
Integrity

A JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

Published by the Commission for Theological Integrity
of the National Association of Free Will Baptists

Summer 2010 • Number 5

I N T E G R I T Y
A Journal of Christian Thought

PUBLISHED BY THE COMMISSION FOR THEOLOGICAL INTEGRITY
OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS

Editor

Robert E. Picirilli

Professor Emeritus, Free Will Baptist Bible College

Assistant Editor

Darrell L. Holley

Chair, Department of English,
Free Will Baptist Bible College

Integrity: A Journal of Christian Thought is published in cooperation with Randall House Publications, Free Will Baptist Bible College, and Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College. It is partially funded by those institutions and a number of interested churches and individuals. *Integrity* exists to stimulate and provide a forum for Christian scholarship among Free Will Baptists and to fulfill the purposes of the Commission for Theological Integrity.

The Commission for Theological Integrity consists of the following members: F. Leroy Forlines (chairman), Stephen M. Ashby, Paul V. Harrison, J. Matthew Pinson, and Craig D. Shaw.

Manuscripts for publication and communications on editorial matters should be directed to the attention of the editor at the following address: 301 Greenway Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee 37205. E-mail inquiries should be addressed to: picirillir@bellsouth.net. Additional copies of the journal can be requested for \$6.00 (cost includes shipping).

Typeset by Henrietta Brown

Printed by Randall House Publications, Nashville, Tennessee 37217

©Copyright 2010 by the Commission for Theological Integrity, National Association of Free Will Baptists

BWHEBB, BWHEBL [Hebrew]; BWGRKL, BWGRKN, and BWGRKI [Greek] Postscript® Type 1 and TrueType™ fonts Copyright © 1994–2002 BibleWorks, LLC. All rights reserved. These Biblical Greek and Hebrew fonts are used with permission and are from BibleWorks, software for Biblical exegesis and research.

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

Introduction	7-8
ROBERT E. PICIRILLI	
Sermon:	
The Excellency of Christ	11-34
JONATHAN EDWARDS (1703-1758)	
Confirmation and Challenge: Thematic Shading and the Theology of the Chronicler	35-64
GARNETT H. REID	
Desert Creatures or Demons? A Note on Isaiah 34:14	65-74
MATTHEW MCAFFEE	
Chronology and the Gospels: Issues in the Life of Jesus	75-97
PAUL V. HARRISON	
An Introduction to the “New Perspective on Paul”	99-112
JEFFREY L. COCKRELL	
Insight for Worship: An Exposition of Doxology in Revelation 5:12	113-135
GYWN L. PUGH	
James Arminius and Natural Law	137-160
ANDREW BALL	
Is the Gift of Tongues for Today?	161-194
ROBERT E. PICIRILLI	

Book Reviews 195-247

A Theology for the Church

Edited by Daniel L. AkinMatthew Bracey

Visionary Parenting: Capture a God-sized Vision for Your Family

By Rob Rienow

Shelter: Being an Intentional Parent in a Random World

By Jimmy HolbrookWendell Walley

Restoring Integrity in Baptist Churches

Edited by Thomas White, Jason G. Duesing,

and Malcolm B. Yarness IIIRandy Corn

The Courage to Be Protestant: Truth-lovers, Marketers, and

Emergents in the Postmodern World

By David F. WellsW. Jackson Watts

I Told Me So — Self-deception and the Christian Life

By Gregg A. Ten ElshopRobert T. Bryan

Word Pictures in the New Testament: Concise Edition

By A. T. Robertson, ed. James A. Swanson.David L. Burgess

*The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New
Challenges to Biblical Authority*

By G. K. BealeJeremy Craft

Joshua, The New NIV Application Commentary

By Robert L. Hubbard, Jr.Edwin Hayes

James: Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

By Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. KamellRichard Hendrix

Toy Box Leadership

By Ron Hunter, Jr., and Michael E. WaddellHenry Horne

*The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians (New International
Commentary on the New Testament)*

By Gordon D. FeeDavid McGowan

- The Art of Divine Meditation: Exemplified with Two Large Patterns of Meditation: The One of Eternal Life, as the End; The Other of Death, as the Way*
By Joseph HallBarry Raper
- First Aid for Emotional Hurts*
By Edward E. Moody, Jr.Millard C. Sasser
- Why I Am A Christian* (Second edition)
Edited by Norman L. Geisler and Paul K. HoffmanMary R. Wisheart
- Perspectives on Christian Worship*
Edited by J. Matthew PinsonMelvin Worthington
- Understanding English Bible Translation: The Case for an Essentially Literal Approach*
By Leland RykenA. B. Brown
- Jesus and the Feminists: Who Do They Say That He Is?*
By Margaret Elizabeth KöstenbergerKarl Sexton

Contributors

JONATHAN EDWARDS (1703-1758)

Congregational Minister
Massachusetts

GARNETT H. REID

Professor, Free Will Baptist Bible College
Nashville, Tennessee

MATTHEW MCAFFEE

Ph.D. Candidate in Northwest Semitics, University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

PAUL V. HARRISON

Pastor, Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church
Nashville, Tennessee

JEFFREY L. COCKRELL

Pastor, Black River Free Will Baptist Church
Andrews, South Carolina

GWYN L. PUGH

Pastor, Liberty Free Will Baptist Church
Millington, Tennessee

ANDREW BALL

M.A. Candidate in Philosophy, University of Windsor
Windsor, Ontario, Canada

ROBERT E. PICIRILLI

Professor Emeritus, Free Will Baptist Bible College
Nashville, Tennessee

Introduction

This is the fifth issue of *Integrity*, my second as editor. It offers an interesting variety of articles, beginning with an extraordinary sermon by Jonathan Edwards. That he has been dead for two hundred fifty years, and represented a fellowship of churches very different from that which sponsors this journal, takes nothing away from the living Word of God which the sermon presents with power.

Following the sermon are two articles that focus on the Old Testament: one presents an insightful survey of the theology of First and Second Chronicles; the other zeroes in on Isaiah 34:14 and grapples with the translation of key words there.

Then come three articles on New Testament matters. The first considers the problems involved in assigning specific dates to events in the life of Jesus. The second provides an introduction to a live issue in contemporary New Testament scholarship: namely, the so-called “New Perspective on Paul.” The third gives exegetical attention to the doxology in Revelation 5:12 and draws from it timeless principles for worship.

The last two articles treat theological issues. One searches the writings of Arminius for his doctrine of natural law, important to a Christian’s concept of human responsibility and government. The other, being a seminar sponsored by the Commission for Theological Integrity (the publisher of this journal), responds to the newest form of charismatic teaching.

Supplementing these articles are reviews of eighteen books, selected because their titles and subject-matter suggested that people in ministry might find them helpful. In a few cases, the reviewers found them disappointing, but for most they concluded that the books were worth recommending. All in all, then, the current issue of *Integrity* offers a wide variety of reading that will inform, challenge, and stimulate our readers.

Saying this causes me to focus, once again, on the nature of this venture we call *Integrity*. Most of our readers are pastors in the sponsoring fellowship of churches. These are the people who are primarily in our minds as we select articles and books for review. Our aim is that each issue of this journal will serve to contribute to the intellectual and spiritual growth of people in ministry, that it will promote “sanctified scholarship” among our readers.

I have often said that we need more scholarship in our ranks. But the scholarship we need must be truly sanctified, anchored by the conviction that the Bible is God’s infallible Word and driven by the intention to promote godly Christian living and effective evangelism. The success of this

journal must be measured in those terms. Special thanks are due to Randall House Publications, Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, and Free Will Baptist Bible College for the financial sponsorship that makes this publication possible.

In the Introduction to the previous issue (2008) I made some observations about how one goes about getting an article published here. What I said there is undergoing some change as a result of the fact that the Commission is making some adjustments to its annual theological symposium. Consequently, our search for articles is not so closely tied to those events. We appeal, therefore, to anyone in our fellowship to submit articles for consideration. Indeed, this is a call for articles, and I address it especially—but not exclusively—to our men and women who are engaged in graduate studies of a Biblical, theological, or ministry nature.

An article should be submitted to the editor, preferably as an electronic copy. He will then send copies to all the members of the Commission, who will express themselves on the appropriateness of the article for *Integrity*. When they have communicated their recommendations to the editor, he will advise the person who has submitted the article. Any prospective writer can obtain from the editor, in advance of final submission, a copy of the guidelines for articles that must be followed. We also encourage readers to call to our attention any books they believe should be reviewed in these pages.

Robert E. Picirilli

Get your degree @ home.

Online Learning from Free Will Baptist Bible College is ideal for bivocational pastors and other ministers, church lay leaders, and other adult learners who need flexible schedules.

Apply today at www.fwbbc.edu/onlinelearning to begin an Associate of Science (A.S.) in Ministry.*



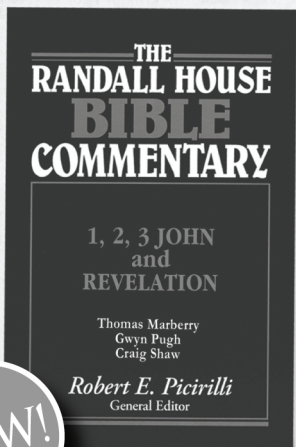
Free Will Baptist
Bible College

*Nationally and regionally accredited.



New Commentary Release!

FROM RANDALL HOUSE



NEW!

1, 2, 3 John and Revelation
Marberry, Picirilli, Pugh, Shaw
13-ISBN: 9780892655373
\$34.99

The Randall House Bible Commentary: The Books of 1, 2, 3 John and Revelation is the latest addition to the series available from Randall House. With Robert Picirilli as the General Editor, Dr. Thomas Marberry and Dr. Craig Shaw served as the writers for 1, 2, 3 John and Gwyn Pugh served as the writer for Revelation.

Each commentary offers a thorough study of entire books using a verse-by-verse method. The writers also provide excellent summaries of passages and application notes for teaching the passages.

The Randall House Bible Commentary series is a great addition to any study library.

Also Available:

Mark
Picirilli
13-ISBN: 9780892655007 **\$29.99**

John
Stallings
13-ISBN: 9780892651375 **\$29.99**

Romans
Forlines
13-ISBN: 9780892659494 **\$29.99**

Galatians-Colossians
Marberry, Ellis, Picirilli
13-ISBN: 9780892651344 **\$29.99**

1 Thessalonians- Philemon
Ellis, Outlaw, Picirilli
13-ISBN: 9780892651436 **\$29.99**

Hebrews
Outlaw
13-ISBN: 9780892655144 **\$29.99**

James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude
Harrison, Picirilli
13-ISBN: 9780892651450 **\$29.99**

1 & 2 Corinthians
Picirilli
13-ISBN: 9780892659500 **\$29.99**



randall house

randallhouse.com 800.877.7030

Jonathan Edwards

SERMON

The Excellency of Christ¹

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain—Rev. 5:5-6.

INTRODUCTION

The visions and revelations the apostle John had of the future events of God's providence are here introduced with a vision of the book of God's decrees, by which those events were foreordained. This is represented (Rev. 5:1) as a book in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne, "written within and on the back side, and sealed with seven seals," ... to signify that what was written in it was perfectly hidden and secret; or that God's decrees of future events are sealed and shut up from all possibility of being discovered by creatures, till God is pleased to make them known. ...

When John saw this book, he tells us, he "saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." And [he says]

1. Editor's note: The year 2008 was the 250th anniversary of the death of Jonathan Edwards, often said to be the most outstanding theologian in American history and certainly the theological voice of the Great Awakening, as Whitefield was its evangelist. Edwards's sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (1841) may well be the most famous in our country's memory. The Commission and I have decided, in honor of the anniversary, to include this, one of his great sermons, suggested by Dr. Paul Harrison. Though Edwards was a thorough-going Calvinist, were I to preach this sermon I would need to change but one line, when he says that as Jesus died He "probably was then shedding His blood for some of them that shed His blood." I believe that He definitely was shedding His blood for all those who shed His. Regardless, I have never encountered so ardent a plea to sinners to receive Christ as that which is in part three of this sermon. My primary source for the text was <http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-zip/edwexcel.txt>. I also compared the sermon as found in M. X. Lesser, ed., *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 19: Sermons and Discourses 1734-1738*, Harry S. Stout, gen. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 563-94. We have done minimal editing, mostly to modernize punctuation and capitalization of pronouns referring to deity and to provide a few notes of explanation. I have made some cuts to shorten it by about a fourth.

that he wept much, because “no man was found worthy to open and read the book, neither to look thereon.” And then [he] tells us how his tears were dried up, namely, that “one of the elders said unto him, Weep not, Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed” etc. as in the text. Though no man nor angel nor any mere creature was found either able to loose the seals or worthy to be admitted to the privilege of reading the book, yet this was declared, for the comfort of this beloved disciple, that Christ was found both able and worthy. And we have an account in the succeeding chapters how He actually did it, opening the seals in order, first one, and then another, revealing what God had decreed should come to pass hereafter. And we have an account in this chapter of His coming and taking the book out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne, and of the joyful praises that were sung to Him in Heaven and earth on that occasion.

Many things might be observed in the words of the text; but it is to my present purpose only to take notice of the two distinct appellations here given to Christ.

1. He is called a Lion. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He seems to be called the Lion of the tribe of Judah in allusion to what Jacob said in his blessing of the tribe on his death-bed, who, when he came to bless Judah, compares him to a lion, Gen. 49:9: “Judah is a lion’s whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?” And [he alludes] also to the standard of the camp of Judah in the wilderness on which was displayed a lion, according to the ancient tradition of the Jews. It is much on account of the valiant acts of David that the tribe of Judah, of which David was, is in Jacob’s prophetic blessing compared to a lion; but more especially with an eye to Jesus Christ, who also was of that tribe and was descended of David, and is in our text called “the Root of David”; and therefore Christ is here called “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.”

2. He is called a Lamb. John was told of a Lion that had prevailed to open the book, and probably expected to see a lion in his vision; but while he is expecting, behold a Lamb appears to open the book, an exceeding diverse kind of creature from a lion. A lion is a devourer, one that is wont to make terrible slaughter of others; and no creature more easily falls a prey to him than a lamb. And Christ is here represented not only as a Lamb, a creature very liable to be slain, but a “Lamb as it had been slain,” that is, with the marks of its deadly wounds appearing on it.

That which I would observe from the words, for the subject of my present discourse, is this: namely,

There is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ.

The lion and the lamb, though very diverse kinds of creatures, yet have each their peculiar excellencies. The lion excels in strength and in the majesty of his appearance and voice; the lamb excels in meekness and patience, besides the excellent nature of the creature as good for food, and yielding that which is fit for our clothing and being suitable to be offered in sacrifice to God. But we see that Christ is in the text compared to both, because the diverse excellencies of both wonderfully meet in Him. ...

PART ONE

First, I would show wherein there is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ, which appears in three things:

A. *There is a conjunction of such excellencies in Christ as, in our manner of conceiving, are very diverse one from another.* Such are the various divine perfections and excellencies that Christ is possessed of. Christ is a divine person and therefore has all the attributes of God. The difference between these is chiefly relative and in our manner of conceiving them. And those which, in this sense, are most diverse meet in the person of Christ. I shall mention two instances.

1. There do meet in Jesus Christ infinite highness and infinite condescension. Christ, as He is God, is infinitely great and high above all. He is higher than the kings of the earth, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is higher than the heavens and higher than the highest angels of Heaven. So great is He, that all men, all kings and princes, are as worms of the dust before Him; all nations are as the drop of the bucket and the light dust of the balance; yea, and angels themselves are as nothing before Him. He is so high that He is infinitely above any need of us; above our reach, that we cannot be profitable to Him; and above our conceptions, that we cannot comprehend Him. Prov. 30:4: "What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?" ...

And yet He is one of infinite condescension. None are so low or inferior, but Christ's condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of them. He condescends not only to the angels, humbling Himself to behold the things that are done in Heaven, but He also condescends to such poor creatures as men; and that not only so as to take notice of princes and great men, but of those that are of meanest rank and degree, "the poor of the world," James 2:5. Such as are commonly despised by their fellow creatures Christ does not despise. 1 Cor. 1:28: "Base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen." Christ condescends to take notice of beggars, Luke 16:22, and people of the most

despised nations. In Christ Jesus is neither "Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free," Col. 3:11. He that is thus high condescends to take a gracious notice of little children. Matt. 19:14: "Suffer little children to come unto me." Yea, which is more, His condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of the most unworthy, sinful creatures, those that have no good deservings and those that have infinite ill deservings.

Yea, so great is His condescension, that it is not only sufficient to take some gracious notice of such as these, but sufficient for every thing that is an act of condescension. His condescension is great enough to become their friend, to become their companion, to unite their souls to Him in spiritual marriage. It is enough to take their nature upon Him, to become one of them, that He may be one with them. Yea, it is great enough to abase Himself yet lower for them, even to expose Himself to shame and spitting; yea, to yield up Himself to an ignominious death for them. And what act of condescension can be conceived of greater? Yet such an act as this has His condescension yielded to, for those that are so low and mean, despicable and unworthy! ...

2. There meet in Jesus Christ infinite justice and infinite grace. As Christ is a divine person, He is infinitely holy and just, hating sin and disposed to execute condign² punishment for sin. He is the Judge of the world and the infinitely just Judge of it, and will not at all acquit the wicked or by any means clear the guilty.

And yet He is infinitely gracious and merciful. Though His justice be so strict with respect to all sin and every breach of the law, yet He has grace sufficient for every sinner, and even the chief of sinners. And it is not only sufficient for the most unworthy to show them mercy and bestow some good upon them but to bestow the greatest good; yea, it is sufficient to bestow all good upon them and to do all things for them. There is no benefit or blessing that they can receive so great but the grace of Christ is sufficient to bestow it on the greatest sinner that ever lived. And not only so, but so great is His grace that nothing is too much as the means of this good. It is sufficient not only to do great things but also to suffer in order to do it, and not only to suffer but to suffer most extremely even unto death, the most terrible of natural evils; and not only death but the most ignominious and tormenting, and every way the most terrible that men could inflict; yea, and greater sufferings than men could inflict, who could only torment the body. He had sufferings in His soul that were the more immediate fruits of the wrath of God against the sins of those He undertakes for.

2. suitable

B. *There do meet in the person of Christ such really diverse excellencies, which otherwise would have been thought utterly incompatible in the same subject, such as are conjoined in no other person whatever, either divine, human, or angelical, and such as neither men nor angels would ever have imagined could have met together in the same person, had it not been seen in the person of Christ. I would give some instances.*

1. In the person of Christ do meet together infinite glory and lowest humility. Infinite glory and the virtue of humility meet in no other person but Christ. They meet in no created person, for no created person has infinite glory; and they meet in no other divine person but Christ. ...

In Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, those two diverse excellencies are sweetly united. He is a person infinitely exalted in glory and dignity. Philip. 2:6: "Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God." There is equal honor due to Him with the Father. John 5:23: "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." God Himself says to Him, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," Heb. 1:8. And there is the same supreme respect and divine worship paid to Him by the angels of Heaven, as to God the Father, verse 6: "Let all the angels of God worship him."

But however He is thus above all, yet He is lowest of all in humility. There never was so great an instance of this virtue among either men or angels, as Jesus. None ever was so sensible of the distance between God and Him, or had a heart so lowly before God, as the man Christ Jesus, Matt. 11:29. What a wonderful spirit of humility appeared in Him when He was here upon earth in all His behavior! In His contentment in His mean outward condition, contentedly living in the family of Joseph the carpenter and Mary His mother, for thirty years together, and afterwards choosing outward meanness, poverty, and contempt, rather than earthly greatness; in His washing His disciples' feet and in all His speeches and deportment towards them; in His cheerfully sustaining the form of a servant through His whole life and submitting to such immense humiliation at death!

2. In the person of Christ do meet together infinite majesty and transcendent meekness. These again are two qualifications that meet together in no other person but Christ. ...

Christ was a person of infinite majesty. It is He that is spoken of, Psalm 45:3: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty." It is He that is mighty, that rideth on the heavens, and His excellency on the sky. It is He that is terrible out of His holy places; who is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea; before whom a fire goeth and burneth up His enemies round

about; at whose presence the earth quakes and the hills melt; who sitteth on the circle of the earth, and all the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; who rebukes the sea and maketh it dry and drieth up the rivers; whose eyes are as a flame of fire; from whose presence and from the glory of whose power the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction; who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who hath Heaven for His throne and the earth for His footstool, and is the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity; whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and of whose dominion there is no end.

And yet He was the most marvelous instance of meekness and humble quietness of spirit that ever was, agreeable to the prophecies of Him, Matthew 21:4-5: "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." And, agreeable to what Christ declares of Himself, Matt. 11:29: "I am meek and lowly in heart." And agreeable to what was manifest in His behavior, for there never was such an instance seen on earth of a meek behavior under injuries and reproaches, and towards enemies; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again. He had a wonderful spirit of forgiveness, was ready to forgive His worst enemies, and prayed for them with fervent and effectual prayers. With what meekness did He appear in the ring of soldiers that were contemning and mocking Him; He was silent and opened not His mouth, but went as a lamb to the slaughter. Thus is Christ a Lion in majesty and a Lamb in meekness.

3. There meet in the person of Christ the deepest reverence towards God and equality with God. Christ, when on earth, appeared full of holy reverence towards the Father. He paid the most reverential worship to Him, praying to Him with postures of reverence. Thus we read of His "kneeling down and praying," Luke 22:41. This became Christ, as one who had taken on Him the human nature, but at the same time He existed in the divine nature, whereby His person was in all respects equal to the person of the Father. God the Father hath no attribute or perfection that the Son hath not in equal degree and equal glory. These things meet in no other person but Jesus Christ.

4. There are conjoined in the person of Christ infinite worthiness of good and the greatest patience under sufferings of evil. He was perfectly innocent and deserved no suffering. He deserved nothing from God by any guilt of His own, and He deserved no ill from men. Yea, He was not only harmless and undeserving of suffering, but He was infinitely worthy, worthy of the infinite love of the Father, worthy of infinite and eter-

nal happiness, and infinitely worthy of all possible esteem, love, and service from all men.

And yet He was perfectly patient under the greatest sufferings that ever were endured in this world. Heb. 12:2: "He endured the cross, despising the shame." He suffered not from His Father for His faults, but ours; and He suffered from men not for His faults but for those things on account of which He was infinitely worthy of their love and honor, which made His patience the more wonderful and the more glorious. 1 Pet. 2:20-24: "For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently, but if when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." ...

5. In the person of Christ are conjoined an exceeding spirit of obedience with supreme dominion over Heaven and earth. Christ is the Lord of all things in two respects: He is so as God-man and Mediator, and thus His dominion is appointed and given Him of the Father. Having it by delegation from God, He is as it were the Father's vice-regent. But He is Lord of all things in another respect, namely, as He is (by His original nature) God; and so He is by natural right the Lord of all and supreme over all as much as the Father. Thus, He has dominion over the world not by delegation but in His own right. He is not an under-God, as the Arians suppose, but to all intents and purposes supreme God.

And yet in the same person is found the greatest spirit of obedience to the commands and laws of God that ever was in the universe, which was manifest in His obedience here in this world. John 14:31: "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." John 15:10: "Even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." The greatness of His obedience appears in its perfection and in His obeying commands of such exceeding difficulty. Never any one received commands from God of such difficulty, and that were so great a trial of obedience, as Jesus Christ. One of God's commands to Him was that He should yield Himself to those dreadful sufferings that He underwent. See John 10:18: "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. ... This commandment received I of my Father." And Christ was thoroughly obedient to this command of God. Heb. 5:8: "Though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things that he suffered." Philip. 2:8: "He humbled himself,

and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Never was there such an instance of obedience in man or angel as this, though He was at the same time supreme Lord of both angels and men.

6. In the person of Christ are conjoined absolute sovereignty and perfect resignation. This is another unparalleled conjunction. Christ, as He is God, is the absolute sovereign of the world, the sovereign disposer of all events. The decrees of God are all His sovereign decrees, and the work of creation and all God's works of providence are His sovereign works. It is He that worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will. Col. 1:16-17: "By him, and through him, and to him, are all things." John 5:17: "The Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Matt. 8:3: "I will, be thou clean."

But yet Christ was the most wonderful instance of resignation that ever appeared in the world. He was absolutely and perfectly resigned when He had a near and immediate prospect of His terrible sufferings and the dreadful cup that He was to drink. The idea and expectation of this made His soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and put Him into such an agony that His sweat was as it were great drops or clots of blood, falling down to the ground. But in such circumstances He was wholly resigned to the will of God. Matt 26:39: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Verse 42: "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

7. In Christ do meet together self-sufficiency and an entire trust and reliance on God, which is another conjunction peculiar to the person of Christ. As He is a divine person, He is self-sufficient, standing in need of nothing. All creatures are dependent on Him, but He is dependent on none, but is absolutely independent. ...

But yet Christ entirely trusted in God. His enemies say that of Him, "He trusted in God that he would deliver him," Matt. 27:43. And the apostle testifies, 1 Pet. 2:23: "That he committed himself to God."

C. Such diverse excellencies are expressed in Him towards men that otherwise would have seemed impossible to be exercised towards the same object, as particularly these three: justice, mercy, and truth. The same that are mentioned in Psalm 85:10: "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

The strict justice of God and even His revenging justice and that against the sins of men never was so gloriously manifested as in Christ. He manifested an infinite regard to the attribute of God's justice, in that, when He had a mind to save sinners, He was willing to undergo such extreme sufferings, rather than that their salvation should be to the injury

of the honor of that attribute. And as He is the Judge of the world, He doth Himself exercise strict justice; He will not clear the guilty nor at all acquit the wicked in judgment.

Yet how wonderfully is infinite mercy towards sinners displayed in Him! And what glorious and ineffable grace and love have been and are exercised by Him towards sinful men! Though He be the just Judge of a sinful world, yet He is also the Savior of the world. Though He be a consuming fire to sin, yet He is the light and life of sinners. Rom. 3:25-26: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

So the immutable truth of God in the threatenings of His law against the sins of men was never so manifested as it is in Jesus Christ, for there never was any other so great a trial of the unalterableness of the truth of God in those threatenings as when sin came to be imputed to His own Son. And then in Christ has been seen already an actual complete accomplishment of those threatenings, which never has been nor will be seen in any other instance, because the eternity that will be taken up in fulfilling those threatenings on others never will be finished. Christ manifested an infinite regard to this truth of God in His sufferings. ...

PART TWO

Having thus shown wherein there is an admirable conjunction of excellencies in Jesus Christ, I now proceed, secondly, to show how this admirable conjunction of excellencies appears in Christ's acts.

A. *It appears in what Christ did in taking on Him our nature.* In this act, His infinite condescension wonderfully appeared, that He who was God should become man, that the Word should be made flesh and should take on Him a nature infinitely below His original nature! And it appears yet more remarkably in the low circumstances of His incarnation: He was conceived in the womb of a poor young woman, whose poverty appeared in this, when she came to offer sacrifices of her purification, she brought what was allowed of in the law only in case of poverty, as Luke 2:24: "According to what is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons." This was allowed only in case the person was so poor that she was not able to offer a lamb, Lev. 12:8.

And though His infinite condescension thus appeared in the manner of His incarnation, yet His divine dignity also appeared in it; for though

He was conceived in the womb of a poor virgin, yet He was conceived there by the power of the Holy Ghost. And His divine dignity also appeared in the holiness of His conception and birth. Though He was conceived in the womb of one of the corrupt race of mankind, yet He was conceived and born without sin, as the angel said to the blessed virgin, Luke 1:35: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."

His infinite condescension marvelously appeared in the manner of His birth. He was brought forth in a stable because there was no room for them in the inn. The inn was taken up by others, that were looked upon as persons of greater account. The blessed virgin, being poor and despised, was turned or shut out. Though she was in such necessitous circumstances, yet those that counted themselves her betters would not give place to her; and therefore, in the time of her travail, she was forced to betake herself to a stable; and when the child was born, it was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. There Christ lay a little infant, and there He eminently appeared as a lamb.

But yet this feeble infant, born thus in a stable and laid in a manger, was born to conquer and triumph over Satan, that roaring lion. He came to subdue the mighty powers of darkness and make a show of them openly and so to restore peace on earth and to manifest God's good-will towards men and to bring glory to God in the highest, according as the end of His birth was declared by the joyful songs of the glorious hosts of angels appearing to the shepherds at the same time that the infant lay in the manger; whereby His divine dignity was manifested.

B. *This admirable conjunction of excellencies appears in the acts and various passages of Christ's life.* Though Christ dwelt in mean outward circumstances, whereby His condescension and humility especially appeared and His majesty was veiled, yet His divine divinity and glory did in many of His acts shine through the veil, and it illustriously appeared that He was not only the Son of man but the great God.

Thus, in the circumstances of His infancy, His outward meanness appeared; yet there was something then to show forth His divine dignity, in the wise men's being stirred up to come from the East to give honor to Him, their being led by a miraculous star and coming and falling down and worshipping Him and presenting Him with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. His humility and meekness wonderfully appeared in His subjection to His mother and reputed father when He was a child. Herein He appeared as a lamb. But His divine glory broke forth and shone when, at

twelve years old, He disputed with doctors in the Temple. In that He appeared, in some measure, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

And so, after He entered on His public ministry, His marvelous humility and meekness was manifested in His choosing to appear in such mean outward circumstances and in being contented in them, when He was so poor that He had not where to lay His head and depended on the charity of some of His followers for His subsistence, as appears by Luke 8, at the beginning. How meek, condescending, and familiar His treatment of His disciples, His discourses with them, treating them as a father his children, yea, as friends and companions. How patient, bearing such affliction and reproach, and so many injuries from the scribes and Pharisees and others. In these things He appeared as a Lamb.

And yet He at the same time did in many ways show forth His divine majesty and glory, particularly in the miracles He wrought, which were evidently divine works and manifested omnipotent power and so declared Him to be the Lion of the tribe of Judah. His wonderful and miraculous works plainly showed Him to be the God of nature, in that it appeared by them that He had all nature in His hands and could lay an arrest upon it and stop and change its course as He pleased. In healing the sick and opening the eyes of the blind and unstopping the ears of the deaf and healing the lame, He showed that He was the God that framed the eye and created the ear and was the author of the frame of man's body. By the dead's rising at His command, it appeared that He was the author and fountain of life and that "God the Lord, to whom belong the issues from death." By His walking on the sea in a storm, when the waves were raised, He showed Himself to be that God spoken of in Job 9:8: "That treadeth on the waves of the sea." By His stilling the storm and calming the rage of the sea by His powerful command, saying, "Peace, be still," He showed that He has the command of the universe and that He is that God who brings things to pass by the word of His power, who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast; Psalm 115:7: "Who stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves." And Psalm 107:29: "That maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." ... Christ, by casting out devils, remarkably appeared as the Lion of the tribe of Judah and showed that He was stronger than the roaring lion, that seizes whom He may devour. He commanded them to come out, and they were forced to obey. They were terribly afraid of Him; they fall down before Him and beseech Him not to torment them. He forces a whole legion of them to forsake their hold by His powerful word, and they could not so much as enter into the swine without His leave. ...

And though Christ ordinarily appeared without outward glory and in great obscurity, yet at a certain time He threw off the veil and appeared in His divine majesty, so far as it could be outwardly manifested to men in this frail state, when He was transfigured in the mount. The apostle Peter, 2 Pet. 1:16-17, was an "eye-witness of his majesty, when he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; which voice that came from heaven they heard, when they were with him in the holy mount." ...

C. *This admirable conjunction of excellencies remarkably appears in His offering up Himself a sacrifice for sinners in His last sufferings.* As this was the greatest thing in all the works of redemption, the greatest act of Christ in that work, so in this act especially does there appear that admirable conjunction of excellencies that has been spoken of. Christ never so much appeared as a lamb as when He was slain: "He came like a lamb to the slaughter," Isaiah 53:7. Then He was offered up to God as a lamb without blemish and without spot; then especially did He appear to be the anti-type of the lamb of the Passover, 1 Cor 5:7: "Christ our Passover sacrificed for us." And yet in that act He did in an especial manner appear as the Lion of the tribe of Judah; yea, in this above all other acts, in many respects, as may appear in the following things.

1. Then was Christ in the greatest degree of His humiliation ... [which] was never so great as it was in His last sufferings, beginning with His agony in the garden, till He expired on the cross. Never was He subject to such ignominy as then; never did He suffer so much pain in His body or so much sorrow in His soul; never was He in so great an exercise of His condescension, humility, meekness, and patience, as He was in these last sufferings; never was His divine glory and majesty covered with so thick and dark a veil; never did He so empty Himself and make Himself of no reputation, as at this time.

And yet, never was His divine glory so manifested by any act of His as in yielding Himself up to these sufferings. When the fruit of it came to appear, and the mystery and ends of it to be unfolded in its issue, then did the glory of it appear; then did it appear as the most glorious act of Christ that ever He exercised towards the creature. This act of His is celebrated by the angels and hosts of Heaven with peculiar praises, as that which is above all others glorious, as you may see in the context, Rev. 5:9-12: "And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall

reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.”

2. He never in any act gave so great a manifestation of love to God and yet never so manifested His love to those that were enemies to God as in that act. Christ never did any thing whereby His love to the Father was so eminently manifested as in His laying down His life under such inexpressible sufferings in obedience to His command and for the vindication of the honor of His authority and majesty; nor did ever any mere creature give such a testimony of love to God as that was.

And yet this was the greatest expression of His love to sinful men who were enemies to God. Rom. 5:10: “When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son.” The greatness of Christ’s love to such appears in nothing so much as in its being dying love. That blood of Christ which fell in great drops to the ground in His agony was shed from love to God’s enemies and His own. That shame and spitting, that torment of body, and that exceeding sorrow, even unto death, which He endured in His soul, was what He underwent from love to rebels against God to save them from Hell and to purchase for them eternal glory. Never did Christ so eminently show His regard to God’s honor as in offering up Himself a victim to justice. And yet, in this above all, He manifested His love to them who dishonored God, so as to bring such guilt on themselves that nothing less than His blood could atone for it.

3. Christ never so eminently appeared for divine justice and yet never suffered so much from divine justice as when He offered up Himself a sacrifice for our sins. In Christ’s great sufferings did His infinite regard to the honor of God’s justice distinguishingly appear, for it was from regard to that that He thus humbled Himself.

And yet in these sufferings, Christ was the target of the vindictive expressions of that very justice of God. Revenging justice then spent all its force upon Him, on account of our guilt; which made Him sweat blood and cry out upon the cross and probably rent His vitals—broke His heart, the fountain of blood, or some other blood vessels—and by the violent fermentation turned His blood to water. For the blood and water that issued out of His side, when pierced by the spear, seems to have been extravasated blood,³ and so there might be a kind of literal fulfillment of

3. blood forced out of the blood vessels

Psalm 22:14: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels." ...

In this the diverse excellencies that met in the person of Christ appeared, namely, His infinite regard to God's justice and such love to those that have exposed themselves to it, as induced Him thus to yield Himself a sacrifice to it.

4. Christ's holiness never so illustriously shone forth as it did in His last sufferings, and yet He never was to such a degree treated as guilty. Christ's holiness never had such a trial as it had then and therefore never had so great a manifestation. When it was tried in this furnace it came forth as gold or as silver purified seven times. His holiness then above all appeared in His steadfast pursuit of the honor of God and in His obedience to Him. For His yielding Himself unto death was transcendently the greatest act of obedience that ever was paid to God by any one since the foundation of the world.

And yet then Christ was in the greatest degree treated as a wicked person would have been. He was apprehended and bound as a malefactor. His accusers represented Him as a most wicked wretch. In His sufferings before His crucifixion, He was treated as if He had been the worst and vilest of mankind, and then He was put to a kind of death that none but the worst sort of malefactors were wont to suffer, those that were most abject in their persons and guilty of the blackest crimes. And He suffered as though guilty from God Himself by reason of our guilt imputed to Him, for He who knew no sin was made sin for us; He was made subject to wrath, as if He had been sinful Himself. He was made a curse for us.

...

5. He never was so dealt with, as unworthy, as in His last sufferings, and yet it is chiefly on account of them that He is accounted worthy.

He was therein dealt with as if He had not been worthy to live: they cry out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him," John 19:15. And they prefer Barabbas before Him. And He suffered from the Father, as one whose demerits were infinite, by reason of our demerits that were laid upon Him.

And yet it was especially by that act of His subjecting Himself to those sufferings that He merited, and on the account of which chiefly He was accounted worthy of the glory of His exaltation. Philip. 2:8-9: "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death; wherefore God hath highly exalted him." And we see that it is on this account chiefly, that He is extolled as worthy by saints and angels in the context: "Worthy," say they, "is the Lamb that was slain." This shows an admirable conjunction in

Him of infinite dignity and infinite condescension and love to the infinitely unworthy.

6. Christ in His last sufferings suffered most extremely from those towards whom He was then manifesting His greatest act of love.

He never suffered so much from His Father (though not from any hatred to Him, but from hatred to our sins), for He then forsook Him, or took away the comforts of His presence; and then "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief," as Isaiah 53:10. And yet He never gave so great a manifestation of love to God as then, as has been already observed.

So Christ never suffered so much from the hands of men as He did then and yet never was in so high an exercise of love to men. He never was so ill treated by His disciples, who were so unconcerned about His sufferings that they would not watch with Him one hour in His agony; and, when He was apprehended, all forsook Him and fled, except Peter, who denied Him with oaths and curses. And yet then He was suffering, shedding His blood, and pouring out His soul unto death for them. Yea, He probably was then shedding His blood for some of them that shed His blood, for whom He prayed while they were crucifying Him, and who were probably afterwards brought home to Christ by Peter's preaching. (Compare Luke 23:34; Acts 2:23, 36, 37, 41; 3:17; and chapter 4.) This shows an admirable meeting of justice and grace in the redemption of Christ.

7. It was in Christ's last sufferings, above all, that He was delivered up to the power of His enemies, and yet by these, above all, He obtained victory over His enemies. Christ never was so in His enemies' hands, as in the time of His last sufferings. They sought His life before; but from time to time they were restrained, and Christ escaped out of their hands, and this reason is given for it, that His time was not yet come. But now they were suffered to work their will upon Him; He was in a great degree delivered up to the malice and cruelty of both wicked men and devils. ...

And yet it was principally by means of those sufferings that He conquered and overthrew His enemies. Christ never so effectually bruised Satan's head, as when Satan bruised His heel. The weapon with which Christ warred against the devil and obtained a most complete victory and glorious triumph over him was the cross, the instrument and weapon with which he thought he had overthrown Christ and brought on Him shameful destruction. Col. 2:14-15: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, ... nailing it to his cross: and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." In His last sufferings, Christ sapped the very foundations of Satan's king-

dom: He conquered His enemies in their own territories and beat them with their own weapons as David cut off Goliath's head with his own sword. The devil had, as it were, swallowed up Christ as the whale did Jonah, but it was deadly poison to him; He gave him a mortal wound in his own bowels. He was soon sick of his morsel and was forced to do by Him as the whale did by Jonah. To this day he is heart-sick of what he then swallowed as his prey. ...

Thus Christ appeared at the same time and in the same act as both a lion and a lamb. He appeared as a lamb in the hands of His cruel enemies, as a lamb in the paws and between the devouring jaws of a roaring lion, yea, He was a lamb actually slain by this lion and yet, at the same time, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, He conquers and triumphs over Satan, destroying His own destroyer, as Samson did the lion that roared upon him, when he rent him as he would a kid. And in nothing has Christ appeared so much as a lion, in glorious strength destroying His enemies, as when He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter. In His greatest weakness He was most strong; and, when He suffered most from His enemies, He brought the greatest confusion on His enemies.

Thus this admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies was manifest in Christ in His offering up Himself to God in His last sufferings.

D. It is still manifest in His acts, in His present state of exaltation in Heaven. Indeed, in His exalted state, He most eminently appears in manifestation of those excellencies, on the account of which He is compared to a lion; but still He appears as a lamb. Rev. 14:1: "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on mount Zion." ... Though Christ be now at the right-hand of God, exalted as King of Heaven and Lord of the universe, yet, as He still is in the human nature, He still excels in humility. ... And though He now appears in such glorious majesty and dominion in Heaven, yet He appears as a lamb in His condescending, mild, and sweet treatment of His saints there, for He is a Lamb still, even amidst the throne of His exaltation. ... Though in Heaven every knee bows to Him and though the angels fall down before Him adoring Him, yet He treats His saints with infinite condescension, mildness, and endearment. And in His acts towards the saints on earth, He still appears as a lamb, manifesting exceeding love and tenderness in His intercession for them, as one that has had experience of affliction and temptation. He has not forgot what these things are, nor has He forgot how to pity those that are subject to them. And He still manifests His lamb-like excellencies in His dealings with His saints on earth, in admirable forbearance, love, gentleness, and compassion. Behold Him instructing, supplying, supporting, and comforting them, often coming to them and manifesting Himself to them by

His Spirit, that He may sup with them and they with Him. Behold Him admitting them to sweet communion, enabling them with boldness and confidence to come to Him, and solacing their hearts. And in Heaven Christ still appears, as it were, with the marks of His wounds upon Him and so appears as a Lamb as it had been slain. ...

E. *And, lastly, this admirable conjunction of excellencies will be manifest in Christ's acts at the last judgment.* He then, above all other times, will appear as the Lion of the tribe of Judah in infinite greatness and majesty, when He shall come in the glory of His Father, with all the holy angels, and the earth shall tremble before Him, and the hills shall melt. This is He, Rev. 20:11, "that shall sit on a great white throne, before whose face the earth and heaven shall flee away." He will then appear in the most dreadful and amazing manner to the wicked. The devils tremble at the thought of that appearance, and when it shall be, the kings and the great men and the rich men and the chief captains and the mighty men and every bondman and every free-man shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, to hide them from the face and wrath of the Lamb. ...

And yet He will at the same time appear as a Lamb to His saints; He will receive them as friends and brethren, treating them with infinite mildness and love. There shall be nothing in Him terrible to them, but towards them He will clothe Himself wholly with sweetness and endearment. The church shall be then admitted to Him as His bride; that shall be her wedding-day. The saints shall all be sweetly invited to come with Him to inherit the kingdom and reign in it with Him to all eternity.

PART THREE

A. *From this doctrine we may learn one reason why Christ is called by such a variety of names and held forth under such a variety of representations in Scripture.* It is the better to signify and exhibit to us that variety of excellencies that meet together and are conjoined in Him. Many appellations are mentioned together in one verse, Isaiah 9:6: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." It shows a wonderful conjunction of excellencies, that the same person should be a Son, born and given, and yet be the everlasting Father, without beginning or end; that He should be a Child and yet be He whose name is Counselor and the mighty God; and well may His name, in whom such things are conjoined, be called Wonderful.

By reason of the same wonderful conjunction, Christ is represented by a great variety of sensible things, that are on some account excellent. Thus in some places He is called a sun, as Mal. 4:2, in others a star, Numb. 24:17. And He is especially represented by the morning star, as being that which excels all other stars in brightness and is the forerunner of the day, Rev. 22:16. And, as in our text, He is compared to a lion in one verse and a lamb in the next, so sometimes He is compared to a roe or young hart, another creature most diverse from a lion. So in some places He is called a rock; in others He is compared to a pearl. In some places He is called a man of war and the Captain of our Salvation; in other places He is represented as a bridegroom. In the second chapter of Canticles,⁴ the first verse, He is compared to a rose and a lily, that are sweet and beautiful flowers; in the next verse but one, He is compared to a tree bearing sweet fruit. In Isaiah 53:2 He is called a Root out of a dry ground; but elsewhere, instead of that, He is called the Tree of Life, that grows, not in a dry or barren ground, but "in the midst of the paradise of God." Rev. 2:7.

B. *Let the consideration of this wonderful meeting of diverse excellencies in Christ induce you to accept of Him and close with Him as your Savior.* As all manner of excellencies meet in Him, so there are concurring in Him all manner of arguments and motives, to move you to choose Him for your Savior, and every thing that tends to encourage poor sinners to come and put their trust in Him: His fullness and all-sufficiency as a Savior gloriously appear in that variety of excellencies that has been spoken of.

Fallen man is in a state of exceeding great misery and is helpless in it; he is a poor weak creature, like an infant cast out in its blood in the day that it is born. But Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah; He is strong, though we are weak; He hath prevailed to do that for us which no creature else could do. Fallen man is a mean, despicable creature, a contemptible worm; but Christ, who has undertaken for us, is infinitely honorable and worthy. Fallen man is polluted, but Christ is infinitely holy; fallen man is hateful, but Christ is infinitely lovely; fallen man is the object of God's indignation, but Christ is infinitely dear to Him. We have dreadfully provoked God, but Christ has performed that righteousness which is infinitely precious in God's eyes.

And here is not only infinite strength and infinite worthiness, but infinite condescension and love and mercy, as great as power and dignity. If you are a poor, distressed sinner, whose heart is ready to sink for fear that God never will have mercy on you, you need not be afraid to go to Christ, for fear that He is either unable or unwilling to help you. Here is a strong

4. Song of Solomon

foundation and an inexhaustible treasure to answer the necessities of your poor soul, and here is infinite grace and gentleness to invite and embolden a poor, unworthy, fearful soul to come to it. If Christ accepts of you, you need not fear but that you will be safe, for He is a strong Lion for your defense. And if you come, you need not fear but that you shall be accepted; for He is like a Lamb to all that come to Him and receives them with infinite grace and tenderness. It is true He has awful majesty, He is the great God and infinitely high above you; but there is this to encourage and embolden the poor sinner, that Christ is man as well as God; He is a creature,⁵ as well as the Creator, and He is the most humble and lowly in heart of any creature in Heaven or earth. This may well make the poor unworthy creature bold in coming to Him. You need not hesitate one moment but may run to Him and cast yourself upon Him. You will certainly be graciously and meekly received by Him. ...

Here let me a little expostulate with the poor, burdened, distressed soul.

1. What are you afraid of, that you dare not venture your soul upon Christ? Are you afraid that He cannot save you, that He is not strong enough to conquer the enemies of your soul? But how can you desire one stronger than "the almighty God," as Christ is called, Isa. 9:6? Is there need of greater than infinite strength? Are you afraid that He will not be willing to stoop so low as to take any gracious notice of you? But then, look on Him, as He stood in the ring of soldiers, exposing His blessed face to be buffeted and spit upon by them! Behold Him bound with His back uncovered to those that smote Him! And behold Him hanging on the cross! Do you think that He that had condescension enough to stoop to these things, and that for His crucifiers, will be unwilling to accept of you, if you come to Him? ...

2. What is there that you can desire should be in a savior that is not in Christ? ... What excellency is there wanting? What is there that is great or good; what is there that is venerable or winning; what is there that is adorable or endearing; or what can you think of that would be encouraging, which is not to be found in the person of Christ? Would you have your savior to be great and honorable, because you are not willing to be beholden to a mean person? And, is not Christ a person honorable enough to be worthy that you should be dependent on Him? Is He not a person high enough to be appointed to so honorable a work as your

5. Edwards is not asserting, of course, that the Son was a creation of the Father, but that the Son took on the form of the created man.

salvation? Would you not only have a savior of high degree, but would you have him, notwithstanding his exaltation and dignity, to be made also of low degree, that he might have experience of afflictions and trials, that he might learn by the things that he has suffered to pity them that suffer and are tempted? And has not Christ been made low enough for you? And has He not suffered enough? Would you not only have him possess experience of the afflictions you now suffer but also of that amazing wrath that you fear hereafter, that he may know how to pity those that are in danger and afraid of it? This Christ has had experience of, which experience gave Him a greater sense of it, a thousand times, than you have or any man living has. Would you have your savior to be one who is near to God, that so his mediation might be prevalent with Him? And can you desire him to be nearer to God than Christ is, who is His only-begotten Son, of the same essence with the Father? ... And would you desire that a savior should suffer more than Christ has suffered for sinners? What is there wanting, or what would you add if you could, to make Him more fit to be your Savior?

But further, to induce you to accept of Christ as your Savior, consider two things particularly.

1. How much Christ appears as the Lamb of God in His invitations to you to come to Him and trust in Him. With what sweet grace and kindness does He, from time to time, call and invite you, as Prov. 8:4: "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." And Isaiah 55:1-3: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." How gracious is He here in inviting every one that thirsts and in so repeating His invitation over and over, "Come ye to the waters, come, buy and eat, yea, come!" Mark the excellency of that entertainment which He invites you to accept of: "Come, buy wine and milk!" Your poverty, having nothing to pay for it, shall be no objection; "Come, he that hath no money, come without money, and without price!" ... And so Prov. 9 at the beginning; how gracious and sweet is the invitation there! "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither"; let you be never so poor, ignorant, and blind a creature, you shall be welcome. And in the following words Christ sets forth the provision that He has made for you: "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." You are in a poor famishing state and have nothing wherewith to feed your perishing soul; you have been seeking something but yet remain destitute. Harken, how Christ calls you to eat of His bread and to drink of the wine that He hath mingled! And how much like a lamb

does Christ appear in Matt. 9:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." O thou poor distressed soul! Whoever thou art, consider that Christ mentions thy very case when He calls to them who labor and are heavy laden! How He repeatedly promises you rest if you come to Him! In the 28th verse He says, "I will give you rest." And in the 29th verse, "Ye shall find rest to your souls." This is what you want. This is the thing you have been so long in vain seeking after. O how sweet would rest be to you, if you could but obtain it! Come to Christ, and you shall obtain it. And hear how Christ, to encourage you, represents Himself as a lamb! He tells you that He is meek and lowly in heart, and are you afraid to come to such a one! And again, Rev. 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me." Christ condescends not only to call you to Him, but He comes to you; He comes to your door and there knocks. He might send an officer and seize you as a rebel and vile malefactor, but, instead of that, He comes and knocks at your door and seeks that you would receive Him into your house, as your Friend and Savior. And He not only knocks at your door, but He stands there waiting, while you are backward and unwilling. And not only so, but He makes promises what He will do for you, if you will admit Him, what privileges He will admit you to: He will sup with you, and you with Him. ...

2. If you do come to Christ, He will appear as a Lion, in His glorious power and dominion, to defend you. All those excellencies of His, in which He appears as a lion, shall be yours and shall be employed for you in your defense, for your safety, and to promote your glory; He will be as a lion to fight against your enemies. He that touches you or offends you will provoke His wrath, as He that stirs up a lion. Unless your enemies can conquer this Lion, they shall not be able to destroy or hurt you; unless they are stronger than He, they shall not be able to hinder your happiness. Isaiah 31:4: "For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them; so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof."

C. *Let what has been said be improved to induce you to love the Lord Jesus Christ and choose Him for your friend and portion.* As there is such an admirable meeting of diverse excellencies in Christ, so there is every thing in Him to render Him worthy of your love and choice and to win

and engage it. Whatsoever there is or can be desirable in a friend is in Christ, and that to the highest degree that can be desired.

Would you choose for a friend a person of great dignity? ... Christ is infinitely above you, and above all the princes of the earth; for He is the King of kings. So honorable a person as this offers Himself to you in the nearest and dearest friendship.

And would you choose to have a friend not only great but good? In Christ infinite greatness and infinite goodness meet together and receive luster and glory one from another. His greatness is rendered lovely by His goodness. The greater any one is without goodness, so much the greater evil; but when infinite goodness is joined with greatness, it renders it a glorious and adorable greatness. ... And how glorious is the sight, to see Him who is the great Creator and supreme Lord of Heaven and earth full of condescension, tender pity, and mercy towards the mean and unworthy! His almighty power and infinite majesty and self-sufficiency render His exceeding love and grace the more surprising. ... Would you not desire that your friend, though great and honorable, should be of such condescension and grace, and so to have the way opened to free access to him, that his exaltation above you might not hinder your free enjoyment of his friendship

And would you choose not only that the infinite greatness and majesty of your friend should be, as it were, mollified and sweetened with condescension and grace; but would you also desire to have your friend brought nearer to you? Would you choose a friend far above you, and yet as it were upon a level with you too? ... Thus is Christ. Though He be the great God, yet He has, as it were, brought Himself down to be upon a level with you, so as to become man as you are, that He might not only be your Lord but your brother and that He might be the more fit to be a companion for such a worm of the dust. This is one end of Christ's taking upon Him man's nature, that His people might be under advantages for a more familiar converse with Him than the infinite distance of the divine nature would allow of. ... And in order hereto, such a one is come down to us and has taken our nature and is become one of us and calls Himself our friend, brother, and companion. Psalm 122:8: "For my brethren and companions' sake, will I now say, Peace be within thee."

But is it not enough in order to invite and encourage you to free access to a friend so great and high, that He is one of infinite condescending grace and also has taken your own nature and is become man? But would you, further to embolden and win you, have him a man of wonderful meekness and humility? Why, such a one is Christ! He is not only become man for you, but far the meekest and most humble of all men, the great-

est instance of these sweet virtues that ever was or will be. ... And on the other hand, how much more glorious and surprising do the meekness, the humility, obedience, resignation, and other human excellencies of Christ appear, when we consider that they are in so great a person, as the eternal Son of God, the Lord of Heaven and earth!

By your choosing Christ for your friend and portion, you will obtain these two infinite benefits.

1. Christ will give Himself to you, with all those various excellencies that meet in Him, to your full and everlasting enjoyment. He will ever after treat you as His dear friend; and you shall ere long be where He is and shall behold His glory and dwell with Him in most free and intimate communion and enjoyment.

When the saints get to Heaven, they shall not merely see Christ and have to do with Him as subjects and servants with a glorious and gracious Lord and Sovereign, but Christ will entertain them as friends and brethren. This we may learn from the manner of Christ's conversing with His disciples here on earth: though He was their Sovereign Lord and did not refuse, but required, their supreme respect and adoration, yet He did not treat them as earthly sovereigns are wont to do their subjects. He did not keep them at an awful distance but all along conversed with them with the most friendly familiarity, as a father amongst a company of children, yea, as with brethren. ... He told His disciples that He did not call them servants but friends, and we read of one of them that leaned on His bosom; and doubtless He will not treat His disciples with less freedom and endearment in Heaven. He will not keep them at a greater distance for His being in a state of exaltation, but He will rather take them into a state of exaltation with Him. ... When believers get to Heaven, Christ will conform them to Himself; as He is set down in His Father's throne, so they shall sit down with Him on His throne and shall in their measure be made like Him.

When Christ was going to Heaven, He comforted His disciples with the thought that after a while He would come again and take them to Himself, that they might be with Him. And we are not to suppose that, when the disciples got to Heaven, they found Him keeping a greater distance than He used to do. No, doubtless, He embraced them as friends and welcomed them to His and their Father's house and to His and their glory. ...

Yea the saints' conversation with Christ in Heaven shall not only be as intimate and their access to Him as free as of the disciples on earth, but

in many respects much more so; for in Heaven that vital union shall be perfect, which is exceeding imperfect here. ...

When the saints shall see Christ's glory and exaltation in Heaven, it will indeed possess their hearts with the greater admiration and adoring respect, but it will not awe them into any separation, but will serve only to heighten their surprise and joy, when they find Christ condescending to admit them to such intimate access and so freely and fully communicating Himself to them. So that, if we choose Christ for our friend and portion, we shall hereafter be so received to Him that there shall be nothing to hinder the fullest enjoyment of Him, to the satisfying the utmost cravings of our souls.

2. By your being united to Christ, you will have a more glorious union with and enjoyment of God the Father than otherwise could be. For hereby the saints' relation to God becomes much nearer; they are the children of God in a higher manner than otherwise could be. For, being members of God's own Son, they are in a sort partakers of His relation to the Father: they are not only sons of God by regeneration but by a kind of communion in the sonship of the eternal Son. This seems to be intended. Gal. 4:4-6: "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." ...

And thus is the affair of our redemption ordered, that thereby we are brought to an immensely more exalted kind of union with God and enjoyment of Him, both the Father and the Son, than otherwise could have been. For, Christ being united to the human nature, we have advantage for a more free and full enjoyment of Him than we could have had if He had remained only in the divine nature. So again, we being united to a divine person, as His members, can have a more intimate union and intercourse with God the Father, who is only in the divine nature, than otherwise could be. Christ, who is a divine person, by taking on Him our nature, descends from the infinite distance and height above us and is brought nigh to us; whereby we have advantage for the full enjoyment of Him. And, on the other hand, we, by being in Christ, a divine person, do as it were ascend up to God through the infinite distance and have hereby advantage for the full enjoyment of Him also. ...

Christ has brought it to pass that those whom the Father has given Him should be brought into the household of God, that He and His Father and His people should be as one society, one family, that the church should be as it were admitted into the society of the blessed Trinity.

Confirmation and Challenge: Thematic Shading and the Theology of the Chronicler

To examine the Biblical books of Chronicles around the same time that the iPhone and the MacBook Air make their way to the consumer seems the ultimate anachronism. If we were discussing not the ancient canonical Hebrew text but, say, *The Chronicles of Narnia* or Ray Bradbury's sci-fi classic *The Martian Chronicles* then we would at least be in the same century as the new technology—almost. Fast forward to Bob Dylan's recent biography entitled *Chronicles* or to all sorts of trendy blog spots with "chronicle" in their web addresses—the "Boomer Chronicles," for example—and now the word has some relevance. Alas, though, we *are* talking about *that* Chronicles, the very last book in the Hebrew canon.

Though most people surely would rank it near the bottom of their reading list—more realistically, it would not even make the list—that opinion would conflict with Jerome's remarkably high estimation:

The book of *Paralipomena* [sic] [Chronicles] is an epitome of the Old Testament and is of such scope and quality that anyone wishing to claim knowledge of the scripture without it should laugh at himself.¹

Recent Old Testament pundits must be taking the venerable monk seriously since the last four decades have witnessed a resurgence of publications on Chronicles.² Just the title of the book elicits a yawn from many today even if they are serious Bible students.

The English word *chronicle* first appeared in the language around A. D. 1300. Its plural use for the two Old Testament books probably comes from

1. Jerome, Epistle 58, cited in Gary N. Knoppers and Paul B. Harvey, Jr., "Omitted and Remaining Matters: On the Names Given to the Book of Chronicles in Antiquity," *JBL* 121 (2002): 232.

2. For a sampling, consult the bibliography in R. K. Duke, "Chronicles, Books of" in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Historical Books*, eds. Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 179-81. Says Steven L. McKenzie, there has never been a better time to study Chronicles, although "Biblical scholarship has had a long tradition of tending to ignore this part of the canon." "1 and 2 Chronicles" in the *Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 17.

Martin Luther as translated into English by Miles Coverdale. Coverdale's 1535 version of the Bible first used "Chronicles" for the previous *Paraleipomena* (Greek *ta paraleipomena*), "the things omitted," from the Greek title given the work by the Septuagint (LXX) translators around 250 B. C. This designation reflected the view that the book included matters left out of other historical narratives in the Hebrew Bible. The Rabbis entitled it *sēpher dibrê hayāmîm*, "the book of the events of the days."³

The work was originally one volume; its division into two books first appeared in the LXX, whose translators chose logically to break the narrative between David and Solomon.⁴ In this study I recognize that this somewhat arbitrary division between "First" and "Second" Chronicles may tend to downplay the unity of the work. I will assume this singularity in my comments, yet for clarity's sake refer to the traditional division of the book into "1 C" and "2 C." The reader should understand that when I speak of one particular emphasis in 1 C and another in 2 C I am essentially referring to the beginning and concluding portions of a single work by an author commonly referred to as "the Chronicler." No definitive, marked break in the narrative appears between 1 C 29:30 and 2 C 1:1; yet, as I will argue, a shift in theological emphasis does indeed occur as the work progresses.⁵

My contention is that through the development of his historiography, the Chronicler transfers emphasis from one major theological point to another, though he anticipates the second premise in the first and echoes the first in the second. I call this technique theological "shading," to borrow an artistic concept from other disciplines. "Shading" speaks of an artist's choice to highlight certain features of a composition for the purpose of emphasis, stressing particular components and downplaying others for effect. Painters achieve this end through color variation and light transfer which draw the viewer's eye toward some features and away from others. Music composers shift tempo, pitch, volume, instrumentation, and other dynamics to achieve a sense of comparison, contrast, or similar variation while preserving a sense of unity within the entire piece.

