



The Bulletin

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Richard S. Ascough, Editor

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Contents / Matières

CSBS / SCÉB Executive for 2008-09	iv
2008 Presidential Address	1
Minutes of the 2008 Annual General Meeting	26
Financial Statements	34
Membership News	46
Membership Directory (not available online)	58

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**Decoding Jacob at the Jabbok and Genesis 32:
From Crude Solar Mythology to Profound Hebrew Theology**

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I begin my talk tonight with a big “thank you!” for allowing me the privilege and honor of serving as your president. I want also to thank my colleague at Wycliffe College, Professor Donaldson, for his kind introduction.

The text I have chosen to consider tonight is Genesis 32. Now in choosing a text from the Old Testament I risk losing the attention of many Society members who specialize in NT/Christian origins. I am consoled that Professor Donaldson will likely seek revenge in next year's Presidential Address. I am further consoled that this Torah passage will be familiar to many Jewish members of the CSBS. For the rest of you, I have minimized the risk of boring you by including matters profane as well as sacred; hence my subtitle: “from crude mythology to profound theology.” So, if there isn't something here for everyone, I shall be surprised. So, on to Genesis 32.

I propose to tackle Genesis 32 by breaking it into two parts. I shall consider firstly the episode of the wrestling match in vv. 23–33 [ET 22–32]¹, and secondly the broader narrative that surrounds it, including parts of chapter 33. The bulk of attention will be given to the first section, since this is the more enigmatic and intriguing of the two. I nonetheless begin with the broader context because it now sets the stage for the baffling entanglement between Jacob and his ominous opponent curiously identified as both human (*ʾîš*) and divine (**lōhîm*).

I am convinced more than ever that Genesis 32–33 is not only about Jacob's reconciliation with Esau, but also about Jacob's ultimate

¹ Hereafter only the Hebrew versification will be given. The English verses in chapter 32 lag one behind. Also, abbreviations in this essay follow the list in the *SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody MA: Hendrickson, 1999) 89–121.

reconciliation with God.² The text wants simultaneously to be read on these two planes—the human (involving Jacob and Esau) as well as the divine (involving Jacob and God). This is why in part we have a preoccupation with twos in the narrative—two camps (mentioned twice, once in 32:3 and again in 32:8, 9); twin brothers; two names of Jacob; 200 she-goats, 20 he-goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams (and later 20 she-asses); as well as the identification of the wrestling partner as both a man and (a) god.

In my judgment an important clue to part of the purpose for the twos (involving God and a human) lies in the explicit association of the action of Esau with that of God in 33:10. Here, near the end of this part of the story, Jacob says to Esau, “to see your face is like seeing the ‘face of God’ now that you have received me favorably.” Whilst the tie between Esau and God might be a mere simile, this seems unlikely to me. For one thing, this is a very carefully crafted story. And for another, the words “face of God” are so rare that its reoccurrence already in 33:10 seems clearly to signal something important here about the meaning of the preceding story of the wrestling match.

A further case of equating the human and the divine is of course the identification of Jacob’s wrestling partner as both divine and human. As to the identity of the human, we are not told, but the most popular candidate is Esau.

A further clue to the *double entendre* of Esau as a literary figure also of God occurs in Gen. 32:4, 7, early enough to send a signal to the reader that the Esau = [literarily] God equation runs throughout the narrative. To see the link, hitherto unnoticed,³ all one has to do is recall an early theophanic tradition preserved elsewhere in the Torah—in Deuteronomy 33:2. Here Yahweh’s action reminds us of Esau’s in Gen. 32:4 and 7: Esau, like Yahweh in the theophany, is described as marching forth from the land of Seir with an army host at his side.⁴ In

² Compare W. Brueggemann. *Genesis*. Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982) 271–73. Drawing from Gen. 33:10, he writes, “The religious encounter and the renewal of the relation are not the same. But they come together and must not be separated. The theme of reconciliation touches the narrative about God and the narrative about brother.... Love of God and love of brother belong together” (*ibid.*, 273).

³ See already, though, J. Glen Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sun Worship in Ancient Israel* (JSOTSup 111; Sheffield; Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) 243–44.

⁴ The MT of Deut.33:2 reads: *yhw̄h missīnay bā’ w’zārah miššē’r lāmō hōpā’ mēhar*

short I am arguing that—whether a later point of obvious intertextuality within the Torah or part of the author’s original purpose—the writer employs *double-entendre* in his portrayal of Esau. (Later on I will suggest that the purpose of the link is to convey Jacob facing not just an *encounter* with his brother [and with God], but an encounter with the *wrath* of both characters.)⁵

At this point I want to leave us hanging partway through an analysis of the broader context of chapter 32 to focus now on the wrestling match at the Jabbok. And it is here that I offer my own interpretation of the story.

As a way of setting the context for interpreting the story of Jacob wrestling with the so-called “angel,” I want to recall four brief windows into the history of scholarship on the famous story. Scholars have long been troubled by an obvious gap in the logic of the story, namely that we are never told why, despite manifold references that imply its significance (vv. 25, 27; cf. v. 32), Jacob’s wrestling partner must depart because the sun is beginning to rise. Worthy of mention first as an explanation, if only for its charm and enviable piety, is the rabbinic interpretation according to which the “man,” the angel Michael, was being called upon to lead morning choir practice.⁶ (His fellow angels in fact threatened him with incineration if he didn’t come!) Second is the famous explanation of Hermann Gunkel that the mysterious man’s deadline at sunrise was a vestige from an earlier, different version of the story. Drawing on folklore from far and wide, Gunkel struck a chord with virtually all subsequent interpreters by suggesting that the earliest version of the story was about a traveler who encountered a night demon.⁷ Third, in testimony to the abiding compulsion of Gunkel’s early

pārān w’āīā mērib’bōī qōdeš mīmīnō ’ēš’dāī [’ēš] [dāī] lāmō. The NRSV translates, “The LORD came from Sinai, /and dawned from Seir upon us; /he shone forth from Mount Paran. /With him were myriads of holy ones; /at his right, a host of his own.”

⁵ Many commentators have sensed, rightly I believe, that the event of Jacob’s wrestling is not simply a foreshadowing of his encounter later with Esau, but functions also as a sort of death-like foreshadowing of his encounter with God, the outcome of which is a sort of regeneration. Cf. e.g., the comment of Dorothy Zellig in W. Gunther Plaut, Bernard J. Bamberger and William W. Hallo, *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981) 224.

⁶ These traditions are laid out nicely in Howard Schwartz, *Tree of Souls: The Mythology of Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 359–65 (esp. 361). (This section of the book is available on line, courtesy of OUP.)

⁷ Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis übersetzt und erklärt* (Göttingen HKAT: 3rd ed. revised;

form-critical work, is the view of Gene Tucker who presents this story as a showcase example of the value of Form Criticism,⁸ without which, he implies, it is impossible to understand the story as we now have it. And fourth, this text has become a *locus classicus* for various Structuralist readings. (Actantial analysis, for example, has led some to conclude our story is a case of an “extortion” or “scandal” because God is both Giver and Opponent.)⁹ If a consensus exists at all, it is that our story is incoherent in its outlay of plot and highly unusual (some say downright “primitive”) in its portrayal of the God of the Hebrew Bible.

As a foray into my own interpretation I want to follow (however inadequately!) in the tradition of Gunkel by beginning with what we don’t understand about the story. There are at least three aspects of our story that are especially problematic:

1. First is the famous enigma mentioned above: Why must Jacob’s partner depart on account of the rising sun? We simply are not told, suggesting either that the answer was once obvious but is now lost (as I shall soon argue), or that the answer belongs to an earlier, no-longer-important version of the story (as most scholars have argued).
2. Secondly, why after wrestling with a man, does Jacob name the place Penuel/Peniël, “Face of God”? We know the story so well we miss the incongruity. It being night, Jacob had “seen” very little. And when morning came he saw only dawn and the יִשׁ, “man” with whom he had been wrestling. If truth be told, we expect Jacob to have named the place, “I have wrestled with a man” (יָעַבְדָּתִי אִישׁ) or some such thing. No encounter follows in which Jacob sees the face of God. It is as though his seeing had happened already. Frustratingly, the language of Penuel (the “Face-of-God”) seems seamlessly to fill the role played earlier

Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1910) 315ff.; 361–62. A slight variation of this often cited notion is that the demon is a river demon.

⁸ Gene M. Tucker, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament* (GBS; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971) 41–54. (Tucker argues for three layers of tradition, including the final form.)

⁹ Wolfgang Roth, “Structural Interpretations of ‘Jacob at the Jabbok,’” *BR* 22 (1977) 51–62; cf. Roland Barthes, F. Bovon et al., eds., *Analyse Structurale et Exégèse* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestle, 1971) 27–39.

by the night wrestler. Victor Hamilton aptly summarizes the problem when he says of Jacob’s statement “I have seen God face to face”:

... a statement that is all the more remarkable given that it happened during the night at the bottom of a dark gorge. Until now, the narrative has focused only on Jacob’s struggle with a man, not with him seeing divinity. Jacob does not give to this place any name that recalls his struggling with God.¹⁰

3. Thirdly, what is the meaning and significance of Jacob’s injury? I shall return to this later.

The brilliance of Gunkel’s view notwithstanding, I want to suggest the key to understanding our story lies not with analogues from folklore of a much later period and from far away, but from ancient Egypt. I want to invoke the thought-world of ancient Egypt, most aspects of which for my purposes flourish in the New Kingdom Period (i.e. the 18th through the 20th Egyptian dynasties, roughly 1575–1075 BCE and especially the 19th dynasty, roughly 1315–1201 BCE). Significantly, most of the Egyptian notions are at home within the region of Heliopolis in the 13th Nome of Lower Egypt.¹¹ And Heliopolis, which is located in and round about Tell Hisn, is effectively a suburb of Cairo, north of Misr el Gedida. My point is this: the region is close to the Sinai and to the Via Maris corridor that leads to Israel. At Heliopolis are the some of the most influential and important cultic centres, including the temples of the sun god Re, Re–Atum (or Re–Harakhty).

No theory comes out of the blue. Mine arose from my previous research on the presence of solar imagery as it pertains to God within ancient Israel. There is of course a long history of Israel’s flirtation with the practice of associating the God of Israel with the rising sun. Those in the field of New Testament/Christian origins will likely recall two references by Josephus to the Essenes; one is that they got up in the morning and faced eastwards bidding the deity ‘to rise’ and the other is

¹⁰ Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 18–50* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 336.

