MIDWESTERN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

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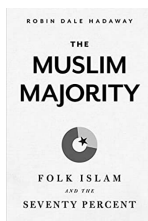
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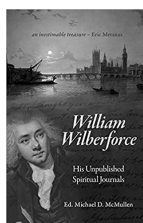
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for the Church
MIDWESTERN
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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Fall 2021 issue of the Midwestern Journal of Theology, once again I would like to begin by expressing my sincere thanks to all who have contributed to make this happen. Special mention goes to Dr. Jason Duesing, Provost and Academic Editor, for all his invaluable assistance; to Dr. Blake Hearson for all the time and energy he invests in each issue; and to Mrs. Lynae Duarte, for all that she so kindly and efficiently does in the background.

We are again blessed to publish a rich and varied assortment of articles for this issue, and I am always grateful for the many who submit articles. If you are interested in submitting an article for consideration, please submit a Word document direct to me at mmcmullen@mbts.edu. We are sorry we are not able to publish all the articles we receive.

We open this issue with a brief word from the Spurgeon Library, in which Geoff Chang shares details of the ongoing efforts in the Library to update or create new library displays. Our articles begin with a submission from Jason DeRouchie, in which he challengingly reminds us that though we live in the kingdom of "Babylon," our mission as the church, is to confront spiritual darkness and to spread the gospel of the glory of God in the face of Christ. Todd Chipman's helpful article on sermon preparation follows, in which he contends that the grammatical and lexical features in a text's original language, signal what the author of that text would want a preacher to emphasize to the congregation in view. We then present Ronni Kurtz's article, which consists of a carefully detailed study of the person and work of Christ. Our penultimate piece comes from Samuel Parkison, a theological meditation on the "riches" and "poverty" of 2 Corinthians 8:9. Rudy Gonzales supplies our final article, in which he argues for a slightly different way of seeing and understanding Romans 6:1-14.

Reflecting the popularity of the MJT, we again close this issue with a good number of relevant and thought-provoking book reviews, helpfully secured and edited by our book review editor, Dr. Blake Hearson.

Notes from The Spurgeon Library

GEOFF CHANG
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Spurgeon's monthly magazine, The Sword and the Trowel, regularly provided updates on the ministry of the Metropolitan Tabernacle and all the institutions associated with the church. Similarly, here at the Spurgeon Library, we also want to provide regular updates on events, publications, research, acquisitions, and other activities that are going on in the Library.

For this edition of Notes, we want to talk about our ongoing effort to update or create new displays in the Library. One of the acquisitions that arrived last fall was a collection of Spurgeon's handwritten letters. These were provided to the Spurgeon Library by the late Gary Long, a pastor in Springfield, MO, and president of Particular Baptist Press. These original letters span Spurgeon's ministry in London and deal with personal issues, church issues, controversies, day-to-day tasks, and much more. We are beginning to incorporate these letters into our displays to allow Spurgeon's voice to be heard.

The Cigar

One of the more popular displays in the Spurgeon Library is the one in the sitting room, displaying his cigar. Supposedly, this is the cigar found in his coat pocket after his death. It was preserved by his family and has made its way to our collection. Spurgeon was known for his enjoyment of cigar smoking. But in the fall of 1874, his comments about smoking got him into trouble,

After an evening service, Spurgeon invited G. F. Pentecost, an American pastor and temperance advocate, to make a few comments. Pentecost got up and spoke "fiercely against the sin of smoking tobacco, especially in the form of cigars, and told his hearers how he had struggled and fought against the pernicious habit, and how at last, by the blessing

and with the assistance of Providence, he had conquered his addiction to the weed." Spurgeon then took the platform, and as the pastor of the church, he felt compelled to speak. One magazine reported the following comments,

Well, dear friends, you know that some men can do to the glory of God what to other men would be sin. And notwithstanding what brother Pentecost has said, I intend to smoke a good cigar to the glory of God before I go to bed to-night.

If anybody can show me in the Bible the command, "Thou shalt not smoke," I am ready to keep it; but I haven't found it yet. I find ten commandments, and it's as much as I can do to keep them; and I've no desire to make them into eleven or twelve.

The fact is, I have been speaking to you about real sins, not about listening to mere quibbles and scruples. At the same time, I know that what a man believes to be sin becomes a sin to him, and he must give it up. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" [Rom. 14:23], and that is the real point of what my brother Pentecost has been saying.

Why, a man may think it a sin to have his boots blacked. Well, then, let him give it up, and have them whitewashed. I wish to say that I'm not ashamed of anything whatever that I do, and I don't feel that smoking makes me ashamed, and therefore I mean to smoke to the glory of God.

Spurgeon's message may have been right, but his choice of words was unwise. Those in the congregation who had conscientious objections to smoking were likely offended. Nonetheless, his concern was pastoral. He was not primarily defending his cigar smoking. But as the pastor of the church, he was concerned to protect Christian liberty. Rather than adding to Scripture, he wanted to focus on matters which are "real sins." He did not want his people agonizing over "mere quibbles and scruples." At the same time, Spurgeon did recognize the importance of the conscience and provided instruction on that subject. But in the end, Spurgeon believed that smoking in itself was not a sin, and he did not want to forbid what Scripture did not.

Not surprisingly, the press was quite happy to report on this incident and highlight Spurgeon's comment about smoking "to the glory of God," setting off a controversy around Spurgeon. One critic wrote to say that he had been helping his son battle his addiction to smoking, but because of Spurgeon's comments, the son had returned to smoking. Another

critic, W. M. Hutchings, wrote a lengthy tract against Spurgeon, seeing him as a threat to the growing temperance movement.

Here in the Spurgeon Library, we have added one of Spurgeon's letters next to the cigar, written during this controversy to a friend.

Dear Friend,

I ought to have answered your letter but have been ill and overworked. Thanks, for it did me good. What a badgering I have gone through! But I yield not, for what I said was right. There is no liberty left us by these spiritual prudes. When you see an opening say a word, for I have been shot at as a lone crow, whereas thousands think as I do or ought to do to be consistent.

If we cannot live near to God and smoke, we must give it up. I can and shall not confess to the contrary, not even by silence.

Yours heartily,

    C. H. Spurgeon

So many of the stories from Spurgeon's life are interesting and even humorous. But in letters like this, we see something beyond the anecdote. We see Spurgeon's humanity – his illness, need for encouragement, the silence of his allies, and yet, his steadfast resolution to speak the truth. More than his love of cigars, the display reveals Spurgeon's commitment to Christian freedom rooted in the authority of Scripture.

Church Letters from Mentone

The last painting in our gallery shows Spurgeon in Mentone, France, in the latter portion of his life. His poor health, combined with his tendency to overwork, meant that he often had to leave London in the winter months for sunny Mentone to recover his health. He would be gone for weeks, or even months at a time, as his elders and deacons urged him not to rush back but to take the time he needed to recover.

However, even from a distance, Spurgeon did not stop thinking about his church. He regularly received reports from his deacons about how things fared. In addition to arranging pulpit supply, he sometimes sent original written sermons for reading on the Lord's Day. And he regularly wrote pastoral letters to his congregation expressing his affection and prayers for them. Underneath the Mentone painting, we have two such letters on display.

The first one is dated December 5, 1889. Here, Spurgeon rejoices with "unfeigned delight" at the report of conversions, following a series of evangelistic services. He urges the congregation to "follow up the work by prayer & by looking after those who have been impressed." There is no sense of any insecurity or competitiveness about the pulpit ministry with Spurgeon's absence. Instead, he rejoices at A. T. Pierson's fruitfulness, who filled in for him in his absence. He writes, "How deeply grateful should I be if I could enjoy the privilege of holy McCheyne who found that during his absence the Lord had sent even a greater revival than when he was at home." Spurgeon also gives a personal update on his health and his commitment to doing all he can to recover. "I feel duty bound to do my best to rest; & I only do as much work as I can do restingly." It appears that towards the end of his life, Spurgeon has learned the hard way the limits of his strength and is doing all he can to rest appropriately. Finally, Spurgeon encourages his congregation to give generously to the work of Hugh D. Brown, a church planter in Ireland. "He is after my own heart, & the more you aid him the better shall I be pleased. Ireland will be the better for Mr. Brown & his mission." With Gladstone's bill for Irish Home Rule defeated in 1886, there was a renewed effort at Protestant missions in Ireland, and Spurgeon was glad to support Brown and his work.

The second letter is dated December 31, 1891, just one month before his death. By this point, it appears that Spurgeon is writing weekly, so there would not have been many more letters after this one. He gives an update on his health, which continues to be poor. It's so poor that he looks forward not only to his return but to the time when he will know when he might return. "What a joy it will be to be within measurable distance of the time to return to my pulpit & to you." At this point, there is no such timetable. But his prayers are not for himself but the church. "Now may the Lord cause the cloud of blessing to burst upon you in a great tropical shower. I am expecting this. Grateful beyond expression for all that the Lord has done & is doing, I am eager for more." He urges the congregation to join him in prayer for such a revival. He also gently warns the congregation to put away anything that might hinder the work of the Spirit. "May no whisper that would grieve the Holy Spirit be heard in house or heart. Let all coldness, worldliness, difference, or selfishness be put forth as the old leaven." It's not clear if these difficulties were connected to Spurgeon's absence or if they are the usual kinds of

challenges that any church faces. Either way, Spurgeon exhorts his people to persevere with holy expectation.

Sometimes, Spurgeon's many accomplishments outside the church overshadow the fact that he was a local church pastor. But here, at the end of his life, limited by poor health, we see Spurgeon committed to his most fundamental ministry: pastoring the congregation of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. These letters give us a glimpse of a pastor's heart and love for his people, evident in the closing of these letters: "Yours in life & in death, C. H. Spurgeon."

By the Waters of Babylon:
Global Missions from Genesis to Revelation[1]

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Standing on this side of Jesus's resurrection, the apostle Paul described his and the church's mission as a calling "to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of [Christ's] name among all the nations" (Rom 1:5). Missions for the sake of the Messiah's glory is one of the central ends of the gospel of God concerning the Son (1:1–3). It is this message that shapes the hopes of the Old Testament Scriptures (Luke 24:45–47; Acts 26:22–23) and that is realized in the new covenant. From Eden onward, God has been moving history toward the day when he finally eradicates Satan, the curse, and the evil that is "Babylon" (Rev 7:15–17; 14:8; 18:2, 10, 21; 20:10; 21:4; 22:3). In that day he will reveal his glory over the whole earth (Num 14:21; Pss 57:5, 11 [6, 12]; 72:19; Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14; Rev 21:23) and generate praise from all the redeemed peoples for whom the Lamb was slain (Rev 5:9–10; 7:9–10). The church's mission to make disciples of all nations is still incomplete, but it continues to spur every Christian either to send or go, either to hold the ropes for others or to cross boundaries and cultures for the sake of Christ's name.

Though we live in this age as "sojourners and exiles" in the kingdom of "Babylon" (1 Pet 2:11; 5:13), our mission as members of Christ's church (Matt 28:18–20) is to confront spiritual darkness (Eph 6:10–20) and to spread the light of the gospel of the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Cor 4:6) ... until those whom Christ ransomed "from every tribe and language and people and nation" serve as "a kingdom and priests to

our God" and "reign on the earth" (Rev 5:9–10; cf. 22:5). This study seeks to trace the theme of missions from Genesis to Revelation for the elect exiles dwelling "by the waters of Babylon" (Ps 137:1).

Humanity's Original Commission and the Need for Curse-Overcoming Blessing

When God first made the world, he planted a garden-city in the region of Eden (Gen 2:8). The city was on a mountain (see 2:10–14; cf. Exod 14:17–18) and operated as his temple-palace. In it he placed his image— a man and a woman, whom he commissioned to expand his garden temple by displaying his image to the ends of the earth.[2] "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (Gen 1:27–28). God commissioned humanity to reflect, resemble, and represent his greatness and glory on a global scale. Humans were to rule the world, subduing and having dominion (1:26, 28). As they worked and guarded the land (2:15), the uninhabitable regions beyond the garden-city would increasingly become habitable, the garden-city would grow, and the glories of God's sovereignty would fill the earth.

Our first parents initially rejected this calling by choosing to imitate the serpent in their rebellion (Gen 3:1–6), and through their surrender to the serpent and disobedience to God, the rule of this world transferred from humans to the devil (John 12:31; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2). God cursed the world (Gen 3:14–19), but he remained committed to magnify himself in the universe. He promised to overcome the curse and the serpent through a royal deliverer—a male offspring of the woman who would one day overpower the serpent––and by extension, his offspring––and

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[2] See especially G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004); G. K. Beale, "Eden, the Temple, and the Church's Mission in the New Creation," *JETS* 48 (2005): 5–31; T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008); Matthew Newkirk, *Fill the Earth: The Creation Mandate and the Church's Call to Missions*, 2020.

reestablish global blessing (3:15).[3] From the moment God exiled humanity from his garden paradise, the Bible's story looks ahead to the day when representatives from all humanity will once again inhabit the mountain city of God. Hence, we read: "To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God" (Rev 2:7). In that day, the voices of heaven will ring out, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever" (11:15). And "his servants will worship him … and they will reign forever and ever" (22:3, 5), thus fulfilling their original calling. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Isa 11:9; cf. Num 14:21; Ps 72:19; Hab 2:14).

After Adam's fall and humanity's exile, sin escalated and moved God to justly punish humanity through the flood. In the days that followed, as Noah and his sons repopulated the world, humans built and filled a new city known as Babel or Babylon.[4] It was here through a man-made tower that human pride against God moved him to confuse language and to disperse some seventy families by their tribes, languages, lands, and nations across the face of the planet (Gen 11:1–9; cf. 10:5, 20, 31–32). On account of their sin, humanity's exile from the garden landed them in Babylon. From this point forward in Scripture, the title "Babylon" comes to represent rebellion, curse, and hostility against the Lord. God will need to rescue humanity from their "Babylonian exile" if he is to overcome evil and save his elect.

