


AN INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

(An ABC study file)

This is a genuine ABC production  authored by *Bob Coffey* and may not be reproduced or transmitted in any manner for financial profit

(1) THE EXEGETE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

We read concerning the text we handle as preachers and teachers that “Holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1.21). This is a well suited place to begin our understanding of the first principles of exegesis. “Holy men” by definition were men whom the Spirit separated unto God. They were recognized for their righteousness and purity of life and in their generation called “men of God”. A not inconsiderable part of their holiness was “speaking” as they were inspired by the Holy Spirit the overall editor of scripture and convenor of its writers. These men were “moved” by the Spirit of God who was not generally gifted to the Israel of the Old Testament centuries past when their ministries flourished. The prophets (for that is what they were) were ““carried” or “moved” (φερομενοι) by the Holy Spirit as by the wind and found themselves writing of the Christ who was to come or gaining visions of His distant reign. Thus the “last days” or Christian era, its development and especially the high joy of its full realisation in the kingdom of God was their transcendent hope. An exegete is committed to the task our Lord undertook of “declaring” or “explaining”. Christ explained (εξηγησατο) the Father to his disciples (John 1.18) and Christian teachers seek to “explain, expound and interpret” the scriptures to disciples of Jesus Christ today. Our task like that of the prophets needs by parallel to be executed with prayer and under the anointing of the Holy Spirit without which we become sounding gongs and tinkling cymbals-very very tinny.

Lord open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law!

(2) THE EXEGETE'S TOOLS

THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH

The exegete as a bible teacher will possess himself or herself of the scriptures preferably in several versions and if he or she is able to become familiar with the original languages that would be an added advantage and a useful edition of the Hebrew Torah and Greek NT and Septuagint scriptures would be of continuing reference value. I am pleased to relay the gist or the advice of **Craig Blomberg** “New Testament Exegesis” (Baker Academic 2010) who has worked through most modern translations and I have added some personal observations.

Blomberg advises that for those inclined to formal equivalence of wording the KJV (1611) and NKJV are quite satisfactory as is the NASB which was produced in the 1960's to revise out the liberal bias of the former RSV-it became less accurate however and was revisited to produce the NRSV which became the first “inclusivist” translation ever attempted though it is ecumenical and academic. For those who desire a translation with good *functional equivalence* the Revised English Bible of 1939, the now little used NEB of 1970 NIV first introduced 1973 are among the choices available and the 2010 TNIV with its inclusivist language has now cornered the market. My own observation shows it is somewhat fickle on “person and tense” but by contrast it has made intriguing small alterations, for example, translating “mind” as “mind-set” in Philippians 2.5.

CONCORDANCES, LEXICONS AND DICTIONARIES

An exegete will need a reliable concordance and is well advised to be possessed of a handy one as well. I have never been without a “**Cruden's**” which for all intents and purposes is fine. However, when a concordance with word study potential is needed there is The word study New Testament which is keyed to **Strong's concordance** (for those who use the NKJV) and there is of course **Young's Analytical Concordance**

To use such a concordance the following steps will help you:-

1. Select a passage of scripture to study and then pick out a word for more detailed work. Some examples of words with different shades of meaning are love and servant.
2. Look up the word you wish to study. Look for the scripture reference you are working with on the list of passages for that word.
3. Look at other passages that are listed that translate the word you are studying from the same word in Greek or Hebrew. Studying the scriptures that share the same translation of this word will help you understand its overall meaning in the scripture.

As to Dictionaries I myself have found **Verlyn Verbrugge's Dictionary of New Testament Theology** (Zondervan 2003) valuable. You will find a treasury of “word usage” inside its covers. The 1978 New International Dictionary of NT Theology by **Colin Brown** is similar. In earlier days “Kittel”(TDNT) was the default resource I would love to have possessed a copy but occasional reference at Union Seminary was the limit of my use.

Whilst NT scholars downplay the old classical **Liddell and Scott** Greek lexicon I would urge that it is still worth its weight in gold as is the **Brown Driver and Briggs** Lexicon to the Old Testament. The great classical dictionary by Liddell and Scott quotes **at least 70 authors whose Greek writings came within the period of the LXX and NT writing** and the word on Greek roots and applications has not been surpassed or equalled by other modern productions. With reference to Hebrew study and handling words you will find **Davidson's** analytical Hebrew & Chaldee lexicon exhaustive and a vital companion on Hebrew roots is **Wilhelm Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon of the OT**. For the unfamiliar Hebrew reader I advise the use of “A reader's lexicon” by **Armstrong Busby & Carr** (Zondervan 1989). These ten volumes could cost an arm and a leg but perfectly good copies are available on Amazon.

(3) THE EXEGETE AS A STUDENT OF “CONTEXT”

It has been said that a text without a context is a pretext. The “*immediate context*” or the words and sentences immediately before and after the text to be interpreted are vital. Romans 5.18 “One righteous act resulted in justification and life for all” might well be understood as universalism were it not for Romans 5 17-19 where we read “Those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness . . . reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ”.

(A) SOCIAL NORMS

The context a bible expositor generally speaking should take into purview ought to be wider in scope than simply the verses surrounding a chosen text. Context generally means the textual setting and the social or life situation (*sitz en leben*) of the passage to be expounded. In many cases prevalent cultural norms come into play when we study to better understand scripture. A good example is 1Corinthians 11.4-6 on the matter of how women in the Gentile church should present during worship. Reference to the “uncovered” head is found in Leviticus 13.45 in respect of giving notice to others of an infectious disease. The penalty for suspected adultery was “loosening of the hair”(Numbers 5.18). Besides in the current Corinthian culture female worshipers of Cybele Isis and Dionysius had “dishevelled hair” as a trademark of their devotion to their deity. (*Fee* 1Corinthians in loco) Homosexual men in the 1st C. Greco-Roman world prided themselves in “long hair” as a way of “coming out” and stating their sexual preference (*Murphy O’Connor* Sex and Logic in 1 Corinthians/Catholic quarterly 1980). Equally women with closely cropped hair were then suspected of being lesbians. (*Fee* I Corinthians Page 511). In conclusion it seems Paul was not referring to a veil in 1 Corinthians 11 but that his concern was that women wore their hair in a longer feminine style as a covering divinely provided and comely else the comments on “gold braiding” in the hair (1Tim 2.9 and 1Peter 3.3) were obtuse. Thus though this is rather a *tour de force* it tends to establish beyond question the value of awareness of the social context of scripture.

(B) SCRIPTURAL TEXTUAL CONTEXTUALISATION

Carl Blomberg of Denver Seminary supplies a somewhat cumbersome but thorough contextual set of which we should be mindful:-

- (1) The immediate context lies at the heart of a circle of
- (2) the paragraphs where it is embedded and
- (3) subsections we know as chapters of the given biblical book, and
- (4) the main section-be it theological or practical-of that book, and
- (5) The book itself has its key theme or themes and its legend or construction method and language (popularly understood as genre).
- (6) These in turn constitute part of the writings of a given author and are
- (7) to be compared or contrasted with other NT writings. The preacher will not require to refer to other aspects of the literary context than the exegesis requires but he would do well to be aware of the wider context.

(4) THE EXEGETE, GENRE AND OTHER SUBORDINATE GUIDES TO MEANING

What are genres and how does one rate their importance for our understanding of scripture and its exegesis?

Here are some examples to guide you:-

- (1) In the gospels: parables, proverbs, pronouncement stories, healing miracles, miracles demonstrating God’s power in nature.
- (2) In the Acts: travel narratives, miracles, speeches or sermons as in Acts 13
- (3) In the epistles: early creeds, hymns, holiness curriculum listings, diatribe
- (4) In the apocalypse: early hymns, visions, letters.

There has been a vast if not inordinate emphasis on genre as a means of understanding bible text. Personally I far prefer structural composition and linguistic usage and have combined these in the exegetical concept of *biblical legends or keys* where to take a simple example *Jude* uses the concept of *memoranda* (*υπομνησαι Jude 5*)- to remind his audience of the spiritual implications of nine distinct historical vignettes.

One of the more serious issues for Genre and its authorial understanding (i.e. authority) is that *Paul Ricoeur* challenged the idea that biblical text is not simply “text written down” but is rather more. His book on Interpretation Theory (1965) goes so far as to say:-

- (1) A text is semantically independent of the intention of its author. The text now means whatever it says not necessarily what its author had meant.
- (2) *Literary genres do more than classify texts; they actually give a code that shapes the way a reader will interpret the text.*
- (3) Once texts have been written their meanings are no longer determined by the understanding the original audiences had. Each subsequent audience reads its own situation into the text. The new readings are not any less valid. They must not be contradictory but they can be different.
- (4) Once a text is written what it says is not related to its referent. The new meaning is freed from situational limits.

Ricoeur has, more than any other, stolen the meaning from the setting and claimed the right to sell it to any would be interpreter as a plaything. The literary style in which divine revelation appears does not encourage such maverick use of God’s word but it does not prevent areas of application which are rather better stated by *Carson and Beale* in their commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament *NEW TESTAMENT USE OF OLD TESTAMENT*(2007)

My personal interest in this subject goes back 40 years and contributed considerably to the composition of the “Westgate Bible Commentary” which I have authored. There are no fewer than 2,600 references that link the testaments-some have found many more. Beale and Carson give 6 guidelines to help the exegete use *biblical quotations* and I retail these as follows with some observations

- (1) What is the NT context of the citation-is it a kindred topic? In that connection Beale and Carson do commend the relevance of genre.
- (2) What is the OT context –could an earlier OT allusion have layers from later OT reference-though this is a bit diffuse.
- (3) How is the OT text handled in extra biblical literature. Again **Beale & Carson** are committed to “provenance” which is as easily a step back from cogency as a step closer. Cross checking early Judaism is another provenance by-path.
- (4) Textual variants of the Hebrew text. As I have discovered from dipping into this field we possess a quite thorough Hebrew text and variants largely show corruption but nothing of great value.
- (5) Is the reference merely a notice of a mind steeped in the OT or do we have a moral lesson?
- (6) To what theological use does the NT author put the OT reference?

In commendation of **Beale and Carson** it can be said that they desire to retain though indirectly some good semblance of the OT meaning though they are ambivalent as to that meaning once OT text arrives in its NT setting. Substantial evacuation of **meaning** cannot be justified by **significance** without doing prejudice to prophecy.

(5) FUNDAMENTAL TO BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IS “MEANING” AND THE TIME HONoured AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE AS ORIGINALLY GIVEN

On the theory of interpretation generally **E.D. Hirsch** brings us back to the affirmation of meaning as determined by the author’s intention. His “*Validity in Interpretation, and The Aims of Interpretation*”(Chicago Univ. Press 1976) argues that:-

- (1) Verbal meaning is what the author has willed to convey by a particular sequence of words and which can be shared by means of linguistic signs.
- (2) The author’s **truth-intention** provides the only genuinely discriminating norm for ascertaining valid or true interpretations from invalid or false ones.
- (3) The first objective of hermeneutics is to make clear that text’s verbal meaning, not its significance. Meaning is that which is represented by the text and what an author meant to say by the linguistic signs represented. Significance, by contrast names a relationship between the meaning and a person, concept, situation, or any other possible number of things.(This statement gives short shift to the “round the houses” academic approach which scours multiple texts to little avail)
- (4) The meaning of text cannot change, but significance can and does change. If meaning were not determinate, then there would be no fixed norm by which to judge whether a passage was being interpreted correctly.

Hirsch laudably sought to restore a greater degree of objectivity to the interpretation of literature and his work has been widely welcomed by evangelicals. Hirsch reduces the scepticism about words and sentences as conveyers of meaning and tends to affirm the authority of biblical text and enhance the concept of the verbal inspiration of the scripture as originally given on which bible commentators and scholars have lately fallen strangely silent.

FIGURES OF SPEECH

In Luke 22 38 and 51 Jesus uses a similar figure of speech in Greek the meaning of which is “That’s enough”. He was saying “That’s enough of this conversation” and that’s enough of this unwise action”(cf. **Howard Marshall** in loco).

The most thorough(by the way “thorough” is thought to have been the motto of Jesus as a carpenter *He did all things well.*) work ever done on figures of speech was that of **E.W. Bullinger**.

BULLINGER ON FIGURES OF SPEECH

Figures of speech are never used but for emphasis and therefore cannot be ignored. They sometimes make the difference between the intended literal or symbolic meaning of the text.

The effective student of scripture should be conscious of figures of speech as used in the bible. **Bullinger** listed 180 such in total though in a ministry stretching over 40 years I have not recognised them all. Let me first set out some readily found in the NT.:-

Allegory (Gal 4 12,24).

Antithesis (Prov.15.17)

Benedictio (Matthew 5.3-11 and variously in the OT)

Chronographia John10.22 Teaching something vital about timing.

Climax or gradation 2Peter 1 5-7

Polysyndeton –the use of multiple “ands” notably in Genesis 22 9,11 where the figure usefully helps understand the deep thoughts in Abraham’s mind.2Peter1.5-7

Symbol a material object stands for a spiritual truth **John 3.29**

Zeugma the unequal yoking of two subjects **Luke 1.64**

Type example of something in the future **Romans 5.14**

Anacoluthon –breaking the sense –Genesis 35.3 **Mark 11.32**

Irony Judges 10.14, Job12.20,Mt 27.40. Genesis3.4-5 & **Matthew 2.8**

Tmesis when a word is cut in two and another word inserted **Ephesians 6.8** “Whatsoever thing ANY MAN DOES good” not “whatsoever good man does anything.”

