

## The Fourth Gospel and Hebrews

### Paul Wyns

#### Introduction

Previous articles on the Fourth Gospel (4G) suggested that the Gospel was written to the Diaspora at Ephesus and discovered links between the 4G and Luke-Acts.<sup>3</sup> Luke is regarded as Paul's companion and biographer; therefore his employment of underlying Johannine sources helps in establishing the early provenance of the Fourth Gospel – before the segregation of a distinct “Christian” ecclesia at Ephesus (founded by Paul).

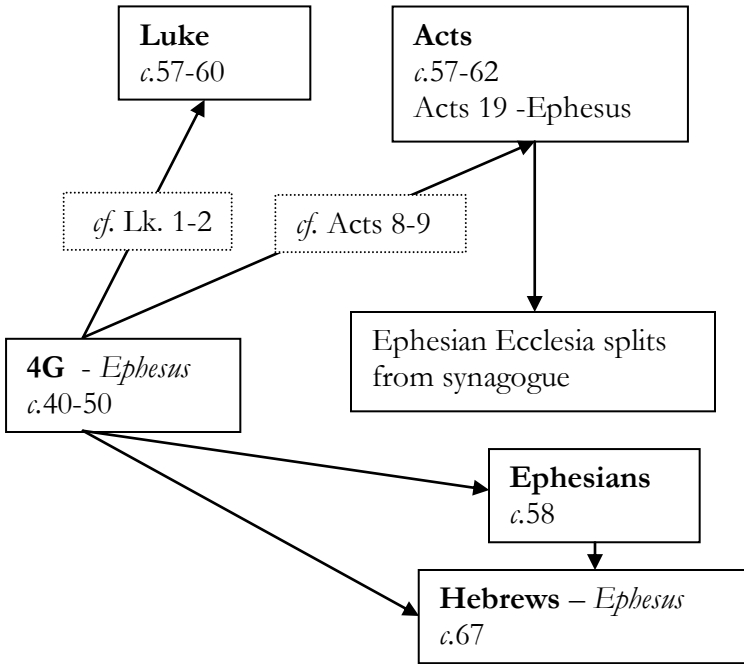
The following article will attempt to demonstrate that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written to the same audience (Diaspora Jews at Ephesus), probably after the death of Paul. Hebrews shows the same concerns about baptism as the 4G; however, in Hebrews the situation is in danger of degenerating into outright apostasy.

The relationship between the books might be represented as follows:<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> See P. Wyns, “The Destination and Purpose of the Fourth Gospel” and “The Fourth Gospel and Paul” in *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation*, (Vol. 3, No. 2, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> The dates are culled from J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1976), 352. Dates are given as approximations (by no



### The Doctrine of Baptisms

The unusual **plural** phrase, “of the doctrine of baptisms” (βαπτισμῶν διδασχῆς), is listed in Heb 6:2 among the rudimentary teachings of Christ. How then are we to understand such baptisms? Is this contrasting the baptism of John and Christian baptism? J. D. G. Dunn believes that those addressed are most probably converts from Judaism:

The initial preaching to them having taken up what was valid in their old belief. This is the best explanation of the non-(specifically)-

---

means fixed) in order to establish relationships. For a review, see P. Wyns, “Review: Redating the New Testament” in *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation Annual 2007* (eds., A. Perry and P. Wyns; Sunderland: Willow Publications, 2007), 123-126.

Christian list of six points: they describe an area of overlap between Judaism and Christianity in terms common to both...<sup>1</sup>

G. R. Beasley-Murray states,

Since the plural ‘baptisms’ is so unusual in the New Testament, we may safely set aside the view that repeated immersions are thereby intended. The employment of βαπτισμός instead of the usual βάπτισμα confirms what in any case most naturally occurs to the reader, that the writer implies a contrast between Christian baptism and other religious ‘washings’. The term is wide enough to include the ritual washings of the Old Testament and every kind of baptism by initiates known in the writer’s time, including the baptism of John, the baptism practised in the Jordan Valley and by the Dead Sea, Jewish proselyte baptism, and whatever ritual washings existed among the various Mystery Religions.<sup>2</sup>

