

# 4

---

---

## The Bible

The central events of the New Testament are the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. From our perspective, this may be the easiest place to begin. This is not where the Jews of Jesus' day began. For them, the Hebrew Bible was a given. The authors of the New Testament were mostly Jews (with the notable exception of Luke), and initially shared this perspective. But as they gradually moved out into the Gentile world, they came to realize that the Hebrew Bible was not authoritative for their listeners, and their sermons came to reflect that perspective. Compare the sermon recorded in Acts 13:16-41, which has 5 direct quotations from the Hebrew Bible as well as numerous allusions, with that recorded in Acts 16:22-31, which has no quotations from the Hebrew Bible, and 2 quotations from Greek poets. For that matter, compare the speech to the inhabitants of Lystra in Acts 14:15-17.

Today we have a similar problem, since the dominant religion in the intellectual world is scientific materialism, a form of empiric naturalism. Two major doctrines of this religion are that the ordering power of the universe is perfectly predictable if we just knew the rules, and that this power does not allow motives

to influence anything except as they cause us to interact with the physical world (*i. e.* there is no such thing as a miracle). The first doctrine justifies the principle of induction, for it postulates that the rules are always there and the basic ones are unchangeable, so if we always observe events to follow a certain course when we have accurate enough data to check on them, we may safely assume that they continue to follow that course even when we are not directly checking. The second doctrine is a special case of what we might call locality. That is, information can only be sent by physical particles, or perturbations of those particles, which can only travel at the speed of light, and usually travel much slower.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore according to scientific materialism any document that purports to describe a miracle must have some flaw in it. The Bible is such a document. It describes a miraculous creation, repeated communications between God and man, repeated miraculous events such as the Exodus, amazing coincidences such as the story of Esther; and then the story of Jesus. One can see why scientific materialism would relegate the Bible to the realm of fairy tales.

However, as we have seen in chapter 2, empiric naturalism cannot account for everything that has been discovered by science. The matter and energy we see in the universe are not eternal, give evidence of constant intervention from outside in the present, and have been influenced by at least one miracle. So we are not justified in rejecting the authority of a book because it reports other miracles. The Bible must be given a fair evaluation.

The data on the Hebrew Bible is relatively sparse, and is subject to some uncertainty. It is interesting to note some recent trends in archaeology and ancient history which indicate that the Hebrew Bible may be more accurate than previously thought, such as the vindication of many of the historical details in the book of Daniel (see below). But in general, the reliability of the Hebrew Bible is not demonstrable enough to serve as a starting point.

---

<sup>1</sup> This means that according to scientific materialism prayer is not heard and answered by an intelligent power that may decide on that basis to alter events elsewhere. Prayer may still be useful as a way to change our own psyche and thus our actions, and through changing our own actions it may effect changes elsewhere, but according to scientific materialism it cannot directly effect changes elsewhere.

## Jesus was Resurrected

On the other hand, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are documented in sufficient detail to be used as a starting point for us. We will observe some of the testimony of His enemies. First, notice the charge that “He is possessed by Beelzebul, and by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.” (Mark 3:22).<sup>2</sup> The charge is *not* that Jesus cannot heal blind people or cast out demons, or that He is a fake, but rather that the miraculous power is malevolent and not to be trusted. It is important to note that in Jesus’ time His ability to work miracles at least some of the time was not challenged.<sup>3</sup> The enemies of Jesus conceded His ability to work miracles. They certainly would have liked to deny them (see John 9:13-34). We would need a good reason to go against them, and simply the fact that it goes against empiric naturalism is not an adequate reason.

Then there is the death of Jesus. All the extant ancient sources (Christian, Jewish, and pagan) were agreed on this point. As Festus summed up the issue to Agrippa, there were “certain points of dispute . . . about one Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive.” (Acts 25:19) The event was witnessed by priests, soldiers, and “many of the Jews” (John 19:20), as well as several disciples. The writer of John takes pains to place himself as an eyewitness to Jesus’ death and assures us that his testimony is reliable (John 19:35). In fact, other than that Jesus was known as the Christ (or Messiah), this fact is the only one for which we have testimony not only written but also preserved by His enemies (Tacitus, *Annals*, XV,44). The assertion that Jesus could have survived His flogging, crucifixion, and having a spear stabbed into His side (“*pleura*” in Greek), is frankly incredible, as has been pointed out.<sup>4</sup> The Romans were in the habit of making very sure that their victims were dead. At this point I see no reasonable hope of denying that Jesus died on the cross.

Finally, there is the resurrection of Jesus. The evidence for

---

<sup>2</sup> See also Matt 9:34; apparently at the casting out of a dumb [Luke 11:15] and blind [Matt 12:24] demon.

<sup>3</sup> His ability to work miracles on demand was challenged, but that is a different matter. See Matt 12:38,27:41-43; Mark 8:11,15:31-32; Luke 11:29,23:35; John 2:18.

<sup>4</sup> Edwards WD, Gabel WJ, Hasmer FE. “On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ”. *JAMA* 255(11):1455-63, 1986

this may be divided into two parts. First, His body disappeared. Again, even His enemies agreed. The only explanation we have which is supposed to have come from them was that the disciples stole the body (Matt 28:11-15), a story which tacitly admits that they could not produce it, even when it would have been greatly to their advantage to do so. If the body could have been produced, they would have done it. On the other hand, the story was patently false. Even if one doubts that there was a guard posted at the tomb (Matt 27:62-66), a stone (apparently heavy and difficult enough to move that the women who first visited the tomb did not consider moving it themselves) was in front of the tomb (Matt 27:59; 28:2; Mark 15:46; 16:3-4; Luke 24:2; John 20:1). Their psychological state would have prevented them from carrying out such a plot. And they would never have given their lives for something *if they had known* it to be false.

Second, He appeared to many people after His death. Paul gives a partial listing in 1 Cor 15:5-S. Individual accounts can be found in the Gospels and Acts. Many of these people were already disciples, although none of them are recorded as expecting to see Jesus when they first saw Him. But at least two, James and Paul, were not disciples initially, and Paul was an avowed enemy when he first saw Jesus. I will agree that the appearances of Jesus do not provide coercive evidence of His resurrection by themselves. But in combination with the fact of His death and the disappearance of His body, I do not see any reasonable hypothesis other than that of His resurrection. Remember that the apostle Paul was able to tell Portius Festus that “the king [Herod Agrippa] knows about these things, and to him I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner.” (Acts 26:26) The facts upon which Christianity was based were incontrovertible.<sup>5</sup>

It is ironic that the usual perception of non-Christians is that the story of the resurrection was made up to fit a theological theory in spite of the facts, when our best historical sources indicate precisely the opposite. The unexpected facts of the empty tomb

---

<sup>5</sup> For a thorough and cautious (sometimes overly so) evaluation of the evidence, see Wolfhart Pannenberg: *Jesus—God and Man*. Trans Wilkens LL. Priebe DA. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968. Others have also summarized the evidence, but usually not working around higher criticism. However, once the point is proven, a major premise of most of higher criticism falls.

and the appearances of Jesus forced the early Christians to re-evaluate their theology.