3. See the discussion in Knoppers and Harvey, 228-9, 241-3.

4. The Masoretes actually noted the mid-point of Chronicles at 1 Chronicles 27:25. Knoppers and Harvey, 234.

5. David Rothstein even suggests that "Chronicles" is "a misnomer." "The book is neither a dry chronicle nor an analytic work," he contends, "but a complex theological-historical composition." "1 Chronicles" in *The Jewish Study Bible*, eds. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1712.

Mark Twain refers to the “fine shading” required in the development of certain literary characters.⁶

Other examples from Scripture could fall under the category of “shading.” One would be the observable contrasts drawn by the writer between the creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2. A decidedly anti-Saul, pro-David slant characterizes the writing of Samuel. John’s gospel offers a distinct shift—“shading,” if you will—from the Synoptics by highlighting seven key miracles of Jesus and focusing nearly half of his narrative on the final week of the Lord’s earthly life. In Paul’s didactic literature it is fair, I think, to label the shift in tone and stress from the first half to the second in such letters as Ephesians and Colossians as “shading”; he opens with doctrinal instruction and closes with practical injunction, though this is oversimplification in some respects.

Whatever the case with the “shading” technique in other disciplines and texts, the Chronicler has given his post-exilic generation a treatise from Yahweh exceedingly germane to their disoriented setting upon the return from exile in Babylon. These deportees faced an incredibly uncertain future, from a human standpoint. Their numbers were few and their territory small. Their social and religious structures were also in shambles. They still had not witnessed the complete fulfillment of the promises God made to Abraham. No king in David’s line sat on the throne; in fact, neither throne nor temple existed in Jerusalem. Most seriously, the early returnees were guilty of gross violations of the Mosaic law, the very problem that had brought Yahweh’s judgment just a century or so earlier, the effects of which they were still feeling. Not only had they lost much of their sense of identity and religion, but their very survival was in doubt. Rodney Duke comments: “Their continued existence as a people depended upon their shaping and maintaining a sense of identity and hope. Chronicles’ paradigm of seeking Yahweh explained the exile and the return. . . . Moreover, it provided the people with an identity that connected them to the promises of God and institutions of their past. It focused and guided their present actions. It gave them reason for hope for a better future.”⁷ Post-exilic Israel needed both encouragement and exhortation. The Chronicler gives them both. He assures them that God is still keeping His promises and fulfilling His plan; yet his people must exercise loyalty to Him and to His covenant. In its “shading” of the nar-

6. Letter from Mark Twain to William Dean Howells, April 26, 1875.

7. Rodney K. Duke, “A Rhetorical Approach to Appreciating the Books of Chronicles” in *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture*, eds. M. Patrick Graham and Steven L. McKenzie (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 118.

rative, 1 C explicitly provides assurance to Israel that God's covenant with David remains in force and implicitly enjoins the individual to trusting obedience. In a complementary tone, 2 C unveils the finished summons to loyalty sprinkled with reminders of the covenant promise. The work is first confirmatory and finally hortatory; its shading thus moves from substantiation to parenesis.⁸

A CONFIRMATORY PROMISE OF HOPE

The covenant with David forms the nexus of the Chronicler's heartening word to Israel. He rehearses the covenantal provisions then points to David's reign, the temple, and a unified Israel as tokens of divine favor. Yet the author also mingles exhortation with his encouragement, challenging the people to faithful obedience.

The Covenant Verified

The primary means by which the Chronicler assures post-exilic Israel of God's continued favor is his pointed emphasis on the covenant with David. In many ways the Davidic covenant is the "key that unlocks Chronicles," anchoring and shaping the attendant promises highlighted throughout the book.⁹ First Chronicles 17:7-15 presents the essential terms of the covenant:

7 Now, therefore, thus shall you say to my servant David,
 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture,
 from following the sheep, to be prince over my people Israel,
 8 and I have been with you wherever you have gone
 and have cut off all your enemies from before you.

8. *Parenesis* = exhortation.

9. Jeffrey L. Townsend, "The Purpose of 1 and 2 Chronicles," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144 (1987): 284. Sara Japhet concludes that the Chronicler "structured his history around the figure of David and his dynasty." "The Historical Reliability of Chronicles," *JSOT* 33 (1985): 440. Her point is well-taken given the fact that nineteen of the fifty-six narrative chapters in Chronicles concern David. "In other words, approximately one-third of the space that the Chronicler allots for the 450-year story of Israel from the reign of Saul to the edict of Cyrus is allocated to the 33-year reign of David over Israel and Judah." William Riley, *King and Cultus in Chronicles: Worship and the Reinterpretation of History* (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1993), 54. Says Stephen Dempster, "Again, it is as if all history has been waiting, not in this case for Abraham, but for David from the tribe of Judah. ... The covenant with David in which he is promised an heir for ever [sic] becomes a critical component in [the Chronicler's] royal theology." *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 226.

And I will make for you a name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. 9 And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall waste them no more, as formerly, 10 from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will subdue all your enemies. Moreover, I declare to you that the LORD will build you a house. 11 When your days are fulfilled to walk with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you, 14 but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever.”¹⁰

Significantly, the unbroken link of this covenant to the Abrahamic is unmistakable: a “name” (8), a “place” (9), and “seed” (children) (11).¹¹ At the heart of the Davidic promise, however, is Yahweh’s specific guarantee of an eternal throne for the dynasty of David grounded in divine *hesed*, God’s loyalty to His covenant word.

Although 1 C mentions the contingent element of the covenant—namely, heart-prompted obedience to Yahweh and His law—this portion of the book puts primary stress on the unconditional fulfillment of God’s part of the agreement.¹² The ground of assurance underlying the Davidic

10. Other citations of the covenant in varying forms in 1 C occur in 22:8-13 and 26:6-10. All quotations from Chronicles are from the English Standard Version.

11. See the elements of the Abrahamic covenant in Gen. 12:2, 3; 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:5, 7, 18-21; 17:8; 18:18; 22:17, 18; 24:4, 7; 26:3-4; and 28:4, 13-15. David specifically refers to Yahweh’s covenant with Abraham in his hymn occasioned by the ark’s arrival in Jerusalem (1 C 16:15-17).

12. Semiticists commonly identify the covenant with David as a covenant of grant, a treaty type in the ancient Near East (hereafter ANE) in which the covenant initiator, as the stronger of the parties, certifies the provisions of the treaty. “Thus the major emphasis of the dynastic oracle is that the Davidic dynasty will be firmly and permanently established by Yahweh himself.” Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God’s Unfolding Purpose* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 128. See also Avraham Gileadi, “The Davidic Covenant: A Theological Basis for Corporate Protection,” in *Israel’s Apostasy and Restoration*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 158-9; and Moshe Weinfeld, “The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the ANE,” *JAOS* 90 (1970): 184-203.

covenant is none other than the strong, faithful God who, in His sovereignty, will fulfill all His purposes.¹³ As H. G. M. Williamson attests, "For the Chronicler, therefore, there was no question of the continuity of kingship, since it was grounded in God ... and God had chosen David and his progeny as the human conduit for perpetual dynastic succession over the theocratic kingdom."¹⁴ Not surprisingly, the language of election has a prominent place in 1 C describing God's choice of David and his family:

4 Yet the LORD God of Israel chose me from all my father's house to be king over Israel forever. For he chose Judah as leader, and in the house of Judah my father's house, and among my father's sons he took pleasure in me to make me king over all Israel. 5 And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) he has chosen Solomon my son to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. 6 He said to me, 'It is Solomon your son who shall build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.' ... 10 "Be careful now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong and do it." (1 C 28:4-6, 10)

And David the king said to all the assembly, "Solomon my son, whom alone God has chosen, is young and inexperienced, and the work is great, for the palace will not be for man but for the LORD God." (1 C 29:1)¹⁵

13. 1 C extols a God who is eternal (16:36), unique (17:20), holy (16:10), good (16:34), strong, majestic, and splendid (16:27). He stands above all gods (16:25-6), sits enthroned above the cherubim (13:15), and has chosen Israel as His prized possession (16:15). For more on the character of God in C, see Eugene H. Merrill, "A Theology of Chronicles" in *Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 158-61; and R. D. Bell, "The Theology of the Books of Chronicles," *Biblical Viewpoint* 38 (2004): 56-7. See Japhet's discussion of the names of God in C. *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*, trans. Anna Barker (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989), 11-41.

14. H. G. M. Williamson, "1 and 2 Chronicles," in *The New Century Bible Commentary*, eds. Ronald E. Clements and Matthew Black (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 27.

15. Chronicles' "interest in divine election ... is unparalleled outside Deuteronomy in the Old Testament," contends Martin Selman, *1 Chronicles: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 47. Note also the comments by Thomas D. Hanks, "The Chronicler: Theologian of Grace," *EQ* 53 (1981):17; and Japhet, *Ideology*, 89, 445-9.

Two additional factors accentuate the surety of the Davidic covenant hope in 1 C. The first is the genealogical list in chapters one through nine. Judah's prominence in the record sharpens to a focus on David as the central figure. "The line tracing God's purposes from Adam to Israel (ch. 1) is now narrowed down to the family of David. ... The Davidic line is the centrepiece of Judah's genealogy."¹⁶ Second, the prevalence of the term *hesed*, Yahweh's covenant-keeping, loyal love, helps to confirm his choice of David's house to rule forever from Zion: "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love [*hesed*] endures forever!" (16:34); "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. I will not take my steadfast love [*hesed*] from him, as I took it from him who was before you." (17:13).¹⁷ Unlike His rejection of Saul, Yahweh's faithfulness to David will endure. "God is not finished with Abraham," asserts Dempster. "There has been a setback, but the blessing will come through the Davidic house. Hope remains."¹⁸

David Enthroned

The Chronicler not only assures the resettled community by reminding them of God's covenantal promise to David, but also by portraying David and Solomon as model rulers overseeing the very kingdom of Yahweh Himself. He paints just such a picture in the central core of the

16. Selman, 93, 99. Far from being irrelevant, tedious details in the text, these genealogies assure the post-exilic community of God's continued interest in them individually. The Chronicler notes, parenthetically, "the records are ancient" (4:22). In other words, "look how far these promises go back, and take hope!" They serve as essential links to the past both conceptually and practically, providing familial evidence necessary for land inheritance and tribal membership qualifying Israelites for temple service. For additional values of the lists, see Selman, 87. He tells of a Jewish student whose favorite portion of the Bible was 1 C 1-8. The young man's quizzical Gentile friend came to understand that, "to a Hebrew (and to many other kinship-oriented societies around the world), genealogical lists of this nature demonstrate in the clearest way the specificity of God's love" (85). According to Peter Ackroyd, one lady learned these "begats" by memory because she hoped one day to meet all these people in Heaven. *The Chronicler in His Age* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 253.

17. The term *hesed* refers to loyal, covenant love; the Chronicler uses it fifteen times. Jonathan E. Dyck refers to the "spiral" intertwining Yahweh's punishment with Israel's unfaithfulness and His forgiveness with their repentance as an axis of covenant faithfulness. It is "Yahweh's abiding [*hesed*] about which the spiral turns ... and shows the very heart of the relationship between David and Israel to Yahweh." *The Theocratic Ideology of the Chronicler* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 223. See also Jacob M. Myers, *1 Chronicles*, vol. 12 of *The Anchor Bible*, ed. W. F. Albright and D. N. Freedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), lxiv-lxvii.

18. Dempster, 227.

book, 1 C 10 through 2 C 9, where David ascends to the throne through the direct intervention of God.¹⁹ David's power, fame, and kingdom increase because "Yahweh of hosts was with him." As portrayed by the Chronicler, David is a worthy recipient of covenant blessings.²⁰

We should note that in his idealized depictions of David and Solomon, the author is still reporting history. All historiography is selective, with details arranged by the historian to communicate his "angle" or "take" on past events and what they mean.²¹ Biblical history is

true history artfully presented. ... Chronicles presupposes its audience's familiarity with Kings. That is, Chronicles clearly seeks to provide a *reading* of its base text rather than a *replacement* for it. ... Both 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Chronicles are works of historiography with their own *purposes* ... and with their own *perspectives*. ... But this fact does not discredit the biblical texts. ... We rather take our biblical stories seriously in

19. See 1 C 10:14; 11:3, 10; 12:23; and 14:2.

20. While it is true that the author does not view David entirely without fault (see 1 C 21; 22:7-8; 28:3), he has selected incidents for his narrative that overwhelmingly cast the king in a favorable light and has omitted those which indict his character. Even the blemish of the census in chapter 21 is attributed to the influence of "Satan" ("the adversary") and is included in the narrative primarily to explain how the temple site was selected. See Japhet, *Ideology*, 473. Included in C but not in Samuel-Kings are the details about David's warriors (1 C 12:23-40); the return of the ark (1 C 13:1-5, 15-16); temple arrangements (1 C 22) and oversight (1 C 23-27); and the assembly at Solomon's accession. As a case in point, consider 1 C 12:28-30. No statement like this one about David's growing popularity occurs in Samuel or Kings. It seems almost Messianic in its overtones. Key material excluded from C though found in Samuel-Kings involves David's flight from Saul (1 Sam. 16-30); his conflict with Abner and Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 1-4); his crimes of adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11-12); and Absalom's revolt (2 Sam. 13-20). For a more complete list covering data from both David's and Solomon's reigns, see Townsend, 281-2. Isaac Kalimi has done extensive rhetorical analysis of the narrative in C to show how small details in the text build up the personas of David and Solomon. For example, in numerous passages cited from Samuel the Chronicler transforms the subject of sentences from the impersonal "he" or "the king" to "David" by name. Compare 2 Sam. 24:2 with 1 C 21:2; 2 Sam. 24:9 with 1 C 21:5; and 2 Sam. 24:20 with 1 C 21:1. See other examples in his *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 167, 180, 181, 305, 330, 331. The lone mention of Saul (1 C 10) describes his downfall and the deaths of him and his sons, thus setting up the dramatic contrast between the failed Benjamite king and Yahweh's choice, David. "Therefore the LORD put him [Saul] to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse" (1 C 10:14b).

21. Remember John's statements in John 20:30, 31 and 21:25 about his selectivity and purposeful arrangement of the events in Jesus' life.

their entirety as artfully constructed witnesses to the past. ... Both Kings and Chronicles provide us with *particular* portraits of the past in this way, and from *particular* points of view. ... [The] differences between Kings and Chronicles seem in large measure bound up with the later date of the latter ... and the different questions being addressed at that time.²²

Clearly a key purpose of the Chronicler's shading of his narrative is to encourage the people of small, fledgling Judah about their future by taking them back to the greatest time in the kingdom's past and to the best king they had ever known.²³ The narrative thus leans toward the rule of David rather than toward his personal life. Solomon, heir to the dynastic oracle in the covenant, is likewise chosen by Yahweh (1 C 28:10; 29:1) and carries out what David began.²⁴ In effect, the author is assuring the people that the kingdom of David is the kingdom of God; the two are synonymous: "I [Yahweh] will confirm him [David] in *my* house and in *my* kingdom forever, and *his* throne shall be established forever" (1 C 17:14, italics mine).²⁵ The Chronicler's logic seems to be that Yahweh, in His covenant *hesed*, has blessed David before; and since the Lord's promise to him is eternal, God's people will again see the kingdom reconstituted in

22. Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 88, 237, 238, 240, 241. We can rightfully say that the Chronicler is both a historian and "an interpreter of Scripture." William M. Schniedewind, "The Chronicler as an Interpreter of Scripture," in *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture*, eds. M. Patrick Graham and Steven L. McKenzie (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 159-162. The "Chronicler is not simply a 'copyist' but a creative artist, a historian who selected his material from earlier books, reorganizing and editing it in the order, context, and form he found appropriate." Kalimi, "Was the Chronicler a Historian?" in *The Chronicler as Historian*, eds. M. Patrick Graham, Kenneth G. Hoglund, and Steven L. McKenzie (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 89.

23. Some commentators deny that the author means to portray David and Solomon in Messianic terms. See William J. Dumbrell, "The Purpose of the Books of Chronicles," *JETS* 27 (1984): 262-4. However, many agree with Raymond Dillard that C does seek to promote a Messianic hope through its idealized characterization of the two great kings. "2 Chronicles" in the *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol 15 (Waco: Word, 1987), 1-5; see also Townsend, 288.

24. In fact, as Ralph Klein notes, only the Chronicler mentions that *any* king after David is "chosen" by God, and that nod goes only to Solomon. "Chronicles, Books of 1 and 2," in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1998), I, 999.

25. In this light, see also 2 C 13:8: "And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David." Read the discussion in Dyck, 217; and Brian E. Kelly, "'Retribution' Revisited: Covenant, Grace, and Restoration," in *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 2003), 215.

a glorious, blessed reign through a son of David who will lead them in sincere, orderly worship just as David and Solomon had instituted at the temple.

The Temple Constructed

The continued force of God's covenant with David receives visible expression in the building of the Jerusalem temple. After all, the original covenant oracle in 2 Samuel 7 had included the assurance that a Davidic descendant would "build a house" for Yahweh's name (v. 13). David himself voices his desire to build this house; Solomon, however, would be the one to implement David's desires and plans in bringing the temple to completion.²⁶ The Chronicler presents the two monarchs as inextricably tied to the sanctuary and to the worship centered there. Japhet observes that C's emphasis on the temple "strikes the reader ... immediately. ... It contains a wealth of information regarding the Temple's construction, ... the way in which the service was conducted, and the identity and hierarchy of Temple ministrants."²⁷ First C 10 through 2 C 6 narrate "how God works up to the building of the temple."²⁸ David captures Jerusalem, then consolidates his army (1 C 11-12), retrieves the ark of the covenant and leads in worship (1 C 13-16), builds an altar on the temple site and organizes temple officials (1 C 21-27), and charges Solomon and all Israel to complete the building and to engage Yahweh in worship (1 C 28-29). Solomon's entire career, as the Chronicler views it, revolves around constructing the sanctuary and leading Israel in loyal worship (2 C 1-6).

By accentuating the temple in his narrative, the author intends to buoy the hopes of his readers regarding the future and to exhort them to sincere worship of Yahweh in their age of new opportunity and challenge.

26. On David's desire, see 1 C 17:1-2; 22:6-8; 28:2-3. Solomon's construction of the temple is noted in 1 C 17:4, 11-14; 22:5-11; 28:4-6, 10, 20-22; 26; and 29:19.

27. Japhet, *Ideology*, 222. Riley, however, overstates the role of the temple in C: "For the Chronicler, the centre of the covenant with David is not formed by the dynastic promise, but by the task of temple-building, and the fulfillment of the covenant is to be sought in the completed Temple rather than in an unending Davidic rule" (75). See also Dumbrell, 264; and Dyck, 143. As important as the Jerusalem sanctuary is, the Davidic covenant is fulfilled in the New Covenant. Its consummation comes not in the rebuilt Jerusalem temple but with the dwelling of God in the incarnate Son of David, the indwelling Spirit of God within the church, and the imminent kingdom coming down out of Heaven in which there is no temple. The dynastic promise to David endures to the consummation of the ages, however; after all, the last description of the Messiah found in Scripture presents him as "the root and descendant of David" (Rev. 22:16).

28. Peter B. Dirksen, "1 Chronicles," in *Historical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Lueven: Peeters, 2005), 19.

To him the temple is vital in four respects. First, it represents in principle Yahweh's dwelling with His people.²⁹ In the second place, the rebuilt temple is commensurate with restored worship. "Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness," David exults (1 C 16:29). According to Allen Ross, true worship is "the celebration of being in covenant fellowship with the sovereign and triune God by means of the reverent adoration and spontaneous praise of God's nature and works, the expressed commitment of trust and obedience to covenant responsibilities, and the memorial reenactment of entering into covenant through ritual acts, all with the confident anticipation of the fulfillment of the covenant promises in glory."³⁰ The worship theme in C centers around the temple as "the life centre of God's people,"³¹ around Levitical ministries and sacrifices (1 C 6, 15, 16, 21, 23, 24), music (1 C 6:31-32; 25), annual festivals (1 C 23), giving (1 C 29:10-16), and all of this set in the context of joy, praise, and covenant loyalty to God's torah.³²

That the temple stands as a token of the Davidic covenant is the third reason for its importance to the Chronicler. "He [David's "offspring"] will build a house for me," Yahweh affirms in the covenant oracle (1 C 17:12). This is the "word of the LORD" to David (1 C 22:8, 10) whose fulfillment attests God's truthfulness. The temple "serves as a focal point for worship ... and stands as a visible symbol of Yahweh's covenant with Israel," according to Paul House.³³

Fourth, the temple links the post-exilic community with both the past and the future. Just as the genealogy binds the Chronicler's generation to creation (1 C 1:1), so too does the temple:

This sanctuary complex reflected the regions of original creation. ... The house of the LORD was like the Garden of Eden; it was where the people had access to God [and]

29. Note that the temple, like the tabernacle, merely symbolizes God's dwelling with His people. As Solomon explains, "Even the highest heaven cannot contain you [God], how much less this house that I have built!" (2 C 6:18). Yet God does "set his name" in the sanctuary to commune with His people (2 C 6:18-21). The ark in the Holy of Holies is Yahweh's "throne" where He manifests His *shekinah* ("dwelling") presence above the *kapporeth* (see 1 C 22:19; 29:16).

30. Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006), 67-8.

31. John Goldingay, "The Chronicler as Theologian," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 5 (1975): 117-18.

32. See Roddy Braun's exploration of these themes in "The Message of Chronicles: Rally Round the Temple," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 42 (1971): 502-14.

33. House, 530.

received all the blessings of life. ... [Israel] built ... a temple patterned after Paradise, not only to recall the memory of Paradise but also to rekindle the hope of glory in the Paradise to come.³⁴

David, Solomon, and the temple also parallel Moses, Joshua, and the tabernacle.³⁵ Along with God's covenant and David's enthronement, a rebuilt temple serves to confirm Yahweh's faithfulness. "The world's hopes are found in genealogy and geography, scion and Zion. David has arrived. The temple has been built. The world is well on its way to being restored. If there was ever any doubt about these points, Chronicles removes it."³⁶

Israel United

Now that the Chronicler's landscape includes a still valid covenant with Yahweh, David enthroned, and temple worship ascendant, he pictures a concordant community reminiscent of the united monarchy under David and Solomon.³⁷ The characteristic phrase he uses is "all Israel": "all Israel" comes to David at Hebron and accompanies him to Jerusalem (1 C 11:4); helps transport the ark (1 C 13:1-6); witnesses David's charge to Solomon (1 C 28:1); and supports Solomon as king (1 C 29:1-6).³⁸ In C "Israel" is the entire kingdom of twelve tribes. This unified perspective serves intentionally to contrast the divisiveness of the previous half-millennium. It is hard to overstate the continuing deep divisions between the

34. Ross, 83, 108. For a fuller development of how the tabernacle and temple correspond to the Garden of Eden, see 81-108.

35. Braun also notes the literary similarities between Solomon's commission to build the temple (1 C 22 and 28) and Joshua's commission in Joshua 1, a parallel designed to underscore Solomon's divine responsibility to build the temple. "Solomon, the Chosen Temple Builder: The Significance of 1 Chronicles 22, 28, and 29 for the Theology of Chronicles," *JBL* 95 (1976): 586-8; see also Selman, 31; Riley, 54-66; and Mark A. Throntveit, "Chronicles, Books of" in *Dictionary for the Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhooser (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 111.

36. Dempster, 226.

37. Ackroyd, 268, explains, "To the David period is traced the unity of the people; the loyalty of all the tribes is expressed again and again, and David's appointment as king at Hebron is described as by representatives of all, 'all of one mind'" (1 C 12:38).

38. Clearly this focus on a united people of God is a deliberate focus of the Chronicler when compared to parallel accounts in Samuel and Kings. For example, 1 C 11:4 notes that "David and all Israel went to Jerusalem," while 2 Sam. 5:6 simply states, "And the king and his men went to Jerusalem." See Japhet, "I and II Chronicles," in *The Old Testament Library* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 267-78; and J. A. Thompson, "1 and 2 Chronicles," in the *New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 34.

Northern Kingdom and Judah rooted in Israel's rebellion against and secession from Davidic rule beginning in 930 B. C., coupled with the consequential religious syncretism and covenant treachery represented in idolatrous Baal worship.³⁹ Add to this sad chapter the Assyrian resettlement policy in Samaria after 722 B. C. and the devastation of the Babylonian conquest of Judah, and the result is a fractured, fragmented, dissociative population.

The Chronicler aims to stabilize the returnees in their restored setting by playing up their continued solidarity with the past and with each other in the kingdom promise of God. This exhortation is evident in his appeal to single-mindedness in welcoming the fulfillment of Yahweh's promises to them through David (1 C 9:1-3; 17:21-23) and in a return to Torah-based worship.⁴⁰ Japhet aptly summarizes:

His [the Chronicler's] dominant view is that of "great Israel" in the broadest sense. ... The people of Israel are conceived of as a comprehensive, unified body comprised of tribes, which in turn are vital and active entities throughout the history of Israel. ... The Chronicler is not confined by the traditional concept of the "twelve tribes"; rather, he strives at encompassing every element in Israel, including the "sojourners" (*gērîm*), the non-Israelite population of the land. According to the Chronicler's portrayal, there are no Gentiles in the land of Israel; all its dwellers are "Israel," either through their affiliation with the tribes, or as the attached "sojourners."⁴¹

Obedience Enjoined

Although the primary shading of 1 C highlights God's unconditional promise to establish both David's line upon the throne and unified, temple-centered worship in Zion, the Chronicler also provides a hint of what will be his dominant focus in the last half of his work: a challenge to trusting obedience—the conditional part of the covenant. He intends that the

39. The story of the insurrection begins in 1 Kings 12.

40. He begins his exhortation regarding a past-present bond early in the text—in the genealogy. First C 3:17-24 traces David's line into the post-exilic generation of the Chronicler himself. Seals and letters from the sixth and fifth centuries B. C. provide archaeological confirmation of many of these names. See J. Barton Payne, "1 and 2 Chronicles," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), 339.

41. Japhet, "1 and II Chronicles," 46-7; see also Throntveit, 112; and Duke, "Chronicles, Books of," 177.

people's assurance not foster complacency and laxness, but just the opposite. Yahweh, he argues, blesses His people so that they will give Him total, trusting devotion.⁴² Early in 1 C the author suggests that faithfulness receives God's reward. "God granted" the "urgent plea" of the Israelites specifically because "they trusted in him" (5:20; see also 4:10). Conversely, according to 9:1, "Judah was taken into exile in Babylon because of their breach of faith."⁴³ In what amounts to a thematic inclusio, the climax of the book offers a similar challenge. David charges his son Solomon:

6 He [the LORD] said to me, "It is Solomon your son who shall build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. 7 I will establish his kingdom forever if he continues strong in keeping my commandments and my rules, as he is today." 8 Now therefore in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, observe and seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever.⁴⁴ (1 C 28:6-8)

David then prays:

17 I know, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. In the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and

42. To this end, the Chronicler imbeds Ps. 105:1-15 within its historical setting in 1 C 16:8-36. Though the ark's entry into Jerusalem is cause for celebration, David exhorts the jubilant devotees to "remember his covenant forever, ... the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed as a statute to Jacob, an everlasting covenant to Israel" (1 C 16:15a, 16, 17). Yahweh's "steadfast (covenant) love [*hesed*] endures forever" (1 C 16:34), but will *their hesed* endure toward him? See Leslie C. Allen, "Aspects of Generational Commitment and Challenge in Chronicles" in *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 2003), 123.

43. ESV's "breach of faith" (NAS, "unfaithfulness") translates *ma'al*, a significant term in C as noted below.

44. Though David's dynasty will endure as Yahweh had promised, individual successors would reign only as long as they were loyal to God's covenant. See Duke, "Chronicles, Books of," 176-7. This provision traces back to the original covenant stipulations in 2 Sam. 7:14-16. Note echoes of conditionality involving David's royal descendants in Ps. 89:30-37; 132:11-12; 1 Kings 2:4; and 9:4-5.

joyously to you. 18 O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you. 19 Grant to Solomon my son a whole heart that he may keep your commandments, your testimonies, and your statutes, performing all, and that he may build the palace for which I have made provision. (1 C 29:17-19)

Yahweh had chosen and enthroned David; now David's son reigns at the good pleasure of Yahweh (1 C 29:23-25). Therefore the question is: Will Solomon carry on the work of the temple (28:10), and will he and the coming Davidic kings "observe and seek" the Lord's commandments (28:8-9)? In this regard, Williamson observes that 1 C "takes on the parenetic purpose of a 'Levitical sermon,' warning and encouraging his contemporaries to a responsive faith which may once again call down the mercy of their God."⁴⁵ Dyck rightly perceives the need of human loyalty answering to the divine:

If Yahweh's [*hesed*, covenant loyalty] is the axis, it is Israel's response to God that provides the movement about the axis. How is Yahweh's [*hesed*] realized in time and space from generation to generation? ... How is Israel's identity as a people secured? ... The chronicler's answer is very simple. Israel's identity as the people of God is secured by the right response of each generation, of each individual to God. ... They are to internalize their commitment to God and adopt the right attitude, humble themselves, pray, and seek Yahweh.⁴⁶

A HORTATORY CHALLENGE TO LOYALTY

In 2 C the author shades his narrative to focus on Israel's covenant loyalty to Yahweh as the primary focus. Although the confirmatory, unconditional aspect of the covenant still looms in the background, the

45. Williamson, "1 and 2 Chronicles," 33. According to Ackroyd, the writer recognizes "that the possession of the land, the gift to be bestowed by God, still depends upon the response of the people in obedience or disobedience." A hopeful future for coming post-exilic generations is likewise contingent upon Israel's present response to Yahweh's covenant. Ackroyd, 74.

46. Dyck, *Theocratic Ideology*, 226.

Chronicler's chief concern in the latter half of his work is to challenge the post-exilic community to a trusting obedience in the Lord's covenant demands. The weight of the story transitions subtly from assurance and hope to exhortation and challenge.

Included in the Covenant Promise

At least six times in 2 C the writer refers or alludes to the Davidic covenant (6:8-9, 16; 7:17-18; 13:5; 21:7; 23:3; and 33:7-8). Each of the more detailed accounts includes the exhortation to the king that he must "seek the LORD" or "observe"—live according to—the Lord's statutes (6:16; 7:17; 33:8).⁴⁷ By means of this ethical-devotional orientation, the Chronicler emphasizes that the same God who declares His unrelenting intention to perpetuate the Davidic dynasty forever also demands resolute loyalty from those kings who will continue the line. Thus God's sovereign election of and faithfulness to David's progeny is assured though each monarch must demonstrate covenant loyalty in order to maintain his own reign and receive covenant blessings.

Second C 1-9 serves as a "Janus" passage to effect this sequencing from assurance to challenge. That is, these chapters do double-duty in the narrative: they look back to the emphasis on certainty and hope stressed in 1 C, and they give the reader a preview of what is to come in the way of contingency and parenthesis.⁴⁸ Solomon is the central figure of these chapters who embodies both of these elements. On the one hand, Yahweh has chosen him in the line of David to build the temple and consolidate the kingdom: "Solomon the son of David established himself in his king-

47. The key words expressing the people's obligation to Yahweh are the synonyms *dāraš* and *bāqāš*, "to seek." Peter Dirksen notes that 40 of the 165 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible of *dāraš* in the Qal theme are in C. "For the Chronicler, 'to seek Yahweh' ... is pre-eminently the term for a fundamental attitude of obedience and trust toward Yahweh." "1 Chronicles" in the *Historical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 23-4. As Duke puts it, "'Seeking Yahweh' [in C] meant a total response of the worshiper to God." "A Rhetorical Approach," 117. The author of C emphasizes "seeking" the Lord in his narrative at critical times in the lives of various kings. Selman, 54. For more on these terms in C, see Brian E. Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 51-54; and Raymond B. Dillard, "Reward and Punishment in Chronicles: The Theology of Immediate Retribution," *WTJ* 46 (1984): 165-6.

48. "Janus" refers to the Roman god with one head and two faces looking in opposite directions. A "Janus" passage is a literary unit serving as a hinge or pivot linking two pericopes through shared themes or rhetorical devices. For more, see Bruce K. Waltke with Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 36-7; and idem, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-15* in the New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 47-50.

dom, and the LORD his God was with him and made him exceedingly great" (2 C 1:1).

4 And he [Solomon] said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father, saying, 5 'Since the day that I brought my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there, and I chose no man as prince over my people Israel; 6 but I have chosen Jerusalem that my name may be there, and I have chosen David to be over my people Israel.'" (2 C 6:4-6)

Now the LORD has fulfilled his promise that he made. For I have risen in the place of David my father and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and I have built the house for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. (2 C 6:10)

On the other hand, Solomon's personal success as king depends upon his own response to Yahweh's covenant demands.⁴⁹ What is more, now as always, God's blessings upon each successive Davidic king and each generation of Israelites hinges upon their loyalty to Him:

Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, "You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk in my law as you have walked before me." (2 C 6:16)

If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to a land far or near, 37 yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead

49. Although the ultimate fulfillment of an endless Davidic dynasty is an unconditional promise from God, *individual* blessings within the covenant structure accrue only through heart-governed obedience. In this sense conditionality exists within an unconditional covenant. See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 156-7.

with you in the land of their captivity, saying, “We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,” 38 if they repent with all their mind and with all their heart in the land of their captivity to which they were carried captive, and pray toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, 39 then hear from heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their pleas, and maintain their cause and forgive your people who have sinned against you. (2 C 6:36-39)

For now I have chosen and consecrated this house that my name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time. 17 And as for you, if you will walk before me as David your father walked, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my rules, 18 then I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, “You shall not lack a man to rule Israel.” 19 But if you turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments that I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, 20 then I will pluck you up from my land that I have given you, and this house that I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight, and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. (2 C 7:16-20)

Clearly, the Chronicler’s shading of the narrative as it changes tone from certainty to contingency turns in the first nine chapters of 2 C.

Founded Upon Mosaic Law

The latter portion of the book also emphasizes Yahweh’s demand that His people model covenant loyalty by giving considerable attention to the Torah, the law of Moses.⁵⁰ In this regard, the Chronicler takes a tack

50. *Tôrâ*, “law,” can refer in general to “instruction” as well as to all or part of a codified prescription for conduct. In this study, “Mosaic law” is synonymous with the Mosaic covenant God made with Israel through Moses. The nature of this law is far too complex for the present discussion. For my purposes, however, the Mosaic law / covenant refers to the revelation of God’s character in the Decalogue and its implications for the lives of His people Israel in the Old Testament. Each individual and generation will experience Yahweh’s blessing only as they have a “heart ... to fear” Him and “to keep his commandments” (see

similar to that of the writer of Kings: the law of Moses entails the standard by which covenant loyalty is measured. Instruction in the law is thus vital for the post-exilic covenant community. They must not forsake the Torah as their fathers had done. William Johnstone remarks, "The point of the Chronicler's long presentation of the monarchy in Israel ... is to demonstrate that kings, including even the messiahs ["anointed ones"] of the house of David, are subject to the Torah. ... Before, beyond, and as a basis presupposed for the success of the Davidic monarchy stands the Torah."⁵¹

Consequently the writer of C speaks of "the book of the law of Yahweh given through Moses" (2 C 34:14); "the law of Moses" (2 C 23:18; 30:16); "the law of Yahweh" (2 C 31:3); and "the word of Yahweh by Moses" (2 C 35:6). Reform movements spring from Mosaic covenant renewal. For example, the copy of the law which Hilkiah discovers in the temple sparks the impressive covenantal reforms under Josiah (2 C 34:14). Solomon himself recognizes that covenant blessing hinges upon faithful, heart-felt observance of Yahweh's law (2 C 6:16, 26-31). Those individuals who abandon God's law bring retribution upon themselves (2 C 12:1; 24:20; 33:7-8); yet all who comply from the heart with its demands receive blessing (2 C 14:4; 17:7-9; 25:4; 31:3; 34:21).⁵² Michael Fishbane provides a rhetorical example where the Chronicler apparently makes a deliberate choice in his narrative to diverge from the record in Kings in order to give intentional emphasis to Torah. In 1 Kings 8, Solomon refers to Yahweh's earlier conditional promise to David: "You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to

Deut. 5:29; 10:12-13; 17:12-13; 29:12). From this moral core (apodictic law) flow specific ritual and behavioral injunctions in the Holiness Code (Lev. 16-27) and in the Book of the Covenant (casuistic law) (Ex. 21-23; see also Deut. 12-26). See Gary Edward Schnittjer, *The Torah Story* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 251-55; and Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 96-137. The Mosaic covenant presents God's people not with a way to *begin* a relationship with Him, but with a means to *demonstrate* such an existing relationship. On the Mosaic law as a "covenant" (*b'rit*), see Ex. 19:5; 24:8; 34:10, 28; Lev. 26:15; Deut. 4:13, 23; 5:2, 3.

51. William Johnstone, "Hope of Jubilee: The Last Word in the Hebrew Bible," *EQ* 72 (2000): 311-12; see also Myers, lxxx; and Hanks, 21.

52. C calls for internal submission as well as external compliance with the Torah. See the emphasis on the "heart" (*leb, lebâb*) in 2 C 6:14, 38; 15:17; 17:6; 22:9; and ten other references. Although the Chronicler values ritual forms of covenant loyalty, "if a conflict should arise between a person's intention to worship God and the demands of the ritual law, a right attitude of heart was clearly the higher priority before God. ... The Chronicler's deepest concern was that worship should arise out of a heart wholly committed to God." Selman, 59; see also Japhet, *Ideology*, 250-1.

their way, *to walk before me* as you have walked before me" (verse 25, my emphasis). Notice the Chronicler's account in 2 C 6 of the same statement: "You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, *to walk in my law* as you have walked before me" (verse 16, my emphasis).⁵³ The Chronicler renders the idea of "walking" or living "before" Yahweh as "walking in" God's "law" (*tôrâ*). Apparently the writer made a deliberate choice to stress Torah loyalty. To live ("walk") before God (*lěpânay*) is the same thing as living in His law (*bětôrâtî*). Even here we note how the Chronicler shades his narrative for the emphasis he desires, in this case to highlight the role of Torah in his challenge to the returned community.

Announced through the Prophetic Oracle

"The book of Chronicles accords prophets an unusually important role in history," observes Japhet: "The call to repentance is the essence or substance of classical prophecy."⁵⁴ This stress on prophecy is especially true in 2 C where the prophets consistently perform their roles of covenant historians, covenant prosecutors, and kingdom visionaries. Their work of exhorting this new generation in the land to covenant loyalty goes hand in hand with the prominent place the Chronicler gives to the Mosaic Torah. Azariah (2 C 15:1-7), Hanani (16:7-10), Micaiah (18:12-127), Jehaziel (20:14), Eliezer (20:37), Zechariah (24:20-22), an anonymous "man of God" (25:7-9), Obed (28:9-11), and Huldah (34:24-28) deliver reminders to the kings and to the people of their responsibility to heed the law of Yahweh with attentive faithfulness. Of these nine prophets, all but Micaiah and Huldah appear exclusively in 2 C; the writer of Kings omits them in his record.⁵⁵

Three cases point up the significant function of prophecy in the Chronicler's exhortation. We learn, in one instance, that Asa's removal of idols and renewal of covenant fidelity issues from the injunction of Azariah the prophet:

"But you, take courage! Do not let you hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded." 8 As soon as Asa heard

53. Except for these phrases and technical differences in spelling, the verses are identical. See Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 385-6. These and other narrative shadings exemplify "inner biblical exegesis" and support Schniedewind's depiction of the Chronicler as "an interpreter of Scripture" (159-62).

54. Japhet, *Ideology*, 181.

55. See the comments in Klein, "Chronicles, Books of 1 and 2," 998.

these words, the prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded, he took courage and put away the detestable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities that he had taken in the hill country of Ephraim, and he repaired the altar of the LORD that was in front of the vestibule of the house of the LORD. (2 C 15:7-8)

First Kings 22:48-49 offers a brief account of the disastrous sea transport alliance between Jehoshaphat of Judah and Ahaziah of Israel. What we do not learn here, however, we pick up in 2 C 20:37. Eliezer had “prophesied” that Yahweh would demolish the ships they had built and shatter their venture. The third example is a stunner: according to 2 C 21:12-15, a letter indicting the covenant failures of Jehoram and declaring judgment upon him comes from none other than Elijah himself. No other record exists of any writing from the Tishbite, so the Chronicler’s mention of it magnifies his estimation of the prophetic role in Israel.⁵⁶

The Chronicler then entreats his generation to avoid the condemnation of earlier generations:

And they abandoned the house of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols. And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs. 19 Yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the LORD. These testified against them, but they would not pay attention. (2 C 24:18-19)

They can do so by trusting in the Lord, as Jehoshaphat pled with his people:

And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in

56. Many commentators discount the authenticity of Elijah’s letter. Williamson, for example, concludes that the “balance of probability” is that the Chronicler himself invented it. “1 and 2 Chronicles,” 306-7. The plain sense of the narrative, however, indicates otherwise. For more complete defenses of the letter’s genuineness, see Selman, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 435-6; and Dillard, “2 Chronicles,” 167-8.

the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed." (2 C 20:20b)⁵⁷

Fishbane describes the Chronicler's intent, using Azariah as the prophetic model:

If, however, the chronicler is addressing those Israelites who have returned to their land but are again involved in sin, then the historian uses Azzariah [sic] to utter a direct prophetic challenge: seek YHWH that evil not befall you as it did your forefathers, for, as with them, there is "recompense" for one's "deeds." ... Through prophetic personae ... the Chronicler was thus able to teach his contemporaries about the restorative power of repentance and the rewards for piety. ... The Chronicler's narrative addressed his generation, in the twilight of classical prophecy, with a "prophetic" voice.⁵⁸

Conditioned upon Individual Response

What was served as an *hors d'oeuvre* in 1 C now becomes the main course: the Chronicler inundates his generation with an unrelenting appeal to covenant loyalty. He rehearses the best and the worst from the bygone divided monarchy in a hortatory challenge to learn the lessons from the past. In response to covenant verification, the enthronement of David's line, temple-focused worship of Yahweh, and the communion of "all Israel"—those items confirmed in 1 C—the author now returns to the earlier sub-theme enjoining obedience and deepens its shading in 2 C. This injunction meshes with the other foci in this latter half of his work, including the conditional element of the Davidic covenant, the loyalty demands of the Torah, and the prophetic summons of the prophets, to form a canon-closing parenetic for God's people on the cusp of a renewed

57. "The ultimate affront to Yahweh's mercy, however, is the rejection of the message of the prophets who appear periodically to instruct and warn Israel as to the proper action to take." Roddy Braun, "1 Chronicles," in the *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 14, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco: Word, 1986), xxxix. Hanks, 23, labels the prophets' injunctions "Levitical preaching." See also Kelly, 220-1; and Kenneth G. Hoglund, "The Chronicler as Historian: A Comparativist Perspective" in *The Chronicler as Historian*, 35.

58. Fishbane, 390-92.

society.⁵⁹ The Chronicler astutely perceives the need for a robust, responsive trust in the Lord and his gracious covenant.

After the introduction of this theme in the Janus passage (chapters 1–9) involving the loyalty challenge to Solomon, the final twenty-seven chapters reveal how each Davidic king responds to Yahweh’s covenantal obligations. According to this “retribution” theme, a monarch who “does right” by seeking God brings blessing upon himself and his people. Disaster and ruin, however, fall upon those leaders who forsake the Lord.⁶⁰ “Thus, while faithfulness and obedience to the Lord bring blessing, in the form of security in the land, ascendancy over other nations, and wealth, as typified by David and Solomon, disobedience ... brings their opposites,” concludes J. G. McConville.⁶¹ Dyck refers to the mingling of loyalty and disloyalty as “a spiraling pattern of punishment and forgiveness.” He makes a significant observation in that the “spiral” revolves around the whole issue of covenant loyalty (*hesed*): “But what is this spiral? ... What is the axis about which it turns? It is Yahweh’s timeless commitment to Israel which transforms the linearity of the Chronicler’s history into a spiral and Yahweh’s abiding [*hesed*] about which the spiral turns.”⁶²

Hesed thus cuts both ways. God will do His part in the covenant; will His people do theirs? On their rejoinder hangs the fate of the post-exilic community.

59. That such an appeal was needed in sixth and fifth centuries B. C. Judah is apparent when we examine the spiritual turmoil of the day. A survey of Ezra reveals enemy opposition to covenant renewal (chapter four) and intermarriage with non-Yahwistic peoples, which earlier had led to idolatry (chapters nine and ten). Likewise Nehemiah describes oppression of the poor (chapter five), abandonment of temple reconstruction, abuse of the Sabbath, and the desecration of the priesthood (chapter 13). Judah seemed in real danger of relapsing into her old patterns of infidelity.

60. There is much evidence of the “contingency of blessing upon obedience,” notes Eugene Merrill, who cites 2 C 15:2; 17:4; 24:20; 26:5; 27:6; 28:6, 9; 29:6-9; 33:8; and 34:24-27. “A Theology of Chronicles” in *Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 171-2. McKenzie agrees that “immediate retribution” is most evident in 2 C. 1 and 2 Chronicles in *Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 51. For more on the “theology of immediate retribution,” see Selman, *1 Chronicles*, 28; Hanks, 18-19; and Townsend, 288-9.

61. J. G. McConville, *I and II Chronicles* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 4-5. Paul K. Hooker labels this principle the “doctrine of moral responsibility.” “First and Second Chronicles” in the *Westminster Bible Companion* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 6.

62. Jonathan E. Dyck, *The Theocratic Ideology of the Chronicler* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998), 223.

Surrounding *ḥesed* are other key terms the Chronicler highlights on either end of this conditional continuum. Two synonyms for “seek,” the previously discussed *bāqas̄* and *dāras̄*, occur regularly in 2 C to urge a proper response upon the king and his people: “Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah assembled to seek help from the LORD; from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD” (2 C 20:3-4). Opposite “seeking” Yahweh are the important concepts of “forsaking” (*āzab*) and “acting faithlessly” (*māʾal*) toward Him: “When the rule of Rehoboam was established and he was strong, he abandoned (*āzab*) the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him. In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, because they had been unfaithful (*māʾal*) to the LORD, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem” (2 C 12:1-2).⁶³ God blesses reformer kings who seek Him; yet when they act unfaithfully and disobey, His stern rebuke ensues.⁶⁴ While the Chronicler does stress the retribution side of Yahweh’s response to the kings’ infidelity, we must also note the Lord’s gracious favor bestowed upon those who repent (*šûb*).⁶⁵ The most notable example of the latter is Manasseh, whose contrition escapes mention in the Kings narrative. Phillipe Abadie points out how the chiasmic/concentric structure of the Manasseh episode in 2 C 33 focuses on the king’s repentance as the axial component of the unit:

A Manasseh is king (v. 1)

B Manasseh’s religious infidelities (vv. 2-9)

C Manasseh’s deportation to Babylon as punishment (vv. 10-11)

D Manasseh’s repentance (vv. 12-13)

C’ Manasseh’s restoration of Jerusalem (v. 14)

B’ Manasseh’s religious reforms (vv. 15-17)

A’ End of Manasseh’s reign; Amon is king (vv. 18-20)⁶⁶

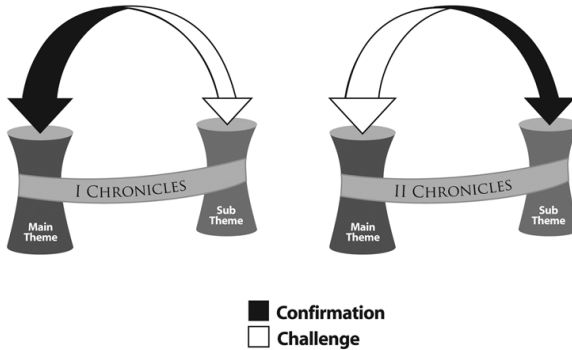
63. On the importance of the term *māʾal*, see Johnstone, 309.

64. “Seeking” kings include Asa (2 C 14-16), Jehoshaphat (17-20), Joash (24), Uzziah (26), and Hezekiah (29-32). Josiah, despite his momentum toward spiritual renewal, dies in battle because of his disregard for God’s spoken word through Neco of Egypt (35:22). Other kings forsake the covenant altogether. Jehoram dies of an agonizing disease due to his disobedience (21:5-10; see also 28:1-27). Rehoboam forsakes Yahweh’s law and feels the strong hand of the Egyptian army as a result (10-12). For a more thorough list of the kings summarized by their loyalty or treason to Yahweh, see Japhet, *Ideology*, 200-1.

65. On this “grace” note in C, see Hanks, 18-21.

66. Phillipe Abadie, “From the Impious Manasseh (2 Kings 21) to the Convert Manasseh (2 Chronicles 33): Theological Rewriting by the Chronicler” in *The Chronicler as Theologian*, 96.

The writer of Kings omits this part of the story, apparently because it is not germane to his purpose of grounding the exile in Israel's sin. For the Chronicler, however, it suits his intent of offering the hope of restoration to the penitent.⁶⁷



COROLLARY: THE INTERPLAY OF DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY
AND HUMAN WILL IN CHRONICLES

Consider the broad trajectory of shading in the two parts of the book. In 1 C, God's confirmation, assurance, and certified covenant faithfulness to His people take center stage. On the flip side, to exhort post-exilic Judah, the Chronicler sounds the notes of challenge, exhortation, and their contingent covenant faithfulness to Yahweh in 2 C. Given these inverse but complementary themes, we should not be surprised that C offers considerable insight into a classical theological paradox. The author asserts both God's sovereign work and the human will side-by-side in the flow of his narrative. Note these texts:

But they broke faith with the God of their fathers, and whored after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them. 26 So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, the spirit of Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and he took them into exile. (1 C 5:25-26a)

So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the LORD in that he did not keep the command of the

67. See Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 517-8.

LORD, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. 14 He did not seek guidance from the LORD. Therefore the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse. (1 C 10:13-14)

Be strong, and let us use our strength for our people and for the cities of our God, and may the LORD do what seems good to him. (1 C 19:13)

O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you, in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing steadfast love to your servants who walk before you with all their heart, 15 who have kept with your servant David my father what you declared to him. You spoke with your mouth, and with your hand have fulfilled it this day. 16 Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you have promised him, saying, "You shall not lack a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk in my law as you have walked before me." 17 Now therefore, O LORD, God of Israel, let your word be confirmed, which you have spoken to your servant David. (2 C 6:14-17)

So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs brought about by God that the LORD might fulfill his word, which he spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. (2 C 10:15)

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars. (2 C 16:9)

But it was ordained by God that the downfall of Ahaziah should come about through his going to visit Joram. For when he came there, he went out with Jehoram to meet Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab. (2 C 22:7)

But Amaziah would not listen, for it was of God, in order that he might give them into the hand of their enemies, because they had sought the gods of Edom. (2 C 25:20)

Do not be like your fathers and your brothers, who were faithless to the LORD God of their fathers, so that he made them a desolation, as you see. 8 Do not now be stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves to the LORD and come to his sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever, and serve the LORD your God, that his fierce anger may turn away from you. 9 For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your children will find compassion with their captors and return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him. ... 12 The hand of God was also on Judah to give them one heart to do what the king and the princes commanded by the word of the LORD. (2 C 30:7-9, 12)

But he sent envoys to him, saying, "What have we to do with each other, king of Judah? I am not coming against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war. And God has commanded me to hurry. Cease opposing God, who is with me, lest he destroy you." 22 Nevertheless, Josiah did not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but came to fight in the plain of Megiddo. (2 C 35:21-22)⁶⁸

The following précis of 2 C 13:3-20 serves as a case-in-point tracing the interweaving of sovereignty and human will during the late tenth-century B. C. clash between Judah and Israel. Abijah of Judah and Jeroboam of Israel prepare to face off with 1.2 million troops, two-thirds of them with Jehoram. Abijah chides the Israelite king for even considering an attack because of God's covenant to establish Davidic kingship in Judah (sovereignty, v. 5). Does Jeroboam really think that he can resist God's kingdom

68. Though sometimes more subtle, see these themes also in 1 C 2:3; 4:10; 5:20; 6:15 (with 9:1); 11:3, 9; 12:18, 22, 23; 14:1-2, 8-17; 15:12-15, 25-26; 17; 22:17-19; 25:4-6; 27:23-24; 28:4-8, 11-20; 29:10-18; 2 C 1:1; 6:4-6, 30-31; 12:1-5; 14:7, 11, 12; 15:12-15; 18:22, 31-32; 20:6, 12, 15, 17, 20, 22; 24:18, 20, 22-24; 26:7, 15, 20; 27:6; 28:9, 19; 31:4, 10, 18, 21; 32:7-8, 19, 22, 27, 29; 33:10-13; 36:15-16, 17-23.

(human will, v. 8)? In contrast with the North's syncretistic worship, Judah has not forsaken the Lord (human will, v. 10). They have kept covenant loyalty, but Israel has not (human will, v. 11). "God is with us at our head," declares Abijah (sovereignty, v. 12). "Do not fight against the LORD" (human will) "for you cannot succeed" (sovereignty, v. 12).

Abijah's warning falls on deaf ears, however, as Jeroboam sets an ambush. Judah then sounds the battle cry in response (human will, vv. 13-15). "God defeated Jeroboam and all Israel" (v. 15) and "gave them into their [Judah's] hand" (sovereignty, v. 16), claims the Chronicler. Yet Abijah, with his forces, had themselves attacked Jeroboam's troops inflicting a great number of casualties (human will, v. 17). "The men of Judah prevailed" (human will) "because they relied on the LORD" (human will and sovereignty, v. 18). Abijah pursues Jeroboam, capturing Israelite cities in the process (human will, v. 19). The Israelite king eventually dies, but it is Yahweh who strikes him down (sovereignty, v. 20). Based on my elementary reconstruction and informal tally, the text notes the exercise of human will nine times while mentioning God's sovereign action seven times.

The Chronicler's accounts of various other kings reveals a similar pattern, as the following chart illustrates:

<i>Asa's Work</i> 2 C 15:8-15a 15:16-18 16:7, 12	<i>God's Work</i> 15:15b
<i>Jehoshaphat's Work</i> 17:3b-4, 6, 9 19:2-3, 4-9, 11 20:3-4, 20, 35-36	<i>God's Work</i> 17:3a, 5 18:31 20:6, 11, 12, 15, 17, 21, 22, 27, 29, 30, 37
<i>Jehoram's Work</i> 21:6, 10	<i>God's Work</i> 22:7
<i>Ahaziah's Work</i> 22:3,4	<i>God's Work</i> 22:7
<i>Joash's Work</i> 24:2, 4, 13, 18, 19, 22a	<i>God's Work</i> 24:20, 22b, 24

In places, C carefully attributes divine work to Yahweh alone. Even “the opportunity to repent is itself a divine gift of grace,” claims Kelly: “The catalyst to human repentance originates in Yahweh, not in any autonomous human will” (emphasis his).⁶⁹ Yet man is free to repent or not, and so to enjoy God’s blessing if he accedes. In that vein, Japhet’s point has merit: “The ‘ultimate cause’ of man’s fortunes lies in man’s free choice: God reacts to his behavior, granting him what he deserves.”⁷⁰

D. A. Carson explores further this interplay between God’s sovereignty and human will in the Old Testament. He surveys twelve passages which expose this “tension,” then draws out several “broad motifs” characteristic of both themes. His conclusions are worth noting.

The idea that men may prevail in prayer with God again presupposes human responsibility, and a significant measure of human freedom; for such language depicts the interplay of personalities, not the determination of machines. ... Injunctions to choose Yahweh, and the tests which God administers to men and nations, are ... given ... to command committed obedience. When a right choice is made (e.g. Josh. 24:22), it tends to become an incentive for continued faithfulness and the fresh abandoning of encroaching idolatry. ... The idea that God really is the sovereign disposer of all is consistently woven into the fabric of the Old Testament. ... Yet the sovereignty of God in the Old Testament is not permitted to devour human responsibility.⁷¹

Bruce Waltke brings this paradoxical tension to bear on Old Testament covenantal concerns such as those which shape the history of Israel in the Chronicles narrative:

69. Kelley, “‘Retribution’ Revisited: Covenant, Grace, and Restoration,” in *The Chronicler as Theologian*, 221; see also the discussion in John H. Wright, “Beyond Transcendence and Immanence: The Characterization of the Presence and Activity of God in the Book of Chronicles,” in *The Chronicler as Theologian*, 263-4.

70. Japhet, “I and II Chronicles,” 44. I do not conclude, however, that God’s “reacting,” as she puts it, is an unforeseen divine response in which somehow God is caught off guard or is “playing it by ear” when it comes to what humans do in their freedom to act. As Robert Picirilli puts it, all “free and responsible ... choices” of humans “are incorporated into His (God’s) plan. ... God is able to govern the truly free exercises of men’s wills in such a way that all goes according to His plan.” *Grace, Faith, Free Will* (Nashville: Randall House, 2002), 43.

71. D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspectives in Tension* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 22, 23, 25.

On the one hand, YHWH's faithful discharge of his promise to Abraham provides the spiritual basis for Israel to accept and keep the covenant with commandments. On the other hand, the commandments set forth the conditions that qualify one to become a beneficiary of YHWH's grant. ... In this way YHWH irrevocably commits himself to fulfilling his promises, but not apart from ethical behavior on Israel's part.⁷²

CONCLUSION

Through the rhetorical strategy of thematic shading, the Chronicler transposes complementary themes in his work. His masterful technique early in the narrative gives prominence to divine covenantal election accented with the subtle undertone of human responsibility. The latter portion of his work inverts the shading, refitting the narrative to highlight the need for believing obedience in light of the theocratic purpose.

Paul's peroration and benediction seem fitting;

But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people." I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! ... God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. ... Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ... For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. (Romans 10:21; 11:1-2a, 33, 36)

72. Bruce K. Waltke, "The Phenomenon of Conditionality within Unconditional Covenants" in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration*, ed. Avraham Gileadi (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 135. God will fulfill His covenant promise to bless Abraham's seed, and through his seed bless all the families of the earth. To that end, Yahweh says through Isaiah, "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose. ... I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it" (Is. 46:10, 11, emphasis mine). Yet the courses and destinies of individuals and nations may change as they respond to God's appeals. Thus the Lord may also offer choices to humans, such as the one He presents through Jeremiah: "If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation ... turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. ... And if it does evil in my sight ... then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it" (Jer. 18:7-10, emphasis mine).

Matthew McAfee

Desert Creatures or Demons? A Note on Isaiah 34:14

The Old Testament never shies away from dealing with the reality of the spiritual realm, in contrast to modernity's tendency to explain away such things in terms of the natural realm. Whether we like it or not, we often have to admit our own phobia of the supernatural that surfaces occasionally when that reality collides with the physical realm with which we are most familiar. Of course, the Christian worldview directly challenges modernity and its insistence upon the assertion that the physical senses alone determine true reality, countermanding that God, who is spirit, spoke the physical world into existence.

Perhaps this hesitancy to entertain the spiritual realm can be illustrated in a seemingly minor translation discrepancy in Isaiah 34:14. There we read (in the King James Version):

The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild
beasts of the island, and the *satyr* shall cry to his fellow:
the *screech owl* also shall rest there, and find for herself a
place of rest.

The "animals" at issue are the last two, which I have italicized. A comparison of the most familiar translations of this text yields a peculiar distribution of readings: i.e., natural desert creatures vs. supernatural demons. All these versions are translating the same two Hebrew nouns. The first is, literally, a *satyr*, often meaning a goat-demon. The second is the literal source of the English *Lilith*, usually referring to a Babylonian she-demon.¹

Versions using natural desert creatures for both words (italicized):

- NIV: Desert creatures will meet with hyenas, and *wild goats* will bleat to each other; there the *night creatures* will also repose and find for themselves places of rest.

