Old Testament Introduction  
The Bible’s Buried Secrets  
Chapter 35, Babylon

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/bibles-buried-secrets.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qalTJzk4kO0>

***About the Video***

What is for the most part an exact copy of the video script follows. There are a few places where individual speakers could neither be heard nor understood: for this we apologize. Every effort was made to be precise: there were just spots that defeated us. Since this is a quote in its entirety it seemed unnecessary to mark it with quotation marks. The notation for each speaker is tedious enough: Narrator, Reader, etc. If you discover bothersome errors, please reply to this website and point them out. You may verify the script more easily by starting to replay it where the “time” stamps indicate discussion begins. The second of the above links is free from advertising and thus easier to use.

***Overview***

BBS continues its attack against the Ten Commandments by insisting that it is a “morality code”, the basic “ideal of Western Civilization.”[[1]](#endnote-1) We claim that the Ten Commandments or Decalogue are a unilateral Covenant, a crucial stage in the unfolding of the Eternal or Everlasting Covenant, with Christ as its centerpiece.[[2]](#endnote-2)

Any “triumph of monotheism”,[[3]](#endnote-3) in the BBS sense, will not come until after 516 BC. Yet, what sort of monotheism is this, that within a few hundred years reduces itself to a lifeless cold dead orthodoxy, characterized by Pharisaism with its endless unattainable rules, and by Sadduceeism marked by rampant unbelief: both of these in direct opposition to the Decalogue, which promises life?[[4]](#endnote-4)

For BBS, the “triumph of monotheism … starts with the destruction of … the Jerusalem Temple”; which sounds more like the defeat of monotheism to us. “David [’s] … dynasty … [only appears to be] wiped out.” This “destruction … [is not] … one of the most significant theological crises in the history of the Jewish people.” It is the termination of the remaining Judean people of the Covenant; it is the creation of a new non-Covenant people called Jews.[[5]](#endnote-5) The ex-Judeans, now becoming Jews, know full well that God is not dead: it is they who are under the condemnation of death. “The visible sign of His [God’s] Presence” was not destroyed; it abandoned Judea, remaining absent for roughly five-hundred eighty-two years.

According to BBS, the P writers reconstruct Israelite worship to retain its validity: the temple is replaced by Synagogues; the blood of the covenant is replaced by circumcision; the great feasts are replaced by the Sabbath; the virgin born Son is conveniently forgotten. Even though Abraham fully depicts the death of death in the death of the Son, it is described as nothing more than a “harrowing tale”. The Israelites, according to this falsification of the evidence, must “maintain their covenant with God”; rather than the truth, which is that God must maintain His Covenant with them.

For BBS, it is all about the themes. The history must be reshaped according to the themes. The master theme, according to the so-called P writers, is that of “Exile and Return”: the vagabonds return from Egypt, the exiles return from Babylon. Since Ur is not far from Babylon, Abraham did not migrate from Ur, as Genesis supposes, he returns with other exiles from Babylon: but, the story must be embellished to reinforce the theme. Since, Israel (that Canaanite faction) came up from Egypt; there must be an embellishment that brings Abraham out of Egypt as well.

In this scenario, it is necessary that “the Israelites [the Jews] … redeem themselves”: never mind that nothing they can say or do will bring about the return of “the visible sign of His [God’s] Presence”.[[6]](#endnote-6) God will return in His own good time, in the fullness of time.

***Script***

Babylon (time 1:29:25)

Quote:

N: By associating the belief in One God with moral behavior, the Ten Commandments establishes a code of morality, and justice for all, the ideal of Western Civilization. Despite Josiah’s reforms, the ancient Israelites continued to worship other Gods. Their acceptance of One God and the triumph of monotheism begins with a series of events vividly attested through archaeology, ancient texts, and the Bible. It starts with the destruction of Yahweh’s earthly dwelling, the Jerusalem Temple.

In 586 BC, after defeating the Assyrians, a new Mesopotamian empire invades Israel[[7]](#endnote-7) [Judea]. The Babylonians ransack the Temple, and systematically burn the sacred city. Before his eyes, the Babylonian victors slay the sons of Zedekiah, the last Davidic king, and blind him. The covenant, the promise made by Yahweh to His chosen people and to David that his dynasty would rule eternally in Jerusalem is broken; after 400 years, Israel [Judea] is wiped out.[[8]](#endnote-8)

Eric M. Meyers:[[9]](#endnote-9) The destruction of Jerusalem created one of the most significant theological crises in the history of the Jewish people.[[10]](#endnote-10)

N: The Babylonians round up the Israelite priests, prophets, and scribes, and drag them in chains to Babylon. Babylonian records confirm the presence of Israelites, including the king, in exile.[[11]](#endnote-11)

Dever: In every age of defeat one is inclined to think God is dead; and surely those who survived the fall of Jerusalem, must have felt so. After all, how could God allow His temple, His house, the sign, the visible sign of His presence among His people to be destroyed?[[12]](#endnote-12)

N: Without temple, king, or land, how can the Israelites [Jews] survive? Their journey begins with the ancient scrolls, which some scholars speculate were rescued from the flames of the destruction.[[13]](#endnote-13)

Coogan: Among the exiles from Jerusalem to Babylon were priests from the Temple, and they seem to have brought with them their sacred documents, their sacred traditions.[[14]](#endnote-14)

N: According to the widely-accepted Documentary Hypothesis, it is here in Babylon, far from their homes in Israel that priests and scribes will produce much of the Hebrew Bible as it is known today.[[15]](#endnote-15) Scholars refer to these writers as P, or the priestly source.

Coogan: It was P who took all of these earlier traditions, The J source, the E source, the D source, and other sources as well, and combined them into what we know as the Torah, the first five books of the Bible.

N: But more than just compiling, P edits and writes a version of Israel’s distant past, including the Abraham stories, that provides a way for the Israelites to remain a people, and maintain their covenant with God.[[16]](#endnote-16)

R: “You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.” — Genesis 17:11

Cohen: When Genesis 17 attributes a covenantal value to circumcision it is not really talking about Abraham; it is really talking about the [Babylonian] exiles of the sixth century BCE, who, far from their native home were desperately trying to find a way to reaffirm their difference.[[17]](#endnote-17) Therefore, they began to look at circumcision as not simply another practice, but rather as the marker of the covenant and they attributed this view back to Abraham.[[18]](#endnote-18)

N: For the exiles, the Babylonians are the new Canaanites, the idol worshiping, uncircumcised peoples from whom they must remain apart.[[19]](#endnote-19) But the Abraham story, with its harrowing tale of a father’s willingness to sacrifice his own son is also about the power of faith.[[20]](#endnote-20) It is no coincidence that the exiled P scribes place Abraham’s origins in Ur, just down the river from Babylon. Perhaps with the same faith as Abraham had, so too will the exiles be returned to the Promised Land.

Coogan: One of the pervasive themes in the Torah is the theme of Exile and Return.[[21]](#endnote-21) Abraham goes down to Egypt and comes out of Egypt. The Israelites go to Egypt and get out. For the exiles in Babylon in the sixth century BC, that theme must have resonated very powerfully. God who had acted on their behalf in the past,[[22]](#endnote-22) would presumably do so again.

N: But the Israelites still have a problem. How in a fallen land, without the temple and sacrifice, can they redeem themselves in the eyes of Yahweh?

Coogan: To assure that Divine protection, the P tradition emphasizes observances, such as the Sabbath observances. You don’t need to be in the land of Israel to keep the Sabbath.[[23]](#endnote-23)

Cahill: And we have allusions in the biblical writings and the prophets to the fact that the exiles also learned to pray in groups, in what was to become the forerunner of the Synagogue.[[24]](#endnote-24)

Unquote.

***The Ten Commandments***

Once again, the Ten Commandments are not a “morality code”, no matter how many theologians say and think so. The Ten Commandments are what they are, no matter what anybody thinks of them. The only way to grasp the meaning of the Ten Commandments is to stop up our ears to the voices of all the theologians, and give attention to the Ten Commandments themselves.

For such a pursuit, one can scarcely do better than to pray through the Psalms as often as once a week. David and other “righteous” kings spent a great deal of time before the Oracle, talking with God: first in the tabernacle; then later in the temple. They even had their own private temple entrance. Leadership, even into battle, was mostly a matter of learning and obeying the mind of God about any given matter. High Priests and Prophets were an essential, indispensable aid in such quests; yet, some of the kings were Prophets in their own right. Consequently, the Psalms provide a depth of understanding of the heart of God like no other; including an intense consideration of all of Torah, especially the Ten Commandments. Thus, the Psalms look backward surveying the entire Old Testament; while at the same time looking forward to preview the complete New Testament. To understand the Ten Commandments and Torah, pray Psalms along with them.

The entire Ten Commandments are secreted living monuments, intended to be etched into the hearts of God’s people, by a unilateral covenant act of God.[[25]](#endnote-25)

There is no necessary association between monotheism and morality as the narrator suggests. The Ten Commandments are not a morality code.

***Western Civilization***

Nor are the Ten Commandments a basic “ideal of Western Civilization[[26]](#endnote-26)” in any way shape or form. If anything, the Ten Commandments are the diametrical opposite of any ideal within Western Civilization. If the Ten Commandments could ever be a morality code, Western Civilization has gone out of its way to break, even obliterate every single commandment. The very vocal wreckage left behind after a succession of Caesars, blood bath revolutions, multiple Reichs, several Holocausts… the annihilation of seven-million Jews in Germany, pales beside the extermination of over twenty-million Christians in Ukraine at about the same time… by the time that the smoke of WWⅡ faded away there were roughly fourteen million dead Jews, nearly fifty million dead Christians, uncountable numbers of Japanese and Ryukyuans incinerated in caves, the dead of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the fire storms at Dresden and Tokyo…. All of these are “collateral” damage: for we haven’t begun to list combatants yet.