Grant Osborne has summarised the main figures rather more concisely than Bullinger under 6 heads:-

(1) *Figures of comparison*: metaphor and simile Luke 13.32

(2) *Figures of addition*: pleonasm James 2.20, epanadiplosis (emphasis/ repetition) Galatians 1.8-9, hyperbole Matthew 5.29, hendiadys Acts 9.1.

(3) *Incomplete figures of speech*: ellipsis Eph5 21-22 aposiopesis Luke 13.9

(4) *Figures of contrast or understatement*: irony Matt 23.32, antithesis Matt 5.21,27,31 euphemism as “sleep” for death-1Thess.4.10.

(5) *Figures of association or relation*: Luke 6.36 synecdoche from Mathew 5.48, personification 1Cor15.55

(6) *Figures stressing the personal dimension of something*: Apostrophe James 5.1.

(6) THE EXEGETE'S THEOLOGY

The realm of theology offers three divergent routes to the student-systematic theology, historical theology and biblical theology. *Professor Tom Wright's* idea of introducing a synthesis of these disciplines that have been rather polarised over the years is gallant or maybe even foolhardy. Men of huge calibre in the field of systematic as *Karl Barth* and *Jurgen Moltmann* have not attempted such synthesis.

The problem is that the *Systematic theologian* is obliged to the philosopher. *Augustine* embraced Neo-platonism, *Aquinas* was *Aristotelian*, Barth was indebted to the dialectic of *Kierkegaard*. Moltmann has developed the philosophic idea of Pantheism (God takes everything into Himself in becoming all in all) and the Process theologians lean on *Whitehead*. Then, secondly, *Historical Theology* has its own categories, "webs of meaning", "cultural scripts" and "discursive domains".

Biblical Theology can by contrast fairly lay claim to the fact that it is as close to what God teaches in scripture as it can be, that is, unless it distances itself by **creating literary and critical categories** of which the apostles knew nothing and of which I doubt they would approve. *Beale and Carson* themselves observe in their 6th reflection on orientation of the relationship of Old and New Testament **"We sometimes need reminded that the NT authors would not have understood the OT in terms of any of the dominant historical critical orthodoxies of the last century and a half."** That is to say despite all the blood sweat and tears that for instance JEDP scholars of the bygone spend to impress that they have cornered to themselves "the knowledge" like London cab drivers.

The evangelical exegete of whatever churchmanship will treasure amongst his tenets of faith though perhaps not without minor tweaks the following truths:- **THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY, THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE VICARIOUS ATONEMENT OF OUR LORD, THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, JUSTIFICATION IMPUTED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH, THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM(S), HOLY LIVING THROUGH THE IMPARTATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TRANSFORMING OUR YIELDED LIVES AND MEMBERS INTO CHRIST'S LIKENESS BY THE RENEWING OF THE MIND, OUR GATHERING UNTO CHRIST AND APPEARANCE AT THE BEMA, THE SECOND ADVENT, THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT WHITE THRONE, THE ETERNAL GLORIOUS STATE.**

(7) THE EXEGETE'S AXIS OF FAITH

The *centrality of Christ* is axiomatic to biblical teaching. Jesus said "In these you think you have eternal life but these are they that testify of me" (John 5.39). In similar vein our Lord taught as He walked to Emmaus discoursing through a substantial body of scripture of "the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24.27).

What is entailed for the exegete if he is to pay more than lip-service to this vital focus of scripture? There are, I think, several implications.

(1) The expositor should ask when he or she is handling any passage **"What does this teach about God and Christ?"** **John the divine states very clearly "The Word became flesh and tabernacled (for a season) among us" (John 1.14). As "the outshining of the glory of the character of the inner being of God" (Hebrews 1.3)** Fundamental to our understanding of scripture is that in and through the written word we come to our understanding and experience of God through what we learn of Christ and His words and ministry. The answer to the question should be part of the exegete's communication of his or her message.

(2) The progress of salvation history can never be far from the mind of the expositor. Whether in the OT where types and shadows or perhaps rather better what I have called *Torahs* (pointers to Christ) speak of the pre-incarnate Lord or whether in the New where hardly a page is turned without multiple mention of Jesus the aroma of Christ is everywhere. There is every good reason to follow the habit of *Spurgeon* that prince of preachers and wind round to Christ ere the exposition draws to a close and apply the appeal of biblical teaching in its gospel envelope to the heart of every audience.

(3) The fact is **Christ has died**, **Christ has risen** and **Christ is coming again**. It is my understanding that the gospel we preach fully stated is "the gospel of the kingdom of God" (Mark 1.14), Acts 8.12, Acts 20.24-25 (where "heralding the kingdom" and "producing divine biblical and personal experiential witness to the grace of God" are combined), Acts 28.30-31 (the last picture Luke gives of Paul at Rome sitting in his own house heralding the kingdom of God and teaching the things that concern Christ the Messiah). The last words of our Lord before He suffered to his disciples were "I shall not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new (καίνος) in the high summer of the kingdom of God (fully realised) (Mark 14.25). That late summer of history to which the Lord alluded is noted in his parable of the trees in Luke 21 29-32 cf. 22.14-20. The earliest Christians went everywhere as heralds of their Messiah and Lord (Mark 16.20). The exegete is a herald of the king and each herald is charged with witnessing to the grace of the king in his life and the glory of the king in his coming kingdom and much concerning **the Lordship of Christ** that lies in between. For these and other reasons the teaching of the things of Christ and His kingdom is inextricably inlaid within the text and the work of the exegete.

(8) THE EXEGETE'S CANON-SCRIPTURE INTERPRETS SCRIPTURE

To a very considerable extent the bible is self-interpreting. A man or woman may read scripture without human aid and come to know Jesus personally because the word of God has the imprimatur of divine authority and as *divinely breathed* (θεοπνευστος) it carries wherever and in whatever language it unfolds the message of proffered promised pardon and the basis of exchange and communication between God and man-the message of Christ.

It is a well established and widely recognised fact that some parts of scripture are more easily understood than others. What is called **"perspicuity"** (passages are more or less "clear") becomes an issue for every exegete and traditional "hot spots" of difficulty present to every generation of interpreters though in this era we stand on the shoulders of those who have wrestled with the issues and left

us strong clues for understanding many previously enigmatic issues. Besides this the ongoing sweep of history enables a better recognition of the unfolding divine plan for the church and the world.

As I previously noted there are over 2,500 references to the Old Testament scattered throughout the New Testament. I have appended a short table to show one very small part of this elaborate web of quotes-to give an appreciation of the number of quotes from one book (that of the evangelical prophet) in the New Testament. The cross-referencing of passages which deal with one and the same topic or where one passage can be linked by biblical reference to another significantly aids our understanding. *Beale and Carson* have developed a bible commentary out of a mountain of such references which they have painstakingly worked over. In the 1960's I contemplated a similar task but only achieved one twentieth of the goal but when at 55 the vision to attempt to lay the foundations for a bible commentary fired my soul and spirit again I determined to pursue the task on other lines seeking with the help of the Holy Spirit to follow the natural contours of the structure of each bible book and travel with a listening ear to God speaking. I went step by step through the books and chapters and verses in the original languages of the Old and New Testaments finding places of great delight and deep terror alike and endeavouring to map out and record faithfully and accurately as I could the scenes of salvation history and revelation where I spent so many days *and the prophetic echo* I listened to there for those who would travel after me. I have ever held a high view *of biblical textual inspiration* and I continue instant to maintain the plain meaning (whether in literal narrative or poetry parable and vision) somewhat *doggedly in face of scholarship travelling with newly contrived academic tools and disciplines of which prophets and apostles were not apprised. My volt face or change of direction in working through scripture was dictated by the desire to come nearer the prophetic-cum-apostolic foundation and ultimate direction of Holy Scripture which has a distinctly futurist intent of which Christ as Lord of the Church and Messiah of Israel is the single cornerstone.*

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS WITH THE ISAIAH CONNECTION

Mt	Mk	Lk	Jn	Ac	Ro	1C	2C	Ga	Ep	Ph	Co	1T	2T	He	Ja	IP	2P	1J	Ju	R
43	16	39	24	30	28	15	8	3	17	4	2	1	5	19	5	23	4	2	1	123

No more thorough work than that of *C.K Beale and D.A. Carson* has through the ages of Christian history been accumulated on this subject and I can but commend their work. Because I myself began to pursue such an undertaking in my 30's no-one appreciates more the hours that these two men must have dedicated to the work notwithstanding the help provided by the work of the United Bible Societies analysis of scripture quotations and references and other modern sources.

Another graphic table (the sample below) provides further visual example of the far-reaching and strategic use of the OT by NT writers. The tables tend to emphasise the absolute relevance of the OT to the apostles as a base from which to preach the gospel and illuminate for us their deep consciousness of the Messiah and His Kingdom which was the central message of the prophets. This message deeply united prophets and apostles in a solidarity of testimony. It is the sweetness and authenticity of adhering to the supreme prophetic role of the scriptures that has drawn the finest of scholars and saints to what is wholesome and indivisibly integral in the bible. This old time authenticity has swept away the JEDP theory soon after its birth and has posed an unyielding bulwark against the source critics and I am convinced is sufficiently vigorous to correct the "genre gentfolk" who have taught the rising generation of scholars to become the Shakespearean noviciates they may fast become feeding the flock of God on a mess of literary pottage for back-grounding. That diet falls far short of the mark and method of our Lord and the apostles and pays lip service to genuine and plenary authorship of the Pentateuch and Isaiah to name but two striking playgrounds on with it parades its genius.

A TABLE OF OT REFERENCES TO THE "PROPHETS" IN THE NT-PART OF A SET COMPILED BY THE AUTHOR IN THE 1971-2

Matthew's use of the prophets

MATTHEW	1 1.1-7.28	2 7.29-13.52	3 13.53-18.35	4 19.1-26.1	5 26.2-28.20
128	25	36	3	41	23

Mark's use of the prophets

MAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
48	3	1(I s)	0	5(I s)	5	2	2(I s)	2	3(2 I s)	1	2(I s)	2	1	5	1&6 psa	0

Luke's use of the prophets (1) Gospel

L	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20				
84	1	10	1	2	1	4	4	1	1	7	0	2	3	0	2	0	0	0	3	1	1	5	3	3

AC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	
										0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0
58	0	3	1	1	0	1	8	2	0	6	0	3	6	1	1	0	6	3	0	0
AC	21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28					
	2		1		0		1		0		8		2		2					

John's use of the prophets

JOHN	1-3.21	3.21-4.54	5.1-5.47	6.1-6.71	7.1-19.37	19.38-20.31	21.1-25
41	7	1	2	1	30	0	0

1	1	2	3	4	5
JOHN					
2	1	1	0	0	0
2	1				
JOHN					
0	0				
3	1				
JOHN					
0	0				

Paul's use of the prophets

ROM	1	2	GAL	EPH	PHIL	COL	THES	TIM	TIT	PHIL
	COR	COR								
59	30	21	7	22	5	2	19	5	2	0

Barnabas' (Hebrews) use of the prophets

HEB	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
28	0	3	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	5	5	2	8

Peter's use of the prophets

1 PETER	34
2 PETER	5

Jude's use of the prophets

JUDE	1
	7
	7

James' use of the prophets

JAMES	1	2	3	4	5
13	1	1	1	3	7

The apocalyptic writer's use of the prophets

R	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	
E										0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	1	2
V																						
3	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	6	7	1	2	1	1	1	9	1	9	4	2	1	7	0
4	6	2	0	1	6	5	5			3	4	4	3	6		9		4	6	5		
7																						

References to the prophets make up a grand total 826 of 2573 NT references –just short of one third of all NT/OT references.

(9) THE EXEGETE AND HIS CHURCH AFFILIATION AND STANCE

As to where biblical theology will take the exegete it is evident that no man is an island and that for the main part those becoming Christians in Britain today have some Church background. Today's church is more diverse. The church to which any believer is attached will no doubt have a "statement of belief". In lots of today's churches all shades of theology mingle with greater ease than a generation or two ago and the church is not only "the people of the way" but a people on pilgrimage to the city that has foundations ready to hold the truth in love for each other consenting to *Spurgeon's* idiom that truth it is a lion and is not obliged to any individual for its protection. The apostle said "everyman should be persuaded in his own mind" of the principles he sincerely holds. Where occasion demands the preacher should be gracious enough to outline relevant alternative biblical reports that he may

not necessarily favour or adopt. The Christian exegete with a teaching role in the local church by the very nature of the task to which one is entrusted as a preacher is entitled to respect for his work's sake and his office demands the expounding *the whole council of God*. For this reason the outlines I shall next present have their settings in different eras of divine revelation and salvation history and set forth different topics.