1. These English spellings are close to the transliterated Hebrew of both nouns and will be used throughout.

- HCSB²: The wild beasts will meet hyenas, and one *wild goat* will call to another. Indeed, the *screech owl* will stay there and will find a resting place for herself.
- NCV³: Desert animals will live with the hyenas, and *wild goats* will call to their friends. *Night animals* will live there and find a place of rest.
- NKJV: The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals, and the *wild goat* shall bleat to its companion; also the *night creature* shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.
- NLT: Desert animals will mingle there with hyenas, their howls filling the night. *Wild goats* will bleat at one another among the ruins, and *night creatures* will come there to rest.
- ESV: And wild animals shall meet with hyenas; the *wild goat* shall cry to his fellow; indeed, there the *night bird* settles and finds for herself a resting place.

Versions using demonic beings for both words (italicized):

- NASB: The desert creatures will meet with the wolves, the *hairy goat* also will cry to its kind; yes, the *night monster* will settle there and will find herself a resting place.
- RSV: And wild beasts shall meet with hyenas, the *satyr* shall cry to his fellow; yea, there shall the *night hag* alight, and find for herself a resting place.
- NRSV: Wildcats shall meet with hyenas, *goat-demons* shall call to each other; there too *Lilith* shall repose, and find a place to rest.

The King James version, of course, is mixed, since the translators rendered the first term in question literally as “satyr” (i.e., goat-demon), while at the same time rendering the second term as “screech owl” (a this-worldly animal).

The translations are thus divided on the meaning of these two unusual words, some opting for the desert-creature reading (*satyr* = wild goat(s); *Lilith* = night creature(s), night animals, night bird, screech owl) and others the demons-of-the-desert reading (*satyr* = hairy goat, goat-demons, satyr; *Lilith* = night monster, night hag, Lilith).

In the following discussion, we will investigate these two terms from the broader perspective of the ancient Near Eastern world. By doing so, their meaning in the context of Isaiah’s oracle against Edom should

2. Holman Christian Standard Bible.
3. New Century Version.

become clearer, and, it is hoped, enable us to reach an informed assessment about whether Isaiah 34:14 is dealing with wild beasts of the natural world or demonic forces of the supernatural kind. Before taking this up, however, it may be useful for us to survey a few of the commentaries to see what others have suggested.

SATYR AND LILITH: THE COMMENTARIES

The commentaries are somewhat divided on the identities of these two entities, an observation that is readily illustrated by two Isaiah commentaries from the same series. In the first Isaiah commentary of the *New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, Edward Young assumed that Isaiah 34:14 speaks of a demonic meeting in the desert, involving both “demons in goat form” (i.e., *satyr*) as well as the Babylonian she-demon, *Lilith*.⁴ The latest Isaiah commentary from that same series produced by John N. Oswalt, however, renders these two words as “he-goat” and “night-bird.” Although Oswalt acknowledges the possibility of a “demonic” interpretation, he reasons from context against the latter option: “Since both the preceding and following verses speak of regular animals, it seems best to remain with that [natural] interpretation.”⁵ He makes no reference to the Babylonian origin of *Lilith*, which has to be read as a demonic being and not a creature of nature.⁶

Several generations ago, Joseph Alexander rejected a demonic interpretation for both words. Of the former, he argued that it more likely speaks of “shaggy monsters” in general rather than goats in particular, since this would correspond more adequately with the preceding two words, “desert dwellers, creatures” (*šiyyîm*) and “jackals, howlers” (*ʔiyyîm*). He proposes the same for *Lilith*, stating that the term “in itself means nothing more nor less than *nocturnal*,” calling all supernatural interpretations of either term “fanciful.”⁷ However, his assertion that *Lilith* means simply “nocturnal” cannot be maintained. For one thing, the Hebrew word *laylāh*, commonly rendered as “night” in the dictionaries and translations, actually possesses an adverbial nuance in the sense of

4. Edward Young, *The Book of Isaiah, Volume II: Chapters 19 to 39* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 440-441.

5. John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 616.

6. Oswalt, *ibid.*, mentions that the name *Lilith* is applied to a well-known female night demon in late Jewish tales, but he does not indicate anything about its origins.

7. Joseph A. Alexander, *Commentary on Isaiah*, 2 vols. in 1 (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1992, reprint of 1876 ed.), 28-29.

“at night.” Furthermore, this Hebrew word possesses an internal consonantal /y/ instead of the vocalic /y/s of *Lilith*. The two words have a distinct orthography that indicates we are dealing with two etymologically distinct forms. Finally, the fact that *Lilith* appears only once in the Hebrew Bible makes Alexander’s proposal all the more doubtful. It seems more likely that this is a Babylonian loan word than one related to the Hebrew word meaning “at night.”

Even so, R. E. Clements, although he briefly mentions this “familiar figure of semi-religious mythology in later Judaism” in reference to Lilith, concludes, “The context scarcely supports the idea of an uncanny and powerful supernatural creature.”⁸ Likewise, A. S. Herbert translates this section as referring to natural creatures of the desert, though he leaves open the possibility of the demonic reading.⁹ Quite remarkably, Geoffrey Grogan completely ignores the issue and simply remarks, “Edom will become a desolate place, fit only for creatures of the wild.”¹⁰

Franz Delitzsch preferred the demonic interpretation, offering the following translation: “And martens meet with jackals, and a wood-devil runs upon its fellow; yea, Līlīth dwells there, and finds rest for itself.”¹¹ His description of the situation helps us visualize what might have been in view for Edom: “In the very spot where kings and princes of Edom used to proclaim the new king, satyrs now invite one another to dance (ch. xiii. 21); and where kings and princes once slept in their palaces and country houses, the *līlīth*, which is most at home in horrible places, finds, as though after a prolonged search, the most convenient and most comfortable resting-place.”¹²

A number of commentators share Delitzsch’s perspective on this text, among whom is Otto Kaiser, perhaps one of the more helpful commentators on this subject. He not only highlights Yahweh as populating Edom with all sorts of natural hostilities, but also with “an army of particularly

8. R. E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39* (New Century Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 274.

9. A. S. Herbert, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah: Chapters 1-39* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 192, 194.

10. Geoffrey W. Grogan, “Isaiah” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 218. He does not even raise the issue involving these two terms and only glosses three of the four entities of this verse—“desert creatures,” “hyenas,” and “wild goats”—without mentioning *Lilith* at all!

11. F. Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, 2 vols. in 1, trans. James Marten (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983 reprint), 74.

12. *Ibid.*

unclean and unpleasant animals and demons."¹³ Maintaining a supernatural interpretation, Brevard Childs renders our verse: "Devils will meet with hyenas, goat-demons will cry to each other. There also the night creatures will take repose and find a resting place."¹⁴ John D. W. Watts devotes several paragraphs to the subject of *Lilith*,¹⁵ tracing the Jewish and Christian understanding of this Mesopotamian demonness, relying heavily upon the more extensive discussion of Hans Wildberger.¹⁶ Wildberger extends the demon creatures beyond *satyr* and *Lilith*, suggesting that the previous two creatures in verse 14 are also intended to be demonic, translating all four as: demons, goblins, goat-demons, and *Lilith*.¹⁷ But this approach seems to push the demonic interpretation farther than the text permits. I am not aware of any other instances in the Hebrew Bible which would warrant such an interpretation of the first two words.¹⁸

Joseph Blenkinsopp acknowledges that *satyr* can mean either "he-goat" or "goat demon," but points out that "in 13:21 they dance, an unlikely activity for ordinary goats."¹⁹ He also notes the plural variants attested in the Qumran Isaiah scroll (1QIsa^a) and Targum Jonathan²⁰ of the prophets, which might allow for the "mundane meaning of 'nightjar'" (a nocturnal bird), but in the end he thinks the reading behind our English version should be preferred contextually.²¹ Besides, Targum Jonathan renders Hebrew *satyr* with an Aramaic word for "demons," so in reality this particular Targum does not avoid the demonic interpretation

13. Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39, A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 359. Kaiser also makes the connection with the Mesopotamian female demon *Lilith*, while at the same time equating her with the demon of our Phoenician Arslan Tash inscription (below)—a somewhat uncertain equation.

14. Brevard Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster Press, 2001), 251.

15. John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 13-14.

16. Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 28-39* (A Continental Commentary; trans. by Thomas H. Trapp; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 335-337.

17. *Ibid.*, 312.

18. See the entries for these terms in BDB, 850, 17.

19. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 453.

20. The Targums were translations of Hebrew Scriptures into Aramaic, used in synagogues where the people spoke Aramaic.

21. The variants cited are not as clear-cut as Blenkinsopp suggests. For starters, the 1QIsa^a from Qumran attests a rather strange spelling that does not resemble the plural form of the Hebrew word "at night." Furthermore, it is all but certain that *Lilith*, as the female Babylonian demon, is attested in sectarian manuscript 4Q510 f1.5, making it less likely that she would have been avoided in 1QIsa^a 34:14. The strange form in 1QIsa^a 34:14 may best be attributed to scribal error. In Targum Jonathan, the plural is certainly clear, but we must be careful in making too much of this Aramaic form, since these Targums are quite late, and as such one could be dealing with a later secondary influence.

altogether.²² Instead, it suggests a multiplicity of demonic forces inhabiting the region. In the end, I am not so sure that these variants do much to change the evidence with respect to these two Hebrew words, as Blenkinsopp would lead us to believe.

LILITH IN NEAR EASTERN LITERATURE

The words in question are not common in the Old Testament, an observation that only illuminates the problems interpreters have had in rendering them. We may begin our own investigation with the word *Lilith*, since it poses the least number of problems in our interpretation of this text. This word occurs only here (Isa 34:14) in the Hebrew Bible, and it is most likely a Babylonian loan word, as already noted.²³ As it appears in the Bible, *Lilith* represents the feminine form of the Babylonian word *lilû* (i.e., male *lilû* demon), thus indicating that we are dealing with the Babylonian female demon *lilîtu*,²⁴ otherwise known as Lilith.²⁵ The earlier male counterpart of the she-demon Lilith first appears in the Sumerian King List (ca. 2400 B.C.), where it is stated that the father of Gilgamesh was a Lilu-demon.²⁶ Apparently, her male predecessor, originally envisioned as a storm-demon, would visit women who gave birth to children begotten by him.²⁷ In the Sumerian epic *Gilgamesh and the Huluppu Tree*, Lilith herself builds her house in the Huluppu (i.e., willow) which had been planted on the bank of the Euphrates during the days of Creation. After a dragon constructs a nest at the foot of the tree and a Zu-bird sets its offspring in its tops, Gilgamesh slays the dragon and Lilith destroys her home, fleeing to the desert for refuge.²⁸ This association with the

22. For a translation of the Isaiah Targum, see Bruce D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus and Notes*, The Aramaic Bible, vol. 11 (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987), 68-69.

23. Some of the translations make a connection between *Lilith* and the Hebrew word for "at night": for example, NIV/NLT "night creatures," NCV "night animals," NKJV "night creature," ESV "night bird." The Akkadian word for night is similar.

24. Ignace J. Gelb, et al., *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (abbrev. CAD) (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1973), 9:190.

25. This Babylonian demoneess gained visibility in the popular culture of the late 1990s and the Lilith Fair, a female artist musical tour founded by Canadian performer Sara McLachlan in 1997.

26. See Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* (Chicago, 1939), 18, also cited by Raphael Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 221-222.

27. Patai, *Goddess*, 222. Cf. also the daughters of men birthing the *Nephelim* begotten by the sons of God in Gen. 6:1-4.

28. Samuel Kramer, *Gilgamesh and the Huluppu Tree* (Chicago: 1939), 1-2, cited by Patai, *Goddess*, 222.

uninhabitable, inhospitable regions of the desert certainly works well for our text in Isaiah, where we are dealing with the desert creatures who will overtake the inhabitable regions of Edom soon to be abandoned. Lilith apparently gained prominence in Akkadian sources where we find several Babylonian incantations against the evil powers of this female demon, one of which attempted to keep her away from a newborn baby.²⁹

For our text, then, the Babylonian understanding of the *Lilith*-demon suggests that Isaiah is certainly making reference to the demonic maiden of the night who is associated with uninhabitable and inhospitable places.

Moving westward, one inscription (at Arslan Tash in Syria) may provide a West Semitic parallel to our text. There a Phoenician incantation against a demon disturbingly depicts a wolf-like creature devouring a young child. The name of the demon is similar to *Lilith*.³⁰ Earlier assumptions were that the incantation mentions our demoness by name, as reflected in Frank Cross and Richard Saley's reading, following Albright.³¹ But for various technical reasons (that go beyond the scope of this article), the use of the exact name is questionable. Both Pardee and Torczyner reject the *Lilith* interpretation of this form. Even so, what remains in this text is the association of the similarly-named demonic entity with infanticide and the night, both of which parallel features associated with the Mesopotamian *Lilith*.

Scholars have long noted the flourishing interest in *Lilith* found throughout the Jewish Talmud, which is a bit late for our interest in Isaiah 34:14.³² Still, the fact that she survived at all requires her to have entered into Jewish literature at an earlier time when she garnered a significant place in the popular culture of the Babylonian world. *Lilith* does appear as early as the first century B.C. at Qumran, and thus closer to the time of Isaiah. The particular text is catalogued as 4Q510 and consists of an incantation against evils spirits of all kinds, including "all the spirits of the messengers of destruction and the spirits of illegitimate children, the

29. CAD, 9:190.

30. On this text, see W. F. Albright, "An Aramaean Magical Text in Hebrew from the Seventh Century B. C.," *BASOR* 76 (1939): 5-11; H. Torczyner, "A Hebrew Incantation Against Night-Demons from Biblical Times," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 6/1 (1947): 18-29; Frank Moore Cross and Richard J. Saley, "Phoenician Incantations on a Plaque of the Seventh Century B.C. from Arslan Tash in Upper Syria," *BASOR* 197 (1970): 42-29. For hand copies of the actual inscription, see D. Pardee, "Les documents d'Arslan Tash : authentiques ou faux?" *Syria* 75 (1998): 15-54.

31. Cross and Saley, "Phoenician Incantations," 46; W. F. Albright, "An Aramaean Magical Text," 9.

32. On *Lilith* in Talmudic literature, see Patai, *Goddess*, 223-254.

demons, Lilith, howlers.”³³ In several other Qumranic texts, *Lilith* has been partially or wholly reconstructed from incomplete words or the context, but 4Q510 is the one case which does not require reconstruction and is therefore concrete evidence for her existence in Second Temple Judaism.³⁴ This period of Jewish history has been described as a “magical time,” a tendency that burgeoned even more fully in the Byzantine era—as manifested in numerous Aramaic incantation bowls only recently published.³⁵ Lilith functioned as one of many evil spirits provoking fear within the Judaism of the time, whose members resorted to magical incantations to keep her sinister powers at bay.³⁶

SATYR IN NEAR EASTERN LITERATURE

Isaiah 34:14 makes reference to the *satyr*, stating: “The *satyr* will call out to its associate.” Again, the translations are divided on whether this creature should be understood as natural or supernatural. The etymological situation with this word is different from the aforementioned *Lilith*, in main because of its well-attested use elsewhere in the Old Testament in the sense of “he-goat” or “she-goat.”³⁷ The word does not refer inherently to the animal itself, but instead denotes its hairy nature; thus we might say “hairy creature.”³⁸ The comparable word in Babylonian similarly means a single hair, the hair of men or deities, or the specific hair of goats.³⁹ Interestingly, the Babylonian evidence suggests that this word can refer to the hair of divine beings, which may bear on Isaiah’s use of *satyr* in conjunction with the female *Lilith* demon.

33. On this text, see DJD 7:634.

34. Lilith also appears in several Aramaic incantation bowls, as for example in the following inscription from the Iraq Museum: “For the binding of Bagdina, king of the devils, and the great ruler of the liliths.” These bowls, however, are rather late for comparison to Isaiah’s time (Cyrus Gordon dates this one to the seventh century A.D.). See Cyrus Gordon, “An Aramaic Incantation,” *AASOR* 14 (1933-1934): 141-144. See also the attestation of the De Menil Bowl 1.7, recently published by Charles D. Isbell, “Two New Aramaic Incantation Bowls,” *BASOR* 223 (1976): 16.

35. See the discussion of Douglas L. Penney and Michael O. Wise, “By the Power of Beelzebub: An Aramaic Formula from Qumran (4Q560),” *JBL* 113/4 (1994): 627-650.

36. For other “demons” at Qumran see Bennie H. Reynolds, “The Demons of Error,” *RevQ* 22/4 (2006): 593-613.

37. “He-goat”: Gen. 37:31; Lev. 4:23; 4:24; 9:3; 9:15; 16:5; 16:7; 16:8; 23:19; Num. 7:16; 7:87; Ezek. 43:22; 43:25; 45:23; 2 Chr. 29:23; “she-goat”: Lev. 4:28; 5:6.

38. The adjective on the same root occurs only twice in the Old Testament, where it describes the “hairy” arms of Jacob’s brother Esau (Gen. 27:11, 23).

39. *CAD*, 17:125-130.

Furthermore, two other uses of the word translated *satyr* in the Old Testament lend support for a demon-creature interpretation, provided that the context is favorable for such a reading. In Leviticus 17:7 the LORD specifically prohibits an aberrant Israelite practice in which they were making sacrifices to goats: "They must no longer make sacrifices to the goats with which they are committing harlotry." Contextually we may conclude that this practice had continued to survive among certain sectors of the Exodus generation (lit. "they are continuing to commit harlotry"). Generations later, Jeroboam is said to have installed cults for both bovine and goat deities, perhaps returning the northern tribes of Israel to a pre-Sinaitic religious situation (2 Chr. 11:15). In both of these contexts, the hairy goat represents some divine creature, familiar to the broader context of the ancient Near East, that drew the allegiance of Israel away from their covenant Lord. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that Isaiah's mention of the *satyr* who calls out to his fellows is none other than the hairy goat-demon who will inhabit the desolate ruins of the nations.⁴⁰

SUMMARY

Viewing these two terms in an ancient Near Eastern context almost certainly demands that we interpret them supernaturally in Isaiah 34:14. The most convincing solution for the etymology of Hebrew *Lilith* leads us to the conclusion that it must be a Babylonian loan-word for the she-demon Lilith, especially in light of the fact that any attempt to connect it etymologically to the Hebrew word for "night" is apparently unsuccessful. Furthermore, the Biblical usage of *satyr*, coupled with the Babylonian designation of this word for divine beings, provides ample precedent for the "goat-demon" reading here in Isaiah. All things considered, it is more likely that we are indeed dealing with demons and not merely natural creatures of the desert.

The significance of this translation note becomes clearer if we observe briefly the broader context of Isaiah's oracle against the nations. The oracle from the LORD declares His indignation against the Edomites and His commitment to utterly destroy them as a vindication offering (43:2, 5).⁴¹ In verses 9-15, the text recounts the events that will take place as a result

40. It is also significant that this creature "calls/cries out to his associate," a wording that may imply more than the ways of ordinary goats.

41. Note the sacrificial terminology utilized for describing this act of divine vindication in vv. 6-7 (blood, blood of lambs and goats, fat of the kidneys of rams, sacrifice, great slaughter, oxen, young bulls, etc.).

of God's day of vengeance against Edom. One of the by-products of divine judgment, as our text indicates, is both natural and supernatural devastation. The natural creatures associated with those uninhabitable and inhospitable places on the fringes of society will overtake the once-thought-secure dwellings of Edom. More catastrophically, however, the demonic creatures often associated with the steppe-lands will also infest the inhabited lands of Edom to inflict their terrorizing fear upon its residents. This text provides a glimpse of life's darker side when God unleashes judgment upon the wicked, apparently removing His restraint from the demonic.

One of the overarching implications of this text reminds the reader that the supernatural realm must be acknowledged in our interpretation of life's happenings. It is tempting to read texts like this one as relics of ancient superstition. But from the perspective of the Christian worldview, we must not be too hasty in dismissing the supernatural realities that seduced the nations into worshipping them, not to mention the covenant community's fascination with these "foreign deities" that often led to spiritual adultery. Perhaps we might do well in acknowledging that the ancient climate lent itself more readily to a supernatural understanding of life.

At the same time, while Christians need to acknowledge such supernatural realities, we must rid ourselves of any association with these unseemly things. Paul warns the Corinthian believers that idolatry is more than feigned obeisance to Christ: it is to partake of the "cup of demons" (1 Cor. 10:20, reflecting Deut. 32:17). No, we are not tempted to participate in a fellowship meal with our family and friends at the neighborhood temple of deity X, but idolatry of all sorts pervades our world.⁴²

On an entirely different level, this exercise demonstrates the benefit of consulting various translations in our study of the scriptures. Depending on the translation, certain interpretive decisions have already been made. In this case, some translations have decided to translate the words in question as natural creatures rather than supernatural. Consequently, if one works only from one translation that happens to follow this reading, he is unaware that another interpretive option exists. On the other hand, if one utilizes several translations from a variety of interpretive methodologies (ranging from dynamic equivalence to more literal translations), he comes that much closer to the original phraseology of the text and can therefore make more informed interpretive decisions.

42. On the question of meat offered to idols, see the insightful essay by Ben Witherington III, "Not So Idle Thoughts on Eidolothuton," *Tyndale Bulletin* 44/2 (1993): 237-254.

Paul V. Harrison

Chronology and the Gospels: Issues in the Life of Jesus

INTRODUCTION

The fact that issues related to time are significant in God's revelation is evident from the opening words of Holy Scripture: "*In the beginning God created.*" In spite of this obvious significance, the Bible does not present a careful, chronological presentation of events. Only occasionally does the sacred writer offer such information.

As would be expected, those who hold the book dear diligently seek data about the Scripture's central figure. Indeed, scholars have engaged in meticulous research for a chronological framework for the life of Christ.¹ These historians, employing different instruments and exploring separate areas of investigation, have arrived at varying conclusions. Their effort has focused on the entire breadth of Jesus' life: His birth, ministry, death, ascension, and awaited return. This article will examine three key issues: the year of Christ's birth, the length of His public ministry, and the day of the month on which He died. Attempts will be made to present the varying approaches scholars have taken in regard to these questions, although some pertinent viewpoints will of necessity be only briefly noted.

THE YEAR OF JESUS' BIRTH

If one can determine the year in which Jesus was born, the historic framework for His entire life is much more easily grasped. However, this area of pursuit, as will be seen, has not always occupied the mind of the student of the New Testament.

Historical Survey

The early church seemed content to date Christ's birth backwards from the approximate commencement of His ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius's rule as recorded in Luke 3:1. This was not the case regarding the exact day of the year on which Jesus was born, for that question was

1. For several decades now, chronological studies have given way to more basic questions of historicity in general.

hotly debated, with the dates of January 6 and December 25 being adopted by the Eastern and Western churches respectively.²

The debate over dates in Jesus' life came about in part because the world was largely unaware of the expectation of the birth of the Messiah. Even those who awaited His arrival were not informed as to the timing of this event (Simeon excepted). Obviously, therefore, the idea of dating years in accordance with the year of His birth had to develop after His entrance into history. Even after His birth, however, this system was not thought of, because He was not accepted by the world at large. Only after Christianity had taken hold of the world did Christ hold such a preeminent position as to revolutionize the calendar.

This occurred in A.D. 525 in response to a request by Pope John I to Dionysius, one of his loyal monks. The Pope wanted a standard system of reckoning years to be used by the Western Church, so the monk set to work. Harold Hoehner described this endeavor: "Dionysius modified the Alexandrian system of dating, which used as its base the reign of Diocletian, for he did not want the years of history to be reckoned from the life of a persecutor of the church, but from the incarnation of Christ."³ Dionysius, however, faced some of the same difficulties modern chronologers face, and he erred in his calculations. The extent of his error is not easily discerned.

The Death of Herod the Great

Since the Scriptures make clear that Jesus was born during the lifetime of Herod (Matthew 2:1; Luke 1:5), the date of His death may serve as the *terminus ad quem*, the latest possible date, for Jesus' birth. Immediately, Flavius Josephus must be consulted, for he offers the most complete record of information concerning Herod. From his *Antiquities of the Jews* one learns that the Roman Senate granted Herod the position of ruler over the Jewish people in 40 B.C., but that he was only able to assume the post after overcoming his opponents in 37 B.C.⁴ Later in his discussion of Herod, Josephus mentions that the moon was eclipsed shortly before the

2. Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 11, 25.

3. Hoehner, 11.

4. Josephus, *The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus, the Learned and Authentic Jewish Historian and Celebrated Warrior ... to Which Are Added Seven Dissertations concerning Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, James the Just, God's Command to Abraham, etc.*, trans. William Whiston, intro. by H. Stebbing (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, n.d.), 442.

king's death. From astronomical calculations, it is determined that this lunar eclipse occurred March 13, 4 B.C.⁵

This, however, is not the only clue Josephus gives as to the date of Herod's death. He records that Herod died in the thirty-fourth year of his reign, which according to Hoehner, would not have begun until March 29.⁶ Jack Finegan pointed out, on the other hand, that the exact time of the year when Herod captured Jerusalem is not certain.⁷ Therefore, to compute the exact beginning point of the thirty-fourth year appears precarious.

Josephus further mentioned that the Jews celebrated the Passover shortly after Herod's death. In the year 4 B.C. this feast would have begun April 11. Correlating these dates, "the death occurred between Mar 12/13 (the eclipse) and Apr 11 (the Passover), an interval of twenty-nine days," in the year 4 B.C.⁸ This span of time serves as the latest time at which the birth of Jesus could be placed.

The Date of the Census of Quirinius

Luke 2:1-2 states that Jesus was born in connection with a census by Augustus at the time "when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." This reference to Cyrenius, who is more commonly known as Quirinius, has sparked sharp debate among historians. A. N. Sherwin-White quipped: "There is one name that has caused more controversy than any other of the Roman phenomena in the New Testament, that of Quirinius, the governor of Syria."⁹ It was argued by Emil Schürer that Luke was in error to list Quirinius as governor at this time. In fact, Schürer refused to list a B.C. census among his political events in the history of Palestine.¹⁰ In his eyes, no such event occurred. Similarly, John Meier writes: "Attempts to reconcile Luke 2:1 with the facts of ancient history are hopelessly con-

5. Josephus, 514.

6. Josephus, 516; Hoehner, 13.

7. Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology: Principles of Time Reckoning in the Ancient World and Problems of Chronology in the Bible*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 292. Finegan opted for the summer or fall as the time that Herod took Jerusalem.

8. Finegan, 295.

9. A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 162.

10. Emil Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus*, rev. and ed. Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Matthew Black (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1886-1890; newly revised, edited, and introduced by Nahum N. Glatzer, New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 3-5.

trived."¹¹ Raymond Brown quips that "this information is dubious on almost every score."¹²

The problem surrounding this matter is that all records, except that of Luke, list Quirinius as the governor of Syria in A.D. 6 and not in the years before Christ at all. Causing many to conclude that Luke was in error is the basic certainty that in A.D. 6, Quirinius was in fact involved in a census.¹³ Also making it difficult to accept Luke's testimony are the extant records of the governors of Syria listed below:

10–9 B.C.	M. Titius
9–6 B.C.	C. Sentius Saturninus
6–4 B.C.	P. Quinctilius Varus
3–2 B.C.	??? (Quirinius) ???
1 B.C.–A.D. 4	C. Caesar
A.D. 4–5	L. Volusius Saturninus
A.D. 6–7	P. Sulpicius Quirinius ¹⁴

The only open dates, 3-2 B.C., do not correlate with the data concerning the death of Herod the Great. This dilemma apparently led some Bible students actually to alter Luke's text. Referring to such an emendation by Tertullian, who substituted Saturninus where Luke had Quirinius, Sherwin-White commented: "If Tertullian is to be taken seriously he must be repeating a version which aimed, already in antiquity, at removing the contradictions posed by Luke."¹⁵

There have been several attempts to reconcile the relevant secular data with that of the sacred. Wayne Brindle listed six such attempts: (1) Quirinius ruled in the years before Christ's birth, not after it; thus, the secular documents were in error; (2) the proper reading in Luke 2:2 should be Saturninus; (3) the census, though ordered during the rule of Quirinius, was not carried out until A.D. 6–7; (4) the meaning of the word for governor (the participial form of *hēgemoneuō*) only refers to a position of importance and not to governorship; (5) Quirinius was actually governor twice—once during the rule of Sentius Saturninus and again in A.D.

11. John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 1: *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 213.

12. Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 413. See his extensive discussion on pp. 547–55.

13. Sherwin-White, 163.

14. Finegan, 302.

15. Sherwin-White, 169–70.

6–7; (6) the word *prōtē* in Luke 2:2 should be translated “before” or “earlier” and not “first”; therefore, Jesus was born *before* the well-known census in A.D. 6.¹⁶

Generally, in recent years, only the final two possibilities have been pursued by scholars who wish to harmonize the accounts. William Ramsay, on the basis of inscriptional evidence he examined in and around Antioch of Syria, judged that Quirinius ruled from about 8–6 B.C. (as well as from A.D. 6–7), the same time Sentius Saturninus was ruling; Quirinius was in charge of military matters and Saturninus political ones.¹⁷ The evidence, however, is not conclusive, and this has led many to see Ramsay’s work as a strained attempt to reconcile history with Scripture.

An alternative translation of *prōtē* in Luke 2:2 has been an opinion held by several Biblical scholars. Some, such as Nigel Turner and F. F. Bruce, have understood the term (which is technically a superlative) to carry a comparative force. Thus, Luke means that this census was earlier than the one in A.D. 6; the two censuses are being directly compared.¹⁸ Although this translation must be granted as a possibility, Luke’s outstanding Greek skills would not point to such a cumbersome construction.¹⁹

Hoehner, following A. J. B. Higgins, saw *prōtē* as meaning “before” (with the same meaning as the preposition *pro*), as its neuter counterpart does in John 15:18. Thus, Luke refers to a census before the A.D. 6 one conducted by Quirinius.²⁰ Hoehner, attempting to hold onto every possibility of vindicating Luke, still maintained that Quirinius was governor of Syria during this census; but this is not necessary as Brindle pointed out. If Luke refers to a time before Quirinius’s known tenure in Syria, there is no need of assuming, from little or no evidence, that he also ruled earlier.²¹

Many scholars have not been convinced including those among the conservative ranks. Ramsay unflinchingly states that this understanding

16. Wayne Brindle, “The Census and Quirinius: Luke 2:2,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27 (March, 1984): 43–52.

17. W. M. Ramsay, *The Bearing of Recent Discoveries on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 285–93.

18. Nigel Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (Edinburgh: n.p., 1965), 23–24; and *The New Bible Dictionary*, 1962 ed., s.v. “Quirinius,” by F. F. Bruce.

19. Hoehner, 20–21.

20. Hoehner, 22.

21. Brindle, 52.

of *prōtē* is “wrong and impossible in Greek usage.”²² His words, though too dogmatic, are illustrative of the unusual nature of this understanding of Luke’s Greek.

Evaluation

In light of Luke’s knowledge of Quirinius’s census in A.D. 6, as seen by his reference to it in Acts 5:37, it is unlikely that he would make a blunder along this line in his Gospel. Also, it should be admitted that the evidence for two reigns by Quirinius is not convincing.

Probably the most reasonable understanding of the passage is to see *prōtē* as meaning “before.” Although this is certainly not the normal use of the word, its possibility should not be denied. This interpretation means that Luke’s reference to Quirinius is basically irrelevant as to dating Jesus’ birth. The Syrian ruler was only mentioned because of his later, well-known census. One is thus left with the firm dates for the death of Herod—March 12 to April 11—before which Jesus was born. The accounts of both Matthew and Luke seem to imply that the Lord’s birth was only shortly before Herod’s decease. Jesus was therefore probably born around 5 B.C.

It should be noted that two items which sometimes are called into court in this matter are astronomical studies (in connection with the wise men’s star) and Matthew’s reference (2:16) to Herod’s killing infants two years old and younger. In regard to the former question, none of the evidence is conclusive, though all of it is interesting. Likewise, Herod’s “slaughter of the innocents” can easily be accounted for by his extreme concern about the Christ and his unusually cruel nature. The two-year-old designation may point to his barbarous character rather than to the length of time since Jesus’ birth.

THE LENGTH OF JESUS’ MINISTRY

Issues relating to the length of Jesus’ ministry impact the whole framework of the Gospel accounts. How much time elapses between events in the Gospels? Which specific feasts are alluded to in the narratives? How many trips did Jesus and His disciples make between Galilee and Judea? These and many more questions are bound up with discussion of the length of the Lord’s public ministry.

22. Ramsay, 238.

Historical Survey

Because none of the church fathers claimed to have any direct knowledge from the Apostles in regard to the length of Jesus' public ministry, they had only the study of the Gospels to help them. The setting for their examination of Gospel literature, however, was quite different from that of today.

First, it should be noted that the Synoptic Gospels, being the first written and circulated Gospel accounts, served as the foundation for the first chronological speculations about Jesus' ministry. These books were interpreted in light of Luke 4:19, which refers to "the year of the Lord's favor." Actually a quotation of Isaiah 61:2, the verse was understood to refer to *one* specific year, and therefore a one-year ministry for Jesus was accepted. Early Gnostics accepted this theory while Clement of Alexandria (*ca.* 150–215) was the first orthodox Christian we know of to accept it. Seeking to account for the one-year theory's early acceptance, George Ogg commented: "But it is doubtless in the way in which the Synoptic Gospels and notably Lk. seemed to confirm this theory that we must find the main explanation of its wide acceptance in the early Church."²³

Although a one-year ministry was the most common view in the early church, the three-year view was also advocated by some.²⁴ Melito of Sardis (died *ca.* 190) was the first Christian we know of to propose this extended Messianic ministry. Apparently, as the entire collection of the Gospels became available and was studied, the three-year hypothesis rose in popularity. Ogg continues: "The impression we receive is that, while at first the one-year theorists were in a majority, later and notably after the time of Eusebius that party shrank and ultimately disappeared, leaving the other in undisputed possession."²⁵ This three-year theory was primarily based on John, yet Luke 4:19 continued to be stressed, leading Eusebius to believe that it referred to the last year of Jesus' life.²⁶

Since Eusebius, traditional scholarship has leaned primarily to a three-year framework for Jesus' ministry. Some have urged a two-year scheme. However, stress on different chronological hints found in John has made the three-year plan more attractive.

23. George Ogg, *The Chronology of the Public Ministry of Jesus* (Cambridge: University Press, 1940), 137.

24. See Edmond F. Sutcliffe, who stated that in the first three centuries of the church there was only scant support for the three-year theory. Edmond F. Sutcliffe, *A Two Year Public Ministry Defended*, The Bellarmine Series (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1938), 50.

25. Ogg, 130–31.

26. Ogg, 138.

One-Year Theory

As mentioned, this theory leans heavily upon the Synoptic accounts and especially emphasizes Luke 4:19. When Luke quotes Isaiah, referring to “the year of the Lord’s favor,” he is believed to refer to a literal twelve-month period. On this basis, Jesus’ work is squeezed into a one-year structure. It must be admitted that, on the basis of the Synoptics alone, a one-year ministry is possible.²⁷ In fact, only one Passover is mentioned in these Gospels. However, as shown below, John does not allow for such a structure.

It should also be noted that Isaiah’s reference to a year of favor does not necessarily point to a literal year. Hoehner explained: “The Old Testament passage was quoted to indicate that the predicted Messiah had arrived and not to indicate the duration of His ministry.”²⁸

Two-Year Theory

The focus for both the two- and three-year theories is on the Gospel of John.²⁹ The two-year plan, dating from the fourth century, has advocates down to the present day.³⁰ Three approaches, whereby a two-year ministry can be construed from John, will be examined.

First, Origen’s manuscript of John 6:4 simply reads “a feast of the Jews” without identifying the feast as the Passover. On that basis, one may infer that the feast referred to there is the Feast of Tabernacles mentioned in the next chapter. With this reckoning, one may conclude that only two years of ministry are given in the Fourth Gospel.³¹ The difficulty which overwhelms this attempt is the lack of textual support for the omission of *to pascha*, the Passover. With the exception of Origen, all identify this feast as a Passover.

The majority of those who hold to a two-year ministry in John support it by transposing chapters five and six. It is urged that this allows for a much smoother geographical picture of Jesus’ labors. As His travels are

27. Ogg, 25.

28. Hoehner, 47.

29. Meier, 406, states: “When it comes to the question of the duration of the ministry, the Synoptics and John are not so diametrically opposed to each other as is sometimes supposed.” He concludes the length to be “two years plus a month or two.”

30. See Apollinaris (ca. 310–390) and Epiphanius (ca. 315–403) for ancient proponents. For modern advocates, see Edmond Sutcliffe, Josef Blinzler, George Caird, and F. F. Bruce.

31. *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. “The Chronology of the NT,” by George B. Caird. With the omission of *to pascha* one could feasibly see only one year of public ministry for Jesus in this Gospel.

shortened, so are His days. A chart depicting these journeys of Jesus makes the matter clear:

Traditional Order	
(Chapter)	(Location)
John 4	Galilee
John 5	Jerusalem
John 6	Galilee
John 6:4 (Passover)	Jerusalem
John 7	Galilee
John 7:2 (Tabernacles)	Jerusalem

Transposition of John 5 and 6	
(Chapter)	(Location)
John 4	Galilee
John 6	Galilee
John 6:4 (Passover)	Jerusalem
John 5	Jerusalem
John 7	Galilee
John 7:2 (Tabernacles)	Jerusalem

By transposing these chapters, a round trip from Galilee to Jerusalem is eliminated. There is one further piece of evidence that lends some credence to this transposition. John 5:1 refers to “a feast.” However, several manuscripts (among them, Codex Sinaiticus) include the article, pointing to “the feast.”³² If this reading is adopted, it seems probable that it refers to the approaching Passover, previously alluded to according to this scheme, in chapter six. Thus, the three Passovers mentioned in John’s Gospel (2:23; 6:4; and 13:1) are the only ones that occurred during Jesus’ public ministry; and three Passovers equal two years!

Once again, the major problem with this plan is that it finds no textual support. There simply are no manuscripts which invert John five and six. However convenient the geographical picture may be, without at least some textual evidence, this theory should not be seriously considered.³³

Finally, some believe that John refers to only two Passovers. Since there are three separate references to this feast, once again, textual tampering is called for. The focus is on the feast in John 2. In light of the Synoptic accounts, which place the cleansing of the temple at the conclusion of Jesus’ ministry, some understand John, for some structural reason, to have moved this event to the beginning of his narration. Finegan commented:

It is possible that Jn transposed this event to a place near the beginning of the ministry for some symbolic reason.

32. See Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2d ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2002), 178. Metzger gives the anarthrous use (i.e., without the article) an “A” rating.

33. Hoehner, 58.

In that event there would be but two Passovers in John's record: (1) that of John 6:4; and (2) that described in two different places, John 2:13 and 11:55ff."³⁴ As is true of any theory that eliminates one of John's Passovers, it even becomes possible to squeeze Jesus' ministry into one year and some months.

Three-Year Theory

Since the time of Eusebius, this theory has represented the majority opinion.³⁵ As mentioned above, John's material provides the battlefield. When the text is taken as it stands, at least two years are clearly pictured. The final year, regardless how one reckons the total number, falls beautifully into place with a year's feasts mentioned in order: Passover (6:4); Tabernacles (7:2); Dedication (10:22); and the Passover (11:55).³⁶ James D. G. Dunn reflects a common opinion when he writes of "the general impression that Jesus' mission must have extended over two or three years, given particularly the Fourth Gospel's mention of three Passovers."³⁷

Proponents of a three-year ministry, however, often see an extra year (and therefore an extra Passover) fitting into the material between the Passovers of chapters two and six. Such an understanding, of course, forces a third year. Several chronological notices are understood to point to such an additional year.

First, it is argued that by comparing John with the Synoptics, the extra year is necessary. Hoehner stated:

One point of chronology that is common to all four Gospels is the feeding of the 5,000 (Matt. 14:13–21; Mark 6:32–44; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:1–15) which is dated sometime near the Passover of John 6:4. Confirmation of this is given in Mark 6:39 where there is the incidental mention that the grass was green—indicating the springtime, the time of the Passover. But earlier in the Synoptic Gospels there is recorded the incident of the disciples plucking grain (Matt. 12:1; Mark 2:23; Luke 6:10) which would point to the harvest season a year earlier. On the other

34. Finegan, 351.

35. See George Ogg, A. T. Robertson, William Hendrikson, Donald Guthrie, etc.

36. *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. "Chronology." See Appendix One.

37. James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 312.

hand the Passover of John 2:23 occurred shortly after He had been baptized and had started the ministry. Also, after the Passover of John 2:13 His ministry was in Judea whereas the plucking of the grain occurred after He had been in Galilee. So the plucking of grain would fit well around the time of the Passover between the Passovers mentioned in John 2:13 and 6:4.³⁸

Hints of an extra year are also thought to be found in John itself. Two are suggested—"four months to harvest" in 4:35 and "a feast" in 5:1—and both must be correlated in order to gain the year.

Advocates of a three-year ministry see Jesus' statement to His disciples concerning the time to harvest as a "chronological notice" rather than as a "proverbial statement." With this understanding, Jesus was saying that harvest would come in four months. Since harvest comes around April or May, the statement must have been made around January or February.³⁹

Others argue that the statement is proverbial in nature, that Jesus was merely saying that there were four months between sowing and harvest.⁴⁰ There are two main obstacles to such a view of this saying. First, no reference has been found attesting to the proverbial nature of the saying. Second, it is generally recognized that there are six months between seed-time and harvest, not four.⁴¹

With the belief that the saying of John 4:35 can be dated to January or February, the reference to "a feast" in 5:1 takes on new significance, especially if the correct reading is "the feast." If this feast were one "after" Passover, then the much sought after "extra Passover" is gained. One would then have the Passover of John 2, this unmentioned Passover occurring before chapter 5, the Passover in chapter 6, and the final one at which Jesus was crucified.

If the correct reading is "the feast," it surely has reference to one of the three annual pilgrim festivals: Passover, Pentecost, or Tabernacles. In this case, the extra year is found, because either "the feast" is the Passover itself or a feast falling after an unmentioned Passover.⁴²

If the correct reading is "a feast," the entire year may be avoided. Purim, a February/March celebration of the deliverance of the Jews from

38. Hoehner, 56.

39. Finegan, 351.

40. C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), 394.

41. Sutcliffe, 122–29.

42. See Appendix One.

Haman (see Esther 9:17-24), could be the unnamed feast. In this case, the first Passover is mentioned in chapter 2, January or February is alluded to in 4:35, Purim (February/March) is presented in 5:1, and the second Passover is in chapter 6.

However, Jesus is not otherwise presented in Scripture as attending the Purim celebration. Perhaps its carnival-like nature was not in keeping with His message.⁴³ More striking is the argument offered by Edmund Sutcliffe against identifying the feast of 5:1 with Purim (an argument that led him to see the two-year ministry based on the transposition of chapters 5 and 6): "Much more solid ground against the identification is provided by the fact that there is no evidence at all that anyone ever went up to Jerusalem for this particular celebration. Indeed, there was no particular reason why the pilgrimage should have been undertaken. There were no special sacrifices prescribed in the Temple ritual. In fact the ancient writings that refer to the feast describe it as social and convivial, not as religious."⁴⁴

Therefore, if the statement concerning harvest in John 4:35 is a chronological hint, and if the feast mentioned in 5:1 is not Purim, which it appears it was not, then an extra year is necessary. With this scheme of reckoning, Jack Finegan's chart may well illustrate Jesus' public ministry according to the presentation in John's Gospel:

<i>Year and Month</i>	<i>Feast</i>	<i>Reference</i>
<i>First Year</i>		
Nisan (Mar/Apr)	First Passover	2:13, 23
Shebat (Jan/Feb)	"four months to harvest"	4:35
<i>Second Year</i>		
Nisan (Mar/Apr)	Second Passover	Unmentioned
Tishri (Sept/Oct)	"the feast," i.e., Tabernacles	5:1, Codex Sinaiticus
<i>Third Year</i>		
Nisan (Mar/Apr)	Third Passover	6:4
Tishri (Sept/Oct)	Tabernacles	7:2
Chislev (Nov/Dec)	Dedication	10:22
Nisan (Mar/Apr)	Fourth and final Passover	11:55ff. ⁴⁵

43. Hoehner, 58.

44. Sutcliffe, 63.

45. Finegan, 352.

Evaluation

When the text of John's Gospel is determined according to the normal guidelines of textual criticism, the one-year theory is seen to be totally unacceptable. A careful analysis of this Gospel also reveals a strong likelihood that Jesus' ministry lasted more than two years. It is therefore not surprising that the three-year theory has been widely accepted. The Fourth Gospel all but forces this conclusion.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE LAST SUPPER

The differences that exist between the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John have stood out to all students of the Scriptures. However, because of the varying subject matter in these accounts, the harmonist is seldom called upon to correlate these materials as they relate to a specific occurrence. In contrast to this general principle are the closing events of Jesus' life which find vivid elucidation in both the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics. Perhaps the most difficult passages to correlate are the separate representations of the Last Supper.

The Synoptics present the Upper Room feast as a Passover meal. John, on the other hand, does not identify these two occasions. Rather, he makes notice that the Passover was to be eaten the next day. This apparent contradiction has been approached from several vantage points.

Historical Survey

From the founding of the church, questions have swirled around the celebration of the last days of Jesus and His resurrection. For example, in the second century some disputed over when Easter should be observed. Christians in Syria and Asia Minor celebrated Jesus' resurrection, not on Sunday, but on the opening day of the Jewish Passover, Nisan 14. These Quartodecimans (*quartusdecimus* is Latin for fourteen), as they were called, harbored strong Jewish tendencies and argued that the death of Jesus was not receiving proper attention in the Easter celebration. Leopold Sabourin noted: "For these Easter (*Pascha*) commemorates above all the passion and death of Christ, not his resurrection."⁴⁶ In this connection, the Quartodecimans commonly pointed to alleged etymological connections between the Hebrew word for Passover and the Greek word for "suffer," which sound somewhat alike—by which they sought to emphasize Christ's suffering. (It is noteworthy that Augustine, even with

46. Leopold Sabourin, "Easter in the Early Church," *Religious Studies Bulletin* 2 (January, 1982): 25–26.

his limited knowledge of Hebrew, saw the fallacy of such a connection.⁴⁷) Yet although they stressed this agonizing aspect of Jesus' final days in connection with the Jewish Passover, they did not celebrate Easter in the way they had formerly celebrated the Passover as Jews before their conversion. J. van Goudoever commented: "The name and the date of the festival are the same as in the Israelite calendar. The same story is read, the same metaphors are used. Yet it is different with at least a new content. The sheep is no longer sacrificed and the Deliverance from Egypt under Moses is not commemorated."⁴⁸

This emphasis on suffering was especially seen in John's Gospel, where, as is noted below, Jesus is seen as the slain Passover lamb. Therefore, it was common for the early church to stress John's presentation of Jesus' last days. Ogg concluded: "It would appear that down to the beginning of the third century not only in Asia but throughout the Church generally the Johannine chronology of the Passion was more commonly received than the Synoptic."⁴⁹

The modern approach to the problem is multifaceted. Many resolve the tension between the accounts by seeing either the Synoptics or John as being in error. Others place more confidence in the materials and seek a viable harmonization. Before examining these attempts at a resolution, the evidence from the Gospels must be noted.

Synoptic Presentation

The Synoptics give strong indication that the Last Supper was a Passover meal. For example, Matthew 26:17 explicitly states: "On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?'"⁵⁰

In addition to such outright testimony, Joachim Jeremias offered fourteen indications pointing to an identification of the Last Supper with the Passover meal. Six of these are given here. First, Mark 14:13-16 makes it clear that the meal was taken in Jerusalem, as prescribed for the Passover in the Mosaic Law. Because of the crowds present in connection with the feast, it was difficult to get around in the holy city; and one would expect

47. Sabourin, 28-29.

48. J. van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars*, 2d ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), 155.

49. Ogg, 239. See Tatian's *Diatessaron*, Clement of Alexandria's *Chronicon Paschale*, and Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* (ch. 111).

50. See also Matthew 26:2, 18, 19; Mark 14:1, 12, 14, 16; Luke 22:1, 7, 8, 13, 15.

that Jesus would have resorted to somewhere outside the city, had it not been necessary to remain there.⁵¹

Second, the room for the meal was delivered up for Jesus' and His disciples' use without any ado. If it was to be used for something other than the Passover meal, this would have been unusual. However, for the Passover meal Jerusalem inhabitants were to provide freely the necessary rooms. This points strongly in the direction of identifying the two meals.⁵²

The fact that the Last Supper was eaten at night is also significant (Mark 14:17; 1 Corinthians 11:23), for the second and final meal of the day was usually taken in the late afternoon and finished before dark. However, this evening supper fits well with the Passover meal, which had to start after the stars were visible.⁵³

Two other matters may be mentioned jointly. Where it had been common for Jesus, throughout His ministry, to dine among large crowds, this night He withdrew himself from the multitudes and communed only with His chosen twelve. This fits nicely the Passover custom of celebrating the feast with a *ḥaburah*, something like a quorum of ten or more Jewish participants. Also, that those at the meal were "reclining" indicates a festal occasion. Sitting was the normal posture for meals, with reclining reserved for special occasions. In regard to the Passover itself, the reclining posture was thought to be a "symbol of freedom," for there must be time to recline, where on the first Passover in Egypt, haste was demanded.⁵⁴

Finally, Jeremias cited as proof of the Passover identification the fact that Jesus spoke interpretive words over the bread and the cup. Such a procedure is described in Exodus 12:26-27, where the children ask certain questions and the father responds.⁵⁵

Johannine Presentation

Were it not for the Fourth Gospel, no doubt would exist regarding the identification of the Last Supper. However, John writes without any apparent awareness that this meal was a Passover meal and even makes statements that lead one away from identifying it as such.

51. Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 3d ed., trans. Norman Perrin (London: SCM Press, 1960), 42.

52. Jeremias, 44. He noted that, although the room was to be provided freely, the custom was to give the sheep skin from the Passover lamb to the owner of the property.

53. Jeremias, 44-46.

54. Jeremias, 44-47.

55. Jeremias, 55-61.

Detailing the final hours of Jesus' life, John 18:28 reads: "Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover." The final statement of this verse indicates that these Jewish leaders had not yet eaten the Passover! Yet this occurrence was after the Last Supper.

John's intention in his presentation of Jesus' passion becomes clear when he notes: "These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: 'Not one of his bones will be broken'" (Jn. 19:36). This statement points to the Old Testament stipulation in Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12 that no bones of the Passover lamb were to be broken. Therefore, it is evident that John is comparing Jesus' death, in which none of His bones were broken, to the death of the Passover lamb. By presenting the Passover meal as being celebrated on Friday evening, following the crucifixion, John correlates the time for the slaying of the lambs with the time that Jesus was slain. He was the Passover lamb. As Dunn observed: "One can hardly avoid the suspicion that John is making a theological point here: Jesus, the lamb of God (1.29, 36), was crucified at the time the Passover lambs were being slaughtered, that is, along with the *other* Passover lambs."⁵⁶ This picture is supported by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7 where he calls Jesus "our Passover lamb."

Possible Harmonizations

No Passover. To avoid concluding that one of the sacred writers was in error, some have urged that the Synoptic accounts can be understood *not* to refer to a Passover meal.⁵⁷ They state that *to pascha* may refer to the entire period of the Feast of Unleavened Bread; but as Jeremias commented, it would be unlikely that John's audience could be expected to pick up on this linguistic subtlety.⁵⁸ Other arguments stress the fact that neither the lamb nor the bitter herbs are mentioned in the narrative (but see Luke 22:15). Also, the bread is referred to as *artos* (bread) and not as *azuma* (unleavened bread). Several other objections are raised, including the fact that if the Last Supper was truly a Passover meal, then Jesus' trial and crucifixion would have been carried out on a feast day. Ogg stated:

56. Dunn, 772.

57. Meier "favors" the idea that the meal was not a Passover, but he does this not out of any effort to harmonize the Synoptics with John but simply as a historical conclusion. He concludes the Synoptics were wrong to call it a Passover. See *Marginal Jew*, 395.

58. Jeremias, 20. See also Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 3 vols., trans. John Moor Trout, William Annot Mather, et al. (Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1977; reprint ed.), 3:297-98.

"The Jewish law not only forbade all such judicial transactions and executions on Sabbaths and feast days, it even disapproved of them on Fridays and on the day preceding a feast day."⁵⁹ In each instance, though the protests carry some force, the possibility of these events taking place on a feast day must be admitted, especially in light of the Jews' determination to kill Jesus.⁶⁰ Much of what the Jews disapproved, they permitted.

Those who conclude that the Supper was not a Passover are at pains to identify the meal, for it obviously was a significant occasion. Perhaps the most popular attempt is to equate the meal with the Jewish *kiddus*.⁶¹ However, in a carefully documented examination, Jeremias convincingly proves that this is untenable. He insisted: "The *kiddus* is therefore neither a meal, nor a sacrifice, nor does it have sacrificial significance, but it is just a simple blessing. "*Kiddus* meals" (the term is a modern invention) have never existed, if anything more is meant by them than meals at which a special blessing was inserted into the normal grace because of the fact that a Sabbath or feast day had begun during, or before, the meal."⁶² Others offer additional possible identifications of the meal, but none seem to satisfy the circumstances surrounding the event.

Anticipatory Passover. Some have seen the Last Supper as indeed a Passover meal but harmonize John's statements with the Synoptics by understanding the feast to have been celebrated a day early. Since Jesus knew He would not be alive for the normal meal, He exercised His divine prerogative and had the celebration early.⁶³ As Lord of the Sabbath, He could rearrange such matters in accord with His will. Second Chronicles 30, where the feast was observed a month late, is often cited as an example of such flexibility.⁶⁴

Although several detailed objections could be raised against this understanding, the insuperable difficulty is in regard to the Passover lamb. One can only celebrate the Passover with a lamb which, after having been set apart for the meal on Nisan 10, was slain in the temple court by a priest. It is unthinkable that a priest would violate the Mosaic strictures placed upon him at the disciples' or Jesus' request.⁶⁵

59. Ogg, 232.

60. Hoehner, 77-80.

61. G. H. Box, "The Jewish Antecedents of the Eucharist," *The Journal of Theological Studies* III (April 1902): 357-69.

62. Jeremias, 27-28.

63. See F. Godet, Reginald Fuller, and Vincent Taylor.

64. Ogg, 216.

65. Hoehner, 82.

Double Passover. Since the discovery of the Qumran materials, interest in that community's calendar system has been high. Apparently, they operated on a 364-day year, exactly 52 weeks, with the first day of the year, Nisan 1, being a Wednesday, because the stars were created on the fourth day. Any notion of a lunar calendar was condemned outright. With a calendar set up on a 364-day cycle, feast days would fall on the same day of the week year after year. Since the Passover meal was to be eaten the evening ending Nisan 14 and beginning Nisan 15, the meal was eaten on Tuesday every year.⁶⁶

Annie Jaubert, followed by Ruckstuhl, proposed the idea that Jesus followed this calendar as opposed to the official calendar of the Jews.⁶⁷ With this reckoning, Jesus observed the Passover on Tuesday night and was crucified on Friday. Other than the supposed need for more time for the events between the Passover meal and the crucifixion, no sound Biblical evidence is presented for this position. However, early church history offers some support for this theory as seen in the third-century *Didascalia*, which placed the Last Supper on Tuesday evening.⁶⁸ Though a novel and interesting proposal, this theory must be dismissed. There simply is no indication that Jesus followed the Qumran calendar.⁶⁹ Also, one would still have to account for the above mentioned problem of providing a lamb for the meal.

D. Chwolson suggested that in the year in which Jesus was crucified Nisan 14, the day the Passover lambs were to be slain, fell on a Friday. Because of the difficulty of slaying before Sabbath such a great number of lambs, Chwolson proposed that the Jewish leaders agreed to kill the lambs a day early, on Nisan 13. In this way, the Sabbath would not be violated, and yet there would be time to kill all the animals needed for the feast.

It should be noted that finding sufficient time to kill all the lambs needed for the feast was a problem, and scholars have sometimes contemplated different times of day when the priests perhaps commenced their bloody work, with the consensus pointing toward noon.⁷⁰ Changing

66. Annie Jaubert, *The Date of the Last Supper*, trans. Isaac Rafferty (New York: Alba House, 1965), 24-28.

67. See Ruckstuhl's work, *Chronology of the Last Days of Jesus: A Critical Study*, trans. Victor J. Drapela (New York: Desclee Company, 1965).

68. Jaubert, 69.

69. Jeremiah, 25.

70. Raymond Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 1.847.

days for the sacrifice, however, is much more radical, and it is unlikely the Jews would have allowed it. The statement in the Mishna (*Pesahim* 5.3), for example, that “(if) one slaughtered it before midday, it is invalid” captures something of the Jewish strictness in this matter.⁷¹

Chwolson’s theory also surmises that a problem developed between the Pharisees and the Sadducees as to the eating of the lamb. All agreed that after it was slain it was to be taken to one’s home and roasted and eaten there; for the old custom of eating the lamb in the Temple area, dating to the Josianic reform, had long been abandoned.⁷²

The problem arose over two verses in the Old Testament. Exodus 12:10 stated that the lamb was to be eaten on the night after it was slain. Leviticus 23:5, on the other hand, mandates that the Passover should begin on Nisan 14 at twilight. It is believed that the Pharisees chose to honor the Exodus regulation and to disregard the one in Leviticus. Conversely, it is maintained that the Sadducees observed the Leviticus stipulation and violated the one in Exodus. Thus, there came to be two different times when the Passover was observed. It is further suggested that Jesus and His disciples followed the Pharisaic thought. In this way the apparent discrepancies in John are resolved.⁷³

It should be stated that in the year of the crucifixion, Nisan 15 may indeed have fallen on Friday. Using astronomical data and allowing one day variance (due to the imprecision with which Jews calculated their months), Ruckstuhl concluded that this could have occurred in several years, any one of which could feasibly be the crucifixion year. The following chart presents this information:

28 A.D. Friday, 15 Nisan = April 30
 30 A.D. Friday, 14 Nisan = April 7
 31 A.D. Friday, 15 Nisan = April 27
 33 A.D. Friday, 14 Nisan = April 3⁷⁴

Also to be granted is the fact that there were many lambs to be slain at the Passover, making it difficult to complete the job within its prescribed lim-

71. *The Mishna: A New Translation*, by Jacob Neusner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 237. Cf. Philo’s statement (The Special Laws, II [*De Specialibus Legibus*, II]), while discussing the Passover, that “the whole people offer sacrifice, beginning at noonday and continuing till evening.” *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, trans. C. D. Yonge, new updated ed. (n.p.: Hendrickson, 1993), 582.

72. Jeremiah, 42.

73. For a summary of this view, see Ogg, 219.

74. Ruckstuhl, 4.

its, usually from 3-5 P.M. As Jeremias asserted, certainly hundreds and thousands of lambs were slain at this time.⁷⁵

This theory, although relieving the apparent inconsistencies in John, presents problems of its own. Hoehner summarized these well: "(1) Would the Sadducees not have obeyed Exodus 12:10? (2) Would Jesus have celebrated the Passover on Nisan 13/14 when the Law specified Nisan 14/15? (3) Jesus would not have been able to eat it with unleavened bread since that feast did not begin until the evening of Nisan 14/15 which would have changed the whole character of the Passover ritual. (4) According to Jeremias, there is evidence that when Nisan 15 was a Sabbath, the Jews could slaughter the victims earlier in the afternoon."⁷⁶ These objections make it difficult to accept the theory as it stands.