¹¹ Latitude 30 degrees and 8 minutes north and at a longitude of 31 degrees and 18 minutes.

that they buried their excrement so as not to offend the ‘rays’ of the deity.¹² Deuteronomy forbids the worship of the sun and something is normally forbidden in reaction to an actual practice;¹³ Jeremiah complains of the prevalence of Judaeon sun worship;¹⁴ Ezekiel 8 implies that the Jerusalem priesthood in the late pre-exilic period worshipped the sun;¹⁵ Josiah removes from the Jerusalem temple itself cultic implements (including horses and chariots) for sun worship;¹⁶ Psalm 104 reflects the preservation of something closely akin to the Greater Hymn to the Aten—and this despite the short-lived and limited influence of the cult of Aten. The prophecy of Malachi describes God as *šemeš š’dāqâ* “the sun of righteousness.”¹⁷ And so on.

To apply the relevance of (largely heterodox) solar imagery for God to our story, it will be helpful to recall the Egyptian solar cycle. In the cycle, the sun god Re makes his journey in the day across the sky, and then continues his journey at night through the waters of the netherworld until he returns to the eastern horizon again at which point he becomes Khepri, god of the rising sun who represents new life, divine justification, and rebirth. Importantly, Re is manifested as a different god (or gods) at each phase of the cycle of the sun and, though the Egyptians may not have put it this way, the sun in effect undergoes metamorphosis at each new phase of the cycle of day and night. This notion is no more clearly articulated both textually and pictorially than in the New Kingdom. The Turin Papyrus, for example, a text of the Ramesside period (133, 10) states: “I am Khepri in the morning, Re in the afternoon, Atum in the evening.”

In a nutshell my theory consists of two parts: 1) the “man” is akin to the nocturnal phase of the sun which travels through the waters of the netherworld (often in humanoid form) on its way to becoming at dawn the sun itself; and 2) Penuel, “the Face of God,” is none other than the emerging sun, which the “man” once was, but which sight of Jacob has survived because he held on to it only at the beginning point of its intensity as it began to blaze above the eastern horizon.

¹² Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, II.128,

¹³ Deut. 4:19; 17:3.

¹⁴ Jer. 8:2.

¹⁵ Ezek. 8:16.

¹⁶ 2 Kings 23:11–12.

¹⁷ Mal. 3:20.

The best test of a theory is to see how well it accounts for the variables and problems. Here then is how the theory applies to the problems I have previously identified:

1. Why must the man depart at sunrise? Because the nocturnal phase of the sun’s journey has come to an end and our friend the humanoid wrestler is morphing into the rising sun itself.

It is of course important to ask whether the nocturnal god Atum (sometimes Osiris) was ever understood to be humanoid in form. The answer is yes. In fact Atum is depicted anthropomorphically more than in any other form.¹⁸

The theory helps to account for why many interpreters have intuitively sensed in our story forebodings of a death-like judgment the result of which Jacob finds vindication and is somehow thereafter changed. This sort of atmosphere describes accurately what the nocturnal phase of the sun involved. For example, Glynn Griffiths says the following about the elaborate pictorial representations of the nocturnal phase of the sun in the *Amduat*¹⁹ and in the *Book of Gates* (another New Kingdom guidebook to the beyond):

The night journey is by no means plain sailing, for Re is now threatened by demonic forces of darkness . . . The rebuttal of the powers of darkness culminates in the coming of dawn, and the sun god’s victory is at the same time a celebration of life over death. A natural concomitant of this concept is that a dominant desire of the deceased is to join the boat of Re and thus to share in his defeat of darkness and death.²⁰

¹⁸Karol Myseliwicz, “Atum,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Vol. 1 (ed. Donald B. Redford; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 158–60.

¹⁹ Alias the *Book of that which is in the Underworld*, a sort of guidebook to the descriptions of the afterlife associated chiefly with the New Kingdom tombs in the Valley of the Kings and of the Queens in Western Thebes. Versions of the story date from the 18th to the 20th dynasties.

²⁰ J. Gwynn Griffiths, “Myths,” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Volume 2 (ed. Donald B. Redford; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 477. For further discussions, see Griffiths, *Osiris and His Cult* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980).

What Griffiths is describing suggests that Gunkel in his demon view (as well as others who have seen in Jacob's encounter forebodings of divine judgment as at death) were on the right track. But there can be no question that the present Egyptian analogue is much closer in time and place to Genesis 32 than the later folkloristic material that Gunkel drew upon.

A further consideration lends support to the theory. I am referring to the location of the story at the Jabbok which tradition-historical criticism has convincingly demonstrated to be integral to the story in its earliest form(s).²¹ To many Israelites who lived in the hill country west of the Jordan river, the wadi Jabbok is in the lowest valley on the eastern horizon and is thus the first place where the sun appears. And of course the wadi itself, being the body of water from which the sun seemingly appeared in the early morning, would be the logical candidate for the waters of the netherworld from which the sun was believed to have emerged. In short, the wadi Jabbok is *the quintessential* location for the theory I am proposing.

In sum, I suggest, that the mysterious "man" in our story must depart specifically at "dawn" precisely because he is becoming the rising sun, reference to which sums the story up in v. 32: "And so the sun rose upon him as he traversed 'Face of God,' he limping on his thigh." There is thus no need to regard the transition between a man wrestling and Jacob having seen the face of God as hopelessly awkward. But this takes us one step ahead to the second part of the theory.

2. Why after wrestling with a man at night does Jacob name the place "Face of God"? As noted, Jacob's own explanation makes little sense to interpreters. Jacob has seen a man up to (and, tenaciously, beyond) the point of his departure at sunrise, not the face of God.

Here is where the second part of theory comes into play: Jacob is referring to the sun when he claims to have seen Penueel, "the Face of God." In other words, the man with whom Jacob was wrestling was

²¹ This is so chiefly because the word for wrestling which is so integral to the story is closely akin (at the level of popular etymology) to the Jabbok location. In other words the story of the wrestling match seems to be a *raison d'être* for the naming of the wadi as the "Jabbok." (The word "wrestle" in the prefixed form sounds very much like Jabbok.)

becoming "the face of God" *in the form of the rising sun*. The theory not only accounts for Jacob's reference to seeing God face to face, but it accounts for his own marveling at his survival; just as one cannot look at the sun in its full intensity, so Jacob survived seeing the face of God because he was tenacious enough to hang on to his opponent long enough to see him only begin to turn into the rising sun.

There is a possible problem with the theory. It entails the assumption that the storywriter equates the sun with the face of God, which seems to many people unlikely for an ancient Hebrew patriarch. In partial defense of the theory, recall that by any and all reckonings this story conveys a primitive and highly unusual portrait of the God of Israel. Moreover, I am not interjecting the sun into the story, as if in a desperate attempt to link it with the "face of God." "Dawn" is specifically mentioned twice in the story and "sun" in the summation in v. 32. The theory accounts for the presence of references to the sun both in the first and second parts of the story as well as the emphasis on early morning. Contrariwise, most if not all other explanations fail to reckon with the role of the sun, including its role as the only common denominator linking the "man" and "seeing the face of God."

It is important to ask whether there is any other evidence in the Old Testament for a link between God's "face" and the sun. I have considered this in some detail in my book;²² suffice it to recall here Psalm 24:6 and Psalm 17:5. The former has been the victim of emendation or corruption.²³ As contextual and text-critical studies have shown, in all likelihood the verse originally referred to God in both lines of the bicolon, as it still does in the LXX:

"This is the generation of those who seek Him,
of those who seek the face of the God of Jacob."²⁴

The second colon in the MT now reads: "Who seek thy face, O Jacob," which awkwardly changes the subject from God, as in the first colon (and the broader context) to Jacob. A ready explanation for so awkward an emendation often involves a matter of theological delicacy, which my theory readily provides. On my reckoning it is easy to imagine that later

²² Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun*, 233–48.

²³ For example, H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms 1–59* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) 311, judges the MT reading to be "hardly plausible according to the parallelism and the context."

²⁴ The witness of the LXX reads: ζητούντων τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰακώβ.

in time the appropriateness of the expression “face of the God of Jacob” would be theologically problematic.²⁵

Psalm 17:16 is similarly noteworthy. The psalmist writes, “As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness, I will be satisfied with thy likeness when I awake.” Here seeing God’s “face” is synonymous poetically with seeing God’s “image” at morning-time. (The word for “likeness” is *tʾmûnāh*, “form.”)

Even if turns out to be the case that the sun was never elsewhere identified with the face of the God of Jacob/Israel, one could perhaps still claim that the link between the man and the rising sun primarily belongs to the Egyptian background to the story. For example, many interpreters have suggested that Jacob’s encounter fits the paradigm of the sort of *dream* from which one wakes up with a Charlie Horse; indeed, its parallel panel in the overall chiasmic structure of the Jacob cycle—the story of Jacob’s ladder—is explicitly stated to be a dream. The problem of course is that the story in its present form seems comfortable playing both the card of Penuel and the rising sun, as if they are related in the way I suggest.

3. What is the meaning and significance of Jacob’s injury? I shall again defer to later in the paper; suffice it to say for now that once again ancient Egypt offers a possible answer.

If a theory is on the right track, evidence often comes from different angles to support the general idea. I believe this happened in the case of the location at the Jabbok. I believe it also happens here. I am referring to two additional elements from Egypt that nicely dovetail with my theory.

²⁵ In *Yahweh and the Sun* (244–48, 263) I have argued that not just v. 6, but the whole of Psalm 24 presumes a solar understanding of Yahweh. Case in point: this is the psalm in which the psalmist longs for the doors of the gates of the temple to be lifted up so high as to permit the entrance of the *melek hakkābôd*, “The King of Glory.” And another case in point: Israel is notable for being an exception to the norm among ancient Near Eastern cultures in that it does not have a representation of the deity ritually processing with its priests and devotees in the vicinity of the temple, as is happening in Psalm 24. The sun as such a symbol would be an image that doesn’t break the second commandment because it wasn’t fashioned by man, but rather by God. And this image of which no trace would be left, can’t normally be looked upon anyway.