## Jesus is Authoritative

If Jesus' resurrection happened, and the evidence seems coercive, it would follow that such an unusual event should have something important to say about the way our universe is put together. Thus the Gospels and the first part of Acts become important. They are our evidence as to the character of the event. And one of the important parts of the event is the character of the Man who was resurrected.

Again we will let His enemies speak first. During Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin, an attempt was made to keep things as legal as possible. Many witnesses were called, but "their witness did not agree" (Mark 14:56). This implies that none of the witnesses were paid, or at least that they were subject to some semblance of cross-examination, or it would have been easy to trump up charges. But finally two witnesses testified, "We heard him say, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another; not made with hands." Yet not even so did their testimony agree." (verses 58-9) (Perhaps the second testimony was recorded in Matt 26:61, where Jesus was alleged to have said "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.") It appeared to His judges that Jesus was going to go free on a technicality.

Now the points on which the witnesses agreed were that Jesus said A). He could destroy the temple, B). He could rebuild it, and C). it would take three days. Although His enemies wanted to believe it, point A does not fit with Jesus' life or teachings. But with the very slight shift from the Jerusalem temple to the temple of Jesus' body, and someone else destroying it, we have exactly the saying in John 2:19. John was not one of the synoptic writers, and there is no obvious reason why he should cover for Matthew and Mark, and certainly no reason they should copy him. It seems highly probable, then, that Jesus' enemies were acquainted with a saying of His that predicted His death and resurrection.

Thus the resurrection, in addition to being miraculous, also fit into a pattern of events that Jesus was expecting. This means that the claim that Jesus could not have predicted His death and resurrection is wrong, and if we find other similar predictions we

cannot automatically write them off to creations of the early church. We have to believe them unless we have good evidence to the contrary.

But there is more in this story. Jesus remains silent. Caiaphas, evidently on the verge of losing his only chance to get rid of this Troublemaker; resorted to adjuring Him "by the living God" (Matt 26:63): "are you the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the Blessed?" (Mark 14:61) Jesus could no longer remain silent. The law required Him to say what He knew. So He did. He agreed with the statement, and predicted His own coming again as well. Caiaphas finally had his charge. It was blasphemy for the Jews, and sedition for the Romans.

Some might be tempted to deny that Jesus believed that He was the Messiah, let alone the Son of God. But Caiaphas was obviously trying to be legal, and he had to have some charge on which to convict his Prisoner. If it was not what was stated, then what was it? I have not heard even a remotely plausible charge that could have been used to convict Him otherwise. And the entire narrative is not one that would have been made up by the early church. Not only were there too many people around who would have corrected the story if there had been any substantial error; but the narrative as it stands seems to hold Caiaphas out as one who would not stoop to buying false witnesses, or at least well-coached false witnesses, and who tried to make the proceedings as legal as possible. That portrait, although still flawed, is better than one that the early church would have made up on its own.

Now if Jesus believed Himself to be the Messiah and the Son of God, then we have no compelling reason to doubt that the other passages where He speaks of Himself as the Son, and speaks of God as the Father; are genuine. We also have no compelling reason to doubt that the passages where Jesus speaks of Himself as the Messiah are genuine. And if one grants that these passages are largely accurate, there is no *a priori* reason why any of the titles which Jesus is supposed to have used, such as the Son of Man, or the Way, or the Light of the World, could not be accurate. It becomes difficult to ignore such passages when searching for Jesus' self-consciousness.

The passage in John 10:22-39 stands out in this connection. Jesus claims to be the Messiah (v. 25). He again talks about "the Father" (vs. 25,29). Finally He declares, "I and the Father are

one" (v. 30). At this point the Jews take up stones to stone Him "for Blasphemy; because you, being a man, make yourself God." (v. 33) Jesus' defense is to quote the Hebrew Bible. "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods' [Ps 82:6]? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken), do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God?'" (vs. 34-37) The psalm quoted is talking about heavenly beings (or at least superhuman beings) who are addressed as gods, and Jesus seems to be indicating that He is an even greater heavenly being. Personally, I have a hard time believing that John could have thought that one up on his own. I have an even harder time believing that he could have done so with a straight face.

The straightforward conclusion is that, although Jesus never claimed to be all there was to God, He saw an identity which set Him apart from His contemporaries. This leads to the well-known three choices. Either He was crazy (an opinion not unknown among His contemporaries), or He was an imposter who needs to be exposed, or He was what He claimed to be. The resurrection would seem to disprove the first alternative.

I have read the Gospels and the rest of the relevant New Testament passages, and I would say that the third alternative is by far the most likely. But if you have not done so, it would seem to be the logical thing to do to read them for yourself and form your own opinion. Just beware that you form your opinion on the basis of the evidence, and not on where you might be afraid that evidence will take you. After all, our journey is a search for truth, not for comfort, certainly not for immediate comfort.

The message of the Gospels is that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection have created a new reality (or have demonstrated reality to be different than previously thought). Therefore His words and actions have primary authority.

But what of the mass of higher critics of the New Testament? If this line of reasoning is correct, why didn't they see it? Why did they instead insist on the essential inaccuracy of the record as we have it today? The truth is that they started by trying to harmonize empiric naturalism and the New Testament. And since empiric naturalism can admit no exceptions to its rule of no miracles, they had to truncate more and more of the New Testament in order to harmonize it with empiric naturalism. Thus Jesus' miracles, and His resurrection, and any meaning to His

divinity which set Him essentially apart from His contemporaries, had to go. Many higher critics felt that if they could just get rid of this “husk”, they could find a valid “kernel” in the life of a Jesus who was a great teacher, and a norm for our day, but who disclaimed any overtly supernatural pretensions. This first wave of higher criticism was dealt a serious blow when Albert Schweitzer recognized its bankruptcy and noted that even following its rules, he had to come to the conclusion that Jesus believed Himself to be the Messiah. Schweitzer felt that Jesus was wrong in His belief, because Schweitzer was himself a believer in empiric naturalism.<sup>6</sup> (It is important to distinguish between empiric naturalism and some ethical systems which have sprung from it, such as those of Nietzsche and the Nazis, or Marx and the Communists, or that of what might be called the Social Darwinists in our society. One might very well believe in the theory that there is nothing beyond that can reach through space, time, and matter to us, without believing that one’s chief end is to serve the self. Schweitzer obviously did.)