(10) THE EXEGETE AND ESCHATOLOGY

For the Church and theology and all who study scripture because of the never more urgent message of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ it is, I believe, important to take seriously the prompting of the two greatest theologians of the last 50 years. **Karl Barth** who redrew the basis of theology from the doctrine of the Trinity that came with Christ (the Word of God) – a doctrine that made theology possible in the last days (i.e. since Christ) said “Eschatology is not a mere footnote to theology”. **Jurgen Moltmann** who as a 2nd World War German prisoner was afforded conversations with Scotland’s best theologians whilst being held prisoner went on to write “The theology of Hope”. His theological approach takes up the biblical eschatological challenge and systematically urges the importance of the future upon us. He speaks of “Christ still waiting” till all things be put beneath His feet and “God still waiting” to be “all in all” and the Spirit of God still convicts and converts even in these days. The exegete has in his possession the bible and the bible speaks plainly of these solemn days in which we are living. Thus exegesis should take us forward and prepare us for the coming of Christ and awaken us to the task He gave who said “I am with you all the days even to the *end or coming together or partnership accomplishment* (συντελεῖα) of the age.

(11) THE EXEGETE ON A LITERAL-SYMBOLIC SEE-SAW

Throughout history since the Rabbinic period in which Christ and the apostles were born right till this moment in time those who prefer to hold a highly symbolic or conversely radically literal view of scripture text have seen a renaissance. Fanciful interpretations like that of **Corban** and many others to reduce the effect of the law circulated amongst the rabbis but our Lord grounded the law in fact and taught truth so plainly that it could readily be systematised as theology. The Christian millennia has its undoubted vicissitudes that may be simply characterised in the following confessedly oversimplified see-saw
UP The apostolic age held to the literal understanding of the NT and the apocalyptic matters Christ taught
DOWN Under **Origen** a non too subtle change was introduced. Mosheim comments “He (**Origen** 185-254) wished to have the literal and obvious sense of the words of scripture disregarded and an arcane sense, lying concealed in the envelope of the words to be sought for”.

UP The able teacher **Nepos** the eminent spiritual Egyptian bishop (230-250) countered Origen effectively in his great work “A confutation of the Allegorists.” Unhappily his significant industry largely perished with other Alexandrian literature.

DOWN **Augustine** (354-430) was faithful to the gospel but in writing the “city of God” equated the ultimate kingdom of God to the world of papal power. His allegory weakened Christianity and began the long dark middle ages feeding the church the notion that the millennial meteorite had landed and mesmerising the church to lay aside its early pre-millennial stance till the morning star of reform opened up the scriptures once more.

UP The **Waldenses** and later the reformers (In particular **John Calvin**) brought back the plain sense of scripture – the supremacy of our literal understanding of God’s word.

DOWN Liberal and creditable orthodox a-millennial scholars currently present their modern accommodation allied to the above source and stream of thought. We are often treated to a gruel that gives rise to a flawed understanding of the future – a concert of **Origen** and **Augustine** that plays well until it is subjected to serious analysis. Its radical flaw is denial of the rapture and gathering to Christ; its amnesia of the bridal feast of the Lamb is regrettable. It proclaims a neo-orthodox substitution of the Anselmic dogma of the wrath of the God exercised against Christ for the wrath of God against the wicked during the well annotated biblical tribulation and heralds an eternal earthly kingdom in place of the biblical eschatological teaching of a new (καινή) heaven and earth following the dissolution of this earthly ball – thus buying wholesale the Jehovah Witness teaching of modern vintage. With this package comes the perpetuation of a curious fallacy that the church extrapolated into the now darkening overall world picture is supposedly *set to phase in* the fully realised Kingdom of God – and all this without a thought of its entire incongruity. It is important to realise as do most respected modern theologians that *apocalyptic poses the ultimate test* of the scholars understanding of the entirety of biblical and prophetic contextualisation and makes the most strenuous demands on the competence of the exegete. Young preachers should not avoid apocalyptic but rather become fully conversant with the subject as it impinges on personal holiness and mission and how we do theology.

UP With the literal rapture and literal gross world trouble ending in the literal coming of *our Lord Jesus Christ* and His literal rule featuring Jerusalem plain biblical teaching shall rise to fall no more. Blessed are those *who love* His appearing.

Behold the mountain of the Lord in latter days shall rise

On Mountain tops above the hills and draw the wondering eyes.

(12) THE EXEGETE’S TASK

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN DRAWING UP AN OUTLINE

The ideas set down by Walter Kaiser in “Biblical exegesis for preaching and teaching (Baker 1981) should prove helpful as the sort of thing a beginner might usefully bear in mind whilst attempting an outline of a passage.

- (1) A repeated term phrase or clause that *may* indicate the end of a section
- (2) Grammatical clues like “ands, buts, then, therefore, wherefore, nevertheless, meantime or after this – all of which *may* indicate a new section.
- (3) A single or several rhetorical question which *may* mark a new unit of text.
- (4) Look for the vocative (notably in letters) which noun of address *may* also mark a new section.
- (5) Be especially observant of “change of tense, mood or aspect of the verb” which may well materially alter the sense or bring in a totally new consideration.

- (6) Look for vignettes or narratives. For example in Acts 8 Luke tells of two events in the life and witness of Philip—that to the Samaritans and that to the Ethiopian. Exegetes might stay with why the Holy Spirit does not come upon the Samaritans at baptism or whether Simon Magnus is saved and lost or whether the eunuch's baptism teaches "total immersion" but Luke is rather intent on demonstrating the outward and cross cultural movement of the gospel. That is the main point.

The Preacher

He or she stands between the living and the dead. In the preacher's heart there has to be a deep growing love for the edification of believers and an unrelenting compassion for the lost. In the preacher's conscience there is attention to the moving still small voice of the Holy Spirit. In the preacher's mind there is submission to and ever increasing studious appreciation of the indivisible word written and prayerful obedience to the Living Word. In the preacher's vision there is the invisible kingdom of the heart ministered to by devotional words of life and the coming prophetically visualised Kingdom of God on earth culminating in but not commuting as to its subjects in the kingdom of the heavens. The preacher is a privileged servant of God whose Holy Spirit in the Word can be relied upon to "show me my sin and show me my Saviour and make the book live to me" where his or her work is faithfully executed to the Glory of God.

Finis

Bob Coffey
A Bible Companion

PLEASE REFER TO THE FOLLOWING PAGE
FOR EXEGETICAL OUTLINES

SIX ILLUSTRATIONS
TEXTS, CONTEXTS, NOTES, OUTLINES AND BACKGROUND
DATA

(1) Genesis 3.17-19

The human condition (or) original sin (Theme)

(a) TEXT

To Adam He said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, “You must not eat of it all the days of your life

Cursed is the ground because of you.

By the sweat of your brow you will eat food...

Until you return to the ground-~~for dust you are and to dust you will return.~~”

(b) WIDER CONTEXT

The Reformation delivered a clear verdict that all sin of whatever sort “deserves the wrath and curse of God” and so a weighty blow was dealt to the regime of penances for venial sins and the whole cartel of indulgences, monastic interpositions on behalf of sinners and the absolution of priests. Technically thoroughgoing Reformation disannuls all priestly offices beyond the “priesthood of all believers” as it is subsumed under the Melchisadekian high priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. The provision of a single Mediator once for all for the elect of God defies the existence and scuppers the logic of other kindred or ancillary offices that boast added value and their validity is gone. Christian ministry now centres on individual and corporate worship, heralding the gospel in every generation and to every soul of man, teaching the scriptures and praying *devotionally and in concert with others* with requests, supplication, intercession and thanksgiving.

(c) NOTES

1. The exegete should pay careful attention to the analysis of the apostle Paul who said that whereas “Eve was in transgression” Adam “first sinned”. The breach of the command “You shall not eat of it” was put to Adam’s account whether or not Eve may have previously only had the forbidden fruit in her hands or whether she first ate. In either instance her action is called “transgression” and transgression assumes law but does not assume awareness of guilt.
2. I would bring to exegetical attention the textual matter of Adam and Eve hiding in the continuous sense as if they were on the run from God. This matter deserves to be noted.
3. God is spoken of as injecting “enmity” between Satan and man. The word also means “persecution” and this should be recognised. Satan persecutes the church and Christians deal with Satan as an adversary through the word of God and prayer.
4. The precise and considered statement of God vis-à-vis Adam and Eve cause the apostle Paul to give a directive to the church as to the teaching office. This is even now the matter of hotly contested debate after 2000 years of Church History and over 5,500 year and more of history since God first gave this ordinance. The rule of Adam in the world of that time was a paternal rule and also a prophetic role since Adam’s duty was thoroughly to brief his wife on spiritual dangers in Paradise.

(d) OUTLINE

THE ENTRANCE OF SIN

In Adam “all” were made sinners

- i. Unavoidable corruptibility of body soul & spirit resulted Rom.”Cor.7.1 1Thess5.23
- ii. Universal sinfulness has passed to mankind Romans 3.23 et alii
- iii. Sin, Deception and recovery

THE CURSE OF SIN

- i. The ground is cursed by ordinance Gen3.
- ii. The attempt to secure righteousness by law is cursed Deut.27.26
- iii. The curse of the law is done away for those under the blood Gal 3.13

THE ULTIMATE RESULT OF SIN

- i. “Dying you will die” Death’s first evidences followed in the wake of sin
- ii. “Dust you are and to dust you will return” . Sin leads to physical death
- iii. “HTB-He that believeth in the Son has life” The soul is saved. A person who repents and trusts to the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ receives eternal life.

A person who refuses or is apostate is advised to repent since “not to know the Lord” or “to deny the Lord” is to face the Second Death. 1Jn.5.12 Rev.21.8

(e) COMMENTARY

WESTGATE COMMENTARY BACKGROUNDING

ORIGINAL SIN & THE DAWN OF REDEMPTION IN THE GOSPEL CALL

...6b-7Eve took of the fruit and gave to her husband. *Now there are two “H locale” terminations at the end of this sentence in the Hebrew. Adam stood with Eve and he was there at this point. The NT conundrum “Adam was not in the transgression” means that Adam did not buy into the lie but He took what they had concertedly previously considered disallowed from her hand. Though she may have taken the fruit she may not yet have eaten it and it would appear that Adam’s was the first sin whether or not he was the first to eat the forbidden fruit as federal head of the race he received the divine rebuke. Their eyes were opened –they had an experience of naked embarrassment that involved their Creator-so that they did not welcome his presence and crafty ideas resulting in a quick-fix- Eve found needles and they had some sort of cord and both got busy sewing fig leaves-the **first rude clothing** ...8 As they were sewing they heard the voice of the saving LORD walking and still walking in the garden toward the evening breeze of the day. The LORD never breaks a covenant and cared enough to continue the relationship. Adam and Eve had been hiding themselves again and again (Hebrew Hithpael Future YITHHAhBEAh) **No-one has portrayed this running away and this loving pursuit better than John MASEFIELD in his “everlasting mercy”.** They hid from the face of the LORD God in the midst of a tree of the garden. The favourite tree for the commentator must be the fig –for they had no time to escape and their task was not complete-like man’s wretched rags of righteousness their coats were of no lasting value....9 The saving LORD God was calling Adam, “Where are you?” **prophetic TORAH** of the gospel call 10 And Adam was saying, “I heard Your voice in the garden house and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid”. ...11God reveals something we are not told earlier in His question, “**Who is there to proclaim or celebrate your nakedness or craftiness?** Have you eaten from the tree which I decreed constitutionally to make an exception from eating?”...12The man instanced the fruit provider as the woman. ...13God confronted Eve next with her action. Her defence was “The serpent deceived me and I ate.”...14 And Yahweh said to the serpent, “Why have you done this?” The divine curse distanced or set apart the serpent from livestock and wild creatures as detested and shunned. The curse changed the serpent to a sliding snake which “ate dust”. Snakes actually eat mice nowadays but the Old Serpent Satan is recognised to have an insatiable appetite for devouring man....who is made from the dust15 And I will put **persecution** (Hebrew AhEYVAH) between you and the woman, your seed and hers, and He shall trample your head and you will trample His heel. ...16 To the woman He said, I will increase greatly your (conception)pain and your wailing, with pain you will bear sons, your desire will be for your husband and **he will rule or teach you**....17 **The verb “to listen” is Preterite admitting of a period of suggestion leading to decision.** Because Adam obeyed Eve not God he would have to “travel far” for food and “toil hard” with the earth life-long. Two more problems would follow-thorns or piercing briars and spreading or circling weed would spring up and man would eat the herbs of the field so food would be less easily obtained....19 Adam would through the sweat of his brow eat bread till he died. God pronounced a term to human life. “From red earth you were taken. Dust you are and to dust you will return”*

(2) Psalm 23.1

The care of the Lord for his own

(a) TEXT

The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want

(b) WIDER CONTEXT OF THE CHAPTER

1. The “context” of the biblical shepherd in the pastoral context of the ancient middle east is a matter of a somewhat specialist sort and the exegete would do well to acquaint himself or herself with informed writing on the subject such as that of *Philip Keller*
2. There is, then, a series of metaphors in the psalm each of which contributes to the notion of God’s tender watch care. The psalm deserves the name “A pilgrim’s allegory” on account of the number of interwoven metaphors the bulk of which are pastoral. In a sense though but 6 Hebrew verses it covers the span and vicissitudes of life’s whole experience.
3. The special emphasis on the “winding paths” and the “valley of the shadow” carry David to experiences of crags and dark ravines he did not relish though they were the way forward. The path of Jesus lead to the cross of which he spoke openly to his disciples saying “The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of men and be crucified”. The exegete should not be so taken by the apparent delights of the psalm to overlook its demands.