First, the references to the “face of God” in the Genesis episode find a common echo in Egyptian literature, especially in the context of the endpoint of the solar cycle. I refer to the fact that Egyptian literature commonly uses the expression “the face of Re” which of course refers to the sun. More specifically, a well-known context in which the face of Re is discussed is during his nightly trek through the netherworld in the solar cycle. Thus, those who tow the boat of Re say as they make their way through the watery dark en-route to morning time: “We follow Re towards heaven. Mayest thou have power over thy mysterious face, oh Re. Re’s face is opened [i.e. the sun is beginning to shine].²⁶” In other words the ancient biblical reference has a close analogue both in language (“Face of [god]”) and in context (late stage of solar cycle) to Egyptian literature. Moreover, although Re is a sun-god and reference to his face naturally denotes the sun, we have in the story of Jacob wrestling the language “face of [god]” in clear association with no less than three specific references to the sun. This I suggest leads one to ponder equating “Penuel” with the sun.

Second, it is highly characteristic of descriptions of the nocturnal phase of the solar cycle to involve a lot of talk about naming, including that of the god in question.²⁷ Elaboration in this case is worthwhile.

A few general words on naming in Egypt, and then a few words on a 19th dynasty (1350–1200 BCE) tale that considers how an especially resourceful and tricky figure was able to secure the secret name of Re. (The text I am referring to is *The God of the Unknown Name of Power*.)

The ancient Egyptians took names and naming seriously; names were thought to be magically and ritually portentous, associated with the individual quite directly. A person often had more than one name, each to reflect a different aspect of his personality. Kings had no less than five names, one for each of the five-part titular expression. Moreover, Egyptian kings sometimes changed their names to reflect a change in religious or political policy.²⁸ So too, Gods regularly had several different names that served to denote different manifestations. The major gods, as well as goddesses, also had secret names that they kept even

²⁶ This translation comes from J. Zandee, “The Book of Gates,” in *Liber Amicorum: Studies in Honour of Professor Dr C.J. Bleeker* (Leiden: Brill, 1969) 316–17.

²⁷ I want to thank my graduate student Shawn Flynn for reminding me of the potential significance of this. He is a good scholar; someone should hire him!

²⁸ Amunhotpe IV changed his royal title to “Akhenaten,” “beneficial to/the light of Aten,” to reflect his new focus on worshipping the solar disc.

from other deities. Chapter 142 of the *Book of the Dead* mentions no less than 100 names of Osiris.²⁹ In this vein, the well-known story of *The God and His Unknown Name of Power*, found on manuscripts dating again to the 19th Egyptian dynasty, recounts several attempts by Isis to learn the secret name of the sun-god Re. Moreover, the means by which Isis was successful at learning the secret name of Re was to take advantage of Re at a point of weakness and desperation (in this case, by afflicting Re with venom from a snake).³⁰ Thus after Re has been immobilized and starts to fade, Isis says: "Tell me thy name, my divine father, for a person lives with whose name one recites."³¹ Re goes through a long list of known names, none of which bring relief. "Then Isis said to Re: 'Thy name is not really among these which thou hast told me. If thou tellest it to me the poison [that has afflicted Re] will come forth, for a person whose name is pronounced lives.'"³²

If this is the same sort of background for Jacob similarly asking for the name of the man (*ʾiṣ*) and for the man renaming Jacob, then some further new light can possibly be shed on our story. First, contrary to some, Jacob's name-change is not necessarily indicative of a complete change in Jacob's identity. (A problem with this "total conversion" theory is that Jacob's character remains shifty in spots such as in 33:15, 18 where Jacob goes to Succoth instead of Seir. As well, Jacob continues to be known as "Jacob" after 32:23–33.) Rather "Israel" should perhaps best be understood as a *supplementary* name given by the god-man to reflect that divine being's experience of Jacob's character.³³ And given that Jacob is so named for having striven with God and "men" (note the plural), the significance of the name-change must spill beyond the wrestling match (with a single "man") likely to include Laban and

²⁹ T. G. Allen, *The Book of the Dead, or Going forth by Day* (SAOC 37; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

³⁰ Isis collects the spit from Re that has fallen to the ground (suggestive perhaps of his age) and she uses it and the dirt to fashion it into a snake.

³¹ J.F. Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts*, 53; *ANET*, 13.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Though I doubt it, given that both "man" and "god" tangle with Jacob, the name change could reflect the being's experience of Jacob in this single event. This possibility will likely be more attractive for those who argue that this episode existed independently of its surrounding context. Its fatal flaw (unless one equates the single "man" with Esau as well as at the same time with some other human or human-like being) is that Jacob is named Israel because he strove with God and *men* (*ʾnāšim*).

probably Esau as well.³⁴ Second, given that the name is not just any name, but Israel, the new name perhaps signals, as it did when an Egyptian king added a new name, a "turning point" in the unfolding of (the) God's plan for him. In Jacob's case God's promise is moving ahead; his offspring will later form the nation of Israel. And finally, for God to reveal a new name for Jacob-Israel—it perhaps had the effect of somehow enlivening the patriarch, if, as in the Egyptian case, "what one names lives." (Certainly this is partly what the name change to "Israel" entails because in the text it constitutes a "blessing" for Jacob.)

Perhaps Jacob, like Isis, was trying to do the Egyptian equivalent of making his opponent say "uncle." For the god-man in effect to say "uncle," he would have to divulge a new name, thereby winning his release, but thereby also surrendering a measure of power to Jacob.

Still on the topic of naming, I should like to reconsider Jacob asking for a (new) name of God. I believe our storyteller wants his readers seriously to flirt with the notion (yet not definitively conclude) that God in fact divulged a new name of his to Jacob: "Peniel." Consider the following. 1. The new interpretation I have offered concerning the referent of Penuel/Peniel being God, specifically links the name Penuel to God and more generally opens up this part of the story for fresh consideration. 2. The text nowhere states that God did not reveal his name to Jacob, only that he said, tantalizingly: *lāmmâ zeh tiš'al lišmî*, "what are you doing asking my name?" This response denotes mere surprise, leaving the question of God revealing his name teasingly open. 3. The wording of the dialogue between Jacob and his opponent over naming is sufficiently tit-for-tat as to lead the reader to suspect that Jacob was indeed given a name for God. Thus, each asks the other for his name, and a name *in each case* is given, both with the typical theophoric "el/god" element. 4. Even where the wording isn't tit-for-tat, the differences still lead to the same conclusion. Thus, whereas Jacob asks for a *blessing* and in return is given a *name* (Israel), Jacob asks for a *name* and in return (someone) is given a *blessing* (Penuel?). (Recall that in the present context the giving of a name is tantamount to receiving a blessing.) To be sure we are not told who blessed whom, but here the ambiguity is intentional. One might well ask: "Why be coy here?" Possibly because of theological sensitivity around God revealing a name

³⁴ The reference to "men" poses a difficulty for those who see the wrestling story to have awkwardly been set into the broader narrative, a view I reject.

for himself, and not just any name, but a new name and certainly one that is (at least to us) controversial for its implied link between God and the sun.³⁵ And one might further ask: "Why would God tell Jacob his new name but not the narrator or the readers?" For one thing, from a literary standpoint, the reader is, after all, anyone and everyone, whereas Jacob is a key Patriarch. For another, from a contextual standpoint, God appeared to Jacob when he was "alone." Moreover, Jacob is in the uniquely special position of just now having become *Israel*. Recall too, that Jacob has just seen God face to face, which no one had done before.³⁶

In sum, I suggest our storyteller strongly implies, but holds back from allowing us to conclude with certainty, that God revealed a hitherto unknown name of His to Jacob, and that the name was Penuel/Peniel, "Face of God."

Part II: The Sexy Part

I turn now to the unanswered question. What is the nature and significance of Jacob's injury? No one will be surprised to hear me claim that the answer once again lies in the folklore of New Kingdom period Egypt. But first I need briefly to rehearse a debate over the anatomical words that locate the injury.

To the reader of English who has a limited knowledge of human anatomy and physiology the text seems quite straightforward. The nocturnal wrestling partner dislocated Jacob's hip, which has led to a later dietary restriction, still practiced among observant Jews, that the sciatic nerve of an animal, excepting birds, must be removed prior to being prepared for consumption. On this understanding the only problem is that the prohibition is not mentioned elsewhere in the Torah.

³⁵ Elsewhere in the story we see similar sensitivity where Jacob and God are concerned. Jacob has only barely survived, having seen God face to face. And by all reckonings Jacob's encounter with God is uniquely intense and intimate.

³⁶ Someone might object that Jacob assigns this name to a place, not to God. But it does not follow from this that the name does not also pertain to God. After naming the place, Jacob says, "for I have seen God face to face." And if the parallel in Genesis 28 where Jacob assigns the name Bethel to Luz be invoked, recall a) the last thing we read is that Jacob assigned the name "Bethel" to the stone he erected (which we now know represented the deity itself) (28:22), and b) Bethel is well attested as the name of a god (see W. Röhlig, *DDD* [2d ed. 1999], 173–75). Cf. the place name Anathoth. In any event, to press for a clear-cut case is to run counter to the purpose of the writer who, I suggest, is intentionally being subtle.

The issue, however, is complex in a number of ways. The waters begin to muddy when one examines the Hebrew expressions lying behind both English "hip socket" (*kap-yerek*) and "sinew of the thigh" (*gîd hannāšeh*). The former expression is literally "palm of his hip" ("palm" as in part of the hand). The latter expression is "sinew of the [blank]," the "blank" depending on how one translates *nāšeh*. One problem with *nāšeh* is whether it is the same or a different root than in Jeremiah 51:30 where it refers to the might of warriors that has "dried up"³⁷ or "shriveled" (*nāš'îd*) such that they are as women. A problem with *gîd* is knowing whether "sinew" is the original meaning or an anachronism reflecting later dietary practice. This, for example is the view of the Charles Jacob Brim, a Jewish medical commentator who suggested *gîd* originally meant "regional nerve, blood vessel, tendon, muscle, joint, [or] fascia."³⁸

Medical experts also differ on the location and likelihood of Jacob's injury. A key problem is that only a severe blow such as falling from a considerable height could dislocate a hip and that it is in fact impossible to walk, let alone limp, with a dislocated hip. Not surprisingly, then, there is a long-standing debate within Judaism, from at least the time of Rashi until fairly recently in the journal *Judaism* about whether or not the "limp-ness" of Jacob might be of a different kind.³⁹ Jewish commentators raise the issue not only in relation to the Hebrew phrases just mentioned but in relation to the root *ḥq* which can mean "dust"⁴⁰ or, as a denominative verb in our story, "wrestle." From as early as the time of Midrash Rabbah 77:3 and 78:3 to as recently as Schneir Levine comes the view that the Jacob's opponent, assumed to be Esau, threatened to castrate Jacob. To Levine, the word castrate is now

³⁷ So, for example, *JPSV*, *NAS* footnote.