Another approach sees two separate times for the Passover celebration based on different understandings of when each day begins and ends, sunrise or sunset. At times in Scripture one sees the day reckoned from sunset to sunset (Leviticus 23:32), and at times from sunrise to sunrise (Exodus 12:18). It is suggested by Robert Thomas and Stanley Gundry that there was a division within Judaism as to how to reckon days. There were those who insisted that the day began at sunrise and others who insisted it did not start until sunset.⁷⁷

The conclusion drawn from this is that due to the differences in calendrical calculations, coupled with the difficulty of slaying a huge number of lambs at one time, the Jews decided to compromise and allow lambs to be slain and eaten on two different days. Therefore, John 18:28 alludes to those who would eat the meal on Friday, Nisan 15, according to the sunset-to-sunset calculation; and the Synoptics picture Jesus and His disciples eating the Passover on Thursday, Nisan 14, according to the sunrise-to-sunrise calculation. Appendix Two presents this scheme in chart form.

Objections to this plan are not hard to find. First and most prominent is the lack of any mention in the sources of this arrangement. Though feasible, it remains total conjecture. Second, that the Sadducees would have allowed such an arrangement is doubtful.⁷⁸

75. See Jeremias, 42. Josephus's report that 256,500 lambs were slain at Passover must be a gross exaggeration. This would be 2,137 lambs a minute if performed within two hours.

76. Hoehner, 83.

77. Robert L. Thomas and Stanley N. Gundry, eds., *The NIV Harmony of the Gospels with Explanations and Essays Using the Text of the New International Version*, rev. ed. of John A. Broadus and A. T. Robertson's *Harmony of the Gospels* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 312.

78. Hoehner, 88.

Evaluation

Every solution offered carries along with it serious objections, objections that should not be casually dismissed. While our spotty knowledge of the details of Jewish practice in the first century opens the door to some of the possibilities examined above, without specific and strong evidence pointing to one theory, each of the harmonizations seems forced and ultimately unsubstantiated. Therefore, until further evidence comes to light, it is probably best not to offer a resolution to the apparent conflict between the Synoptics and John on this matter.

CONCLUSION

Although the Gospel narratives are not simply historical documents, they do present themselves as accurate representations of historical truth (Luke 1:1-4). Therefore, at least some degree of correlation among them should be sought and expected. If this correlation were not to exist, one must either conclude that the documents themselves are not trustworthy or that the writers did not intend to present "real" history. In the latter case, the ethical truths they present may be accepted, but the historical frameworks in which these truths are taught are fictional. No correlation between Gospel events should be sought, for the events never happened.

In the course of Gospel studies, each of these positions has been advocated. Some seek for and find correlation; others, not finding it, determine that the records are not reliable. Still a third group, also not finding the narratives to mesh, conclude that they were never meant to present history in the first place.

It has been demonstrated that various Gospel chronologies can be harmonized. That some proposals to achieve this harmonization are more substantiated and therefore more credible than others is granted, but the possibility that the documents may indeed correlate with each other must also be granted.

It should also be noted that the Gospels should not be seen as strict, chronological layouts of Jesus' life. Rather they include authorial shaping, while never abandoning the basic kernel of historical truth. Therefore, time references, when present, should be given respect. They are not fictional. When these reference points are not supplied, the student should recognize that the Gospel material may not be strictly chronologically arranged. Such a conclusion is not in any way an argument against the historicity of the material.

In the cases examined in this article, although definite solutions may not be insisted upon, the possibility of such solutions may be. One must,

therefore, maintain a balanced position, recognizing that, as new information comes to light, it may become necessary to abandon old solutions for new ones. Until such illumination occurs, one may concur with Eusebius of old who, quoting Jesus' words, stated in this connection: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons."

Appendix One: Jewish Feasts⁷⁹

Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread:

Seven-day feast of the first month (Nisan 14-21; March/April). Included two convocations ("holy calling"). See Exodus 12:6.

Feast of Weeks (Pentecost):

One-day festival, early in third month (Iyyar; April/May), on the fiftieth day after the offering of the barley sheaf at the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Marked the end of grain harvest. See Leviticus 23:16 and Deuteronomy 16:10.

Day of Atonement:

Fast held on the tenth day of the seventh month (Tishri; September/October). See Leviticus 23:37.

Feast of Booths (Tabernacles):

Seven-day feast, began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (Tishri; September/October). Commemorated the Israelites' wandering in the wilderness. See Leviticus 23:34 and 1 Kings 8:2.

Feast of Dedication (Lights):

Eight-day festival (also known as Hanukkah). Begins on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month (Kislev; November/December) and commemorates the victories of Judas Maccabaeus and the purification of the temple. See 1 Maccabees 4:52-59.

Purim (Lots):

A carnival-like celebration of one or two days, held on the fourteenth of the twelfth month (Adar; February/March). Commemorates the deliverance of the Jews from Haman by Esther and Mordecai. See Esther 9:17-24.

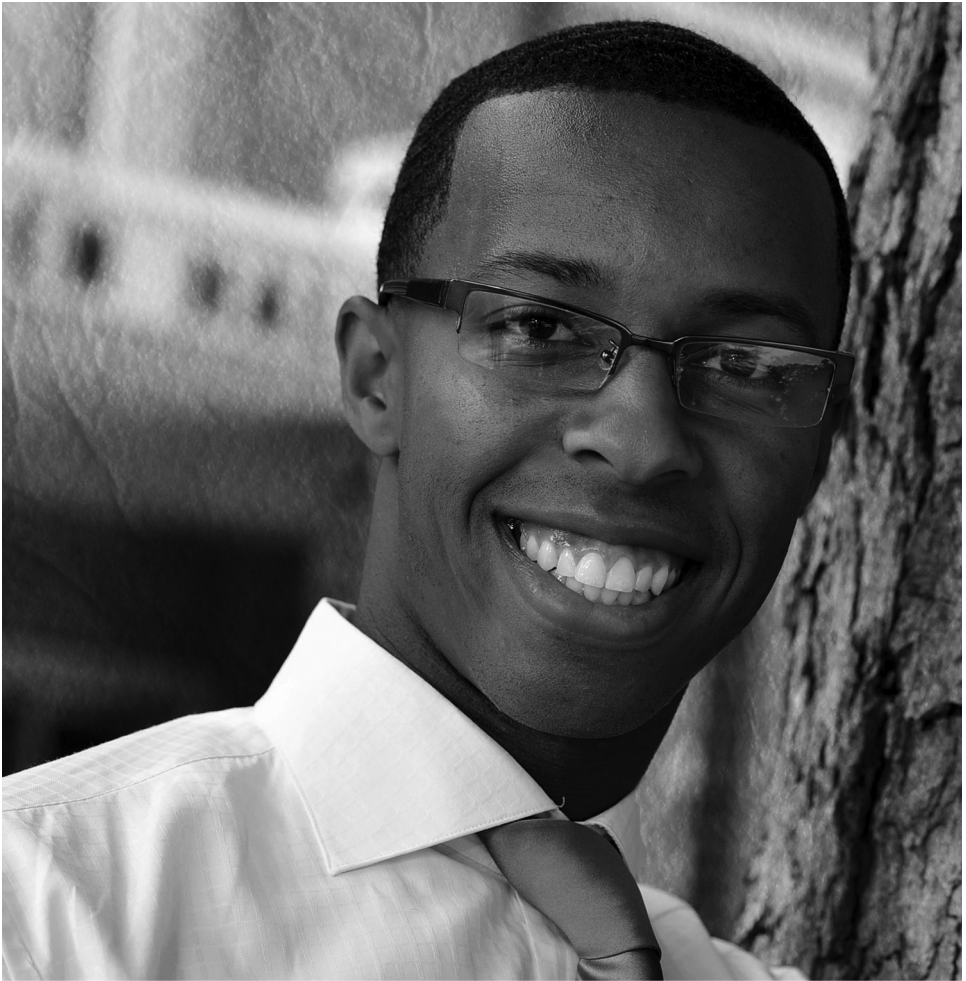
79. Much of this information is taken from Finegan and from the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (1962 ed.), s.v. "Feasts and Fasts," by J. C. Rylaarsdam.

Appendix Two: Last Supper Chart

Sunrise–Sunrise (Synoptics)	Thurs. AM Nisan 14	Sunset–Sunset (John)	Thurs. AM Nisan 13
	Thurs. PM Nisan 14		Thurs. PM Begins Nisan 14
	Friday AM Nisan 15		Friday AM Nisan 14
	Friday PM Nisan 15		Friday PM Nisan 15

Jesus eats Passover meal on Thursday PM, Nisan 14; is crucified on Nisan 15.

Passover extends from Thursday PM through Friday PM. Jesus killed Friday afternoon at the time the Passover lambs were slain. Leaders would eat Passover meal Friday evening.



A Christian Community of Faith and Learning

Free Will Baptist Bible College

www.FWBBC.edu | 800-76-FWBBC



Jeffrey L. Cockrell

An Introduction to the “New Perspective on Paul”

Since the beginning, Christians have had to be on guard about the teaching of the church. In Acts 15 we read of the Jerusalem Council and the debate about whether circumcision was necessary for salvation. In his farewell speech, in Acts 20, to the elders of the church in Ephesus, Paul warned about dangerous teaching that would arise from within and without the church. In the Pastoral Epistles he instructed Timothy and Titus on how to deal with false teachers. The dangers are still with us: we must constantly educate ourselves and examine new teaching which challenges traditional doctrine.

In the past thirty years, a new interpretation has emerged that challenges the traditional understanding of Paul and his teaching about justification. This interpretation is not entirely new, but represents a uniting of several viewpoints from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.¹ Traditional understanding of Paul, since the Reformation, has regarded him as one who rejected Judaistic legalism in favor of the Christian faith.² The doctrine of justification by faith alone was thrust on the scene with Martin Luther’s statement that a person is saved “by faith alone without the works of the law.”³ Luther concluded that Paul was converted to Christianity as a result of his overwhelming sense of sin and guilt and because he was frustrated at his inability to keep the Jewish law. As the doctrine of justification by faith came to be the center of Reformation theology,⁴ it was incorporated into various confessional statements.⁵ Thus,

1. F. David Farnell, “The New Perspective on Paul: Its Basic Tenets, History, and Presuppositions,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* (Fall, 2005): 189.

2. Albert Schweitzer surveyed the history of Pauline research from the Reformation to 1911. Albert Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History* (NY: Macmillan, 1951). Peter J. Tomson has outlined Paul’s relationship to the Jewish law and its Halakha. Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 5-19.

3. Susannah Heschel has described the role of Judaism in German Protestant interpretations of Christian origins. Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1998), 106-26. See also Jaroslav Pelikan, *Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700)* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984), 138-55.

4. David B. Capes, Rodney Reeves and E. Randolph Richards, *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to His World, Letters and Theology* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 2007), 297.

5. J. Reumann, *Righteousness in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 3-11.

post-Reformation understanding of Paul has viewed him as departing from Judaism.⁶

The New Perspective on Paul argues that this traditional understanding of Paul is wrong. This article offers a brief overview of this new approach to Paul by outlining its development, its description, and a proper response to it.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL

E. P. Sanders

E. P. Sanders's monumental book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion*, published in 1977, fired the debate in Pauline scholarship concerning Paul's relation to Judaism.⁷ From his investigation of Jewish literature from 200 B.C. to A.D. 200, Sanders concluded that the different types of Palestinian Judaism had a common thread: namely, the covenant. According to Sanders, the law was simply the means for the Jews to maintain covenantal status,⁸ and thus salvation comes by membership in the covenant community.⁹ Sanders termed first-century Judaism "covenantal nomism." According to Sanders, obedience to the covenant is required, but the law was not a burden but a blessing.¹⁰ No *quid pro quo* (measure for measure) was involved, for God was merciful to those who intended to obey.¹¹ As he examined Jewish literature and concluded that there was a basic pattern concerning salvation in the various Judaisms, Sanders opposed the traditional teaching on Paul and said that Judaism was not a religion of works-righteousness but a religion of election by grace that was followed by certain obligations.¹² The idea is that Jews in Paul's day believed they were saved by grace because they were the elect, but they maintained a right relationship with God by obeying His law.¹³

6. Peter J. Tomson, *If This be From Heaven . . .* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 170.

7. E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

8. William R. Stegner, "Jew, Paul the," *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1993), 510.

9. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 147, 157.

10. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 110.

11. *Ibid.*, 125; E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983), 28.

12. Gaston, 251.

13. Capes, Reeves and Richards, 92; N. T. Wright, *What Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Oxford: Lion, 1997; reprint, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Cincinnati: Forward Movement, 1997), 19.

Sanders believes that righteousness according to the law excluded Gentiles, so he has adopted the idea that Paul developed his theology of faith in Christ for all people.¹⁴ Sanders has based this conclusion on the idea that Paul did not fault the Jews for pursuing the wrong goal of works-righteousness or for pursuing the right goal in the wrong way (a legalistic way), but he says the Jews failed to believe in the gospel because they sought a righteousness available to Jews alone.¹⁵ According to Sanders, Paul uses the terms "boasting" and "works" to refer "to the Jewish assumption that keeping the law guarantees a special privileged status not available to those outside the circle of the law."¹⁶ Therefore, Sanders is concerned about Christianity's superior attitude against Judaism, and he believes that Judaism was based on grace just like the Christianity preached by Paul.

James D. G. Dunn

In more recent years James D. G. Dunn has followed Sanders's thought concerning first-century Judaism. Seyoon Kim describes Dunn as "the most tireless, if not the most prominent, proponent of the 'New Perspective on Paul.'"¹⁷ Dunn is credited with coining the phrase the "New Perspective on Paul."¹⁸ Yet Dunn's emphasis is slightly different from that of Sanders. Dunn emphasizes Paul's Jewish background, and he does not believe Paul transferred from one belief system to another.

Dunn's primary effect on the New Perspective is his interpretation of the phrase "works of the law." He contends that the commandment of the Torah was a "boundary marker" and an "identity marker."¹⁹ The commandments in regard to circumcision, food, and Sabbath-keeping were proofs of covenantal faithfulness.²⁰ According to Dunn the term "works

14. Capes, Reeves and Richards, 92.

15. William S. Campbell, *Paul's Gospel in an Intercultural Context* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992), 100; D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism: A Fresh Appraisal of Paul and Second Temple Judaism, Volume 2 – The Paradoxes of Paul* (Tübingen: Siebeck: 2004), 15.

16. Terence L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 11.

17. Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 1.

18. William S. Campbell, 'Divergent Images of Paul and His Mission,' *Reading Israel in Romans: Legitimacy and Plausibility of Divergent Interpretations*, eds. Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000), 193; James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law* (Louisville: Westminster/Knox, 1990), 183-214.

19. William S. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 28.

20. *Ibid.*, 127.

of the law" refers to the social function of the law and defined Israel's righteousness.²¹

Although Dunn denies rejecting the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith,²² he opposes Reformation theology when he adopts the idea that Paul's gospel concerns how Gentiles can be accepted along with Jews, regardless of their guilt before a holy God. While most Biblical scholars agree that faith is the antithesis of "works of the law,"²³ for followers of the New Perspective, faith becomes an identity marker like the works of the law. According to Dunn, faith in Christ becomes the primary identity marker which renders the other identity markers—such as circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath observance—nonessentials.²⁴ Hence, God accepts Gentiles as Gentiles without their observance of Jewish identity markers. Dunn believes that after his debate with Peter at Antioch, Paul adopted the concept that faith alone was essential and that keeping the law was superfluous; then he developed his Gentile form of Christianity.²⁵

N.T. Wright

Another important contributor to the New Perspective on Paul is N. T. Wright. He adopts a moderating approach to Paul's theology. He disagrees with Sanders on some points but praises him for his contribution to Pauline scholarship.²⁶ He criticizes Sanders for his failure to offer a verse-by-verse exegesis,²⁷ yet he agrees with Sanders and Dunn that the Judaism of Paul's day was not a works-based religion.²⁸ He says Paul was not criticizing the Jews for their legalism but for "national righteousness": "*the belief that fleshly Jewish descent guarantees membership in God's true covenant people.*"²⁹

Thus, one contribution to the New Perspective that Wright has given is his emphasis on the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. Wright believes that Paul's concern was for the inclusion of Gentiles in the

21. James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998), 335.

22. James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 17-23.

23. Simon Gathercole, "What Did Paul Really Mean?," *Christianity Today* 51.8 (August 2007): 25.

24. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation*, 29, 49-50.

25. James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 113.

26. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 18.

27. *Ibid.*, 19.

28. N. T. Wright, "The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith," *Tyndale Bulletin* 29 (1978): 78-80, 87.

29. *Ibid.*, 65. (Italics his.)

people of God,³⁰ and that "works of the law" refer to "the badges of Jewish law observance."³¹ Wright and other New Perspective scholars cite Paul's challenge to Peter in Galatians 2:11-14 as proof of this erroneous attitude by Jews. In Wright's assessment of the conflict between Paul and Peter, he states, "What is at issue is the question: is it right for Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians to eat together? Do they belong at the same table, or not? That is the question, in this, Paul's first and perhaps sharpest statement of 'justification by faith,' to which he regards that doctrine as the answer."³²

While Wright adopts the Augustinian view of justification, he maintains that the traditional Protestant interpretation has failed to understand its full meaning.³³ He believes justification concerns "the behavior which is appropriate for God's people,"³⁴ and he describes justification during the first century as "not about how someone might establish a relationship with God. It was about God's eschatological definition, both future and present, of who was, in fact, a member of his people."³⁵ He faults the traditional understanding, derived from Augustine, which defines "justify" as "make righteous."³⁶ Although Wright correctly explains how the background for justification is found in the law court and has the idea of acquitting someone,³⁷ he then states (concerning the conflict of Paul and Peter): "Paul is not in a law court, he is at a dinner table."³⁸ Wright defines "justification" as "how you can tell who is a member of the covenant family, the family of Abraham."³⁹ He reasons that the concerns of Paul and the idea of justification deal with Jews and Gentiles' eating together. In this way proponents of the New Perspective assign a significantly different meaning to the word *justification*.

30. *Ibid.*, 78.

31. N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 2009), 8, 50.

32. *Ibid.*, 114.

33. *Ibid.*, 86-92.

34. *Ibid.*, 89.

35. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 119. Cf. 122.

36. Wright, *Justification*, 91.

37. *Ibid.*, 90-91.

38. *Ibid.*, 116.

39. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 122.

THE TEACHING OF THE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL

Judaism as a Religion of Grace

In general terms the New Perspective on Paul contradicts the traditional understanding that the Judaism of Paul's day was works-based. It involves more than Paul's theology, and for this reason it is often referred to, more simply, as the "New Perspective."⁴⁰ Those who adopt this understanding believe that the concerns of the Protestant Reformation were wrong or ill-directed.⁴¹ The reformers understood "works of the law" as human acts done with the purpose of gaining favor with God and thought that Judaism in Paul's day believed that to be the case. The New Perspective, on the other hand, holds that Judaism taught that works of the law were part of the Jews' privileges as the people of God and that the performance of such works identified them as the people of God. Therefore, instead of seeing the Jews of Paul's day as legalistic, the New Perspective believes early Judaism was concerned with maintaining their individual identity by observing the law. This is why Dunn has referred to such actions as identity markers.

A Relationship between Jews and Gentiles

The New Perspective on Paul understands Paul's message as one which was concerned with the status of Gentiles in the people of God. New Perspective scholars view themselves as doing a great service by saving Paul from the blame of injecting anti-Judaism into early Christianity.⁴² These scholars say they desire to understand the original context of Paul and the development of Christianity and thus to relieve Paul of the charge of anti-Semitism. According to the New Perspective, Jews who observe the law are already in the covenant and in the family of God, thus law-observance concerns staying in the covenant not getting into the covenant.⁴³ The idea is that the Jews of Paul's day kept the law out of a sense of gratitude for God's grace, and an observant Jew kept the law as an expression of identity. According to the New Perspective, when Paul refers to the works of the law, he is focusing on certain aspects of Jewish life which marked Jews out as the people of God elected by Him.

New perspective proponents charge Luther with wrongly interpreting Paul and his letter to the Romans by seeing the issues in the light of

40. Thomas, 294, note 4.

41. Gathercole, 22.

42. Claudia Setzer, "Does Paul Need to Be Saved?," *Biblical Interpretation* 13:3 (2005): 289-297.

43. Wright, *What Paul Really Said*, 18-19.

circumstances that occurred later than the ones Paul was actually confronting. They believe Luther and Reformation theologians were biased, reading Paul from a medieval context which resulted in a misunderstanding of his teaching on justification. Hence, the New Perspective concerns itself with what Paul says about justification⁴⁴ and charges the church as misunderstanding Paul's doctrine of justification. Their viewpoint is that justification speaks to the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in the church of God. New perspective advocates believe Paul saw a failure in the Jews by wrongly requiring Gentile Christians to observe the law in order to be part of the people of God.

We especially see this kind of understanding concerning the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in Krister Stendahl. He revealed his insights in papers he delivered in the early sixties and later published in *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* in 1976 (the year before Sanders's work).⁴⁵ He says that his attempt is to reach the roots of Christian anti-Semitism.⁴⁶ He says that Paul's teaching on justification by faith is not based on any dissatisfaction with Judaism or an attack on legalism.⁴⁷ Stendahl believes that Luther and others have read their own struggles of conscience into Paul. He says that Luther saw Paul's Damascus road experience similar to his own formidable experience and believed Paul sensed the same sense of guilt and deliverance.⁴⁸ Thus, New Perspective scholars maintain that their concern is to read Paul contextually and not anachronistically (out of proper chronological order). They maintain that post-Reformation scholarship has read Paul with assumptions that Judaism was legalistic, when instead Rabbinic Judaism was grace-based. This supposed error in interpretation has led (according to the New Perspective) to a misunderstanding of the problem Paul addressed and of the meaning of justification itself.

The traditional perspective sees Paul's concern as how one is accepted by God as righteous: namely, by faith instead of the works of the law. The New Perspective interpretation, in contrast, sees Paul's concern as how Jews and Gentiles are united into the community of faith. Furthermore, those who hold the new viewpoint believe that there has been an overemphasis on the individual, which flows from the Reformation reading of Paul. Likewise, the New Perspective supporters see an overemphasis on

44. Gathercole, 24.

45. Krister Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Sixth printing; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).

46. *Ibid.*, 126.

47. *Ibid.*, 127.

48. Joseph Plevnik, S. J., *What Are They Saying about Paul?* (New York: Paulist, 1986), 70.

sin and forgiveness in the traditional understanding. For instance, Sanders states that the rabbis did not view each human being as sinful or needing divine help to obey God.⁴⁹ New Perspective followers believe Paul's teaching on justification deals with the right of Gentiles to be recognized as full members of the people of God without having to keep the "identity markers" prized by the Jews.⁵⁰

The New Perspective on Romans

The old perspective interprets the book of Romans as a message defining the gospel and the doctrine of salvation.⁵¹ It has been called a "somewhat systematic treatment of the Christian faith."⁵² Paul begins the book by describing the plight of humanity in sin and then explains the solution God has provided through Christ.⁵³ By contrast, Sanders believes that Paul did not see himself in a plight from which he needed to be delivered.⁵⁴ Paul's main topic, according to Sanders, is not the death of Christ which atones for sin, but the resurrection of Christ in which all believers—Jew and Gentile—participate by faith.⁵⁵ Therefore, Sanders believes Paul's main theme is seen in the phrase "in Christ."⁵⁶

Advocates of the New Perspective perceive Paul's attempt in Romans as modifying the recipients' thoughts and behaviors concerning the relationship between Jews and Gentiles.⁵⁷ For instance, in Romans 3:28-30 Paul says, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith." Devotees of the New Perspective interpret this passage as Paul's adoption of a new way to get Gentiles into the people of God without the requirement of observing the Jewish practices maintained in the Torah, such as Sabbath-keeping, circumcision, and a kosher diet.⁵⁸

49. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 114-115.

50. Stendahl, 130.

51. Robert E. Picirilli, *Paul the Apostle* (Chicago: Moody, 1986), 82, 85.

52. F. Leroy Forlines, *The Book of Romans* (Nashville: Randall House, 1987), 2.

53. James A. Meek, "The New Perspective on Paul: An Introduction for the Uninitiated," *Concordia Journal* (July 2001): 212.

54. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 443.

55. *Ibid.*, 446, 465.

56. *Ibid.*, 453-463.

57. Lauri Thurén, *Derhetorizing Paul: A Dynamic Perspective on Pauline Theology and the Law* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 2000; First North American Edition; Harrisburg: Trinity, 2002), 100-101, 155.

58. See Calvin J. Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1977), 5.

William S. Campbell writes: "One of the purposes Paul had in Romans was to define the new group of Christ-followers in relation to historic Israel."⁵⁹ He once followed a more traditional understanding of Romans when he stated (based on Rom. 3:25b-26) that Paul seeks to demonstrate God's righteousness, showing (1) that God is righteous at the present time, and (2) that God justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.⁶⁰ However, Campbell now adopts a New Perspective understanding of Romans; he believes that Paul wrote Romans to address the problem of division that had arisen between liberal-minded Gentile Christ-followers and conservative Jewish Christ-followers, urging that Paul offers an exposition of God's righteous purpose for Jew and Gentile.⁶¹ Although Campbell once adopted a more balanced approach to the book of Romans, he now concedes that Romans was directed to the division that had arisen in Rome between Jewish and Gentile Christians.⁶² He offers support for his conclusion by noting how Paul had common dialogue about the Scriptures with Jews who were not yet Christ-followers, that Paul had the approval of Peter and those whose mission was to the circumcision, and that Paul lived a lifestyle that did not alienate him from other Jews.⁶³

Douglas Moo, who comes from a traditional reading of Romans, also references the matter of Jewish-Gentile relationships when he states: "Paul's purpose may be to rehearse the basic issues separating Jews and Christians and to show what his gospel has to say about them, with the purpose of helping Gentile Christians understand the roots of their faith and their own situation vis-à-vis both Jews and Jewish Christians."⁶⁴

The difference in viewpoints between Campbell and Moo is a matter of emphasis. New Perspective advocates place their emphasis on the Jew-Gentile relationship, while traditionalists emphasize the need for the gospel and God's righteousness. Consequently, the New Perspective understands the book of Romans as a response to questions about the inclusion of Gentiles in the people of God and how that affected God's relationship to the Jews. To the New Perspective group Paul's central concern is how the righteousness of God, revealed in Jesus' death and

59. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation*, 98, 127. Cf. Jacob Neusner and Bruce D. Chilton, *The Body of Faith: Israel and the Church* (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1996), 150.

60. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation*, 135.

61. Campbell, *Paul's Gospel*, 21. For his change of opinion see *Paul and the Creation*, 104-20.

62. *Ibid.*, 3, 21, 22. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation*, 75-76. See also A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Reasons for Romans* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 45-49.

63. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation*, 58.

64. Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 11.

resurrection, incorporated Gentiles into the people of God while being faithful to God's promises to Israel.⁶⁵

Our traditional doctrine is that faith is the means that unites Jews and Gentiles, because by faith all are justified.⁶⁶ In the old perspective, faith means trust in Jesus for salvation, but in the New Perspective faith means that Gentiles do not have to become Jews when they become Christians.

As New Perspective followers examine the context of Romans, they conclude that since Paul desired to solicit the needed Roman support for a mission to Spain, the prerequisite was the end of hostility and the uniting of all. He could not depend on support in the midst of internal conflict; therefore he sought to address the attitude of Christian Gentiles and Jews toward each other. Consequently, Romans was written to counter a specific problem,⁶⁷ the division between liberal-minded Gentile believers and conservative Jewish believers.⁶⁸ Hence, in these chapters Paul discusses the anti-Judaism present in the church and urges Gentile Christians not to boast in their status and in the condition of unbelieving Jews. For proof of this view, those who hold the New Perspective point out that the division between the weak and strong in Romans 14-15 is one of Jewish-Gentile relations, and they note that the extended section in Romans 14-15 reveals that Paul's main concern was for a harmonious relationship between Jews and Gentiles.⁶⁹

EVALUATING THE NEW PERSPECTIVE ON PAUL

The Negative

Those who hold the New Perspective claim to emphasize exegesis and interpret the Bible from a historical-contextual basis. The example of Sanders and others, however, shows that *eisegesis* sometimes rules: as they read meaning into the text, they often present a one-sided view in

65. Roetzel, 125. Cf. Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology*, (trans. M. Eugene Boring; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 412-26; 438-9, 469-71. Campbell understands Paul's approach in Romans to be a confirmation of the promises of Christ. Campbell, *Paul and the Creation*, 133.

66. Gerald Bray, *Romans* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1998), xviii; F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1985; reprint, Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1999), 172.

67. John D. Godsey, "The Interpretation of Romans in the History of the Christian Church," *Interpretation* 34:1 (Jan. 1980), 4.

68. Campbell, *Paul's Gospel*, 21; David M. Hay, ed., *Pauline Theology – Vol. II: 1 & 2 Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 253. Cf. J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (paperback ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 65-66.

69. Paul Barnett, *Jesus and the Rise of Early Christianity: A History of New Testament Times* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1999), 339. Cf. Thurén, 99-101.

their reaction against the traditional understanding of Paul.⁷⁰ Sanders, Dunn, Wright, and others have overreacted to the merit-theology of late medieval Catholicism, against which the Reformers such as Luther and Calvin formulated their understanding of justification. Although Protestant interpreters may have exaggerated the idea of the Jewish understanding of obtaining salvation by the deeds of the law, their basic teaching about justification was true. Literature from the time of Paul reveals that some Jews believed that salvation would be granted by their obedience to the law.⁷¹ Paul opposed such teaching when he said things like "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom. 3:20).

It appears that New Perspective exegetes are often guilty of proof-texting. They move from passage to passage to find support for their conclusions, while ignoring the immediate context of the various texts.⁷² Wright, commenting on Romans 1:1, states that the word *gospel* is a reference to Isaiah 40:9 and 52:7, "where a messenger was to bring to Jerusalem the good news of Babylon's defeat, the end of Israel's exile, and the personal return of the Lord to Zion."⁷³ However, traditional grammatical-historical principles of interpretation offer no basis for such parallelism between the passages.⁷⁴ An examination of the context shows that Paul was writing to a predominately Gentile church; this raises serious questions as to how the situation in Rome could be relevant to the end of Israel's exile and the Lord's return to Jerusalem. A better approach involves examining Paul's other uses of *gospel* in Romans 1:9, 15, 16. In Romans 1:16 Paul describes the gospel as providing salvation to individuals ("for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth"), yet Wright understands justification as indicating how Jews and Gentiles are united in the people of God.⁷⁵

New Perspective scholars at least indirectly diminish the Biblical concept of sin when they redefine justification as dealing with one's relationship with the covenant community instead of one's relationship with God. That Gentiles are incorporated into the people of God is essentially a *result* of salvation and not the *meaning* of justification as the New Perspective understands it. The New Perspective supporters are often

70. Fanell, 190.

71. Gathercole refers to the example of the Psalms of Solomon and 2 Baruch. Gathercole, 26.

72. Thomas, 308.

73. N.T. Wright, *Romans* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 415.

74. Thomas, 307.

75. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 119.

myopic in their discussion of Paul's idea of salvation and the church as they emphasize the dealing of God throughout salvation history and the corporal aspect over individual salvation.

The New Perspective strikes at the heart of Reformation teaching of *sola fide* (faith alone),⁷⁶ while Paul teaches that faith is exercised by individuals who then make up the church. In Romans 4 Paul uses the example of Abraham to emphasize the fact that all become a part of the church the same way: by faith. Paul quoted Genesis 15:6 to show what happens when one comes to God by faith and to explain the meaning of justification: "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3). While it is true that the book of Romans addresses Jewish-Gentile relations, this is secondary to the primary message of salvation. Jews and Gentiles likewise are sinners who are in need of justification and who are declared just by God based upon their faith in Christ (Romans 4:18-22).

The New Perspective has misread the reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin. Calvin responded to those who sought to interpret the phrase "works of the law" as referring to ceremonies rather than the whole law. He explained that Paul was confronting those who taught a false confidence in ceremonies like circumcision.⁷⁷ Moreover, for the New Perspective to label Reformation theology as the "Lutheran Perspective" is wrong, for it fails to consider the deeper roots of the Reformation going back to Augustine.⁷⁸

Moreover, the most serious problem—of at least some who hold the New Perspective on Paul—is a low view of Scripture. Sanders describes himself as a liberal who was raised in a church with a low Christology.⁷⁹ He adopts the view of F. C. Baur who rejected several of Paul's letters as authentic and said that the book of Acts does not give a historically-reliable treatment of Paul.⁸⁰ Dunn questions the reliability of the Gospels.⁸¹ And, although Wright views the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and

76. Farnell, 191.

77. John Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 69-70.

78. Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 3.

79. E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 334.

80. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 432.

81. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul*, 13.

John as credible historical records,⁸² yet his discussion of the genre (the type of literature) of the Gospels is less than reassuring.⁸³

The Positive

Although generally the New Perspective offers a questionable view of Paul's theology of salvation, there are some positive elements which can be gleaned from it. Followers of the New Perspective have revealed the Jews' high regard for the law of God. Thus, New Perspective proponents appropriately remind us to be careful in criticizing the law itself, for to do so would be an attack against God who issued the law. As Paul stated in Romans 7:12, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

The New Perspective on Paul has caused scholars to examine the theological context of the early Christian world. Sadly, many Evangelicals have given little attention to the historical development of the doctrine of justification. Sanders has shined the light on the fault of scholars who have taken a negative view of Judaism, and his criticisms have encouraged serious students of Paul to examine the Jewish sources during Paul's time in order to understand the historical and cultural context of the apostle and his epistles.

The New Perspective on Paul has also shone the light on an un-Biblical and subjective view of justification. Many Evangelicals have touted justification as the solution to self-image problems, self-esteem deficits, and emotional neediness, instead of properly seeing it as the solution to the seriousness of God's righteous wrath against rebellious sinners. At the same time, the New Perspective is correct in understanding that Paul argues that Gentiles are not required to observe the law in order to enter into the community of God's people. The New Perspective is also accurate in understanding the social aspect of the gospel as requiring Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians to live together in harmony (Romans 14-15).

CONCLUSION

It is important to understand the Biblical doctrine of justification. As we have noted, Paul teaches that God sent His Son to die as a substitute for sinful man. On this basis He justifies the individuals who come to Him by faith (Romans 5:1-11). A person gains salvation and is justified

82. Guy Prentiss Waters, *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul: A Review and Response* (Phillipsburg: P & R, 2004), 120.

83. N. T. Wright, *The Contemporary Quest for Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 73.

not by observance of the law or by being a Jew. This benefit is for all who believe, regardless of ethnicity, social status, or any other human ranking. Moreover, justification cannot be accomplished by observance of the law, for it is impossible for sinners to obey the law (Romans 8:7).

The New Perspective on Paul should cause us to give more rigorous examination to the meaning of the gospel and to defend the integrity of the gospel message. We should follow in the steps of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 as they responded to error by referring to the teaching of the gospel. We must be alert in the same way the elders at Ephesus were to be alert (Acts 20:28-30), carefully examining all forms of doctrine that arise, whether from within the church or not. The church has a responsibility to instruct all of the Christian community in sound doctrine (Tit. 1:9; 2:1). We have been entrusted with the care of a precious treasure—the gospel—and are obligated to protect it against all attacks.

Gwyn L. Pugh

Insight for Worship: An Exposition of Doxology in Revelation 5:12

INTRODUCTION: A HEAVENLY PROPOSITION

As a matter of prolegomena before a brief exposition of the doxology in Revelation 5:12, let us first accept the logic, even warrant, of using Heavenly or *throne-room*¹ worship as an authoritative model that is as practical as it is primary.²

The throne-room vision of Revelation 4:1-5:14³ is a portrait of worship that likely mirrors permanent forms. It is reasonable to suggest that a component of worship is identifiable as major or enduring, the more closely it is related to the throne of God or to any pattern which may emerge from a comparison of it with other throne-room visions. (See Isaiah 6:1-5; Ezekiel 1; Daniel 7:9-10.)

It is also reasonable to suggest that the more nearly the Heavenly reality is understood (since it is eternal), the more authentic earthly worship becomes from God's point of view. The throne of God and the One seated on the throne are obviously the focal points of each of these "throne-room" visions in Scripture. Other throne-room components are frequently seen, including the throne itself, the awe-inspiring physical appearance of the One sitting on the throne, the mighty guardian angels, the vivid colors, the deafening sounds, and other supernatural phenomena

1. This term is a convenient way to refer to those visions in both Testaments that focus on God sitting on His throne. The visions of the Bible portraying God in this way offer remarkably similar portrayals of His personal appearance, the throne, angels, and other supernatural phenomena. (See Isa. 6; Ezek. 1; Dan. 7:9, 10.) They suggest God's sovereign rule in Heaven and over the created universe. Whatever messages or commands originate from there, such as in the messages to the seven churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 2 and 3, and the predictions about the future from chapters 6 through 22, are truthful and authoritative in an absolute way.

2. A hermeneutical bridge, that may provide linkage between Heavenly and earthly worship, is found in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:10, "Your will be done in earth as it is in Heaven." The Heavenly model of worship has implications for contemporary earthly models, especially as a standard for substance. The throne-room model in Revelation 4 and 5 provides a picture of how worship is conducted in Heaven.

3. The activity and visual features within these two chapters takes place within the throne-room of Heaven and should be viewed as a unit.

such as lightning or what appears to be something like smoke (compare the Old Testament *shekinah* glory). This visual pattern of supernatural phenomena is consistent from Exodus, to Isaiah, to Ezekiel, to Daniel, and to the last visions given to the Apostle John in the Book of Revelation. The throne-room vision in Revelation 4 and 5, however, changes the standard vision dramatically by adding the presence of the Lamb of God. Worship that had heretofore been reserved for God alone is now offered to both God the Father and Jesus the Lamb permanently.

Admittedly, the new Heavens and earth are much more than what is portrayed by a brief or solitary *throne-room* view. God and the Lamb will undoubtedly be worshipped throughout the new creation.⁴ But the Scriptures are in fact silent as to how worship is done elsewhere in the new Heaven and earth, a fact that may underscore the significance of centralization in the mind of God. Even in the new order the nations bring their glory into the New Jerusalem where the throne of God is apparently located (21:24, 25; 22:1-6).

The throne-room *style* of worship (in contrast to its *substance*, as seen in the seven doxological elements of 5:12; cf. 7:12) is unique in the sense that it happens in the literal presence of God around His throne. This is not presently possible in an earthly service although access into His spiritual presence is real, through Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Scriptures. Consequently, an attempt to contour an earthly service precisely according to this Heavenly style is problematic. The Heavenly model's physical mechanics cannot be reproduced in a church setting for a variety of reasons. We have pulpits rather than thrones. We have sinners rather than angels in the audience. Our singing and music may be loud but it is not often perfect. And the visions of God's throne and the doxologies are as *succinct* as they are *pure*. They do not pretend to say everything about worship that could be said.

Visions in Scripture typically function within what is basically narrative or revelatory material and are not intentionally didactic by design.⁵ However, the impulse to imitate what we see happening by those who are worshipping around God's throne is hard to resist and may even be suggestive in such matters as the singing, reciting, bowing, praying,

4. Even as the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 is a rather pure and succinct prayer covering the vast scope of reality; in this writer's view it is the purest, although there are many exemplary prayers throughout Scripture. It does not pretend to say all there is to say that is meaningful and scriptural about prayer—although it could be argued that it outlines the major elements. Likewise, the throne-room visions of worship tend to be pure in form.

5. We are not commanded to use them as worship models.

orderly execution, etc. There is surely some value in our exposure to the *style* of Heavenly worship.

Of equal value for us, and even more primary, is what the throne-room visions clearly reveal about the *substance* of Heavenly worship—in the seven attributes, for example. If we treat the pattern as paradigmatic of all true worship in an abiding, idealistic way, it becomes instructive for those interested in worshipping God on earth presently. The doxologies reveal a fairly broad vocabulary of worship that may be used to facilitate verbal expression of what a worshipper may feel in his or her heart.

An appeal to the throne-room of God as the primary model of worship should recognize how unique the throne-room of God is. It tends to be very pure, and what we are looking at with John is perfect in every way. It is the ultimate expression or example. By comparison, earthly worship services never quite reach Heavenly perfections. Nonetheless, the Heavenly standard witnessed in the doxologies in Revelation 4 and 5 offer a vocabulary for worship now that may be duplicated by individual worshippers or by congregations as a whole. The representatives of the redeemed (the twenty-four elders) use these terms worshipping God as our Creator and Redeemer. The angels join in. All of Heaven does and so should we. These doxological terms used in Heavenly worship are apparently permanent fixtures within the Heavenly pattern.⁶ If not used now, we most certainly will use them then.

There are obviously diverse expressions of worship throughout the world. It is not my purpose to critique these, although many of them are undoubtedly sincere and even authentic. On the other hand, a great deal of modern worship seems to miss the mark and could profit from some reorientation to the Heavenly throne-room standard, in substance anyway. One must, of course, exercise significant care in attempting to lead others to recognize the wisdom of learning from how worship is done in Heaven. But this may be one of those areas of practice where a hermeneutical spiral, that periodically measures our behavior and ideas against the enduring standards of Scripture, is helpful. We should always be willing to subject how we have come to worship, or anything else we do, against the standard of God's Word.

One may rightly assume that the loud volume in singing, reciting, or praying heard in throne-room worship indicates sincere enthusiasm by the host of Heaven. But that is not always the case in a church service on

6. Throne-room visions and other glimpses of God are recorded by a variety of men who were for the most part not contemporaries (Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Paul, and John) but who portray pictures of God and Heaven that are consistent with one another.

earth where wheat and tares sit together in the choir and congregation. The throne-room worship model does not provide definitive insight into how loudly one should sing or play the piano,⁷ the length of prayers and sermons, or the clapping and raising of hands and so on. These are questions related more to style or mechanics. This paper seeks to differentiate between matters relating to the actual *substance* of worship and such physical behaviors as singing, bowing in prayer, responsive readings, standing up, sitting down, or even the recitation of a doxology. *What we sing, pray, or read is the most important thing, and this substance of worship relates more to the actual elements of the doxologies being examined.* Nonetheless, all those who sincerely desire to worship God scripturally would do well to examine the entire portrait of Heavenly worship for potential insight regarding both style and substance. A great deal of the style and substance of the Heavenly variety appears to be transferrable.⁸

Obviously, not every aspect about eternal life in the new Heaven and earth has been revealed in Scripture. The full orb of eternal life remains largely enigmatic and therefore speculative. But much about it has been revealed. We may say confidently that doxology (giving glory to God or worshipping) will be a major component within eternal life because everyone there seems to be doing it. In fact, an examination of the activity within the throne-room visions of Revelation argues powerfully that worship is *the primary activity* around the throne where God and the Lamb are equally worshipped forever.

A close examination of the vocabulary used in the throne-room doxologies exposes a substance in worship that transcends the constraints of time, secondary questions of style, and varieties of expression in different human cultures. The immediate context in Revelation is the rather massive yet singular throne-room vision comprised by the material within chapters 4 and 5. The larger context is the final period in the end-times of earth's history that comes to an end with the Second Coming of Christ. In the structure of Revelation the throne-room drama in chapters 4 and 5

7. The elders have stringed instruments on their laps in Rev. 5:8.

8. For example, music or singing is a legitimate part of most Evangelical worship and is similar to the Heavenly model. But what do we sing about? Do those who plan worship services in non-liturgical churches provide an opportunity for their congregations to participate in non-musical ways such as in responsive readings, confessions, prayers, or even brief doxologies? Is a worship service complete without them? Does using one or more of these components fairly stereotype a church negatively as being "liturgical"? It would seem that the typical "invitation" at the end of the service in many church traditions is ostensibly an opportunity for worshippers to respond.

points forward in time to the catastrophic events described in chapters 6-19. Identifying the rider on the white horse in the first seal judgment as Jesus Christ (6:1, 2) rather than the Antichrist envisions the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments as conquering judgments against a Christ-rejecting humanity, as the methodical demolition of the present world system (religious, economic, political), as the defeat of the Antichrist's regime and his followers—all of which are necessary to inaugurate Christ's own eternal kingdom.

The ability to do all this requires someone who possesses the attributes listed in 5:12. His identity is revealed to John as someone who is both the Lion of the tribe of Judah (military power) and as the Risen Lamb (victory by sacrifice). The doxologies of chapter 5 extol Jesus Christ as the solitary one qualified, worthy, and able to make it happen. The necessary attributes, extolled in the doxologies, are both intrinsic to and received by Christ.

The doxology in 5:12, with the seven elements in particular, has context, and its ascription to the Lamb by the host of Heaven is magnified by what is about to happen on earth in the near future. In fact, the contextual tentacles of this particular doxology reach deeply into past history, justifying and grounding it on the redemptive death of Jesus on the cross. The extreme significance of what has happened on the cross in *past* history and of the Lamb's continuing role in *future* history warrant the high doxological response given to Christ by all the host of Heaven, a response that should be offered to Christ by the church on earth today.⁹

FOCUSING IN: A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The throne-room vision begins in 4:1 after an abrupt break within the structure of John's composition as a whole. This is true in terms of both historical time and spatial location. The messages to the seven churches of Asia Minor, in chapters 2 and 3, are most likely oriented to circumstances within the church during the first century *on the earth*. They are sent to historical people, places, and problems, albeit with abiding trans-temporal lessons for all ages.¹⁰ The *sitz im leben* of 4:1, however, leaps the geography of the Roman province of Asia Minor and Patmos into

9. "At the heart of Christian worship is God himself. . . . In order to worship two fundamentals are needed: revelation, through which God shows himself to man, and response, through which awe-stricken man responds to God." P. D. Manson, "Worship," *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 730.

10. The school of interpretation called *idealism* emphasizes the applicability of all of Revelation to the church of all ages.

Heaven itself. John is transported via the Holy Spirit within his own spirit into God's throne-room. Likewise, the modern reader of Revelation is telescoped¹¹ with John far into the eschatological period of earth's history designated by futurists as The Great Tribulation along with its attendant events.¹²

The focus of doxology and worship by the host of Heaven in chapter 4¹³ begins and ends with God the Father, who is the great Creator of all things, seated on His throne (4:1-11). This doxological tone continues into chapter 5 where God is still seated on His throne but purposely refocuses on Jesus as the Lamb of God (5:1-14). This action effectively affirms the reality of Jesus' deity and establishes His eternal identity as "the Lamb." Even as the doxologies in chapter 4 are first offered to God the Father as their Creator by those around the throne and by the innumerable host of Heaven, this same doxological attitude is transferred seamlessly to Jesus the Lamb in chapter 5 by the same worshippers. The focus shifts from God the Father as their Creator to Jesus the Lamb as their Redeemer. Jesus is the Redeemer of creation by virtue of His death, burial, and resurrection, with special attention now given to His sacrificial death. These are the two basic foundations or pillars upon which the throne-room doxologies in chapters 4 and 5 are constructed. God has not only *created* the material universe and its animate inhabitants—mankind in particular—through Christ. He has *redeemed* it—animate and inanimate (Rom. 8:18-23)—through Christ and specifically through His vicarious death. Since the worship of Heaven is founded on these two great truths, it is reasonable to suggest that our worship should also be characterized or centered by worshipping God in these same ways. Our worship is

11. See "telescoping" in J. B. Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 137.

12. The futurist school of interpretation regards most of Revelation as speaking primarily of events connected with the Second Coming of Christ. With this one may compare the idealist school (para-history), the preterist school (pre-history), and the historicist school (early or continuous history). The latter two of these, along with futurism, see in Revelation literal historical persons, places, or events. Idealism is allegorical and often suggests many fulfillments, stressing the abiding significance to each generation of church history. It is not novel, however, even for idealists to adhere to a literal fulfillment or for historicists to be idealistic. Interpreters of Revelation often represent hybridizations of the main schools. None of this is an issue in doxology per se. There is nothing polemical or philosophically complex about doxology. There is perhaps nothing that evokes such a genuine unanimity in the minds of believers as the concept of worship in principle.

13. "This 'hymn' lacks the kind of descriptive and narrative content characteristic of hymns and is rather like a doxology in the form of an acclamation." David E. Aune, *Word Biblical Commentary: Revelation 1-5* (Dallas: Word, 1997), 364.

Biblical when we give God glory for being our Creator and our Redeemer.

Even so, the vision goes beyond simply worshipping God as Creator and Redeemer. A case may be made that the throne-room vision, the doxologies of chapter 5 in particular, commissions the Lamb for future mission. It is fitting that the Christ who has created, redeemed, and sustained us will also bring about the consummation of the present world (religious, economic, and political). The subsequent chapters of Revelation describe how the *consummation* of creation is brought about by its Creator and Redeemer. The church, therefore, worships Christ not only for His roles historically in creation and redemption but for His continuing role in the eschatological future as the Conquering King who will return to judge, rule, and re-create the earth.¹⁴

The glory of God is visible not only in creation and redemption but also in the *consummation* of the present age through Christ. The consummation comes through an unprecedented series of catastrophic judgments that will engulf the present world with its evil systems and dramatically alter the physical universe. Of course, one's faith perspective determines whether or not this is perceived as glorious; those who have rejected God will not share this perception. As the glory of the old fades away, it is eventually replaced by a perfect and permanent new order in the New Jerusalem and in the new Heaven and earth. Since God's glory is as expansive and enduring as God Himself, extending from creation (Genesis), to redemption (Gospels), to consummation (Revelation), the character and activity of God during the eschatological time frame is an equally important part of that glory and, hence, of doxology!

This exposition will hopefully help provide some clarity to the concept and vocabulary of worship, which for many is only a vague abstraction. This lofty foray will perhaps inspire personal participation and study in worship as we gaze in awe with the Apostle John into the very throne-room of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. In a way that I hope is not overly ambitious exegetically, I am suggesting that the throne-room visions and doxologies of Revelation, and the doxology of 5:12 representatively, provide substantive and practical insight for a church that

14. Revelation is not primarily the story of the Beast and his short-lived rule but is the story of how Christ methodically and triumphantly dismantles the present order (chapters 6-18) before returning as Sovereign King to rule the world and eventually replace it with a new Heaven and earth. The first horseman riding a white horse is not the Antichrist but is Christ Himself, commissioned and sent forth by God to judge and conquer the kingdoms of earth.

desires to worship God genuinely, confidently, even enthusiastically, knowing how it is done in Heaven around God's throne.

EXPOSITION

The throne-room vision in the fourth and fifth chapters of the book of Revelation marks a tremendous demarcation within its structure. Just as John's first great vision (the risen Christ in 1:12-20) served to authorize the messages to the churches of Asia Minor, the drama enacted around God's throne in 4:1-5:14 portrays how Christ is commissioned for future mission in chapters 6-22. The throne-room vision serves as a hinge connecting the church on earth (chapters 2, 3) with her eschatological (chapters 6-20) and Heavenly future (chapters 21, 22). This effectively puts past, present, and future history under the control of Christ. Chapters 1-3 are past history with abiding principles, whereas chapters 6-19 survey events within what many recognize as a literal seven-year period of tribulation that brings an end to the present age and climaxes with the Second Coming of Christ in power and great glory. The final three chapters of Revelation (20-22) have to do with the millennial reign of Christ on earth before transitioning into eternity proper—or alternatively, according to one's millennial perspective, the chapters may look directly into eternity.

As noted earlier, it would be impossible to fully appreciate the doxology in 5:12 apart from the vision's setting around God's throne in Heaven and in relation to its introductory function for subsequent events described in the remainder of the book. The vision in 4:1-5:14 is punctuated by a number of doxologies: 4:8; 4:11; 5:9-10; 5:12; and 5:13. See also 7:12; 11:15-19; 15:3-4; 19:1-8. Those in chapter 4 are offered by the host of Heaven to God as the Creator for having created all things. Those in chapter 5 are offered to Jesus the Redeemer Lamb for having redeemed creation by His sacrificial death.¹⁵ Remarkably, God the Father and Jesus the Lamb remain in this tandem association for the remainder of the book and, in fact, throughout eternity (see 21:22-23; 22:1-3). The fact that the same doxologies are offered to God ("the one sitting on the throne" in chapter 4) and then equally to the Lamb, with identical doxological ascriptions and worship postures, demonstrates the essential equality of both God and the Lamb and thereby becomes a powerful panegyric¹⁶ of

15. The gospel is defined by the Apostle Paul as the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

16. James Moffat, *The Expositor's Greek New Testament*, vol. 5, ed. Robert Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 387.

the deity of Christ. Jesus, the slain and risen Lamb of God, is worthy (Greek *axios*)¹⁷ to be worshipped because He is *both* our Redeemer and our God.¹⁸

As God, Jesus has always been worthy of worship and has always possessed intrinsically what He is now portrayed in the doxology as being worthy to receive. But deity, although implicit, is not the precise focus of the doxology in 5:12. Mounce rightly says, "The worthiness of the Lamb does not at this point stem from His essential being, but from His great act of redemption."¹⁹ He goes on to say, "He is worthy precisely because He was slain."²⁰ He "has been slain" is more literal (the verb is a perfect passive participle), indicating that this stands accomplished. The finished performance of Christ in redemptive history is obviously in view. The sacrificial death of Christ and its eternally abiding significance are hereby ensconced forever in the Heavenly liturgy! God's family in Heaven will always relate to God and Christ in this way. (Compare the references to God and the Lamb together in 7:9-17; 21:22; 22:1-5.)

The doxologies of chapter five, however, greatly expand the vocabulary and chronological scope of the Lamb's worship beyond the core gospel events described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 that have already occurred in past history. As already indicated, the doxologies of chapter 5 *commission* the Lamb of God for a continuing *mission* which also merits the praise of those in Heaven and is thus an integral pillar in any complete definition seeking to incorporate every facet of the glory of God. The future mission of Christ²¹ requires someone endowed with such attributes as are listed in the doxology to be able to execute such a supernatural calendar.

17. Lit. "bringing up the other beam of the scales," "equivalent," "of equal value." *Analytical Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (hereafter *AGLNT*), eds. Friberg, Friberg, and Miller (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 60.

18. "The universal approbation of the Lamb seems strange at this juncture, when the force of wrath is about to burst upon a recalcitrant universe. It is as though there is a moment of recognition, short-lived yet full of insight. The Lamb is now added to the name of the one who sits upon the throne, an acknowledgement of the Lamb's status (cf. 11:14; Phil. 2:10)." Christopher C. Rowland, *The New Interpreters Bible*, vol. 12 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 605.

19. Robert H. Mounce, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Book of Revelation*, eds. N. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, G. D. Fee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, rev. 1998), 135.

20. *Ibid.*

21. This mission includes executing the catastrophes (seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments) that dismantle the present order of things at Christ's Second Coming, His victory at Armageddon, His millennial reign, the judgments, re-creation, and eternal rule.

The defining moment within the larger vision is the welcome realization by a traumatized apostle that someone has indeed been found worthy to take the scroll from God's hand and execute its contents (5:1-10). This is a mission only Christ can do. But the doxology of 5:12 is not simply about the performance of Christ historically in the original gospel events (i.e., His death, burial, and resurrection) or about His essential being as deity even though it is consistent to view it as such. The flow of narration within the vision unit of chapters 4 and 5, and within the larger context of Revelation's entire structure, is moving toward His role as Conquering King in the eschatological future. Aune suggests that the doxological drama is the equivalent of "royal investiture."²² He says, "Though the Lamb has already been exalted to the throne of God and shares His rule, God's plan remains incomplete unless the Lamb, the only qualified emissary of God, receives full power and authority (symbolized by the scroll) to achieve the final eschatological victory."²³ Simply put, Jesus should be worshipped not only for His act of redemption on the cross in past history but for His future role as Conquering King at His Second Coming.

The vast angelic choir in 5:12 (lit. "myriads of myriads," 5:11)²⁴ recites seven vital mission prerequisites in a single doxology to the Lamb. The scene, intentionally didactic or not, nevertheless appears to be a static model or snapshot (a still frame) of Heavenly worship. The practical significance of this for our worship may be that the epithet "as it is in Heaven" in Matthew 6:10 justifiably links those who worship God in Heaven (in the throne-room model) to those who worship God on earth (in the church) in terms of substance if not style. For example, the Heavenly behavior of prostration or bowing in worship²⁵ before God's

22. Aune, 336.

23. Aune, 374. The doxologies may be viewed as a rebuttal to the imperial cult and pagan idol worship. David A. deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods, and Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 914-915, suggests that the doxological activities of honoring God and the Lamb, "redraw the center" and "God and the Lamb, not the beast, occupy center stage."

24. Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, in the *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 262, and Craig S. Keener, *The NIV Application Commentary: Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 189, agree that "myriad" is the highest or greatest number in the Greco-Roman world. It is thus likely an expression with the sense of "innumerable."

25. Aune, 365, suggests that such actions (i.e. standing when kings are seated, bowing, and prostration) are "gestures symbolizing subordination." On this basis they are not out of place or antiquated in modern worship. "Worship" (Greek *proskuneō*) lit. means to "bow down to kiss someone's feet, garment hem, or the ground in front of him," *ALGNT*, 60.

throne is common to the twenty-four elders who represent the redeemed and is an example of style or physical mannerism no doubt connoting humility. So is the practice of corporate chanting or singing recitations for both men and angels. Such public or private worship mannerisms or mechanics in vogue today are consistent with the Heavenly model and illustrate a linkage of style that already exists between Heavenly and earthly worship on the part of many. The fact that John's throne-room visions are proleptic²⁶ (visions of what happens in the future) argues that there is nothing antiquated about singing, reciting doxologies, bowing or kneeling in prayer (from Heaven's point of view) and should not be viewed as ancient relics by those who lead modern worship services. This is akin to how they are doing it now in Heaven and will be doing it in these ways throughout eternity. Furthermore, Heaven's worshippers do what they do unanimously, simultaneously, consistently, and enthusiastically. These things relate to style and have their own value.

Nonetheless, the seven attributes cited in the doxology of 5:12²⁷ provide the content or substance of Heavenly worship. They are *power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing*, and are ascribed to the Lamb of God as an expression of worship by the angelic host. The worthiness of Christ to receive these ascriptions may be understood in a number of ways. The first and most basic of all is that Jesus already *intrinsically* possesses them by virtue of His deity—which is a theological deduction on our part. Prior possession could create a question of apparent redundancy or mystery from a purely rational perspective. After all, how does one give something to someone who already possesses everything?²⁸ It is true that Jesus has always owned these things; but although this is apparent, this aspect does not seem to be prominent.

A second exegetical consideration, based in 5:12, reflects the clear reference to His sacrificial death in "having been slain" (5:12). This perspective may be considered as a part of the *historical* component in doxology since it clearly points to the redemptive work of Christ on the cross. Jesus clearly *merited* these honors as the Lamb of God when He was slain on the cross and acceded to them at His ascension to the throne. This sense is undeniable and, coupled with the use of the perfect participle, suggests that the cross of Christ is always in view on the part of those who worship Him. However, from a contextual standpoint and taking

26. A future event described as if it were happening presently.

27. On this hymn see Aune's comment in note 13.

28. See "intrinsic qualities," in Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary*, ed. K. Barker (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 407.

the entire vision into account, limiting doxology to the redemptive death of Christ would unnecessarily truncate the fullness of God's glory and create an unbalanced doxology because it ignores the role of the Lamb of God in eschatological and eternal glory.

There are at least two other perspectives that should also be included within the scope of an exhaustive definition or concept of doxology.²⁹ First, it is obvious that the Lamb of God will certainly employ these doxological virtues *eschatologically* in His continuing mission. Second, there is the *ecclesiastical* expression whereby God's glory is presently displayed to the world of men through the character and behavior of believers (Matt. 5:13-16) and by offering literal praise in a worship service (see 1 Chronicles 29:10-15).