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[3] For this reading of Gen 3:15, see C. John Collins, "A Syntactical Note (Genesis 3:15): Is the Woman's Seed Singular or Plural?," *TynBul* 48.1 (1997): 139–48; Kevin Chen, *The Messianic Vision of the Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 35–66; cf. T. Desmond Alexander, "Further Observations on the Term 'Seed' in Genesis," *TynBul* 48.2 (1997): 363–67; C. John Collins, "Galatians 3:16: What Kind of Exegete Was Paul?," *TynBul* 54.1 (2003): 75–86; James M. Hamilton Jr., "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," *SBJT* 10.2 (2006): 30–55; James M. Hamilton Jr., "The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham," *TynBul* 58.2 (2007): 253–73; Jason S. DeRouchie and Jason C. Meyer, "Christ or Family as the 'Seed' of Promise? An Evaluation of N. T. Wright on Galatians 3:16," *SBJT* 14.3 (2010): 36–48.

[4] The term is the same in Hebrew.

The Means for Curse-Overcoming Blessing:
The Two-Stage Abrahamic Promise

For the Lord's blessing to overcome curse and sin, his saving work would now need to cross cultures and language barriers. He pledged to do this through a descendant of one of the seventy families—Abraham:

> Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you so that I may make of you a great nation, and may bless you, and may make your name great. And there, be a blessing, so that I may bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I may curse. And the result will be that in you all the families of the ground shall be blessed." (Gen 12:1–3, author's translation)

Growing out of the two commands to Abraham to *go* and *be a blessing*, a two-stage process emerges for overcoming the curse.[5] First, Abraham would need to go to the land of Canaan, where God would make him into a great nation. God fulfilled that promise in the Mosaic covenant era. Second, Abraham, or one representing him, would need to be a blessing, so that God could ultimately overcome global curse and bring blessing to all the families who earlier spread around the earth (cf. 10:32). The Lord ultimately realized that promise in Christ and the new covenant.

Following the original declaration in Gen 3:15 that God would overcome the serpent and his "offspring" through the "offspring of the woman," Genesis distinguishes two family trees––the serpent's rebellious offspring (highlighted in Genesis by three segmented genealogies in Gen 10:1–32; 25:12–18; 36:1–43) and the remnant hoping in the offspring of the woman (e.g., 5:1–32; 11:10–26). Genesis 12:1–3 distinguished both the mission of Abraham's offspring and the mission

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[5] For support of this grammatical interpretation, see Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 267–70; cf. Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Plan*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 23 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 78–79; Jason S. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017), 209–11.

field since the majority of "the families of the earth" (12:3) are linked with the rebels (10:32 with 11:1–9) and not the remnant.[6]

God promised Abraham that he would become "the father of a multitude of nations" (17:4–6). He also stressed that this move from being the father of one nation (Israel) to a father of many nations would happen only when the single, male deliverer would rise. This deliverer would expand kingdom territory by possessing the gate of enemies, and all the nations would be blessed through him: "I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (22:17–18; cf. 24:60; 26:3–4).[7] Missions as we know it—carrying a message of reconciliation outward to the nations—would become operative for all God's people only in the day when this king would arise and crush the powers of the serpent.[8] Let's now consider each of these two stages as they play out in Scripture.

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[6] For more on this distinction, see Jason S. DeRouchie, "The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the *Toledot* Structure of Genesis," *JETS* 56.2 (2013): 219–47.

[7] For more on Gen 22:17–18, see my case study on Gen 22:1–19 in "A Redemptive-Historical Christological Approach," in *5 Views on Christ in the Old Testament*, ed. Andrew M. King and Brian J. Tabb (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming). See also Alexander, "Further Observations on the Term 'Seed' in Genesis"; Collins, "Galatians 3:16"; Andrew E. Steinmann, "Jesus and Possessing the Enemies' Gate (Genesis 22:17–18; 24:60)," *BSac* 174.693 (2017): 13–21.

[8] On this delay of a full-blown "go and tell" (centrifugal) mission, see especially Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, NSBT 11 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001); Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, 2nd ed., NSBT 53 (Downers Grove, IL: 2020); NSBT 53 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020); Eckhard J. Schnabel, "Israel, the People of God, and the Nations," *JETS* 45 (2002): 35–57; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2 vols. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004); Kevin Paul Oberlin, "The Ministry of Israel to the Nations: A Biblical Theology of Missions in the Era of the Old Testament Canon" (PhD diss., Bob Jones University, 2006); contrast Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012); cf. Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity

Stage 1a: Israel's "Come and See" Calling
and the Failed Mosaic Covenant

During the Mosaic covenant age, many non-Israelites *became* Israelites—people such as the mixed multitude coming out of Egypt, Rahab the Canaanite, Ruth the Moabite, and Uriah the Hittite. While Israel as a people was, at some level, a multiethnic community, during the entire Old Testament period Abraham remained the father of a single nation in a single land (Gen 17:7–8).[9] And like Adam in the garden-city, God called this people his firstborn son (Exod 4:22; cf. Gen 5:1–3; Luke 3:38) and charged them to be priest-kings by representing, resembling, and reflecting him to a needy world. Others would see their good deeds, and those good deeds would direct them to the greatness of God.

Thus, Yahweh told Israel, "If you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant and be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine, then you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy

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Press, 2006). Twice the book of Jonah links to Joel's statement that "everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Joel 2:32; cf. Jon 1:14; 3:8) and by this anticipates the missional hope of the NT (Rom 10:13). I believe that Yahweh's call to Jonah to image his own character (Jon 4:2) and to carry the message of judgment and implied hope to Nineveh serves to anticipate the global mission realized through Christ and the church in the NT. Nevertheless, the old covenant included no clear prescription for all Israel to engage in a "go and tell" mission. For more on Jonah's unique role, see the Daniel C. Timmer, "Jonah and Mission: Missiological Dichotomy, Biblical Theology, and the Via Tertia," *WTJ* 70 (2008): 159–75; cf. Daniel C. Timmer, *A Gracious and Compassionate God: Mission, Salvation and Spirituality in the Book of Jonah*, NSBT 26 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011).

[9] By asserting this I do not deny that beyond the people of Israel Abraham also "fathered" peoples like the Ishmaelites, Edom, Amalek, and Midian. However, the focus of the Gen 17:4–8 is to contrast the "multitude" he with "father" in contrast to the single nation that will inherit the land of Canaan. Furthermore, because Gen 17:6 is reiterated to *Sarah* in 17:16, the focus of the promise regarding his fathering many nations relates *not* to all those who came from Abraham biologically but the adopted spiritual offspring whom God would identify with him spiritually by adoption. For more, see Jason S. DeRouchie, "Counting Stars with Abraham and the Prophets: New Covenant Ecclesiology in OT Perspective," *JETS* 58.3 (2015): 450–61.

nation" (Exod 19:5–6, author's translation).[10] Through radically surrendered lives, Israel would mediate God's presence and display God's holiness to a needy world. Similarly, Moses wrote, "Keep [the statutes and the rules] and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people'" (Deut 4:6).[11]

Israel had a high calling to reflect God's worth by surrendering wholly to him. But this calling does not appear to have included the centrifugal, "go and tell" mission that we as Christians now have. Instead, Israel's limited "mission" to the nations was centripetal, involving only calling others to "come and see."[12] As the Israelites obeyed Yahweh, the nations would take notice and draw near to Yahweh's greatness. Thus, at the temple's dedication King Solomon prayed,

> Likewise, when a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name's sake (for they shall hear of your great name and your mighty hand, and of your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, hear in heaven your dwelling place and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and that they may know that this house that I have built is called by your name. (1 Kgs 8:41–43)

This is exactly what happened with the queen of Sheba who "heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD" (1 Kgs 10:1). After seeing Yahweh's glories and the king's splendor and wisdom, she asserted: "Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness" (10:9).

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[10] For more on the translation and significance of this verse see Jason S. DeRouchie, "Understanding and Applying Exodus 19:4–6: A Case Study in Exegesis and Theology," *JBTS* 6.1 (2021): 85–134.

[11] On Deut 4:5–8 within the framework of Israel's mission, see Daniel I. Block, "The Privilege of Calling: The Mosaic Paradigm for Missions (Deu 26:16–19)," *BSac* 162.648 (2005): 387–405.

[12] For more on this distinction, see the resources above in footnote 8.

Yet the queen of Sheba was not the norm, for Israel more commonly failed in their covenant loyalty. Like Adam, they rebelled, breaking the covenant. And like Adam, as Moses anticipated (Deut 4:25–28; 31:16–18) and the prophets affirmed (2 Kgs 17:13–15, 23), Yahweh removed them from their paradise. Comparable to humanity after God cast them from the garden of Eden, Israel's exile from Canaan landed them in Babylon (ch. 25). Jew and Gentile alike need deliverance from this secular city.

Renewed Hope by the Waters of Babylon

We read in Ps 137:1, "By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion." The original speakers were grieving their losses and recalling the seriousness of sin. Babylon was their place of judgment, for having turned from God, they experienced the covenant curses, culminating in exile and death (Lev 26:14–33; Deut 28:15–68), all of which testified to the Lord's removal of provision and protection.

For the prophets, "Babylon" represented the center of earthly power opposed to God (Isa 13–14; Jer 50–51). And Israel's exile there reminded them of their neediness and should have pushed them to return to the Lord and to find hope for the day of complete restoration when Yahweh would overcome "Babylon" in the days of "an everlasting covenant that will never be forgotten" (Jer 50:5). Thus, Yahweh declares, "I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless…. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them" (Isa 13:11, 19). And again, God asserts, "Behold, she [Babylon] shall be the last of the nations, a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert. Because of the wrath of the LORD she shall not be inhabited but shall be an utter desolation…. They flee and escape from the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, vengeance for his temple" (Jer 50:12–13, 28).

Significantly, within the Psalter, the despondency that rises "by the waters of Babylon" in Ps 137 is followed by the messianic King's declaration of hope in Ps 138.[13]

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[13] A Christian approach to the Psalms demands that we read the whole as messianic music, whether as songs "by Christ" or "about Christ." Mark D. Futato,

> I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart....
> On the day I called, you answered me....
> All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O LORD,
>   for they have heard the words of your mouth,
> and they shall sing of the ways of the LORD,
>   for great is the glory of the LORD. (Ps 138:1, 3–5)

You should hear an echo in these words of God's promises to Abraham, which countered the world's Babylonian exile.[14] Israel's curse in the city of Babylon was but a picture of the global curse that arose after exile from the garden-city of Eden. Yet the hope since Gen 3:15 has been that an anointed king would rise, overcome the curse, and secure the praise of leaders from around the globe, resulting in the end of humanity's Babylonian exile. Through the patriarch Abraham a single male seed would grow into a global multi-ethnic garden made of people from every tribe and tongue and with the kingdom turf expanding beyond the land of Canaan to all the lands of the earth.

Similar declarations of future, multi-ethnic praise are common through the Psalms. For example, in the midst of his suffering, the anointed king of the Psalter cries out:

> All the nations you have made shall come
>   and worship before you, O Lord,
>   and shall glorify your name. (Ps 86:9)

And again:
> Nations will fear the name of the LORD,
> and all the kings of the earth shall fear your glory.
> For the LORD builds up Zion;
>   he appears in his glory. (Ps 102:15–16)

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Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook, Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 174. See my discussion on interpreting "Psalms" in DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*, 62–83.

[14] For more on how Abraham's calling reverses the curse in general, see Hamilton, "The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham," 253–73. For its reversal of the Tower of Babel episode in particular, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 279–81.

And following his brutal death and victorious resurrection, the same Messiah declares:

> All the ends of the earth shall remember
>   and turn to the LORD,
> and all the families of the nations
>   shall worship before you.
> For kingship belongs to the LORD,
>   and he rules over the nations. (Ps 22:27–28)

Stage 1b: Prophetic Visions of Hope and a Global Mission of Reconciliation

The Mosaic covenant resulted in Israel's exile in Babylon. Yet even amid the covenant peoples' failures, God raised up prophets like Isaiah and Zephaniah who recalled the promises that God would end the Babylonian exile and bring good news and blessing to the whole world through a single royal deliver. This servant-king would represent the people of Israel, even bearing her name. Through him some from Israel the people and from the rest of the nations would enjoy lasting salvation:

> You are my servant, Israel,
>   in whom I will be glorified....
> It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
>   to raise up the tribes of Jacob
>   and to bring back the preserved of Israel;
> I will make you as a light for the nations,
>   that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth. (Isa 49:3, 6)[15]

Isaiah distinguishes the servant-people "Israel" from the servant-person "Israel." The former are a "sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity,"

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[15] For this reading of Isa 49:3, 6, see J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 383–89; G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 656–57. See also my case-study on Isa 42:1–4 in "A Redemptive-Historical Christological Approach," in *5 Views on Christ in the Old Testament*, ed. Andrew M. King and Brian J. Tabb (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming).

who have "forsaken the LORD" (1:4; cf. 59:2; 64:7); they are spiritually "deaf," "blind," and imprisoned (42:18–15; 43:8–13); they are "stubborn of heart" and "far from righteousness" (46:12). In contrast, the servant-person is righteous (50:8; 53:11) and guiltless (50:9), having not rebelled (50:5) and done no "violence" or "deceit" (53:9). None in the nation could save (59:16), so Yahweh would raise up the messianic servant, whom he named "Israel" (49:3), to save a remnant from both Israel the nation and the earth's other nations (49:6).