³⁸ Cited by Schneir Levin, "Jacob's Limp," *Judaism* 44 (1995) 325.

³⁹ Compare the sense of "dried up," "shriveled" for the word *nāšeh* discussed above. For an overview of rabbinic traditions, see David E. Fass, "Jacob's Limp?" *Judaism* 38 (1989) 143–50.

⁴⁰ The link between dust and wrestling is usually taken to be that wrestling is a dusty affair. Three different Jewish traditions—one that dust denotes sterility, another that it denotes fertility and still another that it denotes circumcision—each have in common a sexual component. For sources and discussion, see conveniently Fass, "Jacob's Limp?" 143–45.

missing in the sentence *wayyar³ kî lô³ yākōl lô* – “and when he saw that he was not able to [castrate] him. . . .”⁴¹

Plausible medical alternatives have been put forth, including an “inguinal hernia” (so Shneur Levine),⁴² or a “ruptured intervertebral disc producing severe and intractable sciatica from pressure on the nerve roots” (so Rendel Short).⁴³

The question remains: are there sexual connotations to Jacob’s injury as the rabbis and others have adduced? I want to return to this issue as part of a final foray into the thought world of Egypt in the New Kingdom period.

In my judgment the famous “Egyptian Tale of Two Brothers” (written during the 19th dynasty) contains an extended parallel to the plot line of the Jacob cycle.⁴⁴ My purpose here is to draw attention to one segment of the plot line in which several parallels to the story line of Genesis 32 emerge.

To show the extended parallels I must briefly rehearse the beginning of the story. As I rehearse the details, I invite you to recall at the same time the story of Jacob fleeing Laban in Genesis 31 and of Jacob and Esau in Genesis 32. The *Tale of Two Brothers* relates a conflict between an older brother, called Anubis, and a younger brother, Bata. At one point in the story the older brother is pursuing the younger brother with the intent of seeking deadly revenge for an offence that the younger brother allegedly committed against the older brother. As the younger brother is fleeing for fear of his life, he offers a sincere prayer

⁴¹ Without the epexegetical infinitive “to castrate,” the sentence remains translatable simply with *yākōl*, as “prevail” (i.e., “when he could not prevail over him”).

⁴² Shneur Levin, “Jacob’s Limp,” 327.

⁴³ A. Rendel Short, *The Bible and Modern Medicine* (London: Paternoster, 1953) 60. (I know this work through Levin, “Jacob’s Limp.”)

⁴⁴ On the *Tale of Two Brothers*, see most authoritatively, Susan Tower Hollis, *The Ancient Egyptian “Tale of Two Brothers”: The Oldest Fairy Tale in the World* (Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture 7, ed. A. J. Heisserer; Norman and London: University of Oklahoma, 1990). More accessible is Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: Volume II: The New Kingdom* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1976) 203–211. The first part of the story may also be found as “The Story of Two Brothers” translated by John A. Wilson, in *ANET*, 23–25. The Tale dates specifically to the Ramesside period and appears to have had a limited sphere of dissemination, being quite specific to the court of the Pharaoh. (A humorous anecdote: early excitement led the well-known scholar Mölendenke to suggest Moses would have studied this text at the University of Heliopolis!)

that the deity would intervene. As a result of his prayer, the sun-god Re places a body of water between the two brothers, such that each is on the opposite side. Each spends the night on either side. The younger brother calls to the older brother telling him that in the morning the sun-god, when it rises, will judge between the two of them and vindicate him.⁴⁵

The parallels to Jacob’s predicament are to my mind compelling, especially in relation to other data that provides a link between the Egyptian and Hebrew stories.⁴⁶ Full elaboration must await a further paper, but I will mention part of the case somewhat in detail so you will see what I mean.

The story line continues as follows. Immediately after the Jabbok-like divine intervention by the sun-god that results in the younger brother’s justification, young Bata, who one expects to return to the land of his brother, diverts to a different place. Interestingly, according to the Papyrus Jumilhac version, which is unfortunately late and thus more problematic where the date of the motifs it contains is concerned, Bata, like Jacob, makes stalls for his cattle at this new locale, calling the place Saka.⁴⁷ The challenges the later Jumilhac version poses notwithstanding, it is tempting to compare Bata’s actions to the otherwise strange reference to Jacob diverting his path to Succoth and making stalls for his cattle. A comparison of the Hebrew and Egyptian accounts is as follows. Genesis 33:17 reads: “But Jacob journeyed on to Succoth, and built a house for himself and made stalls for his cattle; that is why the place is called Succoth.” Column III, lines 22–23 of the Jumilhac Papyrus read: “The place where he [Bata] was exiled is called Saka until this day. Because of this, there has been a stable for cattle in this land.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ See the previous reference for translations. Most accessible is *ANET*, 23–25.

⁴⁶ One parallel has been unanimously recognized already: that between Joseph and Potiphar’s wife and between Bata and Anubis’s wife. The parallels to which I refer are—fearing his brother’s wrath, only to find, subsequently to prayer, that each brother is on the opposite side of a body of water that becomes a scene of divine judgment, occurring at sunrise and involving a deity understood in solar terms. (I shall soon add to this list an injury to the sexual organs.)

⁴⁷ For a translation of the Jumilhac papyrus, see Hollis, *Egyptian “Tale,”* 171–74.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 171. The Egyptian word sounds like the Hebrew word *sukkâ*, “booth,” but they are not cognates (there being no corresponding connection between their key phonemes). Any correspondence (beyond the fact that both words play an etiological role as the name of a place associated with a religious rite) would only be at the level of a popular etymology.

Returning to the safer ground of the Papyrus D'Orbiney version of the Tale and to the issue of a sexual connotation to Jacob's injury, I want here to refer to a key aspect of the Egyptian Tale. The younger brother Bata, in protest of his innocence and as an oath of innocence before the sun-god Re, emasculates himself and throws his phallus into the water between them whereupon it is eaten by shad (fish). This act immediately signals the reader that Bata's act is in imitation of the dismemberment of Osiris, as recorded in the Plutarch account of the Osiris myth.⁴⁹ This is significant because, as in the Genesis account, this injury led to a well-known dietary prohibition being invoked.⁵⁰

Perhaps I am asking you too much to entertain the possibility of some kind of fairly direct association here, so I will make my point and move on. Firstly, the parallels are not limited to Gen. 32:23–33 but include both the preceding and following story line, in effect supporting the view of some scholars that the Jabbok incident is integral to its narrative context. And secondly—and this is my main point—the reference to Bata's emasculation provides indirect corroborative evidence in support of the longstanding view that Jacob's injury was sexual in nature.⁵¹

Part III. The Theological Part

At this point I would like to move from that part of my paper that deals with crude mythology to that part of it that concerns the theological meaning of the passage. But before I return to the broader context of chapters 32 and 33, I should like to attempt to explain the theological

⁴⁹ ANET, p. 25 n. 8.

⁵⁰ In the Egyptian case the eating of what remained of Osiris's phallus by a certain type of fish (shad) led to a dietary restriction against the eating of that type of fish (*ibid.*, n. 9)

⁵¹ I had long been puzzled by the seeming discontinuity between the sexual connotations the rabbis and many contemporary scholars assign to Jacob's injury on the one hand and the commonly held view that Jacob's injury was in the area of the hip on the other hand. A penny dropped when I was explaining the sexual connotations to a mixed group of conservative seminary students. When they seemed distraught, I became sensitive to their concern. I assured them that the passage couldn't really have a sexual connotation by drawing a hipbone on the blackboard as the alternative locale for the injury. The students seemed not to be assured by what I had drawn, so I sought to repair the situation by drawing a detached sinew springing from the top of the bone. This was no more assuring. Hiding all embarrassment, I managed not to confess that I seemed to have stumbled upon a possible connection.

significance of the sexual imagery we have just discussed in the wrestling episode (32:22–32).

These crude elements likely serve no vulgar purpose, but rather a profoundly theological one. Recall that in chapter 31 Jacob's wives contrived with various human schemes to bear children for Jacob. Our story likely functions as a theological corrective. It seeks to direct the reader to the true means by which Jacob's children came into being. By giving Jacob a "groin" injury, God gives the patriarch (and all who read the story) a telling reminder that it is ultimately *God*—not Jacob and his wives—who exercises sovereign control over the matter of the origin of Jacob's children. The point was not to render Jacob impotent (Rachel will soon bear Benjamin), but to afflict him with a pointed reminder, lest he or anyone else should come to the wrong conclusion concerning the people of Israel. Yes, it was through Jacob and his wives that his children were procreated, but, as the abiding pain at Jacob's wellspring serves to remind us, it is through the will and mercy of God *whether* and *how* the Children of Israel came into being.

I turn now to the theological meaning of the broader narrative that surrounds the story of Jacob wrestling (32:3–22 but also 33:1–15). Of the various proposals to the chiasmic structure of the Jacob cycle,⁵² I prefer the breakdown offered by Clinton Branscombe in an excellent Master's thesis.⁵³ Following him, I take all of chapter 32 to be the chiasmic counterpart to 28:10–22, Jacob's encounter with the "messengers of God" (*mal'akê 'lōhîm*) at Bethel (cf. 32:2 where the same rare expression occurs). There the messengers delivered a series of promises on God's behalf: that Jacob and his offspring would be given land; that his offspring would abound like the dust, spreading in all four directions; and that he and his progeny would be a medium of blessing. Then we read in v. 15: "Know that I am with you and will guard you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I promised you." In response Jacob makes a vow to God:

⁵² For a helpful discussion that includes bibliography, see Stanley D. Walters, "Jacob Narrative," *ABD* (1991) 3:599–608.

⁵³ Clinton Branscombe, "Narrative Structure in the Jacob Cycle" (unpublished M. Rel. thesis, Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, 1992).

Then Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will guard me along the course that I walk, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God. And this stone that I have erected as a standing stone will be the house of God [Bethel] and all that you give to me I will give back by way of a tithe" (28:20-21).

