Of course, we know little of the dispersal and absorption of the Amalekites, and therefore likely subjects of Assyria and subsequently of Persia. Nevertheless, Agag the Amalekite becomes an *archetype* in Jewish traditional writings, a sort of “bogeyman” bent on the destruction of Jews. Esau the brother of Jacob married two Hittite wives (Gen 26:34-35; 36:1-2) as well as the daughter of Ishmael (Gen 28:9; 36:3) his descendants formed the Edomites and the Amalekites (and other Semitic peoples through Ishmael’s daughter). All these people became implacable enemies of the Jews.

In sum: ‘Agag’ is either the name of an Amalekite dynasty based on a prominent founder or perhaps a title. There was an Amalekite king called Agag (‘Gog’, LXX/SP) in the time of Balaam and one slain by Samuel (1 Sam 15:9-33). Haman is given the appellation of Agagite and according to Josephus it is a reference to his Amalekite descent (Jos. *Antiq*. xi. 6, 5).

**Seventy Nations**

Jewish commentary on Esther describes the Exile as follows: “One sheep attempting to survive among **seventy wolves**”(*Esther Rabbah* 10:11).Israel in exile were not subjected to one kingdom but to **seventy nations**. The figure of ‘seventy nations’ comes from the table of nations in Genesis 10, the same nations from which the coalition of Ezekiel 38 is drawn.[[47]](#footnote-47)

The reference to Magog, Japheth’s son in the table of nations in Gen 10:2 (and in 1 Chron 1.5) is crucial to establishing the connection, as well as references to the other nations of Genesis 10 mentioned in Ezekiel 38. The motif of ‘seventy’ is a recurring motif in the ANE (not just in Israel) based on the council of the ‘high god’ and his pantheon (seventy sons). One explanation is that this was *demythologised and deconstructed* by the prophets and depicts Yahweh and his divine council which is subsequently reflected throughout Israelite history. Seventy souls entered Egypt (MT), Moses appointed seventy judges (Sanhedrin), Jesus sends out seventy disciples, etc. The idea behind this is that the seventy angels (in heaven) and their proxies (the seventy rulers/judges on earth) would administer the seventy nations in the kingdom age. Moses’ Song in Deuteronomy 32 informs us that the boundaries of Israel were determined (delimited) by the seventy nations:

“Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord’s portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his inheritance”. (Deut 32:7-9)

The following is the Greek LXX version:

“Remember the days of old, consider the years for past ages: ask thy father, and he shall relate to thee, thine elders, and they shall tell thee. When the Most High divided the nations, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the nations, according to the number of the angels of God.And his people Jacob became the portion of the Lord, Israel was the line of his inheritance”. (LXE, Deut 32:7-9)

In the MT, the boundaries are delimited by the children of Israel (the 70 souls entering into Egypt) and in the LXX the boundaries are defined by the angels (70 archangels controlling the nations). Both versions are informing the reader that Israel is God’s portion (inheritance) and his sons (whether angelic or Adamic) function as arbitrators defining and delimiting the boundaries of the Gentile nations. Similarly, Israel (*eretz* = the earth) is metaphorically depicted as “dry land” emerging from waters (surrounded by the gentile sea) when God establishes the boundaries of land and sea as in Gen 1:9.

The scenario in Ezekiel 38 depicts the seventy nations breaching the divinely established boundaries and flooding the dry land and v. 9 uses the same word (cover) that describes the flood in Gen 7:19.

“Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee”.(Ezek 38:9)

The character of Gog is described as **evil** in similar terms to the pre-flood generation:

“And God saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually” (Gen 6:5).

“Thus saith the Lord God; It shall also come to pass, *that* at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought” (Ezek 38:10).

Only one man was righteous – Noah, whose name means ‘rest’ alluding to those who ‘rest’ (different Hebrew word) securely and peacefully in the land in Ezekiel’s oracle. The future time for the rebellious pre-flood generation was reduced to one hundred and twenty years (Gen 6:3) **the same age as Moses** when he died because he rebelled against God. In Deuteronomy 32, Moses is refused entry into the land “…because ye **sanctified me not** in the midst of the children of Israel”(Deut 32:51); contrast Ezek 38:16, “….and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, **when I shall be sanctified** in thee, O Gog, before their eyes”.

We have then a number of contrasts established with Deuteronomy 32. The context of the Song of Moses is that the people are about to enter the land whose boundaries are delimited by the arbiters of the seventy nations. They are warned that a number of calamities would follow apostasy. Moses is not allowed to enter because he did not sanctify God. The Song of Moses had both a prophetic purpose (it predicted the nation’s falling away) and a didactic purpose (it taught the faithfulness of God and the consequences of sin). It warned against God’s wrath and advised them to consider their “latter end” (Deut 32:29) after all it was God who “makes alive” and God who “kills” (Deut 32:39).

The Ezekiel Oracle **reverses the Song of Moses**; the saints are now in the land **living peacefully** the nation has been **resurrected (made alive)** by God (Ezekiel 37) and they have a “Davidic Shepherd” and dwell peacefully (Ezekiel 34); there is no more apostasy. The wealth of nations flows to them as they are the blessed of God and sanctified by him. However, Gog has an evil thought and heads up the nations of Genesis 10 (Ezekiel 38), and the gentile nations breach their God-established boundaries and converge from all directions to conduct genocide and to rob the peaceful saints. Bøe summarises as follows:[[48]](#footnote-48)

The directions from which Gog’s army has been recruited give an impression of a **universal plot** against Israel; cf. the following list of nations according to their place on a (modern) map:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 38.2 Meshech **N**  | 38.5 Put **W**  | 38.13 Sheba **S**  |
| 38.2 Tubal **N**  | 38.6 Gomer **N**  | 38.13 Tarshish **W**  |
| 38.5 Persia **E**  | 38.6 Bel Togarmah **N**  | 39.6 “The coastlands” **NW**  |
| 38.5 Cush **SW**  |  |  |

The contrasts and correspondences between Ezekiel 38 and Deuteronomy 32 in tabular form are laid out in the next table:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ezekiel 38** | **Deuteronomy 32** |
| Boundaries of nations breached**38.10**Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, *that* at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought.**38.9**…Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. | **32.8**…Boundaries of the nations establishedSeventy listed **in Genesis 10**[[49]](#footnote-49)And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually (Gen 6.5).The flood covered the land (Gen 7.19) |
| **38.8** …in the latter years**38.16** …it shall be in the latter days | **32.29** *…that* they [Israel] would consider their latter end! |
| **38.8** *…that is* brought back from the sword *and is* gathered out of many people, against the mountains | **32.26** …I said, I would scatter them [Israel] into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men |
| **38.19** …For in my jealousy *and* in the fire of my wrath have I spoken [against Gog] | **32:22** …For a fire is kindled in mine anger [against Israel]  |
| **38.17…**Artthou he of whom I have spoken in old time (Gog LXX Num 24.7)[[50]](#footnote-50) | **32.7**…Remember the days of old, consider the years… thy elders, and they will tell thee. |
| **38.16**…when I shall be **sanctified** in thee, O Gog | **32:51**…because ye [Moses] **sanctified** me not in the midst of the children of Israel |

In Ezekiel 38, all the punishments reserved for apostate Israel are now poured out on Gog and his hoards as they had breached the ordained boundaries and failed to acknowledge that “Jacob was God’s portion (inheritance)”. God is now “sanctified” in his punishment of Gog.

“Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, *and* lest they should say, Our hand *is* high, (contrast Num 24:7, “his king [Jacob’s] shall be higher than Agag, and his [Jacob’s] kingdom shall be exalted”) and the Lord hath not done all this”(Deut 32:27).

We find then a complete reversal of fortunes. Israel is safe and secure in the land as there are no walls around Israel’s cities…**this is as close as it comes to a lamb among seventy wolves**. It is the story of Esther writ large; the genocide has been averted. The punishments that Israel were warned about when they entered the land have now been heaped on Gog and his hoards. Bøe posits the following considerations regarding the nations of Ezekiel 38.[[51]](#footnote-51)

1. All the lands listed are remote nations, geographically as well as culturally.

2. Many of the nations listed were bygone powers, only heard of in historical accounts.

3. None of the peoples with whom Israel and Judah had actually been engaged in war are listed here, e.g. Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Syria, Edom, Moab, Ammon, the Philistines, etc.

4. The only nation with whom Israel ever came to be politically involved with is Persia and that took place after the days of Ezekiel.

5*.* All the names, except for Gog, are also found in the tables of the nations in Genesis 10 and 1 Chronicles 1.

Bøe is essentially correct (with the exception of Amalek), for it was not Israel but God himself who would conduct **perpetual war against Amalek**, “…the Lord will havewar with Amalek from generation to generation”.

**Reuse of Ezekiel in the Apocalypse**

Any approach that failed to address the reuse of Ezekiel in the Apocalypse would be remiss as Ezekiel 38 and Ezekiel 39 are intertextually linked with Revelation 19 and 20. Of course, the question must be asked why John splits Ezekiel 38 and Ezekiel 39 and reverses their chronological order, with Ezekiel 39 forming the subtext for Revelation 19 and Ezekiel 38 forming the subtext for Revelation 20. Critical scholars early in the last century tended to explain inconsistencies by a two-source theory of Ezekiel and the NT scholar Mealey (1992:131-132) went so far as to propose that Ezekiel 38 and 39 refer to two entirely different battles. Bøe observes that,

“From John’s perspective Ezekiel 38-39 probably appeared as an integrated unity held together by the uniform Yahweh speech and its consistent theme of Gog’s attack and defeat. He probably did not question its origin as a genuine Ezekielian prophecy, placed at this specific place among the many oracles of salvation for Israel. In spite of its penultimate place in the book of Ezekiel, it is not certain that it has been read as chronological information, like a timetable…”[[52]](#footnote-52)

S. Crane suggests that the chronological order found in Revelation reflects the chapter order of the Greek version of Ezekiel preserved in Papyrus 967 (late 2c.-early 3c. AD),

“Although Revelation is a Christian book, and therefore one step removed from the focus of our investigation, it nevertheless has a significant thematic layout possibly reflecting both P 967and the received text’s chapter order. Lust (1980, p.180) proposes that John likely utilised Ezekiel when writing Revelation’s end time events (Rev. 18-22), while observing a slightly different order of final events in Revelation than in the received text of Ezekiel. Of special interest is Rev. 20:11-15 that has a second resurrection *after*the battle with Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:7-10), therefore matching P 967 chapter order. It does raise the question of what may have inspired John to write of a second resurrection, if he was using Ezekiel’s order of events”.[[53]](#footnote-53)

The fact that different Greek versions have slightly different chapter alignments is interesting. However, statistical analysis indicates that Ezekiel 38 and Ezekiel 39 form a unit within the restoration oracles of Ezekiel.[[54]](#footnote-54) Moreover, although Crane argues for the last battle occurring after the second resurrection, the text in Revelation 20 seems to suggest that the battle and second resurrection are almost simultaneous events or at the very least closely related.

Even a cursory reading makes it quite clear that John places Ezekiel 39 at the start of the thousand years and Ezekiel 38 at the end of the thousand years. Although John echoes the language of Ezekiel 39, **he omits to mention Gog in Revelation 16**. The enemy in this chapter is the Beast, the kings of the earth and the False Prophet. At the end of the thousand years the enemy **is named as Gog**. Moreover, Ezekiel 39 relates to a cleansing procedure for removal of the dead bodies and the establishment of a memorial to the destruction of Gog --- these elements are not necessary or even possible at the end of the thousand years as God will be “all in all” and the earth will be populated by immortals. Moreover, the mention of sacrifice and birds in Ezekiel 39 is an echo of the land covenant established at Passover with Abraham.[[55]](#footnote-55) Finally, Gog is cast into the lake of fire where the Beast, the kings of the earth and the False Prophet **already reside** (for the past thousand years). Perhaps the best way to highlight the difference in Johannine usage is with a comparison table:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ezekiel 39** | **Revelation 19** | **Ezekiel 38** | **Revelation 20** |
| **39:17** And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, *even* a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. | **19.1** Whore judged**19.7** Marriage of the Lamb**19.16** King of kings, and Lord of lords.**19.17** saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;**19.19-20** The Beast, and the kings of the earth False Prophet cast in lake of fire |  | **20.4** First resurrection - start of the 1,000 years |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ezekiel 39** | **Revelation 19** | **Ezekiel 38** | **Revelation 20** |
|  |  | **38.8** After many days thou shalt be visited | **20.2** Satan bound for 1,000 years |
|  |  |  | **20.5** Second Resurrection at end of the 1,000 years. |
| **38:4**  I will bring thee forth | **20.7** Satan released at end of 1,000 years |
| **38:2** Gog, the land of Magog | **20.8** **Gog and Magog** |
| **38.11** Land of unwalled villages…at rest, dwelling safely | **20.9** Compassed the camp of the saints |
| **38:22** Fire, and brimstone. | **20.9** Consumed by fire |
|  | **20.10** And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. |
|  |  |  | **20.11-15** Second Resurrection described –wicked mortals condemned to death. |

Decisive in this reading is the phrase “it is done” (Ezek 39:8) which links with “it is done” in Rev 16:17. Revelation 16 relates the battle of Armageddon, when Christ “returns as a thief” and the faithful are exhorted to keep their **garments** (Rev 16:15).