This royal servant would enjoy God's presence and would fulfill his merciful mission to help the hurting and bring justice to the nations (42:1–4; 51:4–5; 61:1–3). He would serve as a covenant mediator and would open the eyes of the blind and deliver the captive (42:6–7; 49:8–9). He would preach the good news of God's victory over evil and saving grace (52:7–10; 61:1–3), which he would secure through his own substitutionary sacrifice. "He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed" (53:5).

Yahweh would make his royal servant an offering for humanity's guilt, and by this atoning work he would "sprinkle many nations," "make many to be accounted righteous," and "bear their iniquities" (52:15; 53:11). In Paul's words elsewhere, "For our sake [God] made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21). And again, "By the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous" (Rom 5:19).

Through the death and resurrection of this royal servant-person, a multitude of offspring-servants would rise who would carry on the missional task of the servant-person, Israel (Isa 49:3, 6). "In the LORD all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory" (45:25). "When his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities" (53:10–11). These would be "an offspring the LORD has blessed" (61:9), and they would "possess the nations" (54:3), including "servants" who would operate as priests

(66:20–21) from among the foreigners (56:6–8) and ethnic Israelites alike (56:6–8; 63:17).[16]

Building on Isaiah's vision, the prophet Zephaniah similarly foretold that, at the very time when God would consume his enemies like a sacrifice by fire at the day of the Lord (Zeph 3:8; cf. 1:7), Yahweh would also create and preserve a multi-ethnic remnant of worshipers and counter the effects of Babel's tower (3:9–10): "For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering." God would purify the peoples' "speech" (LXX = "tongue") so that with one voice they will call upon Yahweh's name and serve him together (3:9; cf. Ps 116:4, 13, 17 with Isa 12:4; Joel 2:28–32; Zech 13:9). Indeed, the offspring of those once dispersed at Babel will operate as Yahweh's worshiping priests, following the rivers of life back to God's sanctuary and bringing him offerings (Zeph 3:10; cf. Isa 56:6; 66:20–21). "Cush" was the ancient center of black Africa and located in modern Sudan, and the rivers were likely the White and Blue Nile (see Isa 18:1–2). The region of Cush and the people associated with it were named after Cush, Noah's grandson through Ham. Cush's son Nimrod is the one who built ancient Babel, where the peoples elevated their own "name" over Yahweh's and where God confused their "speech/tongue" and "dispersed" them throughout the world (Gen 11:4, 7, 9).[17] We first learn of Cush in Gen 2:10–14, which identify it as a terminus of one of the four rivers flowing from the single river coming

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[16] For more on these passages, see DeRouchie, "Counting Stars with Abraham and the Prophets," 465–74.

[17] Gen 11:1–9 and Zeph 3:9–10 are the only two places in the Old Testament that include the terms "lip" (*śāpâ*), "name" (*šēm*), and "disperse" (*pûṣ*), which suggests that Zephaniah intended us to view God's work of restoration at the day of the Lord as a reversal of the Tower of Babel. For more, see Jason S. DeRouchie, "Zephaniah," in *Daniel–Malachi*, vol. 7 of *ESV Expository Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 596–97; Jason S. DeRouchie, "Zephaniah, Book Of," *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale, D. A. Carson, Benjamin L. Gladd, Andrew David Naselli (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, forthcoming); Jason S. DeRouchie, *Zephaniah*, vol. 32 of *ZECOT* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming), s.v., Zeph 3:8–10.

from Eden. So, because Zephaniah envisions the worshipers gathering to Yahweh at his sanctuary to give him offerings, it's as if the descendants of those once exiled from the garden of Eden and scattered at the Tower of Babel are now following the rivers of life back to their source in order to enjoy fellowship with the great King (2:13; cf. Rev 22:1–2). Zephaniah foresaw a day when God would reverse Babylon's curse and restore his world to right order.

Stage 2a: The New Covenant and Jesus's Mission of Good News

Jesus is the very one Moses, Isaiah, and the other prophets anticipated—the one through whom all the world can be blessed. In Jesus, God was remembering "his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham" (Luke 1:72–73). Christ is the singular royal "offspring of Abraham," and in him Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female, can become Abraham's true "offspring," full heirs of all the promises.[18] Paul builds on the promises of Gen 12:3 and 22:18:

The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." … In Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham [has] come to the Gentiles…. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring … who is Christ…. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Gal 3:8, 14, 16, 29)

Furthermore, Jesus is Yahweh's royal servant, who proclaims the good news of God's reign and brings light and salvation to the nations. Thus, he opened his ministry by citing Isaiah 61:1–2 in combination with 42:7 and 58:6: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18–19). Similarly, citing Isaiah 9:1–2, Matthew stressed

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[18] See DeRouchie and Meyer, "Christ or Family as the 'Seed' of Promise?" For more on how all of Scripture's promises are "Yes" for all Christians today, see Jason S. DeRouchie, "Is Every Promise 'Yes'? Old Testament Promises and the Christian," *Them* 42 (2017): 16–45; Jason S. DeRouchie, "How Should a Christian Relate to Old Testament Promises?," in *40 Questions about Biblical Theology*, by Jason S. DeRouchie, Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli, 40 Questions (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020), 355–64.

that in Jesus's preaching, the light of God was dawning on Galilee of the Gentiles (Matt 4:13–17).

Jesus directly fulfilled Isaiah's promise that the messianic servant-person "Israel" would save a remnant both from "Israel" the servant-people and from other nations (Isa 49:3, 6): "To this day I [Paul] have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:22–23). With citations from the Law, Prophets, and Writings, the apostle also noted that Jesus is the one in whom peoples from the nations are now hoping.

> I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name." And again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him." And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope." (Rom 15:8–12; cf. Ps 18:49[50]; Deut 32:43; Ps 117:1; Isa 11:10)

Through the servant Jesus, God was fulfilling OT hopes for the day when his saving blessing would overcome the curse and reach beyond the borders of Israel to all the nations of the earth.

On Mission by the Waters of Babylon

Yahweh had called old covenant Israel to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation amid a dark world (Exod 19:5–6), but they failed in their calling. In contrast, the Lord now both calls and empowers the church to live in a way that points to his greatness and glory, representing him in this foreign land as we hope in the complete realization of his kingdom promises. Hence, Jesus demanded, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt 5:16). Similarly, Peter proclaimed, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession,

that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.... As sojourners and exiles ... keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation" (1 Pet 2:9, 11–12).

Did you notice that Peter tagged Christians "sojourners and exiles"? Regardless of lineage, language, or national status, when we are "born again ... through the living and abiding word of God" (1:23), we gain new birth certificates that identify us with Zion, the great heavenly city Jerusalem. This is the point of Ps 87, which notes:

> Glorious things are said of you,
>   city of God:
> "I will record Rahab and Babylon
>   among those who acknowledge me—
> Philistia too, and Tyre, along with Cush—
>   and will say, 'This one was born in Zion.'"
> Indeed, of Zion it will be said,
>   "This one and that one were born in her,
>   and the Most High himself will establish her."
> The LORD will write in the register of the peoples:
>   "This one was born in Zion." (Ps 87:3–6)

Similarly, Isaiah foresaw the day "when Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance'" (Isa 19:24–25). These three peoples are representative of a remnant of saints from all the earth, now realized in the church of Jesus, who worship God as his single family.

So the church's "citizenship is in heaven" from which "we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil 3:20), where is our present address? From the beginning of Scripture's story, to live as exiles means to live in association with Babylon, and our present state is no different. Thus, Peter concludes his first letter, declaring, "She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings" (1 Pet 5:13). Following in the OT pattern, Peter here identifies Rome as the spiritual "Babylon" in his day,

the capital of the earthly world empire wherein believers suffered as "sojourners and exiles" (2:11; cf. 1:1, 17).[19]

At the end of the Bible, Babylon shows up again as the great city that Revelation symbolically uses to talk about the controlling evil force of influence behind all cultures and worldly systems in our day.[20] John envisions one of God's angels readying to proclaim "an eternal gospel … to every nation and tribe and language and people" (Rev 14:6). The angel calls his listeners to fear, worship, and give glory to God "because the hour of his judgment has come" (14:7). Then a second angel adds motivation to this call by declaring, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality" (Rev 14:8). Those standing with the Lamb are spiritual "virgins," having not defiled themselves by worshiping other gods (14:4), but the idolatry associated with Babylon was rampant. Thus, we read elsewhere, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast…. So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more" (18:2, 21).

Today the "eternal gospel" stands against such stark wickedness. But the contrast will not stand forever. For Babylon the great will fall, and God will replace it with an eternal city with which the saints today are already associated. How does Scripture speak of this new city? Isaiah had told us that we were waiting for a restored garden of Eden, a new creation that is nothing less than a new Jerusalem.

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[19] For this reading of 1 Pet 5:13, see, e.g., Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 201; J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, WBC 49 (Dallas: Word, 1988), 310–11; Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 201–203; Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 353; Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 322–23.

[20] Beale writes, "In the Apocalypse Rome and all wicked world systems take on the symbolic name 'Babylon the Great.'" G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 755.

The LORD comforts Zion;
    he comforts all her waste places
and makes her wilderness like Eden,
    her desert like the garden of the LORD;
joy and gladness will be found in her,
    thanksgiving and the voice of song. (Isa 51:3)

And again,

For behold, I create new heavens
    and a new earth,
and the former things shall not be remembered
    or come into mind.
But be glad and rejoice forever
    in that which I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,
    and her people to be a gladness." (Isa 65:17–18)

Revelation builds on these prophecies when it speaks of Mount Zion (Rev 14:1) or the holy city of Jerusalem (21:10). This is not the Jerusalem in the Middle East but the heavenly Jerusalem that will come to earth and fill all with God's glory (cf. Gal 4:25–26; Heb 12:22). Thus, John recalls how the angel said to him, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." Then the apostle tells us:

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.... And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.... But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev 21:9–10, 23, 27)

Saints today live "by the waters of Babylon," but we do so "as sojourners and exiles" (1 Pet 2:9). And in this foreign context, we must keep our "conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that ... they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation (1 Pet 2:9, 11–12). But our call today is even greater than this, for through those living

in the church age "an eternal gospel" is to go forth, bringing warning and hope "to every nation and tribe and language and people" (Rev 14:6).

Stage 2b: Jesus's Mission Becomes the Church's "Go and Tell" Mission

The mission of the Messiah has now become the mission of his church. In the original garden-city, God commissioned his image bearers to fill, subdue, and rule the earth, displaying his worth and splendor throughout the earth (Gen 1:28). Jesus is now fulfilling this reality through his church. The very one who has all authority in heaven and on earth has commissioned us, his servants, to make disciples, and he has given us his presence, which allows us to image or bear witness to his greatness and glory throughout the world. Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.... And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:18–20).

In Isaiah 49:6, God commissions the servant-person, whom we know as Jesus, to bring light to the nations that God's salvation might reach to the end of the earth (cf. Acts 26:22–23). It is striking, therefore, that Paul claims the Messiah's mission as *his* mission in Acts 13:47: "The Lord has commanded us, saying, 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" Remember how the book of Acts opened. "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen" (1:1–2). The Gospel of Luke records what "Jesus *began* to do and teach," which means that the mission of the church in Acts is what Jesus *continues* to do and to teach through his redeemed saints. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (1:8). The "Holy Spirit" that now empowers us is nothing less than "the Spirit of Jesus" (16:7), so as we proclaim the good news, we do so as agents of Christ himself.

At Pentecost God began to fulfill Zephaniah's vision of Babylon's reversal and of a remnant of worshipers with purified speech (i.e.,

tongues) and unity (Zeph 3:9–10).[21] Devout Jews "from every nation under heaven" heard Jesus's followers speaking in other "tongues" and proclaiming the gospel in their languages (Acts 2:4–6). The result was that many called on the name of the Lord and were saved and united together (2:21, 41–42). Nevertheless, it was God's saving the Ethiopian (i.e., Cushite) eunuch that most directly marked Babylon's reversal and the initial fulfillment of Zephaniah's multi-ethnic remnant (8:26–39). The good news that through Christ's life, death, and resurrection the reigning God saves and satisfies sinners who believe was now moving from "Jerusalem … to the end of the earth" (1:8).

In Isaiah, the messianic servant was the one with beautiful feet bringing the good news of salvation and God's reign: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of *him* who brings good news" (Isa 52:7; cf. 61:1). But in Romans 10 Paul makes the subject plural to identify that the church now carries on the Messiah's good-news proclamation to the nations. "How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of *those* who preach the good news!'" (Rom 10:14–15).

In Isaiah, the Messiah has armor to aid him in advancing God's kingdom: "Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist" (Isa 11:5). And again, "He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and wrapped himself in zeal as a cloak" (59:17). That very armor is now ours in Christ (Eph 6:10–20), as we carry out our mission of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:17–21).[22]

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[21] For more on this connection, see Jerry Dale Butcher, "The Significance of Zephaniah 3:8–13 for Narrative Composition in the Early Chapters of the Book of Acts" (PhD diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1972); Jud Davis, "Acts 2 and the Old Testament: The Pentecost Event in Light of Sinai, Babel and the Table of Nations," *CTR* 7.1 (2009): 29–48; Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary; Volume 1: Introduction and 1:1-2:47* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 1:840–44; DeRouchie, "Zephaniah, Book Of," *DNTUOT*, forthcoming.