Power

There are several words for "power" in the Greek New Testament. The fact that two of them are used in the doxology illustrates the importance of identifying the precise nuance.³⁰ In this case the shade of meaning is important in view of the fact that it is hard to distinguish between the abstractions of "power" and "strength" in English. Three common words may be translated as "power." They are *exousia*, *dunamis*, and *ischus*. Knowing which word for power is being used observes the distinctions and preserves the writer's intended nuance in our doxology in 5:12. Admittedly, an attempt to retrieve which particular nuance is in view is somewhat problematic because the dictionaries tend to define them in similar ways and because of their colloquial interchangeability.

The first of these "power" words (Greek *exousia*) carries a sense of "the legal authority or right to do something," as in Matthew 28:18 or John 1:12. This term is not used in 5:12. The second, *dunamis*, may carry the sense of "ability or capacity,"³¹ and, if this latency is in view here, it would serve to distinguish the first two words in 5:12. Walter Grundmann observes, "Words deriving from the stem *duna-* all have the basic meaning of 'being able,' of 'capacity' in virtue of an ability, the stress falls on

29. Defining the glory of God as "the sum total of everything God is (in His being) and everything He does (in creation and redemption)" must include His eschatological activity and the glories of the eternal age to come.

30. One might compare the importance of distinguishing between the several words translated *love*.

31. ALGNT, 121; Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendriksen, 1999), 159; W.E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: Nelson, 1996), 478, 479.

being able."³² Contextually in 5:12, this may refer to an ability or power given but not yet used (latent), but certainly present to be used on demand. It would then be much like a gifted athlete waiting on the sidelines before actually stepping onto the field to use his powers.

This power the Lamb already possesses by virtue of His identity as deity. And it is a power received as a part of the investiture for future mission, symbolized by taking the scroll from God's hand earlier in chapter 5. But, it is a power that has yet to be used by the Lamb in actuality, pending its literal application in chapters 6-19 and beyond. The *dunamis* nuance then may be conceived of as an intrinsic power available on demand or as a latent power not yet fully applied. (Jesus had the ability to come down from the cross but He did not use it.) This would also fit well with the idea of viewing 5:12 as "royal investiture" or equipping the Lamb for His eschatological mission which is on the cusp but still pending in chapter 5.

The third power word, *ischus*, may refer to "raw physical strength" rather than authority or ability. The second, *dunamis*, is the first word in the doxology of 5:12, *ischus* the fourth attribute translated as "strength" and probably referring to the actual physical application of the Lamb's power (*dunamis*) in the subsequent events of tribulation week. The fact that *exousia* is not cited here in the doxology, as one of the Lamb's virtues, is not significant. The transfer of legal authority (*exousia*) from God to Christ is certainly implied when the Lamb takes the scroll from the hand of "the One sitting on the throne" (vv. 1-7).

Jesus, our Redeemer, is worthy to receive "power" (Greek *dunamis*, with the nuance of "latent ability or capacity") from God (symbolized by taking the scroll from God's hand in 5:1-7) and the worship of Heaven's host in light of His past, present, and future performances in redemptive history. Consider (1) the use of this power in creating and redeeming this world, (2) the present principle of *power-sharing* with each generation of believers, and (3) the necessary use of such throughout the Tribulation period and at His Second Coming, by which His rule and identity as the risen Lamb become permanent.

Riches

"Riches" (Greek *ploutos*), the second attribute in the doxology, may refer to either material or spiritual wealth. Material riches, understood as

32. Walter Grundman (article on *dunamis* and related words), in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 284.

money or things, “an abundance of earthly possessions of every kind,”³³ are not evil but are often antagonistic or counter-productive to spiritual riches (Mt. 13:22; 19:24; Lk. 16:13-14; 1 Tim. 6:6-10). It is certainly possible to be rich in both ways. Abraham, Job, and Barnabas are Scriptural examples. However, personal spiritual wealth is of far greater value since it is often philanthropic and eternal. The wealth of this world may be used for God but does not transfer literally into eternity like Heavenly treasure does. The stories of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 and the rich fool in Luke 12:13-21 also illustrate the contrast. The Risen Christ commends the church at Smyrna for being spiritually rich even though poor materially (2:9). He criticizes the church at Laodicea for being rich materially but not spiritually (3:17, 18). In reality they were “poor.” The material riches of Babylon the Great are completely destroyed by God in Revelation 18. And of course, even the literal material world fails to transfer into eternity proper, undergoing a radical transformation by fire (1 Cor. 3:13-15; 2 Pet. 3:7, 10-13). Therefore, believers are admonished to lay up enduring treasure in Heaven where it does not disappear through decay, theft, poor investment decisions, or eschatological judgment.

Jesus the Lamb is worthy to receive *riches* for more than one reason. (1) He *created* them. All the universe’s raw materials were created by Him and for Him (1 Chron. 29:10-18; Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-20; Eph. 3:8). (2) He is identified as *King* of kings. The three wise men were moved to seek and honor Him with their wealth (Mt. 2:11). (3) In His *continuing* mission He continues to use resources to build the church presently (locally and spiritually conceived). It may be implied that He uses some form of them for Heavenly construction projects as in John 14:3 and for the New Jerusalem and the new Heaven and earth in Revelation 21 and 22. (One may compare the examples of how God’s people contributed to Old Testament tabernacle and temple building projects.) (4) His *present pledge* in Philippians 4:19 is for the ongoing distribution of wealth to meet believers’ needs in the present age. (5) He has a *plan to share* His wealth in rewards for His people both millennially and eternally (Mt. 5:5). (6) He provided His *personal example* of *kenosis* (self-emptying) for our benefit (Phil. 2:7; 2 Cor. 8:9).

Consider the three wise men (Matt. 2:1-11), the little boy and his small lunch (Jn. 6:9), Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (Jn. 19:38-42), the “women of means” who helped support Jesus (Matt. 27:55), Mary and her broken alabaster box (Lk. 7:37), or Barnabas’s example in the early

33. ALGNT, 318.

church (Acts 4:34-37). All of these offered their material resources to Christ. (Cf. Ex. 35:20-29; 1 Chron. 29:10-20.)

Wisdom

“Wisdom” (Greek *sophia*) is the third endowment in 5:12. Jesus is the very personification of wisdom. The Apostle Paul suggests that Christ is the source of wisdom in Colossians 2:2-3. This wisdom was used in creating the world. It was manifested by the marvelous words Jesus used when preaching to the multitudes, instructing His disciples, and even in rebuking or answering His enemies. This wisdom is codified in the Bible and is dispensed particularly to those who ask for it in prayer (Jas. 1:5). The Lamb will undoubtedly use wisdom to execute His future eschatological mission when He dismantles the present physical universe and world systems, in returning to conquer and judge anti-Christian humanity at His Second Coming, to administer His righteous government in the millennial period, and throughout His eternal rule as the Lamb of God.

The Lamb’s wisdom qualifies Him for His several roles. (1) *Creator*. Wisdom was there in Genesis 1:1 as the ability to put the raw materials of creation into meaningful form (Psalm 136:5). (2) *Counselor* (Isaiah 9:6a). God has counseled mankind in Scripture from Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 onward, revealing His desire to relate to us in this way. Solomon prayed for wisdom in order to govern God’s people wisely and was so rewarded by Him. Jesus attributed wisdom to Himself in saying, “One greater than Solomon is here” (Matt. 12:42). As the fountain of absolute wisdom, through the Spirit and Word, Christ is able to counsel believers on a daily basis. Christ’s wisdom is always available for helping to govern the particulars of our personal lives in problem-solving ways (Col. 2:3; Jas. 1:5; 2 Tim. 3:15-17). (3) *Conqueror*. One day the risen Lamb will return to earth as Conquering King to rule by His wisdom forever! This future conquest, including the eventual creation of a new Heaven and earth, requires wisdom to finish the mission.

Strength

The word translated “strength” (Greek *ischus*) is the fourth attribute and may be defined as “strength, power, might.”³⁴ As already indicated, the seven-fold doxology began with the word “power” (*dunamis*) meaning “ability or capacity.” Every individual believer has been *gifted by grace* in this way (*dunamis* power) by the indwelling Holy Spirit. *Dunamis*

34. ALGNT, 207.

power is latent power—an endowment of power (capacity or ability) that is waiting to be used. It is perhaps helpful, then, to view “strength” (Greek *ischus*) as the actual application of power at the point of need. This strength is demonstrated when latent power (*dunamis*) is actually used.

The LXX uses this particular power word (*ischus*) to translate the Hebrew word for power in Exodus 14:31: “When the Israelites saw *the great power* of God,” and in Numbers 14:13: “By your *might* you brought these people up.” This sense of raw physical strength is in view in the case of Samson and Delilah in Judges 16:5 as “the secret of his *great strength*.” It is used in reference to how Jesus is able to “bind the *strong man*” of this world (the Devil).

Jesus’ physical strength is greater than the world, the flesh, or the Devil in every way. This was demonstrated by His victory over Satan in the wilderness temptations (Matt. 4), by various miracles performed repeatedly throughout His earthly ministry, in His death on the cross, and ultimately through His glorious resurrection. There are other Biblical displays of His raw strength—over the demoniac of Gadara in Mark 5, for example, or versus the evil powers of Colossians 2:15, and over the dragon (Devil) in Revelation 12. The most visible display of this power occurs eschatologically throughout the tribulation period, climaxing with the Second Coming when Christ appears in great power and glory—an event visible to the entire world (Rev. 1:7). The magnitude of this yet future display of strength is unprecedented in terms of its world-wide scope and permanent effects.

Recognizing the legitimacy of one’s adoption into God’s family through the grace of God in Christ (*exousia*) and being aware of one’s spiritual giftedness (*dunamis* as new-found capacity or ability through the Holy Spirit), a believer may confidently begin using his or her strength (*ischus*) to do something for Christ. For the sake of distinguishing the power words pragmatically, it is helpful to think of “strength” as power in action or maximum effort. The word *ischus* is used in Philippians 4:13 for “I can do”; in Ephesians 6:10 as “the power of His *might*”; in Heb. 11:34 as “weakness turned to strength ... became powerful (*ischus*) in battle and routed foreign armies”; in James 5:16 and Mark 14:37-38 as the strength that comes by prayer in “the prayer of a righteous man is very *strong*” (lit.). Mark 12:28-33 exhorts to “love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and *strength* (*ischus*).” These help illustrate the nuance for the power word “strength” (Greek *ischus*).

Honor

“Honor” (Greek *timē*), the fifth attribute in the doxology of Revelation 5:12, may be defined as “the recognition of another’s worth” or “honor, reverence, or respect.”³⁵ The Lamb already possesses honor because of His own character as deity. It is also due Him based on His performance or identity as our Redeemer in past history when He died on the cross (“having been slain”). The wise men came to honor and worship Christ with their material resources because they knew that Jesus was born as a “king,” a person to be honored because of His *position* or identity without specific reference to His redemptive mission. They honored Him by making such a strenuous journey, by bravely refusing to cooperate with Herod, and by offering their material treasures to Him, realizing by a holy wisdom from above that this was no ordinary king. They bowed down to Him, and worshipped Him, and presented their gifts to Him (Mt. 2:11).

The honor due Jesus is also *performance* oriented. Historically, the president of the United States of America has recognized individuals’ heroic military bravery or special civic achievement with the Congressional Medal of Honor or other medals. Such medals are typically based on an individual’s unusual feat of valor and self-sacrifice on behalf of others, a good example of honor bestowed primarily for behavior or performance rather than position or rank. Not everyone can be a king or general but anyone can be a hero, and there have been many such. Jesus deserves honor in both ways: because He is a king and also because of His heroic self-sacrifice on behalf of the redeemed. Every believer should honor Christ for His position as the King of kings and for His redemptive achievements as the Lamb of God.

One simply cannot remain passive about Christ in view of His identity as deity, His past performance in redemption, or His continuing mission in Revelation. True honor was exemplified by the extraordinary effort of the wise men in coming to Christ, in protecting Him, and in offering Him their very best. We may also honor Him with our lips by publically confessing Christ to others and by reciting Scriptural doxologies in a worship service. There is no reason why the doxology of 5:12 cannot be used literally for recitation or confession as a doxology in a worship service. Additionally, the highest form of praise or worship may indeed be when we offer ourselves to Christ in response to His identity

35. *ALGNT*, 380. Aune, 365, says that the Greek *timē* “denotes the honor, respect, and status that a person enjoys when his position, wealth, and office are appropriately recognized in the community to which he belongs.”

as King, in gratitude for His redemption, and in order to assist Him in His mission.

Glory

The term “doxology,” containing the word “glory” (Greek *doxa*), is an appropriate term, whether referring to reciting a simple doxology in public worship³⁶ or to the study of worship more broadly conceived as an academic discipline itself. Both senses relate to giving glory to God, which is at the very core of worship. There are five doxologies in chapters 4 and 5 of Revelation alone (4:8; 4:11; 5:9-10; 5:12; 5:13). They are offered to God as our Creator in chapter 4. Those in chapter 5 are offered to Christ, the risen Lamb of God. These Heavenly expressions of doxology are sung or recited by those around God’s throne in an orderly, observable style (by their physical mannerisms) and with consistent verbal substance (expressing the attributes in 5:12 and others).

“Glory” (Greek *doxa*) is stronger than “honor” (Greek *timē*, above). Although both are similar in a colloquial way, the difference is significant. Glory belongs to God, not man, which is a vigorously guarded distinction within Scripture. There are a number of components to God’s glory. By definition, “glory” is literally “a manifestation of light-radiance, brightness, splendor, excellent majesty—a state characterized by honor, power, and remarkable appearance, glory, or splendor.”³⁷ This relates to a sensory component of glory and may be difficult to quantify or predict with respect to its effect on an individual. Nevertheless, it is most definitely present and significant.³⁸ The angels heralded Christ’s birth to the shepherds in a significant display of visual glory (Lk. 2:8-20). The life of Christ was filled with such glory through miracles like the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8). The Second Coming of Christ will take place with an unprecedented visual display of God’s power and glory (Mt. 24:30; 2 Thess. 1:7-10; 2:8; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 1:7; 19:11-16). Consider also the array of colors (red, green, and white) around God’s throne in chapter 4 as a visual expression of His glory, or the gargantuan prismatic effect of the colors radiating within the New Jerusalem that defy present categories of imagination (because of its incredible mathematical dimensions and infinitely bright light sources in the persons of God and the Lamb).

36. Compare the popular Doxology, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below, Praise Him above, ye Heavenly host, Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

37. *ALGNT*, 119-120.

38. As was the *shekinah* glory in the O.T. Temple, a visible glory.

More fundamental to God's glory than its visual splendor is the part that relates to His essential being and activity. Commonly expressed, God's glory may be conceived as "*everything He is and everything He does*" (i.e., His character or attributes *and* His works). More complicated definitions or categories of God's glory may be reasonably invested or expanded in one or the other of these two terms relating either to His essential being or His activity (works). As far as His works are concerned God's glory is discernible *cosmologically*—in the creation of the material universe (Psa. 19:1-6), *soteriologically*—in the redemption Christ achieved on the cross, *eschatologically*—in the consummation and re-creation of the world. It is also visible presently and *ecclesiastically* as the work of sanctification transforming believers' lives into holy behavior (Matt. 5:14-16; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Pet. 2:9).

Last, but not insignificant, is the *effect* of God's glory upon those who are exposed to it.³⁹ This relates to practical doxology. Manson says, "In order to worship two fundamental elements are needed: revelation, through which God shows himself to man, and response, through which awe-stricken man responds to God."⁴⁰ The stylistic or mechanical response of the worshipers in the throne-room vision is noted in the form of singing or reciting, bowing, and so on. The attributes cited in 5:12 express a verbal response to God's glory. The human or even angelic component of God's glory, then, includes the worshipful *response* of men or angels to God when His glory touches them in some subjective way. Doxology includes a worshipful, sanctified response to the glory of God.

The glory of God in John's vision (Revelation 4 and 5), including the doxology in particular, helps put a handle on what often proves to be an elusive and difficult thing: that is, to define God's glory succinctly or, pragmatically, to feel that we understand how to worship. God's glory is a totality, and its effect on humanity may be neatly comprehended or summarized as His glory in *creation, redemption, consummation, and response*. This totality *is* doxology. Subjectively and pragmatically, as far as the worshipper is concerned, it may involve helpful definitions, recognition of identities, subjective feelings, academic substance, and worshipful response to one or more of these.

One may stand at a distance looking at John's vision in Revelation 4 and 5 as a whole and come away awestruck by the visual splendor,

39. Moses' face literally glowed after leaving God's presence on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 34:29-30), a phenomenon that Paul links directly to *glory* (2 Cor. 3:7), albeit the temporary glory of the Mosaic Law.

40. Manson, 730.

sounds, and majesty of the whole thing or, more important, by the one sitting on the throne and the Lamb. All of it forms a portrait of the glory that John saw and recorded for us.

Some elements are more basic than others. We move beyond being awestruck to actually doing something. We adequately respond to glory by giving glory, that is, by returning praise or blessing to the "one sitting on the throne" and to the risen Lamb even as the host of Heaven demonstrated for us. This may help worshipers and churches in measuring whether real worship has happened.

Blessing

"Blessing" (Greek noun *eulogia*) in verb form is literally "to speak well."⁴¹ The noun may be translated as "good or fine speech, praise," "invoking God's favor on other persons," "favor, benefit bestowed by God or people," "things on which God's blessing has been pronounced, consecrated," "giving thanks," "a word invested with power and an action ratifying it," "to grant prosperity or well-being, bestowing physical and spiritual grace upon men in the form of long life, affluence, and power," or "actual words spoken, the gift given, or the act by which it is bestowed." The ideas popularly understood as "praise" or "blessing" seem adequate. Osborne says, "In the Old Testament and the Judaism of Jesus' day, praise was the primary form of worship, as the congregation returned to God the 'blessings' He had poured into their lives."⁴² He also observes, "The basic form of all Jewish benedictions began, 'Blessed be thou, O Lord'."⁴³ A Scriptural doxology assists us in praising or "returning to God" our blessings.

CONCLUDING DOXOLOGICAL CHALLENGE

The throne-room visions within the Book of Revelation and their doxologies open a significant window of insight into how worship is done in Heaven. Those in Revelation are consistent with the data of other throne-room visions in Scripture such as those found in the books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. They also move forward in time and expand significantly in size, subjects, and verbal substance. Consequently, they are not exact duplicates of Old Testament visions of God and other doxologies, but neither do they conflict with them. They are certainly consistent and

41. Vine, 69-70; *ALGNT*, 179; Thayer, 259-260. Cf. "paraenetic blessing" which is responding to one's enemies by blessing them (Lk. 6:27; Rom. 12:14; 1 Pet. 3:9).

42. Osborne, 264.

43. *Ibid.*

similar with those given earlier, but those given to John are more complete, as seen by comparing the glorified Christ in Revelation 1:12-20 and the throne of God in 4:1-11 with visions given to other prophets earlier. The most significant difference is the appearance of the Lamb with God together in the throne-room. In terms of progression in the Biblical record as a whole, the throne of God is hereafter identified as “the throne of God and the Lamb” (21:22-27; 22:1-3). Worship in Heaven throughout eternity will carry this *Christocentric* (Christ-centered) tone because of the Lamb’s permanent association with the throne of God.⁴⁴

It seems logical to suggest that the present worship of the church should reflect something of the worship of Heaven, with some aspects of both style and substance (vocabulary).⁴⁵ We are not left to grope in doxological darkness or design our worship services in ways that leave us wondering whether worship has happened. Rather, we are enlightened by the Heavenly standard and seek thereby to incorporate Heavenly components in both time-honored and fresh new ways.

Therefore, I submit that the more nearly the Heavenly reality is understood and the closer one moves toward the doxological activity around the throne of God, the more authentic and authoritative worship becomes in God’s sight. One’s style or substance in worship should reflect foremost elements of the Heavenly rather than forms that are simply popular, homespun, or eclectic masquerading under a cloak of pseudo-piety.⁴⁶ The throne-room variety is worship as God wants it to be.

It seems that people may not simply “worship as they please” by an appeal to the enigmatic standard of “as the Spirit leads”—unless of course this means doing it “as it is in Heaven,” as they do it around God’s throne. The Holy Spirit is in fact present at God’s throne (4:5b) and is certainly aware of throne-room protocol.⁴⁷ We should worship God the way

44. By comparison, the Holy Spirit is always present at God’s throne but is never worshipped.

45. Beale, 312, sees the Heavenly model in Revelation 4 and 5 as “a pattern for the church’s liturgy.”

46. The greatest “worship service” on earth occurred while Moses was meeting with God on Mt. Sinai. There was a lot of noise, enthusiasm, and mechanical worship, but God was not even there! (See Ex. 32:1-9.)

47. Worship will no doubt exist to some extent throughout the new Heavens and earth wherever men and angels may roam. But it will always be centralized at the throne of God and the Lamb wherever these happen to be positioned in the final disposition of things. (See Rev. 22:1-2 and note Jereboam’s sin of establishing alternative places of worship in Dan and Bethel that resulted in Israel’s destruction. One may compare modern believers who seek to by-pass corporate worship services, i.e. worshipping in places and ways other than with a legitimate, local church.)

He wants to be worshipped. The throne-room visions and doxologies of Scripture portray Heavenly worship and provide stability in both style and substance. In so doing, a paradigm of worship components is always in view.

The doxologies of the Bible are rarely consulted or allowed to inform worship. For many they are nothing more than obscure lists noticed in passing when the Bible is read or in the lyrics of a piece of music. This should be corrected by exploring doxological attributes specifically such as the seven in 5:12 or those in 7:12 (another list of seven). Doxology or worship is only perfected when a worshiper's recognition of the glories of God leads him to praise. This praise will be (1) theological, for those attributes which are intrinsic to God, (2) cosmological, for His glory displayed in creation, (3) soteriological, for those ascriptions merited by Christ as our Redeemer, (4) eschatological, for their future utility and display by Christ, and (5) ecclesiastical, for those experienced by persons in the church whose transformed lives reflect the glory of God within the church and to the world of men (Matt. 5:13-16). This is the glory of giving back to God what He has first given to us—be it our love, our abilities or gifts, our minds, or even our material wealth (1 Chronicles 29:10-20).

Doxology is an act of worship by those who have experienced the glory of God personally (experiential or soteriological) or who have witnessed God's glory visibly in the works of creation or in the holiness (progressive sanctification) and good works of others. They may choose to affirm this reality and its subjective experience in their soul by a vocal response of singing, praying, reciting, and even exhorting others. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Psalm 107:2).

The literal doxologies, such as the one in 5:12 or the one in 7:12, are convenient vehicles or instruments to use in private meditation or corporate worship in order to accomplish this. On a private or personal level they work particularly well when the specific vocabulary of the doxologies (the seven attributes) are committed to memory, facilitating meditation, additional reflection, and spontaneous use in private worship or prayer if so moved in one's spirit. In terms of corporate application for the church, worship-leaders, Bible-study leaders, or pastors may devote an extended study or sermon series treating each doxological attribute specifically or, more ambitiously, all the doxologies in a given book such as those found in the Book of Revelation.

Finally, doxology becomes much more than mere vocal ascription or recitation of things about Christ that are commonly regarded as Biblical

and true. As everyone is aware, church liturgy often degenerates to “going through the motions.” A meaningful doxology goes beyond a simple recitation of things or shallow mental assent that something is true. It engages the heart and life of the worshipper to the degree that there is genuine, internal intention to offer the individual elements to Christ in a personal, heartfelt way. A mature doxology, based on the model of 5:12, not only affirms Christ’s rightful possession of these attributes—in light of what He has done historically in creation and redemption, of recognizing who He is and what He does presently as the Head of the church, in His exalted position and intercession before the Father’s throne, and in terms of our understanding His future mission from an eschatological perspective—but it is crowned complete by the offering of one’s self and service to Christ.

Doxology is giving our *personal* power, riches, mind, strength, honor, glory, and blessing to God and to Christ. Such worship or surrender, in the doing, brings Christ even more glory and is perhaps the highest human expression of doxology and the one that eternally fascinates the angels of Heaven.

HILLSDALE

Established in 1959

Changing the World One Life at a Time

*And He said unto them, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."
Mark 16:15*



Your Gift Equips Men and Women to Make a Difference

www.hc.edu

James Arminius and Natural Law

In recent years the Natural Law tradition has become increasingly popular among those Protestants who have rightly disregarded its unfortunate “Roman” stereotype to find a fundamental philosophical starting point not directly tied to any religious identity, yet consistently pointing to a transcendent explanation for all moral philosophy. Calvinist theologian Stephen Grabill has noted that since 1990 “Protestant theologians, historians, and ethicists have become increasingly more interested in the natural-law tradition as a resource for discussing moral issues in the often hostile and religiously pluralistic environment of the public square.”¹ This breakthrough among Evangelicals is due to a realization that Natural Law is indeed an entirely Christian doctrine set out in Scripture and bolstered throughout Christian thought of the last several centuries despite what some of its more popular antagonists have argued.²

Natural Law is a very misunderstood concept, especially among those whose relativist tendencies lean toward a modern distrust in claims of universal truth. Surface interpretations of the terms “natural” and “law” have led some to dispose of it prematurely and unjustifiably, wrongly mistaking it for naturalism or some other type of impulse-based ethics. Grabill understands natural law to be “the foundational principles of morality that are not only right for all, but are on some level known to all.”³ J. Budziszewski also says that natural law “takes in both the foundational moral principles and their first few rings of implications, whether known to reason through the conscience or through some other means.”⁴ Leroy Forlines, a classical Arminian theologian, understands the Romans 2:15 claim of a “law written on the heart of man” to be based in the fact that persons are created in the image of God, which involves both

1. Stephen Grabill, *Rediscovering Natural Law in Reformed Theological Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 6.

2. It is thought that Karl Barth, in his debates with Emil Brunner, put the proverbial “nail in the coffin” concerning the Natural Law Theory’s place in the Evangelical theological context.

3. Stephen Grabill, lecture given June 14, 2007, at the Acton Institute, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

4. J. Budziszewski, *What We Can’t Not Know* (Dallas: Spence Publishing, 2003), 13.

a rational and moral likeness.⁵ “Even in his fallen state, man still has the categories of right and wrong ... which he has by the design of creation.”⁶

The natural law is simply the moral order in which all humans participate and to some extent acknowledge. For many Christians, St. Paul’s remark in Romans 2:14-15 is an explicit acknowledgment of natural law and is taken to be the standard Scriptural definition: namely, that there is a moral law written on the hearts of humans by virtue of their participation in the image of God. This moral law implies that those who have not heard or learned the law of God in a formal sense are still accountable to God without excuse because His law is written on the conscience. Therefore, natural law is not a respecter of persons. Both regenerate and unregenerate persons can grasp some level of its truth without the aid of Scripture or Spirit.

That natural law speaks to the conscience of every human person allows for its usefulness across the entire human landscape. Many in the public square reject the authenticity and authority of the Scriptures but would not deny the power and persuasion of the inner conscience that delights in truth and loathes evil, and thus has the power to influence and direct the thoughts and behavior of persons. Natural law is what speaks to the inner conscience of all persons, implying a standard of universal ethics that is a moral order ontologically prior to positive human law.

Natural Law should be understood, first and foremost, as it is explained in the first two chapters of Romans: (1) it is that moral order given by the Creator by which the world has been set; (2) it is naturally known, to some extent, by rational beings, by simple virtue of their participation in humanity as well as a functioning conscience. Romans 2:14-15 especially supports this, pointing out that those who do not have knowledge even of written law still instinctively know some aspect of it and perform according to it because the work of the law has been written in their hearts. Thus, natural law has both a metaphysical and epistemological significance: its existence is manifested in the moral knowledge it communicates.

It should be noted, however, that Natural Law does not communicate the complete message of the gospel. God’s infinite wisdom has ordained the preaching of the written word as the means by which the gospel is spread throughout the world. From a practical standpoint, Budziszewski says it best, that the natural-law tradition is probably the most accurate

5. Leroy Forlines, *The Randall House Commentary: Romans* (Nashville: Randall House, 1987), 57.

6. *Ibid.*

approach in interpreting the meaning of Romans 2:14-15, but it is also true that “the law written on the heart is utterly inferior to the revealed truth of the gospel, for though it tells us what sin is, it tells us nothing of how to escape it.”⁷

Natural law is probably the least emphasized aspect of Arminius’s theology, which is not surprising considering its relatively sporadic appearances throughout his works. Nonetheless, Natural Law is often used by Arminius to support his arguments concerning the various theological topics he tackles. It is the intention of this essay to point out those different uses of Natural Law, specifically its metaphysical and epistemological role in Arminius’s theology and its contribution to his treatment concerning moral and ethical issues related to the human person. Finally, a brief look into Arminius’s treatise of Romans 7 reveals Natural Law as the key premise to his interpretation of it.

UNDERSTANDING LAW

Arminius first acknowledges Natural Law in his Public Disputation XII on the Law of God where he claims that law is to be understood as having two distinct forms. First, there is human law which refers to those statutes created by and for a specific legal community. Arminius mirrors the words of St. Thomas Aquinas three-hundred years earlier,⁸ almost plagiarizing the latter’s definition of law: “an ordinance of right reason for the common and particular good of all and of each of those who are subordinate to it, enacted by Him who has care of the whole community, and, in it, that of each individual.”⁹ Western legal tradition has come to define this kind of law as *positive* law since its existence is dependent upon its having been posited by a lawmaking authority.

Second, and more important to his discussion, Arminius recognizes the existence of divine law which is handed down from God. This form of law can be known by persons in either of three ways: “As it is impressed on the minds of men *by the ingrafted word*; (Ro. ii, 14, 15) – as it is enunciated *by words audibly pronounced*; (Gal. ii, 17) – or as it is com-

7. Budziszewski, J., *Written on the Heart* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1997), 11.

8. The actual formulation given by Aquinas is that law “is nothing else than a certain ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated” [ST I-II, Q. 90: Of the Essence of Law, Article 4].

9. II:196-7 [Quotations from Arminius are as they appear in the three volumes of *The Works of Arminius*, volumes I (1825) and II (1828) translated by James Nichols, volume III (1875) by William Nichols, originally published as the London Edition, having been re-published in 1986 by Baker Books, Grand Rapids].

prised *in writing* (Exod. xxxiv, 1).¹⁰ While each mode communicates the same law, or as Arminius puts it, “shares in an identical object,” the first serves as a kind of foundation. The other two simply define law’s “efficacy” because their form only goes as far as the ordinance or rule itself, “commanding what must be done, and what omitted”¹¹ in order to comply with law’s ends.

Arminius then divides the content of the written law into three spheres: (1) the moral law which he exclaims is the “Perpetual and Immutable Rule of living”¹² dealing with moral conduct concerning one’s self, (2) the ceremonial law which prescribes proper conduct in public worship,¹³ and (3) the judicial/political law which was given to Moses for the purpose of bringing about civil order among the children of Israel.¹⁴ Arminius directs our attention to the Holy Scriptures, which contain all three spheres, but notes that the judicial law specifically has a Natural Law element worth exploring.

According to Arminius, the judicial law was intended by God so that “*the whole community of the Children of Israel might be regulated by a certain rule of public equity and justice.*”¹⁵ This is obviously what was codified in what we know as the Decalogue. But Arminius also offers a second reason for the judicial law: “that this his people should have nothing in common with other nations, wherever this was possible according to the nature of things.”¹⁶ It is interesting to see how Arminius recognizes the exception here: God required His people to be distinct from the neighboring pagan nations, yet there was a universal Natural Law fundamentally in common between them. For Arminius the judicial law of the Decalogue was particular to the era in which it was given, pointing out that in contemporary times its exact adherence is neither prescribed nor forbidden. Rather, what is required is that certain universal laws are upheld.¹⁷ It was God’s intention that His people have nothing in common with other nations, only as far as nature allows, but, “those matters are excepted which are of universal obligation, and founded in natural equity: For it is necessary, that they be strictly observed, in every place, and by all persons.”¹⁸ Even though the various nations may have differences

10. II:197.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. II:200.

14. II:202.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. II:203.

with regard to the particular content of their posited laws and, more specifically, when even those are compared to the Decalogue of the Old Testament, Arminius argues that no differences exist concerning the Natural Law that applies to all people, regardless of jurisdiction or pedigree. It is the Natural Law or “natural equity” common to all persons that Arminius emphasizes.

In his public disputation on the subject of liberty,¹⁹ Arminius continues this discussion by referring to Christian liberty in the negative sense. Being in Christ means having been freed *from* something: from the guilt of sin, dominion of indwelling sin, the observance of Old Testament law for salvific purposes, the ceremonial law and the “judicial laws of the Jewish courts.”²⁰ This liberty “is that state of the fullness of grace and truth in which believers are placed by God through Christ, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit.”²¹ No longer must one secure salvation through bondage to an impossible set of judicial, ceremonial, and ecclesiastical codes. But Arminius plainly emphasizes that even though we are freed from this kind of legal bondage, there is a common or Natural Law to which Christian liberty does not apply.

Arminius argues that the political laws given in the Decalogue contain two types of law: “(1.) The political common law of nature [and] (2.) A particular law suited to the Jewish nation.”²² Christian liberty pertains only to the latter of these because it was given at a certain time and for a certain purpose relevant to that time. On the other hand, “the common law of nature embraces the universal notions of justice, equity and honesty.”²³ It is this “common law of nature” that is not particular to any time or place or people, not even to Judaism or Christendom solely, but to all people. It is this universal law to which Arminius argues our Christian liberty has no right or power to override: “Whatever has been appointed for the general good, according to the universal principles of nature and the common design of the moral law, either by commanding or forbidding, by rewarding or punishing, it is immutable: Therefore to such a thing Christian Liberty does not extend itself.”²⁴

The definition of Natural Law now takes a further step. Not only is it linked to general notions of justice, equity, and honesty, but Arminius implies that it is synonymous with the moral law, or at least he negates

19. II:258.

20. II:263.

21. II:259.

22. II:263.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*

their mutual exclusivity. We now have the making of a theory of theological ethics: that the moral law is the Natural Law (or at least, the moral law is communicated through the inner-rational-conscience, which in effect *is* the project of Natural Law) and that it is the way of right living binding on all humanity. Arminius claims that all nations have these universal principles in common, and our ethnicity, political allegiance, or even Christian liberty does not free us from the obligation to observe them.

Civil Government

In the public disputation “On Magistracy,”²⁵ Arminius goes on to argue that Natural Law allows the possibility for a well-organized, just society that is home to both regenerate and unregenerate alike. Since people desire to live socially and also desire a peaceful and orderly society, such a “magistracy” or organized political structure is not only essential but perfectly natural: “The object of this function is the multitude of mankind, who are sociable animals, and bound to each other by many ties of indigence and communication according to both nature and grace, and who live together in a common society.”²⁶

For Arminius, “magistracy” has two meanings. Abstractly, it concerns the power and function of governing. In the concrete it refers to the person(s)²⁷ to whom such administrative and ruling power is given.²⁸ For the purposes of this particular disputation, Arminius focuses on the abstract, defining magistracy as a “pre-eminent power” instituted and maintained by God for the purpose that persons might, within their respective society, “lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.”²⁹ Arminius also makes a point to mention that the magistracy is a “public authority” because it is concerned not only with the condition of society as a whole in a somewhat utilitarian sense, which is its principal concern, but also with the state of each individual within that society.³⁰

25. II:312.

26. II:313.

27. Arminius uses different terms regarding who has care of the magistracy whether prince, administrator, or public authority. He also states at a later point that the legitimacy of magistracy’s power remains constant whether a monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy (II:315). He obviously has in mind a monarchical rule, or at least is speaking from that perspective, under which he lived during the time of his writings. But he does not limit his discussion to that form solely.

28. II: 312.

29. Ibid.

30. II:313.

Arminius recognizes God as the “efficient cause” who institutes and maintains magistracy and has ultimate authority and dominion over all peoples in all societies. He points to God’s love as the integral factor for ordaining human authority, citing a combination of God’s love of order, His love of all persons, His love of obedience to His law, and His love of submission by those under subjection to an authority, even to a secular authority though they are equals by nature by their common humanness.³¹

Arminius makes a further point by which he directly appeals to Natural Law, that the “efficient cause” employs the ability of individuals to understand the necessity of an ordered society. This is so for two reasons. First, men have ambitions for power in their own right, which is evident in every tyranny across the world. Second, an individual society as its own entity can exercise great power; revolutions are very much a part of history. The potential for societal conflict is inevitable, but God through His wise providence has created the moral order in such a way that man’s recognition of the need for civil authority is “employed by God through an internal impression upon the hearts of men, of the necessity of this order.”³² This very thought correlates with something Aquinas had stated nearly three hundred years earlier: “Wherefore, just as in virtue of the divinely established natural order the lower natural things need to be subject to the movement of the higher, so too in human affairs, *in virtue of the order of natural and divine law*, inferiors are bound to obey their superiors.”³³

Concerning the “end” or purpose of magistracy, Arminius goes in a somewhat different direction, moving deeper into his metaphysical bias, revealing his own dualism that strictly distinguishes between the spiritual life and animal life of the human person while also remarking on their complementary natures. For Arminius, our material life as embodied beings is directed toward that which is spiritual even though it is subordinate to that which is spiritual.³⁴ If the material or embodied life were all that mattered, humans would simply be governed as “that of cattle.”³⁵ On the other hand, if persons lived in such a state where “spiritual life only

31. Ibid.

32. II:313-4.

33. *ST II-II*, Q. 104: Of Obedience. Art.1, “Is One Man Bound to Obey Another?” [emphasis mine].

34. II:314.

35. Ibid.

prevail[ed], then this power [of magistracy] [would] no longer [be] necessary."³⁶ But neither of these two options reflects reality.

To emphasize this point, Arminius states that it is unlawful to try to separate their co-superintendence from one another, either animal life from spiritual life or vice versa, by the power of a supreme authority.³⁷ Both are complementary and necessary to each other because man "stands in need of each kind of good, and by the nature of the image of God, capable of both kinds."³⁸

Arminius goes on to argue that the magistracy did not come into existence at the same time that sin entered the world, but is bound up in the nature of humanity itself. Until the time of the fall, there would have been no use of this power because "there were then only two human beings, both of whom comprised in one family."³⁹ Thus, Arminius argues that the origin of the magistracy is synonymous with God's initial design of humanity, having a place in the "primitive integrity of mankind."⁴⁰ In other words, provision for the magistracy is fundamentally a part of the *imago Dei*, having its origin prior to sin's introduction: "For, we think, this can be proved, —from the nature of man, who is a social animal, and was capable of deviating from his duty, —from the limits of this power, —from the causes which induced God to institute it, —from the natural and moral law itself, —and from the impression of this power on the hearts of men."⁴¹

In his concluding thoughts on the magistracy, Arminius offers encouragement to those who take the initiative to accept a civil office of leadership.⁴² He even states that no person is better suited to fulfill the role and responsibilities of the magistracy than a Christian, although this does not exclude the unregenerate from potential success. According to Arminius, "we do not mean to deny that a legitimate magistracy exists among other nations than those which are Christian."⁴³ Obviously, this conclusion follows the line his argument has been based upon, that the notion and pursuit of an ordered civil society is a part of Natural Law, fundamentally bound up with our participation in humanity.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. II:315.

40. Ibid.

41. II:315.

42. II:317.

43. Ibid.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Arminius's Theory of Knowledge

In the third oration given to his students at Leyden in 1603, Arminius argued for the certainty of theology.⁴⁴ Logically speaking, an argument is considered sound if and only if the reasons given for the particular conclusion are true. This raises a problem for Natural Law theory: if it is a universal truth, how is it possible to know this? Some have raised the question how a depraved mind, with its potential for error, can intuitively and instinctively apprehend the laws of the created moral order. Arminius actually gives us some insight towards an answer. He says, "Certainty, then, is a property of the mind or understanding, and a mode of knowledge according to which the mind knows an object as it is, and is certain that it knows that object as it is."⁴⁵

Certainty is described here as sure knowledge, a one-to-one correlation between subject and object, between the knower and the thing perceived. Arminius further writes that there are two essential conditions required to establish certainty: first, the thing perceived must actually be true; second, we must have such an apprehension of it in our minds as to leave no doubt.⁴⁶ Arminius even claims that apprehension and truth, "because of their admirable union, make a mutual transfer of their names, the one to the other" and are thus equivalent.⁴⁷

Arminius states that every bit of certain knowledge we have is perceived by at least one of the following means: the senses (certainty by experience), reasoning and discourse (certainty by knowledge), and revelation (certainty by faith, from the cognizance of both senses and reason).⁴⁸ Arminius also remarks concerning the human mind, "While it is engaged in the act of apprehending and knowing things, [it] cannot exceed the truth and necessity of the things themselves; on the contrary, it very often may, like a spent arrow, not reach them [the truth and necessity], through some defect in its capacity."⁴⁹

So Arminius concedes that it is possible for our minds to be unable to totally grasp certainty, which is not a deficiency of truth, but a defect of

44. Nichols, I:321, tells us that Arminius gave these orations as introductory lectures in divinity when he first became Chair at the University of Leyden in 1603. His purpose was to show his students that there was no other object of study and research superior to theology.

45. I:375.

46. *Ibid.*

47. *Ibid.*

48. I:377.

49. I:378.

the human mind to fully grasp truth. This is an important point because Arminius is making it clear that he does not believe the human mind is infallible, but rather admits of its own limits and shortcomings. Furthermore, Arminius says, "Revelation is therefore necessary by which God may exhibit himself and his Christ as an object of sight and knowledge to our understanding. ... Revelation is necessary, if it be true that God and his Christ ought to be known."⁵⁰

For Arminius, it is impossible to have knowledge of God and Christ apart from revelation. But in this particular argument, he fails to define the kind of revelation, except by commenting that nature, "as a partaker and communicator of a good that is only partial, is not deficient in the things that are necessary ... how much less ought we even to suspect a deficiency in God."⁵¹ The necessary truths nature reveals are assuredly true, even though they are incomplete. There must be a source for a more complete revelation or else there would have to be a deficiency in God Himself who by His very essence necessitates completion and perfection.⁵²

Disputation V (On the Rule of Religion, the Word of God, and the Scriptures in Particular)

In this particular disputation, Arminius defines and distinguishes between general and special revelation, or Natural Law and written Scripture. He argues that in order for the latter to make sense, the former is necessary.

The "ingrafted word" is that which has been implanted into men's minds in creation by what Arminius calls "superinfusion."⁵³ It is through the means of the ingrafted word that God has prescribed religion to man.⁵⁴ God has persuaded man through the ingrafted word that He is to be worshipped, that worship is pleasing to the one worshipped, and that worship consists in love of God as well as a love towards one's neighbor.⁵⁵ Arminius states, "This inward manifestation is the foundation of all external revelation."⁵⁶ Thus even though internal revelation is very important, it is simply the foundation and not the complete structure.

50. I:379.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. II:323.

54. II:323.

55. II:323.

56. Ibid.

The “outward word” is what Arminius refers to as that “infallible word of God in no other place than in the Scriptures” and also as “the instrument of religion.”⁵⁷ For Arminius, God has commissioned the outward word “that He may repeat what has been ingrafted, might call it to remembrance, and might urge its exercise” and also “that He might prescribe to him other things.”⁵⁸ It is the purpose of the Scriptures to define truth more completely as well as to describe what man’s obligation in obedience to God consists of.

Arminius admits that in the case of prescribing other things, the written Word does not in any way contradict Natural Law or vice versa. Such prescriptions are “homogenous to the law of nature ... which man could not with equal ease deduce from them.”⁵⁹ The written Word takes the general principles of morality revealed by Natural Law and makes proper deductions from them, even extending them in some cases. Hypothetically, it could happen that a person construes something totally opposite to what the will of God actually is regarding a matter by simply relying on his perception of Natural Law. Such clarity given to us in the Scriptures is necessary since the mind and will of man are corrupted by sin and always in grave danger of error.

Knowledge of Sinfulness

So we begin to see that Natural Law for Arminius is practical since it is capable of revealing to mankind the general principles of the created moral order. Arminius also argues that it can, at least in some sense, serve as a mirror by which man can judge his miserable state when in need of repentance. “The External Cause inciting to repent is, the miserable state of the sinners who do not repent, and the felicitous and blessed state of those who repent, —whether such a state be known from the law of Moses, or from that of nature, from the Gospel or from personal experience, or from the examples of other persons who have been visited with the most grievous plagues through impenitence, or who through repentance have been made partakers of many blessings.”⁶⁰ This should also help us to understand the power of Natural Law. It is, of course, not a saving power, but because it communicates moral truth it reveals the standard by which all men fall short. The Natural Law extends or com-

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. II:239.

municates the same moral law contained in the Scriptures, but not to the same extent.

Arminius supports this idea in another place, arguing that the first relation between God and man concerned the divine image the first human person partook of. It was according to that extension of God's image that "religion was prescribed to him by the comprehensive law that has been impressed on the minds of men, and that was afterwards repeated by Moses in the Ten Commandments."⁶¹ Interestingly, Arminius indicates that not only was such a "comprehensive" law impressed upon the mind of our first parents, but is impressed on the minds of persons today.

Another passage describes this very plainly: "The Spirit uses the word of the Gospel placed in the mouth of his servants, which immediately executed this vocation, and the word of the Law whether written or implanted in the mind."⁶² So not only is man's self-reflection through the perfection of the law needed in order to bring about a knowledge of one's need for salvation, but the Holy Spirit uses the gospel as well, the gospel preached by those whom He has called to declare it.

NATURAL LAW AND ARMINIAN ETHICS

When investigating Arminius's ethics to determine if and how Natural Law has a place, we first must start with his analysis of the law handed down to our first parents and determine to what extent that is still true today. Obviously man's condition has changed from the pre-fall era, but God has not changed, nor His law. In fact, Arminius argues that there is some remnant of the human mind that is still the same, manifested in its recognition of Natural Law.

The Original Law (Disputation XXIX: On the Covenant into Which God Entered with Our First Parents)

Arminius speaks of the first law handed down to mankind as a covenantal agreement between God and man where God chose to enter into a kind of contract with man.⁶³ While the command given to eat of any tree except of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was definitely a law, Arminius says we should call it a covenant because "of a work commanded, and a reward promised; to which is subjoined the denunciation

61. II:332.

62. II:415.

63. II:369.

of a punishment."⁶⁴ Even though it is an agreement between God and man, it is a covenant because it is not between equals. God remains superior, and the promise of a reward encourages greater obedience on the part of man.⁶⁵

The kind of law this covenant upholds can be understood in two ways.

First, it is Natural Law, "placed in and imprinted on the mind of man."⁶⁶ It is a law that recognizes God as the Supreme Being above all other beings, one who demands and deserves ultimate obedience and worship. According to Arminius, it is a law in "which is contained his natural duty toward God and his neighbor, and therefore toward himself also; and it is that of love, with fear, honor, and worship towards a superior."⁶⁷

The requirement for being able to perform according to this law is a correct ordering of love. Arminius argues that there is that tendency in man to love himself more than others, and if man is to live justly, his affections must be regulated: "For as true virtue consists in the government or right ordering of the affections, (of which the first, the chief, and that on which the rest depend, is Love,) the whole law is contained in the right ordering of Love."⁶⁸ This is proven true from the very fact that man lives among other men in families, communities, and nations. Arminius believes that such a right ordering of love is the "proximate cause that man should live in society with his species, or according to humanity."⁶⁹ There cannot be an imbalance or else the whole will not work correctly. It is interesting to note the Aristotelian tone in Arminius's argument: if virtue is to be achieved by following the Natural Law inscribed on the heart to obey God, then a person's affections must be regulated in order for the whole to function correctly.

Second, Arminius points to the positive law which tested man's willingness to obey the Natural Law imprinted on his mind. "A symbolical law is one that prescribes or forbids some act, which in itself is neither agreeable nor disagreeable to God, that is, one that is indifferent: And it serves for this purpose, that God may try whether man is willing to yield obedience to Him solely on this account."⁷⁰ This symbolical law is found in the Genesis account as God's prohibition against eating from the tree

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. II:369.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. II:369-370.

“of the knowledge of good and evil.” Obviously, there is no moral hazard in eating from a tree, unless of course God condemns it and has made such a prohibition known, such as in the form of a covenant. This particular law was to symbolize the opportunity to either obey or disobey God by a particular action. If Adam and Eve’s affections were truly ordered and loyal to the Almighty, this would have been revealed in obedience. Arminius even says that “the obedience yielded to a symbolical law is far inferior to that which is yielded to a natural law” but disobeying a symbolical law is actually more grievous than disobeying a natural law, because man reveals in the very act that he refuses to submit himself to a superior, and thus will probably not do so in even greater matters.⁷¹

In Arminius’s distinct understanding of the original law as having both a Natural Law foundation and a positive application, we find Arminius’s appreciation for the meta-ethical issue concerning a fundamental underlying law upon which all positive law is based. Arminius even says that if our first parents had not been disobedient in the garden, “God would have acted with their posterity by the same compact, that is, by their yielding obedience to the moral law inscribed on their hearts, and to some symbolical or ceremonial law.”⁷² Here, Arminius, instead of the term “Natural Law,” which he has been using up to this point, substitutes “moral law,” which refers to the “perpetual and immutable rule of living.”⁷³ In the Garden, morality was bound in that simple obligation to obey God, and that has never really changed.

Free Will (Public Disputation XI: On the Free Will of Man and Its Powers)

The treatment of free will is no doubt one of the major features of Arminius’s theology, one that distinguishes him from most other Reformed theologians. For Arminius, the will is important because it is that reactionary aspect of a person’s mind to knowledge: it makes judgments about knowledge which influence action. For instance, when people are faced with the truth claims of Christianity, they must judge whether to accept such propositions and then act upon that decision.

Our question here is, if free will is an attribute of persons, how does Natural Law affect or influence the will? Arminius argues that even though Natural Law is inscribed upon the mind of human beings, the will and mind have become so corrupt that they do not always function correctly according to that law.

71. Ibid.

72. II:371.

73. II:197.

Arminius argues that the will is the integral part of the choice-making process in the human mind and that liberty, as a part of the will, is grounded in one's rational self. "Free Will or choice properly signifies both the faculty of the mind or understanding, by which the mind is able to judge about any thing proposed to it, —and the judgment itself which the mind forms according to that faculty. Liberty, when attributed to the Will, is properly an affection of the Will, though it has its root in the understanding and reason."⁷⁴

Liberty, being that independent aspect of the will from any overriding determinism or tyranny, has five modes, three of which Arminius says are true of the human situation:⁷⁵ they are freedom from necessity whether internal or external, freedom from sin and its dominion, and freedom from misery.⁷⁶ The notion of liberty and freedom is so fundamental to the will that Arminius even claims that the will does not exist unless it is free.⁷⁷

Having established a liberated will, Arminius wants to consider the "good" things intrinsic in man as well as the different conditions that are soteriologically or historically presented to man. The "good" things are in three forms: natural, which are those things man has in common with many other creatures; animal, which are those things specific to humaneness; and spiritual, "which are consentaneous to him as being a partaker of the Divine Nature."⁷⁸ It is the last point that Arminius treats at length for the purpose of his inquiry. But it is important to note that having offered this definition of the spiritual aspect of man, he argues that it is solely due to man's participation in the *imago Dei*.

Man is understood as living in three conditions: primitive innocence, that state in which man was first created; subsequent corruption, which took place when man chose to disobey God; and renewed repentance, when man is restored through the work of Christ.⁷⁹

Arminius understands the original state, primitive innocence, as the time when "man's mind was endued with a clear understanding of truth concerning God."⁸⁰ It was also a time of perfect holiness for our first par-

74. II:189.

75. The first two, freedom from a superior as well as freedom from the government of a superior, only apply to God, since humans are ultimately subject to God as well as his created order (II:190).

76. II:190.

77. *Ibid.*

78. II:191.

79. *Ibid.*

80. *Ibid.*

ents, having the ability to completely fulfill the law handed down to them by God, which law was simply the recognition of and obedience to God as superior. Arminius even says this original state is easily proved simply from the description of God's image which was somewhat mirrored in His creation, as well as the content and intention of the law divinely imposed on them.⁸¹

Nonetheless, they fell. Obviously man was not so grounded in the original state that it would have been impossible to move from it. Arminius says that Adam, "by the representation of some good, after looking upon it and desiring it, and of his own spontaneous and free motion, declined from the obedience prescribed to him."⁸² Arminius even calls the distinction between obedience and disobedience to God as "turning from the Chief Good to an inferior good" by which Adam "placed himself under the dominion of sin forever."⁸³

Man's mind is now "destitute of the saving knowledge of God."⁸⁴ Arminius goes so far as to argue that the soul itself, "which is the most noble part of man," is "but encompassed about with the clouds of ignorance."⁸⁵ He uses the terms "soul" and "mind" interchangeably. He speaks of both as "vain" and "foolish," because of the impact of sin upon them.⁸⁶ "This is true, not only when, from the truth of the law which has in some measure been inscribed on the mind, it is preparing to form conclusions by the understanding; but likewise when, by simple apprehension it would receive the truth of the Gospel externally offered to it: For the human mind judges that to be 'foolishness' which is the most excellent 'Wisdom' of God."⁸⁷

Arminius thus recognizes a Natural Law imprinted upon the minds of men, but as imperfect or to some extent powerless. It would seem that the mind would accept the gospel by simply considering its tenets and by the influence of a Natural Law which the mind comprehends. But Arminius points out that the mind, while in the state of "subsequent corruption," does not accept the truth completely. Because the will is free to choose and apt to pursue "inferior" good, the natural law written on the heart becomes only one option among many desires. It does not have the same power as the prodding of the Spirit.

81. Ibid.

82. II:192.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

85. II:193.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.

Arminius is describing a battle between the mind and the will. This is a battle he more thoroughly explores in Romans 7. The mind has some knowledge of good due to Natural Law. He explicitly states this to be true. Yet the mind is also “destitute of the saving knowledge of God.”⁸⁸ The will has become so corrupted by sin that what it desires is not always in line with what is truly good. Arminius says it best: “Our will is not free from the first fall; that is, it is not free to good, unless it be made free by the Son through his Spirit.”⁸⁹

NATURAL LAW AND ROMANS 7

In his thesis on Romans 7, Arminius makes use of Natural Law in arguing that the subject whom Paul describes is unregenerate. It is interesting to note that in commenting thus, on a passage where there seems to be no clear, unanimous consensus among theologians even today, Arminius relies heavily on Natural Law to argue his position.

Arminius believes the language used to describe the position of the person in this passage is such that it can only speak of someone who is unregenerate. Characteristics such as “sold under sin,” “I am carnal,” “sin dwells in me,” surely can only be predicated of those who have not been regenerated. But these verses also speak of man’s recognition that the law of God is good and reference a conscience that can discern moral rightness from moral wrongness.

As stated earlier, the problem of Natural Law always seems to be one of epistemology, and it reveals its head here as well in the form of a question: are the unregenerate not able to recognize moral truth at all? Arminius’s answer to this question is two-fold: first, unregenerate persons are not so morally depraved as not to recognize moral truth within the created order; second, such a recognizing of truth is due to Natural Law. Natural Law is the reason the unregenerate can in fact have a certain knowledge of moral truth.

Terms Defined

For Arminius, there is a difference between being under the law and being under grace. The former means that someone is actually “governed and actuated by the guidance of the law.”⁹⁰ Being under grace is that glorious state where man has been absolved of sin and condemnation and

88. II:192.

89. II:194.

90. II:492-493.

has been endowed “with the Spirit of adoption and regeneration, to lead and govern him.”⁹¹

Arminius claims that there are certain things that are not true of a regenerate man. For instance, he argues that a regenerate man is not one who “heareth the law, and hath the work of the law written in his heart, whose thoughts mutually accuse or else excuse themselves, who rests in the law, makes his boast of God, knows his will, and approves of the things more excellent, being instructed out of the law.”⁹² Rather, the regenerate are those who have “put on the new man” and been renewed in the knowledge “which agrees with the image of Him who has created him.” They are “crucified with Christ” and “led by the Spirit,” they “desist from evil and do good ... not perfectly, but according to the measure of faith and of the gift of Christ.”⁹³ Arminius even says that such faithfulness on the part of a regenerate person is “not always without interruption (for sometimes he stumbles, falls, wanders astray, commits sin, grieves the Holy Spirit) but generally and for the most part does good.”⁹⁴

On the other hand, the unregenerate man is ignorant of God’s will, commits sins without attack of conscience and is not concerned with God’s wrath.⁹⁵ Arminius also describes such a person as “he who knows the will of God but does it not” and “who has the law of God written in his heart, and has thoughts mutually accusing and excusing one another.”⁹⁶ The unregenerate are those who have some knowledge of moral truth, but do not understand it completely because they know only in part. Exposure to the written revelation and the saving work of the Holy Spirit completes what is given only in part.

The Conflict of Conscience

In his remarks on the seventeenth verse, Arminius argues that the condition of a person under the law is not one where he serves sin with full consent, but has a conscience that cries out against it.⁹⁷ In Arminius’s opinion, the very fact that such a battle rages in this person, the kind where “he approves not of that which he does, nor does that which he would; thus is the slave of another,” means that this person is unregener-

91. II:493.

92. II:494.

93. II:496-497.

94. II:497.

95. Ibid.

96. II:498.

97. II:518.

ate.⁹⁸ He has not been set free by God's divine grace. The language describes slavery to sin which cannot be predicated of a person under grace.

In anticipating a possible criticism, Arminius responds to the question whether the contest described really can take place in the unregenerate.⁹⁹ Arminius argues that what is predicated of the person in this verse is sin's dominion, which is more than simply the ability and tendency on the part of an individual to sin. It is actually much more serious. He refers to this person as a servant to sin by purchase, one who suffers the guilt corresponding to the sin.

On the other hand, someone who is regenerate still has the tendency to sin, but not in the same sense. In his remarks concerning verse 17, Arminius states: "Who can deny, when the scriptures affirm, that there are in us the remains of sin and of the old man as long as we are in this mortal life and shall continue as survivors? ... Indwelling sin is reigning sin, therefore sin does not dwell in the regenerate because it does not domineer or rule in them."¹⁰⁰ Arminius thus makes a distinction between sin existing in someone and sin dwelling in someone, the latter being occupying and controlling. This cannot be said of those who are in Christ because they are occupied and domineered by the Holy Spirit.¹⁰¹

The person "under the law," is in perpetual conflict between "the mind and conscience" and "the inclinations or motives of sin which impel the man to things that are forbidden."¹⁰² This is because of the indwelling sin which is characteristic of the unregenerate. Regenerate persons endure conflict as well, except theirs is between the flesh and the Spirit, while the unregenerate battle between the flesh and the mind.¹⁰³

Arminius quotes the famous Natural Law passage, Romans 2:15, to support his claim that those who are under the law have a conscience always in conflict because the work of the law written on their hearts acts as a mirror, revealing sin and every other imperfection.¹⁰⁴ This happens in the Christian too, except that the Holy Spirit has more of a "mirroring" role than the law because the regenerate are not under the law but led by the Spirit. Arminius quotes Peter Martyr whose opinion on this matter concurs with his own. "We do not deny that there is occasionally some

98. Ibid.

99. Ibid.

100. II:526-527.

101. II:529.

102. II:519.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.

contest of this kind in unregenerate men; not because their minds are not carnal and inclined to vicious pursuits, but because in them are still engraven the laws of nature, and because in them shines some illumination of the Spirit of God, though it be not such as can justify them, or can produce a saving change.¹⁰⁵

The Flesh Variable

In his treatment on verses 18 and 19, Arminius addresses the question of whether or not there is any good at all in the unregenerate. The assumption here is that the subject is constituted not only of a body, but of something else too. Verse 18 specifically states, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), nothing good dwells."¹⁰⁶ The following verse says that even though the desire to pursue good exists in this person, exactly how to do this is unknown to him.