The American Civil War, the bloodiest war in U. S. history boasts the only President who has ever ordered the military to fire on his own people. This still says little or nothing about the public abuse of women and children, which continues in the new slavery called employment; or the ethnic atrocities committed against Asians, Blacks, Indians, and others in the name of social Darwinism in the U. S.; or the destruction of Churches, Mosques, and Synagogues. By any fair measurement based on any Ten Commandment standard, Western Civilization is a filthy sewer, a cesspool of moral corruption: no other civilization has displayed such inhumanity to man; not to mention destruction of the planet. The doors of the temples of war have never been closed throughout the history of Western Civilization.[[27]](#endnote-27)

***Life***

The Ten Commandments are none of these things. The Ten Commandments are life in the heart; and from the heart radiating outward. The person who has truly come to love God and neighbor can no longer participate in the travesty of Western Civilization without protest. The fact that so many continue to serve the violent dictates of Western Civilization evinces a massive disconnect between “said” faith and behavior: for in true faith, faith and behavior are a unified whole. The Ten Commandments are a vital stage in the Eternal or Everlasting Covenant,[[28]](#endnote-28) a unilateral[[29]](#endnote-29) covenant act of God, creating a new life of Christ-likeness in the heart.[[30]](#endnote-30)

***Everlasting Covenant***

A careful study of the Everlasting Covenant shows that it progresses in stages or steps: at each stage, something new is learned about the Everlasting Covenant. Some of its major aspects involve: Noah and his Flood; Abraham and his seed; Moses and his Law; David and his Son; the Virgin and her sinless child, Christ — His death on the Cross, His resurrection trampling down death by death, His ascension into heaven, His enthronement at the right hand of the Father; the coming of the Spirit. We have barely outlined a few of the more salient points. More careful study will reveal much, much more. This biblical construction reveals a definite sequence, around which the entire Bible is structured.

Dispensationalism would have us believe that there is no such sequence, that Abraham’s aspect of the covenant subsums all of its parts, which are conveniently reduced to Abraham, Land-Seed-Blessing, David, and New: thus, casually setting aside Noah, Moses, other numerous aspects of covenant, as well as the precious blood of Christ in a convenient, easily remembered outline.

In a very similar way, BBS would like us to reverse the clock, undo the progress, make everything revolve around Babylon (586-516 BC) and recreate the idea of covenant in the image of man. Thus, circumcision and Synagogue are suddenly thrust into prominence; conveniently ignoring the facts: that there is evidence of Synagogues already late in Judges;[[31]](#endnote-31) that animal sacrifice was already a fading iconography of the covenant;[[32]](#endnote-32) or that circumcision must necessarily be replaced by the Spirit.[[33]](#endnote-33) Some versions of this muddle would even have us embrace Kabbalah with its secret parallel oral Torah. Do not confuse this oral Torah with the true Torah, which is secreted in the heart; yet, is no secret: being publicly declared at every opportunity.[[34]](#endnote-34) All of these theories conveniently sidestep the fact that the Son is being seen, more, and more brilliantly, as the center of the Everlasting Covenant.[[35]](#endnote-35) The Jews knew full well that the Messiah was promised and coming.[[36]](#endnote-36) Yet many, like BBS, turned away from the promise of God; some even wickedly claiming that the nation of the Jews was its own Messiah: thus, thrusting circumcision, Sabbath, and Synagogue into the spotlight in order to hide their rejection of the Truth.[[37]](#endnote-37)

***Isaiah***

A great deal of the BBS construct is purloined from Isaiah without saying so. Ostensibly, Isaiah is comprised of three parts; supposedly, with three different authors.[[38]](#endnote-38) However, the Isaiah Scroll gives no indication of such bifurcations[[39]](#endnote-39). This being said, the movement of Isaiah provides the dramatic setting for BBS and sixth century BC Judaism.

* Chapters 1-39: Proto-Isaiah (over two centuries pre-exilic)
* Chapters 40-55: Deutero-Isaiah (exilic)
* Chapters 56-66: Trito-Isaiah (post-exilic)

Claimed justification for these bifurcations include things like:[[40]](#endnote-40)

* Proto-Isaiah is obviously historic Isaiah; yet, includes a mixture of poetry and prose. The poetry is considered prophetic. The prose is considered to be epexegesis of the prophecy, possibly by a later editor. We have chased this sort of nonsense many times before. Creative people often reveal a wide variegation of writing styles.[[41]](#endnote-41)
* Deutero-Isaiah, it is maintained, is “not framed as prophecy”: this, in spite of the fact that the whole section is packed full of detailed prophecies about John the Baptist and Jesus. This smacks of the unscientific prejudice that prophecy can’t really exist: therefore, these writings are necessarily exilic. If this argument held water, we would be compelled to date Deutero-Isaiah at 30 AD: which is an obvious absurdity.
* Isaiah stops using his name.[[42]](#endnote-42) In Proto-Isaiah, Isaiah is directly involved in the reported action, sometimes even as an object lesson.”[[43]](#endnote-43) Deutero-Isaiah has a complete change of action; it’s all about Messiah,[[44]](#endnote-44) and Isaiah’s name is not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with Messiah, the Shəkinah-King.
* Similarly, Trito-Isaiah speaks largely of the coming judgment of the Messianic Kingdom. Isaiah’s name does not belong here either. Nevertheless, Isaiah has ample historic evidence of Israelite behavior; it would be a blind prophet indeed, who did not see this coming: Isaiah has enough experience with the Israelites to write this section in his sleep. The turn of the message to hope for the meek is equally obvious.[[45]](#endnote-45) Is it not clear that Yahweh hates Israel’s behavior, even from before the days of Solomon (970-930 BC)?
* Changes of style… style necessarily changes with the change of subject matter.

It is good that we have observed these matters. They are aids in outlining the book under a single author. They are not reliable dating references. Both BBS and Judaism have failed in reading Isaiah into Jewish history between 516 and 4 BC. Judaism is not its own Messiah. It is tragic that the post-exilic Jews were so fond of this book; yet, did not believe it when the truth hit them between the eyes.

BBS needs to stop plagiarizing material without referencing actual sources. There is a slim chance that such plagiarizing could be quite innocent: but, that would mean that BBS and its contributors are so ignorant of Scripture that they forgot where their ideas originated. Not that Isaiah is any source of such nonsense; only the most perverse and twisted interpretations can arrive at such conclusions.

***Josiah***

It is true, Josiah’s reforms were short lived. Meanwhile his very real accomplishments are swept under the rug. He did suppress idolatry, and may have prevented many impressionable young minds from being duped by the temptations of idolatry; he may have even kept older minds from being deceived. He succeeded in organizing the first Pesach in many years, where Israelites from the northern kingdom were invited to come and worship. Although several laughed him to scorn, some Israelites listened and attended.

In terms of evaluation as a peacemaker, and restorer of the breach[[46]](#endnote-46) of the Covenant, Josiah does not have many peers. His courage cannot be faulted. He was caught between Assyria and Egypt; yet, in that vice grip, he looked too much to Babylon for relief from the pressure. At the end of the day he disobeyed God; yet, we cannot fault his convictions for daring to take on the formidable Necho. Had he waited for the Babylonians to finish the job, the outcome might have been far different. Had he lived, Nebuchadnezzar might have retained some respect for Judea. Well, these are foolish speculations, aren’t they? They did not take place; so, they are irrelevant.

Josiah lost his life, seemingly senselessly. Necho was defeated anyway. Nebuchadnezzar had little respect for the remaining Judean kingdom, which was so rebellious, he had to put it out of its misery by crushing it. The epitaph for Josiah’s story is Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah. Judea “slid, like a rotten leaf, down the rusty drainpipe of life.”[[47]](#endnote-47)

***Monotheism***

Monotheism is not a human philosophy that slowly developed throughout the history of mankind. Monotheism is counterintuitive to human thought. We have been led to believe from comparative anatomy and other studies that, at the most basic level, a human being is no different than other mammals: behavior is very instinctual, and often self-serving.[[48]](#endnote-48) Maslow, with whom we strongly disagree, insists that there is a “hierarchy of needs”, which need to be met at every level, before attainment of a higher level.[[49]](#endnote-49) At the highest level, self-actualization, the only concept of God possible, is god in the image of man.

We may not like the evidences supplied by the Bible; in fact, some might find them downright superstitious. However, it is not our point of view that is being analyzed. So-called ancient man, including biblical man, believed in a spiritual world that existed invisibly in parallel with natural Creation; a truth beyond human body and brain; another dimension. If we attempt to analyze ancient man after deleting such “religious” evidence, we have destroyed any ability to think like ancient man. Ancient man is intensely religious, as evinced by the numerous idols, as well as the fact that ancient writings are filled with such lore. All of ancient mankind from king to peasant were intensely concerned about communication with another realm, the spirit world. Without coming to grips with such evidence, we commit a massive anachronism, we fail to understand anything about ancient man. Even allowing for the existence of this spirit world, humanity largely finds its solution in idolatry, not in monotheism. Monotheism is counterintuitive to the human animal. Yet, mankind is more than animal.

The Bible describes the Creation of mankind with the giving of a special feature; the endowment of a human spirit[[50]](#endnote-50) to the human animal; which distinguishes humans from other animals, and is called the image of God. Human intelligence, then, is a cooperative effort between the Divine Spirit and the human spirit: not just a brain function. Such a cooperative effort often takes the form of a conversation. Note that the human spirit is an immaterial aspect of man. The Greeks thought of such truth as the world of forms, an impersonal ideal law that defined reality; wherein the physical world consisted of imperfect copies, similar to the ideal form: yet, never attaining its perfections. Like it or not, ancient man, evidently without exception, thought in such terms and claimed to experience them. I am not an ancient man; yet, I claim the reality of the same experience.[[51]](#endnote-51) I claim to have entered into the conversation as a very small listener and tiny explanatory voice.

If God has not in fact spoken to man, then monotheism cannot be a logical outcome. If, by accident, monotheism is accidentally arrived at as a philosophical conclusion; such an imagined monotheism is of no consequence: for the god, thus conceived, exists only in the mind of his inventor. Such a god is not real, he/she is only the figment of an overactive imagination. Such a god lacks the evidence or warrant provided by Plantinga’s, “hidden or secret personal source of evidence”, which is to say that, God, to be true God, must speak to some, if not potentially to all, human beings: there must be a testable scientific way for God to prove His existence to man.[[52]](#endnote-52)

Consequently, monotheism did not appear as a concept to the Jews, out of thin air, around 500 BC. God had spoken to the prophets all along; which the Jews knew full well. Monotheism, as far as humanity is concerned, was present before the dawn of Creation, and the first humans entered fully into conversation with God as soon as He empowered them to speak.[[53]](#endnote-53) The documents of the Akkadian and other ancient libraries, attest to the truth of this conversation.