[22] For more on this theme, see Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld, *'Put on the Armour of God': The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians*, JSNTSup 140 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997); Mark D. Owens, "Spiritual Warfare and the Church's

For the church of Jesus, a "go and tell" (i.e., centrifugal) mission now matches the responsibility to obey in order that others may "come and see" God's worth displayed. Indeed, our Lord has commissioned us to proclaim to all nations the good news that through Jesus Christ's life, death, and resurrection the reigning God eternally saves and satisfies sinners who believe. Filled with the very Spirit of the resurrected Christ (Acts 16:7), the church as God's temple-sanctuary has spread from Jerusalem to Judea-Samaria to the ends of the earth, thus fulfilling Christ's promise (1:8; cf. Isa 32:14–17; 44:3; 59:21). In Christ, the new creation has dawned. God is now reestablishing right order, and his glory is increasingly filling the earth.

> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.… We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way. (2 Cor 5:17–21; 6:3–4)

We today are the end-times servants that God has called to carry out the mission of the servant Jesus. Hear how Paul opens the book of Romans, which is the greatest missionary-support letter ever written.[23] He writes:

> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be

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Mission According to Ephesians 6:10–17," *TynBul* 67 (2016): 87–103; Jason S. DeRouchie, "Greater Is He: A Primer on Spiritual Warfare for Kingdom Advance," *SBJT* 25.2 (2021): forthcoming.

[23] We see that Romans is a missionary support letter from Rom 15:23–29.

the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. (Rom 1:1–6)

Paul was the Messiah's servant, whom Jesus sent as an apostle "to carry [his] name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15; cf. 22:15; Gal 2:7). God set Paul apart for the good news, which finds its source and content in God, comes to us through the agents of the Old Testament prophets through the vehicle of the Scriptures, and finds its focus in the divine Son.

Now, consider the aim of Paul's gospel. "Through [Jesus Christ] we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations" (Rom 1:5). Three elements are noteworthy with respect to this goal.

First, the phrase "the obedience of faith" probably means "the obedience that always flows from faith" progressively over time.[24] Faith is the root and obedience the fruit, yet in a way that the two are never separated; saving faith submits to Christ's lordship (6:17–18; 10:13–17). "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life" (6:22).

Next, the target of the gospel mission is to see people saved and satisfied from "among *all* the nations." All the nations experienced God's curse, and some from all the nations will experience God's blessing. The good news that through Christ's life, death, and resurrection the reigning God eternally saves and satisfies sinners who believe is for the Libyan and the Bolivian, for the expats in Dubai and the mountain peoples in the Himalayas, for the varied tribes in Ethiopia, the Latinos in Miami, and the poor in rural Wisconsin.

Finally, this passage tells us that missions is not the end but is a means to exalting God. As John Piper explains, "Missions is not the

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[24] So, e.g., Richard N. Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 79–82; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 40; Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, NICNT, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 50–51.

ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't."[25] One day, the need for missions will pass away, but the redeemed will forever magnify the majesty and glory of God in Christ. Missions exists "for the sake of [Jesus's] name." The church that received Paul's message bears no higher goal than seeing Jesus's glory savored among the peoples of the world. Making disciples of Jesus (Matt 28:19) and bearing witness to him (Acts 1:8) is the church's distinctive mission.[26]

The apostle Paul played a unique part in fulfilling the early church's great commission. Jesus sent him to reach both Jews and Gentiles with the good news of Jesus, and this included the Christians in Rome "who are called to belong to Jesus Christ" (Rom 1:6). Nevertheless, the responsibility "to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations" (Rom 1:5) was not simply the apostle's mission but is the mission of the whole church in this age. Jesus commissioned his followers to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19). So all Christians are "set apart for the gospel of God" (1:1), but not all in the same way.

When Paul was in Antioch, the Holy Spirit called him and Barnabas out from that local church to be frontier missionaries (Acts 13:2; cf. Rom 1:1; Gal 1:15). Paul later declared, "I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation" (Rom 15:20; cf. 2 Cor 10:16). After the apostle had

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[25] John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 15.

[26] Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011); cf. Timothy Keller, "The Gospel and the Poor," *Them* 33.3 (2008): 8–22. For an alternative approach that I believe unhelpfully minimizes the centrality of disciple-making in the church's mission, see Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*, Biblical Theology for Life (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010). John Piper captures the balance correctly when he affirms that "Christians care about all suffering, especially eternal suffering," and "Christians care about all injustice, especially injustice against God" ("Christians Care about All Suffering and Injustice," presented at "Sing! Conference," Edinburgh, Scotland, and posted at desiringGod.org, Aug 25, 2019:https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/christians-care-about-all-suffering-and-injustice).

planted the churches and moved on, others like Apollos followed him and supplied further training and grounding in Scripture with the help of the Lord (1 Cor 3:5–6; cf. Acts 18:24–28; 1 Cor 16:12; Tit 3:13). Still others like Timothy left his home in Lystra (Acts 16:1), journeyed with Paul for a time, but then settled away from his homeland to oversee the church in Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3) after it had its own elders (Acts 20:17) and its own outreach (19:10). Today there are Paul-type missionaries, Apollos-type missionaries, and Timothy-type missionaries, each serving as arms of local churches to make disciples through reaching and teaching.[27]

But there are also the senders and supporters, whom God has equally set apart from the world to live as the temple of God for the sake of the gospel (2 Cor 6:17). These planted in local churches are to conduct themselves honorably every day (1 Pet 2:12) by embracing the gospel that alone can transform them (Rom 1:16; 16:25; 2 Cor 4:6; 9:13). They are to live as new creations, proclaiming "the message of reconciliation" to family members, neighbors, coworkers, and friends (2 Cor 5:18). They are also to pray fervently for those who have gone out to enjoy gospel advance amid persecution (Rom 15:30–31; 2 Cor 1:11; Col 4:3; 2 Thess 3:1–2); such prayers will multiply God's praises when answers come (2 Cor 1:11). These same ones send out missionaries "in a manner worthy of God" and "support" them (3 John 6b–8). This support includes helping the missionaries through advocacy and financial provision (Rom 15:24; 1 Cor 9:11; Gal 6:6; Tit 3:13) and contributing financially to the needs of those they are serving (Rom 15:25–27; 2 Cor 8:1–5; 9:2, 6–15; cf. 1 Cor 16:1–4), all so that more may thank God for his kindness (2 Cor 9:12–13). By this, local churches will "reap bountifully" (2 Cor 9:6), bear fruit in accordance with their "confession of the gospel of Christ" (9:13), and become partners in the gospel (Phil 1:5) and "fellow workers for the truth" (3 John 8).

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[27] For the distinction of Paul-type and Timothy-type missionaries, see John Piper, "World Missions and the End of the World," desiringGod.org, Oct 26, 1997: https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/world-missions-and-the-end-of-history.

Stage 2c: The Present and Lasting Praise to the
Reigning Savior and Satisfier of the Nations

The ultimate end of missions is white-hot worship—the magnifying of God's greatness and glory in Christ through a multiethnic bride. Paul's mission and the church's mission is "to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of [Jesus's] name among all the nations" (Rom 1:5). Even now in the heavens, those gathered around God's throne are singing praise to the Lion-Lamb King, whose death and resurrection delivered peoples from all nations: "Worthy are you … for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth" (Rev 5:9–10). Today, God's messengers are proclaiming his "eternal gospel … to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people" (14:6). And in the future, those saved and satisfied "from all tribes and peoples and languages" will together cry out, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (7:9–10).

If we have tasted and seen the goodness of God in Christ, the Lord calls us to know Christ and make him known. As I write this study, there are still regions wherein Christ remains largely unknown and where the local churches, if they exist at all, are relatively insufficient at making Christ known without outside help. Over 5 billion people in this world remain in darkness—spiritually lost and helpless, not knowing, not acknowledging, not adoring Christ as Savior and Lord. Of the 17,416 ethnolinguistic people groups around the planet, 7,403 of them are unreached, totaling around 3.27 billions souls.[28] 116 of these unreached peoples are completely unengaged––those for whom not one person, church, or mission agency has taken responsibility to proclaim the good news through word and deed.[29] With these remarkable figures, 1.5 billion people still do not have a full Bible in their language, 167 million people don't have any Scripture at all, and over 350 sign languages are still waiting for a video Bible translation to start.[30] Finally, over 85 percent of all church leaders in this world have no formal theological training or

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[28] Figure taken from https://joshuaproject.net/.

[29] Figure taken from
https://finishingthetask.com/about-finishing-the-task/people-group-list/.

[30] Figure taken from https://www.wycliffe.org/.

theological resources to shepherd God's people.[31] What role are you and your church playing in making disciples for Jesus from among the neighborhoods and the nations?

You have an opportunity and responsibility to participate in a work of cosmic proportions—one that God has been developing since creation and that will climax in the global praise of Christ and the immeasurable joy of the redeemed on the new earth. We can join in God's passion to see the brokenhearted find healing, the enslaved set free, the grieving find hope, and the hurting find help. We must either go or send; we must either be a rope holder or one who crosses cultures for the sake of the name. Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2). We enjoy the greatest power for the highest task (Acts 1:8). I am praying that God would let the readers of this meditation become more faithful goers and more faithful senders until multi-ethnic worship makes missions obsolete. Will you today heed Christ's call to make disciples of all nations as you continue "by the waters of Babylon"?

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[31] Figure taken from https://trainingleadersinternational.org/85.

Preaching Paul's Points:
Systemic Functional Linguistics of ἄρα οὖν and Sermon Preparation in Romans[1]

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Introduction

For the preacher, identifying points of emphasis in Scripture can be fraught with difficulty. Because the goal of a sermon is to equip, challenge, instruct, rebuke, etc., at times, the life situation of the congregation can influence how a preacher reads and preaches a text. The emphasis a preacher finds in a given passage may relate more to his life situation or the congregation than the lexical and grammatical issues analyzed in a commentary.

As a result, the life situation of a preacher and the congregation may eclipse what a biblical author code as emphatic. I contend here that the grammatical and lexical features in a text's original language signal what the author of that text would want a preacher to emphasize to the congregation in view. If, as Jeffrey T. Reed proposes, linguistic analysis of a discourse can bring the grammarian and the commentator together,[2] perhaps the preacher should pull up a seat to the table.

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[1] This article summarizes the research of a paper presented in the New Testament Greek Language and Exegesis Section of the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Fort Worth, TX, 17 November, 2021.

[2] Jeffrey T. Reed, "Discourse Analysis," in *Handbook to the Exegesis of the New Testament,* ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 194. Stanley E. Porter notes that discourse analysis has at least three goals: (1) establishing the boundaries of a text unit, (2) identifying phenomena that provide cohesion of the units of said text and provide coherence of meaning therein, and (3) articulating the ideas, persons, or events an author makes prominent in a text

Systemic Functional Linguistics and Emphasis in a Text

Since readers discern the meaning of a text by synthesizing sentences and units of thought, a preacher's task is to help the congregation see how the grammar and meaning of individual words contribute to the unit in which those words are written.[3] Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL, henceforth) provides the preacher a framework for helping the congregation see how words contribute to the whole of a discourse. Stated differently, SFL is one specific linguistic approach that might be used to accomplish the broader aims of Discourse Analysis.[4]

According to M.A.K. Halliday, systemic grammar is based upon the notion that networks of interrelated contrasts encode grammatical emphasis.[5] Halliday states that the task of a linguist is to communicate how and why a text means what it does for the hearer, helping the hearer understand why he interprets the text in the way that he does.[6] Matthew

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(Porter, *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 90-91.

[3] "The meaning of a discourse is discerned from analyzing a set of interrelated features, such as genre, structure, cohesion, propositions, relations, prominence, and setting" (Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* [Nashville: B&H, 1994], 247).

[4] For a survey of the development of Discourse Analysis and its relationship to linguistics and other social sciences, see Todd A. Scacewater, "Discourse Analysis: History, Topics, and Applications," in *Discourse Analysis of the New Testament Writings*, ed. Todd A. Scacewater (Dallas: Fontes, 2020), 1-30.

[5] M.A.K. Halliday and Christian M.I.M Matthiessen, *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 4th rev ed. (London: Routledge, 2014), 68.

[6] M.A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (New York: Routledge, 1976), 328. For Halliday, the meaning of a text cannot be discerned apart from the lexical and grammatical patterns an author chooses to employ in writing that text. Halliday states that "As the text unfolds, patterns emerge, some of which acquire added value through resonating with other patterns in the text" (Halliday and Matthiessen, *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 63). Mary J. Schleppegrell notes that SFL has the ability to assist interpreters in recognizing and evaluating these patterns stating, "Discourse analysis seeks patterns of linguistic data. Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) offers a means of exploring meaning in language and of relating language use to social contexts so as to contribute to our understanding of language in social life" (Schleppegrell, "Systemic Functional Linguistics," in *The Routledge*

Brooke O'Donnell argues that Systemic Linguistics is built upon the notion that form and meaning are connected[7] with the result that the grammatical categories in a system must be interpreted with respect to the other categories in that system.[8]

Systemic Functional Linguistics and *APA OYN* in Romans

In what follows, I wish to employ SFL to the conjunction combination ἄρα οὖν in Romans. Concerning the value of analyzing Romans at the discourse level, Aaron Sherwood writes, "DA becomes a key resource for sound analysis, because as an approach it pays the closest attention to logical connectors, with which Romans is especially saturated: The *not-buts*, the *neither-nors*, the *not-only-but-alsos*, and the *rathers*; the *sinces* and the *becauses*; the *fors*, *therefores*, and *so-forths*."[9] Douglas J. Moo notes that interpreters across the spectrum recognize Romans 9-11 as a discourse unit.[10] Paul step-by-step structures his argument in Romans with the result that larger units can be identified in also in Rom 1:19-

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Handbook of Discourse Analysis, ed. James Paul Gee and Michael Hanford [New York: Routledge, 2012], 21.