4. The psalm is one of three-Psalm 22 is prophetic of Christ's atoning death, Psalm 23 of the Lord's care for His own Psalm 24 is prophetic of His return as the Shepherd King

(c) NOTES

There are 14 exquisite sung references to the precious personal experience of David as one who is close to the Lord he loves. These give the psalm its special lustre. As David sings in the silence of the Judean hills his heart is rapturous with every new mention of the One who cares for him and is so exquisitely close. His very heart would seem to be leaping for joy.

(d) OUTLINE

THE LORD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE

The exegete will first take a comprehensive look at the eight scenes through which the "good shepherd" leads His sheep: green pastures, still waters, winding hills, dark ravines, dangerous cliffs, thick snake infested grassland, lonely wilderness of drought and sickness and the safety of the fold.

THE LORD'S CARE FOR THE RIGHTEOUS

The Lord's leading by the rugged way –cf. The old rugged cross.

The winding paths that are best-the narrow way is the only way.

This is the way that especially "belongs to His name"(Hebrew) and glory.

THE INSTRUMENTS OF THE LORD'S CARE

His rod –he puts me under the rod as His own-he saves me and keeps me

His staff by which He rescues when as Holman Hunt portrays it we are straying

His Holy Spirit (represented by the shepherd's phial) with which He anoints

(e) COMMENTARY

WESTGATE COMMENTARY BACKGROUNDING

INTRODUCTION

Inn the mid-nineteen eighties I listened to Mr. Thumper give a unique address on the 23rd Psalm. He had a deep interest in the Waldensian Church which suffered persecution in pre-Reformation days and a considerable repertoire of anecdotal stories drawn from the shepherd traditions of the middle east. His comments were never written but I have preserved excerpts from them in the Westgate Bible Commentary.

A SHORT HISTORY OF JEWISH SHEPHERDS WITH REFERENCE TO PASTORAL CARE

The world's pastoral history began with the Lord companioning Adam daily. ABEL-ROEH -the first human shepherd suffered the first violent death. "REU" the shepherd of Gen 10.25 & 11.18 lived contemporaneous with the era when the earth was dividing in tectonic plate shift(curiously dubbed "continental drift" in popular science). Abraham(who lived circa 1800B.C.) was rich "in cattle & sheep" – and like all the patriarchs he learned to care for creation not least through husbandry. Jacob, brought up in that context, had sympathy not to drive too hard a pace for flocks and women & children. Joseph (Gen 45.11) desired to "nourish" his fickle brothers and in common with Moses and David learned leadership and care through shepherding. Our Lord characterised Himself as the "good shepherd"(John 10) and meant by that term that He treasured His own deeply and daily in his affections. He inculcated similar care in the disciples- cf. John 21. Paul and those he mentored placed great emphasis on the daily "the care of the churches", the widow and orphan in particular and the family in especial.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Our Lord is *the Good Shepherd* (Bootes of the Zodiac and Shiloh-shepherd of nations heralded in the Scriptures)and He was born close to the shepherds' fields and *died as a sacrificial lamb* to gather the church and Israel to His bosom-cf. "other sheep". He purposes in the eternal years to extinguish the inventory of sorrow and every tear *εξαλειψει* (Rev7 .17).*It remains for us to confess Him as Lord of all-our Lord and shepherd.* These are the three fundamentals-His person and work and the deposit of our tenderest obedience.

A MIZMOR

The psalm is one of 56 "choice bunches" of grapes. Augustine called it "the Martyr's psalm" Knox introduced 12 psalms to Scotland and his nephew Melville could rehearse them in original Hebrew. Psalm 23 is one of these. The psalm is Hebrew poetry and is thought to come from the early life of David. To sing the psalm in Hebrew is to recognise that the sweetness, joy and sonorous cadences of

the psalm are largely based on *the first person nouns* that are strewn through the composition speaking of a precious personal relationship with God.

SIX GLORIOUS VERSES

1 **JEHOVAH ROEH.** The Lord is *my shepherd* I shall not be "diminished"(as in Gen8.3, 5) or "wanting". (As in Gen 18.28) Its future tense displays "faith". In life I will have no lack and David might easily mean exactly what we do when we sing with confidence "When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there" and he shows that every need will be met.

2 In 'Noah's' *of first sprouting grass* he causes *me* to lie down, by waters of "Noah/rest" He *causes me* to lie in my heritage. The verbs are both Hiphal and speak of the *practice* and *permission* of God-also His *declaration*. David, like Noah, sees his life cast in a wonderful new age of the world-a fresh time of Covenant which links him with the quickening future purposes of God and the psalm is the more significant since he learns from Nathan later that these purposes relate especially to his very own house. The leading of God is seen as "gentle" like that of David's patriarchal ancestor Jacob. Cf. Genesis33 .14 with "I will lead *softly*" [*Heb yffal (aff is onomatopoeic)*]. The exegete should not miss the dynamic work of God active behind the place of confident rest and faith where David arrives.

3 He keeps on turning *my soul* and His practice is to guide me in the "**winding or revolving paths**" [*Heb ylgam*] of righteousness belonging to the "intention" of His name. He is the Good shepherd-to do this He must exercise Himself, the word JI JC comes from 'furrow' so He had to work as a ploughman to shepherd me! The way the Good shepherd takes is a hard way and in the case of our Lord this stanza depicts the cross that He bore and the acceptance of the "way of the cross" in the believer's life.

4 (A) Also because I will walk in a valley of shadows/"shadow of death" [*Heb. tm lxs*] is not the gates of the shadow as in Job3.5 10.2128.3 34.22 &38.17 "**I am not afraid** because you are with me". This is a "trembling fear" [*Heb. ary "a dread of loud noise"*]. Bunyan catches this truth in his portrayal of Giant Despair. From the "noise" some have conjectured the "valley of hyenas" WADI ABU DABA- this is "ZEBOIM" meaning "tinged" as with blood of prey. Of the 400 NT references to psalms many have to do with "security" in God.

4 (B) "Your rod & staff *comfort me*" His "rod" [*Heb fbv*] prods the conscience and separates us out as His own, His staff [*Heb n[v]*] is that which David can "lean upon" -with this instrument of care the shepherd draws the sheep from danger- it is His comfortable faithfulness to promise. This verb is a PIEL meaning that David will constantly be comforted by the fact God has the means to help him.

5 You will extend a table *in front of me* within sight of *my enemies*. The practice of the shepherd to beat grass to expel snakes and then to use a pungent odour around the margins of this area was "preparing a table" This "orderly preparation" [*Heb Jr[]*] is also used of the table of showbread- David, once driven from Saul's table, had resort to Gods. 1SamuelI 21.6-you constantly anoint my head with oil, Also MEPHIBOSHETH enjoyed this extended table by the grace of David to Saul's house 2 Sam 9.11

6 "Surely goodness and covenant mercy (cf Isa55 the "sure mercies of David") will *follow me* all the days of my live and **I will dwell** in the house of the Lord for length of days" Gods goodness and covenant love are as steady as the Jordan-flowing through time. This great Sabbath rest of David is the "length of space" [*Heb Jr[]*] multiplied by the "length of time" [*Heb CC}*]

THE FORCE OF ANGLO- SAXON SIMPLICITY

The psalm can be interpreted through its two "nots" (1) "I will not be wanting" and (2) "Yea though I walk ...I will not fear" first because the LORD "leads" "feeds" and "turns" me round and second because His rod and staff support me. (a)His rod (that is "His word") prepares a table. His staff and His bottles of odour and unguent represent "the Holy Spirit". The final verse speaks of the "goodness" and "covenant love" of God-as ethical guidance of His 'kindness' and spiritual guidance of his 'covenant mercy'. The Hebrew word pdr is used in this connection. It means to "follow quickly" "like the wind". So the sheep dogs represent the Lord's voice in cheering and chiding too.

FOR EVER AND EVER

The psalm ends “I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever”

(3) Isaiah 6.7

The forgiveness of sin (Theme)

(a) TEXT

With it (the live coal) he (the angel) touched my mouth and said, “Lo this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

(b) WIDER CONTEXT OF THE CHAPTER

It is important that the exegete bring together Isaiah’s call and Isaiah’s message as set out in the 53rd chapter.

(c) NOTES

1. The most important exegetical point in this entire chapter is found in the text. The exegete should consult the Hebrew or alternatively come to appreciation of the point made in the commentary below concerning the gender of “this” and the gender of “coal”. The word *coal* is a Hebrew feminine and the word *this* is a Hebrew masculine. Two different matters are presented for consideration. The person of Christ justifies but the incense of prayer is vital to holiness. Had it been the brazen altar and the sacrifice an altogether different connection would exist.

2. The vision centres around (a) the burning seraphs who enshrine and personify holiness (b) the live coal which demonstrates how holy zeal is maintained and (c) the Lord and his robe whose hem stretches to where Isaiah stands and puts salvation health within easy access.

3. It is important for the exegete to look at the historical context of this text and experience of Isaiah and to make the correlation between Uzziah and the Lord (The king of Glory). The first overstepped his role in pride, the second thought it not robbery to stoop to become man and offered his soul as a sacrifice for sin. (see 2 Kings 15.1-5 and 2 Chron. 26.19). Uzziah attempted as a king to act also as a priest and was punished by becoming a leper. Isaiah records standing at the temple in what must have been an aftershock of the great earthquake that Josephus records took place in the very year Uzziah died.

4. It will not be lost on the exegete that “seraph” means “burning one” and the seraphs depict burning zeal and holiness in action by covering their faces and feet and speeding on their mission.

(d) OUTLINE

1. Holiness personified by the Lord

Uzziah died on account of disobedience to God in going beyond his brief. The Lord who is higher than all stooped to fill the temple with his Glory and by the symbol of the hem of his priestly garment brought redemption nigh. Go to Isaiah 53 and show that Christ even took on him our “leprosy” Isaiah 53.4 “He was smitten (much as was Uzziah by plague)

2. Holiness demonstrated by a seraph

The seraphs demonstrated the zeal of holy ones

The seraphs demonstrated their awe by hiding their faces (compare with Isaiah 53.3b)

The seraph demonstrated the alacrity of holy ones

3. Holiness imputed our the great high priest and king

“Lo” The sinful soul must look with hope to the Lord alone

“This” The Lord on the throne is the Lord of Isaiah 53-expound the means of atonement

“Pardoned” The lesson of Alacrity is learned “Here am I send me!” Emphasise that Isaiah carried “a healing message”(v10) go again to Isaiah 53

(e) COMMENTARY

WESTGATE COMMENTARY BACKGROUNDING

Prophecy of Christ crucified and ascended

PERMANENT VALUE

Only in Revelation – and in 7 chapters of that volume – is this vision of God Himself given. (cf. 4.2,8,9,10;5.7,13;6.16;7.10,15;15.8;19.4;21.5-as ever surrounded by humble ministry. The chapter refers also to the nation’s pride and hardness-resulting in the cutting down of its power and the remnant of faith. The Gospel writers pick up this theme too (cf. Matthew 13.14-15; Mark 4. 12; Luke 8. 10, 19.42; Ac 28.26-27; John 2.40-41)

KING OF KINGS

The consoling reality of our lives is that above all earthly rule God is enthroned as sovereign. In the year 740 after 52 years of “able and energetic” rule by J.C Waite’s description (article in N.B.D) Uzziah died a leper in the year of

the earthquake. We read in 2Chronicles 26.5 "As long as Uzziah sought the Lord – God made him prosper... when he was strong his heart was lifted up; he was a leper until his death and dwelt alone. The witness of Zechariah son of Jeberechiah held the king on a steady spiritual path (cf. Isaiah 8.2). It would seem this prophet's witness was curtailed (Perhaps on account of the Kings leprosy) – Zechariah was still active when Mahershalal hashbaz was born – circa 732 – the child would call "mama" & "dada" before the north was annexed – and by then Uzziah had been deceased 8 years. In Jewish tradition Isaiah was of royal blood so the king's death was viewed with personal grief – though his own call in this year of earthquake and demise of the king is a significant act of God, who never leaves Himself without a witness. (cf. Amos 1.1 & 9.1).