Previously, we have argued that the baptism of John and Christian baptism were essentially the same. The baptisms in Heb 6:2 are set in the context of “laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works” (Heb 6:1). The **foundation of repentance** can only refer to the baptism of John, whose baptism of repentance was the cornerstone or founding element of what would become the fully developed Christian baptism. We suppose that the letter’s warning against apostasy concerned those who had experienced the baptism of John and had consequently received the Spirit through the laying on of hands (*cf.* Heb 6:2) or, who had been re-baptised (like the disciples of the Baptist found at Ephesus in Acts 19:1-7). They were in danger of drifting back to Judaism. J. A. T. Robinson states that,

...just as disciples of John transferred their allegiance to the Christian church (as John 1 asserts and Acts 18-19 presupposes), so John himself is best explained on the hypothesis (however guardedly stated) that he had perhaps earlier been brought up in the Qumran community, or at any rate that his baptism of repentance is more fully understandable

---

<sup>1</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1970), 206.

<sup>2</sup> G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Biblical and Theological Classics Library: Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997), 243.

against that background than that of the other contemporary Baptist sects.<sup>1</sup>

This is entirely plausible as the Qumran community also practised lustrations and attached importance to the Isaiah oracles.<sup>2</sup> The Qumran community was hostile towards the Jerusalem priests whom they regarded as evil and impure. The only rituals available to them (outside the Temple cult) were the baths and lustrations practised in the Old Testament. The Qumran covenanters had an eschatological orientation and by applying texts such as Isa 40:3, saw themselves as preparers of the way.

John the Baptist may or may not have grown up, or been influenced by the Qumran community; what is clear, however, is that his baptism was unique. It can be differentiated from the multiple Qumran baptisms in that it was a one off rite, concerned with repentance and manifesting the Messiah, rather than external purity. John's baptism differentiated itself so substantially from Qumran that it required further probing from the Jerusalem temple elite (John 1:19) – an investigation that would be uncalled for if it was simply an extension of Qumran covenanting. Nevertheless, John's baptism would readily lend itself to Judaists who attempted to subvert his former disciples back to the ritual purity of the Torah (water pots for purifying the Jews— John 2:6). The lapsed were 'once enlightened' and had 'tasted the heavenly gift' (Heb 6:4-5).

These last phrases often have exegetes in a quandary,<sup>3</sup> largely due to a failure to recognise the chiasmic structure and the correspondence with the 4G:

---

<sup>1</sup> J. A. T. Robinson, *Priority of John* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 172-173.

<sup>2</sup> J. A. T. Robinson, "The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community" in *Twelve New Testament Studies* (London: SCM, 1962: 28-52), 11-27.

<sup>3</sup> I. H. Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1995), 142, says: "The precise nature of the 'heavenly gift' is uncertain. It is unlikely that the Spirit is meant".

- A** who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift,
- B** and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,
- A'** and have tasted the good word of God
- B'** and the powers of the age to come.

The ‘power of the age to come’ is obviously synonymous with the ‘Holy Spirit’, which is the eschatological Spirit *par excellence*. Similarly, the ‘tasting of the heavenly gift’ is synonymous with, ‘tasting the good word of God’ and this experience is equated with ‘enlightenment’. Our suggestion is that the heavenly gift is the bread from heaven, and scholars fail to recognise the Johannine idiom—it speaks of partaking of the **bread and wine**:

<b>John</b>	<b>Hebrews</b>
<b>1:26</b> I (John) baptize with water....	<b>1.</b> Foundation of repentance
<b>1:5</b> The light shines in the darkness.... <b>1:9</b> The true Light which gives light....	<b>2.</b> Once enlightened
<b>4:10</b> If you knew the gift of God....	<b>4.</b> Tasted the heavenly gift
<b>6:53</b> Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood.....	<b>5.</b> Tasted the good word of God
<b>14:26</b> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name.....	<b>6.</b> The powers of the age to come

### *Common Themes between Hebrews and John*

The letter to the Hebrews demonstrates familiarity with many of the themes that interested the Fourth Evangelist.

1) The centrality of the figure of Moses (Heb 3:2f, 5, 16; 7:14; 8:5; 9:19; 11:23f; 12:21; John 1:17, 45; 3:14; 5:45f; 6:32; 7:19, 22f; 8:5; 9:29). This corresponds to the veneration of Moses in Hellenistic Judaism of the

Diaspora,<sup>1</sup> which understood Moses as unique because of his unmediated access to the presence of God (cf. John 1:18).