The second wave was led by people who tried an even more strict methodology to remove any provably miraculous elements from the story of Jesus. Probably the most famous was Rudolf Bultmann, but there were a number of others. The arguments were made that the Gospels were written much later than previously believed, certainly not by disciples of Jesus.<sup>7</sup> They contained collections of stories which were mostly unreliable, having been made up by the early church to support its own position (or positions), and having been modified during, in some cases, more than 100 years of retelling. This has become standard theory for much of academia.

This theory has been dealt a serious if not fatal blow by one of its previous adherents, John A. T. Robinson. In his book *Redating*

---

<sup>6</sup> For example, see this statement: “The dominant interest in the first [period] is the question of miracle. What terms are possible between a historical treatment and the acceptance of supernatural events? With the advent of Strauss this problem finds a solution, viz., that these events have no rightful place in the history, but are simply mythical elements in the sources. The way was thus thrown open. . . .” *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. 1906. Translated by W Montgomery, 3rd ed. London: A. and C. Bleek, Limited, 1954, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Some of these arguments were also made by people in the first wave, but Mark was usually thought to be written relatively early and thus at least partly accurate.

*the New Testament*,<sup>8</sup> he showed that the assumptions behind the late dating of the New Testament were unsupportable and in many cases palpably false. In addition, crucial data, like the ending of Acts, were systematically ignored, with a blindness that was “almost wilful”.<sup>9</sup> Neither he nor I see this as a complete vindication of fundamentalism. But it does mean that the New Testament, and particularly the Gospels, were written by people who lived through the times that they wrote about, and that they wrote at a time when mistakes could be pointed out by eyewitnesses. It may be granted that the stories were told orally many times before they were written down. But that means that idiosyncrasies are about as likely to be corrected as introduced. The basic reliability of the accounts is very likely and can be reasonably assumed.<sup>10</sup>

Remember that one of the basic assumptions underlying the mainstream of higher criticism, often stated explicitly, was that miracles can't occur. It may have been a reasonable belief at the time, but with the Big Bang, quantum correlations, and the origin of life staring us in the face, it is no longer tenable. Therefore the demand that miracles cannot be allowed, or even the suggestion that any other explanation of a phenomenon is preferable to a miraculous one, is unwarranted. So if we come across a miracle as well-documented as the resurrection of Jesus, we are justified in taking it at face value.

If we accept this miracle, there is no good reason for rejecting the observations of other miracles. If naturalistic explanations of those miracles are strained, rather than rejecting the story, we should accept the implication of a miracle.

This point of view makes the gospels particularly important evidence, and evidence that we cannot repeat at will. However much we may dislike certain features, like Matthew's doubling of people and summarizing, or Mark's ubiquitous “immediately” (*euthus*), or Luke's rearranging, or John's failing to mark where Jesus quits talking and his own editorializing takes over; they are the best, indeed almost the only, sources we have. They should be treated with utmost care.

---

<sup>8</sup> Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342

<sup>10</sup> We probably have a copy of the book of Matthew from Egypt, written as a codex, which dates to around 70 AD. (Thiede CP: “Papyrus Magdalen Greek 17 (Gregory-Aland p<sup>64</sup>): A Reappraisal.” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 1995;105:13-20). This puts extreme strain on any theory that would put the writing of Mark after 66 A. D.

## The Bible is Authoritative

Actually, if one accepts in major outline the story of Jesus, the rest of the New Testament is not a major problem. There are very few miracles outside of Acts, and those are certainly not disproportionate to those in the life of Jesus. Again the line from source to writer is direct and straightforward. So again the rest of the New Testament can be taken pretty much at face value.

The Old Testament is a little harder. Jesus certainly seconded its validity,<sup>11</sup> including specifically the accuracy of Genesis 1 and 2,<sup>12</sup> Genesis 6-8,<sup>13</sup> Genesis 19,<sup>14</sup> Exodus 3,<sup>15</sup> Numbers 21,<sup>16</sup> 1 Samuel 21,<sup>17</sup> and 1 Kings 10,<sup>18</sup> the authority of Exodus 20,<sup>19</sup> Leviticus 19:18,<sup>20</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4-5,<sup>21</sup> Deuteronomy 17:6-7 and 19:15,<sup>22</sup> Psalm 82,<sup>23</sup> Psalm 118,<sup>24</sup> Isaiah 53,<sup>25</sup> Isaiah 56:7,<sup>26</sup> Isaiah 6 1,<sup>27</sup> Malachi 3:1,<sup>28</sup> and Malachi 4:5,<sup>29</sup> and the authorship of the Books of Moses,<sup>30</sup> Psalm 110,<sup>31</sup> Isaiah 29,<sup>32</sup> Jonah,<sup>33</sup> and Daniel.<sup>34</sup> The only hint that Jesus gave that the Old Testament might not be reliable was his comment about Moses giving a divorce

---

<sup>11</sup> Matt 5:17-19, Luke 16:17,31, John 10:35.

<sup>12</sup> Matt 19:4-5, Mark 10:6-9.

<sup>13</sup> Matt 24:37-39, Luke 17:26-29.

<sup>14</sup> Matt 11:23-24, Luke 17:28-32.

<sup>15</sup> Matt 20:3 1, Mark 12:22, Luke 20:5 1.

<sup>16</sup> John 3:14.

<sup>17</sup> Matt 12:3-4, Mark 2:25-6.

<sup>18</sup> Matt 12:52, Luke 11:3 1.

<sup>19</sup> Matt 19:18-9, Mark 7:10; 10:19, Luke 18:20.

<sup>20</sup> Matt 19:19; 22:39, Mark 12:39.

<sup>21</sup> Matt 22:37, Mark 12:28-30

<sup>22</sup> John 8:17.

<sup>23</sup> John 10:34.

<sup>24</sup> Matt 21:42, Mark 12:10-1, Luke 20:17.

<sup>25</sup> Luke 22:37.

<sup>26</sup> Matt 21:13, Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46.

<sup>27</sup> Luke 4:17-20.

<sup>28</sup> Luke 7:27,32.

<sup>29</sup> Matt 11:14; 17:11, Mark 9:12.

<sup>30</sup> Matt 8:4; 19:8, Mark 1:44; 7:10; 12:26, Luke 5:14; 16:29-31, John 5:45-7; 7:19-22.

<sup>31</sup> Matt 22:43-5, Mark 12:36-7, Luke 20:41-4.

<sup>32</sup> Matt 15:8, Mark 7:6-7.

<sup>33</sup> Matt 12:39-41;16:4.

<sup>34</sup> Matt 24:15.

law “for your hardness of heart” (Matt 19:8, Mark 10:5). Even there He did not say that Moses didn’t write the passage in question; indeed, He affirms that he did. He simply says that the law was not universal or even ideal but limited to a particular situation which was not ideal (one wonders how many other laws might fit into the same category).

