

## 2019 BNTS seminars

The Book of Acts Chairs: Sean Adams and Matthew Sleeman

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### Session One

Aspects of the Reception History of Acts 2 and 4 (jointly with the Use and Influence of the New Testament seminar)

Steve Walton, Trinity College, Bristol; Taylor Weaver, University of Kent; Simon Woodman, Bloomsbury Baptist Church

### Session Two

Monique Cuany, HET-PRO, St-Légier, Switzerland, 'The Resurrection in the Kerygma: A Re-assessment of the Use of Psalm 16 in Acts 2'

The speech delivered after the effusion of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in Acts 2 includes a long Christological development focusing on the resurrection of Jesus and including several OT quotations. By and large, exegetes have interpreted the use of Ps 16: 8–11 in vv.25–28 to function as a 'proof from prophecy', aiming at proving either the resurrection or the messiahship of Jesus. Alternatively, it has been argued that what happens is a 'proclamation from prophecy'. This paper challenges those interpretations on narratival and historical grounds and offers a new understanding of the function of the Psalm in the argument.

Peter Doble, University of Leeds, 'Thus it is Written...'

In this paper I offer an account of how Luke 'uses' scripture throughout *Luke-Acts*. Reflecting on my argument demonstrating that he was not mistaken, I account for *how* he wrote to Theophilus of the ἀσφάλεια of 'the things fulfilled among us.' He wrote using scripture structurally and contextually, *embedding* Jesus' story in Israel's scriptures. Without this scriptural structure there is no narrative. Essentially, Luke argues that through Jesus God fulfilled two broad scriptural threads.

First, a *reference-frame* rooted in the David-promise, both base-text and its developments, encloses Luke's narrative from its Prologue to its enigmatic closing in Rome. This reference-frame governs *Luke-Acts'* principal Jesus-descriptors and his concepts of Messiah and of 'fulfilment.' Second, Luke's understanding of God's anointed Messiah—David's seed Jesus—is basically shaped by his *Isaianic Exodos* subtext, initially rooted in Luke's John the Baptist story, but focused by his distinctive account of Jesus' Transfiguration. Luke's story is of one person, two long-standing hopes, and *promises* to David, Moses and Abraham *fulfilled* in and through that person, Jesus.

### Session Three

David A. Smith, Duke Divinity School, NC, USA, 'Acts and the Praxis of Early Christian Ecumenism'

This paper is a study in practical ecumenism as it comes to expression in the Acts of the Apostles. As the only canonical narrative to tell the story of the church, Acts has always been a key text for reflection upon the church's identity and mission. Yet one feature of the ecclesiological vision of Acts, which is particularly relevant for our time, remains largely unstudied: how does Acts deal practically with difference as a characteristic of early Christian life? A surface reading of Acts, as of early Christian history generally,

makes clear that ecclesial difference was a pervasive and often troubling fact of life in early Christianity. Indeed, since the time of F.C. Baur, Acts itself has often been understood as a rhetorical attempt to remedy a situation of ecclesial discord, though the precise divisions and troubles facing the Lukan community have been variously understood. In the last two decades, studies of the ecclesiology of Acts have rightly stressed the theological character of Luke's vision, according to which the church's identity and witness are fundamentally grounded in its life in Christ. Yet such articulations have been, perhaps necessarily, somewhat abstract and, to the degree that they resist abstraction, focused on all-encompassing patterns of life in local communities. Yet the question remains: how did such communities, separated as they were by geographic, ethnic, and theological differences, practically come to understand themselves as one church—brothers and sisters in a single family of God? This paper seeks to clarify the methods of practical ecumenism according to which, in Luke's telling, the theological identity of the church was given tangible expression, and it argues that Luke's attention to these practices of ecumenism provide key data for characterizing the socio-rhetorical character of Acts as an ecumenical document in its own right.

David J. McCollough, Durham University, 'Prescription and Coherence in Luke-Acts: A Narratological Exegesis of Spirit Reception and Christian Initiation'

This paper will address two questions: first, whether Lukan narrative is in any way prescriptive, second, whether Luke presents a coherent picture of Christian initiation. This paper employs discourse analysis, narratology, and literary analysis to demonstrate that Luke both coherently describes and didactically prescribes for his implied audience particular ritual behaviour related to Christian initiation, and especially, to receiving the Holy Spirit, and that the prescription is of a standard ritual structure with allowance for minor variation.

## The Book of Revelation Chairs: Michelle Fletcher and Garrick Allen

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### *Session One*

Garrick V. Allen, Dublin City University, 'Revelation, the Canon of the New Testament, and Greek Manuscripts'

The place of Revelation within the canon of the New Testament is a complex question, especially when we consider its mixed reception in eastern Christian traditions. In response to this situation, significant critical has been exerted in analysing ancient 'canon lists' and explicit discussions of Revelation's 'authenticity' or 'acceptability' in ancient sources. Scholars have also analysed the bibliographic context of the earliest manuscripts, focusing on the early papyri and pandect codices to better understand the canonical rhetoric of these artefacts. However, the bibliographic context of Revelation's medieval manuscripts—the period in which most of Revelation's extant Greek were produced—has never been explored as a way to better understand Revelation's place within the larger collections of the New Testament. When we extend our purview beyond the fifth century, we see that Revelation's Greek manuscripts preserve two concurrent streams of transmission: one in which Revelation is transmitted alongside other 'canonical' works and another where Revelation is unbound from any concrete connection to the New Testament. This finding has consequences for how we conceive of the canon and Revelation's place within it.

Martina Vercesi, University of St Andrews, 'Revelation 19–21 in North African Authors before the Age of Constantine: A First Stage of Exegesis'

This paper will provide some new observations on the early church reception of Revelation 19–21. First of all, it should be noticed that the textual transmission of these chapters is very deficient; at the present, in fact, we do not possess any papyrus witness and the most ancient Greek manuscript that retains their text is Codex Sinaiticus (IV century). Moreover, also the Latin text transmission lacks important witnesses; Codex Bezae does not have Revelation, and the earliest manuscript that retains its Old Latin form, the Fleury Palimpsest, stops at Rev 16:5.

Significantly, an important tradition of exegesis of Revelation could be found in North African authors (T.W. Mackay, *Early Christian Exegesis of the Apocalypse*). In these Christian communities, in fact, the Book of Revelation played a crucial role not only as far as the interpretation is concerned, but also related to the consequences that its interpretation had in the ecclesial practice.

Through the analysis of the text and the reception of Revelation 19–21 in the first North African authors (Tertullianus, Cyprianus, Lactantius) and the accounts of martyrdom, this paper attempts to provide an account of the early Roman Africa Latin tradition of these three chapters of Revelation. Through this analysis it is also possible to shed new light on the most ancient text of this section.

Finally, this paper could also give the chance to reflect on the significance of the eschatological theme in these communities by considering the changes of the interpretation which would occur later on with Augustine theology which would provide a radical change of perspectives of these chapters.