In the case of God and Jacob, God lives up to his part of the arrangement. And so at the centre of the chiasm we have stories of Jacob gaining offspring (29:31–30:24) and livestock (30:25–43), with the very centre of the chiasm being the reference to the birth of Joseph in 30:24–25.⁵⁴ God had been faithful to his promises. But had Jacob? Not once in the intervening narrative is there mention of Jacob fulfilling his vow to honor the standing stone at Bethel or to tithe. Nor (apart from his desperate plea of unworthiness in 32:10–14) does he even offer an extended prayer. Now, as the many allusions back to the episode at Bethel remind Jacob, he has come back to the land God promised him and he needs God's favor. But no vow has yet been fulfilled; indeed it isn't until chapter 35 where God has to summon Jacob that we see Jacob worshipping at Bethel.⁵⁵

Now, as we know from the *Legend of King Kirta* in the Ugaritic texts, it can be dangerous not to follow through on a vow made to a god. Kirta, to whom El promised the precious dynastic gift of offspring, made a vow to Asherah that he did not fulfill and as a result he experienced the wrath of Asherah who made Kirta fall deathly ill.⁵⁶

At this point it will be helpful to remember that, as I understand from the reference to Esau marching from Seir with an army, the narrator sets the reader up to understand the potential wrath of Esau also as the

⁵⁴ So again Branscombe, "Narrative Structure," 51–55.

⁵⁵ Indeed it will not be until chapter 35, when God commands Jacob to go there, does Jacob return and worship, admonishing his family to rid themselves of their idols. The reader gets the sense that, as one commentator puts it, "Jacob had tarried too long on his way to this holy place. . . . He had neglected the altar of God" (Kyle M. Yates, "Genesis," in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* [Chicago: Moody, 1962], 37).

⁵⁶ The vow is made in CAT/KTU 1.14. IV. 34–43. Asherah remembers the vow in CAT/KTU 1.15. III. 25–30. For a translation accompanied by transliteration of the Ugaritic texts and brief comments, see Simon B. Parker ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (WAW; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) 19–20, 26–27 respectively.

potential wrath of God in the next verse (32:4; cf. v. 7; Deut. 33:2). Running from the barrel of Laban's gun, Jacob now finds himself running down the barrel of Esau's gun. Given that Jacob's encounter with Esau is also an encounter with God, Jacob is looking down a gun that is in fact "double barreled"—one barrel being Esau's (almost literally) and the other being God's (literarily). As I argued at the beginning (and as many others have seen), the barrel of impending human wrath and that of divine wrath are inextricably linked in chapters 32 and 33. According to the so-called Yahwist, reconciliation with God and with others goes hand in hand.

In my judgment, Jacob's fear of Esau's wrath (and also of God's) and what he is to do about it drive the flow of the narrative in 32:3–22. In fact, it is the phenomenon of double reconciliation that allows us to make sense of the narrator's occupation with twos noted earlier, including especially that of the "two camps" (*maḥ^anāyim*). As I shall now try to show, the two camps highlight two different options Jacob has for being reconciled to his brother (and at the same time to God).

The biblical writer intentionally creates at least two possibilities for the meaning of "two camps." In 32:3 the "two camps" can only be the camp of Jacob on the one hand and the camp of God on the other. But later in the chapter, upon hearing of the threat to his offspring and livestock, Jacob divides his own entourage into "two camps." Why does the writer intentionally offer in the same context two different interpretive options? I believe the writer is telling us that Jacob is weighing two options as the best way to obtain reconciliation for himself. These alternative options are signified by reference to the two "other" camps. Will Jacob's mode of reconciliation, his other "camp," be the camp of *God* mentioned in 32:2 or will his other "camp" be the camp of *his own* mentioned in 32:7? The narrator sets up the two alternatives early on and then skillfully alternates between Jacob relying on one "camp" at one time and praying to the other "camp" at another time⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Note for example that in 32:2 we have Jacob encounter the "messengers of *God*." Only two verses later we read that Jacob sent "messengers before *himself*" to his brother Esau. We then move between the two options Jacob has. In verses 8 and 9 Jacob divides his own camp into "two camps." Then, immediately following, in verses 10 and 11, Jacob offers a prayer to the "other camp" of divine origin, asking God to keep his promise and to bless him despite Jacob's own unworthiness to receive such. After spending the night there (a further allusion to the Bethel incident), he selects items from among his own

right up to the climactic encounter with Esau the next day (v. 23). By this time, the narrator can be confident that the reader gets the point: *Jacob is literally divided on the matter how he will appease the wrath of the one who marches from Seir to, so Jacob supposes, oppose him.*

It should hardly come as a surprise within a section of narrative in which *ya^aqōb̄ yē^ʾāhēq-s* at the *yabbōq*, that another triadic wordplay is used, this time between “camp” (*maḥ^aneh*), “gift” (*minḥā*), and “favor” (*ḥēn*).⁵⁸ The point of the wordplay is that Jacob, by means of offering from within his own “camp,” wants it to serve as a “gift” in order to win the “favor” (*ḥēn*) of Esau. In other words: will deliverance come to Jacob from within his own “camp” that constitutes a self-made “gift”?⁵⁹ Or will it come from within the “camp” of his God who bestows sheer “favor” or “grace” (*ḥēn*)? The link between “camp” and “gift” (along with a tie-in to “favor”) is made most clearly when Esau interjects one word where the other is expected; Esau says to Jacob in 33:8: “What is all this ‘camp’ that I have encountered?” To which Jacob replies, “to find favor (*ḥēn*) in the sight of my lord.”⁶⁰ Here Esau in effect denies the camp its status as “gift.” Esau regards the gift as totally extraneous to the task of appeasement, though he eventually accepts it.

The narrator is not content to leave the significance of “gift,” or what he thought of Jacob’s tactic, at the level of a mere wordplay. He shows his hand brilliantly and leaves no doubt as to Jacob’s favored strategy when he has Jacob say outright in v. 21, “I will appease [the Piel of *kpr*] his face with the gift that precedes me, so that afterwards when I see his face, he will lift up my face.” But the narrator also shows that God will overrule Jacob’s chosen tactic, substituting it for his own tactic of grace, for in the next verse—and as the backdrop to the nocturnal bout—we read, “so the ‘gift’ (*minḥā*) passed over before him [Jacob],

effects, to serve as a “gift” for Esau. Not surprisingly, the various items are most often numbered with reference to two: 200 she-goats, 20 he-goats, 200 ewes and 20 rams and, later, 20 she-asses. Next the narrator records Jacob giving instructions to the various subgroups into which he has divided his camp. Not surprisingly these instructions are recorded twice.

⁵⁸ The word *ḥēn*, “grace, favor,” occurs 17 times in Genesis and more than a third of those cases occur in these two chapters, and always on Jacob’s lips.

⁵⁹ Twice we are told that Jacob’s servants were to tell Esau that the horde of animals was a “gift” (32:19, and v. 21).

⁶⁰ It suits the purpose of the writer well that “my lord” is a reference both to God and to a superior such as, in this case, Esau.

while he himself lodged that night in the ‘camp’ (*maḥ^aneh*). And Jacob was left alone.”⁶¹ The camp of God meets Jacob only when alone and having dispatched his “gift.”

I like to choose this text as a way of making a point to my Christian students, many of who believe, even if they won’t admit it, that the God of the Old Testament is somehow different from that of the New. Somewhere along the line they have been taught that the God of the Old Testament judges his people on the basis of law and merit, whereas the God of the New Testament operates on the basis of grace through the gift of faith. I sometimes begin the class with a devotional reading from the *New Testament*; on this occasion I choose Ephesians 2:1-10 or at least vv. 8-9 which state: “For it is by grace you are saved through faith; it is not your own doing. It is God’s gift, not a reward for work done, lest anyone should boast.” I might also read some other passage such as Paul’s admonition in Philippians 2 to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” Then, without any hint as to what I’m doing, I turn them to the first book of the Law of Moses, and then through their study of the text of Genesis 32–33, I watch them realize that this so-called “Law” is also Gospel.

I have not of course exhausted the scope of meaning in our story. I have often wondered for example if there isn’t a powerful message here for the post-exilic community within Israel, of Jacob returning from exile to the land with his formerly unified camp having been split into two and now facing the prospect of entering the land having only the remnant from one camp intact. What remains for Jacob is to fulfill his duty to rebuild the house of God (Bethel), which involves casting away idols and making sacrificial offerings before the Lord. Israel is reborn upon entering the land and experiences new birth, despite (and even because of) having been afflicted by God. It is not my place to say (I find it challenging enough aptly to apply a text to my own constituency and thus do not presume to suggest how it might be applied to another) but perhaps the theme would include the notion that the quest to see the face of God which comes at the initiative of God, must go hand in hand with being reconciled with Esau. If that were so, it would not be a message for Israel alone, but for all: that reconciliation with God always has as its corollary, reconciliation with one’s fellow human being as well.

⁶¹ Gen. 32:24–25a.

Time has not permitted me to reflect at length on the theological message of 23–33 apart from offering a theological explanation of the sexual component. Suffice it to say that I should like to argue that proclamation of that text today would capitalize on the background to the story that I have attempted to uncover. This would include confirming the notions often held that Jacob's encounter with God was an almost otherworldly occasion of judgment, as if at death, when Jacob is given an additional identity and experiences a sort of new birth. On my reading, the text is more preparatory for the encounter with Esau the next day than it is an encounter with Esau beforehand, though as we have seen the two should not quickly be disentangled. It is not to be spiritualized into everyone's struggle with God in prayer. Rather, it serves to underscore the mysterious nature of the encounter between God and Israel (and by extension the church), including elements of intense struggle, fear of judgment on the basis of merit that is wanting, woundedness, bewilderment, and awe.

Finally, would you allow me to end on a somewhat personal note? The text of vv. 23–33 underscores two things that are important to me as a biblical scholar. One is that it illustrates something I learned from the late Professor Brevard Childs. I remember Professor Childs telling a class of undergraduates at Yale College that we know so much about the background to some biblical texts that we can bring the text into sharper focus than the text itself would welcome. So, although I believe that our story is dramatically and helpfully informed by the prehistory I have suggested, Childs' caution must be heeded. Given the lack of dominance elsewhere in Scripture to the relation of solar aspects to an orthodox understanding of God, this component should not be given pride of place. No congregation whether Jewish or Christian should be made to hear *background* as if it were foreground!⁶²

The church and synagogue are places where the contours of the text in its final form, along with the overarching theological constructs that are derived from a sustained exegetical engagement with the broader corpus, must be given scope to speak.⁶³ For example, in the case of

⁶² An example of this sort of teaching/preaching leaves a bad taste every time I recall it. It was a sermon on Genesis 1 in which the preacher, much impressed by his learning, spent the bulk of his time talking about Enuma Elish and the relation between *ʿhôm* and Tiamat—as if Genesis 1 were not Scripture but a mere demythologized version of the *real* (Babylonian) story! As I see it, pretending to be wise he became as a fool.