First, Arminius responds to the objection that since these verses speak of someone in whom exists the flesh and some other thing distinct from it (or else the Apostle would never have made the correction to emphasize it), they must be speaking of someone who is regenerate since the unregenerate have only the flesh.¹⁰⁷ Arminius argues that this is false because, at the very least, in "men who are under the law is a mind which knows some truth concerning God and that which may be known of God."¹⁰⁸ Arminius even goes further to argue that in the unregenerate is "a mind imbued with a knowledge of law, and consenting to it that it is good."¹⁰⁹ With this view, there is no person—regenerate or unregenerate—who is simply "flesh," without a mind and conscience that agrees to the goodness of law.

Second, another objection that Arminius addresses asserts that in the case of the unregenerate there is nothing whatsoever "in which good may reside."¹¹⁰ Arminius counters this by pointing out that humans themselves prove the existence and functioning of a rational self which transcends the flesh and contains many good things. He gives several examples that show this truth, but especially offers one which he used before, in his treatment on civil order, concerning man's participation in society. This appears to show how fundamental it is to him that one of the most basic tenets of Natural Law is our situation as societal beings. What

105. Ibid.

106. Romans 7:18, NKJV.

107. II:530.

108. Ibid.

109. II:531.

110. Ibid.

reveals that our mind contains some good, is, “for instance, —a conscience not only accusing man of sin, but also convincing him of it; —the delivering of a sentence of condemnation against the man himself; —the enacting of good laws; —careful attention to public discipline; —the punishment of crimes; —the defense of good people; —despair of obtaining righteousness by the law and by legal works, the impelling necessity [*compulsio*] to desire deliverance and to seek for it.”¹¹¹ According to Arminius, these works indeed are most certain signs of a law that dwells in the minds of unregenerate men.¹¹² Non-Christians can function according to certain knowledge of some moral truth perceived by the mind.

Arminius does not deny that the flesh has some influence over the mind, nor does he assert that good dwells in the flesh in the same way that it does in the mind: “For to reign in the mind, and simply, to reign in the man, are not the same thing.”¹¹³ If man himself were indwelt with the knowledge that the mind can grasp, then it would seem he would be able to resist the appetites of the flesh.

Arminius thinks that this is the reason the Apostle included the parenthetical correction in the eighteenth verse, to show that—since it has been established that good dwells in the mind of a man under the law—an explanation is needed as to why sin flourishes and ultimately reigns.¹¹⁴ He includes these words from Thomas Aquinas: “And by this it is rendered manifest, that the good thing [or blessing] of grace does not dwell in the flesh; because if it dwelt in the flesh, as I have the faculty of willing that which is good through the grace that dwells in my mind, so I should then have [the faculty] of perfecting or fulfilling what is good through the grace that would dwell in my mind.”

The grace spoken of here is what Arminius would probably term prevenient or preparing grace. For him, it is one thing to be affected in some way by grace, and quite another thing to be led, ruled, and influenced by grace.¹¹⁶ The latter is a work, not of Natural Law or any law for that matter, but of the Holy Spirit.

Ultimately, Arminius does not in any sense believe that the unregenerate are totally void of good. He very pointedly states, “I am desirous to have proof given to me, that nothing at all which is good can be attributed to an unregenerate man, of what description soever he may be.

111. II:531-532.

112. II:532.

113. *Ibid.*

114. *Ibid.*

115. II:532.

116. II:544.

According to the judgment which I have formed, the Scriptures in no passage openly affirm this; neither do I think that by good consequence from them, it can be asserted: But the contrary assertion may be most evidently proved."¹¹⁷ As with each of the other criticisms, Arminius responds by pointing out, among other things, that the work of the law "written on the hearts of heathens" is a good thing, put there by God.¹¹⁸ Arminius believes that it is through such things as the Natural Law that the Holy Spirit works to prepare the hearts of the unregenerate and eventually bring them to salvation: "There are certain acts which precede conversion, and they proceed from the Holy Spirit who prepares the will."¹¹⁹ Arminius argues that the Holy Spirit prepares a temple for Himself that He will later inhabit.¹²⁰

The Inward Man

In his analysis of verse 22, Arminius responds to another rival argument that the subject must be a regenerate person since one who "delights in the law of God according to the inward man" can only be one who is under grace. Those who believe this do so for two reasons: first, because throughout the Scriptures the term "inward man" has the same signification as that of "the new man" and the regenerate;¹²¹ second, because this same individual is said "to delight in the law of God after the inward man" and this can only be said of the pious.¹²²

Arminius refutes the first claim by arguing that the "inward man" is not equivalent to the "regenerate man." The term "inward man," from both a semantic and Scriptural analysis,¹²³ is proven not to be characteristic of the regenerate only, nor is "delighting in the law of God" peculiar to those under grace, but also belongs to the unregenerate.¹²⁴ According to Arminius, "These three epithets, the *inward* man, the *regenerate* man, and the *new* man, hold the following order among each other ... the *inward* man denotes *the subject*, the *regenerate* man denotes *the act*, of the Holy Spirit who regenerates; and the *new* man denotes *the quality* which exists in the inward man through the act of regeneration."¹²⁵

117. II:541.

118. Ibid.

119. II:542.

120. II:544.

121. II:547.

122. Ibid.

123. II:547-548.

124. II:548.

125. Ibid.

Arminius now sets out to define exactly what is meant by this term “inward man.” Who is he? What differentiates him from the rest of his person? What is the relation then between “inward man” and “outward” man? Questions such as these are important to the analysis. Arminius quotes Zanchius: “By the term *inner man* is signified the principal part of man, that is, the mind, which consists of the understanding and the will, and which is usually denoted by the word *heart*. ... By the term *outward man*, no other thing can be understood than the corporeal part of man.”¹²⁶

For Arminius, “inward man” denotes the mind of man. From earlier discussions, we know what his convictions about the mind are: it is the faculty of a person that apprehends the truth in the law of God ingrafted in the heart, and makes its own judgments about it. The “inward man” is the rational element of the human person, which he believes reveals the image of God more than any other aspect of the person.

Regarding verse 23, Arminius cites an interpretation concerning the distinction made between what this verse terms as the “law of the mind” and the “law of the members.” Some believe that simply because a person has within him the law of his mind, he must be regenerate.¹²⁷ But just as Arminius has shown that the inward man is a necessary part of the human person, so much more is the law of the mind because it is the conscience of the person.

Arminius says that the defenders of the argument conceive the law of the mind only as a quality of the regenerate because it consents to the law of God.¹²⁸ But the law of the mind is the conscience which “delights in the law” after the “inward man.” It is that faculty which urges the pursuit of righteousness and discourages the practice of sin and all evil because of its apprehension of the moral order. As Arminius eloquently states, “This is the work of the law written in their hearts; which is neither the law of the members, a fleshly mind, nor one that is carnal, but it contends with them.”¹²⁹

The law of the mind, which is the conscience, agrees with the law of God and is even used by God as an instrument towards righteousness “in an unregenerate man to accuse and convict him.”¹³⁰ The law of the mind yearns for truth and order because of the consequences of sin and the guilt associated with it, things experienced by all who participate in

126. II:551.

127. II:564.

128. Ibid.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid.

humanity. Thus it is incorrect to claim that only the regenerate have within them the law of the mind.

PELAGIANISM?

After setting forth his thesis on Romans 7, Arminius responds to the criticism that his view is similar to the Pelagian heresy. After all, Arminius's thesis, that the person whom the Apostle is describing is unregenerate, rests on the fact that there are relatively good things predicated of such a man—good that is possible because his mind is able to grasp moral truths by way of Natural Law. The criticism is that this tends towards Pelagianism because of its claims that good can be accomplished in a person who is not yet regenerate or placed under grace.¹³¹

Arminius replies with the same kind of argument he used throughout the thesis itself, that there are many good things attributed to an unregenerate man. These include knowledge of truth, the work of the law written in his heart, his thoughts accusing or else excusing one another, the discernment of what is just and unjust, knowledge of sin, grief over sin, anxiety of conscience, and desire for deliverance.¹³² All of these things are undeniably good things that happen in the unregenerate person.

CONCLUSION

Arminius makes clear throughout his work that Natural Law has a place in the created moral order and does not take the place of the mission and purpose of written revelation. He states that "Gentiles, even though they have the law written on the heart, must also have internal illumination and inspiration of God to be saved."¹³³ Natural Law is very useful as a starting point for a conversation between the Church and the culture due to the basic presuppositions upon which we all stand by virtue of the *imago Dei*. But from that point our mission should then be to progress towards a presentation of the gospel which contains the power of salvation. After all, "Men do not obtain righteousness, and power to conquer sin, and to live in a holy manner, by means either of the law of nature or that of Moses: But, through the faith of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, those very blessings are gratuitously bestowed on them who work not, but believe on Christ."¹³⁴

131. II:631-632.

132. II:632.

133. II:328.

134. II:593.

Robert E. Picirilli

Is the Gift of Tongues for Today?

Editor's note: This is essentially the same as the presentation given at the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 2009, sponsored by the Commission for Theological Integrity. The Commission asked that it be included in this issue of Integrity.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of tongues¹ is apparently with us again. Christians who do not participate in the phenomenon faced it twice in the twentieth century. Both times it was known as Pentecostalism: the view that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by speaking in tongues.

To set a convenient date, we may trace the *first* wave to about 1901 when this phenomenon broke out among a group led by Charles Parham in Kansas City.² During the years that followed, the Pentecostals formed many groups, ranging from “Sister Aimee” Kennedy Semple McPherson’s International Church of the Four-Square Gospel to the Assemblies of God. For about fifty years this movement mostly stayed within the confines of those denominations.

It became necessary, during that period, to distinguish between *Holiness* and *Pentecostal* theology, a distinction that is still useful. The former promotes sanctification as “a second definite work of grace”—to use the traditional terminology. The latter promotes the baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues. Some denominations, like the Nazarenes and Wesleyan Methodists, are Holiness in doctrine but not Pentecostal. Some, like the Assemblies, are Pentecostal but not Holiness. A number of groups, like many of the Church of God denominations or the Pentecostal Holiness Church, are both. At the practical level, however, speaking in tongues and “second blessing” theology are often linked.

For convenience, again, we may view circa 1960 as the beginning of the *second* wave, when Pentecostalism burst forth from its traditional boundaries and washed over into churches of almost every stripe. Whether Roman Catholic, mainline liberal Protestant, or conservative evangelical, people from churches of many different backgrounds experienced the

1. When I say “tongues” in this article, that stands for “the gift of tongues” or “speaking in tongues” and is for my convenience.

2. Similar phenomena on Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California, in 1906 are equally regarded.

baptism and the gift. Even secular newspapers carried reports of the phenomena. Groups that practiced fellowship across denominational lines, like the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, flourished. Thousands flocked to annual conferences like those sponsored by Pentecostal Catholics at Notre Dame. Periodicals were birthed and books were published to promote and maintain the fervor. The issue came up for discussion—usually tense—in almost every denominational organization. The term *charismatic*—from the Greek word for gifts—became a popular synonym for Pentecostal, although these days we are inclined to use it more broadly to refer to anyone who thinks that the “miraculous” gifts of the Spirit are still given and especially for those outside the traditional Pentecostal churches. In this sense the “charismatic renewal” took on a powerfully ecumenical flavor.³

Those who were not around in the sixties can hardly imagine what it was like. The non-Pentecostal church could not avoid responding to the clamor. From many quarters (including our own⁴) came Biblical treatments aimed at showing why we do not think God intended the gift of tongues for the church of today. By and large, these responses sounded some common themes. I summarize the major points here and will return to the most important ones below.

- We argued that the original Pentecost in Acts 2 represented a turning-point in salvation history that was not to be repeated and that every believer is “baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ” at conversion (1 Cor. 12:13).
- Consequently, we argued that Christians do not need “the baptism of the Spirit” as a “second blessing.”
- We argued that the tongues in Acts 2 were human languages, as is unambiguous in the passage itself. By implication, this meant that the tongues in 1 Corinthians were also human languages.

3. For this reason the Commission on Theological Liberalism (now the Commission for Theological Integrity) of the NAFWB on two occasions asked me to make presentations during the National about the relationship between the charismatics and ecumenism. These were ultimately published as booklets by the Commission as *The Charismatics and the Ecumenical Movement* (about 1974) and *The Charismatics, the New Ecumenicals* (probably 1979).

4. See my *What the Bible Says about Tongues* (Nashville: Randall House, 1973, reprinted from an earlier, self-published edition). See also Harrold Harrison and Leroy Forlines, *The Charismatic Movement: A Survey of Its Development and Doctrine* (Nashville: The Commission for Theological Integrity of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1989). For a practical approach to spiritual gifts, see my *The Gifts of the Spirit: Christian Service Reconsidered* (Nashville: Randall House, 1980).

- We made the case that, in light of the New Testament teaching, the purpose of the “sign gifts” (those requiring miraculous intervention) implied that they were not meant to be permanent in the life of the Christian church.
- We showed, from 1 Corinthians 12, that tongues were never intended as a gift for all.

In some ways, at least, our arguments were effective. But if we thought we had put away the issue of tongues for good, we were premature. Like the proverbial bad penny, it has come around again. My purpose in this presentation is to deal with the form in which tongues have now made another appearance and to discuss whether tongues in this form are for Christians today.⁵

1. THE NEW TONGUES MOVEMENT

A *third* wave of the charismatic movement is now upon us, as well as a “mildly charismatic” form espoused by some respected, Evangelical thinkers. I will summarize both forms.

1.1. We can date the Third Wave,⁶ proper, to the late 1970s, especially to John Wimber. In 1978 he established a church in Yorba Linda, California, the rapid growth of which he attributed to “power evangelism.” From 1982 to 1985 he taught a course at Fuller Theological Seminary called “The Miraculous and Church Growth.” As his following developed, the churches took the name “Vineyard Churches,” and the title “Signs and Wonders Movement” came to be applied to the whole. In brief, the key elements of this movement are as follows:

- The New Testament church is in an age when the kingdom of God has already broken into history, although that kingdom will be more fully manifested in its final form at the end of the age.
- Then Christians are on a war footing, confronting Satan’s kingdom. The two sides are in a power struggle.
- In that light, the church needs displays of supernatural power—“signs and wonders”—to wield effectively the weapons of this warfare.
- Indeed, these are *necessary* for effective evangelism.

5. For a contemporary defense of Pentecostalism (more or less classic), see Douglas A. Oss, “A Pentecostal/Charismatic View,” in Wayne Grudem, ed., *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 239-283, and in his responses throughout the volume.

6. I will capitalize “Third Wave” to identify the more or less specific movement defined here.

- They include such things as exorcisms of demons, revelations and prophecies, healing of the sick, and speaking or praying in tongues.⁷
- These phenomena, however (and here the Vineyard churches break with traditional Pentecostalism), are *not* evidences of baptism in the Spirit and are *not* to be expected for every believer.

I will rely primarily on Sam Storms for the Third Wave teaching, especially on the subject of tongues.⁸

1.2. Closely related are some Evangelical theologians who have undertaken to defend the idea that all of the spiritual gifts listed in the New Testament, including especially those in 1 Corinthians 12-14 (with the exception of apostleship), are still given to the church. Technically, these thinkers are not part of the historic charismatic tradition and are also to be distinguished in some ways from the Third Wave. The two most well-known names for this perspective are Wayne Grudem, who argues for prophecy and for the revelation necessary to that gift,⁹ and Donald Carson, who argues for the continuation of the gift of tongues.¹⁰

This “mildly charismatic” view, as I call it for convenience, is my primary focus in this presentation—as requested by the Commission. Even so, some of the issues are the same as for Third Wave charismatics, and some are the same as those we dealt with in confronting traditional Pentecostalism. The difference between Carson and Storms on tongues, in particular, is more a matter of emphasis. Storms is *enthusiastic* about the gift, promoting its use, eager for believers to receive the benefit of this “precious gift.”¹¹ Carson, on the other hand, is more subdued. He appears

7. The emphasis on tongues varies somewhat among those in the Third Wave.

8. See Sam (C. Samuel) Storms, *The Beginner's Guide to Spiritual Gifts* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2002), and his “A Third Wave View,” in Grudem, ed., *Four Views*. I have depended primarily on the first of these two. Storms represents the charismatic Calvinist movement, which distances him from traditional Pentecostalism. See also D. A. Carson, “The Purpose of Signs and Wonders in the New Testament,” *Power Religion: The Selling Out of the Evangelical Church?*, ed. Michael Scott Horton (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 90-91. Two (of many) books produced in behalf of Vineyard theology are John Wimber and Kevin Springer, *Power Evangelism* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), and by the same authors and publisher, *Power Healing* (1987). See also Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), which many of the Third Wave regard as especially important.

9. Wayne A. Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today*, rev. ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988, 2000), which grew out of his *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1982). All references to his *Gift of Prophecy* are to the 2000 edition.

10. D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987).

11. Storms, *Spiritual Gifts*, 140. Some Third Wave pastors do not emphasize tongues as much as he.

to downplay the gift and certainly prefers that it be exercised in private devotion.

1.3. To help the reader follow the rest of this presentation, I summarize (at some risk of oversimplification) the important ingredients of the Carson-Grudem view.

- Both tongues and prophecy in 1 Corinthians, and in the church today, are in important respects different from their earlier appearances in the Bible. New Testament prophecy is not like Old Testament prophecy. The tongues at Corinth were different from those in Acts 2.
- Both gifts are therefore less spectacular than usually thought. Prophecy is “speaking merely human words to report something God brings to mind.”¹² Tongues are not human languages but a language for prayer, preferably private prayer.
- Neither gift is required for all Christians, although they are valuable and might be experienced by any believer. Such “gifts of the Spirit” are as much events as endowments to be possessed by persons.
- Neither gift signifies advanced spirituality, but prophecy in the public assembly is a sign of God’s blessing and tongues enhance one’s prayer life.

All of these matters will arise in the discussion to follow.

1.4. In some ways this development is gratifying to those of us who were assaulted by the second wave of Pentecostalism. It means that many of the arguments we made have won acceptance, at least with the Third Wave and the mildly charismatic Evangelicals. They agree with us that the tongues in Acts 2 were human languages—and that today’s charismatics are *not* speaking human languages.¹³ They agree that speaking in tongues is *not* the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and that Acts 2 does not record a kind of “Spirit baptism” that every Christian needs to experience subsequent to conversion. Carson, for example, holds that Pentecost was a “climactic salvation-historical event,” tied to a “redemptive-historical appointment” that is not repeatable.¹⁴ They agree that tongues are not for every believer and need not be used in public at all.

We turn our attention, now, to the issues.

12. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, table of contents.

13. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 138; also Storms, *Spiritual Gifts*, 141.

14. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 140.

2. CESSATIONISM VERSUS CONTINUATIONISM

What was always at the heart of our differences with charismatics, whatever else they teach, remains the same: namely, the question whether all the gifts of the Spirit were intended by God to continue throughout the history of the church into the present age.

There are four places in the New Testament where the gifts of the Spirit are listed: two in 1 Corinthians 12 (vv. 8-10 and 28), one in Romans 12:6-8, and one in Ephesians 4:11. (The reference in 1 Peter 4:10-11 might be added, although it does not so much list various gifts as divide them into two categories: service gifts and gifts of speaking.) Some of these gifts required a miraculous, divine intervention. These included—among others, perhaps—prophetic utterance, working miracles, healing, and speaking or translating a language that one did not know. These have often been called “sign gifts,” emphasizing their effectiveness as direct manifestations of the power of God intended to “signify” His confirmation of the person or message involved.¹⁵

The charismatic position is that all of these were intended to be a part of church life permanently. We call this a *continuationist* view.¹⁶ The non-charismatic position is that the Lord meant for the sign gifts, at least, to be temporary. This is a *cessationist* view, sometimes referred to as (although not necessarily agreeing in every detail with) the Warfield position.¹⁷

2.1. We cessationists believe that the New Testament, although it does not deal *directly* with the question of the duration of the sign gifts, appears to define their role in such a way as to imply that they were intended to be temporary, specifically for the apostolic age. Several lines of New Testament evidence form the basis for this view.

An attentive reading of Acts, especially the first several chapters, is interesting for its emphasis on the works of the *apostles*. The following are noteworthy.

- 2:43: “Many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.” Chapter three provides a specific example.

15. For a helpful treatment of miracles as signs, see Harrison and Forlines, *Charismatic Movement*, 19-25.

16. Carson and Grudem do not think that the gift of apostleship continues.

17. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles* (London: Banner of Truth, 1972, reprinted from 1918). Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., “A Cessationist View,” in Grudem, ed., *Four Views*, 25-64 (and in responses throughout the volume) provides a helpful updating of the cessationist view and is more exegetical than Warfield, whose treatment was primarily historical.

- 4:33: "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." Chapter five provides a specific example.
- 5:12: "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonder wrought among the people." The following verses provide a specific example.

This has all the appearance of a deliberate pattern, one that links the signs and wonders with the ministry of the apostles. This does not mean, of course, that absolutely no one else performed such miraculous works. Both Stephen (Acts 6:8) and Philip (Acts 8:6, 13) were instruments of such power, but it seems likely that their gift came at the hands of the apostles (Acts 6:6).¹⁸

This understanding is reinforced in 2 Corinthians 12:12. Paul was also a true apostle, even if "born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15:8), who often had to defend his standing. Here he claims (v. 11) to be nothing behind the very chief-most apostles and fortifies the claim by saying, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." Surely his identification of these supernatural works as "the signs of an apostle" is significant.

Finally, consider Hebrews 2:3-4. The writer speaks of the "great salvation" that was at first spoken by the Lord Jesus Himself. It was then spoken by "them that heard him"—the apostolic generation, apparently. Finally, as they ministered what they had seen and heard in the flesh to "us"—the next generation of hearers in the chain—their ministry was confirmed by the witness God gave in "signs and wonders and different miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit." Again we have the implication, then, that there was a deliberate connection between the sign gifts and the ministry of the apostles.

This last passage implies the reason for this. The written New Testament, as a publishing of the apostolic faith,¹⁹ was not yet available—at least not in completion. Confirmation of the truth the apostles proclaimed and wrote was needed, and that took the form of "the signs of an apostle": supernatural signs and wonders, in other words. Once the Canon was completed and the apostolic generation had passed off the scene, we believe, the Lord did not purpose to give those gifts indefinitely. Signs and wonders in the Bible are especially linked to critical moments in salvation history. Once those critical moments have passed, the signs and wonders tend to fade away.

18. Gaffin, "Cessationist View," 39, speaks of this as functioning under an "apostolic umbrella."

19. Carson speaks of this often (and aptly) as "the apostolic deposit."

This certainly seems to include the gift of prophecy, which the church has traditionally understood to mean supernaturally receiving and passing along a divine revelation. Direct revelation from God we have traditionally viewed as complete in the New Testament, making that gift no longer needed. (Since interpreted tongues are the “functional equivalent” of prophecy, as Storms acknowledges,²⁰ they include divine revelation and are likewise no longer needed.)

Observations from practical experience tend to support this line of Biblical evidence. When we face the claims of the “healers,” for example, we cannot help noticing that they die too, and of the very same diseases and at the very same ages as all the rest of us— putting in serious doubt both their works and their claim that God does not will for any believer to be sick. We cannot bring ourselves to believe that the Genesis curse on the created order—which is the source of physical illness—has in some way been lifted from Christians. To their credit, the Third Wave charismatics have dropped most of those claims, although they continue to emphasize healing in their services. For us, the healing of the sick now apparently falls more into the pattern of James 5:14-16 than as a gift possessed by healers to work miracles.²¹

In the same light, having understood the tongues in Acts 2 to be human languages, we notice that the charismatics are certainly *not* speaking human languages—as Carson and Grudem and many in the Third Wave now acknowledge. Since we see no reason to view the tongues in 1 Corinthians any differently, this supports the view that this gift too, like the other miraculous gifts, has ceased. (We believe that a correct understanding of 1 Corinthians 14:21-22 adds further support, as will be seen in the exegetical survey of 1 Corinthians 12-14 to follow.)

I should add that cessationism does *not* mean that God no longer works supernaturally in our midst. He most certainly heals, for example—in answer to the prayerful outcry of His children and in accord with His will for any given situation. But the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14 were endowments possessed by *persons* (as 12:8-11, 28-30 make clear), not mere occasional events. Cessationists teach that *as a gift to a person to be a healer* that gift has ceased, but God has not ceased sharing with us the gracious gift of His Spirit and power in healing *events*. Furthermore, cessationism applies only to the specific “sign gifts” included in the lists, not to “gifts

20. Storms, *Spiritual Gifts*, 124.

21. As Robert L. Saucy, “Open but Cautious,” in Grudem, ed., *Four Views*, 122, observes, the passage “says nothing about any of them having the gift of healing.”

of grace” used in the broader sense—a sense that would even include salvation.

2.2. Against this line of reasoning the continuationists insist that all the gifts of the Spirit (except apostleship) continue. Without going into great detail, I observe that there are two main lines of reasoning with which they support this view. The first is more or less a simple affirmation, in light of 1 Corinthians 12-14 as inspired Scripture. The point is this. The lists there include the sign gifts. Chapter 14 treats them as really functioning at Corinth. The chapter also describes how both tongues and prophecy are to be correctly used. These chapters are as much for the church today as any other Scripture. Therefore the gifts are still valid.

This particular approach assumes the position being argued: namely, that references to the practice of tongues in the New Testament proves that the gift was permanent. That is, however, the question. Furthermore, this approach ignores other cases in the New Testament where a particular practice of the time is no longer applicable and yet had to be treated in the Bible while it existed. The “holy kiss” practiced as a form of greeting in that culture serves as a good example. In the same way, the discussion of prophecy and tongues provides important principles for life in the church even though those gifts are no longer given.

The gifts of prophecy and tongues were certainly being given when 1 Corinthians was written by the apostle Paul. No one disputes that. We acknowledge, of course, that nothing is said there to indicate that they would cease. But one would hardly expect that to be said when they were in effect. If Paul’s treatment of them does not prove they were meant to be temporary, neither does it prove they were meant to be permanent.

The other main approach used by continuationists is to show that 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 does *not* prove that tongues would cease during the present age. This is no doubt an important part of their argument, for the simple reason that many cessationists have interpreted the words of verse 8 (“tongues ... shall cease”) to mean cease early in the present age.²²

Both Carson and Grudem proceed along the following lines. The cessation of tongues (v. 8) will occur when “that which is perfect” (v. 10) comes. At present the gifts of prophecy (directly stated) and tongues (clearly implied) represent what is partial (v. 9), to be done away with

22. For a good example of this approach by a cessationist, see Robert L. Reymond, *What about Continuing Revelations and Miracles in the Presbyterian Church Today?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977), who argues that “that which is perfect” refers to the completed revelatory process that resulted in the finished Canon. The answer of Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 200-204, relies on denying the idea that New Testament prophecy is “Scripture-quality revelation.”

when perfection comes. This will take place at the coming of Christ (the *parousia*) at the end of this age.²³

I will not attempt to develop their view of this passage further, for the simple reason that I am in fundamental agreement with them. Carson may think—I am not sure—that *all* cessationists believe that these verses point to that cessation. If so, he is wrong. Grudem is aware that at least one cessationist agrees that 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 does not foretell the cessation of tongues and prophecy during the present age.²⁴ At any rate, I have never used that passage in defense of the cessation of the sign gifts. Consequently, his exegetical conclusion, that the passage does *not* prove cessation, has no effect on my position. I insisted, in my commentary, that “the point about these three gifts of the Spirit is that they represent the imperfect and partial work of the Spirit in us in the present age. ... All such gifts are temporary, destined to be replaced by something far better.”²⁵

The point to be made, here, is simply this. Just as this passage does *not* tell that any of the gifts were intended to cease during the present age, *neither does it tell that they were meant to continue throughout the age*. It is one thing to show that the verses do not prove cessation. It is quite another to show that they require continuation. Assuredly, the perfection of the age to come will replace all our present imperfections and partial experience of the things of God. At that point *everything* characteristic of our present incompleteness will be done away, including our imperfect worship, our preaching and teaching, our ministering or showing of mercy. Paul’s point is that *all* of the gifts will pass away then. That falls very short of demonstrating that *some* of the gifts, whose purpose was temporary, did not pass away even earlier. Indeed, Carson and Grudem think that apostleship has passed from the scene, so the passage allows, in their view, for the cessation of at least one of the gifts long before the second coming.²⁶

23. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 69-72. For the same approach see Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 194-99.

24. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 199-200, answering Richard B. Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979), 109-110. In Grudem, ed., *Four Views*, both Gaffin (55-56) and Saucy (123) affirm that 1 Cor. 13:8 speaks neither of the continuation nor of the cessation of any specific gifts.

25. Robert E. Picirilli, *1, 2 Corinthians* (RHBC; Nashville: Randall House, 1987), 191.

26. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 199-200, answers Gaffin’s similar protest; I do not think his answer is satisfactory. Some continuationists (like Sam Storms, “A Third Wave Response to Robert L. Saucy,” in Grudem, ed., *Four Views*, 156-159), argue that apostleship was *not* one of the spiritual gifts, but in light of 1 Cor. 12:28 and Eph. 4:11, that view will hardly stand exegetical scrutiny.

And if there are no more apostles, then the apostolic era has passed and *we are in a different era.*²⁷

Carson certainly seems to understand the force of what I have outlined, above, about the linking of the sign gifts with the apostles. Indeed, he presents the case that “signs and wonders,” in Biblical terminology, are linked to “the two major events of redemptive history, namely, the Exodus and the coming of Jesus Messiah” and that “the activity of the apostles is part and parcel of the Christ-revelation.”²⁸ He uses the very same references that I have used, and in the very same way! In the end, however, he insists that this “cannot be made to support the conclusion that miraculous signs and wonders have ceased altogether.”²⁹

His reason for this is that the passages do not specifically declare that the signs and wonders would cease, nor does any other passage in the New Testament. In other words, there is no *direct* statement in the Bible that God intended these sign gifts to be limited to the apostolic age. He is right in that, of course, but I think he misunderstands the claim of those of us who take this stance.³⁰ We are *not* saying that any passage spells out that some of the gifts were temporary. As I said already, that would hardly be expected during the period when they were being given. What we *are* saying is that the positive statements the New Testament makes, to *define the nature and purpose of the sign gifts*, are such that they are most coherently understood as meant for confirmation of the ministry of those who were laying down the apostolic faith. It follows from that, then, that gifts given for that purpose would be temporary.

3. AN EXEGETICAL TREATMENT OF 1 CORINTHIANS 12-14

As always, the decisive issue is what the Bible has to say, and these three chapters are at the heart of the differences of opinion. We need, therefore, to work our way through the broader context of chapters 12-14.

27. Gaffin, in Grudem, ed., *Four Views*, 45-48, presses this point well. Saucy, “An Open but Cautious View,” in Grudem, ed., *Four Views*, 102, though he is open to the appearance of sign gifts today, urges that “the disappearance of apostles in the church thus argues rather clearly that not all has remained the same in the church with regard to miraculous gifts.”

28. Carson, *Power Religion*, 101-102.

29. *Ibid.*

30. It is precisely because the cessationist argument is *indirect* that my last chapter in *What the Bible Says about Tongues* is titled “What If I’m Wrong?” For this I received some criticism from my cessationist friends, who thought I was waffling. My point, however, was that even if the indirect argument for cessationism is not finally convincing to anyone else, it is *still* true that the Pentecostal view is Biblically wrong, both in theory and in practice.

Chapter 12

Paul begins by making a case that the gifts of the Spirit are from the same triune God (vv. 4-6) and that they are given so that all the members of the church (like parts of the human body) can contribute to the proper functioning of the whole (vv. 12-30), with each one's contribution essential. Consequently, not all members have the same gifts (including the gift of tongues!). The answers to the questions in vv. 29, 30 are unambiguously negative.

12:31 and Chapter 13

At this point Paul introduces a new idea: "Covet earnestly the best gifts," meaning that some gifts make a more important contribution to the life of the church than others, and that his readers should seek those. Before expounding on that, however, he wishes to show them a "more excellent way." That is the way of love, as developed in chapter 13. Only when one exercises spiritual gifts in love will they amount to anything. Only the person under the domination of love will be able to appreciate the greater worth of some of the gifts, to be discussed in chapter 14.

Chapter 14

After the "poem to love" in chapter 13, then, Paul returns to the idea that some gifts are "best" and to be sought. He illustrates this, at great length, by comparing tongues with prophecy (at a time when both were still being given, of course). This leads to *the only New Testament commentary on the value of tongues* (especially vv. 1-22). If one wishes to be Biblical—and who of us does not?—then it is absolutely essential to evaluate the gift of tongues according to this passage.

When we do that, the clear principle emerges, twice: "Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church" (v.12). "Let all things be done unto edifying" (v. 26). This appeal stands like two bookends around a shelf of books, and it is the basis for saying that some gifts are best. The best gifts are those that are more useful for edifying the church. One needs only to count the instances of the verb *edify* and noun *edification*—seven times—to get the point.

In that light—and I think anyone who reads this section objectively must acknowledge this—speaking in tongues is not especially helpful for the edifying of the church, not nearly so much as the gift of prophecy. Every time edification is mentioned, tongues come up short!

Now this may need qualification: Storms (and probably Carson) would not appreciate the way I have expressed this. He would say that the negative comparison applies *only* to *uninterpreted* tongues and that

interpreted tongues have the same value as prophecy.³¹ It is true that *once*, after a negative evaluation of tongues, Paul adds “except he interpret” (14:5), but Paul’s lengthy comparison seems generally to be aimed at the gift, as such, rather than only when abused by being uninterpreted. Had Paul meant to evaluate only uninterpreted tongues, he could easily have said so. I do not think that any reader of the chapter will get the idea that tongues, even when interpreted, are as valuable in Paul’s eyes as prophecy.

14:1-6

In these verses, then, the point—to read it in the best possible light—is that speaking in tongues is only understood by God, not human beings, and does not, like prophecy, edify the church. The best that can be said of this gift is that it edifies oneself, and in light of the rest of the passage one can only wonder if Paul views that as *selfish*. That is probably too strong, but Carson’s observation apparently sounds just the right note: “The tongues-speaker may be edifying himself (14:4), but that is too small a horizon for those who have meditated on 1 Corinthians 13.”³² Regardless, for edification of the church, prophecy is superior to tongues.

14:7-13

Now Paul uses four analogies to illustrate his point. Speaking in tongues is (a) like playing musical instruments without giving clear and different notes (v. 7), (b) like a bugler who gives an unrecognizable call to the troops (v. 8), (c) like a person speaking “into the air” (v. 9), or (d) like the talk of an uncivilized barbarian (v. 11).³³ At the very least, these are not flattering comparisons!

This brings Paul to his first statement of the principle of edification in verse 12. And so if one is to uphold that principle and still speak in tongues he can only do so by receiving also the gift of translating what he said (v. 13).

14:14-17

At this point Paul brings up various exercises that go on in the public assembly where the use of tongues might be involved. These are prayers (vv. 14-15a), songs (v. 15b), and words of praise (“bless” in v. 16, “give

31. Storms, *Spiritual Gifts*, 124.

32. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 102.

33. This illustration is especially apt, given that the Greeks coined the word *barbarian* because the languages of other peoples (whom they looked down on as uncivilized) sounded like so much *bar-bar-bar* to them.

thanks" in vv. 16, 17). In each case he prefers doing so when the "understanding" is fruitfully involved over doing so when only the "spirit" is active. So to pray in a tongue means that one's understanding—literally, one's *mind*—is not fruitful. The same applies to singing or giving praise to God in a tongue. In the last instance, specifically, the hearers will not know when to say the Amen and thus add their own participation in the praise.

It is possible, of course, to read Paul's preferences in either of two different ways. One is to take Paul to mean that he prefers to pray, sing, and give praise in two different ways at two different times, sometimes with the "spirit" and without the understanding of his mind, and at other times in his normal language so that his understanding is actively involved. This implies that one cannot do both at the same time. Carson represents one form of this approach, suggesting "something probably like this": he will first pray in tongues and follow that immediately (having been granted the interpretation, as in verse 13) by repeating the prayer in the language he understands.³⁴

The other way of reading this seems far more likely: namely, that when Paul prays, sings, or expresses praise he prefers to do so in conscious understanding of what he is saying so that both spirit and mind are fruitfully active. For this, only once is necessary since it is in the language one understands.³⁵ It seems especially startling to hear the implication that when one prays in his own language his "spirit" is not praying! But that is the inevitable meaning if praying "in/with one's spirit" is equated to praying in tongues. (And if the only way to pray "in/with one's spirit" is to do so in tongues, then surely every Christian ought always to pray in tongues!)

Either way—and I am satisfied that the latter is correct—one thing is clear: *Paul is not speaking about the exercise of a prayer language in the privacy of one's closet.* The context for the entire chapter is the public exercise of the gifts, and the praying, singing, and expressions of praise in verses 14-17 are all for the assembled church. This is clear from Paul's further atten-

34. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 104.

35. Though my purpose in this paper does not include interaction with commentaries, I did decide to check a number of well-known, Evangelical commentators to see how they view Paul's preference. On the whole, I found them disappointing, failing to make clear the possibilities or their own understanding. Some appear to agree with Carson, some with me. I did appreciate the observation of C. K. Barrent, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York, et al: Harper & Row, 1968), 320: "Rational prayer is not less spiritual than irrational."

tion to the expressions of praise, where he is concerned with the response of others who hear.

One may also ask why any reader would think the passage justifies praying in a tongue without likewise justifying singing in a tongue and expressing praise in a tongue? Furthermore, the clear implication is that it is better to do so in the language of the assembled church so that the others can understand and respond appropriately.

14:18-19

These verses may be considered an inspired comment about the value of tongues: although Paul has spoken in tongues often, in the church he would rather speak five words in a language understood than ten thousand otherwise! Carson acknowledges this much: that Paul means he will at least *almost* never speak in tongues in church.³⁶ The question remains, however, as to when and why Paul spoke in tongues more than all his readers (v. 18). Carson, in accord with his view of tongues, thinks this was when Paul was praying privately.³⁷ I can only suggest that if we continue to view the tongues in the light of verses 21-22 and the book of Acts (see the next paragraphs), rather than as something different from those in Acts, it may be that Paul exercised the gift on those occasions when in one city after another Jews rejected the gospel and Gentiles received it. This would call for Paul to “turn from” the Jews in that city and so separate the church from the synagogue and focus his attention on Gentiles. The problem with *any* view of this is, of course, that Paul does not say when he spoke in tongues and so we are on unstable ground to speculate. After all, his point is not how valuable the tongues were to him, but how much more valuable was speaking in the language of his hearers.

14:20-25

Verses 21-22 almost intrude on our survey of the chapter and clamor for interpretation. By any standard, they are difficult, seeming almost out of place with the surrounding context. Some suggestions help with this appearance of difficulty. The first is that verse 20 goes not with these verses but with the preceding verse 19. In other words, Paul wants his readers to respond to what he has said about the value of tongues with mature understanding, not as children.

36. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 105.

37. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 105. Storms, *Spiritual Gifts*, 132-33, agrees, but with more enthusiasm for the phenomenon.

The second suggestion is that verse 23 begins a new step in Paul's development of the subject, one that is connected by the relatively weak "therefore" (*oun*) to the larger discourse up to this point. This means, then, that verses 21-22 are essentially parenthetical, which accounts for the apparent disconnection. So we do well to focus carefully on these two verses.

Paul says that "tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." Understanding this is highly important since it is the only place in the New Testament where we are told *what tongues are for*—their *purpose*, in other words.³⁸ Paul expresses this in the context of what the Old Testament says (v. 21), rebuking unbelieving Israel. Apparently reflecting on Isaiah 28:11 and Deuteronomy 28:49, he represents the Lord as having said that he would bear witness to His people ("this people") by means of those speaking other languages, and yet Israel would not listen to Him. This, says Paul, was the purpose of the gift of tongues: namely, to bear witness to the unbelief of Israel and to God's consequent judgment and the resulting implications of that.

Acts 2, then, is in perfect accord with this. On that Day of Pentecost, hundreds of Jews gathered outside the place where the Holy Spirit filled the first disciples. Many of those Jews lived in other countries and spoke the languages of those countries. To their amazement they heard the disciples speaking "the wonderful works of God" (v. 11) in their native tongues, the languages of the nations. They could hardly believe such a thing, since the Gentiles were "dogs" in their eyes. The things of God could surely not be given the honor they deserved in the barking of dogs!

The lesson was there for anyone to see. The time had come, in the economy of God, for the things of God to be spoken to the whole world (Acts 1:8) and not to the Jews alone. The measure of Israel's unbelief had been taken, and it was full. The gospel would go to the Gentiles, as is clear throughout Acts (13:46, for example), reaching its climax in 28:25-28. The gift of tongues served as a sign of the unbelief of Israel and of this wonderful new thing in the plan of God. In this light, it is easy to picture tongues occurring at various times when the Jews in various places needed confirmation that the gospel was for the Gentiles whose languages were now fitting for the good news. The other references to tongues in Acts (10:46; 19:6) tend to support this understanding.

This understanding of 1 Corinthians 14:21-22, and of its relationship to Acts 2, serves to add at least a small amount of weight to the idea that the

38. I do not mean to say that this verse tells the *whole* purpose of tongues, only that it gives us what is at least one of the primary purposes of that gift.

gift was intended to be temporary. When unbelieving Israel had received its sign, and the church had become convincingly Gentile, that sign was no longer needed.

Carson is familiar with one source that apparently presents essentially the same view of Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14:21-22 as mine.³⁹ He dismisses it, saying among other things that it is “difficult to think how the use of tongues in private devotion can be integrated into” this synthesis.⁴⁰ Therein lies his problem, in assuming that the tongues were for private prayers. In fact, there is nothing at all (as I will discuss below) in the New Testament about the use of tongues in private devotion! And even if 1 Corinthians 14 were in the context of private devotion, the passage downplays the use of the gift (as Carson acknowledges), and the reason might well be that the Corinthians were *mis*-using it—not a startling thought after all!

In fact, Carson gets very close to the correct understanding of the point of 14:21-22. But he finally misses the point, as I see it, by confusing the unbelievers in verse 22 with those in verse 23. The cause of this, I believe, is that he fails to connect verse 22 closely enough to verse 21 and then fails to see that verse 23 moves to a further point.

Verse 22 is directly tied to the preceding citation from Isaiah and Deuteronomy by the “wherefore” (*hōste*). In that context the “this people” means Israel, as typically in the Old Testament. They are the ones who in spite of God’s judgment by foreigners refused to hearken to Him. Consequently the tongues—foreign languages—serve as a sign to *these* unbelievers, not to unbelievers as a general class of people. This is both a sign *against* them, a sign of their judgment and rejection, and *to* them, that this judgment entails God’s turning to the Gentiles represented by those languages.

Carson presupposes that the Corinthians were defending the idea that tongues served as a positive sign to unbelievers (in general), and that this controls all of Paul’s response in verses 21-25. This is speculative; there is no hint that such a claim had been made. And it downplays the obvious focus on unbelieving Israel. Indeed, had Carson not already effectively severed the connection between the tongues in 1 Corinthians and those in Acts 2, he might have seen how appropriate Paul’s words are for the original Pentecost experience, as I have outlined it above.

39. O. Palmer Robertson, “Tongues: Sign of Covenantal Curse and Blessing,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 38 (1975), 49-53. I have not read this article and cannot vouch for it.

40. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 110-111.

Grudem takes essentially the same position as Carson, and one of his observations is especially wide of the point of verse 21. He says that in this context “Paul makes no mention of the Gentile inclusion or of judgment on the Jews.”⁴¹ There may be nothing direct about Gentile inclusion, here, but the reference to “this people” is clearly to the Jews and their unbelief that called for the judgment represented by the gift of tongues beginning at Pentecost. That judgment necessarily implies the inclusion of the Gentiles.

In verses 23-25, then, the unbelievers referred to are *not* the unbelieving Jews referred to in verse 22, for whom the tongues served as a sign. Consequently, tongues are not useful in a church meeting for unsaved visitors. Indeed, if such visitors come into the church’s assembly and observe people speaking in tongues, they will think the Christians are mad! By contrast, if some speak the truth to them in the language they understand, they may indeed be brought under conviction and be converted.

This understanding, by the way, helps with another puzzling thing about the passage: namely that verse 22 speaks of tongues as a sign to unbelievers, while verse 23 says that unbelievers will think tongues are a sign of madness. Two different classes of unbelievers are meant.

14:26-40

The rest of the chapter (vv. 26-40) describes the conditions under which the gifts, including tongues, are to be exercised, emphasizing primarily orderliness. I say again that these inspired directions applied to times when all the gifts were still being given. If, as I have maintained, the gifts of prophecy and tongues are no longer given to the church, the directions for their government, although useful to give us principles for life in the church, are not ways to govern active tongues and prophecy in churches today.

In conclusion to this exegetical survey, I may note that the evaluation of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 is generally negative, with little more than a few positive concessions scattered here and there—and this at a time when the gift was definitely given! Those concessions are as follows.

- Verse 2: with tongues one speaks to God in the form of mysteries, *but* in prophecy one speaks to others for edification and this is why believers should seek to prophesy.

41. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 151.

- Verse 4: with tongues one edifies himself, *but* in prophecy one edifies others.
- Verse 5: I would that you all spoke in tongues, *but* I would rather that you prophesied.
- Verse 14: when I pray in tongues my spirit prays, *but* my understanding is unfruitful, so my decision is to pray in such a way that both are fruitfully involved.
- Verse 17: with tongues you give thanks well, *but* the other person is not edified.
- Verses 18-19: I speak in tongues more than all of you, *yet* in the church I would rather speak five words in our common language than ten thousand otherwise.

In other words, every positive thing said about tongues is a concession followed immediately by a “but” that contrasts a larger good. I find it difficult to glean, from this chapter, any real encouragement to speak in tongues.

4. PROBLEMS WITH THE “MILDLY CHARISMATIC” VIEW OF PROPHECY

Although this is not the primary focus of this presentation, I find it necessary to give some attention to what I view as defects in the view of Carson and Grudem regarding the gift of prophecy. The two interpreters are colleagues in this venture to reinterpret the sign gifts and provide a place for them in today’s church. Thus, what they say about tongues and what they say about prophecy unite in one common understanding.

I will point out five interrelated problems of a Biblical-theological or exegetical nature, interacting mostly with Grudem.

4.1. First is their severe reinterpretation both of *prophecy* and of the *revelation* required for the exercise of that gift. Christian interpreters have traditionally regarded the Biblical prophet as receiving a direct revelation from God and then speaking that revelation as God’s human mouthpiece—a work requiring miraculous, divine intervention in human affairs. Carson and Grudem have reduced this gift to a much lesser phenomenon.

For them, New Testament prophecy does *not* mean that one speaks directly for God in giving people the very message God has given for that purpose. It does not involve receiving direct, propositional revelation from God and then speaking it, as was true for the Old Testament prophets who always gave an infallible word from God. New Testament prophets, and prophets today, receive inner impressions or promptings—“revelation” in a lesser sense—from the Spirit of God and express to their

hearers what they understand the meaning to be. In doing this they may not be entirely accurate.

Grudem identifies New Testament prophecy as “speaking merely human words to report something God brings to mind” and characterizes New Testament revelation as having “only the authority of merely human words.”⁴² In his view, “The prophet could err, could misinterpret, and could be questioned or challenged at any point.”⁴³ That is the reason every “revelation” by a New Testament prophet had to be critically evaluated (1 Cor. 14:29-30). Consequently, the prophetic gift manifested in the New Testament involved no threat to Biblical revelation or the finished Canon. Allowing for prophecy in the church today is likewise no threat. Let all who will prophecy. Then judge what they say in the light of the apostolic faith revealed in Scripture, and no harm will result.

A quotation from Carson helps flesh this out.

What preacher has not had the experience, after detailed preparation for public ministry, of being interrupted in the full flow of his delivery with a new thought, fresh and powerful, interrupting him and insinuating itself upon his mind, until he makes room for it and incorporates it into his message—only to find after the service that the insertion was the very bit that seemed to touch the most people, and meet their needs? Most charismatics would label the same experience a “prophecy.”⁴⁴

Grudem’s view is the same, reflected in his informal comments about the non-charismatic church he attends:

In people’s actual prayer lives as well as in the personal conversation of the pastor in the pulpit to the congregation, people talk about the Lord leading them and guiding them in specific ways. Sometimes in ways it sounds very much like the gift of prophecy to me, but they don’t call it prophecy. They call it prompting or leading. I am thankful for all of that and I am very comfortable being in a home fellowship group where people pray and are

42. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, table of contents, 64.

43. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 69. On pp. 90-92 he cites a number of charismatic writers who appear to agree with his concept of prophecy in the New Testament.

44. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 169.

willing to say how they think the Lord is leading them and guiding them as they pray and what He brings to their minds. And they don't call it prophecy. But I'm thinking, "That sure looks like prophecy to me."⁴⁵

Most of us will hardly recognize prophecy by this re-definition. Indeed, by this definition perhaps we all have the gift! I don't mean to be glib, and in fact I appreciate at least some of Grudem's motives. The interview from which the preceding quotation came reveals that he is concerned with people in the cessationist camp who are "ready to pounce on anyone who speaks of subjective forms of guidance" or on "anyone who speaks of dealing with promptings of the Lord." He believes, as we all might, that some traditionalists are "so suspicious of any emotional component, any subjective component in all of our relationship with God and with others that it tends to quench a vital aspect of the personal relationship with God in the lives of ordinary believers." This often leads, he says, "to a dry orthodoxy" that in turn leads to the church becoming "dry and static."⁴⁶

What I fault, here, is not his desire to avoid formalism and to maintain room for personal promptings from God and being led by the Spirit of God. That is a worthwhile concern—though one that needs careful, Biblical discussion. But it is not necessary to reduce the Biblical gift of prophecy to such promptings in order to keep that in our experience. Anyone who is familiar with the preachers and laity of our denomination on a broad scale is well aware that this openness is far from dead!

More important is the fact that this kind of openness and conscious submission to impressions from the Spirit of God *ought to be the experience of every believer, when in point of Biblical fact the gift of prophecy is not for all Christians* (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28-30). But Grudem winds up in at least indirect contradiction of this, saying that the gift of prophecy is available to all.⁴⁷ It is, for him, a "congregational" kind of prophecy only.

4.2. An essential part of this view is that it requires a radical break in what otherwise seems a continuous seam in the Biblical representation of prophecy. The view provides us with two very different gifts of prophecy (just as Carson's view yields two different gifts of tongues). For Grudem, the New Testament prophets are fundamentally different from

45. Tim Challies, "Continuationism and Cessationism: An Interview with Dr. Wayne Grudem," dated December 13, 2005, and accessed at <http://www.challies.com/archives/interviews/continuationism.php>.

46. Challies, "Interview."

47. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 180.

those of the Old Testament, and their level of authority is commensurately less.

My response to this is that Peter's message at Pentecost at least appears to link New Testament prophecy with Old Testament prophecy.⁴⁸ He quotes the Old Testament God (via the prophet Joel) as saying, "I will pour out of my Spirit ... and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Acts 2:16-21). In the Old Testament context of those words, New Testament prophecy would most likely suggest the same level of revelation and authority.

Grudem's view reduces revelation, in the New Testament, to little more than a sense of inner prompting or intuition.⁴⁹ Indeed, this means in practical terms that even if a prophecy gives direct instructions to a believer about a course of action, "these instructions should not be considered divine obligations" but should be viewed as the prophet's own fallible report of something he thinks was revealed to him by God.⁵⁰

4.3. One of Grudem's arguments supporting this bifurcation in Biblical prophecy rests on the fact that the New Testament prophets must be judged (1 Cor. 14:29-30), and he cannot picture this as having applied in the Old Testament. Indeed, this point is crucial to the discussion. For both Grudem and Carson it logically implies that no New Testament prophetic utterances were regarded as a revelatory, authoritative word from the Lord, or else the church would not be instructed to judge the message received. This proves, they say, that there could be mistaken notions wrapped up in a "prophecy" that really was prompted by the Spirit of God! Surely, they say, we cannot conceive such a thing as needed, much less encouraged, in response to Old Testament prophecy.

As I see it, there are two things wrong with this. First is the *assumption*—not in itself "exegetical"—that the hearers are judging to sift out the true from the false *within the words of a message that really originated with the Spirit of God* in "prophetic" impulse. That sounds suspicious on its own face. In fact, it seems far more likely that the need for judgment arose in order to distinguish between true and false prophecies or, as Robert

48. Some of my criticism at this point was helpfully influenced by F. David Farnell, "Fallible New Testament Prophecy / Prophets? A Critique of Wayne Grudem's Hypothesis," *The Master's Seminary Journal*, 2:2 (Fall 1991), 157-180. I do not fully endorse all of Farnell's critique.

49. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 111.

50. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 141. Grudem (64-65) is right, I think, to show that the word "reveal" (*apokaluptō*) does not always refer to direct, "special" revelation. Surely God does "uncover" various things to His people in various ways. But that does not reduce *all* revelation to a lesser sort.

Saucy puts it, to separate “that which is prophecy from that which is not.”⁵¹ Grudem’s view, that “each prophecy might have both true and false elements in it, and those would be sifted and evaluated for what they were,”⁵² leaves us with little confidence in prophecy as a gift of God. As a result, believers need to respond to it in the very same manner they would respond to a sermon or a Sunday school teacher, or even to personal advice!⁵³

The second problem is the idea that this need for judgment is radically different from the situation in the Old Testament. We may not at first conceive the Lord asking his people to sit in judgment on the words of Elijah, for example. But, in fact, he *did* ask his people to sit in judgment on prophetic utterances, and in doing so to distinguish the true from the false. Clear examples of the tests to be applied appear in Deuteronomy 13 and 18. If the prophet—even when performing a “sign or wonder” that comes to pass!—entices the hearers to follow gods other than Yahweh, his message and standing are to be rejected (Deut. 13:1-5). Again: if a prophet, even when speaking in the name of the Lord, gives a word that does not “come to pass”—prove out, in whatever form it takes—then that prophet has not spoken from God (Deut. 18:21-22).

There is no reason to think, then, that this need (or basis) for judging the claims of prophets to speak revelation from God was fundamentally different in the two testaments. There is some discontinuity between the testaments, of course, and therefore there will be some differences in detail. But there is also a basic continuity, and this is unnecessarily broken by Grudem’s view. The people are not judging divine revelation, as such; they are judging the *claim* to give divine revelation. Whenever people claim to speak for God, hearers must judge what they say in the light of the truth already known. (And since the Corinthians did not have the full “apostolic deposit” the need was even more critical.)

Verse 29 affirms that “the others”⁵⁴ must perform this evaluative judgment: namely, the congregation as a whole. The writers with whom I am interacting agree.⁵⁵ For some reason, however, they want to disassociate this judging from the exercise of the gift of discernment. No doubt the lat-

51. Saucy, in Grudem, ed., *Four Views*, 147. This does not quite mean to distinguish between true and false *prophets* as such. The question for evaluation would typically be, Is this a word from God?

52. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 61.

53. Which is exactly what Grudem says in *Gift of Prophecy*, 141.

54. The word (*hoi alloi*) is plural in the original.

55. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 57; Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 120; Storms, *Spiritual Gifts*, 114.

ter is broader, but it seems helpful to view the judgment of prophecy as a specific context for, or form of, *discernment*.⁵⁶ The word translated *judge* (*diakrinō*) has a fairly wide range of meanings, including to *pass judgment*, *render a decision*, or *distinguish between*. The root is the same as the noun (*diakrisis*) in 1 Corinthians 12:10, where “discerning of spirits” appears in the list of gifts. The Corinthians must evaluate and decide when a person claimed to speak for God. No doubt those with the gift of discernment would play a vital role in this.

4.4. A somewhat lesser argument of Grudem’s is that Paul felt free to disobey Agabus and the prophets at Tyre, thus showing that their message was not regarded as fully authoritative.⁵⁷ This reflects an old misunderstanding, in my view, of what was happening and what the text actually says in Acts 20:22-23 and 21:4, 10-13.⁵⁸ In these passages, the local prophets were receiving revelation that Paul would be bound in Jerusalem, and it was the *believers* who because of that revelation urged Paul not to go. Paul did not disobey God or the prophets, but he did reject the appeals of the believers who understandably, in light of the infallible revelation, pleaded with him to change his mind. And he did so with firm conviction that he was doing God’s will (20:24; 21:13). This makes sense of all the verses, so that in both 20:22 and 21:4 “the Spirit” means the Holy Spirit, and 21:4 means it was the disciples who urged Paul not to go as a result of what the Spirit had revealed. In 21:11-12 we see exactly how things were happening in various stops on this journey.

Nor can I agree that Agabus (21:10-13) failed to achieve “the kind of accuracy that the Old Testament required for those who speak God’s words” and had “the details wrong.”⁵⁹ By this Grudem means that it was not the Jews who bound Paul but the Romans, and that the Jews did not “deliver” Paul over to the Romans; instead they forcibly took him from them. But this is to force language into too-restrictive molds. We often attribute to people the things they are *responsible* for, even when they did not perform those things directly. Indeed, both Greek and English often use verbs *causatively*, so that Agabus’s words might simply mean that the Jews would cause Paul to be bound and cause him to be delivered to the Gentiles. Paul himself must have understood things this way when he subsequently reported that he was “delivered” (same verb as Agabus

56. I am indebted to Farnell, *Critique*, 177-79, for this idea.

57. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 75.

58. The late Dr. M. R. DeHaan had a series of messages on “The Mistakes of the Apostle Paul,” among which he included Paul’s going to Jerusalem. I developed my understanding of the verses long ago, in response to that.

59. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 78, 80.

used) into the hands of the Romans, clearly implying that this was at the behest of the Jews against whom he had done nothing to deserve such treatment (Acts 28:17)—a decisive answer, I think, to Grudem’s charge.⁶⁰ Indeed, the symbolic act of Agabus with Paul’s sash is very much in the spirit of Old Testament prophecy. Again, *he* did not say that Paul should not go to Jerusalem, only that he would be bound there and fall into the hands of the Gentiles. I see nothing about Agabus’s prophecy that is less than entirely accurate.

4.5. Another essential part of Grudem’s theory is that it was only the New Testament apostles that had the gift of prophecy in the same sense as Old Testament prophets.⁶¹ In support of this he interprets the words “the apostles and prophets” (Eph. 2:20; 3:5) to refer to *one* group of persons rather than two groups (as readers would probably be more likely to think). This is an exegetical issue, of course.

In Ephesians 2:20 the church is said to be built on the foundation of “the apostles and prophets.” Since the words speak to the foundation of truth laid down for the church, for Grudem this honor must be reserved for the apostles. In that case the “prophets” must be the *same* as the apostles. This he supports by noting that in the Greek there is but one definite article linking the two nouns, thus more likely meaning one and the same group: apostles-prophets.⁶²

But there is simply no syntactical rule that in the New Testament two plural nouns linked under one definite article, connected by *and*, must refer to the same persons. They *may* be the same, or they may *not* be; only the context can point in one direction or the other. The decision must be made by the interpreter.

60. I have Saucy, in Grudem, ed., *Four Views*, 231, to thank for pointing out this verse.

61. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 67-68, also argues that since Paul in 1 Cor. 14:37 asserts his own authority over that of the prophets at Corinth, this shows both that the apostles were superior to the regular prophets and that the prophets exercised a lesser authority than Old Testament prophets. This appears to read into Paul more than is justified. He is simply claiming (rightfully) that what he has written in this chapter is, indeed, from the Lord and that anyone, prophet or otherwise, will submit to that or else show that he is not really submitted to God regardless of his claim to be a prophet or spiritual. See Saucy, in Grudem, ed., *Four Views*, 147-148, for an appropriate understanding.

62. Here Grudem is grappling with the same issues that were long ago tackled by Granville Sharp, resulting in what has come to be called the Granville Sharp rule for interpretation of two substantives in the same case joined by *kai* under one definite article. But Sharp’s “rule” does not apply to *plural* nouns, as here. The 2000 edition softens Grudem’s reliance on this grammatical point but nonetheless maintains it. For a more recent grammarian’s discussion of this matter, see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 270-290.