[7] Matthew Brook O'Donnell, *Corpus Linguistics & the Greek of the New Testament*, NTM 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), 30-33. First, communication is best understood by recognizing the system of a language and understanding the instances of communication within that system. Viewing language as a system views any instance within a framework of possibilities. Second, the concept of lexicogrammar, investigating lexeme on one end of a scale and grammar on the other, helps the analyst grasp the relationship between meaning and function. Third, the idea that within a system, patterns can be recognized. These patterns can be analyzed for probability. For the present study, it is noteworthy that when a form is used outside the range of expectation, it can be emphatic. Fourth, the concept of register, whose constituents include mode (the form of the discourse; dialogue, academic paper, monologue), tenor (relationships of participants), and field (what is being discussed, semantic fields and ideas of content) help analysts understand the interplay of social situation and patterns of language.

[8] Ibid., 32.

[9] Aaron Sherwood, "Romans," in *Discourse Analysis of the New Testament Writings*, ed. Todd A. Scacewater (Dallas: Fontes, 2020), 194, italics original.

[10] Douglas J. Moo, "Israel and the Law in Romans 5-11: Interaction with the New Perspective," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D.A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 2:196.

3:31; 5:1-8:39; and 12:1-14:23. Sherwood notes that Paul employs these logical connectors to stitch these larger units together, pointing readers forward in the discourse. Preachers who pay attention to the role of these connectors and the flow of larger units are equipped to help the congregation grasp the macro themes of Paul's argument. In expositing Romans, the preacher will do well to preach sermons that survey, even superficially, these larger sections so that the congregation does not miss the forest for the trees.

But these logical connectors help the congregation to identify essential trees in the forest, and that is my concern regarding Paul's coordination of ἄρα and οὖν in Romans. How one interprets instances of ἄρα followed by οὖν in Romans or elsewhere in Paul depends on their view of Greek grammar. BDF notes that ἄρα can stand alone as an inferential conjunction but that it is strengthened when followed by οὖν.[11] Daniel B. Wallace describes inferential conjunctions like ἄρα and οὖν as syntax markers that signal a deduction or summary of antecedent ideas.[12] Wallace does not detail the coordination of these two conjunctions. Steven E. Runge, though analyzing grammar at the broader discourse level, classifies οὖν as a connecting proposition, but does not note its coordination after ἄρα in Paul.[13]

If one is employing principles of SFL, their analysis of the inferential ἄρα οὖν will recognize that the choice of this conjunction combination implies an emphatic meaning. Stanley E. Porter observes that in the New Testament, only Paul coordinates ἄρα and οὖν and that the combination is rare outside of the New Testament.[14] David L. Matthewson and Elodie

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[11] §451.

[12] Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 673.

[13] Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010), 43-48.

[14] Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 207.

Ballantine Emig[15] cite Margaret E. Thrall's observation that ἄρα οὖν signifies a grammatical emphasis in the inference.[16]

Thrall writes that the ἄρα οὖν particle combination signifies a grammatical emphasis in the inference typical of οὖν.[17] She notes that by itself, ἄρα may imply a surprise, interest, or consequence in the subsequent idea related to what precedes.[18] Thrall suggests that Paul uses the ἄρα οὖν combination in Romans to provide a summary of the argument of an entire section—as opposed to just stating the logical consequence of a subsequent clause concerning its antecedent. In other words, ἄρα οὖν can help identify section breaks in Paul's thought in Romans, providing the interpreter or preacher a precipice upon which to look back and grasp Paul's argument to that point in the discourse.

So, Paul's use of ἄρα οὖν should get the preacher's attention. Here is an idea Paul wants to emphasize, and this idea needs to be emphasized when that passage is preached. Paul writes ἄρα οὖν twelve times (if we accept the variant in Rom 14:12), eight of which are in Romans (Rom 5:18; 7:3, 25; 8:12; 9:16, 18; 14:12*, 19; Gal 6:10; Eph 2:19; 1 Thess 5:6; 2 Thess 2:15).

My concern here is to analyze Paul's uses of ἄρα οὖν in Rom 9:16 and 18, and 14:12 and 19.

In these two sections of text, Paul writes ἄρα οὖν with little intervening material. As noted already, because ἄρα οὖν implies an emphatic inference based upon a broader scope of preceding ideas, the preacher studying the Greek text would expect some distance between instances of this conjunction combination. But twice in Romans, Paul writes ἄρα οὖν in proximity. Here Paul breaks the pattern of grammatical norms. And SFL helps the preacher recognize lexical and grammatical patterns because when an author chooses a word or grammatical form

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[15] David L. Matthewson and Elodie Ballantine Emig, *Intermediate Greek Grammar: Syntax for Students of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), 267.

[16] Margaret E. Thrall, *Greek Particles in the New Testament: Linguistic and Exegetical Studies*, NTTS 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 10.

[17] Ibid., 10-11.

[18] See the surprise/contrast notion ἄρα creates in Rom 10:17. There Paul notes that faith does coming by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ—even though Israel heard but did not respond in belief.

that does not fit its pattern, that choice implies meaning and requires investigation.

I suggest that ἄρα οὖν in Rom 9:16 and 18, and 14:12 and 19 form grammatical frames, requiring the preacher to slow his pace and widen his view of the intervening material. In so doing, the preacher can help the congregation understand Paul's argument at that location in the discourse. The preacher's task is to help the audience grasp Paul's points in these places lest they move too quickly through the relatively small quantity of text that separate ἄρα οὖν in Rom 9:16 and 18, and 14:12 and 19. In these brief units of text, the preacher will identify two major themes in Romans (viz., God's sovereign mercy and the importance of corporate unity in the church) and be equipped to help the audience in view grasp Paul's points.

God Hardens Whom He Wills

For some months, I have been memorizing Romans 8-9 in Greek. When I came to Rom 9:16-18, I scratched my head. Why would Paul write the emphatic inferential ἄρα οὖν in Rom 9:18 separated in NA28 by only thirty-nine words from the previous use of ἄρα οὖν in Rom 9:16?[19] I suggest that Rom 9:18 serves as the capstone of Paul's analysis of OT figures he cites beginning in Rom 9:6.[20]

Paul already establishes in Rom 9:16, based upon his reading of the birth of Isaac (Rom 9:7-9) and Jacob and Esau (Rom 9:10-13), that God's mercy and not physical descent brings one into God's family. In Rom 9:15, Paul defends God's sovereignty by quoting the Lord's statement to Moses in Exod 33:19. God will have mercy and compassion upon whomever He chooses, Paul notes. In Rom 9:6-15, Paul identifies God's

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[19] Richard N. Longenecker writes that Paul uses ἄρα οὖν in Rom 9:16 and 18 to signal an initial and then a corollary conclusion related to God's sovereignty (Longenecker, *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 818. Though Longenecker notes that Paul's uses of ἄρα οὖν in these verses must be understood in relation to each other, Longenecker stops short of noting (1) the rarity of ἄρα οὖν in the New Testament, and (2) that Paul writes ἄρα οὖν in Rom 9:18 in close proximity to its previous use in Rom 9:16. These are my concerns in the present study.

[20] Sherwood states that Rom 9:6-29 is the first section of the literary subunit of Romans 9-11 (Sherwood, "Romans," 214).

sovereign mercy in the lives of Isaac and Jacob and God's word to Moses. From his reading of Genesis and Exodus, in Rom 9:16 Paul makes an inference beginning with ἄρα οὖν stating, οὐ τοῦ θέλοντος οὐδὲ τοῦ τρέχοντος ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐλεῶντος θεοῦ (it does not depend on human will or effort but on God who shows mercy, Rom 9:16 CSB, henceforth). Moo writes that the combination of ἄρα and οὖν in Rom 9:16 has a concluding force to Paul's citation of Exod 33:19 in Rom 9:15.[21] Just as, on the one hand, God's display of mercy to individual Jews and Gentiles is rooted in God's own will; on the other hand, therefore, God's mercy is not based upon human effort or intention.

In Rom 9:15-17, Paul reads Exodus backward.[22] After quoting Exod 33:19 in Rom 9:15, Paul quotes Exod 9:16 in Rom 9:17. In the account of the seventh plague recorded in Exod 9:13-35, the Lord tells Pharaoh that He could have obliterated Pharaoh already but restrained the plagues so that He could show His great power in multiple acts of destruction against Pharaoh and the Egyptian people (Exod 9:15). Paul writes in Rom 9:17 that the Scripture speaks to Pharaoh announcing that the Lord established Pharaoh to show His great power over the Egyptian king and proclaim His greatness throughout the earth (εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐξήγειρά σε ὅπως ἐνδείξωμαι ἐν σοὶ τὴν δύναμίν μου καὶ ὅπως διαγγελῇ τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῇ). With the additional illustration from the life of Pharaoh in Rom 9:17, Paul specifies further, as he does by referencing Jacob and Esau in Rom 9:13, that God chooses not only who will be in His family but also who is excluded.

For Paul in the flow of Romans 9, the story of Pharaoh underscores God's sovereignty even over those who could not claim lineage in Abraham. Paul writes ἄρα οὖν in Rom 9:18, after just thirty-nine words from the previous use of ἄρα οὖν in Rom 9:16, indicating that he wants his readers to grasp with wide lenses God's sovereignty over Pharaoh in

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[21] Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 592-93.

[22] Michael J. Gorman notes that Paul identifies God's word to Moses after the Exodus and then in the exodus (Gorman, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul & His Letters*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017], 447). Paul cites God's statements to Pharaoh to confirm God's electing freedom demonstrated in God's choice of Isaac and Jacob.

Rom 9:17.[23] In Rom 9:18, Paul establishes deep grammatical roots to ground his theological reflections on God's authority to save and condemn.[24]

In summary, Paul's use of ἄρα οὖν in Rom 9:18 emphasizes the negative aspect of election: God is obligated to none. God elects some to know His mercy and enter His family while at the same time confirming others in their state of rebellion resulting in ultimate damnation.[25] God's freedom to save or not may not be a popular message in modern congregations enamored with the pursuit of human freedom. Still, Paul's grammatical choices require the preacher to ensure that his audience understands Paul's point.

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[23] Sherwood does not comment directly on ἄρα οὖν in Rom 9:16 and 18 but summarizes Rom 9:14–18 saying "*Paul analyzes the sundering of first-century non-believing Jews' relationship with God in terms of consequences—God's judgment—upon their idolatry (likening them even to Pharaoh; 9:14-18)*" (Sherwood, "Romans," 214; bold and italics original).

[24] So Mark A. Seifrid, "Paul's appeal to the figure of Pharaoh is thus simultaneously particular and universal: in God's word to Pharaoh the pattern (type) of his work with fallen humanity is manifest" (Seifrid, "Romans," in *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament*, ed. G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson [Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2007], 643).

[25] Moo writes, "No doctrine stimulates more negative reaction and consternation than this one. Some degree of such reaction is probably inevitable, for it flies in the face of our common perceptions of both human freedom and God's justice. And vv. 19-23 show that Paul was himself very familiar with this reaction. Yet, without pretending that it solves all our problems, we must recognize that God's hardening is an act directed against human beings who are already in rebellion against God's righteous rule. God's hardening does not, then, *cause*, spiritual insensitivity to the things of God; it maintains people in the state of sin that already characterizes them (Moo, *Romans*, 599; italics original).

Living to God in Peace with One Another
Romans 14:12

In Rom 14:12, ἄρα οὖν[26] fills its traditional role, culminating Paul's argument in Rom 14:1-11.[27] In these verses, Paul urges those strong in faith (as evidenced in their freedom of conscience regarding food laws) and weak in faith[28] (and thus relying on Jewish makers to identify as the people of God) to live peaceably. Paul forbids those holding one of these positions or another from judging those with whom they disagree. And Paul does so—as throughout Romans—by placing human relationships in the shadow of God's righteous judgment. Since God welcomes those who eat (Rom 14:3) and will affirm at the judgment both those who eat

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[26] External evidence is split with οὖν being absent in 03 (Vaticanus), 06* (Claromontanus), 010, 012, 024, and a few minuscules but written in 01 (Sinaiticus), 02 (Alexandrinus), 04 (Ephraemi Rescriptus), 019, 044, 0209 and a few minuscules including 33. Schreiner writes, "It is difficult to determine whether οὖν is original, since the manuscript evidence is fairly evenly divided. One could claim that the harder reading would omit it, since the construction ἄρα οὖν is a favorite of Paul, especially in Romans (Rom. 5:18; 7:3, 25; 8:12; 9:16, 18; 14:19; cf. Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19; 1 Thess. 5:6; 2 Thess. 2:15), but Paul also often uses ἄρα alone (e.g., Rom. 7:21; 8:1; 10:17; 1 Cor. 15:18). M. Holmes (1999: 195–97) makes a good case for it being secondary, since the exclusion is the harder reading, and it is harder to account for another οὖν in 14:13 if it is original" (*Romans*, 702). Though Paul writes ἄρα οὖν more regularly in Romans than in his other epistles, the combination of these particles is (1) rare, and (2) creates semantic redundancy. Thus, the shorter reading may not be the explanatory reading; a copyist may be more likely to skip οὖν than add it. Since the editors of NA28 retain οὖν in brackets, I analyze it here.

[27] Sherwood notes that Rom 14:1-15:6 is a sub-unit anchored to Rom 12:1-2. According to Sherwood, Paul concludes the unit of Rom 12:1-15:6 by dealing with the relational tensions in Rome because these must have been prominent in Paul's reading of the situation there. "The effectiveness of his pastoral care for his audience—his primary interest in structuring the letter in the way that he has—succeeds or fails based on resolving this trouble" (Sherwood, "Romans," 219).