Ian Paul, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, USA, 'Writing a Commentary on Revelation'

Last year I had my commentary on Revelation published, a medium length (144,000 words!) non-specialist work. But it raised for me a range of academic, textual and personal questions. Where do commentaries sit in relation to academic study of the text? How does taking a broad approach to the whole book compare with specialist study of particular sections, themes or features? And what effect does it have on reading to have to form a view on every passage, and put all those views out to public scrutiny?

## Session Two

W. Gordon Campbell, Union Theological College, 'Spirit, Seven Spirits and Anti-spirits in the Apocalypse'

This paper attempts to understand the Spirit, spirits and anti-spirits in Revelation in context of the book's evolving narrative logic. In interaction with recent scholarly discussion of Revelation's pneumatology, the relevant materials from Revelation are discussed and interpreted under four heads: 'the seven spirits' (Rev 1:4-5; 3:1; 4:5; 5.6); 'in the Spirit' (Rev 1:10-11; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10); 'the Spirit of prophecy and eschatological Spirit' (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 11:3, 6-7, 10; 14:13; 19:10; 22:17); and 'Anti-spirit'/'demonic spirits' (13:11-18; 16:13-14; 19:20; 20:10). In integrating these texts under the title rubric, an account is offered of the book's particular (S/s)pirit-talk as constituting a significant element of its discourse, and—presupposing Revelation's overall coherence—as one intelligible and impactful leitmotif (among others) that impinges on the audience's appreciation of Revelation as a whole. Some consideration is also given to implications for everyday life and witness that the audience might have drawn from their

exposure to Revelation (and especially its message concerning the Spirit, spirits and anti-spirits), in context of corporate worship.

Miles Tradewell, University of St Andrews, 'Solomon's Reign in 1 Kings 1–11 as a Contributing Source to John's Babylon the Great'

John's characterisation of Babylon the Great (18:2-20) is clearly the product of extensive scriptural reuse. Among a host of possible allusions, scholars have consistently recognised his use of Ezekiel 27, describing Tyre's international trade in various commodities. Richard Bauckham's influential study also demonstrates a correspondence between the cargos that John mentions and the trappings of imperial affluence, thereby advancing the claim that Revelation 18 is primarily an economic critique of Rome. However, much of the language of Revelation 17–18 indicates that the city of Jerusalem may somehow also be in view; John appears to echo numerous prophetic indictments of the people of God and the holy city. Nonetheless, this possibility has often been rejected, on account of the relative insignificance of first century Jerusalem, compared with the grandeur that John attributes to Babylon the Great. Ian Paul is surely right that Jerusalem in John's day could hardly be described as ruler over the kings of the earth, a centre of luxury and wealth, or the head of a global sea trade (TNTC, 201). Yet, we should not overlook the possibility that John is alluding to a different era, as these very features are the distinctive characteristics of Jerusalem during Solomon's reign. The book of Kings depicts numerous commodities listed by John (18:12-13) flowing in and out of Solomon's Jerusalem, and the king is portrayed as the dominant monarch of the region. Aside from a few notable exceptions (e.g. Iain Provan; Wes Howard-Brook and Anthony Gwyther), scholars of the Apocalypse have rarely proposed echoes of Kings in Revelation 17–18. I consider the ways in which John's depiction of Babylon may intentionally echo the reign of Solomon. If so, this could bring greater nuance to the text, sharpening its rhetorical effect in line with the wider intentions of the book.

Charlotte Naylor Davis **TBC**, "'The Holy Whore': The Efforts to Reclaim Babylon the Great in Modern Witchcraft and Subcultural Sexual Expression in Discussion with the Text Itself"

The 'whore' of Babylon has been used as an idol for many movements, but usually she stays as a negative representation of power that is corrupt, and must be torn down. However in Occult writings and she has become positive symbol (of a particular type of positive femininity). Peter Grey's work in the realm of modern witchcraft leans heavily on the image of Babylon as goddess to be reclaimed; Camille Paglia, the controversial 'feminist' author has too cited Babylon as a 'whore' whose power should be reclaimed. There is also a leaning in heavy metal subculture to raise up the image of the 'whore of babylon' as a fetishized symbol to be praised. One of the most interesting issues in the language of such reclamation is that the patriarchal judgements of 'whoredom' and on 'female sexuality' remain. Any political meaning of Babylon and what she represents is edged out, but the sexual nature of her image is brought to the fore—penetration and power the language in which she is discussed. This paper will discuss the pervasive nature of patriarchal interpretation on the later reception and usage of Babylon as a symbol of subversion in subcultural expressions. I will discuss the language of the text of Revelation, recent scholarship, and its implications for (mis)interpretation in these subcultural spaces.

## Session Three

Review Panel of Paul Middleton's *The Violence of the Lamb: Martyrs as Agents of Divine Judgement in the Book of Revelation*

Alison Jack, University of Edinburgh; Simon Woodman, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church; W. Gordon Campbell, Union Theological College; Meredith Warren, University of Sheffield; Paul Middleton, University of Chester

## Early Christianity Chairs: Dominika Kurek-Chomycz and Francis Watson

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### Session One

Jacob A. Rodriguez, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, "“What We Have Heard, We Write to You”:  
Modelling Reception in the Gospels of Luke and John and in the *Epistula Apostolorum*”

Francis Watson has reshaped the landscape of Gospels studies by his provocative and seminal claim that Gospel writing before c.200 CE was a singular process of reception involving the Gospels that eventually became canonical and those deemed non-canonical. Watson, and a growing number of scholars building on his hypothesis, have argued that the same dynamics that are at play in the Gospel of Matthew's reworking of the Gospel of Mark, and possibly the Gospel of Luke's reworking of both the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, are also involved in the rewriting of Jesus traditions in other Christian literature such as the Gospels of Thomas and Peter, and Tatian's Diatessaron. Watson postulates that there is nothing intrinsic to the four proto-canonical gospels that would distinguish them from Jesus books on the other side of the canonical divide—a construct that Watson attributes to late-second and early-third century Christian theologizing. The present paper will critique Watson's hypothesis by comparing three Jesus books in which the author gives a candid portrayal of his own act of gospel writing: the Gospels of Luke and John, and the *Epistula Apostolorum*. All three of these early Jesus books describe the process of taking earlier traditions—both written and oral—and reworking them for didactic and evangelistic purposes. These books describe the process of listening, remembering, writing, and distribution (e.g. Luke 1:1-4; John 14:23-26; 20:30-31; 21:24-25; *Ep. Ap.* 1.1-2.3; 31.10-12). However, contrary to Watson's analysis, Luke and John do so in a mode categorically different from the *Epistula Apostolorum*. The present paper will make this case based on the differences between third-person and first-person discourse, the techniques used in combining multiple prior gospel sources, the tenor of discussion about previous acts of gospel writing, the use of the pseudepigraphal genre, and the appeal to a previously written gospel in the *Epistula Apostolorum* (I will critically engage with Watson's exegesis of the Ethiopic text of *Ep. Ap.* 1.1-2.3).