While I cannot say that Grudem's view is grammatically impossible, I can say that it seems clear to me that the context indicates two groups, apostles and prophets. In Ephesians 3:5 the "apostles and prophets" seem even more likely to identify two groups. Indeed, this understanding is surely supported by the fact that in the very same epistle (4:11) Paul clearly distinguishes apostles and prophets as two different gifts. *And there the syntax is not ambiguous.* In all his letters, Paul never again mentions apostles and prophets in the same breath except in 1 Corinthians 12:28, 29—where again it is clear that they are two distinct groups. It seems highly likely, then, that in all four places Paul means two groups. And in that case, the New Testament prophets helped lay the foundation of truth, confirmed in signs and wonders, on which we build the church.⁶³

5. PROBLEMS WITH THE "MILDLY CHARISMATIC" VIEW OF TONGUES

In this section I will offer criticism of the view of Carson, primarily, making some use of Grudem and Storms. Carson's work on 1 Corinthians 12-14 has been recommended as an outstanding example of good Biblical exegesis. I begin by acknowledging this: Carson's exegesis of 1 Corinthians 12-14 is generally excellent. I could hardly do otherwise, since it is so much like my own!⁶⁴

Carson sees the flow of thought of these three chapters in the same way I do. This includes the relationship of each chapter to the whole: namely that chapter twelve emphasizes the unified origin of the spiritual gifts in the one Holy Spirit and their complementary relationship to each other in the one body of Christ; chapter thirteen presents love as the essential context for the exercise of all the gifts; and chapter fourteen first uses the principle of edification as the basis for evaluating the gifts, as illustrated by a comparison of prophecy and tongues, then concludes with directions for governing the use of the gifts in the assembly. Our agreement extends, specifically, to the meaning of 12:31: namely, that the discussion of love in 13:1-13 is the "more excellent way" to be described before turning to an explanation of "the best gifts" (chapter 14) as those most useful for edification of the church. And in most ways his explana-

63. Some interpreters take the prophets in Eph. 2:20 to be *Old Testament* prophets. Pursuing this is beyond the scope of this paper.

64. Both his volume and my Randall House Commentary on 1, 2 Corinthians were published in 1987, so it is certain that neither of us was influenced by the other. It would be foolish of me, of course, to think that Dr. Carson would be aware of, much less make use of, my writings! No doubt both of us were influenced by numerous interpreters of stature.

tion of the comparison between prophecy and tongues in chapter 14 parallels mine.

5.1. My first criticism of Carson's exegesis is that (in a way similar to the redefinition of prophecy) he has on an inadequate basis reduced the gift of tongues to a much less threatening language of prayer, and preferably for *private* prayer (more on the latter below). Carson regards the gift of tongues, in 1 Corinthians, as specifically a form of *prayer*.⁶⁵ He can do this, of course, only because he makes the tongues in 1 Corinthians different from those in Acts 2, and I will come back to that below.

In his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14 itself, Carson first limits the meaning of the words "speaks ... to God" (v. 2) to prayer. This, I believe, is exegetically unwarranted. In context, speaking to God refers to the fact that other humans will not be addressed or understand. The second half of the verse, introduced by *for* (*gar*) is the reason for the first half. Whether in prayer or testimony or any other form of speech, a person speaking in tongues is understood *only* by God. Indeed, all spiritual speech—speech in the context of a Christian assembly—whatever its form, is at root speech to, or for, or in respect to God (the meaning of the Greek dative case), but when such speech is in a foreign language not understood by the congregation God is the *only* one who gets the message.

It seems clear that the matter of *prayer* in tongues does not arise in the passage until 14:14. If tongues speech was entirely a form of prayer, it is strange indeed that this is the first time the word *prayer* is associated with it, and equally strange that the gift is not (at least occasionally) named "praying in tongues." One should read again chapter 12, when the gift was twice named, then read 13:1, and finally read 14:2, 4, 5, 6, and 13. No hint that this is a form of prayer can be detected up to this point.

Indeed, in 14:6 the idea of prayer is foreign to the context: "Now I, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by a revelation or by [a word of?] knowledge, or by prophecy, or by a teaching?" Surely Paul does not contemplate "coming to" the Corinthians in prayer! The contrast would be essentially destroyed by viewing it as prayer. Paul is talking specifically about speech addressed to the congregation.

Furthermore, to make the use of tongues strictly a form of prayer destroys what seems clearly to be the three-fold reference to activities in church in verses 14-16: prayer, singing, and blessing or giving thanks. All of these must then become varieties of prayer, and while that may be eas-

65. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 104. Storms, in Grudem, ed., *Four Views*, 215, agrees that "speaking in tongues is a form of *prayer*." (Italics his.)

ier to conceive for the third, efforts to regard the singing as prayer are unconvincing. For that matter, even the third appears to be more like what we would call a word of praise or testimony.

Finally, the references to tongues in the latter part of the chapter certainly do not support the view that praying in tongues is meant. Verse 26 lists, in the same breath, “a psalm, a teaching, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation”: all of them address the congregation. Nor do verses 27-28 suggest prayer, let alone verse 39.

One may ask why, if praying in a tongue actually enhances one’s sense of God’s presence, only *some* Christians should have that gift? Carson is firm, and right, in his discussion of 1 Corinthians 12:28-30 (and elsewhere), to insist that *not all believers receive this gift!*⁶⁶

In the end, whether tongues were limited to prayer or exercised more broadly, the question of cessation is the same. But it strikes me that this is one of Carson’s exegetical moves that enables him to push the gift into the privacy of one’s prayer-closet without taking it away altogether. And that leads to my second criticism of Carson’s exegesis.

5.2. Although Carson does not quite close the door to public use, it is clear that he really prefers to see this gift exercised in private and not in the church. This is how he personally influenced the outcome of the issue in a church he served as pastor, and it satisfied him. Under his leadership, the church decided it would not actually oppose a public instance of tongues if it occurred, but “those who felt they had the gift were encouraged to practice it in private.”⁶⁷

It is entirely mysterious to me how Carson can find justification in 1 Corinthians 14 for prayer in tongues in private. In the first place, if what I have just said is correct, tongues were not limited to prayer at all—and in that case they certainly cannot be limited to private prayer. In the second place, even if one lets the prayer-context of verses 14-15 swallow up references to tongues in the whole three chapters (as unlikely as that is), it is unambiguously clear that the context of chapter 14 is public worship!⁶⁸

If anyone can promote the use of tongues in *private* prayer, it is well nigh impossible to see how he can do so based on 1 Corinthians 14.

66. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 50.

67. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 187. At various times he hints or speaks more directly about this approach.

68. He does acknowledge this: “That Paul has been talking about what he expects the tongues-speaker to do in the church is now confirmed by verse 16.” Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 104. The only way I can see to make Carson consistent is to view him as meaning that the tongues-speaker was *praying* in public.

Essentially everything in this chapter, if it justifies tongues at all, justifies it *in the church service*. The failure of others to understand the tongues (v. 2) can only be true when others are addressed. The rhetorical possibility of “coming to” them speaking in tongues (v. 6) is coherent only in that light. The response of others with an Amen (v. 16) can occur only in a public meeting. The prescribed limit of three to speak in tongues, and then only when an interpreter is present (vv. 27-28) makes no sense apart from the assembly. Indeed, the need for an interpreter (v. 13) clearly implies the need for others to understand. Nor does verse 39 sound like a warning against forbidding people from praying privately in tongues.

This is what I meant, earlier, when I said that there is nothing in the New Testament about praying in private in tongues. Anyone who clings to the validity of that practice is not basing it on New Testament exegesis. Furthermore, if there is no need to limit tongues to private use, in the New Testament, there is at the same time no need to limit them to prayer.

5.3. The position of Carson and Grudem, even if unintentionally, leads logically to the possibility that *all* believers have access to the gift of tongues (and to the gift of prophecy), in spite of the clear and unambiguous teaching of 1 Corinthians 12:29-30 that all believers do *not* possess either of these two gifts.

On several occasions Carson sounds the proper note that tongues are not for all. The question, however, is simply this: what *value* do they have for the person who uses them (as Carson believes best) in private prayer—or in any other way, for that matter? On one occasion he cites (possibly with approval, certainly without disapproval) another author who speaks of tongues “primarily as a more intense prayer experience in the worship of the inexpressible God.”⁶⁹ If prayer in tongues is “more intense,” that is at least some benefit. But Carson himself says essentially nothing—unless I missed it—that ascribes *any* benefit to the user.

Third Wave teachers are not so reticent, at least not if they are well represented by Storms. He exudes enthusiasm for its benefits, claiming that “most will testify how it has served to enhance and deepen their relationship with the Lord Jesus” and that tongues are often “highly emotional and exhilarating,” bringing peace and joy.⁷⁰ Consequently he asks the logical question, why God would withhold such a precious gift from any of his children.⁷¹ And his answer is that He would not, which leads Storms to “solve” the problem of 1 Corinthians 12:29-30 by suggesting

69. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 79.

70. Storms, *Spiritual Gifts*, 120, 127.

71. Storms, *Spiritual Gifts*, 128.

that there are two forms of the gift even in this epistle: (1) a more formal gift to a few that enables them to minister publicly, the gift of 1 Corinthians 12; and (2) a more congregational gift that is available to all for private prayer, the gift of 1 Corinthians 14.⁷²

I do not approve of this, of course, but I am inclined to wonder if Storms has not followed the logic where it leads, once one starts down the path of Carson's defining down the gift as a language of prayer. Grudem has also followed that logic and speaks freely of the "availability of prophecy to all Christians."⁷³

5.4. Just as the mildly charismatic view divorced New Testament prophecy from Old Testament prophecy, so it also divorces the tongues at Corinth from those in Acts 2. Both Third Wave teachers like Storms and the mildly charismatic Evangelicals like Carson and Grudem agree that the tongues in Acts 2 were human languages, miraculously spoken by people who did not know those languages (and naturally heard by those who did). But they are just as sure that the languages in 1 Corinthians 12-14 were not. Instead, as manifested in 1 Corinthians 14 and in the church today, the tongues are "free vocalization," during which a person utters syllables that belong to no recognizable language patterns but are "coded" so that only another gift (interpretation/translation of tongues) can reveal their meaning either to the speaker or to others.⁷⁴

This bifurcation of the gift of tongues in the New Testament is a serious exegetical weakness, in my opinion, unnecessarily complicating the text. After all, the language of the two passages, when it identifies the gift, is the same. Why must we now have, in effect, two different sorts of tongues to deal with? I am reminded of "Occam's razor," an old principle of logic, which posits that the most likely explanation of something is the one that is the simplest, that contains the fewest assumptions. I think the Biblical phenomenon known as tongues is best understood as a single gift.

Carson makes a brave effort to tie the two together, arguing that they are two forms of the same underlying gift that "serve a diversity of functions."⁷⁵ But his strong plea for this ("The differences in purpose or role should be embraced, not constrained by the dictates of a reductionistic grid.") sounds like special pleading. In the end, it matters little whether the tongues in Acts and in 1 Corinthians are two forms of the same basic

72. Storms, *Spiritual Gifts*, 129-30.

73. Grudem, *Gift of Prophecy*, 180.

74. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 85-86.

75. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 157.

gift (“1a and 1b”) or two different gifts (“1 and 2”). Either way, they are not the same, and—especially important—the exegetical conclusions drawn from one passage cannot support any understanding of the other.

Indeed, Storms complicates the evidence even more, postulating what amounts to *three* Biblical gifts—though he, too, calls them one: foreign languages in Acts 2, a gift to a limited few for public use of tongues in 1 Corinthians 12, and a gift available to any believer for private prayer in 1 Corinthians 14.⁷⁶

There are, of course, some “advantages” to the bifurcation. One can clearly and Biblically affirm—as Carson does—that (as is clear in the text) the tongues in Acts 2 were foreign languages, and tongues-speakers today definitely do not speak foreign languages (as is clear linguistically). And yet, by taking the tongues in Corinth as “a different form” of the gift one can allow tongues today.

By the same token, one can Biblically and correctly assert—as Carson does—that speaking in tongues is *not* an evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and is *not* a gift that was intended for every believer. And yet one can make room for people who claim the gift of tongues to exercise that gift, even if encouraged to do so only at home in prayer.

Likewise, one can recognize—as Carson does—that the gift signifies nothing about the level of one’s spirituality and that the overall impact of Paul’s treatment of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 is negative. He speaks, for example, of the “sustained downplaying of tongues in chapter 14.”⁷⁷ And yet one need not think that the gift was of such a nature as to fade from the scene in the providence of God, thus making a place for it in today’s church—so long as its practitioners will keep it in a quiet place.

The question really is this: Was it the exegesis that led to these advantages, or was it the advantages that led to the exegesis?

CONCLUSIONS

Wrapping this up in a small package is not easy. I will attempt to do this in two steps, and the first is to express my perception of the mildly charismatic movement as a whole. These men move in larger circles than most of us. They encounter apparently genuine and godly Christians who support the continuation of all the *charismata* and at the same time wish for peace between the charismatic and non-charismatic wings of the Evangelical church. This has driven them to study carefully what the

76. Storms, *Spiritual Gifts*, 129-130.

77. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 36.

New Testament has to say about tongues and prophecy, and the result is a middle way between traditional charismatic and non-charismatic thinking.

The first thing they have found is that the traditional response to Pentecostalism is right: tongues are *not* a sign of the baptism of the Spirit and are *not* intended for all Christians. We are grateful for this finding, as well as for the frank acknowledgement that those who speak in tongues are not speaking in human languages as did those in Acts 2. They have found something else, however, in the nooks and crannies of their exegesis: some grounds for defining down the gifts we thought were miraculous in order to fit in with the continuationist view of the gifts.

Thus defined, the gifts are neither so spectacular as we thought nor so threatening. We can make room for them in the church, they say. Prophecy is little more than Spirit-prompted impulses, requiring the same evaluation that one must give to a pastor or teacher. Tongues-speaking is a language of prayer, preferably in private. This way, the gifts we feared can be kept under control, and we do not have to take the hard road of arguing that they were meant to be temporary in the life of the church. We can put to rest the issue that has created such division. We can be continuationists, mildly charismatic, without being Pentecostal.

This is, of course, my perception—and perhaps a highly presumptuous one at that. It may even be inaccurate, at least if it is taken to speak to motives. As a statement about results, however, it seems a likely one.

The second step is to summarize why I think this approach to prophecy and tongues will not be successful, to any large degree, except among those already open to Third Wave theology. Here are some reasons I have for saying that, in the end, this “mildly charismatic” perspective is not persuasive.

1. As is often the case, the middle position will finally satisfy neither side.

2. People will recognize that Grudem’s view of prophecy amounts to little more than applying a Biblical term in a new way, using it to identify the regular experiences of Christians sensitive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

3. As I have noted earlier, the evaluation of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 is characteristically negative, with scattered positive concessions placed in contrast to a larger good—and this at a time when the gift was definitely given!

Carson himself testifies to “the sustained downplaying of tongues in chapter 14.”⁷⁸ And when he finally describes the way he and his church dealt with the issue he acknowledges, with satisfaction, that “the general effect was to downplay the importance of the phenomenon,” which, he says, “is surely in line with one of Paul’s aims in 1 Corinthians 12-14.”⁷⁹ This is a telling admission, even if he means that Paul downplayed the tongues only because the Corinthians wrongly valued or abused the gift.

4. Such gifts as these cease to be *sign* gifts in any meaningful sense. We are grateful that these interpreters do not think of tongues as signs of Spirit-baptism or even of a higher level of spirituality. As Storms makes the point, “*tongues is not a sign of anything*!”⁸⁰ But they have taken away the element of miracle that seems to be obvious in the Biblical picture of such gifts. In their view, both tongues and prophecy are only mildly, if at all, “miraculous.” They have no value as “signs and wonders.” They cannot be tested.

5. In my earlier booklet, *What the Bible Says about Tongues*, I concluded with the question, What if I’m wrong? Similarly, I ask now, What if the argument for cessationism is not convincing? In that case, I would observe that the Third Wave and mildly charismatic thinkers are still wrong. No objective exegesis of the New Testament can demonstrate: (1) that the gifts of tongues and prophecy, in any sense, are available to all believers; (2) that tongues are “free vocalization”; (3) that tongues are meant to be a language of prayer; or (4) that the tongues are for *private* prayer.

6. Interpreting the tongues in Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 as two gifts, even as two forms of the same gift, is especially disappointing, raising as it does the need to explain two different sets of phenomena: the gift of foreign languages and the gift of a non-human language. This means that the exegetical results at one place (Acts 2, where the explanation is clearer) cannot carry over to the other. A solution that views them both as the same phenomenon will remain more satisfactory to most interpreters.

7. In the end, any exegesis of 1 Corinthians 14, regardless how capable and correct, depends entirely on the more basic issue of cessationism versus continuationism. My pragmatic judgment is that neither side has made an exegetical case that will finally win the other side over. Most cessationists will continue to hold that position, and in that case the exercise of the gifts at Corinth proves nothing about the validity of the gifts for

78. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 36.

79. Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, 187.

80. Storms, *Spiritual Gifts*, 120. The emphasis is his.

today. Paul wrote the words while the gift was most certainly current. Whatever is positive about the gift, there, is positive only so long as the gift exists. Whatever is negative or speaks about regulating the gift applies only so long as it is meant to be in use.

This is an obvious point, of course, but it is easy to miss it. Storms misses it precisely in his response to Gaffin's assertion that Paul's advice to the tongues-speaker in 1 Corinthians 14:28 cannot refer to private prayer because the context pertains to the church assembly (as I have argued above). Storms says, "But if this were the case, it would seem to put Gaffin in the position of endorsing the legitimacy of ... speaking in tongues *in the corporate meeting of the church*, a view that I am quite certain he would not want to embrace."⁸¹ But in fact Gaffin would have to accept this "legitimacy" *only for the period when the gift was being given*, and I see no reason he would object to that! I certainly would not.

It is easy to fall into this trap. Every interpreter must be on guard lest impressive discussion of what the text meant at the time, when the circumstances were as described, causes one to lose himself in the discussion and forget an equally important and more fundamental question: are the sign gifts still given? I think there is enough positive Biblical evidence about the nature and purpose of the sign gifts to conclude that they were not meant to continue past the apostolic period.

Note: I had thought to add a brief bibliography, here, for further reading on this subject. But when I thought to do this I recognized that the footnotes will point the reader to the very sources I might otherwise have listed.

81. Storms, "A Third Wave Conclusion," *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*, 319-320.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Theology for the Church. Edited by Daniel L. Akin. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2007. 979 pp. \$49.99 hardback.

Edited by Daniel L. Akin, *A Theology for the Church* is written by numerous authors, including pastors, professors, college presidents, and deans. While its primary audience is pastors, it is written as well for laypersons, Sunday school teachers, and academics. In this book the authors lament the fact that theology is more an academic discipline than a pastoral one. R. Albert Mohler, Jr. writes, "Today's pastors must recover and reclaim the pastoral calling as inherently and cheerfully *theological*" (pp. 927, 930).

The book addresses the doctrines of revelation, God, humanity, Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the church, and last things. Each chapter is organized around four central questions. While this approach is unique, content that is otherwise difficult is made easier to understand.

First, the author asks the reader to consider what the Bible says about a given doctrine. As Christians, we certainly should look there first. Akin writes, "Biblical illiteracy is a great enemy of the church" (p. viii). While each author has a unique method, as a rule each considers the Scripture in a systematic, chronological fashion. In this section, the author will often consider the Scriptures in their historical and literary contexts, conduct word studies, and add commentary.

Secondly, the author considers what the church has believed throughout history regarding the doctrine in question. Although this question is often neglected in our culture, it is of the utmost importance. A thorough knowledge of history helps us avoid the logical fallacy of thinking that we are superior to our forefathers, what C.S. Lewis dubbed as "chronological snobbery." In this section the author considers popular movements, important periods, heresies, and important figures throughout Christian history. Notably, each chapter gives particular attention to Baptist history.

The third question is how it all fits together. It is one thing to know what the Bible or Christian history says about a given doctrine; it is quite another to make sense of it and interpret it in light of the Biblical and historical evidence.

Finally, the author asks the reader to consider the significance of the doctrine for the church today. In this section, the technical and theoretical become applicable and practical.

While a Free Will Baptist reader will agree with many of the theological positions presented, he should remember that the authors are Southern Baptists. As a result, some of the theology differs from the Free Will Baptist position on such matters as Arminianism versus Calvinism, the ordinance of footwashing, and church polity. These considerations notwithstanding, *A Theology of the Church* is generally an easy-to-understand, well-organized, text of Baptist systematic theology. To supplement his reading, the Free Will Baptist may want to consult Robert E. Picirilli's *Grace, Faith, Free Will*.

While it is impossible to review a book of this volume adequately in just a few pages, the remainder of the review will offer a brief summary and critique of each chapter.

Chapter 1, "Prolegomena: Introduction to the Task of Theology," by Gregory Alan Thornbury. In this chapter the author considers worldview issues. He argues that truth is ultimately derived from God and that theology is an attempt to understand that truth. The chapter ends with a quotation from Millard Erickson that Christians would be wise to heed: "History shows ... that a theology that blends too fully with its culture tends to prosper and decline with its culture" (p. 70).

Chapter 2, "Natural Revelation," by Russell D. Moore. While creation unmistakably attests to the existence of God, Moore contends that human depravity limits our interpretation of it. Only special revelation can make perfect sense of it. He writes, "Churches should equip those gifted in all areas to pursue excellence, order, symmetry, and beauty—even when these disciplines are not explicitly ecclesial or 'Christian'" (p. 116). Moore gives special attention to the Biblical texts of Genesis 1-3, Job 38-41, John 1, and Romans 1-3, as well as Thomas Aquinas's "five proofs" for the existence of God.

Chapter 3, "Special Revelation," by David S. Dockery and David P. Nelson. The whole of special revelation centers on the person of Jesus Christ, who is the very Word of God. While the authors discuss some of the most popular theories regarding the Bible's inspiration—including the views of encounter, dynamic inspiration, dictation, and illumination—they emphatically adopt a plenary, verbal, inclusive view of inspiration. Topics discussed include disputes surrounding canonicity and inerrancy.

Chapter 4, "The Nature of God: Being, Attributes, and Acts," by Timothy George. In this chapter, George considers the doctrine of the

Trinity, the various names of God, and the characteristics of God. He is the Lord of history, the keeper of promises, Immanuel, the Alpha and Omega. He is holy, loving, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. Although George clearly embraces Calvinism, he writes, "Divine sovereignty and significant human freedom are not competitive exclusives" (p. 233). Our knowledge of God's nature should have implications for our preaching, worship, evangelism, prayer, witness, and public life.

Chapter 5, "The Work of God: Creation and Providence," by David P. Nelson. The author helpfully explains the theories surrounding the doctrines of creation and providence. Creation is fallen and, as a result, humanity must turn to the Lord of creation for its salvation and sanctification. Christians should give respect to and show dignity for human life, while recognizing the great value and importance of all creatures and of the environment. In light of the doctrine of providence, Nelson addresses topics such as the problem of evil, prayer, and discipleship. He also considers the debate between libertarian freedom and volitional freedom, or incompatibilism and compatibilism.

Chapter 6, "The Agents of God: Angels," by Peter R. Schemm. This chapter begins with the creation of angels, as well as their nature, purpose, and appearance. Schemm's application is particularly notable, as he considers topics such as spiritual warfare and guardian angels.

Chapter 7, "Human Nature," by John S. Hammet. According to the Westminster Catechism, the chief end of man is "to glorify God and enjoy him forever." The author begins by discussing the constitution of the body, the fall, human relationships, and the ethics of work and leisure. Very good are the distinctions he draws between the body, flesh, soul, spirit, heart, mind, and conscience, after which he adopts a dichotomous view of the human being. Other topics he addresses include singleness, marriage, homosexuality, contraception, accountability, and community. Of particular interest is his discussion of male-female egalitarianism versus complementarianism.

Chapter 8, "Human Sinfulness," by R. Stanton Norman. After presenting the Bible's conceptions of sin, Norman considers the base root of sin, concluding that idolatry is the essence of sin. Other theories he explores include the disruption of *shalom*, selfishness, pride, sensuality, rebellion, or unbelief. In discussing human depravity, Norman posits that sin affects our relationship with God, other persons, and ourselves.

Chapter 9, "The Person of Christ," by Daniel L. Akin. After studying the most significant Biblical texts relating to Christ, Akin chronicles the early years, baptism, temptation, ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, and

ascension of Christ. Akin gives an excellent presentation on the Christological heresies of the early church and the councils that attempted to correct them. While his application section is his weakest, this may be the most solid chapter in the book.

Chapter 10, "The Work of Christ," by Paige Patterson. This chapter begins with the offices and work of Christ. He is prophet, priest, and king, and through His atoning work we have redemption and reconciliation with God. Patterson gives a good overview on the theories of the atonement—including the ransom theory, satisfaction theory, governmental theory, classical view, penal substitution view, moral influence view, and example theory. In considering limited atonement versus general atonement, he treats the subject fairly and with respect.

Chapter 11: "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit," by Malcolm B. Yarnell III. Although this chapter is somewhat dry, it is important, if for no other reason, because Baptists are often too timid about the Spirit. After discussing the Spirit's activity through the course of the testaments, he considers the pneumatological heresies of the early church and the statements of the councils. Of particular importance, he explores the events leading up to the Great Schism of 1054, which asked whether the Spirit proceeds only from the Father or from the Son as well. One troubling feature of this chapter is his treatment of Arminianism, however. It is his contention that Arminians limit the Spirit.

Chapter 12, "The Work of God: Salvation," by Kenneth Keathley. For Free Will Baptists, this is the most controversial chapter of the book. Although Keathley holds to a Calvinist view of depravity, election, atonement, grace, and perseverance, he gives an equitable treatment to the different viewpoints. He writes, "Most Christians accept that God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are simultaneously true even if they disagree about how to reconcile these biblical doctrines" (p. 707). He also discusses the conditions of salvation (conversion and regeneration) and the components of salvation (justification and sanctification).

Chapter 13, "The Church," by Mark E. Dever. The author begins with a word study of *church*, or assembly. As stated in the Nicene Creed, the church is one, holy, universal, and apostolic. Dever maintains that the true church has two distinct marks: namely, the right preaching and the right administration of the ordinances. It is the author's position that there are only two ordinances, namely, the Lord's Supper and baptism. In these ordinances, we are humiliated, crucified, and buried and resurrected with Christ. Interestingly, while exploring issues relating to polity, Dever takes the position that the New Testament presents a model of

multiple elders (ministers) for the local church. Other topics he considers include church membership and church discipline.

Chapter 14, "Personal and Cosmic Eschatology," by Russell D. Moore. This doctrine is often neglected. Topics that are covered include the resurrection of the body, Heaven and Hell, judgment and punishment, the antichrist, the second coming, the millennium, and the new earth. In giving application to this doctrine, Moore considers the Christian's hope, personal ethics, and social action.

In conclusion, *A Theology for the Church* is a significant text on Baptist systematic theology. Pastors particularly would benefit from reading through it, though lay Christians would also be well served. Some theological considerations notwithstanding, this book, though long, is well worth the time and labor to read it.

Matthew Bracey
Student, Cumberland Law School of Samford University
Birmingham, Alabama

Visionary Parenting: Capture a God-sized Vision for Your Family. By Rob Rienow. Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 2009. 140 pp. \$12.99 paperback.

Shelter: Being an Intentional Parent in a Random World. By Jimmy Holbrook. Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 2009. 95 pp. \$12.99 paperback.

Rob Rienow, author of *Visionary Parenting*, served as youth pastor at Wheaton Bible Church in Wheaton, IL, from 1993 to 2004 and is now family pastor. He also authored the book *God's Grand Vision for the Home*. He and his wife Amy have founded an organization called Visionary Parenting (www.visionaryparenting.com), seeking to inspire parents and grandparents to disciple their children and equip churches to build Biblical family ministries.

Jimmy Holbrook, author of *Shelter*, began ministry as a youth pastor but now pastors Harrah Free Will Baptist Church just east of Oklahoma City. He is a graduate of the first class of Focus on the Family Institute of Colorado Springs, Colorado, and of Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College of Moore, Oklahoma.

It has been said that "the hand that rocks the cradle shakes the world." Nothing compares with the awesome responsibility, privilege, and

challenge of parenting, yet most parents have little formal instruction to guide them in the journey. Well, the job just got a little easier with the release of these two books by Randall House in 2009. Few, if any, topics are more relevant for today's family when parenting is in such crisis.

Each of the ten chapter headings in Rob Rienow's *Visionary Parenting* includes sub-titles expressed in the form of a biblical vision or goal he wants his readers to capture. The eight chapters in *Shelter* by Jimmy Holbrook build a strong case for making the home a safe place. The book is not about sheltering children from a dangerous culture so much as it is about "building a shelter of development in the midst of a dangerous culture" (p. 12). It is about protecting the sensitive spirits and fragile emotions of children from the dangerous storms of life such as rejection and failure. The title takes on a logical connection with the practice of building storm shelters or "safe rooms" in homes in "tornado alley," where the author lives and ministers.

The two books occasionally share common experiences, themes, and assumptions. That being true, I will examine some of the commonalities first. These similarities begin with the fact that each author's vocation began as a youth minister. Each experienced a crisis prompting a painful re-evaluation and prioritizing of his life. What both authors had claimed all along—God first, family and children second, and work last—became reality and not just an empty truism. Both authors have families with five children and are actively engaged in rearing them. The rich overflow of their new-found passion and experiences formed the seed bed and inspiration for these two books.

The most important similarity of these books is apparent in the first chapter of each, as God's purpose and design for the family is addressed. Both authors' burden and passion is intentional parenting dedicated to the Biblical responsibility of passing faith on to the next generation. This approach flies in the face of the modern trend of outsourcing spiritual responsibility to the church or Christian school, followed by the near total absence of talk about God and prayer in the average Christian home.

Rienow argues that the most important parenting mission is to lead our children to salvation, and he describes the first action step as impressing the hearts of our children with love for God as seen in the Great Commandment (Deut. 6:5-7). God's primary plan of evangelism and discipleship is from parent to child, and no one else can compete with the power of a parent to shape the heart of a child. This point is reinforced when he adds that only twenty-three percent of all the Christians in the United States became believers after the age of twenty-one (pp. 6-7).

Holbrook agrees that God's purpose for the family is that it be a place where values are transferred to the next generation. He recognizes that strong families do not happen by accident but through discipline and commitment, which are difficult to maintain apart from a vision of God's design and purpose for the home.

Another theme both books share centers on discipline. Holbrook claims that the goal of parenting is intentionally finding areas at every opportunity to move children from total "parental control," as at birth, to "self-control." The more effective parents are in teaching self-control, the easier it is for children to place themselves under God's control and respect for authority.

In the words of Rienow, children are to learn obedience and submission to loving parents they can see, so that they are ready to learn obedience and submission to a loving God they cannot see. He also shows that *discipline* comes from the root word *disciple*, a concept implied in his chapter heading "Discipline that Disciples." This discovery prompted him to change his vocabulary from "Honey, we have a discipline situation that has to be dealt with" to "We have a discipleship situation" (p. 117). Both books offer Biblical, insightful, and practical advice on the subject of discipline.

Each book has its own unique features. For example, in addition to a chapter on discipline, Rienow devotes another to discipleship. He identifies the family as a discipleship center, a spiritual transformation center, which becomes the primary environment where character is shaped. He views spiritual growth as happening in the context of relationships, and he characterizes the family as the most powerful discipleship "small group" in the world.

He has a simple five-word formula for disciplining children to love God and keep His Word. It is "impress them on your children" (Deut. 6:7, NIV), and he unpacks the process in four simple statements lifted from the passage and labeled by him as "four power moments." Parents are to talk to their children (a revolutionary concept!) when they are sitting at home, when they are walking along the road, when they get up in the morning, and when they go to bed at night. Rienow credits the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night with having the greatest potential as the first and last words of the day heard by children and pointing them toward Christ. The reality is that "God wants us to share spiritual life with our children multiple times every day" (p. 13). Parents are urged to choose a time, start small, build a new habit, expect an assault from Satan, and refuse to get discouraged. In a word of direct encouragement,

he also reminds us that “God never calls us to do something and then abandons us when we seek to be obedient” (p. 14).

An especially relevant chapter by Holbrook is designed to guide parents in helping their children develop a Christian worldview, described by him as the lens through which a person perceives the world and interacts with it. With the rise of moral relativism and the unseating of absolutes, a Christian worldview may no longer be considered automatic. He insists that God designed the family to be the place that centers all of life on Him, therefore making it the best context for letting daily life and family life orbit around God. He warns that the lack of a Christian worldview may explain why so many children stray from the church: “They are incapable of thinking ‘Christianly’” (p. 75). Parents are called on to be proactive in teaching truth but are also reminded of the importance of listening for positive and negative signals that reveal their child’s belief system. Furthermore, parents must maintain conversation with their children to determine what they believe.

Holbrook also has a valuable chapter on conflict and the importance of children’s learning conflict resolution by observing their parents. It provides sound advice many couples will find beneficial in managing conflict; however, I am concerned that several strongly worded comments in the opening paragraphs could be misinterpreted and misapplied by individuals from extremely dysfunctional or abusive family backgrounds. My fear is that such readers may conclude that shouting matches and fighting are normal, even in Christian homes, although I do not believe that is the impression the author intends to convey.

Two chapters of *Visionary Parenting* provide the high water mark of this book. One of the chapters is devoted to family worship, which Rienow tags as the power center of the home. The other chapter describes what the calendar of the godly home should look like. Both chapters are very practical and filled with examples from the Rienow household. He claims without apology that daily life and regular family schedule are powerful influences in shaping our children’s hearts, because the calendar is a strong indicator of our priorities. A God-filled daily life involves talking about spiritual things, a godly life-style, prayer, and Scripture. He encourages talk about daily work, relationships, movies, music, and difficult challenges of life from a spiritual perspective. Parents should take advantage of appropriate media to spark significant spiritual conversations and point daily decisions back to the Word of God. Convinced that a family calendar is the measure of one’s values and priorities, he says it teaches your children what you prize most in life. He says, “Visionary

parenting is having the courage to choose a different schedule and a different calendar for your family" (pp. 40-41).

Regarding family worship and talk about God, Rienow's surveys indicate that less than fifteen percent of today's parents grew up in homes where they had some type of family worship. He demonstrates that this is in stark contrast to the greater part of church history, during which parents understood that they were called to disciple their children. He quotes from the likes of Matthew Henry, John Knox, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, and others to validate his claim. Family worship is presented by Rienow as being the intersection of a right relationship with God and the family and the foundation for worship in the church.

Rienow advises that it is never too late to start family worship, though he reminds fathers to start small, to set reasonable goals they know they can accomplish, and to begin by aiming for something more than they are doing now. Our children need us to open up the Bible and to read to them with the conviction that it is the very Word of God. We are to pray and sing together and share experiences—highs and lows. The abundance of rich, practical, and creative examples in this book makes family worship more possible—even for the inexperienced.

Each book is practical, principle-centered, easy to read, and worthy of finding its way into the hands and hearts of parents, grandparents, pastors, youth pastors/leaders, and children's church workers. Either book will certainly enhance parenting skills and family dynamics, but *Visionary Parenting* is more generously provided with practical examples and usable ideas drawn from life application in the author's family. Each chapter also includes serious questions for reflection at the end. While I was writing this review, I learned that this book has been nominated by Christian Small Publishers Association as Book of the Year (2009) in the Non-fiction, Christian Living category.

I have already mentioned some of the merits of *Shelter*, but some of the metaphors used throughout the book were a bit distracting to me, or perhaps even in conflict with the overarching theme encompassed in the idea of "shelter." I also felt that a more generous use of examples or illustrations would have been helpful for couples who may find intentional parenting overwhelming and intimidating. Nevertheless, *Shelter* is a worthwhile investment of time and money.

Wendell Walley
California Christian College
Fresno, California

Restoring Integrity in Baptist Churches. Edited by Thomas White, Jason G. Duesing, and Malcolm B. Yarnell III. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008. 261 pp. \$18.99 paperback.

This book seeks to address what the authors consider the major challenges to Baptist ecclesiology in the modern Evangelical world. It is a team effort, drawing in eleven contributors to focus their attention on church membership, baptism, the Lord's Supper, church discipline, and the priesthood of believers. The book contends that Baptists have lost a clear understanding of these five aspects of ecclesiology in the headlong pursuit of church growth. Early in the book, one of the contributors writes, "American Christianity had long been a democratic, egalitarian, populist movement and as such had generally accommodated popular culture. In other words, American evangelical Christianity was becoming market driven before there was marketing." Any pastor who is even mildly aware of the trends in churches will wonder if these writers are not on to something.

The authors are mostly Southern Baptist academics. Mark Dever, the pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., is the notable exception. Often books that pull together many writers are uneven in quality. It is a tribute to the editors that the writing is both clear and compelling throughout.

As a student of church history I have always appreciated books that put contemporary issues in their historical framework. That is a strong point of this volume. Many of the authors trace their subjects from their Biblical roots through the Reformation and up to the modern day. I was particularly interested to see the contribution of the Anabaptists in what is often called the Radical Reformation. My interest in this aspect of the book was also piqued with the mention of the man affectionately known as the "Prince of Preachers," Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He is quoted favorably for his opposition to baptismal regeneration (p. 66), but is panned for holding to open Communion (pp. 168-71)! The author brings together the comments from several Baptist papers of Spurgeon's day where the American editors referred to their English cousin as a "semi-Baptist," one they could not recognize as a "sound Baptist preacher." While I was surprised at this attack on the pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, it did illustrate the authors' point that Baptists of that generation took the closed Communion position very seriously. In this section dealing with the subject of Communion the authors make passing mention of Free Will Baptists. They write, "American Baptists, with the

exception of some Free Will Baptists, were ardently firm in their view of a closed Communion" (p. 169).

Warren Wiersbe, a noted Christian writer, once advised pastors that they should sometimes read the books of those they disagree with, if only to understand the argument involved. That is what the chapters dealing with Communion and the Priesthood of Believers did for me. I had never read a vigorous defense of the closed Communion position, and I have to admit that such a position might well aid in church discipline. What the authors fail to mention is that the difficult task of telling people they are not qualified to receive the Lord's Supper would still have to be done.

The chapter on the Priesthood of Believers left me with some questions. The authors make the point that this doctrine—or as they might say, the misapplication of this doctrine—has led many Baptists to believe that any sort of doctrinal statement, whether by a denomination, a local association, or a local church, is not binding (p. 238). What they seem to be suggesting is that since the New Testament mention of the "royal priesthood" is plural, we can only experience this collectively, within the local church.

This book is not easy reading. Furthermore, it is written by Southern Baptists with a Southern Baptist readership in mind. Even so, I believe a Free Will Baptist pastor can benefit from reading it. I know that I did.

Randy Corn
Bethlehem Free Will Baptist Church
Ashland City, Tennessee

The Courage to Be Protestant: Truth-lovers, Marketers, and Emergents in the Postmodern World. By David F. Wells. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008. 248 pp. \$17.16 hardback.

Many Evangelical authors in the 1990s and the twenty-first century have devoted significant attention to providing sketches of the Evangelical landscape in both its glory and its ugliness. These include theologians, historians, sociologists, and philosophers. Some certainly have produced more fruitful and accurate books than others. One author's work that has continually been a respected resource in the body of Evangelical literature is David F. Wells, now Distinguished Senior Research Professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

In the early 1990s, Wells was given a grant, along with two other writers, to articulate why theology has disappeared from the Evangelical

church. Wells's book *No Place for Truth, or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* commenced what became a five-book series, which reached its conclusion in 2008 with *The Courage to Be Protestant: Truth-lovers, Marketers, and Emergents in the Postmodern World*.

The Courage to Be Protestant is an intriguing book project because it accomplishes two things: (1) It summarizes the essence of Wells's first four books and presents his main arguments from those books in a clear, concise manner; (2) It expands upon those ideas and applies that analysis to the doctrine of the church (ecclesiology). As he says in the preface, "This book started out as a simple summary of the four volumes that had preceded it. All books, however, develop a life of their own, and this has been no exception" (p. xiii).

Chapter one describes the lay of the Evangelical land, which Wells says consists primarily of three groups: Classical Evangelicals, Marketers, and Emergents. The Classical Evangelicals were those such as Carl Henry, Billy Graham, John Stott, J.I. Packer, Francis Schaeffer, and others who sought to affirm fundamentalism's commitment to doctrine and to add a new element: faithful cultural engagement. This coalition, which emerged shortly after the Modernist-Fundamentalist crisis, was "built around two core theological beliefs: the full authority of the inspired Scripture and the necessity and centrality of Christ's penal substitution" (p. 5).

Eventually the Marketer group of Bill Hybels and others emerged and capitalized on Classical Evangelicalism's achievements in forging institutions, publications, and organizations. But the Marketers presented a rather different understanding of the role of doctrine and the church. Referred to by many as "seeker-sensitive," these Marketers sought to shape their ecclesiology around marketing techniques, the findings of polling data, and other modern conventions.

The Emergents are the third constituency. They have departed doctrinally, both implicitly and explicitly, from the Evangelical faith in hopes of engaging the postmodern world. While the Emergents rightly emphasize the role of authentic Christian community, they do so at the expense of fidelity to Biblical truth.

Chapter two investigates Christianity and the penchant that contemporary Evangelicals have to sell it. The key analogy utilized by the contemporary church is that of a churchgoer as a consumer and the gospel as a product. Thus we have the rise of what Wells calls "Wal-Mart churches." His intention here is not merely to poke fun at the antics of megachurches. Rather, he is trying to show how cultural shifts influence

the mindset of Evangelical pastors and lead them to be more concerned with being entrepreneurs than with teaching, leading, and shepherding.

Chapter three explores the thrust of Wells's first book, *No Place for Truth*. With industrial modernization, massive immigration, and the accompanying religious pluralism and other secularizing forces, the whole notion of absolute truth (and theological truth to boot) is implausible to the postmodern mind. The whole mechanistic sense of life created by technological advance, emerging from an atheistic worldview, creates its own impersonal sensibilities. This has had a huge impact on our communities, our families, and our churches. Not only has it eroded our doctrinal commitments and traditions, it has consequently eviscerated us of our notion of authoritative truth from the outside. Instead, truth now comes only from within. Thus we have the notion of the "postmodern self." In the words of Peter Berger, America ends up like India (a heavily religious populace) being ruled over by Swedes (an extremely secular government).

Chapter four deals with the doctrine of God, the subject of the earlier *God in the Wasteland: The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams*. Wells says that, in a world where absolute truth has become merely relative and all external authorities on the outside (God, revelation, morality) have been diminished, the "Center" is lost. With God and His truth no longer at the center of (post)modern life, conceptions of these things become subjective, internal, and non-binding. Sin and evil are not seen in relation to God's law but as mere "badness." Without definitive, external authorities, people are left without a sure standard or authority needed to evaluate experiences and events and to live meaningfully. All of life's happenings are random, or as Wells says, "There is no way to make sense of the whole picture" (p. 109).

In response, Wells says that the church must stand against the privatization of truth and religion and discover "the outside God," who is holy. The church must rediscover a Biblical view of the moral law, sin, and the cross if she is to engage the postmodern world in its current shape.

David Wells's third book in the series, *Losing Our Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover its Moral Vision*, is expanded upon in chapter five. His concern here is to evaluate what has happened in American culture since the 1960s and how it has impacted the church. (Free Will Baptist readers will be interested to know that Wells is very "Forlinesean" in his account of the 1960s cultural revolution.) In anthropological terms, the culture has shifted from seeing humans as persons to seeing them as selves. The Christian faith has increasingly been analyzed and engaged in therapeutic terms. The preacher is expected to be a therapist and

psychologist instead of the teacher and preacher. Along with this has been the shift from emphasizing values instead of virtues and personality in lieu of character. With this has come the confusion of the meanings of shame and guilt.

Chapter six focuses on Christology, the doctrine discussed in book four, *Above All Earthly Pow'rs: Christ in a Postmodern World*. Polling data shows more and more that Americans do not see themselves as religious but are increasingly fascinated with spirituality. However, this spirituality is not consistent with the Protestant faith; it is more akin to paganism than to Biblical Christianity. Wells attributes much of this to the cultural trends surveyed in his earlier books, but also to the massive immigration of people from all over the world (with their corresponding religions), making America a spiritual melting pot. Wells explores this trend and shows how historic, Biblical understandings of Christ can help stem the tide of this increasingly confused culture of spiritualities.

The book concludes in chapter seven by taking the insights of the prior six chapters and then calling the church to embrace Biblical reform. This really is the heart of Wells's concerns. He suggests that perhaps it is not the church that needs to rethink itself but we as individuals who need to reevaluate our thoughts about the church: "We need to ask ourselves how well, or how badly, we are realizing our life in Christ in the church, how far and how well churches stand as the outposts of the kingdom of God in our particular culture" (p. 223). Wells advocates a return to the sufficiency of Scripture, an emphasis on doctrine, preaching, the sacraments, and discipline. He claims that once we recapture a view of God as the holy one who is sovereign in building the church, then much of our current dissatisfaction and ineffectiveness will be resolved.

Frankly, while all five books in this series are worth their weight in gold, if one has the time for only one of them, *The Courage to Be Protestant* is the one I recommend. While it is a book that merits much consideration and intellectual discipline, it is by far the easiest of the five to read. It summarizes the whole set and has immediate relevance to those in local church leadership.

Some readers might say that Wells makes far too many assertions and unsubstantiated claims, that his criticisms are opinion-driven and not research-driven. Certainly, he is very critical of the contemporary church, especially the Marketers and Emergents. Even so, anyone familiar with the corpus of his work will recognize that he has done vast research in developing his views. He says, early in this book, that he has left out footnotes for the sake of accessibility and that he draws almost entirely upon the notes in the earlier books (p. xiii).

Overall this book is a welcome addition to the literature diagnosing the problems of the Evangelical church. For those interested in theological and pastoral admonitions in addressing these concerns, *The Courage to Be Protestant* is a must read.

W. Jackson Watts
Tippett's Chapel Free Will Baptist Church
Clayton, North Carolina

I Told Me So – Self-deception and the Christian Life. By Gregg A. Ten Elshop. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009. 142 pp. \$15.00 paperback.

A person very close to me deceived me last week. I failed to meet the deadline for a major project because I believed him. This was not the first time he has done this. He manages to deceive me fairly often—sometimes it is only about minor things, sometimes it gets serious. I get really frustrated at him, but he keeps doing it.

The problem is that the deceiver is I. I am guilty of self-deception.

According to Gregg Ten Elshop, I am not alone. We are all capable of—and actually fairly adept at—deceiving ourselves. And why not? As the author explains, when we practice self-deception, we put into operation an “amazingly good thing”: if we can convince ourselves that we are better than average preachers, teachers, or ministers, for example, we can enjoy all the satisfaction that goes with that status, with none—or at least very little—of the hard work.

But, as Ten Elshop points out, “The one catch is that you’d have to do all of this convincing without catching yourself in the act. If you caught yourself in the lie, you’d miss out on the satisfaction that comes from believing, really believing, that you’re doing a better-than-average job” (p. 3). In spite of all evidence to the contrary, we have to convince ourselves that we are not deceiving ourselves. “The beliefs I have about myself and others do not need to be *true* to bring me satisfaction. I only need to *believe* them” (p. 4).

As associate professor and department chair of philosophy at Biola University, Ten Elshop is well equipped to reintroduce the subject of self-deception, both from his philosophical and historical studies and from his admitted personal practice of the art. I say “reintroduce” because in earlier eras of church history, self-deception was often a subject of discussion. The Bible acknowledges the problem: witness Jeremiah’s statement that the heart is extremely deceitful, Paul’s reminders to the

Galatians (thinking themselves to be something when they were nothing) and the Romans (suppressing the truth), and John's declaration that we deceive ourselves if we say we have no sin. Theologians and philosophers, from Thomas Aquinas to Bishop Joseph Butler, have emphasized it also. It was Butler, in the eighteenth century, who said that "the 'self-flattering forms of self-deception' explain a great deal of the wickedness that we encounter in the world." If believers in earlier eras examined the question deeply, however, self-deception is seldom a topic of study in Christian circles today. I personally cannot remember hearing a sermon or a Bible study on the subject.

In *I Told Me So*, Ten Elshof first shows how self-deception can be so pervasive—and so attractive—before looking at beliefs and their relation to deception. He then explains deception itself, what it consists of, how it is related to lying, and how it operates. Self-deception differs from garden variety deception only in that it is self-inflicted. His insightful explanation is written in lay terms but still requires thoughtful reading in order to follow his line of thinking. He explains that self-deception is more insidious today because we place great, even extreme, value on *authenticity*—being true to oneself. Since being genuinely authentic requires brutal honesty with oneself, we can easily deceive ourselves into believing that we are indeed honest with ourselves when in fact we are not. At that point self-deception becomes our operational norm.

Ten Elshof uses nearly half of the book to elucidate techniques we use to deceive ourselves: attention management (I pay attention only to those things that tend to support my desired belief), procrastination (if there is some evidence to the contrary, I put off any action on it; it will eventually fade away), perspective switching (if others see me as a success, I'll take their view rather than my own, which sees my failures), rationalization (I find non-rational reasons for my actions and cite them as the rational basis for what I do), and re-sentiment (the grapes that I wanted but couldn't reach were probably sour anyway). Some may take offense at Ten Elshof's challenging statements about beliefs, but as I read the description of each of these techniques, examples of them from my own life flooded into my thoughts. I am indeed guilty of self-deception. This does nothing for my self-esteem, but it does underscore Jeremiah's statement that the heart is woefully deceitful.

What happens, though, when the evidence is too strong, when we cannot deceive ourselves by ourselves? There is hope, Ten Elshof says: our friends will often lend a hand with our self-deception! A kind of *group-think* can enable us to replace rational truth with implausible illusions as a basis for our actions.

How can we overcome self-deception? Ten Elshof suggests that we should recognize that the capacity for self-deception may, in fact, be a God-given blessing and that the very techniques we use to deceive ourselves can also be used for our good. He proposes three actions that can help us limit the negative effects of self-deception in our lives, the first of which is dying to self.

Throughout this book, Ten Elshof prodded me to think and consider my accepted beliefs about the truthfulness of what I tell myself. Some people may find Ten Elshof unsettling and troubling. He writes in a way that some will consider refreshing and others might call irreverent. Nothing of what he says is contrary to orthodox belief, but he does call into question how we live out the beliefs we declare so fervently. Whether the reader agrees or disagrees with him, his arguments are cogent and thought-provoking, which makes the book well worth the reading.

As the back cover states: "Think you've ever deceived yourself? Then this book is for you. Think you've never deceived yourself? Then this book is *really* for you."

Robert T. Bryan
Free Will Baptist International Missions
France

Word Pictures in the New Testament: Concise Edition, By A. T. Robertson, Ed. James A. Swanson. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000. 696 pp. \$14.97 hardback.

Renowned scholar Archibald Thomas Robertson was born in 1863 near Chatham, Virginia. He grew up on a farm in North Carolina. In 1876, he was baptized and became a lifelong Southern Baptist. After graduating from Wake Forest College, he enrolled in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky, and received the Master of Theology in 1888. In 1892 Robertson was appointed professor at that seminary and remained at his post until a day in 1934 when he dismissed his class early and went home and died of a stroke. Robertson helped found the Baptist World Alliance in 1900. He was an important Southern Baptist and a well-respected scholar in his day. Robertson's books are still consulted today.

Robertson's six volume commentary, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*,¹ has now been published in a one volume work, *Word Pictures*

1. Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 6 volumes (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930-33).

in the New Testament: Concise Edition. It is unlikely that Dr. Robertson ever anticipated his transliteration of the Koine Greek to have been omitted in a "Concise" edition, and he almost certainly thought that the student would have the Westcott and Hort Greek New Testament² wide open as the word pictures were being clarified. Robertson's *Word Pictures* is a first-rate reference for Bible study. The initial work was a creation of meticulous research which emphasized the significant and graphic implications which are frequently contained in the original language but missing in translation. But I was duped by this version. There is little Greek and little grammar that is given explanation. It is a condensed version. The publishers have taken 2767 pages and condensed them into 696 pages. Obviously something had to go to reduce the work by seventy-five per cent.

An example of this reduction of information can be seen in a comparison of his comments on John 3:26 from both editions. The original work (vol. 5, p. 55) says,

Rabbi (Rabbei). Greeting John just like Jesus (1:38; 3:2). *Beyond Jordan (peran tou Iordanou)*. Evident reference to John's witness to Jesus told in 1:29-34. *To whom thou hast borne witness (hōi su memarturēkas)*. Note avoidance of calling the name of Jesus. Perfect active indicative of *martureō* so common in John (1:7, etc.). These disciples of John are clearly jealous of Jesus as a rival of John, and they distinctly blame John for his endorsement of one who is already eclipsing him in popularity. *The same baptizeth (houtos baptizei)*. "This one is baptizing." Not personally (4:2), as John did, but through his six disciples. *And all men come to him (kai pantes erchontai pros auton)*. Linear present middle indicative, "are coming." The sight of the growing crowds with Jesus and the dwindling crowds with John stirred John's followers to keenest jealousy. What a life-like picture of ministerial jealousy in all ages.

Whereas this edition (p. 198) states,

{Rabbi} (cf. John 1:38; 3:2). {To whom thou has borne witness} Note avoidance of calling the name of Jesus. These disciples of John are clearly jealous of Jesus as a rival of

2. Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (London: MacMillan and Company, 1895).

John and they distinctly blame John for his endorsement of one who is already eclipsing him in popularity. {And all men come to him} The sight of the growing crowds with Jesus and the dwindling crowds with John stirred John's followers to keenest jealousy. What a life-like picture of ministerial jealousy in all ages.

Specialized consideration of Greek grammar and syntax has been removed from this *Concise* version. Our knowledge of the actions of the New Testament is deepened by Greek participles. Countless difficult-to-grasp passages are illuminated when one is aware of Greek syntax. Grammar and syntax at times facilitate the comprehension of the words.

A working knowledge of the Greek text is an essential tool for any expositor of God's Word. Some translations are potentially misleading in their doctrinal implications, and without the aid of the Greek language one has difficulty attaining an assurance of a factual understanding. The meanings of words in our language change rapidly. If the expositor is not careful, he is expounding the meaning of the English translation which currently may not accurately convey the root concept. Theological contradictions may result without an understanding of the root concept. An elementary knowledge of Greek grammar provides a gold mine of spiritual and preaching truths because the words of the New Testament make up the fundamentals of Christian theology.

In addition, a great deal of the Biblical introductory data has been removed from the *Concise* edition. Context is of great consequence in ascertaining a word's gist. The word "context" speaks of the backdrop, the circumstances, and the interconnected conditions around a passage that can illuminate its meaning. Statements basically are void of meaning separated from their context. The historical context gives us the writer, date, original readers, objective, and thesis as well as additional significant facts concerning the setting of the book. An essential rule of Biblical interpretation is that a verse or passage must be explained historically, grammatically, and contextually. Knowing the customs, setting, and circumstances which motivated the writer to pen the text aid the reader in coming to a proper interpretation.

In Robertson's six-volume set, one hundred four pages are devoted to background material. In the *Concise* edition, there are approximately thirty pages of this type of information. For example, around eighteen pages are devoted to introductory material for the Gospel of John in the original work. However, only two pages of this type of information appear in the *Concise* edition.

We need to keep in mind that A. T. Robertson was a Southern Baptist and he would disagree with Free Will Baptists on some theological interpretations. His position on eternal security does come through on various passages.

John 10:28 says, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Robertson says, commenting on "never perish": "'Never' is very strong in the Greek. The sheep may feel secure" (p. 227). Romans 8:29 states, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." In his explanation of this verse, Robertson states that "He fore-ordained" means "Lit. 'to appoint beforehand [for eternity]'" (p. 372). Commenting on 1 Corinthians 1:8, "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," Robertson notes that "unto the end" means "until Jesus comes, the final preservation of the saints" (p. 391).

While his position of post-tribulationism may be pleasing to some, others may find it objectionable. We get a sense of this position in his comments on 1 Thessalonians 4:17. He states: "This rapture of the saints (both risen and changed) is a glorious climax to Paul's argument of consolation. {And so} This is the outcome, to be forever with the Lord, whether a return to earth or with an immediate departure for heaven Paul does not say" (p. 514).

The *Concise* edition is designed to cut the time that someone would spend reading the original version. Today many read either for entertainment or read quickly to get facts. Some have become skilled at paying no attention to articles, prepositions, adjectives, and adverbs so that they can hurriedly spot the most important details. Following this course, recognition of how the text is crafted is gone. Evaluating texts requires deliberately careful reading. Unfortunately, the painstaking reading of texts today is not valued to a great extent by our society and is outside the immediate capacity of many. This is a crisis with Bible reading too. Our society makes a practice of reading the Bible only to get information. Many times we do not read the text, unhurriedly, thoughtfully, taking in the words. Christians, including pastors, are reading the Bible with the rapidity that they read everything else. This results in messages that are not founded on the text, do not have a key point, and have points which are not derived from the text.

The *Concise* edition is an inexpensive, one-volume, easily-read edition. All New Testament books are prudently scanned, chapter by chapter, with Robertson concentrating on word pictures from the original Greek.

The Greek words take precedence in this work. It makes available a brief reference and undemanding understanding for on-the-go ministers and laypeople. Holman Bible Publishers wants to make A. T. Robertson's discernment accessible and obtainable for all.

While one might pick up a bone that has the meat cut off and chew on the bone, it does not have much nutritional value. Few would ever order just a bone when going to a restaurant. This work has had much of the meat taken from the bone and is left with less spiritual and exegetical value. Many today have tried to eliminate the hard work of scholarly study. In the elimination of hard work, much of the benefit of such an endeavor has been lost. Perhaps this work will develop a taste and appetite for something more nourishing and satisfying. If so, one should buy the original six-volume edition.

David L. Burgess
Pleasant View Free Will Baptist Church
Walnut Hill, Illinois

The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority. By G. K. Beale. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008. 300pp. \$20.00 Softback

G. K. Beale serves as professor of New Testament and is the Kenneth T. Wessner Chair of Biblical Studies at Wheaton Graduate School. In the past, he has served as president of the Evangelical Theological Society. He has written and published several articles and books in the area of Biblical studies. One of his most recent works is the *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, which he coedited with D. A. Carson.

This book is of particular importance to Free Will Baptists, considering that it concerns itself with the topic of Biblical inerrancy and developments during the past several years within the Evangelical community. Beale brings focus to these issues in the introduction and sets the pace for the entire book.

Chapters one and two, articles previously published by Beal, deal with recent developments in Old Testament studies that appear to be incompatible with a traditional approach to Scriptural inerrancy. Chapter one is a slightly modified version of his review of Peter Enns's book *Incarnation and Inspiration* published in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society (JETS)*. Beale acknowledges that Peter Enns is attempting to

accommodate more recent developments in Old Testament studies while maintaining an authoritative view of Scripture. Beale states that Enns attempts to do this through the development of what he calls the “incarnational analogy” (p. 27). Through the incarnation God accommodates Himself in order to reveal Himself to humanity. In a similar manner, God does this through Scripture.

Enns argues that the Biblical writers used *myths*, which include made-up stories (p. 30), but thought that these myths were actual historical events. Enns does not think this hinders the authority of the Scripture. He argues that Ancient Near Eastern writings would not have subscribed to modern standards of truth and error. Enns’s incarnational analogy allows for this in his view of inspiration. Beale’s chapter is devoted to showing the fallacies of Enns’s arguments and the ambiguity of his analogy.