Thus if you take Jesus’ word for it, basically the entire Old Testament is reliable. To some, that would settle it. After all, given His life, Jesus does have more authority than the average person.

But suppose we do not wish to take Jesus’ word for it, perhaps because we find it hard to believe the authority of some parts of the Old Testament. First, we must discount Jesus’ opinion as being a product of His time. While doing this, we should not forget that our opinion is partly a product of our time, which is heavily influenced by empiric naturalism, which has been demonstrated to be false.

Then we should realize that there is a great deal of agreement between the two positions. Except for the second part of Isaiah, Jonah, and Daniel, the scholarly consensus is that the prophets were written by whom they say they were. The authorship of Job is disputed, but it makes little difference since the story is timeless.<sup>35</sup> The disagreements over Psalms are relatively minor; and the same goes for Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. There is disagreement over Esther; even though otherwise the feast of Purim is unintelligible. 1 and 2 Kings have been shown to contain remarkably accurate chronological data by Edwin Thiele.<sup>36</sup> Essentially all their historical data except the miracles are generally conceded to be accurate.

In fact, we are beginning to see a pattern here. All the Old Testament books that do not contain miracles are generally conceded to be accurate. Those containing miracles have been challenged. Sure enough, 1 and 2 Samuel and Ruth, and to a lesser extent Judges, are generally conceded to be mostly accurate,

---

<sup>35</sup> Incidentally, the story must have been authoritative before Ezekiel, or at least the part about Job being righteous, as Ezekiel mentions it without further explanation in 14:14,20.

<sup>36</sup> *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983.

whereas the strongest attacks of the critics are reserved for Joshua and the Pentateuch, as well as Daniel and Isaiah.

This appears to be as much a conflict over theory as one over facts. Now of course most adherents of any given theory will characteristically deny that their theory influences their factual conclusions. Rather; they are driven to their theory by the facts. But they will usually see quite clearly that adherents of other theories ignore or misinterpret the facts.

We can't ignore theories. They do influence the kind of facts we believe are most important, and influence our search for new facts. Furthermore, they should. The thing that distinguishes good science is that theories are never allowed to become primary. So it is best to be explicit about our theories, but never hold them closer than the facts allow.

The theory that dominated the mainstream of Old Testament higher criticism was empiric naturalism. Thus miracles were to be explained away or their accounts turned into legends or myths, and the later they were written down, the easier this was to do. Accurate long-range prophecy was a miracle and was to be dealt with by putting its date of writing after, or at least near; the event prophesied. That is why most of the prophets (who contain relatively non-specific prophecies) were largely unchallenged, while Isaiah, Daniel, and Jonah were challenged.

Jonah can be expected to have left very few traces in secular history, and plausible although not coercive traces have been found, so one's belief or disbelief in the historicity of Jonah is simply a result of one's prejudices for or against miracles. There is very little argument over Jonah. Each side simply ignores the other.

But Isaiah talks about the sun going backwards in the sky, and predicts the reign of Cyrus the Persian. That is not allowed by empiric naturalism, and so Isaiah has to be attacked. Daniel also has miracles, especially the fiery furnace and the lions' den, and has detailed predictions of the future. So Daniel also has to go. And the Pentateuch and Joshua (sometimes known as the Hexateuch) abound in miracles and also have prophecies, so they have to go also.

But of course one cannot simply say, "Daniel has miracles, so Daniel has to go," and expect to win an argument with one who believes in miracles. If one is going to be competitive in the marketplace of ideas one has to find other reasons why Daniel is un-

reliable.<sup>37</sup> So prominence was given to the fact that Belshazzar was not known outside of the book of Daniel (and Baruch which was dependent on it), and that Nabonidus was recorded as the last king of Babylon by all the other known historians. Also Darius the Mede couldn't be identified (Cyrus the Persian was the first

---

<sup>37</sup>There are many who will be startled to find that the mainstream of higher criticism did not discover that Daniel, and the Pentateuch, and other parts of the Bible were written at the (now) conventionally accepted times, and then switch from belief in orthodox Christianity to belief in empiric naturalism, but rather the reverse. Porphyry the first to propose the Maccabean theory of Daniel, was a virulent enemy of all of Christianity (and Judaism). His theory was not revived until after the rise of skepticism and idealism. In like manner, Vatke, the originator of the current documentary theory of the Pentateuch, was a pupil of Hegel, and the first part of his book was a review of Hegelian philosophy. Speaking of Vatke's theory, Otto Pflieger says, "Later tradition was therefore wrong in representing the people under and after Moses as repeatedly sinking to a lower stage from a higher one already attained; on the contrary the development was a gradual one in an upward direction amid a constant struggle between the two parties." *The Development of Theology in Germany Since Kant, and its Progress in Great Britain Since 1825*. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1890, pp. 255-6.

To get the flavor of the Hegelian view of history even more strongly we may note Pflieger's praise of Wellhausen. "... a comparison of this new conception of Israelite history [Wellhausen] with the traditional one. There we had from beginning to end a series of riddles, of psychological and historical puzzles; here everything is comprehensible, we have a clear development, analogous to the rest of history, the external history of the nation and the internal history of its religious consciousness in constant accord and fruitful interaction; and though not an unbroken advance in a straight line of the whole people, still a laborious struggle of the representatives of the higher truth with the stolid masses, a struggle in which success and defeat succeed each other in dramatic alternation, and even failure only serves to aid the evolution of the idea itself in ever greater purity from its original integuments. This is human history full of marvels and of Divine revelation, but nowhere interrupted by miracle or by sudden, unaccountable transitions.

"So bold an innovation necessarily provoked considerable opposition. This was often expressly and perhaps still oftener silently, directed against what seems to us precisely the advantage of this new theory, viz. the substitution of a humanly comprehensible development for mysterious miracles and revelations. Since this opposition rests on dogmatic assumptions lying outside of history, it cannot determine the course of the historian." *Ibid.*, p. 274.