***Triumph***

Seen as the result of true conversation between God and mankind: humans are more than animals, and monotheism existed from eternity before Creation. Such knowledge quickly faded from the human race; yet, humans were not able to completely erase the spiritual, immaterial aspect of their nature: hence, the proliferation of idols followed rapidly as ancient humanity walked away from God. Every leader was seen as a provider; deity was eventually ascribed to many of them. A few tried to remain faithful to and maintain the conversation.

In this light, any “triumph of monotheism”, is seen as the return to the ancient values, brought about by the punishment of the Judeans, the utter destruction of their civilization, and the total loss of their Covenant status. In such a state of humiliation, the non-covenant Jews grasped after every straw that they could cling to. They pasted together what they could recover from surviving copies of their sacred writings. If there is any truth to the P work, this recovery of Scripture is it: not the assembly of mythical J, E, and D writers. This attempt to recover the Old Testament Scripture from manuscripts stopped for a time as the Greek translation called Septuagint, replaced it. However, the quest was resumed by Jewish scholars working from the sixth through the tenth centuries, possibly into the thirteenth century AD.[[54]](#endnote-54) The Old Testament itself gives evidence of such attempts at reassembly and recovery: in places, it seems as if someone is picking up the pieces of shattered documents dropped on the floor, broken and scattered. However, there is no evidence of J, E, or D… or, that such quasi-documents ever existed.

If such a troubled history can possibly be taken as any “triumph of monotheism”, it produces a sordid outcome.[[55]](#endnote-55) The newly-formed Jews are commanded through their prophets to submit to their overlords and seek the prosperity of their new nations. The ruling nations would be punished for their moral wrongdoing as they fell in sequence: Babylon, Medo-Persia (Achaemenid), Greece, Rome, the fracturing of Rome into so-called Western Civilization.

***Jerusalem***

The fall of Jerusalem is not the beginning of the “triumph of monotheism” nor is it the beginning of the end. In terms of human flesh, the beginning of the end, as we have observed before, is David’s sin with Bathsheba. Nor is the end, the fact that Nebuchadnezzar is approaching Jerusalem, having conquered Assyria. The end rests in the fact that the Shəkinah has abandoned the temple, as well as Jerusalem, and has consigned His former people to discipline that is about to be meted out by the Babylonians.[[56]](#endnote-56)

The Babylonians invaded Judea shortly after the defeat of Pharaoh Necho at the Battle of Carchemish (605 BC). After a threat of siege, or at most a brief siege, King Jehoiakim bribed Nebuchadnezzar to leave, with temple treasures and hostages: Jerusalem was spared from destruction at this time. It is believed that this is when Daniel and his three friends were taken captive to Babylon; this was more of a receipt of Judean ambassadors, as well as submission to an agreement of loyalty as a vassal state, than of a political prisoner agreement.

When Nebuchadnezzar suffered a temporary setback in Egypt (601 BC), Jehoiakim jumped ship and switched his alliances to Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar quickly quelled several other rebellions and laid siege to Jerusalem. Jerusalem fell (597 BC), which resulted in the death of Jehoiakim, the imprisonment of Jehoiachin (Jeconiah), together with the deportation of thousands of other political prisoners, additional tribute, the appointment of Zedekiah as the Babylonian viceroy, with widespread pillaging and vandalizing of the temple and Jerusalem. We believe that it was at about this time when Ezekiel witnessed the Shəkinah’s desertion of Jerusalem.[[57]](#endnote-57)

When Zedekiah revolted, he brought about a final siege which ended around 586 BC. Zedekiah’s sons were killed before his eyes, he was blinded, taken to bound to Babylon, and eventually died as a prisoner. The temple was stripped of its brass, and remaining precious objects; then the temple was set on fire, with all the great houses; the city walls were broken down; the city was left in ruins.[[58]](#endnote-58)

A further deportation around 581 BC is also possible.[[59]](#endnote-59)

However, Jerusalem the Golden is God centered, eternal, and heavenly; it is not man centered, temporal, or earthly. The destruction of the Jerusalem temple does not toll the bell: not for the end of God’s Covenant; not for the beginning of the end; not for the triumph of monotheism. Monotheism will only triumph in the Incarnation; as well as in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus; followed, by the coming of the promised Holy Spirit.

***Assyria***

When we left our study of neo-Assyria, Tiglath-Pileser Ⅲ (745-727 BC) was key to our discussion. We had not yet fully considered that he was Pulu, not of royal blood, possibly not even Assyrian, a usurper to the throne, who disguised his usurpation by destroying his predecessors’ monuments, writing over some of them, all the while claiming to be the son of Adad-nirari III (811-783 BC). This, if true, would make Pulu brother to Shalmaneser Ⅳ, Ashur-dan Ⅲ, Ashur-nirari Ⅴ: all of whom he displaced, taking the Assyrian throne-name, Tiglath-Pileser. Usurper or not, he was an effective, albeit cruel leader, who returned Assyria to its reputation as the dominant military world power.[[60]](#endnote-60)

* We recall that Tiglath-Pileser Ⅲ is the real force behind the conquest of Israel in 722 BC and invasions into Judea.
* “His son Ululayu, who took the [throne-name] Shalmaneser Ⅴ” (727-722 BC)[[61]](#endnote-61), got credit for the conquest of Israel.
* Another son, Sargon Ⅱ (722-705 BC), did the mop-up.[[62]](#endnote-62)

Most importantly, for our present discussion, Tiglath-Pileser Ⅲ subjugated Babylon and became its king (729-727).[[63]](#endnote-63) After Tiglath-Pileser Ⅲ:

* Sargon Ⅱ loses control of Babylon.
* Sennacherib (705-681 BC) cannot maintain control of Babylon.
* Esarhaddon (681-669 BC) is otherwise occupied.
* After Ashurbanipal (668-627 BC), the last great Assyrian king, Assyria falls, and the balance of Mesopotamian power shifts to Babylon.[[64]](#endnote-64) Ashurbanipal is followed by Aššur-etil-ilāni (631-627 BC),[[65]](#endnote-65) Sin-shumu-lishir (circa 626 BC),[[66]](#endnote-66) Sin-shar-ishkun (627-612 BC),[[67]](#endnote-67) and Ashur-uballit II (623-612 BC).[[68]](#endnote-68)
* Nineveh falls to Babylon and the Medes in 612 BC. After the fall of Nineveh, battles continue to rage: Megiddo (609 BC),[[69]](#endnote-69) Harran (609 BC),[[70]](#endnote-70) Carchemish (605 BC).[[71]](#endnote-71)
* Assyria folded like a two-dollar tent.

***Babylon***

Tiglath-Pileser Ⅲ (745-727 BC) becomes the first Assyrian king of Babylon (729-727 BC).

* His son, Shalmaneser Ⅴ (727-722 BC) follows him.
* Assyrian control is now lost to Marduk-apal-iddina II, Merodach-baladin (722-710 BC).[[72]](#endnote-72)
* Sargon Ⅱ (722-705 BC) temporarily regains control of Babylon (710-705 BC).
* However, Sennacherib (705-681 BC)[[73]](#endnote-73) cannot maintain control (705-703 BC).
* So, after the brief reign of Marduk-zakir-shumi II (703 BC),[[74]](#endnote-74) Marduk-apal-iddina II, Merodach-baladin returns to power (703-702 BC).
* Bel-ibni (703-700 BC),[[75]](#endnote-75) an Assyrian vassal leads a revolt against Assyria, and is replaced by Ashur-nadin-shumi (700-694 BC),[[76]](#endnote-76) Sennacherib's son.
* Nergal-ushezib (694-693 BC),[[77]](#endnote-77) a Babylonian, ascends to the throne on Elam’s coattails.
* He is followed by Mushezib-Marduk (693-689),[[78]](#endnote-78) who eventually lost to Sennacherib (689-681 BC), once again.
* Esarhaddon (681-669 BC) held the reins, until he was succeeded at his death by Shamash-shum-ukin (668-648 BC), another Assyrian, Esarhaddon’s son, who also led a revolt against Assyria.
* Ashurbanipal, “after he crushed the rebellion.” appointed Kandalanu (648-627 BC)[[79]](#endnote-79) to the throne.

Now, Nabopolassar (626-605 BC),[[80]](#endnote-80) an Assyrian official, possibly a native Babylonian, comes to the throne, overthrowing Assyria to establish the neo-Babylonian Empire. He consolidated the region under his control by 616 BC. He defeated the Assyrian-Egyptian alliance together with Cyaxares the Mede (625-585 BC),[[81]](#endnote-81) who had already taken Assur: together they took Nineveh in 612 BC, Harran in 610 BC. Meanwhile, Josiah confronted and was killed by Necho II at Megiddo in 609 BC.[[82]](#endnote-82)

Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC),[[83]](#endnote-83) defeated Necho at Carchemish (605 BC), having received the kingdom from his father Nabopolassar. The Egyptians retreated, so Syria and Phoenicia fell under Babylonian control. Nebuchadnezzar was bought off from his first siege Jerusalem (circa 605 BC),[[84]](#endnote-84) but Jerusalem fell in the second siege (597 BC),[[85]](#endnote-85) was again taken in a third siege (586 BC).[[86]](#endnote-86)

Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by:

* Amel-Marduk, Evil-Merodach (562-560 BC).[[87]](#endnote-87)
* Neriglissar (560-556 BC)[[88]](#endnote-88)
* Labashi-Marduk (556 BC)[[89]](#endnote-89)
* Nabonidus (556-539 BC)[[90]](#endnote-90). It was under Nabonidus that Belshazzar (550-539 BC) [[91]](#endnote-91), his son served as viceroy of Babylon, when it fell to Cyrus in 539 BC[[92]](#endnote-92).

This historic interchange leads us to the conclusion that tensions between Assyria and Babylon, were mostly a struggle between Assyrian power brokers over whom was greater, and where the capital would be located. Ruling ethnicities were not always certain: for leaders seemed to readily adopt the form of throne-name that most suited their constituency: when in Assyria, take an Assyrian sounding throne-name; when in Babylon….[[93]](#endnote-93) Later other ethnicities came into play: Elam, Mede, Persian, Achaemenid; yet, these seem to employ throne-names as well. Sometimes it seems impossible to extremely difficult to decode these throne-names. It is not even entirely impossible that Cyrus and Darius the Mede are the same person, with two different throne-names.