[28] Moo lists six options for interpreting the weak in faith in Rom 14:1-15:13 (Moo, *Romans*, 829).

and those who do not eat (Rom 14:4), neither party has grounds to judge the other.[29]

Paul emphasizes the sincerity both groups exhibit in practicing their convictions unto the Lord. In Paul's evaluation, the strong in faith and weak in faith seek to honor the Lord, eating or abstaining while giving thanks to God (Rom (Rom 14:6). Since both parties belong equally to Christ and submit His lordship concerning food (Rom 14:7-8), Paul writes, neither group would have the high ground from which they might look down upon the other.[30] Since Christ is the eschatological Lord—as demonstrated by His death and resurrection—no believer has the legal ground to accuse his brother on this side of the judgment (Rom 14:9-10). Instead, Paul writes in Rom 14:10, in the present age, believers should be concerned about their own behavior and the account they will give to God on that day.

It is the concept of ubiquity, commonness, all-ness that Paul wishes to be at the forefront of his audience's mind. In Paul's citation of Isa 45:23 (LXX) in Rom 14:11, he inverts the subject-noun phrase πᾶσα γλῶσσα with the verb ἐξομολογήσεται, placing the subject in an emphatic position.[31] Mark A Seifrid comments that in its context, Isa

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[29] "The idea is that no food or drink is inherently defiled or impure. It is clear that Paul departs from what is required in the OT, for the purity laws were a revelation of God's will. Paul argues that the purity laws are no longer in effect. The dawning of the new age and the inclusion of the gentiles (cf. Acts 10:1–11:18) have rendered them passé" (Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, ed. Robert W. Yarbrough and Joshua W. Jipp, 2nd ed., BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018], 707–708).

[30] Sherwood notes that his discourse analysis of Romans 14 underscores the fact that Paul's strategy is to unify the two groups from a theological grid in which he personally avoids siding with either camp (Sherwood, "Romans," 219).

[31] Longenecker writes, "In quoting the words of the prophet Isaiah, Paul seems only to be seeking to demonstrate the continuity of his words with those OT prophetic statements. Yet, in using words drawn from Isaiah, he is also declaring the biblically based and ominous reality that confronts all who would arrogantly judge and condemn others—and, in particular, all who would judge and condemn others about matters of heritage, personal opinion, and/or preference—that is, such people, even though believers in Jesus themselves, will be called on by God himself at the final judgment to give an account of their judgmental thoughts toward and condemning actions against other believers in Jesus" (Longenecker, *Romans*, 1004).

45:23 (LXX) presents the Lord as Israel's gracious, living Savior—embodied in the risen Lord Jesus. It is as if Paul is asking the Romans (another) rhetorical question, "You who judge your brother, do you not know that you will appear before the judgment seat of this one of whom the Isaianic Scripture speaks, the one who has overcome our judgment?"[32]

Seifrid's comment opens a window for understanding Paul's use of ἄρα οὖν in Rom 14:12. Paul uses the conjunction combination to reinforce the theological, vertical grounds for his ecclesiological, horizontal argument. Within the all (πᾶς) category, Paul repeatedly references, each (ἕκαστος) must give an account to God.

Romans 14:19

Paul's next, and final, use of ἄρα οὖν in Romans begins Rom 14:19, separated by just seven verses from the previous ἄρα οὖν combination in Rom 14:12. The intervening text demands the preacher's attention, and employing SFL can help the preacher communicate Paul's point here.[33]

Appeals to Christian unity dominate Rom 14:13-18. Little new ground is covered here in comparison to Rom 14:1-11. I note previously that in Rom 14:1-11, Paul writes in two directions, framing his ethical appeals for strong and weak believers to walk in love (horizontal) concerning God's grace and love to His people in Christ (vertical). This spatial framework is seen in Rom 14:13-18 as well. To make a horizontal point in Rom 14:13 (Μηκέτι οὖν ἀλλήλους κρίνωμεν· ἀλλὰ τοῦτο κρίνατε μᾶλλον, τὸ μὴ τιθέναι πρόσκομμα τῷ ἀδελφῷ ἢ σκάνδαλον), Paul writes κρίνω in both the hortatory subjunctive (κρίνωμεν, let us no longer judge) and imperative (κρίνατε, decide). And in the next verse, Paul grounds this horizontal appeal in a vertical theological reality: in Christ, no food is unclean of itself (cf. Matt 15:11-20//Mark 7:15-23). In Rom 14:15, Paul again moves from horizontal ethical injunction (For if your brother or sister is hurt by what you eat, you are no longer walking

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[32] Seifrid, "Romans," 686.

[33] Sherwood does not detail the use of ἄρα οὖν in Rom 14:12 and 19 but does observe that Rom 14:13-18 is a unit that culminates in Paul's primary point stated in Rom 14:19 (Sherwood, "Romans," 220). I argue that the use of ἄρα οὖν in Rom 14:19 grammatically grounds Sherwood's observation.

according to love) to vertical theological grounding (Do not destroy, by what you eat, someone for whom Christ died).

In Rom 14:16 (μὴ βλασφημείσθω οὖν ὑμῶν τὸ ἀγαθόν), Paul writes the imperative βλασφημέω with the particle of negation μή (do not let be slandered). But what does Paul intend here? A grammatical analysis requires identifying Paul's referent with the articular substantival adjective τὸ ἀγαθόν ([your] good). The nearest neuter singular antecedent is βρῶμα (food) in Rom 14:15. It may be that Paul uses βρῶμα metonymously to represent one's attitude toward food laws and the expression of those convictions as one eats or does not eat. By eating (when those in one's company refrain), his food habits might be blasphemed. Forbid this, Paul states. It is better that one gives up their freedom concerning Jewish food laws than their freedom be spoken against in the community of believers.[34]

Paul continues to employ his dual-directional frame again in Rom 14:17-18. How would Paul describe the kingdom of God? The domain of the Spirit, where the Spirit operates righteousness, peace, and joy to both Jews and Gentiles. In Romans, Paul uses the term righteousness in different ways.[35] Paul's regular usage of the term in Romans refers to God's fair judicial activity toward Jews and Gentiles. By demonstrating righteousness in this way, God fulfills His promises to Abraham in Gen 15:6. Here in Rom 14:17, δικαιοσύνη is not collocated with θεός but virtues that move along the horizontal axis of Jew/Gentile relations. Righteousness, peace (εἰρήνη), and joy (χαρά) are the ethical qualities that demonstrate the Spirit's presence in the ethnically diverse church. For Paul, the vertical work of the Spirit is reflected in the horizontal

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[34] Similarly Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor state, "*Let not your good* (behaviour, right and justifiable in your estimation) *be misconstrued so as to give you a bad name*, i.e. *do not invite misunderstanding by doing just what to you seems good*" (Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament* [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974], 491; italics original).

[35] A full discussion is beyond the scope of my concerns in the present study, though not unrelated to preaching Paul's points in Romans. See "Paul's Use of Righteousness Language Against Its Hellenistic Background," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2004) 2:39-74; John M.G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015); et al.

relationships of believers with diverse ethnicities and backgrounds in the church.

In Rom 14:18, Paul writes that the love the strong and weak in the church demonstrate toward one another is service to Christ. Paul portrays a crowd looking on to see the loving service the strong and weak show to one another in their deference over foods. Who comprises this crowd of onlookers? God and man. Paul writes that both God and man view the performance as acceptable, worthy of esteem. The way Paul describes humanity in Rom 14:18 is vague. Does Paul reference humanity in the church (i.e., the strong and weak looking on with approval as their fellow believers refrain from judging each other) or humanity outside of the church (i.e., the Roman society approving from the outside the way that an obviously multi-ethnic society seems to be getting along)? The lack of clarity about strong or weak brothers gives the former less traction. Paul seems to be making the point that the peaceful atmosphere created by the loving actions of the strong and weak toward one another gains favor with God and the world. Paul's statement in Rom 14:18 would not be the only instance where the apostle, or other New Testament writers, note the apologetic implications of unity in the church (e.g., Phil 2:1-18; Rom 15:1-7; 1 Pet 2:1-18).

Having surveyed the landscape of ideas in Rom 14:12-18, we can appreciate Paul's coordination of ἄρα and οὖν in Rom 14:19. The editors of NA28 place extra spaces between Rom 14:18 and 14:19, visually representing the force of ἄρα οὖν at this point in Paul's argument. Paul combines these conjunctions in Rom 14:19 to culminate and restate his argument to this point in the chapter.[36]

One cannot study the grammar of Romans 14 and fail to notice Paul's use of the definite article in Rom 14:19 (Ἄρα οὖν τὰ τῆς εἰρήνης διώκωμεν καὶ τὰ τῆς οἰκοδομῆς τῆς εἰς ἀλλήλους). Coupled with the emphatic inferential combination ἄρα οὖν at the beginning of the verse, the coordination of the neuter plural definite article τὰ (what) preceding the articular genitive nouns εἰρήνης (peace) and οἰκοδομῆς (edification)

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[36] Moo writes that ἄρα οὖν here represents a strong consecutive idea and states, "After his 'indicative' interlude, Paul turns back to 'imperative,' exhorting the Roman Christians to put into practice in their relationships with each other the principles of the kingdom that he has just set forth (vv. 17-18)" (Moo, *Romans*, 858-59).

followed by the genitive feminine singular pronoun τῆς before the prepositional phrase εἰς ἀλλήλους (one another) provides a rhythm to Paul's injunction. It is as if Paul is writing a chorus so his readers will sing as they serve one another, anticipating what he will state directly in Rom 15:5-6.[37]

Paul uses ἄρα οὖν in Rom 14:19 to set up the cohortative διώκωμεν (let us pursue) and the dual objects that follow. Paul would have the preacher highlight that the congregation should strive for attitudes and activities that promote mutual peace and encouragement. Paul pivots from the cohortative subjunctive διώκωμεν (let us pursue) in Rom 14:19 to the imperative in Rom 14:20, μὴ ἕνεκεν βρώματος κατάλυε τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ (Do not tear down God's work because of food). Paul states that by eating without regard for his fellow believers, one destroys his brother by putting a stumbling block in his way (Rom 14:21).

Conclusion

The present study is not exhaustive. I have chosen to address homiletical implications limited to Paul's use of ἄρα οὖν in Rom 9:16 and 18, and 14:12 and 19. One could choose to analyze other lexical and grammatical features Paul employs to emphasize this or that idea. My concern here is to establish that though SFL provides the preacher a grid for helping the congregation understand larger units in Paul's argument, ensuring that the congregation does not miss the forest for the trees, the trees matter for Paul, some more than others. Paul would have the preacher expositing Romans slow the drive and point the congregation to the trees around them. I suggest that Paul coordinates ἄρα and οὖν in Romans for that very purpose.

Mary J. Schleppegrell suggests that SFL is the most sophisticated meaning-based grammar available to discourse analysts because it can be used with other analytical tools to provide a macro realization of the meaning of discourse in its social situation.[38] In this study, I argue that Paul's coordination of ἄρα and οὖν in Rom 9:16, 18; 14:12, 19 is consistent with the social situation of the audience. The church's unity is

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[37] "Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, according to Christ Jesus, so that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with one mind and one voice."

[38] Schleppegrell, "Systemic Functional Linguistics," 29.

such a concern for Paul that he linguistically codes the importance of his ideas. These are points Paul would have preachers emphasize in their exposition of Romans. Messages on the complexities of God's sovereignty and the sacrificial costs of church unity are not sermons that tickle the ears. But Paul uses Greek grammar to ensure that preachers set these truths before the flock in every generation. Paul's coordinated use of ἄρα οὖν in Rom 9:16 and 18, and 14:12 and 19 require the preacher to slow down and take the congregation deep into the surrounding ideas lest they miss Paul's points.

Ontic Assurance:
The Soteriological Significance of Christological Impeccability

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On the Dichotomy of Ontological and Functional Christology

Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the Christian enterprise. As such, it should not be surprising that the theological field which bears his name spans both continents and millenniums. Christology as a theological discipline has expanded and evolved over the centuries as the Church seeks to best describe the second person of the Trinity. In her attempt to articulate the doctrine of her Lord, the Church's Christological conversation has shifted with the contextual junctures throughout antiquity. Consistent, however, in this ever-changing conversation about Christ has been questions regarding his *person* and *work*.

Theologians often categorize these two concepts under the umbrella of ontological and functional Christology; ontological pertaining to that which belongs to Christ's being or person and functional referring to the works which Christ performed.[1] The relationship between these two

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[1] It is important to note both of these phrases, ontological and functional, have gone through revisions. Consequently, this definition is not universally used in modern theology. For example, Stephen Wellum agrees that ontological Christology is that branch of Christology that refers to Christ's "nature or being." However, Wellum states that ontological Christology, "usually stresses Christ's deity over against his humanity." Stephen Wellum, *Jesus as Lord and Son: Two Complementary Truths of Biblical Christology* in *Criswell Theological Review* (Volume 13.1, 2015) 24. Wellum is not alone in using ontological Christology synonymously with Christ's divinity and he is right to express the *primary* conversation regarding Christ's ontology focuses on divinity. However, since we can talk of Christ's ontological humanity, this essay will instead employ Grant Macaskill's understanding of the categories. Macaskill says, "the use of the word 'ontology' may imply an assumption about the way in which Paul considers Jesus

Christological categories is a story of ebbing proximity and distance. In the modern era, there is a perceived distance between the ontological and functional aspects of Christology. Of this problem, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen said, "the integral link between the person and work of Christ have led theologians to a growing realization of the connection between 'functional' (what Christ has done for us) and 'ontological' (who Christ is in his person) Christologies. Yet at the same time, works of Christology tend to focus on one or the other."[2]

As scholars "focus on one or the other" there is an "ever-widening fissure"[3] between the person and work of Christ. Of this fissure, Marcus Peter Johnson said, "in far too many evangelical expressions of the gospel, the saving work of Christ has been so distanced from his person that the notion of a saving *personal* union with the incarnate, crucified, resurrected, *living* Jesus strikes us as rather outlandish."[4]

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to be 'divine'…the word 'ontology' is simply used to describe what Paul considers God and Jesus to 'be' or what he understands as the constituent elements of their 'being.'" Grant Macaskill, "Incarnational Ontology and the Theology of Participation in Paul," *"In Christ" in Paul: Explorations in Paul's Theology of Union and Participation,* ed. Michael J. Thate, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Constantine R. Campbell (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014) 87.