THE LORD HIGH AND LIFTED UP 1-2

The vision of Adonai assures the prophet & the world of unmoved sovereignty. **The LORD is high** (at this present He is and continues to be high (cf. participial meaning) **and lifted up** ("constantly" Piel and "presently" present and "by His own action" Niphal – so this has to do with His rights, His praise and His sacrifice). **The train of His robe filled the priestly part of the temple.** -In the original tabernacle this was 30 feet long by 15 wide. This prevented anyone coming nearer than the laver-the door at which Isaiah stood. **Six-winged seraphs ministered "nearby"** or "onwards in time" as "belonging to Him" – **each had six mantles** (or wings) – and here we may render **"belonging to the worship of the united one** *dj a* i.e. the "three in one" or stay with "belonging to each" **In the house of two wings he hid his face; in the house of two he covered his feet and in the house of two he keeps continually flying.** No names no pride – no desire for earthly glory- only the throne is in their view. Ezekiel 28.14 pictures the king of Tyre & figuratively Satan gifting to himself the "mount of God" **and walking proudly amid the stones of fire as king- priest** (in the stead of Christ – who alone should wear the ephod) and adopting a function where he has none – hence pride is found in him

SERAPHIC CALL 3-4

And this one called to this one and said, "Holy, holy, holy – Jehovah of Hosts – all the earth is full of His glory. The witness of the seraphs like the "ark cherubim" is two-fold. "Filled" arm is used to say, "God filled His hand and gave all"(or)"completed by His glorious presence"(or) "satisfied with His person". The seraphs did not view the awesome beauty of the earth simply as astronauts might do – their zeal for the plan of salvation prompted worship and a Christ cantered signal – "The glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters the sea" for this is the "planet of glory". **The foundations of the "threshold" or "dish (-es)" were disturbed or moved to and fro. The house was filled with smoke** Here the voice of this call was answered by God – shaking the foundations of temple worship and of the showbread and laver dishes – calling for "the cleansing of God". The smoke signals God's anger with Uzziah's pride.

ISAIAH CLEANSSED – A GRAMMATICAL & INTERPRETATIVE ERROR CORRECTED 5-8

He spells out three woes. First, **"I am a man of sinful lips"**. Second, **"in the centre of a people of unclean lips I remain"** Third, **"My eyes have seen the King Jehovah of Hosts"**. The awareness of not being right with God by legal sacrifices was immediate. God's answer – **one of those seraphs flew to me (a repentant man) with a live coal** (The Hebrew word *hpxr* is a **feminine** word) **taken by tongs from the altar of Sacrifice** (possibly the annual Passover). **He touched my mouth-and he said, "Behold this one** (The Hebrew word *jz* is a **masculine** word – indicative of the Lord) **has touched your lips – your iniquity is removed – your sin covered."** The fundamental truth of covering of man's nakedness of spirit by true humility is shown by these creatures as is the fundamental of a clean heart showing its fullness through purified lips and the fundamental zeal for Christ and holiness is expressed by their dealing in fire (**not animals**) and the altar of Christ. The Rabbis first understood the "live coal" as the agent of sanctification and all western texts follow The interpretation like ducks. The rabbinic take on the "coal" declaring it a symbol of sanctification (not an agent) has, however, to be appreciated. Simple attention to grammar would have obviated the error. It would be obtuse and heretical to look to the "blood of bulls" to expiate sin and certainly it is not intended that we place confidence in "coal" – but only in the whole sacrifice of the Lord Jesus – the uplifted crucified one to whom the seraph pointed

ISAIAH'S CALL 8-10

The *ymda l q* i.e. "The voice of the Lord" is associated with the vision and it would seem with the *dj a* "unit of Adonai" which is reflected in the "unit of Seraph" – meaning that "one" seraph called and one person of the Trinity was cited -otherwise the seraphs covered head and feet and flew using 3 pairs of wings – cf. verses 2 and 6. The voice spoke in recognisable Hebrew **"Who will I send and who will go for us"**. This statement in itself holds up a mirror to the divine union – God is "one" as in Deut 6.4 where, significantly, the same words *dj a [mv]* are to be found. Isaiah replied, **"Behold me, send me"** The former is an "act of grace" the latter "an act of secret preparation to supply Gods people in the presence of the enemy" as the aqueduct (cf. Isaiah 8.5) The Lord says, **"Go, Declare to this people 'they must listen in order to hear & obey and they will not understand (by mediator)'"** The idea is based on the experience of Isaiah whose experience of forgiveness was the object of the exercise of listening-

but that could only come with repentance. Again "they must see or study prophetic things to see (God) and they will not obtain intimate knowledge (of God) "Feed or make fat the heart(their thoughts will and affections-their reasoning and understanding) of this people and burden their ears-cause their ears to listen favourably or with grace – lest they see(the word is as in Genesis 38.15 – "deep desire for union") in the house of the eyes and hear in the house of the ears and understand in their heart and turn and I heal it". Here the people are taken as a whole and what is not on offer is "revival". The reasoning is, "They will not learn from speech alone, they want to have a vision like you were given-however they will not go on to a true relationship of union with the Lord" This word *apr* "healing" is a restoring to the pristine and a speedy healing. This is neither the time nor the dispensation – nor are the people yet prepared for this act. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah and the cross must intervene

HOW LONG? 11-12

Isaiah asked how long this state of affairs would last The Lord *ymda* replied – "Till the cities are destroyed from no-one dwelling in the houses, from no man to work it the land is also destroyed and a silent wasteland. Jehovah has sent *mdah* man as a race far away (a verb used of both space & time) and there is a forsaking of the centre of the land of Israel. There is an allusion to Eden and the prophecy fits the days of the Roman conquest of Jerusalem as well as the days of the Babylonian Captivity of the people. The great "forsaking" Hebrew *hbz* [indicates "ruins, a broken bond with God, end of the present state" as to the city of Jerusalem. A tenth will be left and it will be carried captive belonging to a time of destruction by fire – which took place under the Romans.

Luke 15.20

The love of God our Father

(a) TEXT

So he got up and went to his father, but while he was still a long way off his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

(b) WIDER CONTEXT

The first parable shows that we wander easily from God, the second shows that we those who are lost have no sign of their covenant relationship to him

(c) NOTES

1. The "lost sheep" story is specifically called a parable, so is the "lost coin" and the "lost son" but the exegete should note that each is "a certain something" so the stories may well have had a factual base.
2. The exegete will see the significance of the Jewish wedding coins which were hung around the woman's neck and think about the significance of the calf and goat in Leviticus 9

(d) OUTLINE

1. THE FATHER'S EYES

*The boy's father kept a keen look out
Those eyes would well up with tears from day one -of this we can be sure*

2. THE FATHER'S HEART

*The father suffered or empathised with his prodigal son
As time went by the Father would often take thought about his son and think of the state he might be in
The exegete should develop the idea of compassion (Latin *Cum-passio*- "suffering with")*

3. THE FATHER'S KISS

*The father persisted to kiss and to give. How like God the Father
The exegete will make something of the "child's / "servant's view" which lays telling emphasis on the "value of the calf". Of this part of the sweet story of deep feelings both commentators and exegetes are largely unaware. The renewed standing is signified by robe and ring and shoe but the great sign of forgiveness is **the calf**. The elder brother (typifying the religious leaders who see their works as pleasing God). The religious leaders of Jesus' day are depicted in the elder brother who failed to enter in to relationship with God through Christ.*

Return to the "kiss" to show the wonderful provision of grace in the robe of righteousness, the ring of genuine son-ship and full spiritual rights and the shoes of service for the Father does not decline what was in the unspoken message of the prodigal-make me as one of your hired servants-service there would be. The exegete will lay necessary emphasis on the fact that without repentance the Fatherhood of God means nothing to the prodigal as a sinner.

(e) COMMENTARY

WESTGATE COMMENTARY BACKGROUNDING

This chapter records three of the best known stories of Jesus—those of the lost sheep coin and prodigal Son. The effect of the stories is to highlight the attitude of joy and to contrast it with the moralist Phariseeism that fails to recognise what our nature is like or how relationships suffer with one link lost—like on command broken, or how love must move sacrificially to bear burdens

THE SHEEP THAT WERE NEAR THE SHEPHERD 1-7

It is to be noted that Luke states first that the Publicans and sinners were “nearer Jesus”. This fulfils a truism “nearer the shepherd safer from danger”. Luke tells us that there were Pharisees and scribes who could not get close to Christ – so they complained about that when nothing else could be said. They grumbled that the tax-collectors continually kept near and that they often ate with the master. Not those who claim to be righteous but those who acknowledge sin and repent are safe. This principle is not far beneath the surface in all the stories of this chapter. The heavenly joy over a repentant person is on account of need impressed by the Holy Spirit and felt – as opposed to those *οιτινες* (“who” here is used in the inflated sense – “those who think they are something”) who have no felt need of repentance. This parable begins “a certain man from among you” has one hundred sheep – so the Lord puts these quasi-religious hearts in a pastoral dilemma. He shows how religious leaders of the day chased after followers to sustain numbers. *Ezekiel 34.11 & 16* show the Lord as one seeking the lost – one binding the broken and strengthening the sick.

THE WOMAN WHO LOST A COIN (FROM HER 10 COIN STRING) 8-10

Or which wife would not seek that every sign of her relationship is in place. So our obedience to Christ and that of Israel is focused. The coins number equivalent to the commandments. Again “friends and neighbours feature here” – they share the “joy” of this woman whose diligence to seek for the coin that put her relationship to her husband in danger of the charge of carelessness. To break one of the commandments as *James 2.10* shows has like consequence with breaking all. See her “touch” the light that reveals the dark places of her house—she needs the light like we all need scripture. See her sweep the house – we all need the garnishing work of the Holy Spirit.

THE MAN TEACHES LOVE THROUGH A FATHER AND A PRODIGAL †50 11-31

(a) The Son’s view of the Servants

A powerful famine arose when the son who spent his portion of his father’s very “life” (*ουσια*) came into distressful circumstances abroad. His life was as one piece with a citizen of his adopted country. He was in want (*υστερευω* – *he had nothing for the first time in his life*) – he had no food no clothes to speak of – even his shoes broke or were gone (v22). In his heart words came freely “Dear old dad and those happy servants of his – every one like a king – “I’m going home”. I have sinned against heaven (*my God and my dear father*) – *I’m no son* – I can make no future demands on you Dad – make me like a servant. All this was sin – his wasting of his “true being” and scattering everything like arrows to the wind; then “cemented a link with the stranger – really so foolish; and his impoverished mission to feed pigs; and his passionate *longing* for carob pods. As to his careless extravagance *the parable shows how fully the Son of man comprehends the prodigal heart*. The teaching implies that the Fatherhood of God in general terms just is not a working relationship for either the departed prodigal or the resident elder brother devoid of the love of God.

(b) The Father’s view of the prodigal

The Father was watching with a longing love. Those kisses (*καταφιλω*– “*kept kissing*”) showed his joy. This is not simply an immoderate display of emotion—this signifies the “life” of the Spirit in the repentant prodigal—a point that must not be missed. Those actions tell this story and tell it specifically—the *stole* of peace was first his own for we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ when faith comes. The ring he used as his personal authority He gave the son—the sandals which signify battle or readiness with the good news - these belong to the redeemed – our peace is in Him – our authority in prayer is also from Him – and our mission to be involved with the good news is His design for those who have come home.

(c) A child’s view of the calf

A child or servant explained to the “elder brother” that his brother had returned and that the Father had killed the fatted calf because he had received him *απολαμβανω* (*from another – the stranger in the foreign land*). The word *σιτευτης* like *σιτευτον* means the “feeder “of the “well fed calf” (i.e “The calf I fed”). Perhaps the child loved the calf and even fed the calf. He wasn’t in the least concerned about the “authority” or the “Peace” or the “shoes”. To understand the children’s view (cf. v 26 *παιδων*) of the calf is to get a notion of the importance of the sacrifice and its relevance to renewed relationships. The Elder brother wanted nothing of the feast and his whole debate was on the subject of sacrifice – of the kid of the goats which he would supposedly like to have shared with his friends.

(d) **The Elder Brother’s view of the joy** of homecoming fellowship and reconciliation. The whole chapter speaks about “friends and neighbours being called – here the “servants sit down to eat – something largely missed –while the brother is absent. The deep compassion and love of the Father is here – the joy of the servants too – but the elder brother can only condemn his brother for a sin declared in *Proverbs 29.3* “He that keeps company with harlots spends his substance – he had been “profligate – a debauchee. The last word is “It is essential – it is a must – it is wanting and there is need of two things *ευφραινω & χαιρω*. The elder brother protested that he was never given a “goat”. *Leviticus 9* shows that the calf and goat were used at the very first opening of the tenet of meeting and signified meeting with God as sin was dealt with. The absence of the elder brother and the lack of the goat symbolise want of relationship in OT terms. Joy here entails:-

To enjoy life be pleasant rejoice at seeing others and to gladden
To rejoice in good news, express pleasure & welcome warmly.

The Prodigal Son like David acknowledged the heavenward thrust of his sin. Sin also has a heavenly solution in repentance.

In *Proverbs 29* the profligate man is called a “wanderer” – the Hebrew word ABAD is used of a “wandering sheep”. The peril of a wandering sheep is something we must take seriously. It will not long survive the predators of the desert.

The son who is “wise in matters practical” causes his Father to shine with joy... It is the Godlike endowment of discernment which enables judging what is right.

1Corinthians 13.10

A more excellent way (Theme)

(a) TEXT

Love never fails

(b) WIDER CONTEXT

1. The Corinthian church came behind in no gift. Despite this gifting they proved tedious and very resistant to introducing moral discipline but more important they demonstrated head-knowledge and significant lack of agape love. They set up schismatic groups and expressed strong preferences for one or other of the early church leaders.

2. The Church were considerably endowed with spiritual gifts as “speaking in tongues” but showed their infancy and lack of maturity in love.