In any case, the fall of Assyria to Babylon, may not be described simply in terms of a weakening of Assyrian power; and a growth of Babylonian power: for both were heavily influenced by Assyrian ethnicities. Moreover, we take Pulu, Tiglath-Pileser to be Assyrian; yet, he may not be an ethnic Assyrian at all. The power shift may have been heavily influenced by outside factors as well: Elamite, and Median in particular. Early events in Babylon seem to have a strong Elamite pressure. We do not know enough about the Elamite Empire: it may be larger and more powerful than previously thought. Later, the Medes seem to have withdrawn support from Babylon, to form a strong alliance with Persia. Again, too little is presently known of the Medes.

***Crisis***

Yes, this presents a sort of crisis in Israelite affairs. Jerusalem lies in ruins. The houses of the nobility are burned. Even the temple has been torched. The bulk of the leadership, scholarship, and skilled trades have been carted off to Babylon; there are virtually no upper or middle classes left; most of the prophets are false prophets: only a few true prophets, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel remain, Ezekiel may have been removed already.

Yet, this is not the sort of crisis that Meyers would have us see. Meyers has missed the point that the Shəkinah is gone: God has seemingly deserted His people. This is the real crisis: Yahweh has gone dark. The Israelites were destroyed by the Assyrians (722 BC). Now, Judea is no longer a Covenant people. Without the Shəkinah, Ark, Decalogue, Torah, Ephod, Urim, Thummim, the Judeans seem to have lost all contact with God: the heavens have been made brass for them.[[94]](#endnote-94) The Judeans are no longer free to pray as they once did; God is not there to listen. The Jews that emerge from this crisis are not a Covenant people either; they have been demoted from their place of honor and privilege.

This is the true crisis. The Jews that return from Babylon are not the same people as the Judeans that were taken to Babylon. Yes, there are fleshly earthly ethnic links between them: but, the spiritual links have been broken. We must not think of them as the same people. The Jews are orphans: they have been abandoned by God.

***God is Dead***

Dr. Dever’s anachronism is showing. He has read his own unbelief back into the 586-516 BC milieu.[[95]](#endnote-95) Yet, Dr. Dever is not on trial here; it is sixth century developing Judaism which is now on trial. There is nothing in the extant writings to indicate that the Jews thought “God is dead”.[[96]](#endnote-96) Their own writings clearly specify that such destruction is coming; that the Jews are to submit humbly to their new overlords; that they are to seek the prosperity and welfare of any nations where they are cast; that God will bring retributive justice upon the wrongdoing of these overlords.

Dever states, “After all, how could God allow His temple, His house, the sign, the visible sign of His presence among His people to be destroyed?” Dever must be confused. Surely, he must realize that the “visible sign of His presence” is the Shəkinah that lived within the premises, and not the premises themselves. Surely, Dever knows that the writings clearly state that the Shəkinah moved out of the house. This may not be an important distinction to Dr. Dever; yet, it was exceedingly important to sixth-century Jews: even if they fabricated the story to cover up their embarrassment at being found naked, with no justification for continuing as a nation or even a people. After all, what kind of a fool would associate the loss of a temple with the loss of God; unless, of course, that god was really an idol. Even the stiff-necked Jews, as they are beginning to learn some rote adherence to monotheism, would have known that. So, what is the point? That God died in a house fire? The house itself is most certainly not “the visible sign of His presence”. God’s “visible sign of His presence”, the Shəkinah was not destroyed, He left; the Jews are orphans, they have been abandoned, at least in human terms.[[97]](#endnote-97)

***Survival***

“Without temple [God], king, or land, how can the Israelites [Jews] survive?” They can’t! However, the Jews know that they have been orphaned; they know that they are under discipline; they have also been promised that they would return to the land in seventy years.[[98]](#endnote-98) The very God Who affected their punishment, also affected their return. That being said, for the vast majority, they could not get their prayers answered. They got their land back; yet, for many years they would exist without the presence of God or King. They have lost all validity as a nation, and will remain under the chains of vassalage for a long while to come. When their God and King finally returns (4 BC), they don’t want Him.[[99]](#endnote-99)

***Homecoming***

“Their journey [home] begins with the ancient scrolls.” No, their journey home begins with the promise of God; He made it happen. The scrolls are incidental to the process. Daniel has and reads a copy of Jeremiah; or has received an oral report of Jeremiah’s writing.[[100]](#endnote-100) There is no specific mention of other books. Certainly, there is no reason to dispute the idea that the Jews were able to bring some Scripture copies to Jerusalem with them: even though the exact content of this Scripture must remain unknown. There is every reason to doubt that they were permitted to get their hands on the Oracle archives.

Ancient kings were nearly always tasked with some sort of priestly responsibility: Egyptian pharaohs acted on behalf of Amun or other deity; similarly, the Assyrians, Babylonians, and others served in priestly functions; in Rome Caesar was required to pray the Auspices.[[101]](#endnote-101)

The most logical picture is that Nebuchadnezzar either destroyed or sequestered any documents found in the Oracle to prevent the Jews from rebuilding any alliance with these powerful Judean gods; thus, causing Babylon much harm. It is very unlikely that Nebuchadnezzar would have permitted the Jews to get their hands on any Oracle artifacts. Very likely, if these artifacts still existed, they would have fallen into the hands of the Medo-Persians, who would have been equally reluctant to let the Jews near them for all the same reasons.

The Jews had copies in what was, no doubt, a growing collection. It was, however, an imperfect, fragmented collection, as present “Hebrew” and Greek documents themselves reveal.

As to which documents the Jews brought with them to Babylon: that must remain unknown. Which documents they were able to collect during their captivity is also unknown. What they were able to scavenge after their return, is still a mystery. What we have today is the obvious outcome; yet, how it was assembled is an enigma. We also know that documents were eventually collected in Babylon; but if these were carried back to Babylon later… that is a riddle. We know that significant Jewish studies developed in Babylon and in Jerusalem; but, details of their source materials have never been disclosed.

Whether former temple priests were able to bring copies or not, as Dr. Coogan suggests; it is very unlikely that they were able to retrieve Oracle archives.

Neither does any of this have anything much to do with their homeward bound journey.

***Documents***

There is no widely-accepted Documentary Hypothesis.[[102]](#endnote-102) There are numerous varieties of Documentary Hypotheses, none of which has consensus among the scholarly community. BBS is, yet another, newer spin on one of these.

Produce? What does that word even mean? Does produce mean that the so-called P writers are the original authors of 50% of Torah around 500 BC? If so, then there is no evidence of such a P work. Does produce mean that the so-called P writers gathered the then available manuscript evidence, to the best of their ability attempting to reassemble an Old Testament from these manuscripts? There is more than ample evidence that this is what they did.

* Are these P writers a source? No, they are scholars and scribes attempting the very difficult work of text criticism, without making additions or deletions.
* Did they work from J, E, D, and other sources? No, there is no evidence that such sources ever existed; we have exposed many of the internal contradictions involved in such hypotheses.
* Did they accomplish this work in Babylon? Not necessarily. The place of the work is unknown: it could be Babylon, or Jerusalem; a combination of both; or neither… someplace else.
* Were they limited to Torah? The evidence indicates that they gathered and assembled manuscripts for all the books of the Old Testament that had been written at that time.
* Did they compile? Compile generally means to list, classify, and organize. If this means compile from extant manuscript evidence: yes. If this means compile from J, E, D, and other sources: no.
* Did they do more than compile; did they write? No, not if new material is meant: they were not prophets. If, what is meant is that the reassembled paleo-Hebrew manuscripts were reproduced in a block-Aramaic version, a Hebrew version, and read in the Aramaic language of the people, the answer is: yes, they produced a common language translation.[[103]](#endnote-103)
* Did they write a new version of Israel’s distant past? No, there is no evidence that they did any such thing.
* Did they provide a way for the Israelites Jews to remain a people? No, not entirely, they helped. Several activities helped establish the Jews as a people: they returned; they rebuilt Jerusalem; they rebuilt the temple; they resumed animal sacrifices;[[104]](#endnote-104) the scribes standardized the popular language, Aramaic, and made the Scripture available in that language. We ought not underestimate the importance of standardized language, and understandable Scripture reading.
* Did they provide a way for the Israelites Jews to maintain their Covenant? No, absolutely not. The only way to maintain the Covenant was for the Shəkinah to return. No number of circumcisions, Sabbath Synagogue meetings, or sacrifices could ever make up for the loss of the Shəkinah.
* Was circumcision increased in importance, invented, or reestablished around 500? There is no evidence for that. Circumcision always was, since Abraham, a sign of the Covenant. The narrator errs in failing to draw a distinction between a mere personal sign of the Covenant and the Covenant itself. In a nutshell, the Covenant says, “I am your God; you are my people; and I dwell among you.” The sign simply says, “Yes, I belong.”
* Were the Jews “desperately trying to find a way to reaffirm their difference?” No, Cohen errs widely. Circumcision was important to both Abraham and Moses: the sign alone required careful maintenance. The evidence shows that Babylon, and more so, Medo-Persia were very tolerant of ethnic and religious differences, as long as it didn’t threaten the political status quo. These, vast empires were successful because they created a generally safe environment for widely differing peoples. The Babylonians even demanded that the Jews sing songs of Zion.[[105]](#endnote-105) The Jews were returned to Jerusalem with a blessing; as many other people, evidently, were also sent home with a blessing. These were not acts of desperation. The Jews have always been quite distinctive.
* Are the Babylonians the new Canaanites? Not hardly. According to the BBS pseudo-history the Israelites are a small minority of old Canaanites: the poor escapees from Hazor and the poor vagabonds from Egypt, living in tents in the central highlands. BBS never did show us how these poverty-stricken Canaanites distinguished themselves from other Canaanites, other than by their poverty. The so-called Israelites were not distinct in their religious worship: for moments before their captivity they were bowing down to everything that crawled. How is it then, that these immoral polytheists, suddenly become flaming monotheists, morally superior to the Babylonians in any substantial way… let alone seeing them as another new branch of Canaanite polytheism. Daniel and his three friends, confront the evils of Babylon alone; yet, most BBS-like theorists, don’t even believe that Daniel existed: remove Daniel from the Bible and show us one specific instance of wild, vile pagan practices among the Babylonians. Rather, according to this myth, the Jews must have learned from the Babylonians that monotheism is a good idea.