[2] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction,* 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 4. Kärkkäinen has elsewhere discussed this issue. Drawing a dichotomy between the way theologians have done Christology in the past with the methodology of the present, he says, "Ontology and functionality cannot be distinguished in such a categorical way as older theology did, nor is it useful to do so. Who Jesus Christ is determines what he does; what he does reflects and grows out of who he is." Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World,* Volume 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013) 40.

[3] Marcus Peter Johnson, *One With Christ: An Evangelical Theology of Salvation* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2013), 15.

[4] Ibid. Elsewhere, Johnson has insightfully pointed out typical Evangelical language as evidence of this dichotomy. He says, "let us take a moment to consider our habits of speech. We often talk, for instance, about trusting the finished work of Christ rather than the living person of Christ for our salvation. We talk about our sins being nailed to the cross rather than our sins being borne away in the body and soul of Christ." Marcus Peter Johnson and John C. Clark, *The Incarnation of God: The Mystery of the Gospel as the Foundation of Evangelical Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 104.

In line with Kärkkäinen's assessment regarding the need to bring ontological and functional Christology together, a number of scholars have consciously made this shift. For instance, Oliver Crisp presented readers with a "'joined-up' account of the person and work of Christ."[5] Stephen Wellum argued ontology and functionality can never truly be torn asunder for, "*who* Christ is determines *what* he does; *what* he does reveals *who* he is."[6] Moreover, Wellum's Christology, *God the Son Incarnate*, is a full length treatment exhorting readers in the mending of this relationship by seeing Christ in his being as the Son without losing the work of his incarnation.[7]

In the field of Biblical Theology, Brandon Crowe offered readers an examination of the importance of Christ's *life* during his incarnation as opposed to focusing solely on his *death*.[8] In doing so, Crowe's work in the Gospels mends the gap between Jesus' person and work. Finally, Richard Bauckham sought to so entangle the two categories that he renders them, as they currently stand, obsolete. He puts forward the notion of "divine identity" as a better way of explaining the this divide in Christology, saying, "Jesus' participation in the unique divine sovereignty is, therefore, also not just a matter of what Jesus does, but of *who Jesus is* in relation to God." He continues, "The whole category of divine identity and Jesus' inclusion in it has been fundamentally obscured by the alternative of 'functional' and 'ontic', understood to mean that either Christology speaks simply of what Jesus does or else it speaks of his divine nature."[9]

This article seeks to follow in the path of those mending the dichotomy of the person and work of Christ. Furthermore, this essay seeks to showcase the inherent connection between ontological and

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[5] Oliver D. Crisp, *The Word Enfleshed: Exploring the Person and Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016), xi.

[6] Stephen J. Wellum, *Christ Alone: The Uniqueness of Jesus as Savior* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 107.

[7] Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015).

[8] Brandon D. Crowe, *The Last Adam: A Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017).

[9] Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 31.

functional Christology by using the test case of the doctrine of the impeccability of Christ. Ultimately, we will see the ontic reality of Christ's impeccability aids the functional work of Christ by rooting soteriological assurance in ontological necessity.

On the Doctrine of Christ's Impeccability

Before we can examine the soteriological implications of the doctrine of impeccability, it is important first to establish what is meant by the doctrine. We will arrive at a conclusion regarding the doctrine by exploring some of the nuances in the conversation surrounding impeccability. By way of jurisdiction, this paper will not seek to provide a full defense of the doctrine. Rather, we will presuppose the affirmation of impeccability on our way to investigating its soteriological significance.

Impeccantia

The first nuance in need of exploration is the difference between the doctrines of *impeccantia* and *impeccabilitas*. The former doctrine states that Christ was *without sin*, while the latter articulates his *inability* to sin. For those who hold to Chalcedonian Christology, the former should be non-controversial, for the creed states that Christ is, "of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin."[10]

There is no shortage of New Testament passages that affirm the Chalcedonian doctrine of *impeccantia*. In the Gospels, we see the Devil's attempt to tempt Jesus without success in Luke 4. Then, in John 8, Jesus rhetorically asked, "which one of you convicts me of sin?" knowing his question will be met with silence. In the Epistles, we see Paul's letter to the Philippians speaking of Jesus' obedience even unto death. To the Corinthians, Paul writes that Jesus, "knew no sin." Later, Peter said of Jesus' blood that it was, "precious ...like that of a lamb without blemish

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[10] Moreover, Wolfhart Pannenberg gives a helpful overview of the historic affirmation of Jesus' sinlessness in the patristic era. He states, "Corresponding to the unanimous witness in this matter in the New Testament, the Christological confessions of the patristic church also emphasized Jesus' sinlessness: In the Eastern declaration to the Nicene Creed, in the Chalcedonian confession with reference to Heb. 4:15, in Cyril's tenth anathema in 431 with an allusion to II Cor. 5:21." Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus – God and Man* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), 357.

or spot." Moreover, Peter told us that Jesus, "committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth." The sinlessness of Jesus runs throughout the book of Hebrews. For Hebrews 5:8 says that Christ was "made perfect." Later in chapter seven, describing the type of High Priest Jesus is on behalf of his people the author says, "for it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens." Finally, in explicit language, Hebrews 4:15 says that Jesus' work as a High Priest is one performed with sympathy, for he has been tempted like us, "yet without sin."[11]

These texts and more are what led B.B. Warfield to describe God's sinless holiness as his, "whole, entire, absolute, inconceivable and, therefore, inexpressible completeness and perfection of separation from and opposition to and ineffable revulsion from all that is in any sense or degree, however small, evil."[12] In summary of the conclusive evidence of Jesus' sinlessness presented in the New Testament, Gerald O'Collins stated, "His activity comes across as that of someone utterly oriented towards God and unconditionally committed to the cause of the kingdom."[13]

Non Posse Peccare vs. *Posse Non Peccare*

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[11] Though I disagree with his ultimate conclusions, Michael McGhee Canham gives an insightful list of confessors of Jesus' sinlessness or lack of guilt in the New Testament. He lists, "Christ Himself (John 7:18; 8:29,46; 14:30); Luke (1:35; 4:34), Mark (1:24), Peter (John 6:69; Acts 3:14; 1 Pet 1:19; 2:22; 3:18), Judas Iscariot (Matt. 27:4), Pilate (Matt 27:24; Luke 23:4, 14, 22; John 18:38; 19:4, 6), Pilate's wife (Matt. 27:19), Herod Antipas (Luke 23:15), the penitent thief (Luke 23:41), the Roman centurion (Matt. 27:54), John (1 John 2:1, 29; 3:3, 5, 7), the writer of Hebrews (Heb. 4:15; 9:14), and Paul (Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21). Michael McGhee Canham, *Potuit Non Peccare or Non Potuit Peccare: Evangelicals, Hermeneutics, and the Impeccability Debate* in *The Master's Seminary Journal* (Volume 11.1, 2000), 94.

[12] B.B. Warfield, *Faith and life* (Bellingham, WA: Longmans, Green, & Co, 1916), 444. Moreover, Macleod helpfully points out that Christ was free from both actual sin and inherent sin. He says, "nowhere in the structures of his being was there an sin. Satan had no foot-hold in him." Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 222.

[13] Gerald O'Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 282.

Another way of stating the previous distinction, and one more frequently used, is the distinction of *non posse peccare* and *posse non peccare*. The two phrases translate to mean Christ was either *not able to sin* or *able not to sin*. The former holding to the doctrine of impeccability and the latter holding to that of peccability. These two positions juxtapose the experience of the first and last Adam. Whereas the first-Adam experienced *posse non peccare*, or the "possibility of not sinning," Christ experienced *non posse peccare*, or "not possible to sin." While both parties affirm the *impeccantia* of Christ, there is less doctrinal harmony regarding his ability or inability to partake in sin. The divide seems to be no respecter of confession nor creed; for theologians as diverse as Edwards and Schleiermacher or Hodge and Barth find themselves, at least within this conversation, on the same side of the theological table.[14] Hodge, an ardent defender of Chalcedonian Christology, said about the doctrine of impeccability:

> This sinlessness of our Lord, however, does not amount to absolute impeccability. It was not a *non potest peccare*. If he was a true man He must have been capable of sinning. That He did not sin under the greatest provocation; that when He was reviled He blessed; when He suffered He threatened not; that He was dumb, as a sheep before its shearers, is held up to us as an example. Temptation implies the possibility of sin. If from the constitution of his person it was impossible for Christ to sin, then his temptation was unreal and without effect, and He cannot sympathize with his people.[15]

Contrary to the words of Princeton's third professor, Friedrich Schleiermacher argued that Christ had "essential sinlessness." It is this essential sinlessness, said Schleiermacher, that "distinguishes [Christ] from all other human beings."[16]

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[14] It would be reductionistic to claim that these theologians agreed on all matters regarding this Christological conversation. However, regarding the question of *non posse peccare* and *posse non peccare,* they stand on common ground.

[15] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology, Volume 2* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2013), 457. For more on Hodge's view on the doctrine of Christ's impeccability, see: James J. Cassidy, *No 'Absolute Impeccability:' Charles Hodge and Christology at Old and New Princeton* in *The Confessional Presbyterian* (Volume 9, 2013).

[16] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith, Volume Two* (Louisville:

It was not only German liberal theologians who ran contrary to Hodge regarding their doctrine of Christ's impeccability. Even amongst fellow Princetonians we can see disagreement; showing, once again, that this conversation is not a respecter of creeds nor confessions. As a portion of a larger analysis on Christ's freedom and praiseworthy virtue; Edwards provided an extended argument for Christ's impeccability. He started by saying, "It was impossible, that the acts of the will of the human soul of Christ should, in any instance, degree or circumstance, be otherwise than holy, and agreeable to God's nature and will." He proceeded from this quote to give eleven points of argumentation.[17]

While numerous reasons abound for why theologians, like Hodge, deny the doctrine of impeccability, one is due to the affirmation of Christ's assumption of a fallen nature. Donald Macleod attributes the origin of this view to Edward Irving.[18] Furthermore, as an indicator of the impact Irving's view had, Macleod points out Barth's use of Irving's reasoning in his affirmation of Christ's fallen nature.[19]

In the same way there are a multitude of reasons one would affirm the peccability of Christ; there also exists a number of reasons theologians argue that Christ took on a fallen human nature. The chief reason for this affirmation is rooted in soteriology. Let the reader see the irony in this reality. For this essay seeks to discuss the soteriological implications

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Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 608. For more on Schleiermacher's understanding of impeccability, see: Kornél Zathureczky, *Jesus' Impeccability: Beyond Ontological Sinlessness* in *Science et Espirit* (Volume 60.1, 2008), 61-65; also, Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus – God and Man*, 359-360. It should be noted, however, that while Zathureczky's article is insightful regarding Schleiermacher's understanding of impeccability; the conclusion of the article runs in direct contrast to this one. Zathureczky concludes that impeccability is not an ontological property of Christ and is instead, "an event in the Trinitarian life of God." (70).

[17] Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), 281-289. For more on Jonathan Edward's view on impeccability, see S. Mark Hamilton, *Jonathan Edwards, Hypostasis, Impeccability, and Immaterialism* in *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* (Volume 58.2, 2016). And Philip J. Fisk, *Jonathan Edward's Freedom of the Will and His Defense of the Impeccability of Jesus Christ* in *The Scottish Journal of Theology* (Volume 60.3, 2007).

[18] Macleod, 222.

[19] Ibid., 223.

rooted in the affirmation of Christ's impeccability; therefore, running straight into the headwinds of the primary conversation surrounding the doctrine of peccability.

Kelly Kapic picked up on the soteriologically charged nature of this conversation as he said, "On the one hand, those who seek to affirm that the Son assumed a *fallen* human nature...are often interpreted as sacrificing the sinlessness of Jesus and thus leaving believers still in need of a Savior." He continued, "on the other hand, those who affirm that the Son assumes an *unfallen* human nature...are often charged with presenting a generic Jesus who is not truly man, thus losing the soteriological significance of his life, death, resurrection, and ascension." He concluded these remarks saying, "both parties think nothing less than the very heart of the gospel is in jeopardy."[20]

The soteriological premise behind an affirmation of Christ's peccability is the oft-cited line from Gregory of Nazianzen, "For that which He has not assumed He has not healed."[21] The reasoning behind this argument is that for Christ to act as a covenantal representative, he must meet the wicked in the soteriological state in which they exist. Therefore, to redeem the post-Adam, pre-regenerate race who live with a nature tainted by and bent toward sin; Christ must take on a similar nature.

As mentioned earlier, Barth picked up where Irving left off in an affirmation of Christ's fallen nature. Barth speaks to this issue and links it to soteriological concern. He said

There must be no weakening or obscuring of the saving truth that the nature which God assumed in Christ is identical with our nature as we see it in the light of the Fall. If it were otherwise, how could Christ be

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[20] Kelly Kapic, *The Son's Assumption of a Human Nature: A Call for Clarity* in *International Journal of Systematic Theology* (Volume 3.2, 2001), 154. Readers can see the importance and balance of Kapic's article for this conversation in the reality that those on both sides of this conversation point to this particular article as a vital read. See, for instance, two peccability proponents, John C. Clark and Marcus Peter Johnson, *The Incarnation of God*, 118. Fn. 29. For an example from an impeccability proponent, see: Stephen Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 233. Fn. 62.