Julia Lindenlaub, University of Edinburgh, 'Disciple Authors and Their Texts: A Johannine Model for Competitive Authorial Claims in *Epistula Apostolorum* and *Apocryphon of James*'

Exemplifying competitive tensions incited by gospel plurality in the second century, *Epistula Apostolorum* and *Apocryphon of James* (NHC I, 2) notably valorize representations of Jesus' disciples as authors of written texts for contrasting purposes. In *Ep. Ap.*, the threat of 'false apostles' prompts rendering of Jesus' teachings in a new composition certified by collective apostolic authorship. In *Apoc. Jas*, Jesus' disciples write individual accounts that are dramatically relativized by exclusive revelation given to James and Peter and textualized by James alone. In both, disciple authorship and emphatic textuality undergird competitive claims—whether in continuity with the apostolic witness of extant Gospel writings (*Ep. Ap.*) or through an alternative authority figure's subversion

thereof (*Apoc. Jas*). Moreover, in both texts legitimacy for these authorial claims is substantiated by the authors' specialized roles as characters within their own compositions.

I propose that a model for such depictions of these authors as recipients of privileged revelation and their competitive deployments in a milieu of rival gospels can be found in a common precedent: the Gospel of John. As both *Ep. Ap.* and *Apoc. Jas* draw upon the Gospel of John, they can be viewed alongside the 'Longer Ending' of John 21 as examples of early readers and users of this gospel exhibiting comparable authorial claims—applied to the Beloved Disciple, the 'Eleven', and James. I suggest that all three attribute parallel roles to disciples as authors, invoke shared assumptions regarding the textualization of Jesus tradition, and situate their contributions to gospel writing with similar sensitivity to prospective competition. Thus bridging the 'canonical/non-canonical' boundary, *Ep. Ap.* and *Apoc. Jas* can be shown to share conspicuously 'Johannine' proclivities in ascribing competitive currency to their representations of disciples as authors and fixating on the textualization of their accounts.

### Session Two

Panel Discussion of Andrew Gregory, *The Gospel according to the Hebrews and the Gospel of the Ebionites* (Oxford Early Christian Gospel Texts; OUP, 2017)

Candida Moss, University of Birmingham; Darrell Hannah, All Saints Church, Ascot;  
Andrew Gregory, University of Oxford

### Session Three

Julia Snyder, University of Regensburg, Germany, 'Proof-texting from Other People's Scriptures? The "Prophets" in Acts of Philip 5–7'

In the Acts of Philip, a prominent 'Jewish' antagonist named Aristarchos invites the apostle Philip to debate about Jesus. In the debate, both cite 'prophets'. For those accustomed to thinking of Israel's scriptures as part of the Christian canon—and of 'Philip' as Jewish—this might not seem particularly striking. Isn't Philip just citing his own authoritative texts? Certain elements of the narrative suggest that the apostle may actually be arguing on *his opponent's terms*, however, and that the texts may not have the same status for him as for his interlocutor. The paper will reflect on the status attributed to 'the prophets' in the narrative, and more broadly on what it means to proof-text from what could be described as 'other people's scriptures.' The Acts of Philip challenges the assumption that the mere citation of Jewish scriptures indicates that they always had a robustly 'authoritative' status for Christian authors. To support this reading, I introduce analogies from other sources, including a debate between Nestorian patriarch Timothy I and Abbasid caliph al-Mahdī, in which the Christian Timothy cites the Qur'an to support arguments about Jesus, and Nag Hammadi *Exegesis on the Soul*, in which quotations from the Odyssey are included alongside HB and NT passages. More broadly, I argue that the phenomenon of citing 'prophets' while discussing claims about Jesus should be seen as a *practice* to which a range of different meanings were assigned by different Christians over the centuries. An early Jewish writer such as Paul will naturally have connected claims about Jesus to the Jewish texts and traditions that had shaped his worldview. Later Christians who had not been socialized in a Jewish context inherited and continued the same *practice*, but not always with the same sense of what they were doing and why.

Kelsie Rodenbiker, Durham University, 'Constructing the New Testament: the Problem of the Catholic Epistles in the Fourth Century'

This paper investigates the status in the fourth century of the Catholic Epistle collection among the developing New Testament canon. Contrary to conceptions of the formation of the New Testament that characterize the now-canonical 27-book collection as having progressed toward and come to a halt with Athanasius' famous Easter Letter of 367, I argue that the Catholic Epistles, due to their unresolved status into the fourth century, present a unique case study through which to view the state of the New Testament canon in the late fourth century and its contingent process of becoming. Focusing here on the roles of Eusebius, Athanasius, and Jerome, I compare and contrast their diverging conceptions of the Catholic Epistles in the New Testament collection. While the Catholic collection is disputed earlier on by Eusebius, among others, on the basis of the questionable authenticity of James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude, by the time of their general acceptance in the late fourth century their positive reception is, curiously, not accompanied by arguments in favor of their genuineness. Both Athanasius and Jerome accept all seven letters, but where Athanasius mentions nothing of their previously disputed status (*Epist. fest.* 39.18), Jerome is explicit with regard to the questions that remain surrounding their authenticity and that they were nevertheless 'reckoned among the holy scriptures' (cf. *De vir.* 1, 2, 4, 9, 18). The later lack of affirmation of the apostolic authenticity of all seven Catholic Epistles indicates, I argue, that 'apostolicity' could be claimed on the basis of a text's association with an historical apostolic figure, orthodox content, and generations of use, while historical genuineness lessened in importance—even, perhaps, for Athanasius.

Hebrews Chairs: Loveday Alexander and David Moffitt

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### Session One Hebrews and Biblical Interpretation

Owen Edwards, University of Chester, 'Allegory in *Hebrews* and its Christian Contemporaries'

When investigating the use of the Hebrew Bible by the author of *Hebrews*, the reader may find some passages—most famously Heb 7:1-3—hard to fit into traditional categories of interpretive move. This paper will seek to place these in the context of roughly contemporary Christian writers (the near-contemporary or slightly earlier Paul and the slightly later *Epistle of Barnabas*), and examine them all in relationship to wider Hellenistic modes of rhetoric—particularly that which the ancient world called 'allegory'.

Considering relevant passages—the use of the Psalms and Genesis 14 in *Hebrews*, Paul's activity in Gal 4:21-31, 1 Cor 9:8-10 and 10:1-4, and elsewhere, and much of the substance of *Pseudo-Barnabas*—this paper will demonstrate that these interpretive moves, whether ones involving messianic fulfilment ('typology'), numerology, substitutionary allegory, or other techniques, all significantly stem from the same rhetorical understanding of the Scriptures. This wider context of early Christian interpretive practice will enable us to engage better with the bold and evocative theological activity of *Hebrews* by understanding one of the letter's wellsprings, the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible.

Seth Whitaker, University of St Andrews, 'Psalms and Eschatology in Hebrews and Early Jewish Literature'

The Psalms frame Hebrews' initial portrait of Jesus and provide the foundation for eschatological hope of the last days in the first two chapters of the exhortation. Containing similar references to eschatological convictions such as 'the world/age to come' (cf. Heb 2:5; 6:5), the early Jewish literature of Midrash and Targum provide correlated interpretations that may be insightful for better understanding early Jewish exegesis. The Midrash concerning Ps 102 (cited in Heb 1:10-12) specifically interprets the prayer of the afflicted as an atoning prayer for 'a later generation' (Ps 102:1, 18; cf. Heb. 13:15). And the Targum readings of Ps 22 (cf. Heb 2:12) expand the Hebrew for an addition of 'Abraham's seed' (cf. Heb 2:16) who will worship the LORD and tell of his might, again, to 'a later generation' (*TgPs* 22:31). Through this study, it seems plausible that other Jewish interpretive traditions read the Psalms (particularly the Psalms found in Hebrews 1–2) as particularly relevant for communities in the latter days. In this sense, eschatological hope for several interpretive communities is expressed by a similar appeal to Psalter.