***Faith***

Does Abraham’s “harrowing tale” give us the power of faith for return? No, not at all: faith has no such power. The narrator is trying desperately to sell the Ouija Board concept of faith. If I only believe hard enough, I can make the Babylonians release us and we will return to Jerusalem. This is not how faith works.

The Jews knew that God would discipline the Babylonians for their sins; they knew that God intended to return them to Jerusalem after seventy years. Faith understands that God does what He says He will do; then, as the seventieth-year approaches, faith looks with anticipation to see it happen.

Faith is not a conjurer’s deception, incantation, a way to manipulate God, or magic: faith is based on truth. It is a wicked lie: that whatever you wish will happen if you just have enough faith. Lo and behold, in the fullness of time, seventy years, Babylon is crushed in a single night; shortly thereafter, the new overlords, the Medo-Persians send the Jews packing home to Jerusalem. Faith did not make that happen. God made that happen.[[106]](#endnote-106)

***Themes***

Dr. Coogan is mistaken in stating that “One of the pervasive themes in the Torah is the theme of Exile and Return.” A handful of human migrations, or almost aimless wanderings, does not a pervasive theme make.

Widespread human migrations in the days of Abraham, as well as before and after Abraham are well known. We don’t know all the details and sequences of such massive migrations; but, the bigger picture is plain enough. The clashing of early empires, such as that described in Genesis 10, is well enough known from other sources. There can be no doubt that Sumerian, Akkadian, Elamite, Aramean, and other powerful civilizations developed with a high degree of sophistication at an early date: huge statuary of “angelic” beings, sphynx, pyramids, and temples discloses a common belief in a spirit world; massive libraries remain, indicative of widespread education and intricate thinking; monuments of war depict hostility and aggression, driving people apart and away from each other. There is even some thought that poor farming methods diminished the productivity of the land in southern Mesopotamia,[[107]](#endnote-107) forcing migration northward and westward around the fertile crescent. It has long been believed that the Cushites and Mizraim migrated first into Africa; whatever the actual case may be, we may be sure that the Cushites and Mizraim did not arrive in Africa by accident. Tools found on Crete, at the very least, establish that ancient man was quite mobile.[[108]](#endnote-108) This mobility was so extensive that we still cannot explain the development of whole civilizations in Africa, Asia, the Americas, isolated Islands: extensive enough to call in question the idea of a universal flood. Similarly, linguistic development, presents a yet unsolved riddle, just as Genesis 10 suggests: a problem so great that it casts doubt on any universal flood, and supports the idea of migration. There can be no doubt that such massive human migrations existed; or that Abram, and his family were more than a few specs of dust carried along by such migration as they wandered from Ur to Haran to Cisjordan, and down into Egypt. If there is a pervasive theme here, it is that of Early Human Migration; not of Exile and Return: for its whole nature is different from that experienced in Mesopotamia during the sixth century BC. The record of Abram/Abraham in the Bible, precisely fits a nineteenth century BC migration theme; it does not at all fit an Exile and Return theme that is unfolding thirteen-hundred years later. Nor does the development of the old-Babylonian empire, with the prominence of Ur; mix well with the development of the new-Babylonian empire, and the prominence of Babylon: they are two vaguely similar, yet, very distinct occurrences.

Abram/Abraham is a nomadic sheep herder, always moving in search of better grazing; necessarily dwelling in tents, yurts, or other temporary housing. His travels may be somewhat cyclical as changing seasons mean that the best, freshest grasses move from north to south, and back again, every year: it is the rare spot that allows Abram/Abraham to stay put for a whole year. Animal herds don’t mix well with human civilization; so, Abram/Abraham is compelled to live an unsophisticated, uncomplicated life, away from frequent contact with others, surrounded by his sheep and his fellow herders. If there is a pervasive theme here, it is that of the nomadic, herdsman lifestyle. No theme of Exile and Return can be found here. Most civilized people don’t much care what happens to a few unwashed shepherds; they are quite surprised when Abram/Abraham musters a small army of herdsmen and rescues Lot.

The Jerusalemites are sophisticated, educated, cultured; dwelling in massive fixed buildings, even stone palaces; buildings elaborately decorated with the finest cut and polished basalt, limestone, obsidian, and other semi-precious stones; engraved with the accomplishments of nobility, ceremonial instructions, or carved with exquisite bas-relief, and even statuary. The best pottery and tapestry was there. People dined with delicate feasts and wines; not with mutton bar-b-que roasted over an open pit; fancy tilework, not a dirt floor; tables set with gold, silver, and brass, not rudely eaten with the fingers.[[109]](#endnote-109) To be reduced to starvation by siege, then forced to march in chains, to live by compulsion in a strange city, in a different house; paints a far different picture of themes than that found in migration and shepherding. There is no theme here for the Jews: it happened once in their history. If there is a more general pervasive theme here, it is that of empire; more specifically, it is the theme of the neo-Babylonian Empire: this is the theme of how the Babylonians treated all conquered people, especially the more rebellious ones: “keep your friends close, your enemies closer”. There is no known precedent for what God is doing here. If the Sumerians, Akkadians, or Elamites used such practices; they are, at present, unknown to us. There is only one other event in the history of man that approximates such a theme: namely, the Babylonian Captivity of the Church. No one else has dared to draw such a comparison until BBS….

***Self-Redemption***

Self-redemption is in itself an oxymoronic expression; it’s a non-starter. If one has the power to redeem one’s self, one does not need outside help to be redeemed. If the Jews are able to get themselves out of the scrape they are in, they don’t need God to move in the affairs of mighty nations to get the job done. We may not like this idea very much; yet, the progress of Western Civilization clearly demonstrates its veracity. The very words we use, such as Third Reich, indicate that Western Civilization is somehow or other, heir to Daniel’s Rome.[[110]](#endnote-110) … that, at least in the mind of Hitler, Germany is heir to Rome via the First Reich, the Holy Roman Empire (962-1806); the Second Reich, the German Empire (1871-1918), until it became Nazi propaganda in the Third Reich.[[111]](#endnote-111) Anybody who thinks we can dig ourselves out of this mess, is living in denial. The Jews cannot “redeem themselves in the eyes of Yahweh”. Only Yahweh Himself can work such redemption. Returning to circumcision and Sabbath observance will not bring Yahweh back. Yahweh has decreed punishment via time-out. The Jews will not get the land back until seventy years are concluded. Yahweh Himself will not return until the fullness of time has lapsed (4 BC). There can be no public King, no Priest, no Prophet, until Yahweh Himself returns: there can only be the enigmatic whispers of prophets in secret.

***Protection***

Dr. Coogan goes on to assure us that Sabbath observance will win the day. Yet P knows no more than what was already revealed in Torah; all P did was, sweep up the shattered pieces, and try to put them back together in their proper order. We owe it to P that they did a pretty good, yet less than perfect, job. P knows no more about Sabbath observance than Moses does. P knows no more about Sabbath violations than the Prophets have disclosed. No amount of blind ritual Sabbath observance will undo the damage that has been done. Sabbath observance is a good thing; yet, it is too little, too late. Divine protection comes on God’s own terms; not through the bargaining power of man.

This displays more of a stage of grief than anything else. Grief, we have been told, goes through stages: denial, it didn’t really happen, we’re not slaves, we’re still free; anger, it’s Yahweh’s fault were in this mess; bargaining, God, we’ll give You the Sabbath obedience, and You’ll let us go; depression, we’re helpless and hopeless; acceptance, we have thrown the Covenant away, now we have to live with that truth, until Yahweh returns to rescue us in His own good time, just as He promised.[[112]](#endnote-112) God has stronger medicine than this planned.

***Synagogue***

According to one authority, “The oldest dated evidence of a synagogue is from the 3rd century BCE [300-201 BC], but synagogues doubtless have an older history.”[[113]](#endnote-113) “Whatever their origin, synagogues flourished side by side with the ancient Temple cult and existed long before Jewish sacrifice and the established priesthood were terminated with the destruction of the Second Temple by Titus in 70 CE.”[[114]](#endnote-114) It is interesting to note that this authority claims that animal sacrifices continued well past 516 BC, and into the first century AD; this seems to square with the Pesach observance of Jesus in 33 AD.

Psalm 74 may be an ode in remembrance of Babylonian destruction; or Psalm 74 may relate to an earlier tragedy. Psalm 74 is a Maskil of Asaph. Asaph may be dated to the reigns of David (1010-970 BC) and Solomon (970-930 BC).[[115]](#endnote-115) In verse 8, Asaph complains, “they have burned up all the Synagogues of God in the land.” The context reads like this:

“They have cast fire into Your sanctuary, they have defiled the dwelling place of Your Name by casting it down to the ground. They said in their hearts, ‘Let us destroy them completely. They have burned up all the Synagogues of God in the land. We do not see our signs. There is no prophet any longer. There is no one among us who knows how long.” — Psalm 74:7-9

This indicates a time even before David’s career. According to this picture, the Philistines have burned down the tabernacle at Shiloh after the Ark had departed.[[116]](#endnote-116) “The dwelling place of Your Name” must mean the Oracle; since it cannot possibly be the Oracle in Solomon’s temple: it must be the Oracle in the tabernacle at Shiloh. “We do not see our signs” means that the High Priests have ceased functioning with Urim and Thummim, because the Ark is gone. “There is no prophet any longer” means that Samuel has died. “There is no one among us who knows how long” pictures the despondency and depression, the inability to function in the days of Saul, before he is slain on Mount Gilboa, while David is still a young man. In this context, Synagogue is specified in the plural, at least two Synagogues were functioning in the early days of David (1040-1010 BC). These Synagogues are not just general gathering places; these are Synagogues of God, dedicated to His worship. We have already seen one such Synagogue perverted to pagan use.[[117]](#endnote-117) Even if parts of these verses are spurious, Masoretic interpolations, they indicate a well-educated guess that the Synagogue was a well-established Israelite institution before 1000 BC.