Chapter two is Beale’s rejoinder to Enns’s response that was also published in *JETS*. He asserts that he does not call into question Enns’s conviction that all the Bible is from God, but that he does question how he can hold to a plenary inspiration view of Scripture while acknowledging that the writers include mythical stories in their historical written accounts (p. 67). Concerning the Ancient Near Eastern difficulties Enns sees as hard to maintain with traditional inerrancy, Beale thinks they can be easily reconciled. Finally, he reaffirms his difficulties with Enns’s incarnational analogy not because he disagrees with it (he actually agrees with it), but because he thinks it poses problems when it is being fleshed out (p. 81).

Chapter three, a review originally published in *Themelios*, is directed toward Peter Enns once again, dealing more specifically with Enns’s understanding of the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament. Beale agrees with Enns on his “Christotelic” hermeneutic, which stresses that the entire Old Testament points to the eschatological coming of Christ but does not read Christ into every text (p. 86). However, Beale is not in agreement with how he defines a “Christotelic” reading and also raises concerns regarding Enns’s use of the Old Testament in the New Testament. Beale argues that his view implies that there are no interpretive approaches that one could use to avoid eisegesis and that it requires a new approach in developing Biblical theology.

Chapter four is Beale’s rejoinder to the response Enns gave concerning chapter three. Beale, again, argues that he did not misunderstand the audience Enns had in mind, but restates that readers should be given both sides of the argument, considering the importance of the issue. Beale also points out that he agrees with Enns concerning the diversity found in early Judaism’s hermeneutics, but those instances, he asserts, must be

examined on a case-by-case basis before generalizations can be made. The text should be allowed to speak for itself before it is interpreted through the lens of first-century Judaism (p. 116). Furthermore, he reaffirms that more than one interpretive approach can be used while remaining true to the author's intent.

In chapter five, Beale moves from his dialogue with Enns and discusses the Isaianic authorship of the entire book of Isaiah. He notes that it is problematic if one does not at least think Isaiah was responsible for the contents of the book because Jesus acts as if Isaiah wrote the entire book. Beale seeks to vindicate the traditional Isaianic authorship from within Isaiah itself and bring the argument up to date (p. 126). He shows that the New Testament, Josephus, Philo, Old and New Testament Apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, and the apostolic Fathers indicate Isaianic authorship. He concedes that it is possible that scribes could have written for Isaiah, thus explaining variation in writing style. However, "Isaiah's historical conceptual handprint is over the book" (p. 157).

In chapters six and seven, Beale seeks to discuss the issue of Old Testament cosmology—how the writers conceived the "shape" of the universe. Chapter six seeks to demonstrate how their expressions either reflect the way things *appear*, and are similar to expressions used today, or show that the Biblical writers were expressing their theological, not scientific, conception of the universe as a temple for God (p. 163). He then shows how Ancient Near Eastern parallels further advocate his argument. In chapter seven, Beale fleshes out how this idea does not contradict a modern scientific understanding of the universe and, therefore, gives no viable reason for modern Christians to adopt this mindset. The cosmic descriptions can be understood in either a phenomenological or theological sense.

Three appendices are attached to the end of the book. The first discusses questions of authorial intent, epistemology, and presuppositions that have been raised by postmodernism concerning Scripture. The second appendix is a reprinting of the Chicago Statement of Inerrancy accompanied by a commentary. The third appendix provides quotations from Karl Barth's writings on infallibility and inerrancy.

There are several good things about this book. Beale rightly pointed out the ambiguity in Peter Enns's "incarnational analogy." He made it clear through his extensive quotations of Enns that while this incarnational analogy is good in concept and theory, the logical implications of how this is fleshed out must be developed more clearly and carefully. Furthermore, his discussion of the authorship of Isaiah helped reinforce the traditional view of Isaianic authorship. He was very clear and

thorough in demonstrating Isaiah's authorship and explained how he could still be credited as author while having a scribe write the manuscript. Finally, his argument for the cosmos as God's eschatological temple was interesting and insightful. The argument appeared reasonable and attractive.

There are also some things to criticize. I found myself uncomfortable with some of Beale's accusations towards Enns, especially when he was dealing with Enns's comments on the process of Biblical interpretation (p. 102). He comes close to portraying him as saying "anything goes" in exegesis when this clearly was not what Enns intended to say. There were times Beale seemed to be exaggerating his arguments.

Also, the nature of chapters one through four made the reading difficult. Because chapters were critiques and responses to Enns, I felt that this slowed the pace of the book. The reader may find that he must go back and forth between Enns and Beale. It would most likely be helpful to read Enn's *Incarnation and Inspiration* to get a better grasp of his arguments before reading this book.

Finally, a question must be raised about Beale's cosmology discussion. How does Beale relate his arguments for an eschatological understanding of the cosmos as God's temple to the New Covenant teaching that God's children serve as His temple or dwelling place? How does this further support God's dwelling amongst His people as illustrated through the tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament, and through the Covenant believers in the New Testament?

Apart from these criticisms, this book will helpfully serve to familiarize the reader with current discussions concerning inerrancy that are taking place within Evangelicalism.

Jeremy Craft
Student, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
South Hamilton, Massachusetts

Joshua, The New NIV Application Commentary. By Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. 652 pp. \$34.99 hardback.

The book by Robert Hubbard, Jr., is part of *The NIV Application Commentary Series*. Hubbard is professor of Biblical Literature at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago and an ordained minister with the Evangelical Free Church of America. He has a Ph.D. from Claremont Graduate School.

The audience for this commentary is any serious Bible scholar who wants to delve deeply into the historic meaning of the book of Joshua, along with the contemporary context and application of what the book means to believers today. *The NIV Application Commentary Series* gives contemporary application and brings the ancient message of the Biblical books into a modern context. It is an attempt to help readers not only apply the message, but to think through the process from the original meaning to its contemporary significance. This is emphasized in the subtitle, *From biblical text...to contemporary life*.

This process has some positive benefits. Any useful commentary will give the direct meaning of the Scripture along with the author's interpretation of the passages, which this one does. This commentary gives more usable application than others I have read. The author obviously wants the reader to follow the process of hermeneutics from its beginning point in the ancient Scripture to its practical application in current situations.

The down-side to this method is that it tends to be more subjective than other commentaries. Using Hubbard's approach, the reader receives more opinion and personal interpretation than is typically found in most commentaries.

The author takes a mostly conservative approach to the authority of Scripture, stating that the "Scripture is not only *timely* but *timeless*" (p.10). Each portion of Scripture is covered in three major sections: *Original Meaning*, *Bridging Contexts*, and *Contemporary Significance*.

The *Original Meaning* section gives the meaning of the Scripture as it would have been understood by people in the day it was written. The meaning of the main point of each Scripture text is explored.

The *Bridging Contexts* section attempts to span the gulf between the ancient and contemporary worlds. By first bridging the space between the original writer's time and our modern age, the writer attempts to make relevant in the reader's mind the ancient issues discussed. For instance, Hubbard explores the difficulty of the modern mindset that would have God severely judging and executing entire cities as Joshua and the Israelites came through the land of Canaan. While explaining this practice, he introduces the concept of *herem*, meaning "utter destruction" and God's total ownership of these people and cities. His explanation is that only God has the right to judge and bring utter destruction in His wars. Joshua and the people of Israel did not possess this right of themselves (pp.198-199).

Hubbard goes on in the *Contemporary Significance* section to show how Joshua's physical war parallels Jesus' spiritual war. He makes the point that the cruel and fierce enemies Joshua faced are similar to enemies of

the gospel. The reader is reminded that believers are not at peace today but at war. Enemies of both ages are presented as strong and tyrannical. They also have the ability to enslave humans. As can be seen in the myriad of problems found in society, families, and individuals, these enemies are most active. Hubbard makes the point that these enemies are opposed to Christians' sharing the gospel. By using the enemies Joshua encountered in Canaan, the author makes this application concerning our contemporary enemies: "In short, with Joshua, we share the theological assumption that there is a war on and that God fights for his people. The Jesus war actually continues the Yahweh war of the Old Testament. Warrior Jesus exercises the same power on our behalf today as Warrior Yahweh did for Israel at Jericho. It is both a spiritual and political one, demanding that its troops engage God's enemies in both arenas" (p. 212).

I do think that Hubbard, in his attempt to be relevant to modern culture, uses many examples that will unnecessarily date the commentary. He uses contemporary terms like Generation X (p. 245), the Discovery Channel (p. 345), and the book *The DaVinci Code* (p. 345). He uses examples of modern children's movies—*The Lion King* (p. 375), *Finding Nemo* (p. 51), or *The Little Mermaid* (p. 523). He also cites former newsman Ted Koppel (p. 345), talk-show host Jay Leno (p. 539), and singers Shania Twain (p. 144) and Aretha Franklin (p. 581). These terms, movies, and people may not be that well known to readers ten or twenty years from now.

The editorial board of this series informs readers that this work is primarily for reference, not devotional literature. Overall, I believe this book would be a useful addition to the library of any serious Bible scholar who wants to explore not just the facts of the original Scriptures, but also the modern context and the application to believers today.

Edwin Hayes
Ohio State Association of Free Will Baptists
Reynoldsburg, Ohio

James: Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. By Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008. 280 pp. Hardback. \$24.99.

The authors of this exegetical commentary on the Epistle of James are Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell. Clint Arnold, professor of New Testament language and literature at Talbot School of Theology in

LaMirada, is the general editor of the series. Blomberg is a professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary and is the author of several books and journal articles. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. Kamell is a Ph.D. candidate in New Testament studies at the University of St. Andrews. She has published several articles on James.

This commentary will be a useful resource to teachers, scholars, and pastors alike. The emphasis of this commentary is on application of James's teaching about wealth and poverty to contemporary life. In fact, Blomberg and Kamell introduce readers to three themes from the text of James: wealth and poverty, wisdom and speech, and trials and temptations.

The commentary is unique in its design because of the components used for the treatment of each Biblical passage. First is the Literary Context, which explains how each passage functions within the epistle. Then the Main Idea summarizes the central message of the passage. (This will be very helpful in preparing either a class or a sermon). Third, the Translation and Graphical Layout presents a translation through a diagram that helps readers visualize the flow of thought within the text. Fourth, the Exegetical Outline gives the overall structure of the passage. Fifth, the Explanation of the text provides interpretive insights into the background and meaning of the text, making use of the Greek language to interpret the passage.

Although this work is designed primarily for those with a basic knowledge of Biblical Greek, all who endeavor to understand and teach the New Testament will find this commentary useful. The fifth component puts emphasis on the text to convey the meaning. Here words and images are examined, including grammatical details, relevant Old Testament and Jewish background to a particular concept, and historical and cultural context. Last, Theology in Application discusses how the message of the text fits within the epistle and in a broader Biblical-theological context, suggesting applications for the church today.

Although the authors are Evangelical and examine the Word of God with care, their application to contemporary life is sometimes weak and stale. Blomberg and Kamell see in James's epistle a call to work against systematic inequality; this involves both an emphasis on Christian benevolence and a reining in of the drive to acquire wealth. For example, they state that "the wealthy West has replaced Rome as the primary exploiter of the natural resources of poorer countries to sustain our ever-fattening consumer demands" (p. 211). Another example of their weak application is seen when they casually mention the "rape of the environment" and make implications unsupported by the text of James. They use the

illustration of food waste from restaurants to show the excess of Western culture. The comparison of restaurant patrons to the wealthy landowner who withholds wages from the destitute is something of a stretch (p. 233).

There are some useful applications of the text, even though some of them are extreme. While this commentary leans toward the technical side, the writers keep the pastor in mind. They give thesis statements for each section, key ideas, and a practical explanation of the text. Overall, this commentary is a useful resource for the pastor or teacher who wants a scholarly opinion but does not want to get bogged down in issues of history, phrasing, and structure.

Richard Hendrix
Madison Free Will Baptist Church
Madison, Alabama

Toy Box Leadership. By Ron Hunter Jr. and Michael E. Waddell. Nashville, TN : Thomas Nelson, 2008. 194 pp. \$ 19.95 hardback.

Though the title and some of the information in the book may “take you back to some of the fun and playful benchmarks of your childhood” there is certainly nothing childish about this book. The authors, Ron Hunter, Executive Director of Randall House Publications and Michael Waddell, who writes from his experience as an educator, consultant, and minister, take a fresh and unique approach in presenting key issues on leadership.

The lessons on leadership are presented from ten different childhood toys that many of us had in our toy boxes and grew up playing with. Here are five examples:

- Lego® Bricks – The authors use the idea of LEGO® bricks and relate them to the importance of connecting in our relationships. If you want your organization to grow and produce you must connect with your customers, co-workers, and vendors. The “building blocks of any program” require connecting with people.
- Slinky® Dog – Any good leader will have a vision or direction in which he wants the organization to go. The leadership lesson taught with the Slinky® Dog is that your vision—with just the right “pull” of communication, courage, example, and determination—will eventually move the organization and individuals forward in the desired direction.

- Play-Doh® – Play-Doh® compound can be worked and molded into any shape or form you can imagine. Leaders, too, can be shaped and formed. The type leader you become will depend upon your willingness to be molded and what and whom you allow to mold you.
- Mr. Potato Head® – The leadership lesson from this toy is the importance of communication. Since the face “is the courier of the message” and leaves a lasting impression, the authors identify “the eight faces that every leader must pack.” Putting on the right face in the right place sends a “powerful message.”
- Weebles® – These toys have a unique characteristic: they “weeble and wobble” and when they fall they sit right back up. It is inevitable that at some time in life every leader will fail. But failure does not have to mean the end. Success often comes from getting right back up and learning from our failures.

There were times when I felt the authors stretched to get the leadership lesson from the toy in question. Even so, the information and leadership lessons in each chapter come across with clarity. I also anticipated Scripture references and some Biblical examples of principles of leadership. However, there was only one presented.

Included with the lessons on leadership, each chapter begins by presenting interesting information about the origin, background, and nature of the toy that the lessons draw from. The book is an encyclopedia of trivia on each toy. It is also filled with quotations from famous and well-known individuals pertaining to the various lessons on leadership. These two aspects of the book will keep your attention and make you anticipate the next page.

Toy Box Leadership is easy reading that presents very practical lessons and information that, when implemented, will help any leader to stop playing around and get busy leading.

Henry Horne
Union Chapel Free Will Baptist Church
Chocowinity, North Carolina

The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians (The New International Commentary on the New Testament). By Gordon D. Fee. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. 394 pages. \$44.00 hardback.

Dr. Gordon Fee, who is both editor of this series and author of this commentary, is a well-respected Biblical scholar who is presently Professor Emeritus of New Testament studies at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. He serves as the third general editor of the *New International Commentary on the New Testament*, following Ned Stonehouse and F. F. Bruce. Having taught this material at three different seminaries over a period of thirty years, Fee is eminently qualified to write this commentary.

Originally, Leon Morris wrote the first commentaries on Thessalonians in this series. Morris, at age ninety, revised his commentaries and they were to be used in this series. Fee, seeing the vast amount of material devoted to these epistles over the past fifteen years, decided to replace Professor Morris's commentary with his own, thus offering a fresh exposition of this text. This volume is a definite upgrade on Morris' original NICNT commentary both in material (Fee's is nearly one hundred pages longer) and in depth. The reader will be pleased with the upgrade.

According to the information sheet provided by the publisher, "Fee's primary target is the proverbial 'busy pastor' who wants help in understanding the Biblical text as he or she prepares to preach or teach." The author certainly hits his target as he provides for the reader a detailed outline of the books. He sticks to the text and does not try to force alliteration of points or make it "too preachy" in his approach. Rather, this commentary is a true expositional commentary in which the author goes to great lengths to exegete with great care and precision, complete with many footnotes. For the serious student of these books, Fee cites over two hundred fifty bibliographical references for further study.

As one might expect, the translation used for exposition is that of the TNIV. However, since the variants between the texts are very minor in these two books, the modern preacher, no matter what text he may prefer, will benefit from Fee's exposition. In fact, in cases where there is a variant in the text between the Majority and Critical texts (as in the salutation of 1 Thessalonians 1:1), Fee helpfully points this out in his footnotes and makes explanation with precision. This is what one expects from Fee, who is seen as an expert in textual criticism. Therefore, I would heartily recommend this commentary, no matter one's textual preference.

The author sometimes becomes so enamored with textual issues that his discussion is meandering. For the scholar, these side trips into textual choices are enlightening and interesting, but for the target audience—the "busy pastor"—this makes for some weighty reading about minutia.

One of the unique characteristics of this commentary is the manner in which Fee addresses the second letter. He does not simply use it as an "add

on" to the first book. Rather, he approaches the second letter to the Thessalonians with separate introductory material, foregoing material that is common to both letters and including information pertinent to the second. This is an improvement over Morris's earlier work and in comparison to how most commentators handle these books. A wealth of material is given in support of Pauline authorship of the second letter as well. Fee gives the reader ten specific indications of Pauline authorship of the second letter and then directs the reader to the works of Marshall and Malherbe for the pros and cons of Pauline authorship. I found this approach refreshing; he did not simply reiterate the points made by others but sought to give the reader new material to consider. He concludes by saying, "When one reads the literature by those who argue that Paul is not the author of this letter, one is struck by the 'thinness' of the argumentation as such, especially since there is hardly a single argument that does not take some form of subjectivity on the part of its proponents" (p. 238).

When reviewing a commentary, one tends to focus on disputed passages. One of these is 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, where the TNIV reads, "It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable." The Authorized Version reads, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour."

In his discussion of the *vessel* and *possess*, the author takes an unusual view. Historically there have been two interpretations of the term "vessel." The old view by Augustine and others was that "vessel" is a metaphor for a man's wife. This is a minority view among scholars. The prevalent view is that Paul uses "vessel" as a metaphor for one's body, over which one should gain mastery (know how to possess) in sanctification and honor. However, Fee says, "Paul uses the noun 'vessel' not as a metaphor, but as a euphemism for the male sexual organ" (p. 149). Thus, Fee takes the position that Paul's concern is about a man's governing his own sexual organ in a way that is holy and honorable. This view is definitely in contrast to Morris's earlier work which does not mention this euphemism and holds to the traditional view that the term "vessel" refers to the body. While not agreeing with his thinking on this point, I do agree with Fee's overall conclusion that Christian holiness includes abstaining from sexual immorality.

For the Free Will Baptist reader, two areas in Thessalonians will be of special interest. First is the word *election* in 1:4. Many Calvinistic writers, in keeping with their theological leanings, seek to make this term speak of the individual election of the believer. Morris, in the previous commentary in

this series, is heavy on this point although it is not clearly supported by the text. Fee takes a more reasonable view of election. He says, "The evidence of their election is to be found in their conversion itself. ... Their election itself is a positional reality; but their own appropriation of that reality came about through a combination of experiential factors: Paul's powerful, Spirit-inspired preaching of the gospel, resulting in their joyful experience of conversion, all orchestrated by the Holy Spirit" (p. 29). He appropriately states that Paul was not thinking about individual election but was using the term to speak "of the whole body of Thessalonian believers as elect" (p. 31).

The other issue that will be of specific interest to Free Will Baptist readers is Fee's view of eschatological passages, especially 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 5:1-11 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17. Fee shies away from declaring his personal position. He seems to take a "middle of the road" approach to the *Parousia* in chapter four. However, concerning the verb "caught up" he states, "Although this verb has been seen by some as referring to a 'secret rapture of the church,' Paul himself could hardly have intended such a meaning here" (p. 179). Fee more or less bypasses the issue of the rapture to emphasize the individual's destiny to be with the Lord forever as the important feature of the passage.

In parting, Fee takes a shot at some of the contemporary usage of the passage. He says, "It is equally inappropriate for it to become the basis for the kind of false teaching that one finds, for example, in the 'Left Behind' series of books and films that became popular in the last decade of the preceding century. This is about hope, not threat, and should continue to be treated as such in the church" (p. 182).

The reader will surely find interesting the discussion surrounding the term "falling away" in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. Fee takes the position that this Greek term *apostasia* does not refer to a defection of believers but rather to the active "rebellion" of unbelievers, as rendered in the TNIV. He recognizes that the term has historically been understood to refer to apostasy among God's people. In its only other usage in the New Testament (Acts 21:21) it refers to a turning away or apostasy. But Fee is satisfied that the TNIV's "rebellion" is indeed correct (p. 281).

Overall, the book is not easy reading. However, one would not expect a detailed commentary to be easy. It is good library material for both the student and scholar. To receive full benefit from this book the reader will need to be familiar with Biblical languages.

David McGowan
First Free Will Baptist Church
Pontiac, Michigan

The Art of Divine Meditation: Exemplified with Two Large Patterns of Meditations: The One of Eternal Life, as the End; The Other of Death, as the Way. By Joseph Hall. Lafayette, Indiana: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 2007. 80 pp. \$8.25 paperback.

The book was originally published in 1607. It became one of the most widely-read books of the day, particularly influential among the Puritans.

Chapters 1-8 cover the benefits and uses of meditation. In this opening section Hall also discusses both extemporaneous meditation and deliberate meditation. Extemporaneous meditation is that which is prompted by experience and by careful observance of nature. Hall states, "The creatures are half lost if only we employ them, not learn something from them. God is wronged if His creatures be unregarded; ourselves most of all if we read this great volume of the creatures and take no lesson for our instruction" (p. 74). How much do we observe anything in the world, much less meditate on the instruction we can receive from it? Hall's main thrust, however, is deliberate meditation. He prescribes a focusing of the mind and heart to deep probing of one issue, instead of spreading the attention in many places. He says, "So while thou thinkest of many things, thou thinkest of nothing; while thou wouldest go many ways, thou standest still" (p. 76).

The second major section, chapters 9-17, explains some of the practical elements attached to meditation such as places and postures. Postures are as varied as the persons meditating. Whether a person chooses to kneel or to walk, the posture should communicate reverence and also help to further the devotional life. He states, "In this let every man be his own master, so be we use that frame of body that may both testify reverence and in some cases help stir up to further devotion, which also must needs be varied according to the matter of meditation" (p. 82). The best place for meditation is where the person can be alone with God. "Solitariness of place is fittest for meditation" (p. 80). Hall then cites Jesus, John the Baptist, Isaac, and David as among those Biblical examples of this practice.

Chapters 18-27 cover the method of meditation which Hall suggests in great detail. Each chapter is devoted to a different aspect or step in meditation, similar to holding up a diamond and turning it to observe all sides. In other words, we can look at the diamond as a whole, or we can look at the diamond by observing all sides and parts of the diamond—this is meditation. Hall takes the reader through the steps or stages of meditation, providing Biblical examples as he proceeds. Essentially Hall

bombards the text with questions, some of which are similar to the ones normally employed in some textbooks on Biblical interpretation.

For those not accustomed to reading from this period, some of the language will perhaps be difficult to follow at first. Hall, like many from this period of time, also is wordy at times; but perhaps this flows out of his insights into Scripture, born out of his methods of meditation.

We may take the questions Hall suggests and adapt them for modern use. Donald Whitney, in his book *Simplify Your Spiritual Life*, provides a list of the questions adapted to more contemporary language:

1. What is it (define and/or describe what it is)?
2. What are the divisions or parts?
3. What causes it?
4. What does it cause, i.e., its fruits and effects?
5. What is its place, location, or use?
6. What are its qualities and attachments?
7. What is contrary, contradictory, or different to it?
8. What compares to it?
9. What are its titles or names?
10. What are the testimonies or examples of Scripture about it?¹

The short work ends with a section on the affections. It is not enough, according to Hall, for us to simply understand the text under consideration. Our aim must also be to have our affections changed. Hall states, "In meditation we do both see and taste, but we see before we taste. Sight is of the understanding; taste, of the affections" (p. 100). Like most of the Puritans, Hall was concerned with the proper balance of intellect and affections, light and heat.

The Art of Divine Meditation speaks to a subject of great importance in contemporary Christianity. The modern barrage of media, coupled with the frenetic pace of life, provides an environment that makes meditation extremely difficult. Hall's book could prove useful for both the pastor in his study and in the arena of personal discipleship in the spiritual discipline of meditation. This book will help us improve our meditation; meditation will improve our lives. As with anything of worth, however, it will not come easily. Serious and slow reading of Hall's book is required.

Barry Raper
Free Will Baptist Bible College
Nashville, Tennessee

1. Donald S. Whitney, *Simplify Your Spiritual Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2003), 72-73.

First Aid for Emotional Hurts. By Edward E. Moody, Jr. Nashville: Randall House, 2009. 231 pp. \$12.99

Edward E. Moody, Jr. has been a counselor-educator at North Carolina Central University since 1995. He is also an associate professor and has chaired a department there since 2001. Moody also serves as the pastor of Tippetts Chapel Free Will Baptist Church in Clayton, North Carolina. His ministry has provided many opportunities to counsel with troubled and hurting people. In addition to his pastoral, teaching, and administrative duties he also works with troubled youth in correctional settings. His educational qualifications include a Ph.D. from North Carolina State University in counselor education, an M.A. in clinical psychology from Middle Tennessee State University, and a B.A. in pastoral training from Free Will Baptist Bible College. He is a licensed professional counselor in North Carolina, a Health Services Provider—Psychological Associate, and a Nationally Certified Counselor.

I was pleased to find that the book helps the lay counselor in at least three ways: by using laymen's terms when possible, by explaining technical language when necessary, and by providing additional resources that are easily accessible.

Moody has written in a way to assist non-professional counselors, including the laity, as well as pastors and professional counselors. For the laity who may not have training in counseling, he begins with the basics of helping people and moves on to the more specific hurts that people face regularly. Moody addresses his subject in a way to remind the professional that hurting people are just that: people who hurt and need help.

First Aid for Emotional Hurts will especially be helpful for laity and pastors who have frequent opportunities to help bear the burdens of others. The book can easily be divided into three major divisions.

1. Chapters 1-3 provide basic foundations for helping the hurting. They lay groundwork upon which the "helper" can build. For example, chapter one provides guidelines for the helper to follow. The author answers the question "What do I do when I don't know what to do?"

The layman as well as the pastor may sometimes not know just the right steps to take in guiding those who need help. Chapter two provides an index of excellent resources for just such times.

In chapter three the author interweaves faith, prayer, and practical activities such as medical care and personal discipline to show how God may use them to answer prayer and bring faith to fruition.

2. I identify chapters four through six as “practical advice” for those who help, as well as for those who hurt. After all, each of us will hurt at some time, and in those times we are the ones needing help.

In chapter four the author begins with a series of ten statements. Then, based on the premise that what one really thinks impacts how one lives and whether or not one thrives (p. 66), he offers helpful insight on each of the statements. This chapter is well worth the time required to read and analyze it.

Chapter five deals with the weighty subject of depression, its causes, and its dangers. After providing a definition of depression Moody guides the reader through a series of both current and Biblical models to show that depression is real and not just imagined. The author defines different types of depression and provides possible help for those suffering from depression. I was encouraged to find that Moody offers real hope for those who suffer from depression.

In chapter six the author moves on to discuss the “vicious cycle of addiction.” The reader should plan to spend a little time in this chapter. The author deals with both substance abuse and dependence, as well as non-substance addictions. After pointing out the power of addictions, Moody gives hope and Biblical directives to enable the addicted and the “helper of the addicted.”

3. From my perspective chapters seven through ten make up the final division of the book. I call this “the how-to section.” Chapter titles will provide insight: chapters seven through nine begin with “Helping People” and chapter ten begins with “Helping Families.” Each chapter includes helpful advice on how to handle issues and problems in one’s quest to be a “burden bearer.”

In chapter seven Moody discusses schizophrenia and other personality disorders. He provides characteristics of the disorders and helpful insight for those working with people troubled with such disorders. He offers several Biblical illustrations that point toward the disorders he discusses in the chapter. He concludes the chapter with a short discussion of demonic possession. I found the section on schizophrenia particularly helpful and appreciated the discussion, though limited, of demonic possession.

Pastor Moody shows up clearly in chapters eight and nine. In chapter eight he not only deals with loss and grief from a clinical perspective, he also reveals the importance of the pastor’s heart as he offers help to the grieving. In chapter nine his pastoral heart comes through in his discussion of overcoming fear and anxiety. I particularly appreciated his step-by-step prescription for handling anxiety.

In his final chapter Moody addresses family life and the importance of a healthy family environment for children. This chapter is very practical and offers guidelines for many areas of family living. Every parent would do well to read this chapter.

In the outset of the book Moody sets out to provide helpful information for those who are given opportunity to help bear the burdens of others. Throughout the book he provides important information from both practical and spiritual perspectives. This book would be a worthy addition to the home or church library and in the pastor's study.

Millard C. Sasser
Sherwood Forrest Free Will Baptist Church
El Sobrante, California

Why I Am A Christian. Eds. Norman L. Geisler and Paul K. Hoffman. Second Edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2009. 368 pp. \$16.99 paperback.

The editors of *Why I Am a Christian* state their purpose as presenting proofs for thinking persons, whether believers wishing to examine their own beliefs or skeptics, agnostics, or atheists. To support this purpose, they have included essays on truth, the existence of God, miracles, the Bible, and Jesus Christ as Messiah and Son of God. They have chosen to use philosophy professors, lawyers, scientists, and professors of theology and religion from Christian and secular colleges and universities.

Hoffman's introduction (to the first edition) lists nine generalizations people make about Christians and Christianity, such as the lack of intellectuals or even the existence of anti-intellectuals among us. He includes the idea of some that evolution has rendered unnecessary a creator God and the belief that science and history show that the Bible is full of myths and errors. One central purpose of the book is to show that these and other such generalizations are false.

Hoffman justifies the second edition of the book by noting that the first edition was issued just three months before 9/11, a catastrophe that changed the world. Thus, the editors decided that a refocus on Islam should include among the contributors Dr. Ergun Caner, once a follower of Muhammad, now a Christian and a dean and professor in a seminary. The second edition also includes a bibliography presented as "Selected Bibliography of Works Addressing Issues in Christian Apologetics," including books and articles from magazines, journals, and newspapers.

It is followed by "Selected Apologetic Resources," including websites that relate to apologetics. These are helpful for one who wishes to pursue further reading or pursue research in books written or mentioned by the different contributors.

Anyone who expects to find warm, emotional, personal testimonies about the joy of following Jesus Christ will be largely disappointed in this book. Perhaps it should be better called an apologetic for the Christian faith. Most of the writers attempt to prove various beliefs by reason, logical devices, lists, and charts. Those who appreciate syllogisms and other logical means to support belief in God, the Bible, and Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Messiah will find such arguments in this book. Much of it is difficult reading and probably should not be read in one sitting. Perhaps selecting a certain topic of interest and reading through one chapter at a time, allowing time for thoughtful consideration of the "evidence," would be the best way.

The seventeen different chapters by fifteen different authors make it hard to review the book as a unit. William Lane Craig's essay "Why I Believe God Exists" will serve as an example of how the arguments proceed. Throughout the essay, Craig uses syllogisms, finishing with this concluding one:

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist.
2. Evil exists.
3. Therefore, objective moral values exist (some things are truly evil).
4. Therefore, God exists."

If you have followed Craig's arguments, then you have good grounds for believing that God exists. Such arguments, however are difficult and sometimes abstruse. Craig himself asks about people who do not have the ability or time to follow them. He believes that they may know God through their immediate experience. Apparently the writers were instructed by the editors to focus on logical arguments.

There are problems with this approach. The book contains much repetition, and the writers do not always agree. Also there is the danger of concentrating on trying to find proof of this or that so that the reader's personal experience with God may recede into the background. Craig warns of this: "A real danger exists that proofs for God could actually distract one's attention from God himself. ... We mustn't so concentrate on

the proofs of God that we fail to hear the inner voice of God speaking to our own heart.”

Even those with an open mind will not agree with everything they find here, and some things they may reject totally. Even so, the careful reader may profit by learning some things. For example, in Winfried Corduan’s essay “Why I Believe the Bible Alone Is the Word of God” he compares ten other so called “sacred books,” including the Qur’an from Islam and books from Hinduism, Shintoism, Daoism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism. The descriptions are brief, but they give some idea of the nature of these books and how they relate to the Bible.

Some readers may have a problem with the essays by the two scientists, both of whom appear to believe in the Big Bang theory of creation. Walter Bradley, Distinguished Professor of Engineering at Baylor University, in “Why I Believe the Bible is Scientifically Reliable,” concentrates on what he feels is one of the main objections science makes to the reliability of the Bible. He agrees that the universe was created—some twelve billion years ago. He agrees that God created plants, animals, and human beings—through process. He believes the flood occurred ten or twenty thousand years ago—and was local. Although he insists that the Genesis account of creation is consistent with what we know from science, at some points he may seem to be trying to force the Bible to agree with modern scientific claims.

Hugh Ross, founder and president of Reason to Believe, is a fellow in astronomy at California Institute of Technology. He acknowledges that recognizing God as the creator of the universe eventually led him to accept Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Since then what he observes and sees in a scientific examination of the universe continues to support his belief in God as the creator. In “Why I Believe in the Miracle of Divine Creation” he gives tables showing the development of new discoveries, all supporting the Biblical account of creation. In his conclusion he observes that we have no reason to fear continuing scientific research: “The more we learn, the more evidence we accumulate for the existence of God and for his identity as the God revealed in the Bible.”

Perhaps the book should have a different name. I did not find the essays really answering the question of why the writers are Christians. Except for chapter three and Josh McDowell’s part of the Afterward, only Part 6, “Why I Have Chosen to Follow Christ,” really describes why the writers are Christians. Here the writers, although including some logical reasons, give personal testimonies. This is the part that appealed to me most.

In “Why I Am Not an Atheist,” for example, J. Budziszewski relates how he moved from atheism to faith. After he returned to the Christian faith of his youth he realized that in his atheism he was simply self-deceived. As an atheist he focused on the idea that either God is not there or He is impotent. When he applied this idea to himself, he began to think of himself as a machine.

One night out of the agony that his deception had brought upon him, he prayed to God. On that night, he felt that he had simply talked to the wall, but later he found that God did answer his prayer. He felt what we would call a conviction of sin. He recalled some of that faith he had tried to desert—the reality and goodness of God. God had to humble his intellectual pride. Budziszewski insists that there is no atheist without self-deception. The way to honesty leads through Jesus Christ.

For someone led away from the true faith by philosophy, this essay is a good one to recommend. While the atheist is not likely to agree with everything Budziszewski says about atheism, the testimony of his journey from atheism to faith can be restorative.

Who better to write about Jesus as the true Messiah than a Jew who has accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior? Barry R. Leventhal, in “Why I Believe Jesus Is the True Messiah,” considers three pieces of evidence: Jesus’ fulfillment of Messianic prophecy, the impact of His resurrection, and His Messianic transformation of lives. Of many Old Testament Messianic prophecies, he concentrates on two: the place of His birth and the nature and meaning of His death.

Leventhal does a beautiful job of showing how the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled by the life and death of Jesus. This article is worth reading for his treatment of passages in Isaiah 40, 49, 50, 52, and 53. Especially touching is Leventhal’s story of how he began to wonder about the servant in Isaiah 53 and came to his rabbi with a question that ultimately led to his conversion. As support for the Messianic resurrection, Leventhal adapts the five pieces of evidence quoted (from J. P. Moreland) in Lee Strobel’s *The Case for Christ*: disciples willing to die for their beliefs, conversion of skeptics, the institution of communion and baptism, and the emergence of the church.

Leventhal’s personal testimony about how the claims of a Christian friend caused him to study the Jewish Scriptures and then the New Testament confirm what appears to me to be the most powerful apologetic of all: he was influenced toward the Lord by the transformation and testimony of one who accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We do well to ask if this transformation is easily seen in our lives as we touch shoulders with those about us.

Another who was influenced by the life and testimony of a believer is Ergun Mehmet Caner, a converted Sunni Muslim. His is the new essay included in the second edition of the book, "Why I Am No Longer a Muslim." He says that Christ drew him through intellectual inquiry, by one tenacious high school friend. A fellow student never gave up on Caner but kept confronting him and inviting him to his church. When he finally went, he felt greeted with kindness and love. He had believed with other Muslims that Christians were responsible for wars, hatred, hypocrisy, and all kinds of evils. Jerry and his church showed something strange and unusual to Caner, unconditional love. Caner sees this love as the profound difference between Christianity and any other religious system.

Caner points out that Muslims respect Jesus and names the eight points that Muslims affirm about Jesus. Yet, he warns, we may revere or reject Him but must not simply respect Him. He also points out the essential points of Christian doctrine about Jesus that the Qur'an denies.

Caner is another example of the influence of a believer. The questions we must ask here are about our persistence in our witness for Christ. How about our churches? Would a visitor immediately sense this unconditional love?

J. P. Moreland's essay "Why I Have Made Jesus Christ Lord of My Life" tells how he came to Christ because a group of believers, in a Campus Crusade ministry, gave a gospel message in his fraternity house at the University of Missouri. He saw that they had something he knew nothing about and began to question one of them. After reading the New Testament and asking many questions, one night Moreland went to his room, knelt by his bed and asked Jesus to be his Lord and Savior. He determined to be His disciple and simply asked Him to stay with him and go with him wherever he went.

John S. Feinberg, in "Why I Still Believe in Christ, in Spite of Evil and Suffering," confronts such persistent questions as why God allows little children to suffer or why there is so much evil in the world or why God allows things like the Holocaust if He is indeed an all-powerful, loving God. After presenting the options for defending God on such a charge, he turns to testimony.

At twenty-eight years of age, his wife was diagnosed with Huntington's disease. Huntington's disease is a cruel, genetic disease that affects the person both physically and mentally and ultimately leads to death. There is no cure. We can only imagine the emotions and questions that swept over this family. He admits to feelings of hopelessness, abandonment, helplessness, and even anger. Although he had studied and

researched the problem of evil for years, none of the intellectual answers were the least bit comforting. Four far more practical things helped. First was a word from his father, who reminded him that God promises grace only for the day. This led him to a daily, morning prayer invoking God's grace for just that day. Next, he began to think of ways God had blessed them. Then, when he wanted to blame God for the situation, he realized that God did not give his wife the disease: we live in a fallen world, and disease is the result of sin. And when he felt that God was unfair, he began to realize that if he wanted justice from God, then he should get what he deserved. God does not owe us grace, it is undeserved, unmerited favor, and God was giving it. Finally, what helped to remove his anger toward God was the many tangible signs of God's love and care. People began to show generosity and kindness. For those who, like me, would like to know more, Feinberg indicates that there is more to the story in his book *Deceived by God? A Journey Through Suffering* published by Crossway in 1997.

Josh McDowell's article in the afterward is called "*A Skeptic's Quest.*" As a teenager he had a thirst for happiness and meaning in life. He did not find it in religion at the church he attended. He did not find it in education when he entered the university. Being a big man on campus did not satisfy his thirst, neither did three nights of partying every week. He became almost desperate.

Then he noticed a group of eight students and two professors who seemed different; they seemed to know where they were going and had convictions. He decided to make friends with those people. One day he asked one of the girls why they were different from other students and faculty members, what had changed their lives. The girl said simply, "Jesus Christ." When he told her he was fed up with religion, she reminded him that she did not say religion; she said Jesus Christ. Then the group issued him a challenge to examine intellectually the claims that Jesus is God's Son. He scoffed at the very idea, believing that the claims of Christianity could not stand up against an intellectual examination. He decided he would write a book to show that Christianity was a sham. As he did research for such a book, he began to see that the claims of Christ were true. He was being intellectually dishonest.

Finally one night he decided to accept Christ and became a Christian. At first he was afraid he had made an emotional decision that he would regret intellectually, but he noticed that his life had changed. He had a desire to serve others instead of using them. He no longer had a violent temper. He stopped hating his father, a drunkard on whom he had blamed his mother's death. He found that he could tell his father he

loved him. McDowell concludes with an invitation for others to accept Christ. This testimony supports what this book is supposed to be testifying for: the truth of the life-changing power of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Attorney Paul K. Hoffman pleads, at the end of the introduction to the second edition, that readers make a fair assessment of whether the contributors to the book have adequately explained why they are Christians. Each reader will need to study and digest this book in order to make that personal assessment.

Mary R. Wisheart
Free Will Baptist Bible College (Retired)
Nashville, Tennessee

Perspectives on Christian Worship. Edited by J. Matthew Pinson. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2009. 360 pp. \$24.99 paperback.

This book presents five different perspectives on worship styles, with each presented by an advocate. Timothy C. J. Quill, a Missouri Synod Lutheran, presents the *liturgical* view. J. Ligon Duncan III, an evangelical Presbyterian and professor of theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, argues for the *traditional Evangelical* view. Dan Wilt, director of the Institute of Contemporary and Emerging Worship Studies, makes the case for *contemporary* worship. Michael Lawrence and Mark Dever, pastors at Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D. C., advocate a *blended* worship style. Dan Kimball, who oversees the Sunday worship gathering at Vintage Faith Church in California, supports the worship style of the *emerging* churches. Following the presentation of each perspective another chapter presents responses by the other contributors to this book.

J. Matthew Pinson, president of Free Will Baptist Bible College, edits the whole. His insightful introduction argues that each of these five broad movements is rooted in a distinct historical context, and he summarizes the history of approaches to Christian worship through the centuries in a way that makes reading this book worthwhile. He addresses the earliest Christian worship, changes in Christian worship, liturgical development in the Middle Ages, worship and the Reformation, and the post-Reformation worship spectrum. He summarizes the five views on Christian worship and the tensions and challenges. He contends that this variety of worship styles raises significant problems, urging that for the

church to bear witness to the transformational gospel of Christ in the world, while maintaining faithfulness to the very countercultural, other-worldly qualities that make the gospel transformational, is the profound challenge, now as always. This is the challenge that the contributors to this book seek to address.

1. Liturgical worship is presented in chapter one. Quill argues that a church does not become or remain liturgical in its worship style because of personal preference or taste. While the liturgy includes aesthetic elements—such as music, art, architecture, vestments, and ceremony—these elements of style always come second. Worship primarily articulates doctrine and communicates the beliefs of the church. He argues that the liturgy, which is structured around the church year, is profoundly Biblical and important for the sake of the gospel, that it has been tested by generations and serves as a common confession and fosters unity. He emphasizes that the liturgy serves as a basis for pastoral care and for the forgiveness of parishoners' sins, concluding that liturgical theology shapes the sermon, which in turn gives life to the liturgy and prevents it from degenerating into dead ritualism, mysticism, or superstition.

2. In the chapter advocating what is called traditional Evangelical worship, Duncan suggests that there was a time when the form and substance of Christian public worship was very much alike in a variety of denominations. Today's corporate worship, by contrast, is a bewildering spectrum of diversities, both in philosophy and practice. In visiting churches today one is likely to experience as many worship styles as there are churches. Duncan believes there are many reasons for this. One is that there is a lack of consensus among Evangelicals regarding what constitutes public worship and whether the Bible provides universally applicable, clear, and specific directions about what is to be done when the church gathers for Lord's Day worship.

To counteract this lack of clarity, Duncan proceeds to define what worship is (and is not) and to identify the goal and meaning of public worship. He argues that the great concern of traditional Evangelical worship is for the heart, form, and content of congregational worship to be Biblical. What, then, should worship look like? Duncan contends that public worship ought to be characterized by reading the Bible, preaching the Bible, praying the Bible, singing the Bible, and seeing the Bible.

Duncan is, of course, arguing for what has sometimes been called "the regulative principle": namely, that the church should use, in public worship, only what the New Testament at least implicitly demands. Biblical worship is therefore Scriptural, simple, spiritual, God-centered, historic, reverent and joyful, Christ-based, corporate, evangelistic, delightful,

active and passive, and on the Lord's Day. In short, the Bible should guide and provide the substance for our public worship, in both form and content.

3. In support of contemporary worship, Wilt touts the importance of embracing change. The contemporary worship movement may be considered representative of a vast array of forms, liturgies, informal elements, styles, and ministry philosophies. But it is neither style nor form, finally. The guiding values of contemporary worship include cultural relevance, integrity, a holistic view of worship, an embracing of emotions in worship, immanence, "incarnational worship," simplicity, diversity, and unity.

Wilt focuses much of his attention on music in contemporary worship, providing some historical background for the development of contemporary music. He describes why singing is so important and why there ought to be new songs. He deals with the always important question how Christ and the church intersect with contemporary culture. He sums up by contending that if contemporary worship aids the church in a fresh reclaiming of the "heart of worship" in the twenty-first-century, then it will have fulfilled its role in the grand story that God is fashioning across human history.

4. Michael Lawrence and Mark Dever begin the chapter on blended worship with a startling statement: "The style of music you use on Sunday morning is incredibly unimportant." They contend that while worship includes what we do on Sunday mornings when we gather with other Christians, it is not fundamentally that: worship is our service to God. It is acting and thinking and speaking as if He really is who He says He is and we really are who He says we are. Worship is the creature serving the Creator.

The purpose of Lawrence and Dever is to put both worship and style back in their proper relationship with one another. Blended worship does not mean a blending of truths or truth-perspectives, a blending of diverse theological and liturgical traditions, a blending of elements of worship, or a blending of media or means of communication. Instead, blended worship uses various forms for invariable elements; it is corporate worship that consists of its Biblical elements—prayer, singing, reading and preaching God's Word, tithes and offerings, observance of the ordinances—in a variety of styles or forms, forms that should be intelligible, orderly, edifying, unifying (rather than divisive), and promoting reverence for God.

Most important, a blended worship service is characterized by God-centered sermons and prayers of intercession. Lawrence and Dever illustrate by offering five sample services and a sample prayer of confession.

5. In arguing for the worship style of the emerging church, Kimball first gives a detailed portrait of worship in the Old and New Testaments. He then proceeds to emphasize that we really cannot make a case from the Scriptures for what a worship gathering should specifically look like, and that all the different ways we worship in most churches today are neither directed nor informed by the Scriptures themselves, but rather evolved from people in church leadership, reflecting the culture of their time.

Kimball emphasizes that we should be more concerned with how people's lives are being changed by the Spirit as they encounter God in worship than about the styles in which we actually practice worship—providing we are not violating Scripture. Where most churches focus on a cognitive, one-way expression of worship, emerging churches offer a more multisensory experience.

Kimball offers practical suggestions: that the pastor move from the spotlight, that we empower women, that we involve other people in Scripture reading, and that we develop other ways of teaching and other ways of using the spoken word in emerging worship. These may include the fine arts, like paintings and sculpture, prayer stations, film, video, and photography.

In reviewing this book I have sought to reflect the concepts and conclusion of the writers objectively, withholding my own observations until now. I took note of several things. Each writer shared a passionate belief that his view of worship was Biblical. All the views of worship presented in this book had things all could agree with. Some views were characterized by subjectivity while others emphasized objectivity. All the writers define worship in many of the same ways, although some were more concerned with style than substance. All the views of worship were designed to enable all believers to have a worship experience with God. None of the views on worship noted the differences in worship between the Old Testament and the New Testament. For me there is a significant difference.

In evaluating the various views of worship presented in this book my personal views will surface. For example, although liturgical worship has many commendable qualities for me it is too stilted, structured, and symbolic. Rituals can often lead to routine rather than reality. Traditional Evangelical worship is my preference. It seems to me that it is the most Biblical. I especially concur with Duncan's emphasis that the Bible pro-

vides universally applicable, clear, and specific directions about what is to be done when the church gathers for Lord's Day worship. Contemporary worship does not appeal to me because of its guiding values of cultural relevance, embracing of emotions in worship, immanence, "incarnational" worship, and its emphasis on the place of music in worship. Blended worship would be my second preference. I especially agree with the concept that a blended service is characterized by God-centered sermons and prayers of intercession. I appreciate blended worship's emphasis on styles and forms that are intelligible, orderly, edifying, unifying (rather than divisive), and promoting of reverence for God.

Emerging worship, in my opinion, builds its case on human reasoning rather than accurate Biblical principles. Rather than confronting culture this view of worship conforms to culture. I disagree with Kimball when he suggests that we cannot make a case from the Scriptures for what a worship gathering should specifically look like. This makes emerging worship subjective rather than objective. Acts 2 and Acts 4 give clear and concise examples of the early church at worship.

This book can be a useful tool for the pastoral staff of any church. The five perspectives on Christian worship presented are well documented and well written. They are explained clearly, concisely, and comprehensively. The evaluative responses of the different contributors also help to clarify them and provide excellent material to help the reader grasp the information and issues, and to understand better the arguments for and against each view.

Readers will not, of course, agree with every perspective on worship presented in this book. Even so, churches that want to maintain Biblical worship services will profit from the concepts set forth here. Being informed about these styles of worship should help churches deal with the issues involved, especially with what are often called "the worship wars."

I believe every church staff member and church member will profit from reading this book and that doing so will prove to be a rich and rewarding educational experience. It should be required reading for pastoral candidates, youth workers, ministers of music, and Christian educators. An understanding of the various forms and styles of worship will dispel misinformation, mistrust, and misunderstanding.

Melvin Worthington
National Association of Free Will Baptists (Retired)
Ayden, North Carolina

Understanding English Bible Translation: The Case for an Essentially Literal Approach. By Leland Ryken. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009. 203 pp. \$12.99 paperback.

Leland Ryken, who has been professor of English at Wheaton College since 1969, is probably the leading advocate for the historic, literal approach to Bible translation. This book follows up his earlier and larger work *The Word of God in English* (2002). His apt and eloquent challenge to the "Dynamic Equivalence" (hereafter DE) philosophy of Bible translation created quite a stir among conservative scholars. He has become one of the leading and most competent advocates of the philosophy of translating the Bible literally as far as practically possible.

The author is not an opponent of modern translations. He served as one of the literary stylists for the English Standard Version of the Bible, released in 2002. However, he is an ardent opponent of DE, an approach to Bible translation utilized to one degree or another by most modern translators. To his credit, Ryken is carefully ethical in his opposition to DE, skillfully attacking the method but not the men who use it. He uses well-reasoned arguments to convince his readers that the literal approach to translating God's Word best preserves its original meaning.

At the core of Ryken's argument for literal translation is his belief that the DE approach turns the translators into interpreters first and translators second. They become commentators before they are translators. They are not bound by the language of the autographs, but by the thought or message they perceive the author of the autographs to be trying to communicate. Ultimately, they are *thought, message, or concept* translators and not *language* translators. They feel free to replace the words of the original author with their own words if they think their words better communicate the meaning of the original author.

The goal of a DE translator is a "transparent" text, an English text which is readily understood by an English-speaking reader with modest reading and comprehension abilities. In order to accomplish this transparency, the translator feels free to read the Greek or Hebrew text and then translate the *thought* in an easily comprehensible manner into the receptor language (English) without regard to the original wording of the original text.

Thus, the DE translator has no obligation to find and use English words which best correspond to the words found in the original text. His first responsibility is to translate the *message* communicated by the author. He is responsible to express that message in colloquial language easily understood by the common man with low-level reading skills. By

this approach, transparency means the *transparency of the translated message*.

In contrast to this, the literal approach requires a “word-for-word” translation from the original language into the receptor language as much as possible. Such a translator chooses vocabulary which most closely corresponds to the vocabulary of the original text, although he recognizes that it is impossible to translate from one language into another with an exact word-for-word equivalence in every instance. Therefore, transparency to him means making the wording of the translation correspond as closely as possible to the wording of the original text, making it clear in meaning to the reader.

The literal approach to translation grows out a view of inspiration which believes that the Holy Spirit inspired both the thoughts *and the words* used by the original authors. The original authors were led by the Holy Spirit to choose the exact words which best communicated the ideas He led them to express. Literal translators recognize that finite translators cannot improve upon infinite wisdom. This approach makes the translator first and foremost a *translator*, while DE makes the translator first and foremost an *interpreter* and then a translator. This is a major difference.

Ryken also takes issue with what he refers to as DE *reductionism*. This, he argues, is the brazen attempt to reduce the elevated language chosen by the original authors, while they were writing under divine inspiration, to the lowest and simplest colloquial terms of today’s spoken language. He argues that high thoughts require high words and that, if we shrink the words, the substance will also shrink or be diminished.

Ryken argues that the word “equivalence” is a new word introduced into the translation world by Eugene Nida in the mid-twentieth century when he and his followers helped popularize the DE philosophy of translation. Prior to that, the word that translators would have used was *correspondence*, which meant finding the word in the receptor language which most closely corresponds to the word in the original language.

The author argues that DE is a radical departure from what had been, for almost two thousand years, the translation philosophy of the church. He insists that, historically, translators had universally approached translation with the intention to be as literal as possible. This radical departure is seen in the following goals of DE translators.

1. They seek to reduce the language of the Bible to the lowest common denominator by using contemporary colloquial words and terms that are readily understood

by low-level readers in the contemporary society. This allows translators to focus on the message and not the words and requires that they interpret the text before they can translate it.

2. As translators of the message or thought of the text, they are free to change figurative language into direct statements and add interpretative commentary in order to make the message immediately clear to the modern reader.
3. With the goal of reducing the language of the original text to contemporary language geared to the Biblically illiterate, many DE translators replace theological vocabulary with everyday vocabulary. For example, the ESV, which follows a literal approach, says, "You anoint my head with oil." The DE approach is reflected in *The Message* which says, "You revive my drooping head," and in the *Good News Bible* which says, "You welcome me as an honored guest." In both instances the translators have shut the reader out from the words of the original text and offered him two different interpretations of the text.
4. In texts which are legitimately subject to two (or more) possible interpretations, DE translators choose for the reader which of the possible interpretations he will be exposed to. This suggests that readers are incapable of making a good judgment between the two.
5. DE translation philosophy is consumer- or market-driven, reducing high-level vocabulary and syntax to a lower level that robs the Word of God of its dignity and respect.

The author says that the King James translators felt obligated to the following three requirements: "Ensure that every word of the original was rendered by an English equivalent; make it clear when they added any words to make the sense clearer, or to lead to better English syntax"; and "follow the basic word order of the original wherever possible" (p. 49).

Probably the most serious charge Ryken levels at DE translators is their reduced view of inspiration. He says, "If 'all Scripture is breathed out by God' (2 Tim. 3:16), we have no alternative but to conclude that God gave us the Bible that he wanted us to have. Dynamic Equivalence

translators do not believe it in actual practice. They apologize for statements in the original that 'have little meaning' for 'most readers today' (NIV preface), or references to ancient customs that 'are meaningless to most people' (NCV preface), or metaphorical language that 'is often quite difficult for contemporary readers to understand' (NLT preface). Dynamic Equivalence translators keep 'correcting' the Bible for its deficiencies, including its literary style and vocabulary" (p. 149).

This book deals with a serious issue, one that every serious Bible student should be aware of. The author raises critical issues which could have serious effects on the church's continued understanding of the message which God gave to the original authors.

A. B. Brown
Calvary Free Will Baptist Church
Crewe, Virginia

Jesus and the Feminists: Who Do They Say That He Is? By Margaret Elizabeth Köstenberger. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008. 253 pp. \$19.99 paperback.

The author, Margaret Elizabeth Köstenberger, currently serves as adjunct professor of women's studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. She gives a thorough review and history of theological feminism, focusing on the views of feminists concerning the person of Jesus Christ over the last one hundred fifty years. This book is helpful for women and any student of the Word of God who desires to know the truth about who Jesus is, about His relationship with and teaching concerning women, and about a woman's place in the church and body of Christ.

In the book, Köstenberger interacts with the positions and literary works of the feminist leaders, tracing the progression of the feminist movement in the church. As she notes, "Over time, three general groups of feminists emerged: (1) radical feminists, (2) reformist feminists, and (3) biblical evangelical feminists or egalitarians" (p. 22). These groups are defined and the leaders of each group are identified and their beliefs scrutinized logically and Biblically. The writer is careful to quote the various feminist leaders and give fair treatment to them. However, she deals with each wave of feminism Biblically and in the context of each phase of development. Each leader is identified, the leader's beliefs about Jesus and woman are made clear, and then the view is dealt with Scripturally by the author. One of the great strengths of the book is that it deals with

the various positions in the context of each phase of feminism in the church.

The clear position of the author is that patriarchy in the Bible does not give way to a feminist Christ. Authority is ordained by God. God does not intend to make women inferior to man. Köstenberger points out "that true freedom in life is not found in the abolishing of any authority over oneself, especially if it is God-ordained. Scripture presents men's authority in the home and in the church not as autocratic or grounded in male superiority or merit but in the mysterious, sovereign divine will subsumed under the supreme lordship and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Living within God's created male and female order allows for a genuine experience of fulfillment and freedom for everyone" (p. 34).

The intention of this book is not only to address the role of women but, more importantly, to prove the position of Jesus toward womanhood in general and in the church. Jesus taught equality of the sexes, but He also taught the role of women in the plan of God. Jesus treated women with honor and respect throughout His ministry. Women served Jesus, and He seemed to show a special sensitivity to women. However, as the author shows from God's Word, nowhere in Scripture does Jesus show Himself to be a feminist.

Interestingly, the author notes that even the feminists, who range from radical to egalitarian, cannot agree on their premises or on the practice of Jesus as a feminist. Köstenberger asks, "Was Jesus a feminist? Ironically, this is a question on which feminists cannot agree. As we have seen, some feminists, in particular the radical variety, believe that Christianity is an irredeemably patriarchal religion and that Jesus, too, was steeped in patriarchalism. Others, especially Evangelical feminists, claim that Jesus, in contrast to His patriarchal Jewish contemporary culture, paved the way for full male-female equality in the church" (p. 214).

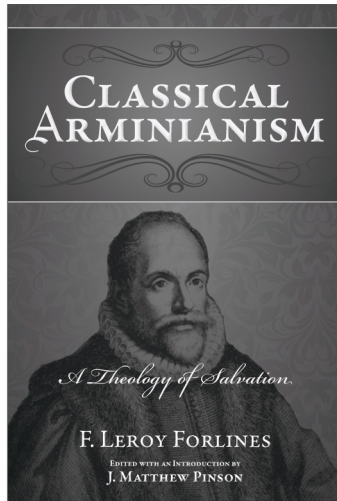
Köstenberger concludes that the issue really comes down to the fact that most feminists who use the Scripture eventually have to part from Scripture totally or at least from proper interpretation of Scripture. The author shows how many notable feminists started out to reform the church and Biblical interpretation to make way for their radical feminist position. The more radical ones reject the Bible completely; the reformist scholars seek to use Scripture to reform the church from within. They deny the inerrancy of Scripture but attempt to use it to prove their feminist position. The problem is that their suspicion of Scripture ultimately dismantles their tool for reconstruction. One cannot deny or doubt the Bible and then use it authoritatively to prove one's point. The feminists

who are Evangelical egalitarians believe the Bible but twist the laws of hermeneutics to make Jesus a feminist.

Köstenberer very adequately uses the laws of interpretation to show who Jesus truly was and His position toward women. Was Jesus a feminist? The author concludes that He was not and urges the use of the fundamental laws of interpretation to come to a decision on all matters of belief and practice.

Karl Sexton
Gateway Free Will Baptist Church
Virginia Beach, Virginia

New Release from Randall House



Classical Arminianism

ISBN 9780892656073

Price \$24.99

"In this book Leroy Forlines presents a lively, relevant, biblical restatement of classical Arminian theology. In a time when the choice seems to be Calvinism or "free will theism," his classical Arminianism is most welcome. Believing that theology is for life, Forlines writes for every Christian, not just for other theologians. His work appeals to the whole person, sets before us a powerful vision of God's holiness, and calls us to holy living. Every Christian who seeks to be biblically faithful will grow by reading and digesting this nourishing work."

Jontban R. Wilson

Pioneer McDonald Chair of Theology
Carey Theological College

"Leroy Forlines is an accomplished and seasoned scholar who is the face of Reformed or Classical Arminianism, which is closer to the actual teachings of Jacob Arminius than the more widely known Wesleyan Arminianism. Forlines is, above all, faithful to careful biblical exposition as the foundation of his theology. The perspective offered by Forlines, along with like-minded theologians such as Robert Picirilli and Roger Olson, deserves to be heard on these crucial issues. Although our own perspective differs at points, we have used their books profitably at our seminary."

Steve W. Lemke

Provost
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary



randall house

**To order, call 800-877-7030
or visit www.randallhouse.com.**