⁶³ I do not deny that such can and must be done where the purpose for examining the text

Genesis 32:23–33, I welcome the hint provided by the parallel panel of Genesis 28:10–22 that this story too may have been a dream of Jacob. To my mind this softens the otherwise seemingly syncretistic understanding of God here. At the same time, it is important to remember that Jacob, having received early and harshly limited insight into the nature of God, was in no way even close to being an orthodox Jew or a creedal Christian!⁶⁴ Thus, an ideal interpretation of this story would take into account its background—to uncover its tracks if you will. But good theological interpretation must then cover over the tracks again to the same extent as reflected by text in its final canonical form. That is after all how the Bible has come to us. We do an injustice to the text if we grant privilege to some form other than that which has come to us as Scripture for the synagogue and church. That said, as our story shows, we dare not presume what it will say or how it will say it. Indeed, doing just that has until now kept us from understanding the Egyptian mythological background to Jacob's now profoundly theological encounter with the one who was both "man" and "god."

is to trace developments in biblical traditions and into reconstruct the history of ancient Israelite religion.

⁶⁴ Scholars have long been aware of strong differences between the religion of the Patriarchs and later orthodox Yahwism.

**Minutes of the 2008 CSBS
Annual General Meeting**

University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC
June 1, 16:00 – 17:17

Present: Dorothy Peters, Leslie Hayes, Dan Fraikin, Terry Donaldson, Roy Jeal, John F. Horman, David Hawkin, Wayne McCready, Benno Przybylski, Lissa Wray Beal, Gord Oeste, Brian Irwin, Gabriel Alalade, Derek Suderman, Christine Mitchell, Rob Cousland, Ellen White, Judith Newman, John L. McLaughlin, Steven Scott, Keir Hammer, Karljürgen Feuerherm, Joel Lohr, Bill Richards, Willi Braun, William Arnal, Todd Penner, Diet Neufeld, Gerbern Oegema, William Alexander, Francis Landy, Peter Flint, Eric Bellavance, Zeba Crook, Alicia Batten, Lee Johnson, Colleen Shantz, Eileen Schuller, Marie-France Dion, JoAnn Brant, Christina de Groot, Edith M. Humphrey, Gary N. Knoppers, John Kessler, Daniel Miller, Rob Hiebert, Bob Derrenbacker, Patricia G. Kirkpatrick, Ellen B. Aitken, John Kloppenborg, Richard Ascough, Kim Stratton, Adele Reinhartz, Esther Kobel, Anders Runesson, Glen Taylor, Michele Murray, Agnes Choi, Tony Burke

1. Approval of the Agenda + Business Arising (Christine Mitchell/John McLaughlin; approved unanimously)

2. Approval of Minutes of Last Annual General Meeting, May 27, 2007 (Daniel Miller/John Kloppenborg; approved unanimously)

3. President's Report (Glen Taylor)

The membership stood for a minute of silence to honour the memory of two CSBS members who died in the past year: Barbara Organ and Lawrence Toombs.

Glen explained that the executive thinks it would be a good idea that we hire a technological assistant for next year's Congress, preferably someone on-site at Carleton; the person would be paid \$125 plus a free society dinner (it could be a student). He also announced that he would speak with each of the leaders of seminars and special sessions regarding the possibility of developing an evaluation form that would be distributed at the end of the seminars and special sessions, so that the leaders of these can get feedback from participants. These evaluations could be submitted if and when a request for renewal or extension of the session is submitted to executive.

Glen concluded his report by thanking the executive for its work, in particular Bob Derrenbacker, who did double-duty by being the Local Area Coordinator in addition to his regular duties as Treasurer and Membership Secretary.

4. Executive Secretary (Michele Murray)

Since Michele was voiceless (!), Glen kindly read a curtailed version of her report on her behalf.

The dates for next year's Congress meeting at Carleton for CSBS were given: May 24, 25, 26 2009 (Sunday through Tuesday again). It will be another large Congress, so members are encouraged to book accommodations early. The current Congress is the largest one ever, with over 10,000 scholars registered. The following locations have been decided upon for future Congresses: 2010: Concordia; 2011: U. of New Brunswick and St. Thomas University; 2012: Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo

It was announced that a volunteer is needed to organize the Women Scholars' Lunch for next year in Carleton.

Glen then introduced Francis Landy, English Language Editor of the journal *Studies in Religion*. Francis explained to the membership that *SR* has been presented with a new publication opportunity from SAGE, a British-based international company that has proposed taking over the marketing and production of the journal, including putting it online. *SR*

editors have inquired 1) as to how SSHRC would respond if SAGE became the producer; the answer is that there would be no SSHRC funding for *SR*, and 2) if Wilfrid Laurier Press would respond with a counter-proposal; WLP suggested a Montreal press that would make the journal accessible on line. *SR* is the main source of funding for the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, so whether to change to SAGE is a very important decision. Questions that were posed by members included: how would this change affect the book series? What sort of financial impact would signing on with SAGE have on the Corporation? Members stated that more information is needed, and Francis encouraged members to send their questions and reactions by email to Aaron Hughes, Managing Editor of *SR*.

5. Student Liaison Officer's Report (Agnes Choi)

Agnes reported that the new members and students lunch was successful; she thanked Bob Derrenbacker for his help in organizing it. The student session, "A Week in the Life of an Academic," also went very well. Agnes thanked the four panellists (Marion Taylor, Michel Desjardins, Terry Donaldson, and Phil Harland) for sharing their wisdom, as well as those who attended and contributed to the discussion.

Agnes noted that our society has a well-deserved reputation as being student friendly; in fact, there are 24 student papers this year, which comprises one-third of the total papers. She congratulated the two Student Essay prize winners again (Heather Macumber and Andrew Pitts). Agnes encouraged students to submit paper proposals, since they will find the society is a great place to start presenting papers.

6. Vice-President's Report (Terry Donaldson)

Terry put forward the names of the nominees for the three vacant positions on the executive: Student Liaison Officer: Agnes Choi (for a second term of one year); Communications Officer: Richard Ascough (for a second term of three years); Vice President: Francis Landy. There were no nominations from the floor and it was moved to close the

nominations (Harold Remus/John McLaughlin). The nominees were acclaimed to their positions, and were warmly thanked for their willingness to serve the society.

Terry revealed the two CSBS book prizes winners. The 2008 R. B. Y Scott Book Award for an outstanding book in the areas of Hebrew Bible and/or the Ancient Near East was awarded to Gordon J. Hamilton for his book: *The Origins of the West Semitic Alphabet in Egyptian Scripts* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2006).

The Frank W. Beare Award for an outstanding book in the areas of Christian Origins, Post-Biblical Judaism and/or Graeco-Roman Religions was awarded to Kimberly Stratton for her book, *Naming the Witch: Magic, Ideology, and Stereotype in the Ancient World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). Congratulations to Kimberly and Gordon!

The Norman E. Wagner Award recognizing the innovative use of technology relating to biblical scholarship was not awarded this year; Terry encouraged members to nominate colleagues for this award.

7. Programme Coordinator's Report (Tony Burke)

Tony announced that this year there are 78 papers, which is a record. As a result of the large number of presentations, there are three concurrent sessions scheduled at all times. He noted to members that a hard copy of the programme is available at the CSBS section of the bulletin board.

Tony announced that the Historiography seminar ends this year, and that the Travel seminar is finished after 2009, as is the DSS special session. He encouraged members to submit to him proposals for special sessions and seminars for next year and beyond. He further announced that Richard would be developing an on-line form for the submission of paper abstracts, and that first-time student presenters will be asked to submit a letter of endorsement from a professor.

The Local Area Coordinator for next year (at Carleton) will be Zeba Crook.

8. Communication Officer's Report (Richard Ascough)

Richard stated that the Bulletin would be out in July, and that the executive is considering publishing the Bulletin on-line. He noted that the CCSR web site is working better this year, hence the CSBS website will remain on that server for at least another year. Email communication continues to be an effective way of distributing information to members, and Richard encouraged members to send changes to address, etc., to him or to Bob Derrenbacker. He noted that this year 100% of membership news came in on email, which was great. Because of the large size of the society, when Richard sends out mass emails he has run into problems from the Queen's University server (it considers him a spammer) so he is thinking of developing a listserv for the society. Richard thanked members for sending him the exact email messages that they wish him to distribute.

Richard thanked the judges of the book prizes, who remain anonymous, and he encouraged members to nominate books for the prizes. He reminded everyone that sending out a book notice does not serve as a nomination for a prize, and that self-nominations are accepted. Richard reminded members that the Wabash Center, which focuses on teaching and learning in religion and theology, offers various workshops to faculty in religion and theology, and after participating in a workshop there are research bursaries available. This year, CSBS organized a one-day workshop on how to teach introductory Religion courses that will take place at Regent College.

9. Treasurer's Report (Robert Derrenbacker)

Bob reported that the Pay pal system, which was newly implemented this year, is working well; 57% of members used this means of payment to renew their membership in CSBS. There is currently an 80% renewal rate (up from 75% at this time last year). He noted that membership levels are constant, with steady growth in the past few years. To date, 39 new members have been nominated; the total membership stands at 386 (the highest number the society has ever had). The names of new

members were read, and a motion was passed to accept these new members to the society (Bob Derrenbacker/Richard Ascough; unanimously passed).

Finances continue to be in good shape as well. The SSHRC travel grant of \$4,755 was distributed among 41 members (who had applied for funds in the amount of \$23,977). The formula for distribution is as follows: 16% for full members and 32% for student members for travel to Vancouver. Bob noted that a number of costs for the operation of the society have gone up, but that most of the expenditures would be recovered from the membership renewals. The shortfall (of approximately \$1500) would be covered from interest from Endowment investments.

Bob noted that our accountant, Robert W.R. Bishop, recommended that CSBS have a "review of financial statements" done rather than a "financial audit." His recommendation is based on changes that have occurred in auditing standards, and the increase in charges for an audit; in fact, charities of CSBS's size do not need to undergo an audit (nor, for that matter is there a requirement for a financial audit either. A charity must file an information (tax) return annually which must be accompanied by financial statements, but these can be *reviewed* instead of *audited*. The executive decided in the Spring to follow our accountant's advice. As a result, the membership was asked to consider the following motion: "That the Membership of the CSBS affirm its support for the Executive's decision to move to an annual *Review of Financial Statements*, which maintains the ongoing commitment of the CSBS to keeping adequate books and financial records" (Michele Murray/Richard Ascough). After brief discussion, members passed this motion unanimously.