### *Session Two Issues in Interpreting Hebrews' Cultic Concepts*

Nicholas Moore, University of Durham, 'Once More unto the Breach: The Sanctuary Veil in Hebrews in Pentateuchal, Apocalyptic, and Synoptic Perspective'

The temple/tabernacle curtain (καταπέτασμα) is mentioned six times in the NT, once in each of the Synoptic Gospels at the veil-tearing during Jesus' crucifixion, and three times in Hebrews (at 6:19; 9:3; 10:20). A strong case has been made for understanding the Synoptic veil-rending accounts in apocalyptic terms (Daniel Gurtner). In Hebrews scholarship much attention has been given to the difficult phrase *τούτ' ἔστιν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ* in Heb 10:20, and also to the background of the veil imagery in an apocalyptic rather than gnostic conceptuality (Otfried Hofius responding to Ernst Käsemann). Less attention has been given to other key passages within Hebrews, to the connection between Hebrews and the Septuagint (especially Pentateuch) material on the veil, or to the relationship between Hebrews and the Synoptics. This paper will establish the importance of broadening our scope within Hebrews to include two passages where the curtain is strikingly absent (4:14-16 and 9:6-14), and on this basis will argue two further points: (1) Textually Hebrews depends in large part on the LXX, with influence from Second Temple apocalyptic traditions. (2) While there is little intertextual connection between Hebrews and the Synoptics, they display considerable conceptual overlap. Both construe heaven as an open sanctuary as a result of the Christ event, although with significant differences in the manner, timing, and agency of the breaching of the veil.

David Moffitt, University of St Andrews, 'Jesus' Sacrifice and the Mosaic Logic of Hebrews' New Covenant Theology'

Many assume that the Epistle to the Hebrews marks a definitive break in the development of early Christianity away from its Jewish roots. Perhaps no element of the text points in this direction as much as the author's apparent repudiation of Jewish sacrifice. The logic, priesthood and sacrifice of the Mosaic covenant seem to be overthrown and replaced by something decisive and new in Jesus. The common conflation of Jesus' death with his sacrifice is the lynchpin of this reading. Such an account, however, does not accurately perceive the covenantal logic of Hebrews' argument. In this paper, I argue that Hebrews' conception of the new covenant



presumes numerous analogies with the priesthood, sacrifices and sacred space of the Mosaic covenant. The new covenant in Hebrews is obviously understood by the author to be superior to that of Moses. The basic conception and mechanics of that covenant are not, however, set over against those of the Mosaic covenant. Rather, the new covenant in Hebrews works by analogy to the old not only in terms of recognizing a key event of covenant inauguration, but also in seeing the need to have a mechanism for the ongoing maintenance of that covenant relationship. This covenantal perspective explains why Hebrews links Jesus' death with the liberation of God's people from the Devil and Jesus' ascension with his ongoing high-priestly work in the heavenly sanctuary.

*Session Three: no Hebrews seminar meeting*

Johannine Literature Chairs: Andy Byers and Cor Bennema

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*Session One*

Paul Trebilco, University of Otago, New Zealand, 'The Theocentricity of I John: Reading I John as an Interpretation of the Gospel of John'

It is often argued that I John is written after the Gospel of John. Hence, in some passages such as the Prologue to I John in 1:1-5, it seems likely that the author of I John is deliberately interacting with the text of the Gospel of John. One noteworthy feature of I John is its theocentricity. What is said about Jesus in the Gospel is often said about God in I John. This relates, for example, to abiding and to knowing. It will be argued in this paper that the author of I John is interacting with Johannine tradition in this regard, and so can be seen to be involved in an interpretative exercise in relation to the Gospel. This will lead to conclusions about the ways in which I John provides a model for how we can interpret Scripture.

Alan Garrow, University of Sheffield, 'The Missing Epistle of John'

The Third Epistle of John addresses a disagreement over the way in which travelling Christian workers should be received. The Elder argues that they should be welcomed, supported and sent on their way in a manner that befits God's service. A certain Diotrephes, by contrast, teaches that they should not be welcomed. The Elder remarks, in passing, that he has written something to the church about this matter (3 John 9). The letter in question has, however, long since been lost.

The *Didache* is a multi-layered document created by different authors/editors at different times. One of the practical questions it addresses is the way in which visitors should be treated. Curiously, however, the text offers closely related but contrasting instructions on four points: the length of stay (two days maximum // three days maximum); whether money may be asked for (never // under certain circumstances); whether the visitor may be allowed to settle (absolutely not // under certain circumstances); and what provision should be made for their onward journey (only sufficient bread to reach the next lodging // as much assistance as the community is able to provide). A similarly stereoscopic arrangement occurs in the *Didache's* instructions concerning Eucharistic praying: *Didache* 9 and *Didache* 10 are remarkably similar, but *Didache* 10 allows freedom to prophets in prayer.

This paper explores the possibility that the *Didache's* more austere instructions provided the basis for Diotrephes' harsh attitude towards visitors—and that the more generous instructions (inserted into the *Didache* at a later date) belong to the written response to which 3 John 9 refers. This presentation includes a review of distinctive parallels

between John's Gospel, the book of Revelation and those elements of the *Didache* here seen as belonging to the Missing Epistle of John.

### Session Two

Adele Reinhartz, University of Ottawa, Canada on her book *Cast out of the Covenant: Jews and Anti-Judaism in the Gospel of John* (Lexington/Fortress, 2018) (30 mins) followed by two 10-minute responses and 40 minutes of discussion.

### Session Three

Luke Irwin, Durham University, 'Seeing Jesus in the Fourth Gospel'

This paper asks why the Fourth Gospel explicitly describes certain people as seeing Jesus and what this means for John's conception of sight. While the Gospel naturally implies that many people saw Jesus throughout his life, it remains the case that in only ten instances is anyone explicitly said to actually see him. Moreover, belief in Jesus as divinely authorized and sent into the world is at stake in each occurrence (John 1:14; 1:29, 36; 6:19, 37; 9:37; 11:32; 19:6; 20:14–15; 20:29). Those few whom John describes as seeing Jesus either see him with eyes that faith has shaped or is shaping; or they see him and fail to recognize his true identity, one intimately anchored in God. On the basis of this observation, I argue that these ten explicit occurrences of seeing Jesus should be read as accompanying Jesus' radical claims that the sight of God—hitherto denied all people (John 1:18; cf. 5:37; 6:46)—is available in himself (John 12:44–45; 14:6–11; 15:24). It is precisely the visibility of the human Jesus that obscures the Father's visibility in John: 'is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?' (John 6:42). Likewise, it is precisely that which transcends Jesus visibility as a man that makes God visible in him: the σημεῖα and his miraculous 'evasions'. Both are necessary for the true sight of Jesus. After all, for John, Jesus is both visible and the λόγος; yet both can lead to mistaken seeing—mistaken ultimately in its failure to recognize the Father in him. Thus, for John, the 'seeing Jesus' passages intertwine belief in Jesus with the occurrence of theophany in Jesus. They thereby elevate the function of sight in the Gospel to a crucial Christological role.