**It is done**

“Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord God; this *is* the day whereof I have spoken” (Ezekiel 39:8).

The phrase “it is done” is used three times in the NT. The first occurrence is Lk 14:22 is in the parable of the wedding feast (a certain man made **a great supper**, and bade many, v.16) to demonstrate the unpreparedness of the guests (some attended **without garments**). The second occurrence is in Rev 16:15 in relation to the return of Christ and **garments**. The third occurrence is at the end of the thousand years when the heavenly Jerusalem is revealed (Rev 21:6). A fourth parallel occurrence (using a different Greek word) in John 19:30 relays Jesus’ last words as -- “It is finished”. It seems then that versions of this phase are used at pivotal points in divine history.

The phrase is not, however, used in Revelation 19 because that chapter is an **expansion of the sixth vial** (Revelation 16); Revelation 19 fills in the details of Revelation 16. The Great Supper is the “messianic banquet” where the enemies of the Lord are depicted as sacrifices. Moreover, Psalm 22, which was recited by Jesus on the cross (and is connected with the sacrifice of Genesis 22)[[56]](#footnote-56) ends with similar phraseology, (literally): “he hath done” (Ps 22:31). It cannot be coincidental that Revelation 19 echoes Psalm 22:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Revelation 19 | **Psalm 22** |
| 4. The four and twenty elders.  And four living creatures. | 22: In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.21. Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns (the cherubim in the sanctuary). |
| 5. Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. | 23. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. |
| 6. The voice of a great multitude. | 25. My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows (marriage vows?) before them that fear him. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Revelation 19** | **Psalm 22** |
| 6. Hallelujah, for the Lord God Almighty reigneth. | I will declare thy name unto my brethren. |
| 7,9. The marriage supper of the Lamb. | 26. The meek shall eat and be satisfied…your heart shall live forever. |

Therefore, Armageddon (Revelation 16) and the Great Supper (Revelation 19) describe **the same event** in the figure of an anti-type. The Lord was crucified and had a “last supper” now the beast is metaphorically crucified and becomes the ingredient (sacrifice) at the “great supper” (wedding feast). This occurs **at the return of Christ**. The next time the pivotal “**it is done**” phrase is introduced is at the end of the thousand years after the recent Gog invasion and the abolition of death.

The release of Satan at the end of the millennium is the precursor to the recrudescence of evil. This is symbolised by the invasion of Gog and Magog based on the Ezekiel prophecies. There has already been one fulfilment of this prophecy in the banquet of the birds at the start of the millennium, so why is there a second fulfilment at the end of the millennium?

This invasion is different from the earlier one, for although the language of Gog and Magog was employed, the nations were never referred to by name in Revelation chapter 19. Now “*Gog of the land of Magog*” from the prophecy of Ezekiel has become **a pair** of nations in chapter 20, *Gog* **and** *Magog*. Gog is therefore, being treated as applicable to different historic situations. No longer does the attack come from the uttermost parts of the north (Ezek 39:2), or even from the east (Ezek 16:12), but from the **four-corners** of the earth (Ezek 20:7). In this chapter, Gog and Magog symbolise something greater than the constituent nations, for as the Abrahamic descendants are prophesied to be like the sand of the sea shore (Gen 22:17), so Gog and Magog will be like the **sand of the sea** itself. Abraham will be a blessing to all his spiritual descendants who come from many nations, but Gog and Magog will bring the curse of death on all their followers, who also originate from many nations.

The object of the attack is **the camp of God’s people and the city he loves**. ‘Camp. is the word used in the story of the Exodus for Israel’s wilderness home, and reminds us that **Gods people**, even in the golden age of the millennium, the ecclesia in the wilderness, is still the ecclesia in pilgrimage.[[57]](#footnote-57)

In order to complete the picture, we must ask ourselves another important question. What occasion calls for all the saints to be gathered in the beloved city at the end of the millennium? We would expect the saints in their role as Christ’s agents and as part of his theocratic government, to be dispersed all over the world. What occasion calls for this summit meeting? The suggestion is that the only event that merits such a huge gathering is **the last judgment**. As king-priests it is not unreasonable to assume that they will participate in the judgment scenario just as they did in ruling the nations.

Those cast outside **the city** are the mortals found wanting at the last (second) resurrection – for, “without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoso loveth and maketh a lie” (Ezek 22:15). “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.” (Luke 13:28)

The elements, refused entry to **the city**, foment the last rebellion. **The city** is of course the community of saints known as the “New Jerusalem”, with Christ, **the tree of life** in the midst. The imagery comes from Eden with Satan (cf. the serpent) tempting the nations and the rejected sinners denied access to the tree of life and exiled from Eden (the beloved city). It cannot be coincidence that the last rebellion and the last resurrection **both occur at the end of the thousand years.** The angel with the **key** has the authority to release Satan from the pit, but the keyis also symbolic of the authority to **raise the dead** from the pit, for Christ has the **key of David** and whatever he opens cannot be shut and vies versa (Rev 3:7). He has the keys to death and hades and can open or shut the doors of the kingdom on whomsoever he chooses. The prophet Isaiah seems to confirm that the release of Satan and the second resurrection are the same event. “And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.” (Isa 24:22-23)

If the release of Satan from the abyss equates with the wicked elements rejected at the second resurrection, what purpose does it serve? It seems that the wicked are not immediately condemned to the second death (lake of fire). Apparently they function as emissaries of Satan, going out into the world at the end of the millennium to preach rebellion. This is in contrast to the immortal ambassadors of Christ, who continued the gospel mission during the millennial age.

It is obvious that God has allowed this to occur in order to distinguish the “wheat from the chaff.” In an age of longevity and peace, man is again faced with the same choices that he had at the beginning – love of God or love of self. The antagonistic elements of the mortal population will show their hand - in their folly they will attack the peaceful and ostensibly unprotected camp of the saints. Those who join the insurrection will be instantly consumed by fire from heaven. Those who choose the side of Christ will be immortalised. The wicked elements that encouraged rebellion because they were rejected at the second resurrection will also be consumed by fire along with all the others. This **second death** is called the lake of fire. Gog and his supporters will in fact join the beast and the false prophet who had also been cast into the lake a thousand years previously (Rev 20:10).

Casting death and hades into the lake of fire (the second death - 20:14) is a metaphor for condemning back to their natural home those who have the nature of death. **Death to death and ashes** **to ashes** but Spirit to Spirit, the last enemy, death, has been abolished because, effectively, all those who bore the nature of sin and death were consumed in the last rebellion*.* “O death, where is thy victory? O grave, where is thy sting?” (1 Cor. 15: 55). Those mortals who remained loyal to Christ become immortals and unite with the rest of the beloved city. Then the entire globe will contain an immortal population and is prepared to be presented to the Father as a perfect gift, for it is covered with his glory (an immortal population who reflect his image).

**Conclusion**

The language of Ezekiel 39 is employed by John at the commencement of the thousand years to depict Armageddon in Revelation 16 and 19 **without mentioning Gog by name**.

In contrast, Ezekiel 38 is employed by John in Revelation 20 to depict the final Gog invasion at **the conclusion** of the millennium when sin (Amalek/Agag/Gog) is finally destroyed and all those with the nature of sin (mortality) perish leaving the earth populated with immortals. At that point the divine **universal war** against sin/Amalek/Agag/Gog is finalized - a war that lasted from generation to generation is not necessary when **there are no more generations**! The “beloved city” (a play on the name of David) is actually a “camp” – a temporary dwelling place - - even in the kingdom age the true fulfilment awaits the revelation of the “heavenly Jerusalem” when the entire earthly population is immortalised. Note that the context is not “entering the land” or even entering into the “Sabbath rest” (kingdom) but the final fulfilment of the age (it is done) when God will be all in all. The attack occurs immediately prior to this event when the saints are “dwelling safely without walls”. **This is a kingdom picture** as depicted in Ezekiel 34:24-27:

“And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it. And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: (the beast destroyed at Armageddon) and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them”.

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**Columnists**

**Exegesis/Analysis**

**Benedict Kent**

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 and 2 Thessalonians 1:5-2:12 are often placed under the blanket genre of ‘apocalyptic’ but this does an injustice to the multiplicity of allusions and intertextual possibilities the imagery may be suggesting. By comparing 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 and 2 Thessalonians 1:5-2:12 side by side with their intertexts, this column hopes to shed light on how the eschatology of the second letter appropriates and extends the imagery of the first.

N.T. Wright argues that in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5.11, Paul is drawing on two sources from the Jewish tradition: (i) from the theophany at Sinai and (ii) the apocalypse of Daniel.[[58]](#footnote-58) Because imagery from the ‘original’ theophany is a common element in apocalyptic literature it is arguable that, by default, a theophanic reading is possible for passages of apocalyptic nature. However, because the allusions to the Sinai theophany are embedded so comprehensively throughout 2 Thessalonians and have their own distinguishable function, this column will treat the theophanic genre as a topic in its own right.

2 Thessalonians follows 1 Thessalonians’ allusion to the theophanic *parousia*. In 1 Thess 4:15-16, Paul describes the climax of the eschaton as th.n parousi,an tou/ kuri,ou (1 Thess 4:15). The Greek word *parousia* is primarily translated ‘presence’, as of a person. However, in the Greek and Jewish literary traditions of the Second Temple period the word also had an association with ‘arrival’ or sudden presence of a deity. N.T. Wright argues that *Parousia*. is used in these traditions particularly when the power of this deity was revealed in divine manifestation or in healing’.[[59]](#footnote-59) In the Jewish tradition Josephus describes the scene in Exodus when YHWH’s presence arrives at the tabernacle in a mist:

evdh,loun th.n parousi,an tou/ qeou/ oi-j Mwush/j e;cairen euvmenou/j paratuco,ntoj.

…and while all the rest of the air was clear, there came strong winds, that raised up heavy showers of rain, which became a mighty tempest. There was also such lightning as was terrible to those who saw it; and thunder, with its thunderbolts, were sent down, and declared God to be there present in a gracious way to such as Moses desired he should be gracious.

(Antiq. 3.80)

To describe this phenomenon of YHWH meeting with the Hebrews, Josephus uses the word *Parousia*.

The Sinai theophany (Exodus 19), when YHWH manifests himself to Moses and to the Hebrews, becomes the archetypal theophany in Jewish apocalyptic and prophetic texts.[[60]](#footnote-60) As well as using the language of ‘presence’, Paul deploys a set of images that also allude to Sinai. ‘The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God’ (1 Thess 4.16). Along with the clouds (4.17) these images allude to Exod 19.16-20, when YHWH descends on Sinai in smoke, the sound of the trumpet and with a voice like thunder. The spatial movement of Jesus descending from heaven to his people as they in turn are ‘caught up together’ (4.17) is further reminiscent of Moses finishing his meeting with YHWH and descending through the smoke to the Israelites (Exod 19.17, 24.3-4). For any audience familiar with Jewish traditions, the imagery of 1 Thessalonians 4.15-17 is identifiable as alluding to the theophany at Sinai and the beginning of the covenant relationship between God and his people.

2 Thessalonians 1.5-12 appropriates and extends the theophanic imagery. The theme of the presence of the Lord is repeated, using the words *parousia* (2.1, 8) as well as evpifanei,a| (appearing, 2.8) and avpoka,luyij (revealing, 1.7), along with images of heaven, angels and flaming fire. The puri. flogo,j (flaming fire, 1:8) is a particularly loaded image that, when combined with the image of angels, often alludes to an even earlier example of divine manifestation in the Jewish Exodus narrative, the burning bush (Exod 3:2).[[61]](#footnote-61) The allusions to the ‘original’ theophany are further affirmed when the eschatology appeals to God’s justice (2 Thess 1:7). The text appeals to the *lex talionis* – the law of an eye for an eye, as legislated in the Torah (Lev 24:17-22). The eschatology takes the ancient Hebrew law of retaliation and transposes it to ‘the level of divine eschatological retribution’,[[62]](#footnote-62) thus constructing an intertextual link with the Song of Moses, in which God is proclaimed to be the one who will rescue his people and deal out vengeance to their enemies (Deut 32:35-37).

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 also draws from other theophanic tropes. Just as the *parousia* of Jesus (1 Thess 4:15-17, 2 Thess 1:7-8) alludes to the original manifestation of God at Sinai, so the sign schema leading up to the *parousia* closely resembles the events associated with Exodus 19, namely the Golden Calf.

In the same way that Moses returns from Sinai to find that the Israelites have constructed an idol to worship (Exod 32:7-8), so the *parousia* of 2 Thessalonians will not happen without a great ‘apostasy’ or ‘rebellion’ (2 Thess 2:3). In the same way that the Israelites declare the false statement: “This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.” (Exod 32:4), so will people be deluded at the time preceding the *parousia* and not ‘receive the love of the truth’ (2 Thess 2:10). And as God is portrayed in 2 Thess 2:10 as ‘send[ing] upon them a deluding influence’ as a precursor to judgement,[[63]](#footnote-63) similarly in the Sinai narrative Moses smashes the idol to powder and forces Israelites to consume it (Exod 2:20), followed by violent judgement (Exod 32:26-27).