Bob noted that our accountant observed the following: "Based on my review, nothing has come to my attention that causes me to believe that these financial statements are not, in all material respects, in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles." Financial statements will be printed in the 2009 Bulletin for members to review. A motion was put forward to send a note of thanks to our accountant, who has donated a lot of his time to CSBS (Bob Derrenbacker/John Kloppenborg; passed unanimously).

Wayne McCready reported on behalf of the Endowment Committee (consisting of Adele Reinhartz, Harold Remus, Bill Klassen, Diet Neufeld, with Bob Derrenbacker and Michele Murray representing the executive) that there is currently approximately \$126,000 in the endowment, which is about a 122% increase to the initial investment in 1998 of \$56,425. The annual investment income is \$6700, and this sum is made available each year to cover costs if needed. Wayne thanked Committee members for their input and counsel; during the last number of years reinvestment of funds has allowed for financial growth.

10. Other Business

There was no other business.

11. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was passed unanimously at 5:17 PM (Christine Mitchell/Edith Humphrey)

(Minutes were prepared by Michele Murray in June, 2008).

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

AUGUST 31, 2008

(Unaudited)

Review Engagement Report

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Operations

Statement of Changes in Fund Balances

Statement of Cash Flows

Notes to the Financial Statements

Schedule of Restricted Funds

ROBERT W. R. BISHOP
Chartered Accountant

13308 Crescent Road, South Surrey, BC V4P 1K4

Tel 604-538-1288 Fax 604-538-1248

REVIEW ENGAGEMENT REPORT

To the Directors of
Canadian Society of Biblical Studies

I have reviewed the statement of financial position of Canadian Society of Biblical Studies as at August 31, 2008 and the statements of operations, changes in fund balances and cash flows for the year then ended. My review was made in accordance with Canadian generally accepted standards for review engagements and accordingly consisted primarily of enquiry, analytical procedures and discussion related to information supplied to me by the Association.

A review does not constitute an audit and consequently I do not express an opinion on these financial statements.

Based on my review, nothing has come to my attention that causes me to believe that these financial statements are not, in all material respects, in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

"Robert W.R. Bishop"

March 6, 2009

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
As at August 31, 2008
(Unaudited)

	General Fund	Restricted Funds	ESCJ Fund	2008 Total	2007 Total
ASSETS					
Cash	\$ 9,584	\$ 14,006	\$ -	\$ 23,590	\$ 27,268
Accounts receivable (Note 4)	950	-	-	950	446
Investments (Note 5)	-	115,693	-	115,693	106,226
Funds held by CCSR (Note 6)	-	-	11,753	11,753	11,753
	\$ 10,534	\$ 129,699	\$ 11,753	\$ 151,986	\$ 145,693
LIABILITIES					
Deferred revenue (Note 4)	\$ 950	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 950	\$ 446
	950	-	-	950	446
FUND BALANCES					
Unrestricted	9,584	-	-	9,584	12,743
Restricted	-	129,699	11,753	141,452	132,504
	9,584	129,699	11,753	151,036	145,247
	\$ 10,534	\$ 129,699	\$ 11,753	\$ 151,986	\$ 145,693

APPROVED BY THE BOARD:

_____ Director

_____ Director

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
For the Year Ended August 31, 2008
(Unaudited)

	General Fund		Restricted Funds		ESCJ Fund	
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007
REVENUE						
Membership dues	\$ 17,474	\$ 14,045	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
SSHRC travel grant	4,755	4,755	-	-	-	-
CFHSS academic support	-	1,450	-	-	-	-
CSBS dinner	5,962	2,923	-	-	-	-
Congress registration	1,244	1,552	-	-	-	-
Subscriptions and other	83	15	-	-	-	-
Donations	-	-	4,981	6,843	-	-
Investment income (Note 5)	-	-	8,948	(1,401)	-	-
	29,518	24,740	13,929	5,442	-	-
EXPENSES						
Accounting and audit	4,100	5,120	-	-	-	-
Bank charges	190	293	-	-	-	-
Computer software	443	469	-	-	-	-
Congress expenses	798	764	-	-	-	-
Craigie Lecture	-	-	-	1,668	-	-
CSBS dinner	7,031	2,640	-	-	-	-
Dues and memberships	2,289	2,162	-	-	-	-
Executive	5,105	5,381	-	-	-	-
Member travel	5,115	4,899	-	-	-	-
Office, printing and postage	2,117	2,067	-	-	-	-
Student awards	-	-	2,751	2,200	-	-
Subscriptions	7,580	6,330	-	-	-	-
Teleconference	139	853	-	-	-	-
	34,907	30,978	2,751	3,868	-	-
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES						
	\$ (5,389)	\$ (6,238)	\$ 11,178	\$ 1,574	\$ -	\$ -

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES
For the Year Ended August 31, 2008
(Unaudited)

	General Fund		Restricted Funds		ESCJ Fund	
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007
BALANCE, OPENING	\$ 12,743	\$ 16,717	\$ 120,751	\$ 121,441	\$ 11,753	\$ 11,753
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	(5,389)	(6,238)	11,178	1,574	-	-
INTERFUND TRANSFERS	2,230	2,264	(2,230)	(2,264)	-	-
BALANCE, CLOSING	\$ 9,584	\$ 12,743	\$ 129,699	\$ 120,751	\$ 11,753	\$ 11,753

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
For the Year Ended August 31, 2008
(Unaudited)

	General Fund		Restricted Funds		ESCJ Fund	
	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007
CASH PROVIDED BY (USED FOR)						
OPERATIONS						
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ (5,389)	\$ (6,238)	\$ 11,178	\$ 1,574	\$ -	\$ -
Unrealized change in market value (Note 5)	-	-	(2,074)	13,836	-	-
Changes in non-cash working capital:						
Accounts receivable	(504)	342	-	-	-	-
Investments	-	-	(7,392)	(5,973)	-	-
Deferred revenue	504	(342)	-	-	-	-
Interfund transfers	2,230	2,264	(2,230)	(2,264)	-	-
CHANGE IN CASH	(3,159)	(3,974)	(519)	7,173	-	-
CASH, OPENING	12,743	16,717	14,525	7,352	-	-
CASH, CLOSING	\$ 9,584	\$ 12,743	\$ 14,006	\$ 14,525	\$ -	\$ -

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
August 31, 2008
(Unaudited)

1. PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION

Canadian Society of Biblical Studies is an unincorporated non-profit organization, the purpose of which is to stimulate the critical investigation of the classical biblical literatures, together with other related literature, by the exchange of scholarly research both in published form and in public forum.

The Society is a registered charity and is income tax exempt.

2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Basis of Presentation

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles and are presented in Canadian dollars.

(b) Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported in the financial statements. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

(c) Fund Accounting

Canadian Society of Biblical Studies follows the restricted fund method of accounting.

The General Fund accounts for the operation and maintenance of the Society. This fund reports unrestricted resources.

Various restricted funds account for endowment resources that have been donated for specific purposes. These donations are invested and the income earned thereon is used for grants, prizes and other awards in accordance with donors' wishes.

The ESCJ Fund (Etudes/Studies in Christianity and Judaism) is a publication subsidy program managed through the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion ("CCSR") -- see Note 6.

(d) Financial Instruments

Effective September 1, 2006, the Society adopted, on a prospective basis, the recommendations of CICA Handbook Section 3251 "Equity", Section 3855 "Financial Instruments - Recognition and Measurement", Section 3861 "Financial Instruments - Disclosure and Presentation" and Section 3865 "Hedges". These new standards apply on a prospective basis and, accordingly, prior period amounts have not been restated.

2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES, continued

(d) Financial Instruments, continued

Section 3855 prescribes when a financial asset, financial liability or non-financial derivative is to be recognized on the balance sheet and at what amount, requiring fair value or cost-based measures under different circumstances. Under Section 3855, financial instruments must be classified into one of five categories: held-for-trading, held-to-maturity, loans and receivables, available-for-sale financial assets, or other financial liabilities. All financial instruments, including derivatives, are measured in the balance sheet at fair value except for loans and receivables, held to maturity investments, and other financial liabilities which are measured at amortized cost. Subsequent measurement and changes in fair value will depend on their initial classification, as follows: held-for-trading financial assets are measured at fair value and changes in fair value are recognized in net earnings; available-for-sale financial instruments are measured at fair value with changes in fair value recorded in other comprehensive income until the investment is derecognized or impaired at which time the amounts would be recorded in net earnings.

Section 3861 establishes standards for presentation of financial instruments and non-financial derivatives, and identifies the information that should be disclosed about them. Under the new standards, policies followed for periods prior to the effective date generally are not reversed and therefore, comparative figures are not restated except for the requirement to restate currency translation adjustments as part of other comprehensive income.

Section 3865 describes when and how hedge accounting can be applied as well as the disclosure requirements. Hedge accounting enables the recording of gains, losses, revenues and expenses from derivative financial instruments in the same period as for those related to the hedged item.

(e) Capital Assets

No value is accorded to capital assets for reporting purposes. Capital asset purchases are charged as an expenditure in the year of acquisition.

(f) Revenue Recognition

Contributions related to general operations are recognized as revenue in the General Fund in the year services are performed or related expenses are incurred. The Society's share of Congress net revenues is recorded in the General Fund in the year of receipt. Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate restricted fund. Investment income earned by the restricted funds is recognized as income of the designated fund.

(g) Donated Materials and Services

Donated materials and services are recognized only when their fair value can be reasonably estimated and the materials and services would be paid for by the Society if not donated.

During the year ended August 31, 2008 the value of donated materials and services recorded in the accounts was \$nil (2007 - \$nil).

3. CHANGES IN ACCOUNTING POLICIES

(a) Financial Instruments – Disclosure and Presentation

Effective September 1, 2007, the Society adopted the recommendations of CICA Handbook Section 3862 "Financial Instruments – Disclosures", and Section 3863 "Financial Instruments – Presentation". Sections 3862 and 3863 replace Handbook Section 3861 "Financial Instruments – Disclosure and Presentation", revising and enhancing its disclosure requirements, and carrying forward unchanged its presentation requirements. These new handbook sections place increased emphasis on disclosures about the nature and extent of risks arising from financial instruments and how the entity manages those risks.

Disclosures required by Section 3861 are contained in Note 7.