David Richir, Haute École de Théologie, St-Légier, Switzerland, 'Jacob in Cana? Echoes of Jacob/Israel in John 2:1–11 and the Johannine Characterization of Jesus'

As a tree whose roots can be seen in the deformation of the ground all around it, every textual allusion is only the visible part of a network that can be seen all around it, sometimes very clearly, sometimes only as a tiny deformation of the text. In this manner, besides (and around) the two obvious allusions to Jacob/Israel in John 1:51 (the dream of Bethel) and John 4:5–12 (Jacob's well), the father of the Jews may appear between the lines of several narratives in the fourth Gospel, thus informing John's characterisation of Jesus. The wedding scene at Cana serves as a test case of the hypothesis of a wider presence of Jacob in the fourth Gospel. Besides the influence of the direct context of John 1:51, some echoes of Jacob can be traced in John 2:1–11: the mother-son motif, the wedding sequence, the transformation of the bride/wine, and the custom of giving the one before the other. The connections go beyond themes and motifs: they can also be found in words and textual constructions. The literary device of situating Jacob/Israel at the background of this narrative (and of others in the fourth Gospel) enable the author to characterise Jesus after Jacob. In fact, more than 'after' Jacob, Jesus is portrayed as 'before', 'greater' and 'above' Jacob/Israel, as a king coming

to his own. Consequently, fresh light could be shed on the major Johannine theme of the *loudaioi* ('those of Judah', fourth son of Jacob, heir of Jacob's blessing).

Daniel Eng, University of Cambridge, 'Relationship, Reciprocity, and Regency: Friends as Subordinates in John 15'

This study contends that the evangelist portrays Jesus as the patron *par excellence* in the John 15:13-16. We will focus on the term φίλος, suggesting that it conveys a client-regent obedient to a king. Thus, the role of Jesus' friend is one of subordination, not equality.

John 15:13-16 shares connections with patron-client relationships. High-ranking patrons often gave clients, who were subordinates, the honorary designation of 'friends.' After Jesus' self-designation as κύριος (13:14), John 14-15 is characterized by calls to *obedience*. In addition, a patron-client relationship often resulted from a master manumitting a slave. This is consistent with Jesus' saying 'I do not call you servants any longer...but I have called you friends (15:15).' Furthermore, the phenomenon of patrons as *brokers* further bolsters the argument that the evangelist uses patronage language. With Jesus being the only way to the Father (14:6), he promises to broker the Spirit from the Father and (14:16) and declares that the Father will give Jesus' friends whatever they ask for in his name (15:16).

Furthermore, numismatic studies demonstrate the prevalence of φίλ- terms like ΦΙΛΟΚΑΙΣΑΡ on Roman provincial coinage, publicizing the relationship of regents to the emperor. This is consistent with Pilate's designation as φίλος τοῦ Καίσαρος in John 19:12. In accordance, after the portrayal of Jesus as the awaited king in John 12, the disciples are commissioned to obey and bear fruit in his absence (14:15-16; 15:16), acting in his place.

Patronage best explains the saying 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends (15:13).' Jesus' ultimate sacrifice for *subordinates* makes his patronage greater than Caesar's. Thus, the evangelist urges loyalty to Jesus, the patron *par excellence*.

New Testament and Second Temple Judaism Chairs: Susan Docherty and Crispin Fletcher-Louis

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### Session One

Current Research in NT and Second Temple Judaism: an invited panel will present on their current research projects, highlighting some of the key themes within contemporary scholarship on the NT in its early Jewish context and its possible future directions.

Meredith Warren, University of Sheffield, 'Tasting Death: Sensory Metaphors and Other Worlds'

'To taste death' is a phrase used in several texts in antiquity as a euphemism for dying, including Targum Pseudo-Jonathan; 4 Ezra; Midrash Rabbah; the canonical Gospels; Hebrews, the Gospel of Thomas, and countless later Christian writers such as Origen, John Chrysostom, and more. It also occurs in earlier, non-Jewish/non-Christian Greek texts. However, since Bruce Chilton's brief 1978 paper, no dedicated treatment has been attempted of this phrase. This paper will explore the use of sensory metaphor in communicating culturally-accepted understandings of death. Building on my previous work on transformational eating, I aim to demonstrate how the sense of taste functions

as a way of accessing various underworlds, such as heaven/hell/Hades/Sheol. The shared use of this metaphor might indicate shared cosmological and sensory understanding among various groups in antiquity.

Philip Esler, University of Gloucestershire, 'The Righteousness of Joseph: Interpreting Matt 1:18-25 in Light of Judean Legal Papyri'

Matthew 1:18-25 has attracted careful analysis with respect to Mediterranean culture by Matthew J. Marohl in *Joseph's Dilemma: 'Honor' Killing in the Birth Narrative of Matthew* (Cascade, 2009). The aim of this paper is to undertake an interpretation of this narrative so as to explore what Matthew means when he says that Joseph was righteous (*dikaios*; v 19) in wanting to divorce Mary quietly. This will involve a study of the nature of Judean marriage and divorce in the first century CE. To illuminate this context, recourse will be had to ancient Judean legal papyri. The primary sources will be marriage and divorce documents from the Dead Sea region in the first and second centuries CE, including those of the Babatha archive. In addition, papyri records of litigation from the Judean *politeuma* of Herakleopolis in the period 144 to 132 BCE will be used to show what could happen when problems arose in relation to marriage. The result will be to demonstrate the critical importance of the Judean legal papyri for understanding Matt 1:18-25 (and other New Testament texts) in their ancient contexts.

### Session Two

Paul—In What Sense 'in Judaism'? (joint session with Paul seminar)

The extent to which Paul should be interpreted as belonging 'within Judaism' is a key issue in contemporary Pauline scholarship. This question will be addressed by an invited panel followed by discussion: Kathy Ehrensperger, Abraham Geiger College, University of Potsdam, Germany; Simon Gathercole, University of Cambridge; Matthew Novenson, University of Edinburgh.