The **second literary source** that Wright and others see Paul drawing on in 1 Thess4:13-17 is Daniel 7, the characteristic text of the apocalyptic genre.[[64]](#footnote-64) The imagery of believers being caught up in the clouds to be with Jesus is a re-imagining of Daniel’s ‘son of man’ figure rising on the clouds (Dan 7:13). Wright argues that Dan 7:13 “is now reapplied by Paul to the Christians who are presently suffering persecution.”[[65]](#footnote-65) However, T. F. Glasson argues against such association, claiming that the imagery of the heavenly descent cannot come from Dan 7:13, as the ‘son of man’ is a deeply symbolic figure, rather than the literal single figure of 1 Thess 4:16. He also argues that 1 Thess 4:13-17 is portraying a heavenly descent whilst Dan 7:13 depicts the reverse, a heavenly ascent. Glasson’s criticism is legitimate if Paul is interpreted as borrowing the ‘son of man’ image for his depiction of Jesus. However, it is arguable that, it is the image of the ascending believers in 1 Thess 4:16 that alludes to Daniel’s son of man figure as an echo of the pattern of Jesus’ own ascension after his resurrection (Acts 1:9).

By drawing on Danielic imagery, 1 Thess 4:13-5:11 can be compared with other Jewish literature available in the first century, namely, some of the sectarian writings from the Qumran community as well as theodicies such as 1 Enoch, 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra.[[66]](#footnote-66) In particular, when Paul addresses the Thessalonians with the titles ui`oi. fwto,j (‘sons of light’, 1 Thess 5:5) and ui`oi. h`me,raj (‘sons of day’, 1 Thess 5:5), he employs similar terminology to some of the sectarian writings found at Qumran which use the phrases ‘sons of light’ self-reflectively and ‘sons of darkness’ for outsiders.[[67]](#footnote-67) These titles are given an eschatological dimension in ‘The War Scroll’, which depicts a future war between the ‘sons of light’ and the ‘sons of darkness’.

Like 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians uses apocalyptic imagery but to a far greater extent. 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10 depicts the conditions of the *parousia* of Jesus, echoing many of the elements from Daniel 7’s vision of end times. The persecution of the people of God in 1:4, 6 (Dan 7:21, 25), the judgement against the godless in 1:6, 8 (Dan 7:26, 12:2), and the fiery and angelic presence in 1:7 (Dan 7:9, 11), portray a scenario similar to Daniel’s vision where God takes decisive action.[[68]](#footnote-68)

The central part of the letter, 2 Thess 2:1-10, introduces an array of images which, like recognisable characters from a drama, have roles to play in the lead up to the *parousia* of Jesus. As with 1 Thessalonians, these characters resemble familiar figures from Daniel 7, 11 and 12. The apostasy appears in Dan 11:32,[[69]](#footnote-69) the mystery in Dan 7:16, the man of lawlessness in Dan 8:24-25, 9:26-7, 11:31-39[[70]](#footnote-70) and his destruction in Dan 7:11. Traditionally, the man of lawlessness has received a great deal of attention as an early component in the formation of the antichrist tradition. J. R. Harrison has more recently examined the figure. The figure (2 Thess 2:4) appears to be modelled on Dan 8:24-25, 9:26-7, 11:31-39, and is generally interpreted as Antiochus Epiphanes who provoked the Maccabean revolt of 166-160 BC.[[71]](#footnote-71) The Psalms of Solomon, Josephus and Philo also show that later historical figures such as Pompey (63 BC) and Emperor Gaius Caligula (37-41 BC) were viewed in the light of Antiochus Epiphanes, either because of their besieging of Jerusalem or their attempts to assert their own authority on the Jewish Temple.[[72]](#footnote-72)

Like 1 Thess 4:13-5:11, 2 Thess 1:5-2:12 shares many motifs with contemporary apocalyptic literature.[[73]](#footnote-73) Ernest Best surveys the common motif of great evil preceding the end in apocalyptic literature.[[74]](#footnote-74) Similarly, God’s divine judgement,[[75]](#footnote-75) the revealing of the Messiah figure,[[76]](#footnote-76) the persecution of believers,[[77]](#footnote-77) and future rest for the faithful are common features.[[78]](#footnote-78) The condition of mystery surrounding eschatological matters is typical language of apocalyptic writings, and especially of sectarian groups such as of those at Qumran. As well as having historical applications, the man of lawlessness has also been associated with the Jewish myth of the binding of the Satan which Best argues is a common eschatological theme in apocalyptic writings.

As well using apocalyptic imagery, 1 and 2 Thessalonians also rely heavily on imagery from Jewish prophetic literature such as Isaiah. In 1 Thess 4:13-5:8 this link with prophecy is revealed by the phrase, ‘by the word of the Lord’ (4:15). The ‘word of the Lord’ is a common motif in prophetic literature throughout the Hebrew Bible and the appropriation of this language reveals the genre of the subsequent verses. Imagery such as ‘the day of the Lord’ (Isa 2:11; 13:6), ‘the shout’ (Isa 42:13), ‘the heavenly descent’ (Isa 31:4; 43:13; 64:.1), ‘judgement’ and ‘resurrection’ (Isa 26:21), the metaphor of ‘labour pains’ (Isa 13:8; 26:17), the ‘gathering together’ of God’s people (Isa 27:12), all allude to the prophetic imagery of when God intervenes in history.

2 Thessalonians also takes imagery from Isaiah but with an increased use of imagery of judgement, echoing Isaiah 66. This is immediately recognised in the threefold emphasis on retribution in 2 Thess 1:5-12.[[79]](#footnote-79) Like 1 Thessalonians, the theophany of 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 hearkens back to Isaiah’s depictions of the *parousia* of the Lord with its revealing from the heaven (Isa 66:15-18), association of fire with manifestation (Isa 64:1-2) and judgement (Isa 29:6; 30:27; 66:15-18), God deluding people (Isa 6:10-13), the casting of enemies away from the divine presence (Isa 2:10), and the glory of the Lord amongst his people (Isa 2:3; 24:23, 66:18-20). Particularly significant is the ‘breath’ of the Lord that defeats the ‘lawless one’ (2 Thess 2:8) as it alludes to prophecies about the Messiah (Isa 11:4) as well as to prophecies about YHWH (Isa 30:27).

A key variation that both 1 and 2 Thessalonians make is the replacement of the figure of YHWH with the figure of Jesus. Instead of ‘the day of the Lord’ being the day that YHWH intervenes in the world, as described in the prophets, the day of the Lord in 1 Thess 5:2 and 2 Thess 2:2 is attributed to Jesus.[[80]](#footnote-80) By combining the prophecies of the ‘day of the Lord’ (Isa 2:11; 66:15-18) with the prophecies of the Messiah (Isaiah 11) the ‘day of the Lord’ becomes the day of the Messiah.’[[81]](#footnote-81) Wright argues that the writer of the letters to the Thessalonians “is still working within the controlling Jewish stories now retold around Jesus.” L. J. Kreitzer supports this evaluation: ‘It has long been recognised that [the] shift from God at the centre of such eschatological hope to Christ at the centre is partly dependent upon the adaptation of certain eschatological texts from the Old Testament.’[[82]](#footnote-82) This is a significant element of Paul’s Christology as well as his eschatology, that Jesus has taken over the eschatological role traditionally ascribed to God, on God’s behalf.

**History**

**Andrew Wilson**

In January 2016, I wrote Part One of this series on *Ezekiel* 38 in the *EJournal.* This set out to expose the prophecy’s historical background, logic of potential interpretation, and, hence, its present-day application. My final paragraph, in January, explained that there were several “Jigsaw pieces” which required slotting into place properly to provide the background to this work. Part 1 of that background was entitled “How the Middle-Eastern world of c.1900 became the Middle-Eastern World of post-1945.” I wish to thank readers for their patience, and to assure them that my thoughts on Part 1 are, with this current piece, complete.

The January 2017 contribution (D.V.) will begin to look **directly** at the political geography of the Middle East in approximately 600 B.C., [when the prophet Ezekiel was working], and will attempt to apply the resulting analysis to the national and/or regional boundary-lines of the same area, on a present-day map, and thus begin to see how the foreground of this story sits into the background established above.[[83]](#footnote-83)

[f] Dr. Chaim Weizmann [1874 - 1952], academic, Jewish nationalist and first Israeli President

Chaim Weizmann, a Beyelorussian Jew, emigrated from a small town, then named Motol, near Pinsk, via work in University research in Germany and Switzerland, [where he studied Chemistry to PhD level], and came to Britain to teach Chemistry. Weizmann also worked as both a teacher and researcher in Chemistry at Manchester University, from 1904, where he eventually became Senior Lecturer in Chemistry. In those roles, Weizmann developed a new synthesis for acetone.

Because of his skills, bridging Organic and Inorganic Chemistry, Weizmann was appointed, by David Lloyd-George, to be Director of the British Admiralty Laboratories, [1916 – 1919], in charge of producing acetone for the further production of cordite, a military propellant: “[he] set out to discover some means of preparing acetone synthetically. He worked night and day. Within a month he did it.”.[[84]](#footnote-84). It should be explained that L-G multi-tasked in WW1, being, during 1916, Minister of Munitions, from May; Secretary of State for War, from June; and Prime Minister, from December of that year.

Weizmann’s initial successes, and later his fame, arose from his discovery of how to use bacterial fermentation[[85]](#footnote-85) to produce large quantities of “acetone – butanol – ethanol”. Today, Chemists consider him to be the Father of Industrial Fermentation.[[86]](#footnote-86)

As with previous articles in this series, historians are faced with the dilemma of interpreting yet another serendipitous coincidence – Weizmann being in the right place at the right time. Was it pure happenstance or providential provision?

In his *Memoirs*, L-G made his views clear about the good evidence he felt he had for relying absolutely on the veracity of his close friend, and political colleague, C. P. Scott, Liberal MP, Editor and sometime Owner of the *Manchester Guardian.* Scott had told Lloyd-George: “[He] could guarantee that...Weizmann was thoroughly devoted to the cause of the Allies”.[[87]](#footnote-87)

In Part Three of this series, paragraph [e], I referred to the part played by C. P. Scott, in introducing L-G to Weizmann, a mutual friend. If Scott’s recommendation of Weizmann to the Prime Minister was very fulsome, L-G’s own assessment was no less glowing: “I took to him at once. He is now a man of international fame. He was then quite unknown to the general public, but as soon as I met him I realised that he was a very remarkable personality. His brow gave assurance of a fine intellect and his open countenance gave confidence in his complete sincerity”.[[88]](#footnote-88)

C. P. Scott had told L-G: “There is a very remarkable professor of chemistry in the University of Manchester willing to place his services at the disposal of the State.”[[89]](#footnote-89) These remarks were true, as stated; yet, in other circumstances, Weizmann could be outspoken against the Brits, and in favour of the *Yishuv*. So, for instance, Weizmann’s opposition to the British Government’s 1939 Palestine White Paper was total and unrelenting, *because he believed it, in its totality, to be misbegotten.*

President Harry Truman had views about Weizmann’s probity and integrity similar to those of Lloyd-George. In 2009, Steve Hunegs, quoted from Truman’s 1955-6 *Memoirs*: “I surely wish God Almighty would give the children of Israel an Isaiah, the Christians a St. Paul, and the sons of Ishmael a peep at the Golden Rule.”[[90]](#footnote-90) Such an individual being unavailable, Truman found, in Weizmann, the next best thing: “Truman admired Weizmann’s life’s work and willingness to speak honestly and eloquently. ...Truman’s trust in Weizmann was reinforced by the latter’s recognition of certain truths in the Palestine conflict, including the reluctant recognition that the dream of a Jewish state in all of Palestine was not realistic, and that instead the Jewish people should accept partition.”[[91]](#footnote-91)

Despite being surrounded by the strong pull from tides of contrary opinions, not the least amongst his own advisors, President Harry Truman recognised the State of Israel minutes after the Declaration of its Independence in the night-time of the 14th of May, 1948. This action relied in no small measure on his trust in Dr. Chaim Weizmann.

The German U-boat blockade of Britain during WW1, had been effective in denying Britain access to her traditional sources both of gunpowder itself, and the acetone from which its accelerant was derived. Not only so, but, according to Dr. Amanda Mason:[[92]](#footnote-92) “The [U-boat] campaign intensified over the course of the war and almost succeeded in bringing Britain to its knees in 1917”.[[93]](#footnote-93) Of Chaim Weizmann’s single-handed role in reversing this looming disaster, David Lloyd-George, in his *War Memoirs,* said: “When our difficulties were solved through Dr. Weizmann’s genius, I said to him: ‘You have rendered great service to the State, and I should like to ask the Prime Minister[[94]](#footnote-94) to recommend you to His Majesty for some honour.’”[[95]](#footnote-95)

[g] The 1930s Jewish cultural hegemony in Europe, and the effects upon it of Nazism

There is a whole range of literature, on this subject, as on others, under the rubric of ‘Faction’[[96]](#footnote-96) available today. Of the material under this heading, perhaps the most well-informed, wide-ranging and clearest is being written by the novelist Colin Falconer [1953-]. A whole range of material exists cataloguing the successes enjoyed by Jewish academics. Here is a list of a few, from the many:

(i) *The Jewish Almanac*, (eds. R. Siegel & C. Rheins, [New York, 1980] ). Siegel & Rheins list, for example, the Nobel prize-winners, to date, of Jewish extraction, pp. 495-496.