(b) Accounting Changes

Effective September 1, 2007, the Society adopted the recommendations of revised CICA Handbook Section 1506 "Accounting Changes". The new standard allows for voluntary changes in accounting policy only when they result in the financial statements providing reliable and more relevant information, requires changes in accounting policy to be applied retrospectively unless doing so is impracticable, requires prior period errors to be corrected retrospectively and calls for enhanced disclosures about the effects of changes in accounting policies, estimates and errors on the financial statements.

The impact that the adoption of Section 1506 will have on the Society's financial position and results of operations will depend on the nature of future accounting changes.

(c) Accounting Policy Choice for Transaction Costs

Effective September 1, 2007, the Society adopted the recommendations of CICA Emerging Issues Committee Abstract No. 166 "Accounting Policy Choice for Transaction Costs" (EIC-166). EIC-166 addresses the accounting policy choice of expensing or adding transaction costs related to the acquisition of financial assets and financial liabilities that are classified as other than held-for-trading. Specifically, it requires that the same accounting policy choice be applied to all similar financial instruments classified as other than held-for-trading, but permits a different policy choice for financial instruments that are not similar. The adoption of EIC-166 requires retroactive application to all transaction costs accounted for in accordance with CICA Handbook Section 3855 "Financial Instruments - Recognition and Measurement".

The Society has evaluated the impact of EIC-166 and has determined that no adjustments are required as a result of adoption of this new standard.

(f) Recent Accounting Pronouncements

Capital Disclosures

Effective September 1, 2008, the Society will adopt the recommendations of CICA Handbook Section 1535 "Capital Disclosures". Section 1535 specifies the disclosure of (i) an entity's objectives, policies and processes for managing capital; (ii) quantitative data about what the entity regards as capital; (iii) whether the entity has complied with any capital requirements; and (iv) if it has not complied, the consequences of

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES
 NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
 August 31, 2008
 (Unaudited)

3. CHANGES IN ACCOUNTING POLICIES, continued

(f) Recent Accounting Pronouncements, continued

Assessing Going Concern

Effective September 1, 2008, the Society will adopt the recommendations of amended CICA Handbook Section 1400 "General Standards of Financial Statement Presentation". Section 1400 now includes the requirement for management to assess and disclose an entity's ability to continue as a going concern.

4. DEFERRED REVENUE

As at August 31, 2008, the Society was owed \$950 by the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences ("CFHSS") in connection with Congress 2008. This amount is shown in the financial statements as deferred revenue.

5. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2008	2007
Realized investment income	\$ 6,874	\$ 12,435
Unrealized change in market value of investments	2,074	(13,836)
Investment income	\$ 8,948	\$ (1,401)

6. FUNDS HELD BY CCSR

As at August 31, 2008, the amount of \$11,753 was held on behalf of the Society by the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion. Of this amount, \$3,141 was designated for the ESCJ program and \$8,612 was designated for the UM Book Series.

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES
 NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
 August 31, 2008
 (Unaudited)

7. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

(a) Classification of Financial Instruments

The Society's financial instruments consist of cash and cash equivalents, accounts receivable, investments in marketable securities, and accounts payable and accrued liabilities. The Society does not have any hedging instruments.

The Society classifies its cash and cash equivalents, and investments in marketable securities as held-for-trading, which are measured at fair value. Accounts receivable are classified as loans and receivables, which are measured at amortized cost. Accounts payable and accrued liabilities are classified as financial liabilities, which are measured at amortized cost.

(b) Fair Values

The carrying amount of cash and cash equivalents, accounts receivable, and accounts payable and accrued liabilities each approximate their fair values due to the short-term maturities of these instruments. The fair value of investments in marketable securities is based on quoted market prices.

(c) Credit Risk

The Society's accounts receivable do not expose the Society to significant credit risk. The Society has no history of bad debts.

(d) Foreign Exchange and Interest Rate Risk

Because the Society's functional currency is the Canadian dollar and all current operations occur within Canada, the Society is not exposed to significant foreign exchange risk. The Society has no debt and so is not exposed to significant interest rate risk.

(e) Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Society will not be able to meet its financial obligations as they fall due. The ability of the Society to settle its financial obligations with cash depends upon the level of income it derives from its investments and the continued support of its members through dues and donations.

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES
 SCHEDULE OF RESTRICTED FUNDS
 For the Year Ended August 31, 2008
 (Unaudited)

	General Endowment	Student Research	RBY Scott Award	N Wagner Award	Publication Fund
CAPITAL					
Balance, opening	\$ 13,772	\$ 1,283	\$ 12,743	\$ 10,321	\$ 3,306
Donations	2,556	-	2,000	-	-
Expenditures	-	-	-	-	-
Interfund transfers	-	-	-	-	-
Balance, closing	16,328	1,283	14,743	10,321	3,306
INCOME ON HAND					
Balance, opening	4,686	684	4,598	4,888	1,281
Investment income	1,508	129	1,377	1,034	331
Expenditures	-	-	(500)	-	-
Interfund transfers	(344)	(45)	(304)	(329)	(90)
Balance, closing	5,850	767	5,171	5,594	1,523
FUND BALANCE, CLOSING	\$ 22,178	\$ 2,050	\$ 19,914	\$ 15,915	\$ 4,829

	Beare Award	Craigie Lectureship	Founders' Prize	Jeremias Prize	Total
CAPITAL					
Balance, opening	\$ 12,072	\$ 16,582	\$ 7,968	\$ 8,742	\$ 86,789
Donations	-	225	100	100	4,981
Expenditures	-	-	-	-	-
Interfund transfers	-	-	-	-	-
Balance, closing	12,072	16,807	8,068	8,842	91,770
INCOME ON HAND					
Balance, opening	5,208	6,005	3,138	3,474	33,962
Investment income	1,210	1,673	804	881	8,948
Expenditures	(500)	-	(810)	(941)	(2,751)
Interfund transfers	(329)	(426)	(174)	(190)	(2,230)
Balance, closing	5,589	7,252	2,958	3,224	37,929
FUND BALANCE, CLOSING	\$ 17,661	\$ 24,059	\$ 11,026	\$ 12,066	\$ 129,699

Membership News

Monographs, Edited Volumes

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- _____ with Paul Reddit, eds. *Unity and Disunity of Ezra-Nehemiah: Redaction, Rhetoric, Reader*. Hebrew Bible Monographs 17. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008.
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Articles, Chapters, Published Conference Proceedings

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- _____. "Giving Up on Life: Jephthah's Daughters - Take Two." *Society of Biblical Literature Forum* 6.5 (2008) <http://sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleID=772> May 1, 2008.
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- Zerbe, Gordon. "Paul on the Human Being as a 'Psychic Body': Neither Dualist nor Monist." *Direction* 37/2 (2008) 168-84.

Appointments, Promotions, Awards, Honours

- Batten, Alicia. Associate Professor, University of Sudbury at Laurentian University.
- Ben Zvi, Ehud. 2008-2009 Killam Annual Professorship, University of Alberta.
- Braun, Willi. Elected to a 3-year term (2008-10) as President of the North American Association for the Study of Religion.
- Chambers, Stephen. Promoted to Associate Professor of Exegetical Theology (New Testament), Concordia Lutheran Seminary (July 1, 2007).
- Crook, Zeba. Promoted to Associate Professor (July 1, 2008), Carleton University.
- Epp-Tiessen, Dan. Promotion to Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Canadian Mennonite University.
- Kalimi Isaac. "Zvi and Matilda Roifer Prize for 2008 Annual Lecture," Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Beer-Sheva, Israel.
- _____. National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), 2007-2008.

- _____. Senior Fellow, Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, Jerusalem (2007-2008).
- LeMarquand, Grant. Academic Dean, Trinity School for Ministry, Ambridge, PA
- _____. Editor, *Trinity Journal for Theology and Ministry*
- Middleton, J. Richard. Promoted to Professor of Biblical Studies, Roberts Wesleyan College (May 2008).
- Miller, Daniel R. Tenured, Bishop's University (July 1, 2008).
- Scott, Mark. Postdoctoral Fellowship, Harvard University.

Dissertations/Theses Completed

- Scott, Mark. *Cosmic Theodicy: Origen on the Problem of Evil* (Harvard University, 2008).

Research in Progress

- Adams, Sean A. Hellenistic Greek Reader; Discourse Analysis of 1 and 2 Thessalonians; Genre studies in Luke-Acts
- Ascough, Richard S. 1 & 2 Thessalonians; Greco-Roman associations.
- Batten, Alicia. Adornment in Antiquity; Emotions in Antiquity; French Biblical Interpretation during WW II.
- Boda, Mark J. Temple Building Texts and Rituals in the ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible; Zechariah (NICOT).
- Duhaime, Jean. Contribution to a new French annotated translation of the non-biblical texts from Qumran.
- Ehrlich, Carl S. From an Antique Land: An Introduction to Ancient Near Eastern Literature.
- Humphrey, Edith. Elizabeth Stuart Bowdler's contributions to the study of the Bible; Grand Entrance: Worship in the Bible and the Church; tradition in the Bible.
- Irwin, Brian. Editing and shaping of Judges.
- Jeal, Roy R. Socio-Rhetorical Commentaries on Colossians and Philemon; Ancient Mediterranean intertextual resources; Translation of LXX Wisdom of Solomon for the Lexham Interlinear Septuagint Project.

56 CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

- Kloppenborg, John S. Parable of Jesus (for *Papyrologische Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*); James (*Hermeneia*).
- Lamoreaux, Jason T. 1 Clement; *Social Science Interpretation of the Apostolic Fathers*.
- McLaughlin, John L. Monographs on Ancient Israelite Religion (Paulist), Ancient Near East (Abingdon Press), and Wisdom Genres (Baker Academic).
- Middleton, J. Richard. Commentary on 1 and 2 Samuel; The Bible's Holistic Vision of the Redemption of Creation.
- Miller, Daniel R. Incantations in the Hebrew Bible.
- Reinhartz, Adele. Media-ting the Bible: Searching for Scripture in Digital Image and Sound.
- Scott, Mark. An Irenaean or Origenian Theodicy? Rethinking the Patristic Sources of John Hick's Soul-Making Theodicy; William James and Abolition Theology; Christian Approaches to the Problem of Evil.
- Tolppanen, Kari. A Source Critical Reassessment of the Gospel of Luke: Was Canonical Mark Really Luke's Source?
- Wray Beal, Lissa M. Commentary on 1 and 2 Kings (Apollon Old Testament Commentaries).