### Session Three

Logan Williams, Durham University, 'The Praxis of the Promise: Ethics and Unconditional Mercy in Pseudo-Philo and Romans'

Pseudo-Philo regularly insists that God will keep his promises despite Israel's disobedience (*LAB* 9.3-5; 12.4; 12.9-10; 15.4-7; 19.2-3, 8-9; 30.7; 32.13-14; 35.2-3; 49.3). While interpreters have also suggested that in *LAB* God's promise to Abraham was not conditioned by Abraham's righteousness, a closer look at Pseudo-Philo's theological reasoning will uncover a more complex configuration of divine mercy. Though Pseudo-Philo seems to agree with Seneca that a promise can be revoked if it turns out that the recipient of the promise is unworthy (*Sen. Ben.* 2.34.3-36.3; cf. *Cic. Off.* 1.10.31-32), the theological genius of *LAB* lies in the separation of *condition* from *beneficiary*. The narrative consistently portrays God as giving the promise to Abraham in response his initial obedience and his continued fidelity (6.1-18; 18.5-6; 23.4-6; 30.7; 32.1-4; 40.2). But because the promise that God would bless Abraham's descendants is conditioned by only Abraham's righteousness, Israel's disobedience does not alter the initial conditions of this promise. Thus, the promise is at once conditioned and unconditional, being given *because of* Abraham's righteousness, but *for the benefit of* his regularly disobedient descendants. While some take this emphasis on the promise to suggest that *LAB* is not concerned with inciting its readers to obedience, the narrative consistently portrays trust in the unconditionality of the promise as the basis for moral behaviour (9.3-5; 12.4; 13.10; 15.6; 21.9-10; 30.1). Pseudo-Philo's careful theological reasoning can help

illuminate Paul's somewhat different argument in Romans. Unlike Pseudo-Philo, Paul establishes the present unconditionality of divine mercy (Rom 9:4; 11:1-12, 24-32) by arguing that God's promise to the forefathers was not conditioned by their obedience (4:2-8; 9:6-18); but like Pseudo-Philo, for Paul the unconditionality of the promise forms the impetus for his commitment to summoning Israel to trust in her messiah (10:14-15; 11:25-26).

Tim Murray, Newman University Birmingham, 'Widows' Money in the Jerusalem Temple: Making Sense of 2 Maccabees 3:10'

The uncertainty of how best to understand 2 Maccabees 3:10 is reflected by the history of the New American Bible translation. Originally rendering the verse to refer to a 'care fund' for widows, the revised edition instead referred to a 'deposit'. The latter is currently the majority view, but this raises historical questions that remain intriguing. This paper will first survey the major contributions to this question and then probe some of the unresolved questions. Finally, it will discuss whether the connection between widows and the temple can contribute anything to our understanding of the various episodes in the gospels that connect the two.

Nathanael Vette, University of Edinburgh, 'How Mark Wrote: Scripturalization in the Gospel of Mark and Second Temple Literature'

Devorah Dimant helpfully distinguishes between an expositional and a compositional use of the Jewish scriptures in Second Temple literature. The former refers to marked citations or allusions which seek to interpret the meaning of the scriptural text, whilst the latter refers to the unmarked use of scriptural material embedded and re-contextualized in a new work. Studies on the use of the Jewish scriptures in the Gospel of Mark have tended to focus on the first kind, the expositional use of scriptural material (i.e. Mk 1:2-3; 4:12; 7:6-7). Instead, this paper will try to understand the compositional use of scriptural material in Mark by looking at two texts from the Second Temple period which similarly use the Jewish scriptures to compose new narrative—a process that I will call scripturalization, following the work of Judith Newman. I will look at three episodes from the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*: the use of Dan 3 in the episodes of Abram and the fiery furnace (*LAB* 6) and Jair and the fiery furnace (*LAB* 38) and the use of Judg 7 in the episode of Kenaz's rout of the Amorites with three-hundred men (*LAB* 27); and one episode from 1 Maccabees: the use of Deut 2:26-36 (cf. Judg 11:19-21) and 20:10-14 in Judas' siege and slaughter of Ephron (1 Macc 5:45-51). I will then look at episodes in Mark which feature a similar compositional use of the Jewish scriptures: the use of Elijah's forty-day sojourn in the wilderness and the call of Elisha (1 Kgs 19) in Jesus' forty-day sojourn in the wilderness and the call of the disciples (Mark 1:12-20); the use of Elisha's feeding miracle (2 Kgs 4:42-44) in the two feeding miracles of Jesus (Mark 6:35-44; 8:1-9); the use of LXX Esther in the banquet scene in the episode of John the Baptist's execution (Mark 6:17-29); and the use of various scriptural passages in the Passion Narrative (Mark 14-15). I propose that, together, these examples point to the shared compositional technique of scripturalization: narratives which have been composed using a scriptural episode as a model or by inserting scriptural details into the new narrative. I will conclude by outlining some consequences of this study for Gospel of Mark research and why scripturalization deserves to be studied further in relation to other early Christian literature.

### Session One Eschatology, Apocalyptic, Creation and Theology

Douglas Campbell, Duke University, NC, USA, 'All Israel will be Saved: a Non-Supersessionist Coordination of Apocalyptic and Salvation-History'

Stacey Van Dyk, University of Oxford, 'The Seven Birthing Women of Galatians: Living in Light of the Eschaton'

The use of women's bodies to mark eschatological time—in particular, their experiences of pregnancy, labour, and childbirth—has a rich history within ancient Judaism, early Christianity, and Rabbinic Judaism. The apostle Paul, also, makes use of childbirth imagery to describe both the imminence of the eschaton and the unknown moment of its arrival. This paper will address Paul's usage of birthing and barren women (both metaphorical and literal) in his Epistle to the Galatians and the relationship between this imagery and the apostle's claim that 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal 3:28). It will be demonstrated that the apostle's choice of female imagery, metaphorical and otherwise, is tied to his understanding of the biological inter-dependence of men and women and has implications for male-female relationships within a believing community that eagerly awaits its redemption (cf. Rom 8:22-23)

Justin Hagermann, King's College London, 'The Concept of Divine Agency as Creativity in Pauline Theology: The Creative Function of Christ and the Rationale of Pauline Ethics'

The field of Pauline studies has observed a growing interest in the topic of divine agency. Although recent perspectives have clarified the complex features of the divine and human agency dynamics evident throughout the Pauline literature, these discussions have given less attention to the creative function of Christ. As we will argue in this essay, this concept of creativity provides clarity concerning the complex rationale of Pauline ethics. The first section of this paper will outline the problem: the creative activity of Christ—highlighted in the earlier works by Albert Schweitzer, Gustav Deissman, Morna Hooker, and Margaret Thrall—remains obscure in contemporary discussions on divine agency in Pauline theology. In order to address this problem, in the second section of this paper we will test our hypothesis that divine agency can be defined as the ability to create. This definition allows us to suggest that Paul assigns to Christ a creative capacity, which underpins the rationale for ethics. However, it is conceded that Pauline scholars have touched upon aspects of this thesis. In her recent work, *Paul and the Person: Reframing Paul's Anthropology*, Susan Eastman discusses the formation of 'the Christological agent'. The third section of this paper will form a dialogue with Eastman's perspective concerning how the agent is newly formed in Christ. But this interaction will be centred upon analyses of creation-motifs discerned in three Pauline texts: (i) Christ's working through Paul (Romans 15:18), (ii) Christ's transformation of the mortal body (Philippians 3:21), and (iii) Christ's strengthening the Thessalonians' hearts (1 Thessalonians 3:13). In conclusion, the concept of Christ's divine agency, understood as his capacity to create, allows Paul to provide his rationale for ethics.