(c) NOTES

1. Notice the use of *Hyperbole*. Paul uses it four times

(d) OUTLINE

1. Love as the missing link

- i Though the greatest biblical linguist or supremely gifted in glossalalia
- ii Though possessing the greatest prophetic gift
- iii Though exercising the greatest faith in prayer
- iv Though posing as the greatest religious benefactor
- v Though possessed of the highest dedication (cf. Shadrach Meshech & Abednego)

2. Love as perseverance

- i patient and kind
- ii Not envious boastful proud rude self-seeking angry settling scores, savouring evil
- iii Love always protects, trusts, hopes, perseveres

3. Love as perfection

- i Tongues prophecy & knowledge are superseded

- ii Childhood gives way to manly maturity
- iii The face of face beauty of Jesus replaces its poor reflection in believers

(e) COMMENTARY

WESTGATE COMMENTARY BACKGROUNDING

There are 5 characters drawn in this fabulous chapter on love. The first three are deliberately overdrawn- to deflate current Corinthian self-esteem; the fourth is exactly delineated – Jesus; the fifth is honestly described – Paul.

1. THE MAGNIFICENT LINGUIST 1

John Paul JJ had great linguistic endowments. Early in 2012 I met a gentleman who is resident in Turkey and fluent in over 20 languages. He pointed out a minor error in a printed Hebrew script I had issued and told me he was currently studying Babylonian. Paul creates a fictitious character with unbelievable comprehension far beyond what I have described above – one who commands all earth’s languages and heaven’s tongues. Were such knowledge attainable – in the absence of love even so astounding a gift could be discounted as valueless. Loveless language has no joyful song and is an “echo” – it comes back as harsh, unfeeling, insensitive or as hollow grating sound without harmony and melody – it is so much noise.

2. THE MIGHTY PROPHET v.2

Daniel was enabled to interpret dreams and to Jeremiah it was given to know the time of Israel’s return – to Daniel the days until Christ’s triumphal entry, to John the divine the signs of the Lord’s second coming – these were specially favoured men indeed. Paul takes us beyond such outstanding prophets in a second hyperbole and introduces us to a prophet to whom nothing is mysterious, who knows everything and is such a confidant in the will of God as to be able to change the position of mountains (*cf. Matthew 17.20*) in His world. Without love such a person could not exist for these powers belong to God alone and God is love. Omniscience and love belong together and could never be the prerogative of the loveless. Prophecy originates in a loving God who will do nothing except He reveals it to His servants the prophets but the prophetic ministry is one of absolute servant hood to the hour of death.

3. THE MAGNANIMOUS BENEFACTOR v3

To give everything to the poor and to make one’s life a burnt offering as a martyr for a great cause – this is to count neither possessions nor very life dear. This performed without love has absolutely no advantage or gain. It remains unrewarded. The concept of *the suicidal individual – acting out of hatred* – is plainly rebuked here. In his comment *Godet* refers to an Indian who had himself immolated at Athens in *Augustus’* time – of whom *Strabo* says “He immortalised himself”. *Lucian* calls such “Men of empty glory” *Godet* again quotes the case of two Presbyters who went to execution – the one craving the other’s forgiveness without receiving it. He who would not forgive denied Christ and was spared – he who craved it died gloriously for His Lord. Heroic acts there may be but where they lack love they have no merit and are literally worthless.

4. THE PERFECT MAN 4-10

We are compelled to John’s Galilee verdict, “It is the Lord!” on assessment of this fourth delineation. “*The*” love expressed in this outstanding portrayal depicts “One who never loses patience; one ever kindness itself. “*The love* (in Him) is without a jealous bone in His body; “*The*” love(in Him) is free from a boasting spirit and conceit ; He is one who never has to be ashamed or apologetic; one who does not assert His rights; one who is never exasperated – and most amazing of all – who never has an evil thought”

Put positively, here is one who always rejoices in truth and is no despairing critic of men’s’ incommensurable and terrible failures; one who covers over others’ faults (making his atoning blood their shelter of safety – literally a roof and home); in Him we meet one who always is confident and trustful; who never ceases to hope; who endures under the greatest burden. “*The love*” (expressed in the person of Christ) never fails (*literally “never falls from the charioteer’s board”*). In this most perfect of portraits of love incarnate love divine the supreme lover of our souls is patient, kind without envy boast or pride. This lover of His people is never; rude, self-seeking or readily angered. He did not come to judge and keeps no record of wrongs for He forgives all our iniquities, transgressions and sins and remembers them no more for ever. He delights in truth. He is our Shepherd and protection and trusts us more than we trust Him, He maintains His hopes for us and His perseverance with our faults and

foibles renders Him most precious. His name is Jesus and there is no-one who remotely compares with Him for loving kindness.

Where Paul has put a **generic article** to Love (*ἡ ἀγάπη*) in verses 4, 8 and 13 he is describing pristine love in Christ. This is the Christ whom Paul preaches.

4. THE APOSTLE v11

When he was *νηπιος* (*a child beginning life in Tarsus without speech*) he simply made sounds. His practical wisdom was limited, his power to calculate or think logically or count *λογίζω* was very limited too. With manhood childish things were, however, soon past and gone. Paul tells us that prophecies will become a thing of the past and tongues will cease in face of a common speech and pure language when the Lord returns. Knowledge gained by acquaintance and inquiry will no longer be employed in the world of tomorrow. Science will be defunct. “God will make all things new” *Revelation 21.5*. God is going to “form” things new and for common sharing.

5. THE PRESENT ENIGMA WILL YIELD TO FUTURE SIGHT

(1) **The dark glass** – in the ancient world the metal mirrors of Corinth were famous.

(2) **The enigma** is a sentence which does not say something clearly or exactly but enables an educated guess. The OT verse from *Deuteronomy 34.10* mentions God speaking to Moses mouth to mouth and not in dark or enigmatic sentences. The advent of Christ (*cf. 1 Corinthians 1.7*) will give rise to new circumstances in respect of prophecy, speech, and knowledge.

(3) **The Enduring love** – in the perfect state gifts will be done away. There will be sight of Christ – so faith is unnecessary; there will be possession of the kingdom – so hope will pass away. Hope and faith abide *now* (*νῦν*) [*literally “at this moment in time”*]. They will of course fade away. *Godet* puts it beautifully “**The palm belongs to charity**”. *Calvin* “Love is greater in virtue of its eternal duration”. Faith is superseded by sight as when Thomas calls out “My Lord and my God”, so hope of the new day is eclipsed by the morning of His appearing.

(4) **The love** v13 is greater than these. The love that Christ demonstrated is beyond hope and beyond faith that we can exercise and even – dare I boldly tread alone to say it – beyond all other love ever seen among men – even among the dearest believers – **the love of Jesus at the cross holds the palm**. Its preachers and exemplars have not won the world but neither have they lost the battle for men’s hearts. What is wanting in us the return of the dear dying Lamb in righteousness glory and justice with never dying love will quickly progress – and without the shadow of a doubt – He will not just conquer the hearts of men for a term – this “desire of nations” will hold the whole wide earth in thrall for a thousand years

Revelation 7

A glimpse of heaven

Introduction: Preachers seldom venture beyond Revelation 4 though some boldly go to Revelation 21-22 to provide God’s people with a vista of what heaven and the eternal state in the “New” earth holds in store. Few consider that Revelation views earth’s future from heaven’s perspective and the Lord considers it vital for us to know the important considerations God balances and in one sense He reveals His secrets to John and gives information and provides detail as to how He remains sovereign and shepherd of Israel amid earth’s greatest trouble and Satan’s last battle to ultimately silence the truth in the campaign to wrest the earth’s people from God.

(6) REVELATION 7.13

The comfort of Divine Sovereignty (Theme)

(a) TEXT

What are these that are arrayed in white robes and whence came they?

(b) WIDER CONTEXT OF THE CHAPTER

John was exiled during the short Domitian persecution (one of a series of 11 in all). Rather remarkably it was ended when the sons of Jude appeared before the emperor as relatives of the Christ and so impressed him with their plain honest working lives that he relaxed his opposition to Christianity.

1. Divine sovereignty holds back life’s storms 1-3
2. Divine Sovereignty in the last days reaches the Jews once more
3. Divine sovereignty will spare the church and reward witness

(c) NOTES

1. Revelation presents the Lord under a different name from other bible books. He is termed "The Pantocrator" which in Greek combines the idea of "Victor and Sovereign"
2. The idea of "angels holding back a storm" is clearly metaphorical for a storm of a worldwide sort that would imperil Israel, unsettle the sea of nations and diminish spiritual fruit on earth
3. It is important to know that chapters 4-19 cover 5 sequences during the Heptad (3-7)
4. The exegete should be aware that Jehovah Witnesses lay claim to the 144,000 by faulty interpretation as part of their sect who inherit the paradise earth
5. Our Lord referred to "the Great Tribulation" in Matthew 24.21 and 29
6. The exegete should note the aorist tense of the verb "come".
7. The emphatic of "wipe away" ἐξάλειπῶ indicated "no sorrow" in heaven.

(d) OUTLINE

Introduction. The angel's question has three aspects. He asks "Who are these?" then in a supplementary he asks "Where did they come (in one exodus) from". Then the angel gives a very comprehensive answer with which the exegete is for the main concerned as it holds great comfort for God's people which comfort derives from the Lord the Pantocrator.

i THE COMFORT OF REVELATION Why the angelic query? Simply because he was engaged in explaining forward truth to John. Why reveal this truth? When suffering persecution John like his mentor John the Baptist sorely needed the comfort of the risen Lord the sovereign victor who came to him as promised in John 21.22

ii THE COMFORT OF THE CHURCH IN ALL AGES The church shall not pass through the judgment of tribulation (The Great Tribulation). Cf. 1 Thess. 5.9. Jesus explained "You will have persecution" and even said "Blessed are the persecuted!"

iii THE COMFORT OF JUSTIFICATION SANCTIFICATION & GLORIFICATION

Main exposition: We learn from the vision that full dedication in service & worship will be ours, richer life will unfold, no tears will despoil the joy we shall share.

When by His grace I shall look on his face
That will be glory-be glory-for me!

(e) COMMENTARY

WESTGATE COMMENTARY BACKGROUNDING

SEGMENT 3 7.1-7.8 META TAUTA NO.3

SIGNALS THE IMPETUS TOWARDS ISRAEL'S CONVERSION

This very short segment sets before the church of today the wonder of divine grace and the work of the Spirit of God in **the aftermath of Church History** reaching out to bring the nation of Israel to Himself by especial providences. Here we see Angels deeply involved as the writer to the Hebrews puts it "as ministering spirits sent forth to those who are heirs of salvation". Later in the Apocalypse we shall read of the appearance of two witnesses who consolidate God's work in Israel. **Further still we read of an Eagle twice acting for the well being of Israel.** We are given notice in this *third segment* of the vital role Israel and Jerusalem is to play during the tribulation (6.2-8) and into the Millennium. This segment follows the *great earthquake (6.12-17)* or geo-physical shaking foretold in the sixth seal. The OT & NT have a spate of notices of this "humongous tremor" (see *Isaiah 13.13; Joel 3.16; Haggai 2.6 & 21; Matthew 24.29; Mark 13.25; Luke 21.26; Hebrews 12.26*) As this segment opens four angels appear on earth "holding the four winds". So at this point the world has been shaken and geography has radically changed and mankind is terribly frightened but the hills around Jerusalem stand and this nation is ready to take its place at centre stage in the world to be.

THE FOUR ANGELS 1

John saw four angels standing or as we say "stood" after the style of guards above the four angles of the earth. There is no need to go anti-Copernican. To take the Magnetic north and an opposite Antarctic position along with a position above the mid-east and above the pacific shows how such angular [*γωνιας* "right angle"] positioning is to be read from above [*επι τας τεσσαρας γωνιας*] not from the surface view. The exact positions are clearly ordained of God – but they were devised for global cover and vital hastening of immediately future events.

The angels held the four winds – the BOREAS (N), EUROS (E), NOTOS(S) and ZEPHYROS (W). The winds served as points of the compass do today.

It might be asked why the winds were withheld from blowing on earth, sea or any tree. The obvious answer would be further massive destruction of fruit and the food chain from the destruction of trees [*δενδρον* "fruit trees" as opposed to *υλη* "timber trees"]. Assuming nuclear engagement trade winds would grossly aggravate the plight of mankind.

Equally seaways were still open during this time of massive earth disturbance and though the land was in turmoil following the greatest "shake" ever known on earth and no doubt for a time the "sea and the

waves were roaring"[*Luke 21.25*]a quiet sequential weather pattern would greatly abate the disaster. THERE IS MERCY MIXED WITH THIS JUDGMENT AND A WELCOME PAUSE BEFORE THE VERY DISTURBING EVENTS OF THE SEVENTH SEAL.

A FIFTH ANGEL 2-3

I saw another angel coming down from the rising of the sun (Anatolia) v.2 here the viewpoint of John is "the earth" – and as vv4-9 show – it appears to be the Holy Land but as Jews may still be spread worldwide it may as readily be "earth" in the wider sense. The angel held the seal of the living God. This is not a question of opening seals of historical events reserved for future revelation – it was rather a case of current use of the seal to set apart God's servants as those to be saved from among modern Israel. He shouted in a mighty voice to the four angels – the very same ones commanded not to act illegally as to the earth, sea or trees. He had come to enforce the command – "Do not act wrongly(*It may be said that to act at the wrong time is to act wrongly – and clearly angels have government among them to secure good order in this matter*) in respect of earth, sea or trees until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.