It is well known that the Israelites were organized as patriarchates from the days of Jacob, and by the time of Moses (1406 BC). Moses seeks the assistance of six elders from each tribe, in addition to their patriarch, a net of seventy-two, the prototypical Sanhedrin, who will receive spiritual gifts that empower them to understand, instruct, and judge their individual tribes from the Scripture that Moses is recording. Consequently, we believe, that the members of this prototypical Sanhedrin came to be called Judges: it is their function of leadership which we see operating in the book of Judges. Obviously, it is impossible for this prototypical Sanhedrin, these Judges to function without some sort of organized meeting. What took place in these meetings? Torah was read and explained to the people; then specific cases were judged. If something too difficult arose, it was passed up the ladder until it was solved; eventually, Moses had to deal with the toughest cases. Thus, we see from the days of Moses (1406-1366 BC), the necessary establishment of a prototypical Synagogue of some sort. It may not have born the title Synagogue; but, Synagogue it most certainly was.

So, any idea that Synagogue is a post 516 BC invention, is patent foolishness. The idea of Synagogue is built into the very concept of how Israelites did things; it is at the heart of what it means to be an Israelite from square one. It only makes sense that buildings be dedicated to larger matters, and what better day to study Torah issues than on the Sabbath. Minor daily issues could be settled in the city gates. The requirement to disseminate and explain Scripture required quite a lot more. It required a publication institution of scribes to keep the manufacture of manuscript copies, accurate, in good repair, and in plentiful supply. Such manuscripts were treated with a similar, albeit subordinate, respect as that of the original, including archiving in a special place. The public reading of such manuscripts required more skills, and constant study.[[118]](#endnote-118) If such memories were to be inculcated within families, a lot of work was necessary.[[119]](#endnote-119)

***Conclusion***

The Ten Commandments is neither a “morality code” nor the “ideal of Western Civilization. The life bringing Decalogue is an essential unilateral stage of the Everlasting Covenant. Monotheism, which was well-known from Creation, does not triumph in 516 BC; it triumphs between 4 BC and 33 AD. This same triumph brings about the perfection of the Davidic Dynasty and the complete restoration of the Covenant. The picture painted by BBS caries a perverse resemblance to the destructive and distorted exegesis of Isaiah: as if Isaiah were plagiarized.

Josiah and monotheism are all but forgotten. Any triumph of monotheism bears a false ring. Jerusalem is made a misleading focal point; when every eye should be on the Shəkinah. Assyria falls to Babylon, and Babylon to Medo-Persia. The true crisis of Judea is that the Judeans are gone from the pages of history forever. God is most certainly not dead; nor does it seem so: we cannot read nineteenth and twentieth-century philosophy and theology back into sixth-century BC Judaism.

The Jews, however, barely surviving, have been sent home. After seventy years of punishment, they have been relegated to the status of a landed; but, non-Covenant people: for the Shəkinah has abandoned them, leaving them as orphans. What remains of their sacred documents is in tatters, needing reassembly, not from pseudo-documents either; translation becomes necessary for the understanding of the people. Alterations to Israelite worship, though compelled by circumstance, were not effective in establishing credibility or validity: the Jews are now a permanent vassal state, until their final destruction in 70 AD. Still, they, impetuously in childlike temper tantrum, continue to kick against God and resist His discipline.

Efforts to find new ordinances are vain and ineffective. Attempts to manipulate the outcome by trumped up quasi-faith, likewise fail. The power of faith rests in Yahweh, Who, is faithful; not in the intensity of one’s prayers. The Jews are unable to maintain the Covenant. The theme of Exile and Return fails to hold water. Rewriting history to fit the theme is just another form of lying, and self-deception: it never happened.

Self-redemption is a non-starter. Protection comes on Yahweh’s terms. The Synagogue was discovered to be an ancient institution, not a new invention. The return is completed. Animal sacrifices are restored. Everything is almost as it was: except the Shəkinah, the autographs, and the crucial priestly instruments are not there. The Covenant is seemingly gone forever.

[[120]](#endnote-120)

1. The idea that Western Civilization finds its moral ideal in the Decalogue is patently absurd. No countries have been more abusive of the Decalogue than the countries that comprise Western Civilization. We could go item by item to develop our case against the horrors of anti-Decalogue Western Civilization; but, a few examples will suffice for the time being: crusades, Machiavelli; slavery, colonial movement, manifest destiny, and social Darwinism; banking and usury (Bank of England); monopolistic restraint of trade, development of opium trade and other vice centered businesses (East India Company); and on and on. No countries have been more deserving of the punitive hand of God than the countries of Western Civilization: Greece, Rome, Venice, Switzerland, Germany, Portugal, Spain, England, and the United States, to name just a few. The avarice of Western Civilization knows no bound. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Where does such an idea come from? One location, we have not yet discussed, consists of the intimate relationship between Psalms 1 and 2, which we have been led to believe is even considered to be a single Psalm by some scholars. In Psalm 1, we encounter a very distinctive ode to Torah. In Psalm 2, we immediately encounter the enthronement of the Son. This is virtually identical to our understanding of the Decalogue. The dormant Law (Romans 2:14-16) is brought to life in our hearts as we kiss the Son. Everything about Psalms 1 and 2, speaks of the same relationship between the Father and the Son, which we see in the Decalogue’s introduction and affirmation. Since all of the Psalter is an ode to Torah, we continue to encounter prophetic details of the life of Christ throughout it. See also Jeremiah 31:31-40. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. It is just wrong, perverted thinking to suppose that Trinitarian monotheism on earth began at any time other than at Creation. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. What is the true difference between death by rules and death by unbelief? Both reach the same conclusion. Psalm 37:31; 40:8; 119:34; Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Yes, God has evidently abandoned the Judeans; He abandoned them to become Jews. The Judeans, for the most part, wished to live their lives without the Covenant; everyone doing what was right in their own eyes. God simply granted their wish. For the greater part of the period from 586 to 4 BC, the Jews lived without God: there were rare exceptions. This period of abandonment, a Divinely ordered time-out, should have taught the Jews a valuable and much needed lesson: many of them managed to twist this to their own desires. In the final analysis, we must conclude that the Judeans and the Jews abandoned God, before He ever abandoned them: even then, they are under the discipline of the “rods of God”. Exodus 4:20; Job 21:9; Psalm 2:9; Isaiah 10:5, 24, 26; 11:1, 4; Jeremiah 25:8-11 (seventy); 50:20-23 (a hammer); Lamentations 3:1; Ezekiel 21:1-32 (a sword); Habakkuk 1:4-13 (justice)

   See also Jeremiah 23:29 where the Word of God is described as a fire and hammer. Jeremiah speaks of the destruction or discipline of the false prophets that contradicted and controverted Jeremiah on a regular basis.

   God has a plan for the whole human race. Jewish separatism and exclusivism has never been part of that plan. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. This is at the heart of the problem. BBS supposes that mankind has the ability for self-salvation: in this case, god is not necessary: he is only imaginary. Many of the Jews have come to believe that they are their own Messiah. The Bible insists that mankind is incapable of self-salvation: in this case, the truth of God looms large: for He is the only way out of the worldwide human disaster. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Israel no longer exists at this point in history (605, 597, 586 BC). [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Only the physical human side of the Covenant is broken. The Divine side of the Covenant cannot be broken, even if the tablets are destroyed: for the perfect Son is not yet born, the One Who does not sin. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Eric M. (and Carol) Meyers, professor at Duke with no other special qualifications in archaeology.

   <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_M._Meyers> [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. The destruction of Jerusalem marks the end of the Covenant people Israel-Judea as such. These dead cannot be brought to life by any mere human physician. The Jews, “Jewish people”, that return from Babylon in 516 BC are no longer a covenant people: the Shəkinah has abandoned them; the Ark, Mercy Seat, and Decalogue are all gone; the Oracle Scriptures are all missing; the High Priesthood with its miter, ephod, Urim, and Thummim are nowhere to be found; all that is left is an empty corpse going through the motions of religion; the prophets are, for the most part, strangely silent. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonian_captivity#Archaeological_and_other_non-Biblical_evidence> [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. For Dr. Dever, the visible sign of His Presence is the temple, not the Shəkinah, the Glory. There is no mention here of the Ark, or of the One enthroned upon the Ark. Dever’s opinion is of very little merit here. For Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the post-exilic prophets, God is very much alive; as is also, the confidence that the Eternal Covenant will be kept in spite of the Jews. Jeremiah 31:31-33; 32:40; Ezekiel 16:60; Daniel 9:27; Haggai 2:5; Zechariah 9:11; Malachi 3:1 [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. This is pure speculation. There is no evidence that anything survived from the temple that was not carried away to Babylon. What was recovered was copies and pieces of copies that were pasted back together in an attempt to recover the lost autographs. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. We have no record of what the priests did or did not bring with them. The only evidences for this would be the Babylonian Talmud (200-500 AD), and the journey of the Magi in 4 BC: but neither are discussed or even mentioned by BBS. Even though the Babylonian Talmud is a late document; it is difficult to explain its existence without a sizable Jewish presence and Jewish Scripture in Babylon. It is equally difficult to explain the presence and journey of the Magi in 4 BC if they did not include at least portions of the Old Testament in their research. The necessity of the existence of predecessor documents, suggests the possibility that such documents existed in Babylon from around 586 BC onward. However, there is no evidence that any of this Scripture was more than secondary copies. If the autographa were kept, they would be found in the Babylonian archives, not among the Jews. Another possibility cannot be denied is that such copies were brought in later from other places, possibly even after the return in 516 BC. Very likely, the returning Jews would be concerned that the Jews remaining in Babylon, would be provided with the Scripture necessary for worship.

    <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talmud>

    <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Magi>

    <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achaemenid_Empire>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem_Talmud> [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. There is very little to be “widely-accepted” about the Documentary Hypothesis. It is fragmented into numerous versions, precisely because it has no consensus. There is some dispute among P theorists, whether P was accomplished in Babylon prior to 516 BC or in Jerusalem after 516 BC. Hypothetically speaking, there is very little point to the Jews carrying much of their Scripture to Babylon; when, according to this absurd Documentary Hypothesis, fully 50% of Torah will be written by P (500 BC) after the return. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. In other words, the Jews fabricated a falsified history to justify their sorry existence: yet, this history has no basis in fact whatsoever, according to the BBS claim. The full richness of the Covenant is now reduced to one of the signs of the Covenant: namely, circumcision. The sign associated with the Davidic Covenant: namely the γένεσις παρθένου, is not given immediately, but only much later (2 Samuel 7:11-13; Isaiah 7:14). Isaiah (750-698 BC) prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah (Isaiah 1:1), over two-hundred years after David’s death; his prophecy will not be actualized until 4 BC, another seven hundred years.