Or as was somewhat uncharitably remarked by someone on the other side, "They overlooked the historical fact that the disbelief had been antecedent to the criticism. Disbelief had been the parent, not the offspring of their criticism; their starting-point, not the winning-post of their course." Pusey EB. *Daniel the Prophet: Nine Lectures, delivered in the Divinity School of the University of Oxford*. London: A. D. Innes & Co., 1892, p. vi.

ruler of the Medo-Persian empire). The very first verse of Daniel was felt to be flagrantly in error because (a) Jeremiah 25:1 stated that the fourth year of Jehoiakim was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar; so that Jehoiakim couldn't have been given into Nebuchadnezzar's hand in Jehoiakim's third year because Nebuchadnezzar wasn't king yet, and (b) Jeremiah (v. 9) was felt to imply that Nebuchadnezzar had not invaded Judah yet, and there was no record of an invasion in Jehoiakim's third year other than the reference of Berossus, which was felt to be inaccurate.<sup>38</sup> Daniel and his companions couldn't be found in secular historians, or even (except for Ezekiel, which was discounted) in Biblical or intertestamental material before the time of the Maccabees. Their Babylonian names were felt to be corruptions which wouldn't have been butchered so badly if they had been from an actual account. The Aramaic of Daniel was similar to post-exilic Aramaic. Its Hebrew was alleged to be late. It had some Persian words, which were felt to indicate a date some time after the conquest of Cyrus. It had some Greek loan words, which were felt to prove a late date.<sup>39</sup> The theology of Daniel was felt to be too advanced for the Exile. Daniel was written in a style called apocalyptic, and our other examples (except probably Revelation and possibly Zechariah) were all pseudonymous. And Daniel is supposed to give detailed predictions of the Medo-Persian and Macedonian empires up to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and is much more sketchy after that time. These arguments<sup>40</sup> bol-

---

<sup>38</sup> It is strange how Berossus was felt to be inaccurate here when he was asserted to be strictly reliable when he stated that the last king of Babylon was captured some time after the city fell and was not killed. Apparently in the old style of arguing sources were to be used as a drunk would use a lamppost: more for support than for illumination. Unfortunately this went for both sides (see, for example, Hengstenberg EW. *Dissertations on the Genuineness of Daniel and the Integrity of Zechariah*. Trans Pratten BP. Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1847).

<sup>39</sup> The classic statement of the arguments from linguistics was put this way somewhat later: "The *Persian* words presuppose a period after the Persian empire had been well-established: the Greek words *demand*, the Hebrew *supports*, and the Aramaic *permits*, a date *after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great* (B. C. 332)." Driver SR. *The Book of Daniel. The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1900 (Italics his).

<sup>40</sup> And other minor ones. The judgment of Montgomery (himself a believer in the Maccabean theory) on the minor objections is pertinent: "The minor points should be approached from the judgment obtained for the main histori-

stered the claim of mainstream Higher Critics that Daniel was untrustworthy.<sup>41</sup>

Now there is nothing wrong with this way of proceeding. Everyone tries to find facts to support his or her theory. And at one time the evidence seemed to be heavily against Daniel. One could rationally put the origin of the book during the Maccabean period. In fact, quite a few theologians who apparently believed in miracles did so.

Defenders of the authenticity of the book of Daniel<sup>42</sup> did not have much to work with. The identification of Belshazzar with Nabonidus was very unsatisfactory. Darius was identified with the Cyaxares of Xenophon (*Cyropaedia* i-viii), who was otherwise unknown and whose existence was denied by Herodotus, or possibly with Gobyras, about whom little was known. Harmonization of Daniel 1:1 and Jeremiah 25 was attempted by saying either that Nebuchadnezzar was coregent with Nabopolassar or that Jeremiah used a different system of reckoning than Daniel (non-accession versus accession year reckoning or fall versus

---

cal considerations, the questions of Darius the Mede, Belshazzar, the Fourth Monarchy. If the decisions fall out in favor of these points as historical, it remains for the historian but to discount minor difficulties and inaccuracies." Montgomery JA. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel. The International Critical Commentary*, Vol. 17. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927, p. 72.

<sup>41</sup> For some examples, see Bertholdt L: *Daniel aus dem Hebräisch-Aramäischen neu übersetzt und erklärt mit einer vollständigen Einleitung und einigen historischen und exegetischen Excursen*. Erlangen: Johann Jakob Palm, 1806; Lengerke C von: *Das Buch Daniel*. Königsburg: Gebruder Bornträger, 1835; and De Wette WML: *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in die kanonischen und apocryphischen Bücher des Alten Testaments*. Berlin: G Reimer, 1845. A more complete list may be found in Barnes A: *Notes on the Old Testament, Explanatory and Practical. Daniel*. 1852. Reprint ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1961.

<sup>42</sup> For examples, see Hengstenberg in note 38; Hävernack HAC: *Commentar über das Buch Daniel*. Hamburg: Friedrich Perthes, 1832; and Barnes in note 40. Because some of the references in this and the previous note are both long (Bertholdt has over 800 pages) and in German, I have had to break my otherwise inflexible rule of not citing material unless I have read it, for these two notes. I can read German but with some effort, and am still wading through the material. However, the secondary material I have read is all consistent with what I have read of the primary material.

spring new year).<sup>43</sup> The Greek words were reduced to 3, but otherwise the best the defenders of Daniel could fairly say was that the linguistic evidence was inconclusive. The argument from theology, of course, was only strong for an empiric naturalist, and reversed itself for a supernaturalist.

There were four strong points for the defenders of Daniel. First, the four empires of Daniel 2 (later expanded by chapter 7 and chapter 8) seemed to include an empire after the Seleucids. The visions of Daniel 2 and 7 are obviously parallel, and almost all commentators would agree that the vision of Daniel 8 is parallel to the other two. We may list the parallels as follows:

<u>Daniel 2</u>	<u>Daniel 7</u>	<u>Daniel 8</u>	<u>Identification</u>
Head of gold	Lion with eagle's wings		Nebuchadnezzar (2:38)
Breast and arms of silver	Bear raised up on one side with 3 ribs in mouth	Ram with 2 horns, higher rose up last, pushing in 3 directions	Media and Persia (8:2)
Belly and thighs of bronze	Leopard with 4 heads and 4 wings	Male goat with one horn, then 4 horns Little horn? Sanctuary cleansed?	Greece (first horn = first king, then split into 4 kingdoms—8:21-2)
Legs of iron	Terrible beast with iron teeth	Little horn?	Strong as iron, subdues everything (2:40)
Feet of iron and clay	10 horns, little horn	Little horn?	Divided kingdom (2:41) 10 kings, another king (7:24)
Stone	Judgment	Sanctuary cleansed?	God's kingdom (2:44) Judgment (7:26)

It may be questioned whether the little horn of Daniel 8 is identical with the fourth beast of Daniel 7, or with the little horn, or whether it comes before the fourth beast. But the ram with one horn higher than the other appears to be the same as the bear which was raised up on one side, and the leopard with 4 heads (the only animal with more than one head) and 4 wings appears to be the same as the male goat with the one horn whose place was taken by 4 horns. I see no reasonable way around that identification.

---

<sup>43</sup> Both hypotheses about the year turn out to have some truth. There were two different kinds of year and accession-year reckoning was used. The former probably accounts for the discrepancy. We now have Nebuchadnezzar's annals which confirm Berosus. See Thiele, note 36.