2) The particular contrast between the shadow (type) and true fulfilment is also a typically Johannine mode of idiom (the copy and shadow of the heavenly things (Heb 8:5); true tabernacle (Heb 8:2); copies of the true (Heb 9:24); the true Light (John 1:9); the true bread from heaven (John 6:32); and the true vine (John 15:1)).

3) The nearest NT parallel outside the Johannine Corpus to ‘the Word’ (John 1:1-3) is in Hebrews (Heb 11:3; cf.1:3). Similar to the 4G, Hebrews stresses the superiority of Christ’s ministry; it is no longer John the Baptist who is the forerunner (John 3:28), for Jesus becomes the forerunner of all believers:

Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizidek (Heb 6: 20).

John the Baptist may have been “sent ἀποστέλλω (*apostello*) before him” (John 3:28), but Jesus was the ἀπόστολος (*apostolos*) “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession (Heb.3:1). He was not an Aaronic priest like John, but a priest of an entirely different, higher order.

---

<sup>1</sup> The proposal that the initial audience for Hebrews is the Hellenistic synagogues is further supported by the allusion to angels as the mediators of the old covenant (Heb 2:2). This notion, absent from Exodus 19-20, and alluded to in Deut 33:2, gained acceptance sometime prior to the first century and spread among Hellenistic Jews (cf. Acts 7:38, 53; Gal 3:19; Josephus *Ant.* 15.5.3). Note also that Hebrews 12 contrasts Jesus with Moses by alluding to Stephen’s (a Hellenistic Jew) defence in Acts 7: Moses whom they refused (Acts 7:35); who refused him that spake on earth (Heb 12:25); him shall ye hear (Acts 7:37); Him that speaketh from heaven (Heb 12:25); in their hearts turned back again into Egypt (Acts 7:39); if we turn away from him (Heb 12:25). The veneration of Moses in Hellenistic Judaism can be quickly determined by following up the indices in J. H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols; New York: Doubleday, 1983-1985).

4) Hebrews (like the 4G) is also concerned with differentiating the cultic cleansings of OT ritual with baptismal cleansing representing the sacrifice of Christ. The ashes of the red heifer may have sanctified the unclean person's *flesh*, but they did not actually take away sins: "let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:22). The parallelism is not antithetic; it is purely rhetorical (cf. Ezek 36:25).

### The Ephesus Connection

Several textual details fit an Ephesus location for Hebrews:

1) The incident in Acts 19:13-17, which occurred at Ephesus, anticipates the theme of Hebrews 12—the removal of Mosaic forms of worship. The **seven exorcists**, the sons of the chief priest Sceva are overcome and flee **the house** naked and wounded.<sup>1</sup> The Synoptic parallel (Matt 12:43-45) is the Parable of the Wicked Spirit where we read "seven other spirits more evil (πονηρότερος) than itself...who decide to return to **my house** from which I came". The same term, "evil/wicked" (πονηρότερος), is employed in Acts 19:12, 13, 15, and 16 to contrast the casting out of wicked spirits by Paul with the exorcisms practised by the Jews. The Parable of the Wicked Spirit and the incident in Acts 18 should be seen against the background of John the Baptist, who had come to prepare the 'house' for the Passover Lamb (John 1:29), and Jesus who had literally swept the 'house' clean in order to remove the 'leaven' (John 2:15).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The typological details in Acts 19:13-17 are relevant to the judgment on Judaism anticipated by first century Christians. The house is a metaphor for the temple. The seven exorcists are an allusion to the priestly dynasty of the high priest Annas, who was also father-in-law to the high priest Caiaphas (*Ant.* 18.2.1, 2 and John 18:13), and who produced five sons who became high priest. Annas was the power behind the throne at Christ's trial (Luke 3:2; Acts 4:6; John 18:24). See H. A. Whittaker, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (Cannock: Biblia, 1985), 299-300, for an exegesis of the acted parable.

<sup>2</sup> Other noteworthy features in Matt 12:43-45 are the allusion to releasing the scapegoat (typifying the unclean nation sent into captivity) in the wilderness

2) The situation within the community described in the letter to the Hebrews (Heb 10:32-34) is one of persecution and difficulty, but *not of martyrdom*, as Heb 12:4 states that they had “not yet resisted unto blood” in the cause of Christ. It is noteworthy that although they were made a public show (θεατρίζω), “a gazing stock” (KJV), they were not subjected to loss of life. The Greek word signifies “to make a spectacle”, from which we get our word “theatre”. The riot (spectacle) at Ephesus occurred in the magnificent theatre of that city (Acts 19:31). In the past, Jewish converts, including former disciples of the Baptist, had loyally stood by their fellow Christians, but now they had to be reminded of their solidarity (Heb 13:3).