    <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaiah>

    <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uzziah>

    <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hezekiah> [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Are we being led to believe, prior to 586-516 BC, that circumcision was merely a random chance, accidental barbarian tribal practice? What utter tripe. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Cohen is mindless of the fact that such a quasi-covenant is not worth the parchment it is written on. This pseudo-construct conveniently ignores Isaiah 7:14, which was well known, and attempts to replace the covenant of γένεσις παρθένου with the much older circumcision. Even so, Isaiah’s prophecy (750-698 BC) of virgin birth must stand during the captivity (586-516 BC). This prophecy alone explains why the believing Jews did not simply cease to exist, but clung to hope against hope in the midst of dire circumstances. Circumcision does nothing to meet such a need in times of utter despair. This virgin birth is clearly the faith of the Jews: for in the Septuagint they translated the Hebrew word, Almah, παρθένος. Compare Isaiah 7:14, “… διὰ τοῦτο δώσει κύριος αὐτὸς ὑμῖν σημεῖον ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ,” with Matthew 1:23, “Ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἕξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ ὅ ἐστιν μεθερμηνευόμενον Μεθ’ ἡμῶν ὁ θεός.” There are no major textual variations in these verses: OT B has you shall call (supported by D). OT א has he shall call (with even less support). The vast majority of Greek NT texts read they shall call. Within the grammatical context it is absurd to suppose that Ahaz can speak aloud from the grave, so that the Jewish populace and posterity will now speak for Ahaz, acclaiming Christ as Emanuel, God in our midst. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. This discloses another internal contradiction in the BBS story line. According to BBS, the exiles are an amalgam of Canaanites from Hazor, with Canaanites from Egypt, who accidentally absorbed the name Yahweh during their journeys. Now this Canaanite amalgam must resist returning to Canaanite follies: even though the idea of monotheism, according to BBS, is not fully formed, and will not be fully formed until around 500 BC. It seems to us that the Judean exiles have very little reason to believe themselves superior to their conquerors, whether they are an amalgam of Canaanites, or a gathering of Semitic tribes known as Israelites-Judeans.

    This spin ignores the fact that the exiles already know that their punishment is from God, and only seek God out of their desperate humiliation. Moreover, many of the Babylonian ethnicities are Semitic, rather than Hamitic: there is no basis for attitudes of superiority. As a matter of fact, Daniel and his three friends fully engage the Babylonian culture, becoming outstanding leaders within it: in this context they humbly beg to be relieved from certain dietary obligations, they do not remain aloof in any way. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. This imposes the modern, empty meaning of faith upon the word. Faith is derived from and related to pathos (pathology) and as such is constituted from the strong convictions of life that develop out of experience. The Jews now have faith because Yahweh has faithfully taught it to them. For BBS, Abraham (circa 1800 BC) does not really exist; Abraham is just a fiction inserted by the P writers to give their lie credibility and local color. If there is any Abraham, he is a character or composite of characters, a parable from 500 BC, about life as it was imagined around 1800 BC. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Yet, Abraham was never exiled. He only proceeded under his own free will. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Exactly how has God “acted on their behalf in the past?” God’s leadership of Abram/Abraham can hardly be considered acting on their behalf. Did God so act in the falsified legend of flight from Hazor and Egypt, in splicing these divergent Canaanites together in the central highlands? How is this to be considered an Exile and Return? Dr. Coogan has manufactured his own private mythos. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. There is no real need for any such P emphases. With the temple removed, circumcision, Sabbath, and Synagogue stand out all by themselves. There is no necessity for rewriting or addition of emphasis here. The original report (Torah) is an adequate explanation of all that has taken place. In a massive reconstruction and rewriting there is no necessity for the inclusion or invention of temple details.

    Except for the fact of preexistent promises for their return there is no reason for the Jews to hope for a return, or a chance to build a temple: there is no reason to retain Leviticus. The fact that massive segments about temple worship are retained is a strong indication that the P work has nothing to do with writing a falsified and invented version of Israel’s distant past, for which there is no evidence whatsoever. Rather, the P work must be seen as the frantic effort to preserve and recover the Torah as Moses originally wrote it, before anything was lost. The temple originals were already destroyed or locked in captors archives. Concealed and hidden copies would have to be used for the reconstruction. Nothing was added. Nothing was taken away. The P work could have gone on in Babylon; or later, back in Jerusalem, after the return. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. There is no good reason to suppose that such practices were not established in Israel from before its inception. There is evidence of Synagogue establishment, as early as the Judges. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16 [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Western Civilization is a widely-taught, college-baccalaureate-level, history course. In a social milieu desperately trying to grasp the implications of world economy and peace, Western Civilization presents a highly biased and myopic view, ignorant of Eastern Civilization, African Civilization, Asian Civilization, as well as many others. No wonder, then, that Americans fail to understand Russian, Slavic, Greek, Turkish, Syrian, Jordanian, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and other world relationships, to name just a few. It is the arrogance that Western Civilization is the only civilization that matters, which leads to so many of our problems. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Sometimes said of Athena’s temple… however:

    <http://penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/imperialfora/nerva/geminus.html>

    <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4433099?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_of_Janus_(Roman_Forum)> [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Genesis 9:16; 17:7, 13, 19; Leviticus 24:8; Numbers 25:13; 2 Samuel 23:5; 1 Chronicles 16:17; Psalm 105:10; Isaiah 24:5; 55:3; Isaiah 61:8; Jeremiah 32:40; Ezekiel 16:60; 37:26; Hebrews 13:20 [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. The proofs of the unilateral nature of the Covenant are these:

    God alone writes and hands the original tablets to Moses. There are only four times where God is said to write in all of Scripture. Exodus 31:18; Deuteronomy 9:10; Daniel 5:5; John 8:6

    Even in the Exodus and Deuteronomy copies of the tablets, God speaks and Moses records. Where we are able to find evidence of some sort of notation, even this is reported as though it came from God directly. There is no report that Moses was permitted to even ask questions about the Covenant. Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5

    The people are so terrified that they refuse to listen to God or speak with Him: they have no interaction, other than terror, with the receiving of the covenant. Only a handful of patriarchs, risk going up the mountain. Exodus 19:3, 20; 24:1-18, 18; 32:15; 34:4; Numbers 20:27; Deuteronomy 5:1-33; Isaiah 31:4; 40:9

    Both tablets are sealed inside the Ark for Divine keeping; ordinary humanity has no part in the stipulated obligations. Exodus 25:16-22; Deuteronomy 10:1-3, 5; 1 Kings 8:9; Hebrews 9:4

    The only human interaction is found it the words, “Honor your Father and your mother”, which we believe directly applies, only to the Divine-human Prince. Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; Matthew 15:4, 6; 19:19; Mark 7:10; 10:19; 18:20; Ephesians 6:2

    The lid of the Ark is called, the Mercy Seat, indicating that the keeping of the Covenant is entirely dependent on God’s Mercy. Exodus 25:17-22; 26:34; 30:6; 31:7; 35:12; 37:6-9; 39:35; 40:20; Leviticus 16:2, 13-15; Numbers 7:89; 1 Chronicles 28:11

    The high priest does nothing with the Covenant, except to recertify the unbroken seal by the sprinkling of blood once a year on the Day of Atonement. Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 16:1-34; 23:27-28; 25:9; Hebrews 9:7; 12:24; 1 Peter 1:2

    The themes of eternality and blood continue throughout the Bible until they reach their culmination in the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus. Hebrews 13:20 [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16 [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Judges 17:1-18:31 [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Psalm 51:11-17 [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. The baptism of the Spirit replaces circumcision as a rite of entry. Numbers 11:29; Matthew 3:11; 28:19; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; 11:13; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 2:38; 10:47; 11:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13 [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Genesis 17:4-5; Numbers 11:29; Deuteronomy 11:19, 29; Joshua 8:33; Ezekiel 33:8; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 11:13; John 3:16; Acts 18:6; 20:26; Romans 4:17-18; Romans 5:14-21; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Revelation 14:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Genesis 21:12; 22:1-18; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; 2 Samuel 7:11-16, 18-29; 22:51; 1 Kings 2:33; 11:39; 1 Chronicles 17:10-14, 16-27; 2 Chronicles 6:16; Psalms 2:1-12; 18:50; 22:1-31; 24:1-10; 89:1-52; 110:1-7; 132:1-18; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; 11:1; Jeremiah 22:30; 23:5; 30:9 [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Psalm 20:6; 28:8; 45:7; 84:9; 105:15; Daniel 9:24-27; John 4:25 [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Matthew 21:43; John 1:11; 14:6 [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Isaiah> [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaiah_scroll> [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Isaiah> [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. For example, Poe, who was said to have mastery of at least three different writing styles: literary criticism, poetry, and short stories. Famous painters are often classified by periods, as they transition from one painting style to another (He was in his cubist period or phase). Among the notable Israelites; the Prophets are arguably the most creative, the most diversified, the most flexible: these variations flow from their steady conversation with the Shəkinah. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Isaiah mentions his own name sixteen times. Isaiah 1:1; 2:1; 7:3; 13:1; 20:2, 3; 37:2, 5, 6, 21; 38:1, 4, 21; 39:3, 5, 8 We risk a jocular, more than slightly sarcastic, conjecture, “We guess Isaiah didn’t write chapters 3-6, 8-12, 14-19, 21-36 either: his name is not found there.” Maybe, Isaiah’s style and subject matter changed, so that his name is no longer important to the discussion. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. “He walked naked and barefoot,” a very humiliating role to play. Isaiah 20:2-4 [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Some of these prophecies are very well known, due to their exact quotation in Handel’s Messiah.