SEALED JEWS WITH A GLORIOUS MISSION 4-8

These angels then joined in the greater ministry of sealing the 144,000 v.4 [*Greek ρμδ=144,000*] for the completion of the elect of this significant period when it is clear that the "fear of the LORD" is the beginning of wisdom for Israel. The sealed persons were sealed where a soldier's hat badge was worn – between the eyes on the forehead. They were heirs of Israel preserved till these late days of God's sovereign purpose. (*This act bears not the least semblance of connection with the far-fetched claim of modern non-Jewish watchtower followers that initial disciples of the cult ascend to heaven whilst the residual number abides on a paradise earth*) John states with the angel that from Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin there are 12,000. The sealing was used in New Testament times for servant-slaves and for soldiers. In v.3 the angel specifically calls these persons "servants" (*after the style of Revelation 1.1*) in their absolute willing obedience to the Lord. ***This act of sealing forestalls the "mark of the beast" in chapter 13. This is the "mark of the Lamb."*** The beginning of the next or tribulation segment sees these soldier saints pass one by one to Mount Zion – a final glorious testimony to God's salvation – the thin blue line of spiritual witnesses to the Lord Jesus Christ – and in the passing they witness with great effect against a background of cruel anti-Jewish activism that re-emerges in the tribulation era.

SEGMENT 4 7.9-15.4

META TAUTA NO.4

(NUMEROUS SAINTS ESCAPE FROM TRIBULATION – 7TH SEAL 9-12 TRUMPETS – THE SCROLL – TWO WITNESSES – 7TH TRUMPET – THE 144,000 IN HEAVEN – WRATH AND WORSHIP)

THE FAITHFUL CALLED HOME – FAITH REKINDLES ON EARTH

Jesus once said, "When the Son of Man comes will He find faith upon the earth" (*Lk18.8*). Through this SEGMENT the world and Israel too becomes much denuded of faith – though where it lives on or is awakened what splendid quality of obedience and handsome proportion of faith is in evidence.

John directs us to look above to heaven and home - glorious with the

redeemed. "I saw, he says, a great MIXED MULTITUDE (*the redeemed of all ages – the recent raptured ones and the fresh martyrs*), that no-one was able to number once for all. We should note that this like the other visions of the Apocalypse 4-22 is a *prevenient vision* and so none could have any idea in apostolic days of the greatness of the church of God. This only God foreknew. **These were people from every nation, tribe, people and tongue, standing in adoration and worship and joy in before the throne of God and before the Lamb – getting very close to God and to the Saviour – though multitudinous.** They need no seats –there are no crowd controllers – they never fall exhausted – wonderful experience. They had *clothed themselves* in white stoles – the mark of completion – and held victor's palms in their hands. On the Jewish feast of tabernacles on earth palms and fir and myrtle are traditionally prominent. The celebration portended here is stupendous by comparison. They shouted as one man, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb." And all the angels had been standing in a circle or corona or possibly scattered everywhere in the circle around the throne (*we will have to wait to see*). Inside the crowd of the redeemed the twelve elders appear and inside that again – the living creatures.

**PARENTHESIS: WHAT BELIEVERS NEED TO KNOW! 13-14
THE QUESTION THAT NEEDS TO BE ASKED!**

WHO ARE THESE IN WHITE ROBES? TRIBULATION SAINTS

Before we read of the most terrible traumas of earth in this segment the felicity of the church in heaven again greets the reader's eyes. *Christians may glibly say – why should God reveal so much of the trouble on earth?* We don't need to know that! That is why we have the heavenly scenes running concurrent. There are a series of things taught in this scene that the LORD considers the church now needs to know.

And all four orders of creation fell on their faces and they worshipped God saying “Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever, Amen”.

(1) We need to know that the circle now comprehends *like a hunter's circle* multitudes the Saviour has searched for INDIVIDUALLY and brought to Glory.

(2) We need to know that all the redeemed of each succeeding age are in heaven and we may say of this great throng that they are *clad to enter the victor's battle appeal in heaven that precludes the final contest* with Satan on earth...”Lord take your great power and reign!”

(3) We need to know that we will be taken from the face of tribulation.

One of the Elders had asked me, saying, “**These clothed in white stoles or armour – who are they and where have they come from?**” [The Greek verb is *ἦλθεν* which is *in the aorist form* – and is typically so used by *Homer, Theocritus, Aristophanes the LXX* and in *Alexandrian literature*. The effect is “*These came in a once for all "catching up"*”]

John replied “Sir, you clearly perceive who they are!”

He said in a classic reply, “These are they who have come out of (cf. NOTE BELOW) great tribulation and they have washed their stoles, and made them white in the blood of the lamb.” They had been in battle on earth and in the circle of the blood of the Lamb – of those who witnessed to blood – they were caught up from Great Tribulation. John is transported thousands of years ahead in vision

(4) We need to know how close to Jesus we are and shall be. The saints (*and martyrs*) are recognised as “soldiers of Christ” from the theatre of the spiritual warfare on earth. They are greatly loved and for this reason they are in close [*ἐνώπιον – in close*] to the throne.

(5) We need to know that full surrender and commitment is called for. They are continuing to “give their all” [*λατρευουσιν – to expend massive resources – as when rich nobles on earth supported a war or engaged a national choir*] in service day and night in the temple of God – the inner HOLY OF HOLIES.

(6) We need to know that the honoured witnesses of the last days and the martyr group will be shepherded to various joys of heaven and the Shepherd of souls will lead the way to ever living fountains of waters – the “head streams” or “springs” of life itself suggests further mysteries and richer life will yet unfold.

(7) We need to know that the questions of suffering and tears that ever flowed will be understood and joy supernal will reign in the Father's house.

The word for “*wipe away*” is not merely a matter of fact manner. The Greek is not *ἐκλείπω* but *εξάλειπω* meaning “*to obliterate*” or “*wipe off the map*”. Here is supreme tenderness and comfort for people who came out of the most terrible period for the righteous in all of history.

(8) We need to know that EVERY (GUARDIAN) ANGEL was here to witness *these great entrances* prior to the return of Jesus Christ to Jerusalem. These angels had been involved in the gathering of the elect.

(9) We need to know that all martyrs and witnessing saints are under the Shekinah (v16) – their labours are over. We are all to be treated as those who loved not their lives – as witnesses. We shall abide in Glory without sun-borne diseases, without hunger that afflicts many Christians today, without tiredness and without sorrow.

A NOTE ON THE SENSE OF "OUT OF" TRIBULATION

The term "out of" has three general connections. It may mean out of a given location; out of a given period or out of in terms of origin. *However in composition the sense of "removal" prevails.* The nub of the answer is that *they are not continuously emerging out of great tribulation but they came in a mass exodus.*

He that is seated on the throne will spread His tent over them – so they abide ever near Him. They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the sun fall upon them nor any heat. The effect of his clause is to make clear that their destiny is not to resettle on earth.

(13) POSTSCRIPT: THE EXEGETE'S HIGH VIEW OF SCRIPTURE

The biblical exegete is in business because God requires that the scriptures by which He reveals Himself and His will be set forth in clarity for the spiritual wellbeing of man whom God created and in particular the church on whose members God has set the seal of His Holy Spirit.

The scriptures as originally written are as to the OT mainly in the Hebrew language and the NT is written in the Greek lingua franca of the era. Whereas scholars write voluminously and in these days go into an infinitude of detail about how the bible is to be received and the best modern mould into which it may be cast it has to be said that variants in the original languages give rise to surprisingly few substantive theological issues. I give you the acute observations of Philip Schaff commenting in the *Companion to the Greek NT and the English version* (Harper & Brothers, New York 1883) "The multitude of various readings of the Greek text need not puzzle or alarm any Christian. It is the natural result of the great wealth of our documentary sources...it ensures the integrity of the text. Only about 400 or the 100,000 or more variations materially affect the sense. Of these not more than 50 are really important for some reason or other and not 1 affects an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not sustained by other undoubted passages. *The Textus Receptus of Stephens, Beza and Elzevir and our English Version, teach precisely the same Christianity as the uncial text of the Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts*, the oldest versions and the Anglo American Revision.

Were all learned institutions to become dysfunctional on account of some unthinkable world event or were the church to be called home in the rapture it is undeniable that there remains in scripture and the continued gift of the Holy Ghost the basis on which a seeker with a full copy of the bible in his or her language thereafter could come to saving faith.

To proceed further if in such circumstances a literate Hebrew speaker were possessed of a copy of the OT in Hebrew or a literate Greek speaker the NT in Greek the perusal of either according to ordinary logic and the teaching of the Reformation on the primacy of scripture would be sufficient for the revelation of God's plan of salvation.

To forsake futuristic thinking and go in the reverse direction and then make the dogmatic claim that the holy scriptures as originally given were verbally inspired may *a priori* seem intolerable but given that God the Holy Spirit knows the deep things of God in His omniscience and is the sole convenor of all that is written in the book and single mover of all who wrote in the OT and alongside the Lord the inspirer of all who wrote in the NT to settle for any less than "full inspiration" is both unnecessary and indeed unsafe. So ipso facto it appears that the scriptures *as originally given* have the imprimatur of God and the OT canon as received by our Lord and the NT canon as completed by the apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit according to the promise of Christ is to be received as verbally inspired.

There are of course multiple transferences between the original writings and even the Hebrew and Greek we now possess. We have to express gratitude to God for those who reproduced uncials cursives and papyri etc. since Jamnia and scholars who by their rigour preserved the NT text for us so faithfully. It is not unthinkable that if all our present form and source critical scholars were to go on extended leave that still the church would forge ahead with strength. It would never be my intent to despise a single scholar but it is vital to get the ball back into play and spare scripture being taken far off piste. The scriptures as they survive within the church of the firstborn and in the hearts and minds of the redeemed of the Lord and current copy as held by both is utterly adequate and thoroughly trustworthy for these last days if only every soul of man had such a copy and could read it in his or her own tongue. There is *little more than a canvas* between what our Lord and the apostles could read in synagogues of the Old and what John the divine could muster of the New had he access to each of the 22 books he did not write. The exegete can be confident that no doctrine we are called to believe has altered by reason of transmission of copy and the scriptures in our hand measure up quite precisely to the scriptures as originally given. My own findings after spending 15 years in translating and commenting are that the scripture is intact after millennia-as Jesus said "The scripture cannot be broken".

To put this in theological form is to teach *the authority and inerrancy of scripture* in accordance with Psalm 12.6, Proverbs 30.5, Psalm 119.18, Matthew 24.35, John 17.17, John 14.26 and especially 2 Timothy 3.16.

The Westminster fathers in their Confession of 1643-46 recognised that we must needs be moved to a high and reverent esteem for scripture by the testimony of the Church. Their default position was that "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of Holy Scripture is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts"(W.C. 1.5). D.A. Carson usefully argues that *If pluralism is true the Bible cannot be what it claims to be: the words of the only true God, the creator and judge of all the world has spoken to us*. Pluralism is an aspect of postmodernism which alleges that anyone's perspective on truth is as valid as that of anyone else. This logic taken further means that he who thinks that man has walked on the moon is as accurate as he who denies it. The latter perspective denies a valid fact.

Scholarship comes up short and has overreached itself when it seeks to excise and cut away or replace and compete with scripture writers and the final chapter of the last book of the Bible states “If any man adds anything to the prophecy of this book God will add to him the plagues of this book and if anyone takes away from this book of prophecy God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city therein described.” Apocalypse 22.18-19

Theories of Inspiration have included Dictation inspiration (the denial of human influence), partial inspiration, degrees of inspiration, concept inspiration (But the bible emphasises verbal inspiration in 1 Cor.2.13), natural inspiration and mystical inspiration (Schleiermacher). The position I adopt is the Plenary inspiration and verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

DO (TO TAKE ONE EXAMPLE) TEXTUAL GAPS IN 2 SAMUEL NEGATE PLENARY INSPIRATION?

TEXTUAL GAPS IN 2 SAMUEL

There are nine textual gaps and 89 oral alternative usages suggested by the rabbinic study of this book. I have not been solicitous to divert to comment on the oral detail except in a few cases but I have drawn the valuable lessons that we can gain from the textual gaps. I am giving a synopsis of the nine lessons here but commend the reader to the full text for a more detailed examination of the contents so that you may form your own impression.