3) The author of Hebrews is also aware of the Pauline epistle to the Ephesians. Similar to Paul, he associates<sup>1</sup> Psalm 110 with Psalm 8 (Heb 1:3, 13, cf. Eph.1:20, 22) and Psalm 8 itself is cited in Heb 2:6b-8a. We may surmise that whereas Ephesians was written to the Gentile element in the ecclesia (Eph.2:11; 3:6-9), Hebrews was directed at the Jewish Diaspora: such expressions as “the fathers” (Heb 1:1), “your fathers” (Heb 3:9), “seed of Abraham” (Heb 2:16) and the language of Heb 13:9-15 is evidence of such an audience.

4) Another recurring theme in Ephesians is that of the “heavenly places” or “heavenly things”— it is used five times in Ephesians (Eph 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12) and only three times elsewhere. Two of these occurrences are in Hebrews (Heb 8:5; 9:23) and one in John 3:12. This neatly links John, Ephesians and Hebrews.

5) The Pauline themes of “boldness of access”, and “sonship” (Eph 3:12) are also concepts upon which the author to the Hebrews expands (Heb 3:16; 4:16; 10:19, 35). Whereas Paul makes the Ephesians aware of the privilege of being “foreordained unto the adoption as sons through Jesus Christ” (Eph 1:5), the author to the Hebrews reminds them that with sonship comes responsibility and chastisement for wrongdoing (Heb 12:5-6). Paul’s epistle

---

(*dry places*, cf. Lev 16:10) and the allusion to the feast of unleavened bread, when the Jews swept their houses clean of leaven in preparation for the Passover (Exod 13:7).

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 8 and 110 are also correlated by Paul in 1 Cor.15:27.



to the Ephesians addresses the tensions caused by the inclusion of Gentiles into the covenant relationship; Hebrews—the problem of Jews reverting to righteousness through legalism. Further thematic links are set out in the following tables:

Ephesians (Gentile)	Hebrews (Jews)
<p>Saved through faith... not of works that man should glory (2:8).</p> <p>Strangers from the covenants of promise (2:12).</p> <p>No more strangers and sojourners but fellow citizens (2:19).</p>	<p>Salvation by faith (Hebrews chapter 11).</p> <p>Strangers and pilgrims (11:9, 13).</p> <p>He hath prepared them a city (11:16).</p>
<p>2:14 For He Himself is our <b>peace</b>....</p>	<p>7:2 King of Salem, which is king of <b>Peace</b></p>
<p>2:14 Who hath made both (Jew/Gentile one and brake down the middle wall of partition (between God and man) having abolished in his flesh...</p>	<p>9:10 By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, <b>through the veil</b>, that is to say his flesh...</p>
<p>2:14-15 ...The enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances</p>	<p>10:20 Carnal <b>ordinances</b>, imposed until the time of reformation</p>
<p>1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your <b>faith</b> in the Lord Jesus, <b>and love</b> unto all the saints...</p>	<p>6:10 God is not unrighteous to forget your <b>work and the love</b>, which ye showed towards his name</p>
<p>1:15-18 ....the eyes of your understanding <b>being enlightened</b>; that ye may know.....</p>	<p>10:32 ....which after ye were <b>illuminated</b> (enlightened by the spirit)...</p>

## Conclusion

Hebrews was written to an urban community (Heb 13:14) that had links with Timothy and with those “from Italy” (Heb 13:24), a phrase previously used to describe Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:2), who had close associations with Ephesus (Acts 18:24-26). The author of Hebrews was familiar with the Pauline circle but this does not necessarily mean that Hebrews was written by Paul (who was probably martyred by now). We conjecture that the epistle was written to Ephesus from somewhere in Asia, where the author, together with Priscilla and Aquila (of Italy) were waiting to be joined by the liberated Timothy (who was imprisoned in Rome?). The *cumulative* evidence presented so far suggests that the 4G, Hebrews and Ephesians were directed at different elements within the Ephesian community. The 4G was written to the Diaspora Jews before the split with the synagogue; Ephesians was written after the split (when Gentiles were included); and Hebrews was a warning directed at Diaspora Jewish Christians at Ephesus who were drifting back to an apathetic Judaism.