(ii) *The Jewish 100*, Michael Shapiro, (New Jersey, 1994). This work, of almost 400 pages, enters into much more detail than do Siegel & Rheins about Jewish leaders of thought, from Religion to Physics.

(iii) *Jewish Writing and Identity in the Twentieth Century* (L.I. Yudkin, London, 1982).

(iv) *Cult, Ghetto and State* (M. Rodinson, translated from French by Jon Rothschild, London, 1983). A judicious and energetic application of the Index to the text needs to be exerted in this work, fully to derive matter relevant to the current topic.

(v) The Holocaust Museum at the Holocaust Memorial Centre, 39 Pava utca, Budapest. This is visitable online at [www.hdke.hu/en/](http://www.hdke.hu/en/) and contactable by e-mail at info@hdke.hu. I had a close working relationship with the Director, April 2004 on, and have always found the Centre to be very obliging and helpful. One feature of the Centre’s array of material is the vast range of Hungarian Jewish talent, butchered in the period September 1944 to the end of WW2. Because of the Centre’s narrow, national, focus, it is able to provide detail in a depth not available elsewhere. The resultant detailed impact of variably-illuminable maps, biographical ‘periscopes’, with many hundreds of biographies available, at the press of a button, and the like, is historically breath-taking, and emotionally devastating.

Of Colin Falconer’s (pen-name- see Wikipedia) historical novels on the Middle East, the first, *Fury*, was written in October 1993. Three other titles in a series have followed this first effort, thus far, but it is *Fury* with which I am concerned here. *Fury* parallels personal developments between a German Jew and a Gentile in Inter-war Germany with a potential personal relationship between a Palestinian Arab and a Jewish Kibbutznik. After 1945, the two strands of the story are woven together, when the central characters emerge together in the modern State of Israel. The issue in the 1930s, for the successful German Jew, Josef Rosenberg, and his persistent and increasing blindness towards the direction of policy towards which the Nazi Party was trending, is most poignantly portrayed.

On a History course for teachers of undergraduates and ‘A’-level pupils, in London, in the 1990s, Israeli Historians clearly taught that, in their view, there would have been no state of Israel, were it not for the viciousness of the Nazis, in driving out of Europe the German Jewish Bourgeoisie. These and related issues are currently being explored by historians such as Yehuda Bauer [1926-].[[97]](#footnote-97)

It is these issues of German Jewry’s commitment to a luxurious lifestyle in Europe, based on esteem and recognition by their Gentile contemporaries versus the emotional/spiritual/existential issues involved in a [contrary] commitment to Zion, which Falconer exposes in the starkest of realities in *Fury.*

On September 28th, 2016, Michelle Collins, the lead actress in Jewish writer Diane Samuels’ play *Kindertransport* [1993]*,* was interviewed on Radio 2, about the substance of and the background to the play. Interested parties, with a knowledge of the background to the events in question, were then invited to phone-in their reflections. Against the background of the story that a grief-stricken Jewish mother, unable to separate herself from her beloved baby daughter, and to place her on a *Kindertransport* Train, at a German Railway Station, had the decision taken from her hands by SS troops, who laughingly snatched the baby from her agonising mother, tossed her into the air, and caught her on their bayonet-tips, another lady contributor, who was living in Germany in the 1930s, said, *par contre*, that she believed German Jews were well able to see increasingly, but long before *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, [possibly even as early as the dual elections in 1932], the direction in which events would unfold.

Falconer’s work is much more nuanced than this Radio discussion, showing how, however foolhardy this might now seem, with the perfect vision of hindsight to assist us, those *then* with so very much – a whole way of life – to lose, blinded themselves against believing that the country of Schiller, Beethoven and Goethe, would allow itself to descend to the depths which the Nazi Party envisaged.

**Conclusions**

Once again, as in previous *EJ* instalments of this story, we are confronted with the ‘Accident v Providence’ dichotomy.

This final part offers raw material for such consideration, including the following:

(a) A man, becoming a leading Chemist, ‘Father of Industrial Fermentation’, indeed, arrived on British shores from over 1100 miles away at the very time Britain found itself facing the build-up to WW1 – a World War in which Britain, a leading protagonist in the War, became severely inconvenienced by a total shortage of cordite, and bereft both of the materials and means to rectify its embarrassment.

(b) The Chemist in question happened to be Jewish, and presented himself in Britain at a time of extreme sensitivity, as regards the Jewish people.

(c) The Chemist was known to, and trusted by, *confidants* of the then Prime Minister, David Lloyd-George.

(d) The Chemist found himself, thus, in a position of saving his newly-adopted country from total calamity in a World War.

(e) The Chemist had no desire to recoup any personal aggrandisement out of the success of his efforts.

(f) The Chemist was a committed Zionist.

(g) The Chemist had a great deal of desire to extract benefit for the Jewish people out of the gratitude expressed to him by Lloyd-George, the then Prime Minister of his adopted country, Britain.

As has already become apparent, from earlier instalments in this *EJ* series, at precisely the same period as the above seven variables, other matters were trending in the same direction. For example:

(h) Britain was, at this point, also in train of establishing the Balfour Declaration.

(i) General Allenby was imminently about to capture Palestine, and Jerusalem from the Ottomans.

(j) European Jews, despite much success in that Continent, as measured academically, and in many other ways, were pressurised, very much against their will, and to the severe detriment to their standard of living and status, into an urgent desire to leave Europe, to save themselves from the Nazis, even though this required them to leave behind all their sophisticated and successful way of life in the West, and to roll their sleeves up, encouraging the Desert to ‘blossom as the Rose’. This was far less romantic than it might be made to sound – given, for instance, that, in the draining of Lake Huleh alone, many $ millions, and the even more painful giving of emigres’ lives, were spent.

(k) Under Israel’s Law of Return [1950], consolidated by the Nationality Law [1952]: “Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an *oleh*”.[[98]](#footnote-98) In that way, a frightened and bewildered tide of Jewish humanity, desperately exiting from holocaust in Europe, had a Home ready and willing to receive them.

Thus, the challenge, at this point, for the reader – William Paley-like[[99]](#footnote-99) is simply this:

“How complex does a proposition need to become before the concept of design [and, hence, a Designer] in its workings becomes inescapable, whilst any ‘coincidental’ analysis is rendered demonstrably facile?”

**Archaeology News**

Kay McGrath

In the last several months two articles have been blogged at **Ritmeyer Archaeology –** July 2016was the 10th Anniversary of brother Ritmeyer’s publication *The Quest: Revealing the Temple Mount in Jerusalem*[[100]](#footnote-100) (first published July 2006). The second, September 2016 – the *Flooring from the Temple Mount in Jerusalem*[[101]](#footnote-101), a**Temple Sifting Project**[[102]](#footnote-102) – the reconstruction of Temple tiles.

**Israel**:

In July the National Geographic reported on *Bible Scenes Uncovered in Ruins of Ancient Synagogue*, a fifth century mosaic found in northern Israel, “above the sea of Galilee.[[103]](#footnote-103)

@ Archaeology News, *Dead Sea Scrolls Still Conceal Many Stories*, “One of the most traumatic events in Jewish history occurred around the year 70 CE.”[[104]](#footnote-104)

In Southern Israel, again a feature story in National Geographic – *Discovery of Philistine Cemetery May Solve Biblical Mystery*[[105]](#footnote-105) *–* “An unprecedented find in southern Israel may finally reveal the origins of one of the Hebrew Bible’s greatest villains.”

Counter reported @ Live Science – *First Ever? Discovery of Philistine Cemetery Draws Criticism.*[[106]](#footnote-106)

Of interest: *The Bornblum Eretz Israel Synagogues Website[[107]](#footnote-107) –* “The main goal of this website is to display the world of synagogues from the Land of Israel for the scholar, student and layperson. This website provides information such as bibliographical references, geographical location, photos, plans and brief descriptions of ancient synagogues from the Roman and Byzantine periods in the Land of Israel. It also presents information on selected historically significant synagogues from the Middle Ages through the beginning of the 20th century. This site will be constantly updated including the latest relevant research news and scholarly works. A search of bibliographical references is currently in preparation.”

To Science, a “Summer 2016, Cover Stories, Daily News” at Archaeolgy.com – *Genome of 6,000-Year-Old Barley Grains Sequenced for First Time.*[[108]](#footnote-108)

The earth continues to reveal its history: *Rare Pottery Workshop Discovered in Galilee*[[109]](#footnote-109)*, Remains of Canaanite Fort Unearthed by Teens on Galilee Dig.*[[110]](#footnote-110)

Dr. Gabi Barkai speaks – “They want to have their cake and eat it” – *We Experience the Destruction of the Temple Year-Round.*[[111]](#footnote-111)

More frescoes discovered, *Rare Frescoes from Roman Period Discovered at Zippori in Galilee in Hebrew University Excavation.*[[112]](#footnote-112)

To Mikvah *– Ancient Roman Bath House Discovered Under Modern Mikvah.*[[113]](#footnote-113)

Of interest – *The Second Temple* [[114]](#footnote-114)– by Lawrence H. Schiffman.

thetorah.com, Dr. David Gurevich, Abstract: What brought Rome to present a military campaign against the small and distant province of Judaea as a great victory? Why did such a small rebellion succeed for so many years? What brought Titus to raze the most important metropolis of Judaea when much less would have put down the rebellion? Finally, why did the Flavian emperors actively publicize the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple? The answer to these questions should be sought not in Jerusalem, but in Rome and its political climate.[[115]](#footnote-115) The article titled – *Why Did Vespasian and Titus Destroy Jerusalem?*[[116]](#footnote-116)

@ blog.bibleplaces.com – *Seven Fascinating Facts about Crossing the Jordan River*[[117]](#footnote-117) – “I had the opportunity to read a pre-publication draft of an article that David Z. Moster has written on crossing the Jordan River in antiquity. I found it a fascinating study, and I asked him if I could share some of his excellent research with you, and he kindly agreed.”

Inscriptions, again @ blog.bibleplaces.com – *Favourite Ancient Inscription Results.*[[118]](#footnote-118)

Weapons and tools discovery – “some dating back 3,500 years” – *Metal Weapons and Tools Thousands of Years Old Discovered at Israeli Beach.*[[119]](#footnote-119)

A digression *– Sifre Devarim*,[[120]](#footnote-120) Marty Jaffee – “A new translation of the 4th-century rabbinic oral commentaries on Deuteronomy”.

The JewishPress.com reports – *Archaeological Evidence of the Kingdom of David*[[121]](#footnote-121) – “Israeli archaeologists will present to the public the new evidence recently uncovered of the truth of the Biblical kingdom of David.”

In the Negev, a *1,500-Year-Old Stable Exposed*.[[122]](#footnote-122)

A news release by Azusa Pacific University details the discovery of a stone seal – *Israel Dig Unearths Ancient Seal*[[123]](#footnote-123) – dating around 3,000 years ago.

Alexander the Great? – National Geographic article – *Explore This Mysterious Mosaic—It May Portray Alexander the Great*.[[124]](#footnote-124)

@ JewishPress.com, *Largest Archaeological Garden Ever in Israel Inaugurated at IDF Kirya Base in Tel Aviv*.[[125]](#footnote-125)

ScienceDaily.com – Jerusalem, Mt Zion, a rare Roman coin was discovered – Source: University of North Carolina at Charlotte – *Rare Roman Gold Coin Found in Jerusalem at Mt. Zion Archaeological Dig*.[[126]](#footnote-126)

Afghanistan, IsraelNationalNews.com – *Rare Findings from Ancient Jewish Community of Afghanistan*[[127]](#footnote-127) – “The Israeli National Library acquires massive and unique collection of ancient Jewish documents from Afghanistan”.

The Temple Mount – ynetnews.com covers the availability of a virtual reality tour of the Temple Mount as it was 2,000 years ago – *A Virtual Reality Visit to the Second Temple*.[[128]](#footnote-128)

Ashkelon, a *Fisherman’s House Discovered*[[129]](#footnote-129) – “A building used by fishermen in the Ottoman period, containing fishhooks and fishing weights, was exposed in an archaeological excavation conducted in Ashkelon, north of the Gaza Strip.”

One more digression: *Ancient Charred Hebrew Scroll Virtually Unwrapped*[[130]](#footnote-130) – “A new digital analysis of the extremely fragile Ein Gedi scroll — the oldest Pentateuchal scroll in Hebrew outside of the Dead Sea Scrolls — reveals the ink-based writing hidden on its untouchable, disintegrating sheets, without ever opening it. While prior research has successfully identified text within ancient artifacts, the Ein Gedi manuscript ...”

Continuing, at LiveScience.com – *Gallery of Dead Sea Scrolls: A Glimpse of the Past*.[[131]](#footnote-131)

The Israel Antiquities Authority report about – *The Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein National Campus for the Archaeology of Israel is Taking Shape in Jerusalem*[[132]](#footnote-132)(including video link[[133]](#footnote-133)).