## Session Two

Paul—In What Sense within Judaism? (joint session with NT and Second Temple Judaism seminar)

The extent to which Paul should be interpreted as belonging 'within Judaism' is a key issue in contemporary Pauline scholarship. This question will be addressed by an invited panel followed by discussion: Kathy Ehrensperger, Abraham Geiger College, University of Potsdam, Germany; Simon Gathercole, University of Cambridge; Matthew Novenson, University of Edinburgh.

## Session Three Context and Text

Annalisa Phillips Wilson, Durham University, 'Philippians 3 and Stoic Categorical Errors: Paul's View of His Jewish Credentials as Neither Vice nor Virtue'

Philippians 3 is one instance of a common paradox in Pauline writing which has often occupied Biblical Studies: his concurrent positive and negative language concerning Judaism. The text is dominated by Paul's use of the metaphorical motif of value, a motif he does not often employ elsewhere when speaking of aspects of his Judaism. However, the metaphor of value was a common feature of ancient Stoic ethical discourse, particularly to discuss the sage's pursuit of virtue and selections amongst the *ἀδιάφορα*. This paper will argue that Paul's concern in Phil 3 regarding his opponents and his explanation of his own view of his Jewish credentials is made more understandable in light of this Stoic moral reasoning. If Paul is operating under Stoic-like assumptions about establishing ethical categories and proper moral orientation to them, several features of the text which often perplex scholars can be more easily explained. Such a comparison indicates that Paul is concerned here to establish an incommensurable value for 'knowing Christ' and an *ἀδιάφορα*-like value for his Jewish credentials. His ensuing description of this shift in values explains that he regards 'knowing Christ' to have such value due to its ability to contribute towards the *τέλος* of eschatological salvation. Paul's warning of his opponents is based on their misplaced confidence in Jewish credentials to accomplish salvation—such an orientation to the *ἀδιάφορα* was a categorical error in Stoic reasoning. This reading argues that Paul did not repudiate such credentials, but held them to have a contingent value that should strengthen the Jesus-believer's ability to 'rejoice in Christ'. His description of his personal shift in values is then also intended to be normative for all Jesus-believers since 'knowing Christ' constitutes salvation and is the only credential worthy of reliance and confidence towards that end.

Michael Dormandy, University of Cambridge, 'How to Understand What Passes All Understanding? Using the Documentary Papyri to Understand the Meaning of εἰρήνη in Paul'

I attempt to deepen our understanding of εἰρήνη, peace, in two Pauline texts, Rom 5:1 and Phil 4:7, by exploring how the word is used in documentary papyri. 'Documentary papyri' is a broad category, encompassing all text-bearing artefacts, which are not coins, inscriptions or manuscripts of literary texts. The category includes everyday documents like private letters, wills, administrative and legal documents and reports and lists of all kinds. These artefacts give us a fascinating window on to everyday language use, which means that they are highly significant for exegesis. In the paper, I explain my method, which involves searching papyrological databases for papyri containing the εἰρήν-root. The bulk of the paper is a presentation and analysis of the search-results, including discussion of individual papyri. I conclude that, in the documentary papyri, the εἰρήν-

root refers more to good order and smoothly running systems than to calm quietness. It is used in connection with the arrest and movement of criminals, the busy unloading of corn, even the bloody victories of Roman armies, because all these either involve or produce well-ordered systems. It is social and political more often than it is personal or emotional and it is frequently associated with gods or rulers. I conclude the paper by outlining implications for the two Pauline texts. Romans 5:1 is the subject of a well-known text critical debate about whether the verb is indicative or subjunctive. My research is evidence that εἰρήνη is an objective state God brings about, thus suggesting that the indicative fits better in context. Philippians 4:7 is taken by some commentators as a promise that God will give praying people a sense of calm well-being. My research suggests that it is more likely to be a promise that God's good ordering of the world will uphold praying people in Christ.

Ethan Johnson, University of St Andrews, 'Witchcraft and Miracles: Contrasting the Actors in Galatians 3:1-5'

Paul's solitary use of βακαίνω in Gal 3:1 has often raised interpretative eyebrows. A number of scholars have argued that the word refers to demonic forces behind the Galatians' agitators, the bewitching power of the 'evil eye,' or common rhetorical convention. All of these suggestions are valuable in their own right, but questions remain about why Paul uses this language in this context, and what relationship his curious questions in 3:1 have to the rest of the chapter. In this paper, I propose that we can achieve greater clarity about the relationship between 3:1 and the following material by examining the shape of the argument in chapter 3 and by considering the appearance of βασκαίνω and ἐνεργῶν δυνάμεις in the NT and in other Greek texts. In particular, I argue three points. First, 3:1–5 marks a cohesive sub-unit within the larger context of Gal 3. Second, 3:1 and 3:5 bracket this unit through parallel constructions that highlight the activity of external forces on the Galatian congregation. Third, Paul's vocabulary in 3:1 and 3:5 is often used in contexts related to 'magical' or divine action. I conclude that Paul's question in 3:1 is not merely a way to point out the Galatians' stupidity or employ methods of ancient diatribe before moving on to the meat of his argument. Rather, his question is an essential part of his point that sets the stage for a contrast between the stupefying influence of his opponent(s) and the empowering manifestations of God's Spirit.

Synoptic Gospels Chairs: Andy Angel and Elizabeth Shively

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### *Session One*

Heerak Christian Kim, Asia Evangelical College and Seminary, 'Fiedler's Leadership Contingency Model and the Task-Oriented Leadership of Jesus of Nazareth as Illustrated in Matthew 10'

Leadership contingency models were developed to understand the correlation between a leader's roles in an organization or movement and the leader's relationship to workers that impact productivity, and Fiedler's Contingency Theory is the most well-known (da Cruz, Nunes, & Pinheiro, 2011). Fiedler distinguished between task-oriented leadership styles and relationship-oriented leadership styles. In this paper, I examine the leadership styles of Jesus of Nazareth. Although there are elements of Jesus of Nazareth's ministry with the twelve disciples that seem to point to a relationship-oriented leadership style, such as Jesus engaging in a communal life with his twelve disciples, as evidenced in the Last Supper, it would be more accurate to describe Jesus of Nazareth's leadership style



as task-oriented. This is clear in the work that Jesus of Nazareth entrusted his twelve disciples to do in Matthew 10. Jesus of Nazareth as a leader was interested in expanding his movement, and the Gospel pericope describes specific tasks that Jesus of Nazareth assigns to his disciples. Jesus of Nazareth is interested in achieving his organizational goals through specific tasks that each of his disciples were to carry out. And Jesus of Nazareth provides instructions regarding contingencies that the disciples might face in the course of carrying out their tasks. Jesus of Nazareth provides specific instructions for each contingency. Thus, Mathew 10 pericope will be analyzed with a view to Fiedler's Contingency Theory as a way to show that Jesus of Nazareth had a task-oriented leadership style rather than a relationship-oriented leadership style.