The most common way to have the fourth beast be the Seleucids, the theory that Daniel envisioned a separate Median kingdom, is ruled out by the book itself. In 8:20, the kingdom of Media and Persia is represented by one animal (the ram). During Belshazzar's feast the word Parsin or Peres (the word itself implies Persian predominance) is interpreted as standing for the *Medes and Persians* (5:28). And in 6:8,12,15 Darius the Mede is bound by the laws of the Medes and Persians.

If the bear is the Medo-Persian empire, and the leopard is Greece with its four divisions, then the fourth beast (to say nothing of the little horn) had to come *after* the Seleucids, and Daniel's prophecies did not end shortly after 164 B. C. as required by the empiric naturalistic interpretation. Then the fourth beast could easily be Rome, where it naturally fits. But if Daniel made some accurate predictions, he could have made some more, and there is no *a priori* reason why his prophecies couldn't have been made in the 6th century rather than in the 2nd.

Second, the seventy weeks of Daniel 9 extended past the Maccabean era. It is nearly universally agreed that these weeks (9:24—literally sevens) must be weeks of years. The number is reinforced in 9:25-7 by being given in parts, one of which, the 62 weeks, does not have any discernable symbolic significance. For the present I have no intention of getting stuck in what has been called "the Dismal Swamp of O. T. criticism".<sup>44</sup> I only wish to make one point. Regardless of which decree to rebuild Jerusalem (or the Temple—around 537 B. C., 520 B. C., 457 B. C., or 445 B. C.) one selects, there is no reasonable way to get to the Maccabees, or even to suggest how the writer of Daniel could have mistakenly done so. The 70 weeks have to extend beyond the Maccabean period. Since this prophecy and the fourth kingdom extend beyond Antiochus Epiphanes, it is not proper to say that all the prophecies point to Antiochus or even his era. The 70 weeks did not end until some 100-200 years later.

Third, the Maccabean theory of Daniel strongly implied a practically complete acceptance of a thoroughly erroneous book into the canon within less than 60 years of its writing. Everyone at that time agreed that the writer of 1 Maccabees (and possibly Mattathias) and all the subsequent writers who mentioned the subject (except Porphyry) until the Renaissance accepted Daniel

---

<sup>44</sup> Montgomery, see note 40, 17:400.

as canonical, including Jesus, Josephus, and John the Revelator, as well as the subsequent Jewish writers. This factor has not always been given the weight it deserves. On the Maccabean hypothesis, Daniel, and certainly the prophecies, didn't exist before 167-4 B. C., and yet within perhaps 30 years the writer of 1 Maccabees accepted the book. If the prophecies had been both new and obviously partly wrong, and the Jews of that period lacked a prophet to say what should be done about defiled stones (1 Macc 4:46), let alone books of the canon, it is difficult to see how the book could have become canonical.

Finally, the reference to Daniel in Ezekiel (14:14,20;28:3) was not easily explained without the story being correct. On this point the proponents of the Maccabean theory were not quite objective. One of their major arguments was that there was no external evidence for the existence of Daniel before 1 Maccabees, and yet the one other book of the Bible which was written in Babylon at that time mentions a Daniel who had not been otherwise satisfactorily identified. Daniel does fit in terms of his qualifications after Daniel 2 (righteousness, Ezek 14:14,20, and wisdom, Ezek 2 8:3). It is not fair to dispose of this piece of evidence on shaky grounds and then say that the lack of external evidence is a good argument against the authenticity of Daniel.

The argument that since Job and Noah were ancient, Daniel must be, seems strained. No one would have trouble identifying the middle member of the trio of great generals if we listed Caesar, Napoleon, and Alexander the Great. Nor would anyone have any trouble identifying the common properties of Nero, Hitler, and Atilla the Hun. There is a reason why Daniel might have been mentioned in the middle. Noah, by his righteousness, saved his whole family. Daniel, by his righteousness, saved himself and his companions. But Job couldn't save any of his children by either his righteousness or his prayers (although he did save his friends). If the argument was meant to say that Daniel doesn't fit perfectly, then I could accept it. However; it seems that he fits well enough so that the weight of evidence from this passage is on the side of the conservatives. Ancient commentators had no trouble with this identification. And it is noteworthy that people with a knowledge of the Hebrew Bible would have instantly known who Noah and Job were, and yet on the Maccabean theory of Daniel they would have been completely in the dark about Daniel, of whom more was said. The detractors of Daniel should have

realized, or shown they realized, that on this point they were going against the weight of evidence. They may have been justified by other considerations, but on the external evidence their arguments should have been clearly defensive.<sup>45</sup>

But most of that has changed. Belshazzar has been found, as second ruler of Babylon, being given the kingship,<sup>46</sup> and able only to offer Daniel the post of third ruler in the kingdom, which was precisely what he offered in Daniel 6.<sup>47</sup> A possible candidate for Darius the Mede has been found in Cyrus himself.<sup>48</sup> Not only

---

<sup>45</sup> It is true that we have now found a Daniel (with the spelling actually matching that of Ezekiel slightly better than Daniel of the book but whose wisdom and righteousness are no match for Ezekiel's Daniel) in Ugaritic literature. This is the one prediction of the early detractors of Daniel that has at least partially come true. But even if we assume that Ezekiel would take an example from pagan literature, the early detractors of Daniel didn't know that this Daniel existed and couldn't have used that argument.

This is not to say that they are the only ones who are unable to look objectively at the evidence, or even the first. The tone of the early defenders of Daniel is often every bit as polemic, and their understanding of their own weaknesses and their opponents' strengths were often as limited as that of their opponents. It is to be hoped that we can improve on the lack of objectivity of that era.

<sup>46</sup> See Oppenheim A. L., in Pritchard JB (ed): *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p. 313. See the discussions in Dougherty RP: *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929; and Shea WH. "Nabonidus, Belshazzar, and the Book of Daniel: an Update." *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)* 20(2):133-49, 1982.

<sup>47</sup> The expression "third ruler in the kingdom" puzzled the early commentators. For dramatic effect it would have been better to make the interpreter the second ruler in the kingdom, as Joseph was. Solutions offered included triumvir, third after the king and queen (or queen mother), and third after the king and king's son (! See Barnes, note 40, 1:291, after Grotius) or "heir apparent" (Henry M: *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1712). Of course, after the discovery of Belshazzar in the secular documents, the meaning was obvious (but not immediately—see Keil CF: *The Book of the Prophet Daniel*. 1869. Trans. Easton MG. Edinburgh: T. & T Clark, 1872) to all but die-hard detractors, who have latched onto an Akkadian word meaning third-rank officer. But imagine Belshazzar trying to bribe the wise men with what was in effect a demotion for some of them. "I'll put a royal robe on you and put a gold chain around your neck and make you a district manager, or major in the army." This one piece of information proves that the writer of Daniel knew more about the last days of the Babylonian kingdom than anyone else except the monuments themselves.