- (1) 5.2 The first gap between the nation’s recognition and that of the elders of David’s rule testifies both to the widespread consent to the nature of David’s leadership and heart
- (2) 5.19 “Will you cause them to be delivered into my hand” ...”And the LORD said ‘go up’”. The gap between these words instructs us that David waited on God and did not rush into hostilities.
- (3) 7.4 This gap tells us of the second word of God to Nathan and stops David in his tracks. Overnight David was probably sketching out the nature of the temple he would like but before morning he was out in the old tabernacle praising God that his own family was the one chosen by God from which Messiah would emerge.
- (4) 16.13 This gap gives us outstanding evidence of the compassion and forbearance of the heart of David as an aged believer. His testimony serves to bring Shimei to faith
- (5) 17.14 So the LORD determined [*hwx*] to annul or void the better counsel of Ahithophel for the LORD’S purpose of transitioning to bring calamity upon Absalom. *This statement standing in the textual gap is the writer’s assessment and it interrupts the history. From whatever hand it is part of Holy Scripture. This gap draws attention to the sovereignty of God as Theocratic monarch over His people and so in ultimate command. The word has “constitutional” overtones and this gap gives us pause as we survey the unlikely taking place—the foreign counsellor in from the other side—with long adherence to David getting away with it.*
- (6) 21.1 And the LORD said “It is on account of Saul and his bloody house on account of his killing of the Gibeonites.” *This gap suggests to us that there was a three year long prayer of David persisting in looking to the LORD for a solution to this long famine.*
- (7) 24.10 And David’s heart smote him after he had numbered the people....and David said to the Lord “I have sinned greatly because of what I have undertaken so now O LORD please pass over the iniquity of your servant for I have shown myself very foolish”. Then David arose in the morning. *It was not just a momentary thing—this experience in all likelihood immediately followed his conversation with Joab and remained with him till the LORD corrected him. He essentially did nothing in that time to halt the census and probably it was going on under its own momentum anyway. This should remind us to act promptly on conscience and warn us of the critical problem of events taking their own inexorable course if we do not. But the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad the seer or visionary of David saying... The verb “to sin grievously” is repeated in 2 Chronicles 16.9 when Asa becomes self-reliant and as a result is punished by having to endure wars life-long while he reigns. David’s prayer was for a “passing over grievous sin” and in the divine mercy he met the “angel of the LORD” and at that time arguably saw the one that acted on his behalf at Calvary. This was one of the most terrible experiences of David’s life but one of the most prophetic. To the terror and grandeur of the episode the gap is glowing testimony.*
- (8) 24.11 For when David was up in the morning... the word of the Lord came unto the prophet Gad offering three options -3 days pestilence or 3 months of defeat or 7 years of

famine. David left the issue with God. This gap emphasises a great sorrow but laces it to a great joy that an altar at the threshing floor triggered the procedure to buy ground for the temple which would long serve.

- (9) 24.23 This gap serves to show that Israel has rights to the sacrum extending from 1000 BC and a proper purchase between the original Jebusite owner and King David. The spiritual lesson for Araunah is that atonement is indeed costly and there must be a sin offering to effect reconciliation.

Thus these points in the ancient text direct us not to criticise but to learn great truths from the Holy Spirit of God and this principle of faith and learning I commend to the exegete. The numerous gaps in 1 & 2 Samuel do not negate biblical inspiration or prejudice the sufficiency of Holy Scripture

(14) THE EXEGETE'S MODEL PAULINE SERMON

THE FINEST EXAMPLE OF PAULINE PREACHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (ACTS 13)

One who aspires to preach and teach scripture will do well to selectively peruse the sermons of other great preachers. You will find profit in the great sermons of CHS and the lucid generally three point sermons of Murray McCheyne and countless others. Whilst you will make full use of modern media and instead of parable you will use clips from the internet or power-point illustrative matter the concern of this file is not to talk about what windows you will arrange for your bible teaching and sermon but how you will work to the highest exegetical standards in the construction and content of your address. My concluding encouragement in this direction is an examination of what I consider one of the greatest addresses of all time-that given at Psidian Antioch by the apostle Paul. This sermon is quite special because it is a surviving example of the ancient but largely unappreciated and forgotten principle of *Proem and Yalameddenu* (dividing and teaching. Take time to read Acts 13 & work through the subsequent appreciation.

(1) THAT OTHER ANTIOCH-AS DISTINCT FROM THE SYRIAN BASE OF PAUL & BARNABAS

We read in Acts 11.26 that “the disciples first called themselves Christians at Antioch” in Syria. Luke uses the aorist infinite of the Greek verb for “negotiation” or “conference” [χρηματιζω] and intends to convey to us the signal impact of the teaching of Christ at Antioch, namely, that Christ - likeness was the first principle inculcated in ministry and that there first by **conference** and **deliberation** the believers named themselves Christians. The popular old wives tale or rather preacher’s idyll that some local hooligans gave us the name we have been stuck with over the centuries is as near total nonsense as we can find in the history of the church.

Paul along with Barnabas and others had a leading role in teaching this important early Church. His epistles define Christianity as “Christ centred”. He says such things as “Christ lives in me” and “for me to live is Christ” and “I obtained mercy that is in me first that Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering as a pattern” and “follow me as I follow Christ” and “How I am straightened until Christ is formed in you”. Paul, I submit, was the architect of the name which was his own appreciation of those who followed the Christ-the name of the “Christians”.

There were sixteen Antiochs in all. They were founded by the Seleucids who succeeded to the empire that *Alexander* bequeathed to his heirs. Paul carried the Kerugma or gospel announcement which he heralded and taught in Syria to Antioch in Pisidia. He landed at Attalia and went on to Perga and then to Pisidia on his first missionary journey. The city, which I have visited, is set in panoramic and barren desert coloured terrain - a steep climb even by car leads to the 3000 feet plateau where modern Yalvac is situated and where one finds oneself with a grand overview of the land lying toward the coast.

(2) GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND TO THE SERMON

Those around Paul went ahead sailing to Attalia and came upstream to Perga in Pamphylia. John Mark returned to Jerusalem. They passed Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia and entering the synagogue on the Sabbath, sat down. After the reading of the law and the prophets the leader said to them, “Men and brothers, if you have a word of encouragement for the people, tell us.

Paul rising waved his hand for silence – to quieten the natural chatter and stir on account of his visit - and then spoke to them. *In the first week of May 1999 the author and his wife were present at a memorable and historic event and on account of the delay of American guests I was invited to be interviewed for Turkish TV on my impressions of the event and the hospitality - prior to a march of Christian witness at that location in commemoration of St Paul’s visit. That day the Papal and*

Orthodox hierarchy joined with free - churchmen in a goatskin tent to celebrate in song and speech and sermon the event recorded for us and the address and teaching of Paul the Apostle in Acts 13 at the original historic Pisidian Antioch site.

(3) PRELIMINARY NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE GREAT SERMON

Paul stands as a gospel herald. He related in 16-43 that God chose Israel; he spoke of the God - given prosperity of Israel, the hand of God in the Exodus, the divine patience with Israel over 40 desert years, the overthrow of 7 nations in Canaan in favour of Israel's residency and the inheritance promised to the fathers.- He indicated how God had been gracious to their nation and kept his word over 450 years of grace.

Then he spoke of the period of the Judges when his namesake Saul, the Benjamite King, reigned 40 years. He told of how the reign of David a man after God's heart followed. Of the regal line of David came Jesus - ushered in by John the Baptist. Paul lifted up the name of "Jesus" (Yeshua) the unrecognised Saviour whom Pilate executed and God raised. He pointed to distinct scripture - Psalm 2 "You are my Son" - the baptismal prophecy and the resurrection promise of Psalm 16 "Your holy one will see no decay" and the warning against rejection, "You who scoff, I am going to do something in your day you would not believe even if someone told you". The Jewish party withdrew but the rump of Gentile proselytes called on Paul to continue with them on the following Sabbath on which occasion the whole city sat in on the address. Quoting Isaiah 49.6 "I have made you a light to the Gentiles" in defence of his action Paul answered Jewish synagogue abuse by stating that he would evangelise the Gentiles - **those called to be soldiers(of Christ)** who believed . So though the apostles were expelled the continuing disciples were filled with joy & the Holy Spirit.

OBSERVATIONS ON PREACHING BASED ON THIS SIGNIFICANT CHAPTER

1. PAUL STOOD UP v16

Paul set a precedent by standing to teach in the synagogue. This position is symbolic of life as the position of the Rabbis was significant of death. The word ANASTASIS (rising) fits better with all that the gospel preacher presents than the word SABBATH (resting). We read in Luke 4 that our LORD stood up to read persuade or own the scripture and sat down to apply it by parable and we might add to give judgment on a failed system. Thus it appears the testimony of the preacher's stance befits his message which is a message of the work of the living Spirit and the risen LORD. The Jewish teacher's seat was called the Bema and it pictures the judgment seat. Though Christ might occupy such a seat and legalists besides the gospel preacher as *a herald* is characteristically on his feet.

2. RIGHTLY DIVIDING AND TEACHING

ORTHODOXY cf. 2 TIMOTHY 2 14-15

Paul as a teacher would retain the Jewish principle of *Proem and Yalameddenu* (dividing and teaching) This sermon is an excellent example of the principle. Let me explain what is involved in this time-honoured method of setting out divine truth.

1. PRM and LMD come from two Hebrew concepts "*to divide bread*" and "*to train by use of known material*". I will now draw out the implications of the method.
2. TRUTH TAUGHT should be of such a sort that will feed and nurture
3. TRUTH TAUGHT should be make clear and accessible to those who hear
4. TRUTH TAUGHT should be applied to the varied needs of God's people
5. TRUTH TAUGHT should derive readily from scripture. In Paul's instance it was capable of being derived and illustrated from THE LAW, THE PROPHETS AND THE WRITINGS
6. TRUTH TAUGHT should be *kosher* - just as sacrifices had to originate from beasts of cloven hoof or chewed the cud or possessed scales so teaching must be pure biblical doctrine - susceptible of demonstration from God's word.
7. TRUTH TAUGHT should be *enforced by a number of scriptures* for example when the Protestant Church Fathers of the 17th century talked of *the state of believers at their death* they argued what we now call *the intermediate state* from the very suspect ethical usage of the word "perfect" in one verse of the N.T Hebrews 12.23 and did not think to add or failed to find other proofs to establish their proposition. Our doctrine of *Judgment(s)* and the *Kingdom of God* and the *Rapture* and many others require a widening of the base of scripture evidence. Many of the great truths we have received on *the nature of God* and *suffering* and *divine sovereignty* and the *age to come* have their ground within the OT and modern evangelical theological thought processes may fail to be sufficiently familiar with the territory.

3. SOUND OR HEALTH-BEARING PREACHING

(a) Sound preaching is based on historical fact understood biblically.

Hebrews 13.22 states that the book of Hebrews exhibits this style a factor demonstrating an authorship trained within Judaism whether in the Jerusalem or Alexandrian Torah School. There are many references to the TORAH NEBIIM and KETHUBIM. (26 in all of which I reckon 11 are from the O.T. histories) Notice that the 7 nations included Hittites from their seat of power Hattusa in Paul's Cappadocia - today's Turkey. The Hebrew *Kerugma* or gospel showed a people brought out of Egypt and brought into Canaan as Inheritors with divine prerogative

(b) Sound Preaching uses the law (and the prophets) to display rebellion

The reading of the scriptures is ever cogent. The puritans spoke of "law work" and "gospel work". Where did that idea come from? We have here the Hebrew *PROEM & YALAMEDDENU* concept (For "divide and disciple" The PRM & LMD principle of preaching divides What happened in those days when great Jews who were converted to Christ preached was that the truth of the TEXT - in this case verses 22-23 on the appearance of Christ from the Davidic line was **set alongside the law and the prophets**

(c) Sound Preaching majors on the heart (Preaching reaches the understanding, will, conscience and emotions)

"I have found David a man after my own heart" (1Sam13.14 v22) who is set against Saul-as those who entered Canaan are set against those who left Egypt, as Israel is set against the seven nations; as devout converts are set against abusive Jews-the principle taught in the gospel is obedience as opposed to rebellion- cf. v22.

(d) Sound Preaching is Christ-centred

The Lord was raised up as David's seed-incarnate-virgin born-v23 "God raised a Saviour" (ηγειρε)
The Lord was crucified and raised in prophetic ministry as Messiah-vv30-31(ηγειρεν)
The Lord was raised from the tomb as Light of the World - v.37 (ηγειρεν)

(e) Sound Preaching is full-orbed.(The uniqueness of this address is that it comprehends many themes)

The modern preacher in the West will not preach anything near as long as did Paul and exposition will concentrate on the localised topic. However a resident pastoral expositor must needs explore the whole counsel of God.

- (i) Repentance is vital and proud rebellion is its major target cf.v24B and the contrasting humility v25
- (ii) "Leading in" (εισοδος) the bridegroom of the heart v.24A
- (iii) Covenant mercies v.34 & Isa55.3
- (iv) The cross - or tree v.29 With Deut 31.23 (Gal3.13) is at the heart of preaching i.e. the curse taken away only in Jesus
- (v) The perfect lamb v33 and Psalm2.7 (cf. Mark1.11)
- (vi) Forgiveness available to the obedient v. 38 Jeremiah 31.34
- (vii) Justification by faith v.39 (cf. Romans 5.1)
- (viii) The reality of Judgement v41 with Habakkuk 1.5
- (ix) Covenant Grace v. 43
- (x) A call for decision v. 46
- (xi) The divine overarching sovereignty v. 48 "enrolled"- cf. the book of life
- (xii) The fullness of the Spirit v. 52.

**Come Holy Ghost for moved by Thee
The prophets wrote and spoke;
Unlock the truth, Thyself the key,
Unseal the sacred book**

FINIS