Will Robinson, Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry, Australian Catholic University, '*Matthew's Eschatology and the Ethics of Jesus*'

Several recent studies have suggested that there is a fundamental contradiction between the ethics of Jesus in Matthew's gospel, such as love of one's neighbour, and the gospel's violent eschatology, particularly relating to the burning of the wicked in hell. This paper argues that early Christians would not necessarily conclude this way. Rather, Matthew has an essentially consistent portrait of eschatological punishment that permeates Jesus' ethical teachings and his parabolic imagery. Therefore, the violent eschatology cannot be easily excised. Other relevant texts are adduced to demonstrate that concepts such as love were routinely presented alongside those concerning eschatological punishment. Accordingly, we conclude that neither Matthew, nor his audience, would necessarily view Jesus' ethical admonitions, such a love of one's neighbour, as opposed to his predictions of the burning of the wicked in hell.

## Session Two

Andy Angel, St Andrew's Church, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, 'Jesus' Sodom and Gomorrah Sayings in the Light of Current Research into Second Temple Jewish Texts: A Discussion Paper'

The Church of England has commissioned a project, 'Living in Love and Faith', to explore Christian teaching on human sexuality in the contemporary context. Those involved in the process are exploring, amongst other things, Christian teaching on homosexuality. In contemporary debate, Jesus is often said to be silent on the topic although traditionally many understood his Sodom and Gomorrah sayings to suggest that he thought homoerotic behaviors to be sinful. In 1955 Derrick Sherwin Bailey published his *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* which read the NT references to Sodom and Gomorrah against the development of intertestamental literature as understood by contemporary scholarship, and concluded that at the time of Jesus their sin was understood to be some form of inhospitality. His conclusions in this book influenced the attitude of the Church of England towards homosexuality, contributing to the recommendations of the Wolfenden Report in 1957 and the decriminalization of homosexuality in the UK. Since Bailey wrote much work has been done on intertestamental literature, not least the magisterial work of William Loader on sexuality in second temple Judaism. The paper and discussion will explore what light, if any, current work on intertestamental literature might shed on Jesus' Sodom and Gomorrah sayings, and whether this helps us to understand his (or the Synoptic evangelists') attitude towards homoerotic behaviors. Those leading 'Living and Love and Faith' have expressed an interest in the paper and the results of the discussion.

### Session Three

Book Review Panel on David Wenham, *From Good News to Gospels: What Did the First Christians Say about Jesus?* (Eerdmans, 2018)

Eric Eve, University of Oxford; Alan Garrow, University of Sheffield; and David Wenham, Trinity College, Bristol

### Use and Influence of the New Testament Chairs: Alison Jack and John Lyons

#### Session One

Aspects of the Reception History of Acts 2 and 4 (jointly with the Book of Acts seminar)

Steve Walton, Trinity College, Bristol; Taylor Weaver, University of Kent; Simon Woodman, Bloomsbury Baptist Church

#### Session Two

Siobhan Jolley, University of Manchester, 'Killing Adam's Eve: Latent Biblical Imagery in BBC America's *Killing Eve*'

This paper will consider the subversion of traditional Christian rhetoric regarding women in BBC America's *Killing Eve*. It will argue that its portrayal of transgressive women provides a vehicle for re-remembering the biblical figures of Eve and Mary Magdalene, and challenging the associated gender norms that have become archetypal for women in Christian tradition.

The way in which biblical themes are embedded in western culture more broadly affords popular culture a particular utility in assessing their complex imagery and the way in which ideals about gender and femininity are communicated. Moreover, the dialectical nature of popular culture as both descriptive and prescriptive offers a unique means of engaging with these established ideals. In *Killing Eve* the presentation of women draws upon and subverts the way in which these biblical women are conventionally characterised, and the subsequent types in which other women are cast.

First, the paper will identify latent biblical imagery in the development of the characters of Eve and Villanelle, illustrating how gendered tropes in the portrayal of the Biblical Eve and Mary Magdalene are reclaimed and reimaged. This in turn provides a lens for revisiting biblical source material from Genesis and the Gospels and considering the relationship between text and reception. Using this as tool for critiquing the cultural inheritance that leads to the construction of gender norms, it will argue that 'killing' traditional imagery can provide some initial deconstruction of patriarchal boundaries for women in Christian tradition.

#### Session Three

Tobias Ålöw, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, "...I am Your Handsome White Jesus...": Kenny Powers and the Plerotic Parody of Christology in HBO's *Eastbound and Down*

Notwithstanding its combination of popularity, critical acclaim, and reiterated reference to messianic ideas and language, the use and influence of the New Testament on HBO's sports comedy *Eastbound and Down* (2009–2013) has not been previously addressed within the field of biblical reception-criticism. The paper, therefore, engages this matter with special attention to how various New Testament messianic ideas are re-used and parodied in the portrayal of the show's main protagonist—the washed-up, self-

delusional, mullet-sporting, drug-abusing, foul-mouthed, self-absorbed, former major league baseball player turned middle-school PE-coach—Kenny Powers. Taking its point of departure in S. Klint's theoretical and methodological approach to reception-criticism, the paper examines specifically how notions related to *sacrifice*, *resurrection* and *parousia* are taken over and are transformed in the staging of Powers as a self-proclaimed Messiah-figure. The paper, thereby, not only describes how the biblical presence is made manifest by tracing the scriptural roots of the christological concepts employed, but also attempts to lay bare the tension between approach and deviation from the biblical material, and describe the function of the biblical traditions within the pertinent work of reception. By juxtaposing the crude messianic depiction of Kenny Powers with the theologically convoluted description of Jesus in the 'Christ Hymn' of Phil. 2:5–11, the paper argues that the basic kenotic emphasis evinced by early Jesus-followers has been transformed into a fundamentally plerotic parody of New Testament Christology. Through analysis of the re-use of New Testament messianic ideas in the portrayal of Kenny Powers the paper sheds light particularly on the use and influence of the New Testament on *Eastbound and Down*, but attests at the same time to the enduring influence of the Bible on Western culture in general.

Damian Cyrocki, St Mary's University, Twickenham, 'Like a Daughter of Man? A Peculiar Reading of Revelation 1:13'

The Mariavite Catholic Church is a Christian movement that emerged from Polish Roman Catholic Church at the beginning of the 20th century. According to the official representatives of the Mariavites, its theology is coherent with the tradition of the undivided Catholic Church of the first millennium as they understand it. Nevertheless, there are some elements presents that distinguish this community from all the others, particularly its millenarian readings of the Bible.

One of such specifics is their idiosyncratic reading of the passage from Rev 1:13 where son of man (υἱὸν ἀνθρώπου) is understood to be female mainly due to possessing female breasts (μαστοῖς). Subsequently this passage is read back as a reference to the mystic, Maria Franciszka Kozłowska, who is understood as the bride of Jesus.

Archbishop Jan Maria Kowalski, who was the leader of the Church at early stages of its formation, came up with this understanding around the year 1930. After his death we can observe the slow degradation of this interpretation into oblivion. Why did this happen?

The main aim of the paper is to show how Archbishop Kowalski came up with this interpretation of Rev 1:13. This paper will assess his peculiar reading in light of possible antecedents in the history of Christian Church, or at least those who came up with similar conclusions or pointed similar directions. It will then move on to how this interpretation was implemented and the reasons why this interpretation was eventually marginalized.