<sup>48</sup> A number of other suggestions have been made, such as the governor of Babylon during Cyrus' time, Gubaru by name (see Whitcomb, J. C. Jr. *Darius*

has Daniel been found (under his Babylonian name of Belteshazzar (= Belshazzar),<sup>49</sup> but his three Hebrew friends have been plausibly identified on a cylinder suggesting a political gathering similar to if not identical with the one recorded in Daniel 3.<sup>50</sup> Aramaic documents from about the time of Daniel have been found, and except for spelling, the book of Daniel matches them more closely than it does later documents.<sup>51</sup> Even the spelling in

---

*the Mede*. Grand Rapids, MI: Win. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959), and Gubaru or Ugbaru (probably Cyrus' general Gobyras—see Shea, W., "Darius the Mede: An Update." *AUSS* 20(3):229-47, 1982). But they all have weaknesses which leave me unconvinced.

Donald Wiseman was the first to suggest that Darius was actually Cyrus ("Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel", in *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, Wiseman DJ, ed. London: The Tyndale Press, 1965, pp. 9-16). As he presents them, the arguments for this position are relatively weak, but they have been strengthened by William Shea ("Darius the Mede in His Persian-Babylonian Setting." *AUSS* 1991;29(3):235-257) who points out that there is evidence that Cyrus became king of Media before he took the formal kingship of Babylon late in the first year after he conquered it (his son Cambyses was king during most of his first year). Shea also deals with the *gestalt* of the period in a way that I find satisfactory, and the only thing I am waiting for before I can completely support this theory is the finding of a Darius in the Median documents of this time. This still remains the weakest link in the arguments for the historicity of Daniel.

It must be said that the theory that Darius the Mede was a figment of the writer's imagination has nothing positive going for it either. A separate Median kingdom is excluded by the text, and would have weighed heavily against the acceptance of a newly published book as canonical if it was not already accepted by the Jews of Maccabean times.

Outside of this supposed Median empire, I have not seen any reason given for the invention of Darius the Mede. Thus Darius is not as strong an argument against the historicity of the book as might seem at first glance.

<sup>49</sup> The documents are translated in Dougherty see note 46, p. 67-70, and (into German by) Oberhuber K: *Sumerische und Akkadische Keilschriftdenkmäler des Archäologischen Museums zu Florenz*. Innsbruck: Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Kulturwissenschaft, Suppl. 8, 1960, p.95 (no. 135). The latter is cited by Brinkman J: "Neo-Babylonian tablets in the Florence Museum." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 1966;25:202-9. See the discussion by William Shea in "Bel(te)shazzar meets Belshazzar", *AUSS* 26(1):67-81, 1988.

<sup>50</sup> The document is translated by Oppenheim, see note 46, p. 30 7-8. See the discussion by William Shea in "Extra-Biblical Texts and the Convocation on the Plain of Dura", *AUSS* 20(1)29-57, 1982.

<sup>51</sup> See the discussion in Kitchen KA: "The Aramaic of Daniel", in Wiseman, see note 48, pp 50-79.

the book is characteristic of a time before the Maccabean period.<sup>52</sup> The Persian words turn out to be Old Persian, which mostly disappeared by 300 B. C.<sup>53</sup> The surprise about Greek loan words is now not that Daniel contains them, but that it contains so few.<sup>54</sup> It even appears that the writer of Daniel knew on which day of the week the new year fell during the third year of Cyrus.<sup>55</sup> And perhaps most stunning, copies of the book of Daniel have been found in the Dead Sea Scrolls (including the change from Hebrew to Aramaic and the change back from Aramaic to Hebrew), and if it were not for the fixed “knowledge” of the dating of the book, one of them would probably be dated earlier than Daniel was supposed to be written. As it is, this manuscript is dated to less than 50 years after the time of the supposed writing, and we are told that we must be in possession of one of the first copies!<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> This forces those who believe in the Maccabean theory to hypothesize that the Massorettes overcorrected the spelling. See Cross FMJr, Freedman DN: *Early Hebrew Orthography: A Study of the Epigraphic Evidence*. New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society 1952. On pp. 69-70 they stated, “The later parts of the Old Testament seem to have been revised systematically on the basis of the conservative spelling practices of the Pentateuch manuscript tradition, as is evident from the fact that the latest books (Daniel, for example) were put into orthography which is actually older than the date of the writing of the books itself!”

<sup>53</sup> See Kitchen, note 50, pp. 35-44,77. Three of these words were badly translated by the LXX/Theodotion, suggesting that their meaning had been lost between the writing of that part of Daniel and the translation of the Septuagint.

<sup>54</sup> See note 50, pp. 44-50,77, and Mitchell TC, Joyce R, “The Musical Instruments in Nebuchadrezzar’s Orchestra”, in Wiseman, see note 47, pp.19-27.

<sup>55</sup> See the discussion by William Shea in “Wrestling with the Prince of Persia: A Study on Daniel 10.” *AUSS* 1983;21(3):225-50.

<sup>56</sup> The oldest manuscript is published in Ulrich E: “Daniel manuscripts from Qumran. Part 2: Preliminary editions of 4QDan<sup>b</sup> and 4QDan<sup>c</sup>.” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 1989;274:3-26 (BASOR). The paleography is discussed in Cross FMJr: “The development of the Jewish scripts.” In Wright GE (ed.): *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*. Garden City NY: Doubleday & Company Inc.,1961 (BANE).

Cross says that some features which occur in 4QDan<sup>c</sup> are relatively old, such as the simple *zayin*, the long thin final *mem*, the small “y” <sup>c</sup>*ayin*, the narrow, round-shouldered *reš*, and the use of the two-stroke *taw* part of the time. Some are younger, such as the narrow *he* with parallel legs, the simplified *yod* nearly matching *waw*, the two-stroke *kap*, and the curved *sin* with the right arms formed with one stroke. Cross fit it after 4QXIIa (a manuscript of the twelve minor prophets) and at the same time as 4Qps-Enoch<sup>a</sup> (a manuscript thought to be of pseudo-Enoch).