@ Haaretz.com – *Caves in Which Jewish Rebels Hid from Romans 2,000 Years Ago Found in Galilee* – “As the First Jewish War raged in ancient Palestine, villagers would hide in impressively inaccessible cliffside caves as the Roman armies marched through.”[[134]](#footnote-134)

Two articles @ LiveScience: *25 New ‘Dead Sea Scrolls’ Revealed*[[135]](#footnote-135)– “More than 25 previously unpublished “Dead Sea Scroll” fragments, dating back 2,000 years and holding text from the Hebrew Bible, have been brought to light, their contents detailed in two new books” and – *Are These New Dead Sea Scrolls the Real Thing*?[[136]](#footnote-136) – “The Dead Sea Scrolls are about 2,000 years old and hold text from the Hebrew Bible. Hundreds of fragments of the scrolls were first found between 1947 and 1956 in caves in Qumran in the Judean Desert” – both articles by Owen Jarvis.

To **Jordan** (in brief):

*Researchers Unearth Ancient Mythological Statues in Jordan*[[137]](#footnote-137) (Aphrodite).

*Prehistoric Fortifications Found In The Basalt Desert Of Eastern Jordan*.[[138]](#footnote-138)

*Ancient Texts Offer Wealth of Information for Archaeologists, Local Epigrapher Says*.[[139]](#footnote-139)

*The Nabataeans of Ancient Arabia*.[[140]](#footnote-140)

*What Two Oxford Archaeologists Discovered While Flying Over Ancient Jordan*.[[141]](#footnote-141)

**Egypt**:

*Polish Archaeologists Studied a Unique Necropolis in Egypt*.[[142]](#footnote-142)

*‘Primitive Machine’ Within Great Pyramid of Giza Reconstructed*.[[143]](#footnote-143)

*Oldest Traces Of Canine Bone Cancer Discovered At Ancient Egyptian Pet Cemetery*.[[144]](#footnote-144)

*Ancient Egypt: A Brief History*.[[145]](#footnote-145)

*To Study Ancient Cancer, this Scientist Made Her Own Mummies*.[[146]](#footnote-146)

*7 Amazing Archaeological Discoveries from Egypt*[[147]](#footnote-147) (Photo Journal).

*Egypt’s Antiquities Minister Attends Lifting of Newfound Beam of Khufu’s Second Boat*.[[148]](#footnote-148)

*Emoticons in Ancient Egypt*.[[149]](#footnote-149)

*1700-Year-Old Greek Epitaph of Jewish Woman Translated*.[[150]](#footnote-150)

*Dying in Ancient Egypt—Evidence of Inflammation, Infection and Possible Cancer*.[[151]](#footnote-151)

*New Discovery in Matariya Points to a King Ramses II Temple*.[[152]](#footnote-152)

**Greece**:

*Rediscovering a Giant*.[[153]](#footnote-153)

*Scientists Use Mass Spectrometry To ‘Look Inside’ An Ancient Greek Amphora*.[[154]](#footnote-154)

*23 More Wrecks Found at Greek Hotspot for Sunken Ships*.[[155]](#footnote-155)

*Russian Archaeologists Uncover Ancient Persian Stele Inscribed with a Message from King Darius I*.[[156]](#footnote-156)

*Animation Brings 2500-Year-Old Greek Vase To Life*.[[157]](#footnote-157)

*Roman-Era Shipwreck and Building Remains Discovered Off The Coast Of Delos*.[[158]](#footnote-158)

*Archaeologists Unveil New Findings from Greek Warrior’s Tomb*.[[159]](#footnote-159)

**Iran**:

*3,000-Year-Old Glazed Bricks Discovered In Iran’s Sardasht*.[[160]](#footnote-160)

**Iraq**:

*Iraq’s Ancient City of Babylon Eyes World Heritage List*.[[161]](#footnote-161)

*MKs Turn to UNESCO to Save Prophet’s Tomb*.[[162]](#footnote-162)

**Roman**:

*Reading the Unreadable*.[[163]](#footnote-163)

*One of the Most Significant Etruscan Discoveries in Decades Names Female goddess Uni*.[[164]](#footnote-164)

*More Tombs Uncovered in Etruscan Vulci*.[[165]](#footnote-165)

*Myth busting Ancient Rome – The Emperor Nero*.[[166]](#footnote-166)

*Researchers Reconstruct Beautiful House In Pompeii By Using 3D Technology*.[[167]](#footnote-167)

*Huge Water Cistern Found At The ‘Villa Of Augustus’ Near Nola*.[[168]](#footnote-168)

**Turkey**:

*Biblical Riot at Ephesus: The Archaeological Context*.[[169]](#footnote-169)

*Underwater Basilica in İznik to Shed Light on Roman Era*.[[170]](#footnote-170)

*Secret Tunnel Found in Hittite Capital*.[[171]](#footnote-171)

*Underground Artifacts in Seljuk Graveyard to be Unearthed*.[[172]](#footnote-172)

*Archaeologists Discover 4,200-Year-Old Rattle in Central Turkey*.[[173]](#footnote-173)

*Zeus Temple to Regain its Glory*.[[174]](#footnote-174)

*2,100-Year-Old Goddess Kybele Sculpture Unearthed in Turkey’s Black Sea*.[[175]](#footnote-175)

*Byzantine-Era Tablet Found in Road Construction*.[[176]](#footnote-176)

*Ancient Seal Found in Tatarlı Mound*.[[177]](#footnote-177)

*Restoration of Laodicea’s Hellenistic Theatre to be Completed in 3 Years*.[[178]](#footnote-178)

*Gold Found in 8th Century BC Sarcophagi Discovered in Turkey’s Çanakkale Province*.[[179]](#footnote-179)

*Centuries-Old Rental Agreement Unearthed in Turkey’s İzmir*.[[180]](#footnote-180)

*Ancient Crossword Puzzle Found in Smyrna*.[[181]](#footnote-181)

*More On 8,000-Year-Old ‘Goddess Figurine’ Found In Central Turkey*.[[182]](#footnote-182)

*Ancient Grape Seeds Found in İzmir*.[[183]](#footnote-183)

*Untouched Ancient Burial Chamber Found in Turkey’s Muğla*.[[184]](#footnote-184)

**General**:

*This is the Oldest Surviving Melody Dating Back to 1400 BC, and it Sounds Totally Amazing* …[[185]](#footnote-185)

*Digital Library of the Middle East*.[[186]](#footnote-186)

*Integrated Tree-Ring-Radiocarbon High-Resolution Timeframe to Resolve Earlier Second Millennium BCE Mesopotamian Chronology*[[187]](#footnote-187):

*Poles Have Solved the Riddle of Defensive Structures of the Middle Nile*.[[188]](#footnote-188)

*Ancient DNA Reveals Complex Genetic History of Near East at Dawn of Agriculture*.[[189]](#footnote-189)

*Ancient Coin Profiles: Carthaginian Gold and Silver 1½ Shekel*.[[190]](#footnote-190)

*Beautiful Treasure in Ancient Cyprus Tomb Reveals Island was Crucial Mediterranean Hub*.[[191]](#footnote-191)

*Women in the Ancient Near East*.[[192]](#footnote-192)

*How Geography Helps Destroy Your Doubts about the Bible*.[[193]](#footnote-193)

*Digital Troves, Providing Insights and Reuniting Antiquities*.[[194]](#footnote-194)

*NGC Ancient Coins: Redefining the Biblical Widow’s Mite*[[195]](#footnote-195) – “The Biblical Widow’s Mite is among the most familiar, yet most mysterious, coins of antiquity. Truth be told, we don’t know exactly what it was. The best place to start is the New Testament, where the widow’s offering is described in the Gospels of Mark (12:41-44) and Luke (21:1-4).”

*CoinWeek Ancient Coin Series: Coins of Julius Caesar*.[[196]](#footnote-196)

*Lifting the Veil on Queen of Sheba’s Perfume*[[197]](#footnote-197) – “It is one of the oldest fragrances in the world. Nicolas Baldovini’s team at the Institut de chimie de Nice (CNRS/UNS) has just discovered the components that give frankincense its distinctive odor: two molecules found for the first time in nature, named “olibanic acids” by the scientists. Their research results have just been published online, on the website of the journal Angewandte Chemie International Edition.”

**News**

The Christadelphian Digitisation Project ([www.cdfoundation.org](http://www.cdfoundation.org)) states its aim as follows:

“The Christadelphian Digitisation Foundation was created to digitise Christadelphian books and resources, make them available online and coordinate digital projects that go beyond the scope and capabilities of individuals and ecclesias. Our goal is to make it much, much easier for anyone – be they inside or outside of the community – to find and access Christadelphian writings on whatever aspect of the Bible truth is of interest to them.”

“The CDF was created to raise and administer the funds necessary to digitise large quantities of Christadelphian books and resources, redistribute them via digital platforms and develop a stronger Christadelphian presence online. We do all of our work with the permission of ecclesias, authors, publishers and copyright holders.

Our belief is that brotherhood is in need of better resources and stronger continuity in how it uses the internet and digital technologies for preaching, teaching and communication. We set up the CDF to address that need.

Christadelphians have produced many excellent teaching resources over the years. Books have been written, magazines have been published and these have shaped our community in significant and meaningful ways. Since the 1990s however, the way that we search for, and find information has changed profoundly and become strongly oriented towards the internet where there currently exists a significant vacuum in Christadelphian resources. This has inadvertently created two problems — firstly, that a younger generation have little awareness of the resources already available, and secondly, it has allowed for a higher acceptance and re-distribution of evangelical literature.”

**The Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation will be making available the last 10 years of its issues available to the project for inclusion in its search engine.**

**Reviews**

**Jonathan Burke, “Satan and Demons in the Apostolic Fathers: A Minority Report”, *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 81. Uppsala 2016. Pp. 127-167.**

The Christadelphian community is blessed with individuals who have the aptitude, the willingness and the patience to engage with academic literature, both as readers and as writers. This latter activity, participating in the wider theological dialogue, gives Christadelphians the opportunity to make representation of their doctrinal perspective to the communities that inform theological ideas at the highest level. In areas where Christadelphians diverge from mainstream Christendom, we have some different and valuable ideas to contribute to the dialogue. Of course, such differences may also impede being selected for publication, but all the more reason for Christadelphian writers to approach their subject with rigor and so earn an audience. This article by Jonathan Burke is one such piece.

The tag ‘Apostolic Fathers’ is the name given to a collection of texts dating from the first and second centuries. It is varied collection and grouping them together under a single category can mask the fact that they represent different perspectives from different authors. Yet as representatives of the period between the New Testament writers and the 2c. Apologists, they are a crucial datum in understanding early Christianity. By looking at texts written immediately after the New Testament period and finding points of continuity, one can corroborate doctrinal themes within early Christianity. One such theme is the Christian understanding of Satan and demons.

Burke begins by outlining previous work on Satan and demons in the Apostolic Fathers and, more generally, in biblical texts. He then proceeds to discuss the Jewish aetiologies of sin in the Second Temple Period. Looking at the Jewish understanding of Satan and demons is crucial given the (sometimes overlooked) fact that Jewish influence upon Christianity did not end with the apostles. The early Christians continued to draw on various strands of Judaism. Some doctrinal shifts that were previously supposed to be due to pagan influence can be more readily understood through the influence of Hellenised Judaism. In Second Temple Judaism there were two aetiologies of sin: Adamic (human origin of evil) and Enochic (demonic original of evil). This allows Burke to devise a criterion for analysis satanological terminology in a text: when accompanied by an Adamic aetiology of sin such terminology indicates a non-belief in Satan and demons. Via this methodology Burke argue that certain texts exhibit non-belief in Satan and demons without appeal to arguments from silence.

After describing his methodology, Burke proceeds to apply his methodology to the Apostolic Fathers. He identifies a number of texts that he believes exhibit non-belief in Satan and demons, namely, the Didache, First Clement, Shepherd of Hermas, Martyrdom of Polycarp, and Second Clement. He contrasts these with texts that do exhibit belief in Satan and demons, namely, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Epistles of Ignatius. In making this contrast Burke is able to further strengthen his conclusion, arguing that Barnabas and Ignatius reveal how the other writers would have written had they believed in Satan and demons. Burke takes the evidence from the Apostolic Fathers as evidence for “a first century demythological Christianity which survived well into the second century, though only as a minority report”.

**TG**

**John Piper, *A Peculiar Glory: How the Christian Scriptures reveal their complete truthfulness.* London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2016. 302pp. ISBN: 978-1-78359-409-2**

The ambition of this book is to describe how the Bible can be self-authenticating. This is intended to answer the worry of how the Bible can be known to be true, be known to be the inerrant word of God, without recourse to heavy intellectual research and argumentation. This is not to say that the author rejects historical reasoning or defences of the canon and text of the Bible. He devotes Part 2 of his book to questions of the formation of the canon and textual criticism, and he devotes Part 3 to common arguments for the authority of Scripture from Jesus’ estimate of the Old Testament and the apostolicity of the New Testament. Yet such arguments and evidences are in danger of being incomplete and rest upon a good deal of knowledge. How does the average believer come to accept the Bible as the word of God?

The question of direct awareness of the divine character of the Bible may seem to put us in the same territory as Reformed Epistemology, and Piper does base one chapter on the ‘Internal Testimony of the Holy Spirit’. However, Piper’s answer is not that of Reformed Epistemology, or at least not that of Alvin Plantinga, that the Holy Spirit witnesses to the believer that the Scriptures are true. The answer of Piper, broadly, is that the Bible exhibits the titular “peculiar glory”, which can be seen to be divine and so self-authenticates the Bible’s divine origin. This peculiar glory, if I understand the author correctly (and I’m not sure I do), is the way in which God subverts expectations by reaching into history and touching humans in the everyday. In Part 5, the author describes how this peculiar glory can be seen in the various aspects of the Scriptures.