## The Fourth Gospel and Revelation Paul Wyns

### Introduction

In earlier articles, links were established between the Fourth Gospel (4G) and the epistles to the Ephesians and Hebrews. It was suggested that they were all addressed to different elements within the Ephesian community at different stages of its development. The last writing that completes the chain of evidence is the warning to Ephesus in the book of Revelation. In order to reach a conclusion it is necessary to examine the relationship between the Johannine writings—are the 4G and Revelation written by the same hand, namely, John the son of Zebedee?

### The Relationship between the 4G and Revelation

Critical scholarship recognises that some relationship must exist across the Johannine Corpus for, despite their differences, they display many theological likenesses. This has led scholars to postulate a “Johannine School” or “Johannine Circle”—a common group of disciples of John the Apostle who

wrote and edited these works—thus explaining the similarities and differences between them. G. R. Beasley–Murray proposes that the authors of John and Revelation were both disciples of John the son of Zebedee.<sup>1</sup> There is almost unanimous agreement among critical scholarship that the author of Revelation and the author of the 4G could not be the same person. However, it is just as easy to attribute both books to a single author writing in different circumstances.

We know that Revelation was written during a period of banishment on Patmos, possibly under house arrest (or forced labour?) with restricted access to the wider Christian community. As such one would expect Revelation (if left unrevised) to be different in many ways to a Gospel that was composed under more comfortable circumstances, even though we may be uncertain about the exact date and circumstances of the Gospel.

The two Johannine writings in question are of a different linguistic character; for example, John of the Apocalypse frequently uses “ungrammatical” solecisms; however, these are done purposely because elsewhere the author practises correct usage. Nevertheless, according to G. B. Caird, “It is certain that they [both] came from the same geographical, cultural, and theological setting, if not from the one hand”.<sup>2</sup> What can be said for the view that both books were composed by the apostle John, the son of Zebedee?

### *Theological Correspondence between the 4G and Revelation*

In an appendix to M. Hengel’s work on the Johannine question,<sup>3</sup> J. Frey has noted correspondence between the apocalyptic theology of the 4G and Revelation. Both works emphasise what are typically regarded as apocalyptic motifs: dualism; determinism; election; messianism; revelation; hostility with the world; wisdom; eschatological judgment; and the revelation of heavenly mysteries by Jesus. Thus, Beasley-Murray observes that,

---

<sup>1</sup> G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (rev., ed.; NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 36.

<sup>2</sup> G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1996), 4.

<sup>3</sup> M. Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage; Ein Lösungsversuch mit einem Beitrag zur Apokalypse von Jörg Frey* (WUNT 67; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1993).

Both works alone, for example use the term *logos* (the “Word”) of Christ, both see in the Lamb of God a coalescence of the concept of the apocalyptic Warrior Lamb and the Passover Lamb (see Beasley-Murray 1978, 124-26; and 1986, 24-25,354-55). Moreover the terms for witness, life, death, thirst, hunger and conquer in a spiritual or moral sense occur so frequently in the Gospel and the Revelation as to suggest a positive relationship in the area of soteriology between the two works.<sup>1</sup>

A comparison table demonstrates their thematic associations:

<b>John 1</b>	<b>Revelation 14</b>
Where abidest thou? Come and ye shall see (vv. 38, 39)	I saw the Lamb stood on Mt. Zion and with him 144,000 (v. 1)
The Lamb of God. (vv. 24, 36) They followed Jesus (vv. 37, 43)	Which follow the Lamb wherever He goes (v. 4)
Nathaniel found ‘under the fig tree’ (v. 48)	Firstfruits unto God and the Lamb (v. 4)
Nathaniel an Israelite in whom is no guile(v. 47)	In their mouth was found no guile (v. 5)
<b>John 12</b>	<b>Revelation 12</b>
Then came a voice from heaven, saying, I have glorified it and will glorify it again (v. 28).	And I heard a loud voice in heaven, Now is the salvation, and the power and the kingdom, become our God’s, and the authority is become his Christ’s (v. 10, RV mg).
Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out (v. 31)	And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil (v. 9)

<sup>1</sup> G. R. Beasley-Murray, “Revelation” in *The Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Developments*, (eds., R. P. Martin, P. H. Davids; Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1997), 1032.