Cross first gave the manuscript the earliest ‘possible’ date, in “the late second century [B. C.]”, “no more than about a half a century younger than the

None of this evidence appears to be reversible. It would seem that the writer of Daniel had inside information about the politics of the Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires which had been lost by all other sources by 164 B.C. He was also able to write in a style which was archaic for 164 B.C., and put in just the right amount of Greek words. Except for the miracles and prophecy (and we have discussed that problem above), Daniel would appear to have to have been written when and by whom it says it

---

autograph of Daniel.” (Cross FMJr: *The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies*. Revised ed. Anchor Books. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961. p. 43). He then backpedaled to around 75 B. C. in *BANE*. He then was forced to reinstate the earlier date (see Ulrich, *BASOR*, p. 18), apparently because of the discovery of documents of the time of Alexander from the Wadi ed-Daliyeh (Cross FMJr: “The papyri and their historical implications.” In *Discoveries in the Wadi ed-Daliyeh*. Cambridge, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1974, pp. 17-29).

Further evidence for this early date is given by Ulrich (*BASOR*, p. 18) with three additional characteristics of the handwriting which appear to be relatively archaic. First, some examples of *bet* have the initial downstroke come so far down that it closes the left side of the letter. Second, a partial example of *tet* suggests the older form (without the square corner on the right?). Third, some examples of *ayin* have the right stroke nearly vertical.

But the matter is even more complicated than that. The entire paleography sequence was floating from 375-350 B. C. to 55 A. D. That is, in this interval it gives only relative dates. Cross' dates in *BANE* are based on the assumption that changes in the standard handwriting occurred in two phases. He remarks on “the emergence from the slowly evolving Archaic book hand of a characteristic and rapidly developing style, which may be associated naturally with the decline (or suppression) of Greek, the resurgence of Aramaic and especially Hebrew as the official languages of Judaea in the era of Maccabean nationalism.” This assumption helped ease the strain on the Maccabean theory of Daniel by giving a later date for the oldest fragment of Daniel. But it turned out to be at least partly wrong when measured by the fixed dates of the documents from the Wadi ed-Daliyeh. And it is just as easy to visualize a period of rapid change in the early Greek period, followed by a period of relative ossification in the conservative climate of the Maccabees, as the reverse. Perhaps the truth is somewhere in between. The manuscript might easily be older than the Maccabean theory of Daniel would allow.

In addition, what is not always properly noted is that several characteristics of 4QDan<sup>c</sup> are highly individualistic, or as Cross would say “ephemeral” (*BANE*, p.187). These include the leftward curl of the bottom of the diagonal in <sup>ⲓ</sup>*alep*, the use of final *mem* in the medial position, the absence of most final forms of letters (exceptions are *kap*, *nun*, and possibly *šade*), and the closure of the head of *pe*. If 4QDan<sup>c</sup> is so individualistic in these characteristics, it would seem possible that some more ‘modem’ features are also merely individualistic features that were later adopted by other scribes, rather than indications of modernity. This manuscript may belong earlier in the sequence than it appeared

was. Even the fallback position that someone took an old story and added or reworked the prophecies would seem to be a strained position.

Using the terminology of Lakatos (see chapter 1), it is fair to say that the Maccabean theory of Daniel is a degenerating research program, and that the conservative theory of Daniel is a progressive research program. It would seem prudent to strongly consider the more progressive program.

This dramatic turnabout in the arguments over the book of Daniel would seem to indicate caution about disregarding other books of the Old Testament. In fact, it would seem reasonable to explore theories attempting to harmonize them with secular history without largely discounting them. This approach may not prove fruitful in the end, but it deserves as much of a try as the approach which discounted all miracles was given. At this point I shall make such an attempt. I will not claim that all of the presently available evidence is coercive, or even persuasive. But it

---

at first glance.

Of course, to one who is convinced of the Maccabean theory of Daniel, none of this makes any difference. The manuscript cannot be older than 164 B. C., and that is all there is to it. Any evidence to the contrary must simply be explained away. This is particularly true since 4QDan<sup>c</sup> happens to quote Daniel 10 and 11, which simply have to be fabricated after the event unless there is such a thing as accurate prophecy. Accurate prophecy would be an almost unanswerable argument for a God who could intervene in history. So if one is committed to the universe as a closed system, without the intervention of God, no amount of evidence will be convincing. But if one recognizes that the universe is not a closed system, then the manuscript suggests that one of God's interventions was either to produce the book of Daniel, or to conform history to its predictions (or both).

Today we may not have to leave the question there. With modern techniques for radiocarbon dating (see the next chapter for a discussion) one does not have to destroy the entire manuscript to date it by physical means. This should be done (in fact, most of the Dead Sea Scrolls should be dated by the carbon-14 method, so we have some relatively firm hooks on which to hang our chronology. It would be particularly fascinating to date the paleo-Hebrew manuscript of Leviticus). This would still not prove the point for Daniel (as it might for Leviticus), unless it was written before around 225 B. C., as we will get a range of dates rather than a single date (partly because of statistical difficulties and partly because of the radiocarbon calibration curve: See Stuiver M, Becker B: "High-precision decadal calibration of the radiocarbon time scale, AD. 1950-6000 B.C." *Radiocarbon* 1993;35 (1):35-65, and Pearson GW, Stuiver M: "High-precision bidecadal calibration of the radiocarbon time scale, 500-2500 B.C." *Radiocarbon* 1993;35 (1):25-33). But if the range is centered at a point older than 164 B. C., it would put some strain on the Maccabean theory of Daniel.

does have the advantage of not having to assume Jesus was mistaken when He used the Old Testament.

If one allows for the possibility of miracles, Isaiah can be accepted as authoritative relatively easily. The mention of Cyrus becomes merely another example of accurate prophecy. Something happened to stop Sennacherib from conquering Jerusalem. Since Daniel did not write everything only for the people of his day, there is no reason to demand that Isaiah do so either. The only problem is that the sun going backwards at the time of Hezekiah's illness is not documented in secular sources which are usually assumed to be contemporaneous. This may be an artifact of not enough people looking in the right places.

Job can be expected to leave few traces in history. The only traces that might be left would be a reference to the story in other sources. Indeed, Ezekiel mentions Job. So once miracles are allowed, there is no good reason to doubt the veracity of Job.

Esther fits into a relative void in history. Outside of miracles (and strictly speaking not even miracles but only providence), there are no persuasive arguments for or against Esther; other than the feast of Purim itself. As a first approximation, we can assume its historicity.

The historicity of 1 and 2 Kings (and therefore 1 and 2 Chronicles), and especially their chronological data, has been confirmed, as noted above. Therefore, once miracles are allowed, there is no good reason for doubting their historicity. Judges and 1 and 2 Samuel and Ruth would follow suit.

That leaves us with Joshua and the Pentateuch. Here we have three problems that must find some kind of solution before the entire Old Testament can be accepted as authoritative. First, there are the allegations of the late date of the Hexateuch. Second, there is the difficulty of finding the Exodus and the conquest in secular (particularly Egyptian) history. And finally, there is the difficulty that the theory of evolution poses to the credibility of Genesis 1-11. We will discuss these questions in the next chapter.