It may be the philosopher in me, but this all seems to me to be rather woolly and inexpertly articulated. Whilst Piper multiplies examples of what he calls “peculiar glory”, he never seems to tie down a definition as to what it actually is (and what it isn’t). It is also not clear on what basis one should conclude that it testifies to the divine origin of the Bible. The “peculiar” aspect of the “glory” implies that it does not meet with our *a priori* expectations of divinity, so in what sense can it be the litmus test of divinity? If the argument amounts to know more than “the Bible presents a really nice description of who God is and what he does” then it doesn’t really amount to anything at all.

I do not doubt there is a degree of self-authentication in the way that the Bible interacts with believers. It is important that in some sense the Bible has the “ring of truth” or “makes sense” but what Piper has done seems so poorly articulated that it adds almost nothing to the discussion. Despite the high praise of the book on the back cover, I personally cannot understand how this book can be helpful either for apologetics or for strengthening believers.

**TG**

**Graham Jackman, *The Word Became Flesh: A Theme in John’s Gospel,* Reading: Graham Jackman (via Lulu). ISBN 978-1-326-73364-3. 336pp.**

Graham’s modesty will not thank me for saying that he is one of the finest writers the Christadelphian community can boast. But to be truthful, one would need to go beyond the humble accolade of being a big fish in a small pond as a compliment and state that Graham’s works would not be embarrassed amongst those of other scholars. His former books, *The Language of the Cross* and *Re-Reading Romans,* gave academic level treatments of the atonement and the New Perspective on Paul; his latest book brings the same rigour and clarity to the Gospel of John. All his books bring his own insight, from within the Christadelphian frame, to a scholarly dialogue. Yet such statements must carry a note of regret because it is unlikely that Graham’s books will receive a wide reception even within our community, let alone beyond, despite being worthy of us. Partly this is because a wide reception within our community (and wide isn’t that wide) is generally predicated on being published by one of the established publishers, rather than self-publication (as with Graham’s books). Partly this is because (and I mean this as no insult to members of our community) Graham’s writing is erudite but certainly not simple; the price of academic level dialogue is losing the popular level audience. Nevertheless, I would encourage readers to make the effort.

Graham’s present book, *The Word Became Flesh,* is concerned with the Gospel of John, but not as a commentary or chapter-by-chapter exposition. Rather it develops a number of themes from the gospel, taking the Prologue as their prism. The title, taken from John 1:14, captures the theme Graham wishes to explore. Yet he is not singularly concerned with Christology, nor with a rebuttal of the crude Trinitarian interpretation that takes “Word” as a name of a pre-existent of person, though his book does discuss both. Graham argues that “word” refers to a genuine speech act (or, more properly, speech acts) and “flesh” refers to an empirical historical reality, primarily (but not exclusively) in the person of Jesus. The book develops this theme in the Gospel, exploring how John sees God’s intentions expressed.

The first chapter is concerned with history. Graham gives short shrift to form critical approaches that disconnect the Gospel from the historical Jesus, concluding that the writer is a single individual who involved with the real events. Yet he also acknowledges that the gospel goes beyond the mere reporting of events as it has a message to convey. The second chapter is concerned with the Old Testament, specifically the sense in which John sees Jesus as fulfilling the Old Testament expectations.

Chapters three and four explore Christology, what John does (and doesn’t say) about the person of Jesus as the self-revelation of God. Inevitably this involves discussion of the traditional view of Jesus as a pre-existent person but this is not a knock-down match of pat answers as what interests Graham is getting to the bottom of what John actually has to say. And what John wants to say is that Christ is the medium by which God speaks to the world.

The fifth chapter is on the theme of the judgment entailed by the coming of the light into the world. This section includes comment of accusations of anti-Semitism in the gospel, given John’s frequent pejorative statements against those he styles “the Jews”. The sixth chapter traces the narrative of the gospel, though sequential summaries of its chapter. The seventh chapter explores some formal aspects of the gospel. Two appendices discuss the authorship of the gospel and its relation to the first Johannine epistle.

**TG**

**Marginal Notes**

**Romans 5:12 - AP**

This passage has been a source of discussion in doctrinal writing about sin. We want to examine features of the text that need to be taken into account when writing about sin.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned… Rom 5:12 (KJV)

This verse is almost as well-known as John 3:16 in providing a summary statement of a doctrine. There are a number of views about its proper meaning. We are interested in the two clauses: “and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”. The Greek of the last clause has been translated in other versions, “because all have sinned”, or “in whom all have sinned”, and these translations support different views in the doctrine of sin.

The expression *death passed upon all men* uses a Greek verb die,rcomai, which strictly means *pass through*, so that the text might just as well be rendered so as to say that death has passed through all men (to other men). The use of this verb has a semantic contract with the earlier verb eivse,rcomai, which is translated “entered into”, so that the contrast is made that whereas death entered *into* the world by one man, death has passed *through* all subsequent men. This rendering places the stress on the *passage* of death from man to man. Death passes through all men because they all sin, (but since Jesus is the first man not to sin, death will not pass through him to those who are born in his line).

The Greek translated *for that* in the KJV clause “for that all have sinned” is evfV w-|, and it is more strictly rendered *upon whom* or *upon which* - a preposition with a relative pronoun. The meaning may be *a literal location* as in Acts 7:33, where we read, “for the place *upon which* you stand is holy ground”, or it may be more abstract as in Phil 3:12, “if that I may apprehend that *for which* also I am apprehended”, and Phil 4:10 “I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; *in which* ye were also mindful”. The meaning may also be one of cause and effect, as we find in 2 Cor 5:4, “For we that are in [this] tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not *because* we would be unclothed, but clothed, that mortality might be swallowed up in life”.

The locative sense is harder to fit into Rom 5:12, because the relative pronoun would have to connect to Adam, who is removed from the clause by two intervening clauses, and the location would be a *man* rather than a place. Furthermore, the Greek preposition for this sense would not usually be evpi, *but rather* evnwhich is the regular preposition used in, for instance, the expression ‘in Christ’. Instead, the relative pronoun should be connected to the mention of *death*. If we do this, the cause and effect senseconveyed by *for which* or *because* would fitthe passage, giving the translation, *and so death passed through to all men because all have sinned*. Of these two causal senses, *for which* is better because it lacks the ambiguity of *because all have sinned*. The sin *for which* all die is their own.

**Postscript**

Prophecy is not an end unto itself, “For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy” (Rev.19.10).

1. It can mean the witness that the Christian bears to Jesus.
2. It can equally mean the witness that Jesus Christ bears to men.

This is the kind of double meaning of which the Greek language is capable. It may well be that John intended a double meaning; that we are not meant to choose between the meanings, but accept both of them. If so, since true prophecy is the witness to Jesus, any witness to Jesus can be identified as prophecy, and thus prophecy is not limited to those who are designated “prophets” in a special sense. It is therefore the word spoken by God and attested by Jesus that the spirit takes and puts in the mouth of the Christian prophet. At the end of the first century there were many charlatans about, like the Jezebel of Thyatira who claimed to speak with authority in virtue of their prophetic gift, and the ecclesia was under the necessity of devising tests to distinguish the true from the false. John insists that his friends shall *“test the spirits* (those who claim the spirit of prophecy) *to distinguish the true from the false”* (1John 4: 1).

God reveals himself to his people in different ways. In the past this was through the prophets or “holy men” until the appearance of his Son, Jesus Christ who is the **word made flesh**. His son poured out the Holy Spirit on the First Century Church and a community of “new age” prophets was born to guide and encourage believers through the crisis of AD 70. However, God also reveals himself through his **written word** in allegories, patterns, echoes and direct prophecies etc. This repetitive pattern of lesser and greater fulfilment (or already/not yet) may seem strange until we realise that two unchangeable forces interact in the development of history, (1) The nature of God and, (2) The nature of man. As both these forces are unchangeable, the same mistakes (from man’s end) are repeated. His fallible nature makes him predictable as he seldom chooses the good (unless he is that man=Jesus Christ) and therefore divine Biblical patterns repeat.

However, when it comes to interpretation, man’s unchangeable nature is also reflected in his propensity to self-delusion. Sometimes this is simply “confirmation bias” we confirm what we want to believe and ignore contrary facts. We all do this to a degree and it is a mistake that all interpreters must guard against. At other times, interpretation is deliberately skewed and misinterpreted – such a malicious interpretation is the mark of a “false prophet”. Usually wrong interpretation is simply a case of ignorance and an unwillingness to accept correction or guidance. Sometimes God deliberately obstructs an interpretation and the vision becomes “sealed” from the learned and unreadable by the ignorant because of their attitudes (Isa.29.11-14).

At other times people delude themselves such as in Jeremiah’s time with the proverbial saying:

“Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, *are* these” (Jeremiah 7:4).

This was the saying that the people comforted themselves with. God has his temple in Jerusalem, He dwells amongst us - therefore we will not see any trouble. After all, did not Yahweh rescue Hezekiah and Jerusalem? The pattern has been established and we will hold Yahweh to his pattern despite His warnings and our intransigent behaviour.

We could go on with many, many more historic examples, but are we any better at interpreting the prophetic word? As a community we have been blessed with a unique understanding of first principles but we are sorely lacking in our understanding of the prophetic word. We have not progressed from milk to meat. A recent viewing of certain online prophecy day video’s leave me with a distinct queasy feeling as they provide a unique insight to everything that is wrong with our prophetic approach:

1. A misreading of current geopolitical events – an oversimplified view of goodies versus baddies and a failure to see the absolute hypocrisy and corruption on all sides (including USA/Israel)
2. A misreading and ignorant understanding of the original prophecies. If you don’t understand the starting point how can you understand the outcome?
3. A misreading of the patterns. So we will all be gathered to Mt Sinai for judgement when we are explicitly told that is not the case?
4. Confirmation bias in spades.
5. A kind of hubris that will not contemplate that we might (actually might) be wrong sometimes.

So, we can only end with Jeremiah’s exasperated lament:

“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?” (Jeremiah 5:31)

**PW**

**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.

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

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The Christadelphian EJournal is published quarterly and released as a paperback 'annual' each October. It is an academic journal that seeks to interact with scholarship from the standpoint of... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications#expand_text) Christadelphianism, Biblical Unitarianism and the Abrahamic gospel.

**Old Earth Creationism, PB £4.99**

This book (Third Edition, Sept 2016, ISBN 978-0-9563841-8-8, 120 pages) defends Genesis against the two main attacks on its credibility as history - the account of Creation and Noah's Flood. First,... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications#expand_text) it argues that the earth is as old as scientists say but that Genesis records a recently concluded localised special creation by God, but one that is part of a long history of God's creative work with the planet. Secondly, it interprets the account of Noah's Flood as a local Mesopotamian flood and thereby shows that it is credible history. On both counts, Bible readers are encouraged to believe in the Bible as relevant to their thinking about our origins. An appendix to the book explains how we should understand the genealogy of Genesis 5 and its long ages.

**Creationism, HB £21.99**

Creationism (ISBN 978-0-9574460-8-3; First Edition, Revision 1, 523 pages, Sept 2016) is the collected trilogy of the latest editions of the paperbacks 'Old Earth Creationism', 'Historical... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications#expand_text) Creationism', and 'Special Creationism'.

**Isaiah 40-66, Volume One, PB £14.99; Volume Two, PB, £12.99**

This commentary is part of the Christadelphian Academic Commentary Series This volume is the first of a two-volume treatment of Isaiah 40-66. This volume covers chapters 40-48 (ISBN... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications#expand_text) 978-0-9934440-2-9, 576 pages, November 2015); the second volume covers chapters 49-66 (978-0-9934440-3-6, 495 pages, November 2015).

**Church Diaries and Letters, PB, £4.99**

This book (978-0-9563841-9-5, Release 3 (Aug 2015), 130 pages) is a collection of humorous diaries and letters about church events like outreach and evangelistic weeks, fellowship weekends and other... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications#expand_text) things like letters from foreign parts to the church back home.

**Demons and Politics, PB, £3.99**

This monograph (72 pages, 978-0-9526192-6-0) analyses Mark's portrayal of exorcism from a political perspective. It argues the case that Mark saw in Jesus' exorcisms a symbolic demonstration of the... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=4#expand_text) cleansing of the people. Thus it is argued that the Marcan Jesus did not subscribe to the cosmological dualism of his day; rather Mark used this language to represent the spiritual and political state of the people.

**Job, PB, £8.99**

This book (363 pages, ISBN 978-0-9526-1925-3)) offers a chapter by chapter commentary on the Book of Job using the KJV, RSV and NASB versions of the Bible. It compares Job with the Book of Isaiah and... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=4#expand_text) argues that Job, in addition to being a story about a patriarch, is also a prophetic and political commentary about Hezekiah and Judah during the days of the Assyrian Crisis. This prophetic and political discourse is set within the parabolic framework of the prologue and epilogue, in which the details of the patriarch Job's experience have been chosen in such a way so as to represent Hezekiah and Judah.

**Fellowship Matters, PB, £6.99**

This book (194 pages, 978-0-9526-1923-9) examines the basis of church fellowship. It outlines the teachings that should form the basis of Christian fellowship. It examines the grounds upon which... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=4#expand_text) churches should withdraw fellowship.