<b>John 12</b>	<b>Revelation 14</b>
If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my servant be(v. 26)	These are they that follow the Lamb wherever He goes (v. 4)
Verily, verily, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it bringeth forth much fruit (v. 24)	These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb (v. 4)
He that loveth his life shall loose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal (v. 25)	From henceforth saith the spirit, (RVmg), yea, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them (v.13)
<b>John 12</b>	<b>Revelation 14</b>
A voice from heaven saying (v. 28) The people said that it thundered, others said, an angel spake to him (v. 29)	Saying with a loud voice (v. 7) The voice of a great thunder (v. 2)
For this cause came I unto this hour(v. 27) Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out (v. 31)	The hour of his judgment is come (v. 7)
<b>John 16:20-21</b>	<b>Revelation 11:10; 12:1-5,12</b>
Enemy rejoicing A woman travailing in birth Sorrow Birth of a man child Your sorrow turned to joy	Enemy rejoicing A woman travailing in birth Pained to be delivered Birth of a man child Rejoice ye heavens...

John 21	Revelation 1
If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? (v. 21)	I was in the Spirit on the Lords day (v. 10)
The disciple who Jesus loved (v. 20)	Unto him that loved us (v. 5)
..even the world itself....would not contain the books that should be written (v. 25)	What thou seest, write in a book (v. 11)
This is the disciple that beareth witness (R.V.) of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his (= Jesus?) witness is true	Who bare witness (R.V.) of the word of God, and of the testimony (witness) of Jesus Christ, and of all the things that he saw (v. 2) The faithful witness (v. 5)

In R. Gundry's<sup>1</sup> analysis of λόγος (word) and its related family, he comments on John's frequent and synonymous use of ἐντολή (commandment(s)), as in Rev 14:15, 21; 15:10, 12, all of which speak of keeping Jesus' commandments, or commandment, and John 8:51, 52; 14:23, 24; 17:6, all of which speak of keeping his word. He also expands the associated family to include the word used for Jesus' μαρτυρία (testimony) in John 3:11, 32, 33; 4:44; 5:31; 7:7; 8:13, 14, 18; 13:21; 18:37 and compares this with the association of testimony with "the word of God" in the book of Revelation.

We can observe other connections between the two books. For example, in Rev 19:13 it says that Jesus' name is the "Word of God", and John's exile on Patmos "because of the word of God" (Rev 1:2, 9) probably refers to a testifying to Jesus himself and exile because of him. Or gain, the "commandment(s)" of Jesus concern baptism and the breaking of bread. This unique usage of "commandments" is also found in Rev 12:17; 14:12;

---

<sup>1</sup> R. H. Gundry, *The Old Is Better: New Testament: Essays in Support of Traditional Interpretations* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 2005), 327 (fn.28).

22:14. Finally, another pertinent observation is that the 4G contains no Olivet prophecy, probably because the equivalent is already found in the Seal Section of Revelation.

### *The Warning to Ephesus*

The Letter to the Hebrews demonstrates awareness of the warning to Ephesus in Revelation. Hebrews was a last ditch appeal to the Jewish element at Ephesus which carried the threat of the removal of the temple cult, a lesson that had been reinforced at Ephesus with the expulsion of the exorcists. Of course the early dating of the 4G (for which we argue) and Hebrews (pre-70) has implications for the dating of Revelation—we leave the reader to draw their own conclusions.

Previous articles have already established links between Hebrews and the community at Ephesus; the literary dependence of Hebrews on the warning to Ephesus in Revelation confirms our earlier conclusion. The reverse could be argued, namely that Rev 2:1-7 is dependent on Hebrews, but this is less plausible. Thus, we would argue that the author of Hebrews was obviously aware of the warning issued by Jesus to Ephesus and felt the need to remind his readers at Ephesus by weaving those warnings into the “woof and warp” of the fabric of his epistle.