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messiah_(Handel)> [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Proverbs 6:16-19; Isaiah 61:1-11; Zechariah 8:16-17 [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Isaiah 58:1-12 (eighth century BC, three hundred years ahead of P) [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. unknown author [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_brain> [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs> [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. Genesis 1:2, 26-27; 2:7; 6:3; 9:6; 41:8, 38; Exodus 28:3; 31:3; 35:31; Leviticus 19:31; Numbers 11:17, 25-26, 29; 14:24; 16:22; 24:2; 27:16, 18; Deuteronomy 34:9; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Samuel 10:6, 10; 11:6; 16:13, 15-16, 23; Ezekiel 8:3; John 4:24; Romans 1:9, 23; 8:16; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 1:15 [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Consider Alvin Plantinga’s discussions of philosophical warrant. Luke 11:13

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warrant_and_Proper_Function>

    <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/warrant-9780195078626?cc=us&lang=en&>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alvin_Plantinga> [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Luke 11:13 [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28-29; 2:16-20; 3:1-20 [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. It is only fair to ask, since the rabbis had already spoken to this issue before 4 BC, why did the Masoretes resume the quest? There isn’t a hidden agenda here, is there? [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Zealots, Sicarii, Publicans, Samaritans, Essenes, even believers, and the like…. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Ezekiel 10:18-19; 11:22:23; 43:1–10 [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(597_BC)> [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(587_BC)> [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonian_captivity>

    <http://www.bible-history.com/map_babylonian_captivity/map_of_the_deportation_of_judah_the_destruction_of_jerusalem.html>

    This article puts any hypothesis of the “triumph of monotheism” to the test.

    <http://www.rollstonepigraphy.com/?p=544> [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiglath-Pileser_III> [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shalmaneser_V> [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sargon_II> [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiglath-Pileser_III> [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. Ashurbanipal –

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashurbanipal>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_of_Ashurbanipal>

    Nineveh –

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Nineveh_(612_BC)>

    Megiddo – in the irony and mystery of life, Josiah, in league with Babylon, moved to block Necho Ⅱ, who had become an Assyrian ally. Josiah was killed for his troubles and Judea briefly became an Egyptian vassal. 2 Kings 23:29, 30; 23:34; 2 Chronicles 35:20, 22; 36:4;

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Megiddo_(609_BC)>

    Harran –

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall_of_Harran>

    Carchemish –

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Carchemish> [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashur-etil-ilani> [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sin-shumu-lishir> [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinsharishkun> [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashur-uballit_II> [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Megiddo_(609_BC)> [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fall_of_Harran> [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Carchemish> [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. 2 Kings 20:12; Isaiah 39:1; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marduk-apla-iddina_II> [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. Sennacherib sieges Jerusalem around 701 BC. [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marduk-zakir-shumi_II> [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bel-ibni> [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashur-nadin-shumi> [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nergal-ushezib> [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
78. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mushezib-Marduk> [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
79. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kandalanu> [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
80. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabopolassar> [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
81. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyaxares> [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
82. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Megiddo_(609_BC)> [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
83. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nebuchadnezzar_II> [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
84. Daniel and his three friends may have been deported to Babylon at this time.

    2 Kings 23:34-36; 24:1, 5-6, 19; 1 Chronicles 3:15-16; 2 Chronicles 36:4-5, 8; Jeremiah 1:3; 22:18, 24; 24:1; 25:1; 26:1, 21-23; 27:1, 20; 28:4; 35:1

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehoiakim> [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
85. Ezekiel may have been deported to Babylon at this time.

    2 Kings 24:6, 8, 12, 15; 25:27; 1 Chronicles 3:16-17; 2 Chronicles 36:8-9; Esther 2:6; Jeremiah 24:1; 27:20; 28:4; 29:2; 52:31; Ezekiel 1:2

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeconiah>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(597_BC)> [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
86. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psamtik_II>

    2 Kings 24:17-20; 25:1-4, 7-21; 1 Chronicles 3:15-16; 2 Chronicles 36:10-11, 18-19; Jeremiah 1:3; 21:1, 3, 7; 24:8; 27:3, 12; 29:3; 32:1; 34:8-22; 37:5-16; 39:2; 52:7, 12-25; Ezekiel 24:1-2; 30:20-21; 33:21; 40:1

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zedekiah>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(587_BC)>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonian_captivity> [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
87. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amel-Marduk> [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
88. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neriglissar> [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
89. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labashi-Marduk> [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
90. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nabonidus> [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
91. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belshazzar> [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
92. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyrus_the_Great>

    There is much dispute about the identity of Darius the Mede at about this time.

    Daniel 5:31; 6:1, 6, 9, 25, 28; 9:1; 11:1 In 11:1 LXX only: the reading is Cyrus.

    The main thing wrong with the following false-hypothesis, proving its error, is that Daniel is first written in Aramaic. For this false-hypothesis to be true to the era, it would be necessary for Daniel, if a second century work, to be written in Greek.

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darius_the_Mede>

    Darius I (522-486 BC) fits the pattern in many respects, except he is not known to be a Mede. That being said, in 550-522 BC, before his ascent to the Achaemenid throne, he may have served as viceroy of Babylon under Cyrus, being given the honorary title, King of Medes, especially to honor the Medes for their influence in Babylon. In other words, there is ample room for political apologia here.

    <https://explanationblog.wordpress.com/2008/06/17/the-identity-of-darius-the-mede/>

    <https://pppministries.wordpress.com/2010/07/17/cyrus-king-of-persia-aka-king-darius-the-mede-son-of-ahasuerus/>

    <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1563&context=auss>

    <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/Darius-Mede>

    <https://truthonlybible.com/2016/01/08/darius-the-mede-a-solution-to-his-identity/>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darius_I> [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
93. We much prefer the language throne-name to title. It is next to impossible to uncover childhood designations. Throne-name addresses the problem with neutral bias. In Assyria, he was called Tiglath-Pileser; in Babylon, he was known as Pulu: does his childhood name really make much difference? In Persia, he was Cyrus; in Babylon, he could have been Darius. [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
94. Leviticus 26:19; Deuteronomy 28:23 [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
95. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\_G.\_Dever

    “I am not reading the Bible as Scripture… I am in fact not even a theist. My view all along — and especially in the recent books — is first that the biblical narratives are indeed ‘stories,’ often fictional and almost always propagandistic, but that here and there they contain some valid historical information. That hardly makes me a ‘maximalist.’ ”

    and

    “Archaeology as it is practiced today must be able to challenge, as well as confirm, the Bible stories. Some things described there really did happen, but others did not. The Biblical narratives about Abraham, Moses, Joshua and Solomon probably reflect some historical memories of people and places, but the ‘larger than life’ portraits of the Bible are unrealistic and contradicted by the archaeological evidence.” [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
96. “God is dead”, as a philosophical concept, may have originated with Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). The Death of God Movement seems to have reached its zenith around 1950 or 1960. Today it seems to be on the rise again; albeit the twenty-first century version may better be described as apathy: The post-Christian era. This is simply not sixth-century BC thinking.

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_is_dead>

    <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_of_God_theology>

    <http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,941410,00.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
97. Zechariah 7:13 [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
98. Jeremiah 25:1-38, especially verses 11 and 12; 29:10; Daniel 9:2; Zechariah 7:5 [↑](#endnote-ref-98)
99. John 1:11 [↑](#endnote-ref-99)
100. Daniel 9:2 [↑](#endnote-ref-100)
101. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I,_Claudius>

     <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I,_Claudius_(TV_series)> [↑](#endnote-ref-101)
102. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Documentary_hypothesis> [↑](#endnote-ref-102)
103. Even though the known writings on the subject specify Torah, more must have been collected: for how else would we have come into possession of these documents. Expressions such as, “gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading”, necessarily mean more than the delivery of a raw exegetical sermon: a complete Aramaic (block Hebrew) translation is required; reading of the translation is crucial; then exegesis, further teaching, as well as questions and answers follow. The recovered documents were written in paleo-Hebrew; the translation, which is what we possess today, is written in block Aramaic script. Ezra 7:11-12, 21; Nehemiah 8:1, 4, 8-9, 13; 9:3 [↑](#endnote-ref-103)
104. By the way, this puts the lie to any suggestion that they thought they could survive without animal sacrifices… on circumcision, Sabbath, and Synagogue alone. They evidently restored the three major feasts: Pesach, Shabbat, and Sukkot. None of these would be abolished until 70 AD. Shall we suggest that, historically speaking, the events of the sixth-century BC, are nothing more than the rewritten themes of Titus in 70 AD? [↑](#endnote-ref-104)
105. Psalm 137:1-9 [↑](#endnote-ref-105)
106. True faith is built on substance and evidence. Hebrews 11:1 [↑](#endnote-ref-106)
107. Such poor farming methods deplete the soil of nutrients, loading the soil with toxic salts, making the soil non-productive in one or two generations. This may be part of the driving force behind land fallowing laws. [↑](#endnote-ref-107)
108. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1343969/Stone-Age-tools-Crete-prove-man-sailed-sea-130-000-years-ago.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-108)
109. Genesis 18:5-8 [↑](#endnote-ref-109)
110. Daniel 2:1-45 [↑](#endnote-ref-110)
111. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_Germany> [↑](#endnote-ref-111)
112. C. S. Lewis (1898-1963) thought of these in, *A Grief Observed*, (1961), before Elizabeth Kübler-Ross (1926-2004) graced the pages of history with her hypothesis (1969).

     <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%BCbler-Ross_model> [↑](#endnote-ref-112)
113. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/synagogue> [↑](#endnote-ref-113)
114. ibid [↑](#endnote-ref-114)
115. 1 Chronicles 6:39; 2 Chronicles 5:12;

     <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalms_of_Asaph#Identity_of_Asaph> [↑](#endnote-ref-115)
116. Here is a pervasive theme in Scripture: the departure of God as a discipline measure in the face of extremely wicked behavior. This is the Divine time-out of His children. When we have disobeyed God, He may simply refuse to listen to us, or answer our prayers for a season. This can leave us with the opinion that God is an absentee landlord; however, the Bible assures us that He keeps a watchful eye on all our activities. Leviticus 26:19; Deuteronomy 28:23; Psalm 78:60; Isaiah 59:2 [↑](#endnote-ref-116)
117. Judges 17:1-18:31 [↑](#endnote-ref-117)
118. Psalm 1:2 [↑](#endnote-ref-118)
119. Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:1-12; 11:13-21 [↑](#endnote-ref-119)
120. If you have been blessed or helped by any of these meditations, please repost, share, or use any of them as you wish. No rights are reserved. They are designed and intended for your free participation. They were freely received, and are freely given. No other permission is required for their use. [↑](#endnote-ref-120)