**Demons, Magic and Medicine, PB, £7.99**

This book (245 pages, ISBN 978-0-9526192-9-1) examines all NT references to demons and argues that Jesus and the disciples opposed the common beliefs of their day about demons. The book first sets... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=4#expand_text) out the background views about demons from available first century writings. It then argues that in each of Jesus' set-piece demon miracles the Gospel writers present a symbology in which the demon-possessed represent Israel under foreign domination. It is then shown how Jesus opposed a belief in demons through his parables that involve demons. Finally, the book argues that God is the author of good and evil and not the Devil and his demons.

**Before He Was Born, PB, £7.99**

This book (4th Ed. March 2013, 259 pages, 978-0-9526192-0-8) examines texts in the NT which are interpreted as proving that Jesus had some manner of existence prior to his birth of the Virgin Mary.... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=3#expand_text) Every text is examined and shown not to bear this implication once they are read in the light of Jewish typological patterns. Jesus "existed" in the types of the OT narratives, but he did not literally pre-exist in heaven.

**One God, the Father, PB, £8.99**

This book (First Edition, Jan 2013, ISBN 978-0-9574460-2-1, 310 pages) is a collection of 16 essays by various authors offering a defence of Biblical Monotheism. It presents a definition of... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=3#expand_text) 'monotheism' from the Jewish Scriptures and contrasts this with the Trinitarian definition of God. It explores how the Old Testament presents Yahweh as 'one God'. It details how the Synoptics, the writings of John and Paul present the relationship of Israel's God to Jesus. It traces the development of church ideas about God showing how they then deviated from the Bible. It describes how thinkers and communities have preserved the truth of Biblical Monotheism down the ages. It concludes with essays discussing the atonement, and the issue of worship and prayer in relation to Jesus.

**Story and Typology, PB, £7.99**

This book (267 pages, First Edition October 2012) is about the narrative stories we have in the Bible. How are they written? What are their symmetries and patterns? How is the 'plot' advanced? How... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=3#expand_text) are names and descriptions used? How do Bible writers draw characters? How does typology work? These and other literary questions are asked using stories from the Old and New Testaments. For example, stories about Abraham and Jacob, the parables of Jesus and the typology of Genesis are examined. The book will introduce readers to the artistic craft that can be seen in Bible narrative.

**Joel, PB, £7.99**

This study on Joel (Third Impression, Jan 2013, 242 pages, ISBN 978-0-9526-1927-7) is based on the KJV, RSV and NASB versions of the Bible. It locates Joel in the latter half of the eighth century,... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=3#expand_text) and relates the prophecy to the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah.

**Head-Coverings and Creation, PB, £5.99**

This book (4th Edition, Revision 1 (Jan 2013), ISBN 978-0-9526-1924-6, 142 pages) examines the topic of Head Coverings in the church today. It offers a detailed analysis of Paul's argument in 1... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=3#expand_text) Corinthians 11, and shows how Paul argues that women in the church should wear head coverings at the breaking of bread meetings. The book also discusses the objections that are raised against this reading.

**Beginnings and Endings, PB, £7.00**

This book (Third Edition, Revision 1, Sept 2012, 227 pages, ISBN 978-0-9526-1921-5) presents an Old Testament theology of creation through an examination of the types and patterns of Genesis 1-3 as... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=3#expand_text) they appear in the Old Testament.

**Who Through Jesus Sleep, PB, £7.99**

Who Through Jesus Sleep is a compendium of essays about the mortality of the soul (254 pages, ISBN 978-0-9574460-9-0, June 2015). The book analyses what the biblical writers believed about the nature... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=2#expand_text) of the soul and the opportunity for life after death. It explores both the beliefs of the ancient Israelites, as presented in the Old Testament, and those of the early Christians, as presented in the New Testament. It traces the development of these biblical ideas to the emergence of the notion of the immortality of the soul in both Judaism and Christianity through the influence of Greek philosophy. It describes thinkers throughout history, as well as modern scholars, who have affirmed the biblical idea of the mortality of the soul. Common “proof” texts for the immortality of the soul are also examined.

**Special Creationism, PB, £7.99**

This book (Fourth Edition (Jun 2015), 276 pages, 978-0-9574460-5-2) examines the creation, evolution and intelligent design debate. It presents an Old Earth Creationist view and combats theistic... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=2#expand_text) evolution. It argues that Genesis 1 is an account of a recent special creation of a habitable environment for humankind focused on Mesopotamia. The account is nevertheless exemplary for all of the planet (and the universe), teaching that God is a creator of all things at all times. Evolution is a matter for Science and to be considered in the pre-Adamic space. Genesis presupposes the existence of the planet and Science has shown that there is an ancient history of life on earth. Philosophically, Science cannot exclude divine action (special creation) from this history. And Genesis gives us warrant for seeing the creative acts of God throughout the history of life on earth and nature shows this to have been the case in evidence for its intelligent design.

**Biblical Investigations, PB, £7.50**

This book (Revision 2, Apr 2014, 226 pages; ISBN 978-0-9563841-3-3) is a collection of essays that defend the Bible as the inerrant and inspired Word of God. Some essays have previously been... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=2#expand_text) published in magazines, but are now difficult to obtain; other essays are new. The essays included are "Bible Study", "Evaluating the King James Version", "The Unvarnished New Testament", "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Bible Translation", "Inspiration", "Exegetical Considerations relating to Inspiration", "Luke as Scripture", "The Spirit of Elijah", "Old Testament History", "Old Earth Creationism", "Heaven", "Creation Types in Exodus", "Noah's Flood", "The Historical Jesus" and "Finding God".

**Reasons, PB, £6.99**

In this book (ISBN 978-0-9563841-4-0, 231 pages) a number of authors bring together their expertise in various fields, including science, philosophy and biblical studies, to lay out some of the... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=2#expand_text) reasons for believing in God, Jesus and the Bible. Covering topics ranging from the fine-tuning of physical constants to the historical evidence of the resurrection of Jesus, this book provides positive reinforcement for faith in the modern world.

**More Reasons, PB, £6.99**

In many respects the case for faith has never been stronger. The discoveries of modern physics have provided strong indication that there is an intelligence behind the universe. A renaissance in... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=2#expand_text) Christian philosophy has provided robust and respected defences against traditional challenges to theism. Scholars find they can no longer justify the hasty dismissal of the biblical text as either legendary or outdated. And yet despite these positive changes, religious believers find their sincere convictions dismissed as ill-founded and irrational. In this book (ISBN 978-0-9574460-6-9, 227 pages, First Edition June 2014) a number of authors bring together their various expertise and experience to continue laying out reasons for believing in God, Jesus and the Bible. Arguments are drawn from areas such as the fact of human rationality and religious experience, the divine character of the Bible, and intelligent design. These arguments provide additional support for faith in the modern world.

**Historical Creationism, PB, £4.99**

This book (Rev. 2, 125 pages, ISBN 978-0-9574460-4-5) advocates Historical Creationism — a view that holds Genesis 1 to be an historical account of a creation ‘week’. It presents a... [More >](http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/willowpublications?searchTerms=&pageOffset=2#expand_text) straightforward view of three aspects of Genesis — the firmament and the waters above the firmament are not mythical elements but historical aspects of God-manifestation in the account, and the concept of the earth is not that of a ‘flat earth’ (or a 'planet' for that matter) but just one of ‘dry land’ or ‘all land’ or 'all things below'. The book offers an interpretation of Days One, Two and Four centred around the Christadelphian doctrine of God-manifestation.

1. Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “Legitimate Hermeneutics” in *A Contemporary Guide to Hermeneutics* (ed. D. K. McKim; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 111-141 (113). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. E D. Hirsch Jr., *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3rd. ed.; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969); W. W. Hallo, ed., *The Context of Scripture* (3 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. W. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. R. W. Younker and R. M. Davidson, “The Myth of the Solid Heavenly Dome: Another Look at the Hebrew [;yqir' (*rāqîa*‛)” *AUSS* 1 (2011): 125-147 (127). [Online.] [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See, G. Hassel, “The Polemical Nature of the Genesis Cosmology” *EvQ* 46 (1974): 81-102. [Online.] [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. As G. Ramsey remarks, when exploring the historical import of biblical texts, “the careful scrutiny of the ‘internal evidence,’ meaning literary study of the biblical text, should be attended to first.” G. Ramsey, *Quest for the historical Israel* (London: 1982), 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See A. Perry, *Historical Creationism* (Sunderland: Willow Publications, 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, 15-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. A methodological problem here is that there are several words used in the ANE texts for sky, air, atmosphere and it is not straightforward to choose the word to correlate with *raqia*. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. D. T. Tsumura, “[yqIrl” in the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Exegesis* (5 vols; ed. W. A. VanGemeren; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 3:1198. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. With the emergence of writing in Mesopotamia several thousand years after the beginning of the Neolithic Age; a written *revelation* of that beginning would be needed to replace oral history. As to when the account of Gen 1:1-2:4a was written, the 6/7-day literary structure suggests the time of the Exodus and Moses. Creation stories can be written for any religious need at any time. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The background material is well-reviewed. See, for example, G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (2nd ed.; London: SCM Press, 1983), 192-22; Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 14-22; M,. Hengel, *The Son of God* (London: SCM Press, 1976); and J. Fossum, “Son of God” *ABD* 6:128-137. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. W. Burkett, *Greek Religion* (Oxford Blackwell, 1987), 165-166, 183. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. This is the point of difference with Wisdom traditions. Wisdom comes to the earth and lives among men, but she is Wisdom in those men (as Torah, Bar 3:37-4:1; as Wisdom, Sir 24:10). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See A. Kamesar, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 97-101, 136-138. Depending on the school of philosophy, the *logos* idea will be different; *ABD*, 4:348-356. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See J. D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making* (London: SCM Press, 1980), 220-230. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See J. R. Davila, “Of Methodology, Monotheism and Metatron: Introductory Reflections on Divine Mediators and the Origins of the Worship of Jesus” in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism* (eds. C. C. Newman, J. R. Davila and G. S. Lewis; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999), 3-18 (14-17). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Dead Sea Scroll texts are from G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Rev. Ed.; London: Penguin, 2004). On 1QSa 2.11, see Vermes’ discussion in his *Jesus the Jew*, 198-199. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See the discussion of J. D. G. Dunn, “ ‘ Son of God’ as ‘Son of Man’ in the Dead Sea Scrolls? A Response to John Collins on 4Q426” in *The Scrolls and the Scriptures* (eds. S. E. Porter & C. A. Evans; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 198-210 (204-205). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. See the relevant entry in J. Neusner, *Dictionary of Ancient Rabbis* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003) and Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 72-78. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 69-72. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. D. Stockton, “The Founding of Empire” in *The Oxford History of the Classical World* (eds. J. Boardman, J. Griffin, and O. Murray; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 531-559 (543). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. L. W. Hurtado, “Paul’s Christology” in *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul* (ed. J. D. G. Dunn; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 185-198 (187). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Hurtado observes, “Paul’s Christology”, 191, “Paul does not refer to Jesus as divine son in contexts where Christian worship is in view (1 Cor. 8-10) or in any statements that call for worship of Jesus or contrast Christian worship with pagan worship of gods and demi-gods.” [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. ‘Biblical Unitarianism’ is a polemical term and it stands for a certain type of anti-Trinitarianism (see Wikipedia). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Hence, J. Carter, *The Letter to the Galatians* (Birmingham: CMPA, 1965), 96, observes, “It is easy to speak of the birth of Jesus, and of the fact of his divine sonship; but it is not easy to apprehend the stupendousness of it – that for the purposes of man’s redemption God begot a son of the human race.” [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 19, 38-39. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. See Jud 6:8; 2 Chron 36:15; Jer 1:7; Ezek 2:3; Obad v. 1; Hag 1:12; Mal 3:1 (all avposte,llw in the LXX); and Acts 22:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. There is an echo of the exodus in that it happened at the end of an assigned period of time (Gen 15:13; Exod 12:40; Gal 3:17). [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. D. Luhrmann, *Galatians* (Continental; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 74-82, offers a comparison of similarities and differences with reference to scholarship. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. See the forthcoming article, “Russia in Ezekiel 38-39 (Part 2)” in the next issue of the EJournal. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Sverre Bøe, *Gog and Magog: Ezekiel 38-39 as Pre-text for Revelation 19,17-21 and 20,7-10* (Mohr Siebeck GmbH & Company KG: Germany, 2001), 113-114. See also D. I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 489-493, for further Jewish interpretation of Gog. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Myrto Theocharous, *Lexical Dependence and Intertextual Allusion in the Septuagint of the Twelve Prophets: Studies in Hosea, Amos and Micah* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012), 249. The relevant passage in Bøe is pp. 54-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Bøe, Gog and Magog, 75. For Amos 7.1(LXX) See William A. Tooman, *Gog of Magog: Reuse of Scripture and Compositional Technique in Ezekiel 38-39* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 143-144, “The difficulty of the MT when contrasted with the clarity and fluidity of LXX, suggests that the LXX represents a clarification of this difficult text. But in light of the retroversion, it is impossible to characterize it as a ‘free’ translation”. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Alan Fowler, “SUGGESTION – Ezekiel 38-39 Explored” (The Christadelphian Tidings of the Kingdom, Bridgend, England: March 2005), http://www.tidings.org/2005/03/suggestion-ezekiel-38-39-explored [retrieved Aug 2016]. Other interpreters also understand the events in Ezekiel 38-39 as occurring after the completion of the restoration described in Ezekiel 33-37 – see Brevard S. Childs *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* [Philadelphia: Fortress. 1979], 366-67). This judgment is based upon the order of chapters in the MT and the assumption that the events in 33-39 are presented chronologically. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. “Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwalled towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar *a day of* gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.” (Esth 9:19) [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Ibid., Fowler. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. C. H. Gordon and G.A. Rendsburg, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (4th ed.; London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1997), 303. Fifth century B.C. cuneiform tablets from southern Mesopotamia record that one large banking firm employed many Jews. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Ibid., Fowler. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Note that the LXX of Esth 3:1 (also 9:10) portray Haman as a Bugaean (Greek). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. M. G.,Kline. “Har Magedon: The End of the Millennium” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society,* 39:2 (1996): 207-222 (215). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. J. M. Wiebe, ‘Haman’ (6 vols.; ed., D. N. Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:33; D. D. Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* (2 vols.; repr. London: Histories and Mysteries of Man Ltd, 1989), 2:10, in which the *Annals of Sargon*, 23, notes ‘Agazi’. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. See WikiNoah, “Seventy Nations”, for the derivation of the seventy nations from Genesis 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Genesis 10:5– “By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations”. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Note that the context of Balaam Oracle is entering the land. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Bøe, *Gog and Magog*, 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. S. Crane, “The Restoration of Israel: Ezekiel 36-39 in Early Jewish Interpretation: A textual-comparative study of the oldest extant Hebrew and Greek manuscripts” (theses, Murdoch University, 2006), 301. Crane is reliant on the work of J. Lust who argued that the MT arrangement of chapters is secondary; see D. I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 337-343, who prefers the MT arrangement. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. This will be shown in “Part 3: A Stylometric Analysis of Ezekiel 38-39”, forthcoming in the EJournal. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. See P. Wyns, “Where the Vultures Gather” 4/3 (Jul 2010): 2-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. See P. Wyns, “Psalm 22” 10/2 (Apr 2016): 27-48. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. For these two paragraphs, see G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (Harper’s New Testament Commentaries; New York: Harper, 1966) on Revelation chapter 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, (London: SPCK Publishing, 2011) pp. 144-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Wright, *Hope*, p. 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. T. F. Glasson, *The Second Advent*: *the origin of the New Testament doctrine* (London: Epworth Press, 1945), p. 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ernest Best also arrives at the same conclusion, in Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (London: A. and C. Black, 1972), p. 259; V. P. Furnish, *Thessalonians,* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), p. 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. M. J. J. Menken, *2 Thessalonians*, quoted in Furnish, *Thessalonians,* p. 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. See also Rom 1:28. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Wright, *Hope*, pp. 144-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Wright, *Hope*, pp. 144-45. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. 4 Ezra 11-1, quoted in George H. van Kooten, *Cosmic Christology in Paul and the Pauline school: Colossians and Ephesians in the context of Graeco-Roman cosmology* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), pp. 93-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. 1 QM, 4Q491-496, 1QS 3:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Furnish, *Thessalonians,* p. 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Glasson, *The Second Advent*, p. 181. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Furnish, *Thessalonians,* p. 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. cf. Furnish, *Thessalonians,* p. 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Ps Sol. 17.11-18, quoted in Glasson, *The Second Advent*, p. 181; Josephus, *Ant.*, 19.1.1, 18.8.2, Josephus, *J.W.*, 2.184-86, 192-97, Philo, *Embassy* 186-9, 263-8, quoted in Furnish, *Thessalonians,* p. 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Furnish, *Thessalonians,* p. 155. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. 1 Enoch 91:5; Job 23:4; 2 Bar 27:4, 4; Ezra 14:16; Mark 13:2; 2 Tim 3:1-9; quoted in Best, *Thessalonians,* p. 282. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. 1 Enoch 91:7b; 99:9b; 4 Ezra 7:113-15, quoted in Furnish, *Thessalonians,* p. 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. 4 Ezra 7:28, 13:22, quoted in Furnish, *Thessalonians,* p. 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. 2 Bar 2:13.3-10; 48:48-50; 52:5-7; 78:5; 2 Macc. 6:12-16, quoted in Furnish, *Thessalonians,* p. 146. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. 4 Ezra 7:36, 38, 75, 85, 95; 2 Bar 73:1, quoted in Furnish, *Thessalonians,* p.147 [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. R. D. Aus, “The Relevance of Isaiah 66.7 to Revelation 12 and 2 Thessalonians 2”, quoted in Fee, *Thessalonians*, p. 252. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. [ED AP]: Of course, whenever the ‘day of the Lord’ was relevant in the short term in Israel/Judah’s history, there is a figure on the ground who acts on behalf of YHWH. Hence, the day of Christ is the day of YHWH. The Old Testament provides the types for Paul in Thessalonians in its prophecies. Nothing is being redefined (retold) away from YHWH and ascribed to Christ by Paul; *contra* Wright. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. N. T. Wright, *Paul: Fresh Perspectives* (London: SPCK Publishing, 2005) p. 141-142. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. L. J. Kreitzer, *Jesus and God in Paul’s Eschatology*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), p. 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. The technical difficulties involved, it will be appreciated, are enormous, given the extra volatility in boundaries provided by the Syrian Civil War, ISIL, a potential Kurdistan, the pugilisms of an unleashed Vladimir Putin, emboldened by an ever more plaintive [post-Lame Duck presidential period] USA, and the vacillations and irascibility of Mr. R. T. Erdogan. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. *Life*, June, 1939, Vol 6, No.4, p. 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. He used the bacterium *Clostridium acetobutylicum* (the ‘*Weizmann organism’*) to produce acetone. For the Chemical details, and a very modern series of appreciations of Weizmann’s work, visit the Low-carbon discussions between specialists in the subject-area, at Claverton AB Main Group, on line. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. “Weizmann developed the ‘ABE’ process, which produces acetone through bacterial fermentation”; see [www.worldofchemicals.com/](http://www.worldofchemicals.com/chaim)chaimweizmann [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. David Lloyd-George, *War Memoirs* (6 vols; London: Ivor Nicholson & Watson, 1933-1936), Vol.1, p. 348. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. David Lloyd-George, *War Memoirs*, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 348. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. David Lloyd-George, *War Memoirs*, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 348. These remarks by the editor of the Manchester *Guardian* were so true that not only did Weizmann become a British citizen [in 1910], but also he was prepared, on occasion, to disagree with the *Yishuv*, [the Jewish Establishment in pre-Israel Palestine], so as to maintain loyalty towards the British Establishment. From a man who became the first President of Israel, in 1948, this was the staunchest of stances, and also indicates the closeness of Britain and Israel, then. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Hunegs is the Executive Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, in Minnesota. In 2009, in *Minnpost,* 17th August, 2009, p.1., Hunegs reviewed Dr. Allis R. Radosh and Professor Ronald Radosh’s *A Safe Haven: Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel,* from which the above citations derive. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Allis, A.R. & Radosh, R., op. cit., p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Amanda Mason is a historian in the Department of Research and Academic Partnerships, associated with The Imperial War Museum, London. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. *The U-Boat Campaign That Almost Broke Britain*, [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk/).>History>the-u-boat, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. By October, 1922, the British Prime Minister was Andrew Bonar Law [1858 - 1923]. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. D. Lloyd-George, *War Memoirs*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 349. Although “highly visible in politics”, (J. Campbell, Lloyd-George: *The Goat in the Wilderness, 1922-1931* [1977]), L-G had no office of state at this time; he was, however, Leader of the Liberal Party shortly afterwards [from1926 to 1931]. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. This means material occupying some point – the points vary - between fact and fiction. This type of work, viewed with deep suspicion by some, varies enormously from that which takes absurd liberties with the subject-matter, to that which remains tied quite tightly to its strictly factual base, and is insightful about cross-currents on the matters under review, in a way in which academic texts rightly shy away from, in the main, but to be entirely without which, produces both dullness and analytical sterility. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Yehuda Bauer has been, for many years, and after professorships at Brandeis and Yale, Professor of Holocaust Studies, at Jerusalem University, Mount Scopus. At rthe age of 90, he now holds the title of Professor Emeritus of Holocaust Studies. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. This term is, in Hebrew, descriptive of the Right to ‘make Aliyah’, to *Eretz Yisrael*, the Land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, by God, in *Genesis*. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. The Christian philosopher and University teacher, Dr. William Paley [1743 – 1805] wrote, in his *View of the Evidence of Christianity* [1794] many celebrated inferential arguments for the existence of God. These were, in fact, so highly regarded, that, from the time of their writing up until the third decade of the 20th Century, they remained on the examinable syllabus at Cambridge University. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. http://www.ritmeyer.com/2016/07/05/10th-anniversary-of-the-quest/ [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. http://www.ritmeyer.com/2016/09/12/flooring-from-the-temple-mount-in-jerusalem/ [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. https://templemount.wordpress.com/brief-introduction-to-the-project/ [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/07/mosaic-synagogue-huqoq-israel-magness-archaeology/ [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. https://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.com.au/2016/07/dead-sea-scrolls-still-conceal-many.html#cYsGf5hJ03820sGf.97 [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/07/bible-philistine-israelite-israel-ashkelon-discovery-burial-archaeology-sea-peoples/ [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. http://www.livescience.com/55402-first-philistine-cemetery-draws-criticism.html [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. http://synagogues.kinneret.ac.il/ [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. http://popular-archaeology.com/issue/summer-2016/article/genome-of-6-000-year-old-barley-grains-sequenced-for-first-time [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. https://www.facebook.com/groups/217338426213/ [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter\_article.php?id=35229 [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/216086 [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. http://new.huji.ac.il/en/article/32216 [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/216271 [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. http://www.bibleodyssey.net/en/places/main-articles/second-temple [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. This article is based in its large part on the researches of Martin Goodman, Gil Gambash and J. Andrew Overman on the Roman politics and its influence of the First Jewish-Roman war. The reader may be interested to find further information in the following sources: J. Andrew Overman, “The First Revolt and Flavian Politics,” in *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History and Ideology* (eds., Andrea M. Berlin and J. Andrew Overman; London 2002), 213-220; Martin Goodman, Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations, New York: Vintage, 2007); Gil Gambash, “Foreign Enemies of the Empire: The Great Jewish Revolt and the Roman Perception of the Jews’” 32 (2013): 173-194 [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. http://thetorah.com/why-did-vespasian-and-titus-destroy-jerusalem/#.V7A655pBQhE.facebook [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. http://blog.bibleplaces.com/2016/08/seven-fascinating-facts-about-crossing.html [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. http://blog.bibleplaces.com/2016/08/favorite-ancient-inscription-results.html [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. http://www.breakingisraelnews.com/74435/metal-weapons-tools-thousands-years-old-discovered-israeli-beach/#6Qu0GCDTLUvogJHL.97 [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. http://jewishstudies.washington.edu/book/sifre-devarim/ [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/archaeological-evidence-of-the-kingdom-of-david-in-jerusalem/2016/08/30/ [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/1500-year-old-stable-exposed-in-negev-canyon/2016/09/08/ [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. http://www.apu.edu/media/news/release/24899/ [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/09/mysterious-mosaic-alexander-the-great-israel/ [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/largest-archaeological-garden-ever-in-israel-inaugurated-at-idf-kirya-base-in-tel-aviv/2016/09/13/ [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/09/160913150507.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/217792 [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4855837,00.html [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. http://www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/fishermans-house-discovered-on-ashkelon-beach/2016/09/20/ [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. http://popular-archaeology.com/issue/fall-2016/article/ancient-charred-hebrew-scroll-virtually-unwrapped [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. http://www.livescience.com/16241-dead-sea-scroll-gallery.html [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. http://www.antiquities.org.il/article\_eng.aspx?sec\_id=25&subj\_id=240 [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7PgnbsLnAE [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. http://www.haaretz.com/jewish/archaeology/1.744834 [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. http://www.livescience.com/56428-25-new-dead-sea-scrolls-revealed.html [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. http://www.livescience.com/56429-are-new-dead-sea-scrolls-forgeries.html [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. http://phys.org/news/2016-09-unearth-ancient-mythological-statues-jordan.html [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. https://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.com.au/2016/09/prehistoric-fortifications-found-in.html#IcO1YzYzA9TK2d1o.97 [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/ancient-texts-offer-wealth-information-archaeologists-local-epigrapher-says [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. http://etc.ancient.eu/interviews/nabataeans-ancient-arabia/ [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. https://www.thestar.com/news/world/2016/10/12/flying-over-ancient-jordan-2-archaeologists-snap-photos-to-discover-protect-sites.html [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. http://scienceinpoland.pap.pl/en/news/news,410366,polish-archaeologists-studied-a-unique-necropolis-in-egypt.html [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. http://www.livescience.com/55347-primitive-machine-in-great-pyramid-protected-pharaoh.html [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. https://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.com.au/2016/07/oldest-traces-of-canine-bone-cancer.html#DxTES6GJqLMYBYH9.97 [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. http://www.livescience.com/55578-egyptian-civilization.html [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
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