If the first readers of Hebrews were unaware of the existence of Rev 2:1-7, then the multiple allusions would be pointless—now they form a powerful argument to the Hebrews—you (Jewish Christians at Ephesus) have already been warned from heaven by Jesus...therefore repent! (See Table)

Often a counter argument to the above view is presented, namely, that the situation in the ecclesia at Ephesus can scarcely have deteriorated so rapidly that it degenerated into apostasy so soon after being founded by Paul. Arguments of this nature are subjective (how long does it take—5 years, 10 years, 20 years for apostasy to develop?); moreover, they fail to take account that a concerted campaign was underway to subvert the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> Even during his lifetime Paul could declare that, “all those in Asia have turned

---

<sup>1</sup> On this see H. A. Whittaker, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles* (Cannock: Biblia, 1985), 393-399.

away from me” (2 Tim 1:15) and to the Galatians Paul could write; “I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel; which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal 1:6-7).

Hebrews (c. 67)	Revelation 2:1-7
But <b>call to remembrance</b> the former days, in which after ye were <b>illuminated</b> ye endured a great fight of afflictions (Heb 10:32)	<b>Remember</b> from whence thou art fallen...will remove thy <b>lampstands</b> (illumination) (vv. 1-7).
God is not unrighteous to forget your <b>work</b> and the love, which ye showed towards his name (Heb 6:10).	I know <b>thy works</b> and thy labour and thy patience (v. 2).
That ye wax not weary <b>fainting</b> in your souls (Heb 12: 3).	And hast borne, and hast patience and for my names sake hast laboured and hast not <b>fainted</b> (v. 3).
That <b>no man fall</b> after the same example of disobedience (Heb 4: 11; cf. 6:6).	Remember therefore from whence thou <b>art fallen</b> (v. 5).
...how much more shall we not escape, who turn away from him that <b>warneth from heaven</b> (Heb 12:26)	Revelation is the only message from Jesus <b>spoken from heaven</b> to the churches
And this word, yet once more signifieth the <b>removing of those things that are shaken</b> (Heb 12:27)	I will <b>remove thy lampstand</b> .... (v. 5)

God walked amongst the trees in the cool of the day (Gen.3:8). This aspect of God “walking” is picked up in a description of the tabernacle/temple (2 Sam 7:6; 2 Cor 6:16). This feature thus illustrates how the Garden of Eden and the tabernacle/temple are consciously linked as areas of dwelling for God. In the same way, Jesus walks amongst the seven candlesticks (Rev 2:1) which together correspond to the trees of Eden. Hence, the description of the candlestick in the tabernacle clearly mimics the parts of a tree - trunk,



branches, knops, flowers and almond fruit (Exod 25:31-37). Each ecclesia was to think of itself as a candlestick/tree in a Garden. The tree of life is forward of the throne of God and of the lamb in Revelation (Rev 22:1), just as the candlestick was also forward of the ark in the tabernacle in the Holy Place. Hence, each ecclesia was also to think of itself as a “tree of life”. Hence, in Jesus’ warning to Ephesus, there is mention of the tree of life (Rev 2:7). These temple/tabernacle/Garden allusions provide the framework for Jesus’ warning to Ephesus about their “fall”. Such allusions to Genesis in Revelation’s warning to Ephesus are deeply embedded and intricately woven and cannot be suspected of being a dependent on Hebrews—we are dealing here with the original which Hebrews references.<sup>1</sup>

### Conclusion

The 4G and the book of Revelation come, if not from the same hand, at the very least from the same mind. Revelation was received in the region of Asia on the island of Patmos and (admittedly weak) external evidence suggests that the 4G was also written to the community at Ephesus in Asia. The series of articles presented in the EJournal have presented a chain of internal evidence linking the 4G, Hebrews (and Ephesians) with different sections of the Ephesian community of believers at different stages of their development.

### Marginal Notes

#### Isa 13:17 and the Medes—AP

In an earlier article, “Babylon in Isaiah 13-14”,<sup>2</sup> it was suggested that Isa 13:17 referred to Median harassment of Israelite places of settlement in Media after the captivity of 722 (2 Kgs 17:6). The purpose of this note is to put another (better) suggestion into the field that is also consistent with the

---

<sup>1</sup> [ED. AP] The argument here is that the tightly knit text (Rev 2:1-7) is more likely to be the original for the echoes shared with a more diffuse text (Hebrews 4, 6, 10, 12)

<sup>2</sup> A. Perry “Babylon in Isaiah 13-14” in *Christadelphian EJournal of Biblical Interpretation Annual 2007* (eds. A. Perry and P. Wynn; Sunderland Willow Publications, 2007), 11-15.