[21] Gregory of Nazianzus, *To Cledonius the Priest against Apollinarius, Volume Seven* in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2012), 440.

really like us? What concern could we have with Him? We stand before God characterized by the Fall. God's Son not only assumed our nature but he enters the concrete form of our nature, under which we stand before God as men damned and lost.[22]

The line of theologians who placed soteriological stock in Christ's assumption of a fallen human nature does not stop with Barth. T.F. Torrance, while commenting on John's use of "flesh" says of Christ's human nature,

> Are we to think of this flesh which he became *as our* flesh? Are we to think of it as describing some neutral human nature and existence, or as describing our actual human nature and existence in the bondage and estrangement of humanity fallen from God and under the divine judgement?...One thing should be abundantly clear, that if Jesus Christ did not assume our fallen flesh, our fallen humanity, then our fallen humanity is untouched by his work – for '*the unassumed is the unredeemed',* as Gregory Nazianzen put it." [23]

These hermeneutical and Christological propositions, for Torrance, are pregnant with Soteriological consequence. He concludes his treatment of Christ's assumption of a fallen flesh saying, "Thus Christ took from Mary a corruptible and mortal body in order that he might take our sin, judge and condemn it in the flesh, and so assume our human nature as we have it in the fallen world that he might heal, sanctify and redeem it."[24]

Finally, the line of Irving, Barth, and Torrance found an Evangelical expression in the theology of John Clark and Marcus Peter Johnson. Clark and Johnson, to their credit and cited above as an exemplar of

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[22] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics, Volume 1.2* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956), 154. Quoted from Macleod, 223.

[23] T.F. Torrance, *The Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 62-63. Wellum addresses Torrance's use of Gregory of Nazianzen and makes the important point that Torrance might be misappropriating this line. Wellum says, "Gregory, in fact, deployed this principle against the heresy of Apollinarianism, which denied that Christ assumed a human mind and thus denied he had a full and complete human nature. At stake was whether Christ had a full human nature, not whether that nature was fallen." Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 235.

[24] Ibid., 63.

theological method, root their argument for Jesus' assumption of a fallen nature in the desire to keep close the person and work of Christ. They argue that Christ humanity while "culminating" at the cross is not isolated to the cross alone. Rather, his Earthly life, spent in the flesh, must bear soteriological significance. They stated that, "God's condemnation of sin took place in the flesh of Christ." A flesh, they said, "he holds unreservedly in common with us."[25] They take this argument beyond Christ's human nature; for they opined that even his incarnation signifies this point, saying, "the incarnation attests to the reality that God the Son seized us in the state in which he found us, a state of condemnation, corruption, and alienation – assuming the only kind of human nature that exists east of Eden, the only kind that actually needs redeeming."[26]

Whereas some theologian's affirmation of Jesus' fallenness is often an implication of seeking to do soteric justice to mankind's plight of a nature ruined by sin; it is not the only reason theologians deny impeccability. Another reason some opt for the *posse non peccare* position is due to the temptations Jesus faced.

The idea behind this denial of impeccability is that a true presence of temptation must entail a true presence of the possibility to sin. While not exactly the same as the denial of impeccability rooted in fallenness, this view also derives from soteriological concern. Proponents of peccability who appeal to Jesus' temptation fear that the functional reality of Jesus' ministry as our high priest is at stake if, in light of Hebrews 4:15, he cannot truly sympathize with mankind in genuine temptation. Though it is not the point of this paper to answer every objection for the doctrine of impeccability it is important to note that throughout antiquity, as a response to this tension, there have been a number of answers spanning

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[25] Clark and Johnson, 113.

[26] Ibid. As previously stated, it is out of the jurisdiction of this paper to defend the doctrine of impeccability from each of its detractors. However, for a polemic against the view that Christ assumed a fallen nature see Wellum's six arguments against the position, Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 233-235. Also, see: Oliver D. Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 111-117.

the theological spectrum from philosophical, biblical and systematic theology.[27]

Finally, another reason for the affirmation of the *posse non peccare* position is that of praiseworthiness. Within this critique of the doctrine of impeccability really arises two critiques. The first is regarding Christ's freedom; the second, as a result, regarding his worthiness to receive praise. This line of reasoning insists that God – whether it be the Father, the Son, or the Spirit – must work out of genuine creative freedom. For if God's action is an unavoidable consequence of his intrinsic nature, he is not free. This impacts God's praiseworthiness since his action, whether it be the positive actions of creation and providence or the negative action of avoiding sin, does not qualify for praise since he could not have done otherwise.

Vincent Brümmer compares this view of God to an "infallibly 'constituted' machine, only able to behave in accordance with the way it is made, than like a person freely deciding what to do or not to do."[28] This leads Brümmer to the conclusion, "if Yahweh is in this way powerless to deviate from his character, he could hardly be praised for not doing so."[29]

Brümmer's conclusion that the doctrine of impeccability disqualifies God from valid praise seems to find foundation on shaky presuppositions. For Brümmer's position to hold up one would have to root praiseworthiness in having similar properties as humans, to a greater degree. However, if we define God's relationship to humans with an eye toward classical Christology then we will see that God's praiseworthiness is not rooted in having greater degrees of properties that we share; rather, he is praiseworthy for the fact that he is utterly

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[27] For a thorough project demonstrating how different theologians have made since of Christ's temptation, see: John E. McKinley, *Tempted for Us: Theological Models and the Practical Relevance of Christ's Impeccability and Temptation* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster Theological Monographs, 2009). McKinley offers nine models for dealing with Christ's temptation before ultimately providing his own. For a brief history of how Evangelicals, particularly in the Reformed tradition, have answered this issue, see: Bruce A. Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus: Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 73-90.

[28] Vincent Brümmer, *Divine Impeccability* in *Religious Studies* (Volume 20.2, 1984), 212.

[29] Ibid., 213.

unique. The incomprehensibility of his impeccable nature validates eternal praise, especially from those who have only known corruption.

Systematic Consequences for Peccability

    The interconnection between Christology and other systematic categories should not come as a surprise since Christ is the center of the Christian faith, from which and to which all things are connected. Therefore, an affirmation of either the peccability or impeccability of Christ comes with a myriad of theological consequences. While not an exhaustive list two implications of affirming the doctrine of peccability are important for our present conversation. First, the doctrine of Christ's peccability sets the stage for a potential scenario in which God could be set in opposition to God. Second, an avowal of the *posse non peccare* position creates a category error regarding the nature/person distinction in Christology and therefore gives way to the appearance of Nestorianism.

    As for the first problem, in a denial of kenotic Christology, classical Christology does not affirm that Christ emptied any of his divinity in order to inaugurate the redemptive enterprise of the incarnation. Christ's divinity was intact for the entirety of his Earthly ministry. This Chalcedonian affirmation means that, "if he sinned, God sinned."[30] In light of the person-perichoresis of the intra-Trinitarian relationship, this proposition is theologically disastrous. Gerald O'Collins picked up on this danger when he asked, "Was Christ personally impeccable de jure? The answer should be yes. Otherwise we could face the situation of God possibly in deliberate opposition to God."[31]

    The second pitfall is equally as dangerous. For all parties represented in this essay, the conversation regarding Christ's peccability or impeccability regards his *impeccabilitas,* not his *impeccantia.* All are unanimous that Christ was indeed sinless; therefore, the question at hand is *could* Christ have sinned. Those who answer in the affirmative, especially those who espouse that Christ assumed a fallen human nature, state that it was his human nature alone that bore the iniquity of the Fall *or* that it is only his human nature that is peccable. However, the issue with this argument is that it confuses both the totality of sin and the

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[30] Macleod, 229.
[31] O'Collins, 281.

person/nature distinction. Crisp is correct when he says, "There does not seem to be any way of making sense of the notion that Christ had a human nature that had the property of being fallen but not the property of being sinful."[32] Moreover, O'Collins and Wellum are correct in their affirmation that sin is something that takes place in the *person* and not just the *nature*.[33] It is not the case that when Christ comes to judge the living and the dead that those guilty of transgression can point to their human nature as the guilty culprit in a case for the innocence of their person. Nor is it the case that if Christ *were* to have sinned, the transgression would have been contained to his human nature; for sin happens in the person. This bares two consequences: first, it restates the previous problem that the potentiality for Christ to sin would set one person of the Trinity against another. Second, it opens this view up for the appearance of Nestorianism. To avoid sin tarnishing the person of Christ, one would have to affirm a way for his human nature to sin that would not impact his divine nature; which would, in turn, create a Nestorian divide in the hypostatic union.

Bavinck captured both the danger of setting God against God and deteriorating the hypostatic union in a single line when he said, "God himself would have to be able to sin – which is blasphemy – or the union between the divine and the human nature is considered breakable and in fact denied."[34]

Soteriological Implications of Impeccability

With some of the nuances of the *posse non peccare* and *non posse peccare* discussion covered, we can now move toward a constructive case for the soteriological implications of the doctrine of Christ's impeccability. For the sake of precision, the question we seek is not whether Christ's sinlessness entails soteric significance. The soteriological importance of the sinlessness of Christ is such that, were it not so, the unfolding of the historical-redemptive drama would come to an immediate halt. Rather, we seek to resolve the question of whether or

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[32] Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity*, 93.

[33] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 460. "Behind this assertion is the fact that sin is an act of the *person*, not of the nature." O'Collins, 281. "We sin or refrain from sinning as persons."

[34] Herman Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ, Volume Three*. (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 2006), 314.

not there is soteric significance to Christ's inability to participate in sin as stated in the doctrine of impeccability.

The salvific significance of Christ's impeccability stands as a conclusion of two premises. These two premises are: (1) As a result of the Fall, Adam's posterity needs a foreign righteousness, which we receive in Christ; (2) The doctrine of impeccability is rooted in divine ontology and is therefore *essential*.

Michael Horton said that the Old Testament interprets history, "as the story of a covenant made and a covenant broken" and that the New Testament builds on this interpretation.[35] The drama of the covenant broken begins in the Garden wherein Adam fails in his role as covenant representative and therefore brings about the soteric plight of his posterity – the need for and inability to obtain righteousness.

It is into this postlapsarian setting that Christ assumed human nature in the incarnation. In so doing, Jesus serves as the covenant redeemer overcoming sin and fulfilling the law. Brandon Crowe, emphasizing the *life* of Jesus and not only his death, said, "As the last Adam, Jesus is the obedient Son who serves a representative capacity, vicariously attaining the life through obedience that Adam did not."[36] The Scriptural statement of this reality is found in the fact that according to Romans 5, "many were made righteous" through Christ and in another Pauline passage, 2 Corinthians 5:21, that those who are "in him" would become "the righteousness of God."[37] So then, while those "in" the first-Adam have a personally insurmountable plight in their need of righteousness; their cosmic need finds solution in the imputed obedient righteousness of the Son, the last-Adam.

Our second needed premise is to see the impeccability of Christ as an ontological reality of his divine nature which renders it *essential*. As such, while it is proper to recognize the multitude of factors that aided Christ's incarnate ministry – such as the ministering work of the Holy Spirit and

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[35] Michael Horton, *Lord and Servant: A Covenant Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 121.

[36] Crowe, 203.

[37] As Crowe points out, however, the necessity and reality of the obedient life of Jesus is not a teaching isolated to the Epistles. Crowe says, "What is explicit in Paul's epistolary exposition (Rom. 5:12-21) – that the actions of Adam and Christ have implications for those "in" each representative man – is also present in narrative form in the Gospels. Ibid., 204.

the promises of the intra-Trinitarian plan of the *pactum salutis* – nevertheless, we recognize the impeccability of Christ not because of *what* he has or did but because of *who* he is.[38] The classical doctrine of divine simplicity substantiates this claim. For we should identify the Son's impeccability as an attribute of his person. The doctrine of divine simplicity would assert, "all that is in God is God" therefore, "each of His attributes is identical with his essence."[39] If it is true that God's attributes are identical with his essence, then God must have each attribute *necessarily* and *essentially*. Aquinas proposes as much when he declared,

> God alone is good essentially...it belongs to God only, in Whom alone essence is existence; in Whom there are no accidents; since whatever belongs to others accidentally belongs to Him essentially...Hence it is manifest that God alone has every kind of perfection by his own essence; therefore he Himself alone is good essentially.[40]

If we grant the categorization of impeccability as an essential attribute rooted in God's ontology; then Christ's obedience was greater than volitional consistency, it was ontological necessity.

Having established our two premises the soteriological implication of Christ's impeccability becomes obvious – those united to Christ by faith, who have obtained the righteousness of Christ, lay claim to an ontologically necessary righteousness which should render assurance immutable.

In the *impeccantia* of Christ we have enough to stake our soteric assurance on. For the Son procured a record of no wrongs, which becomes ours via the grace of imputation. However, the assurance of God's people runs deeper than the volitional consistency of Christ's

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[38] Vanhoozer stated this well when he said, "To say that, as a matter of record, Jesus did not in fact sin takes us only as far as sinlessness (*non peccare*). We can, and should go further and acknowledge that Jesus, because of *who* he is, was unable to sin (*non posse peccare*): impeccable." Kevin Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 432.

[39] James E. Dolezal, *All That Is In God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), 42.

[40] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, Volume One* (Notre Dame: Christian Classics, 1948), 29.

sinlessness. The Christian assurance rests in an immutable, simple, impeccable Christ. We can see, in this grace, how the ontology of Jesus aids his functional ministry as redeemer. Moreover, into the pool of our assurance runs the double stream of what Christ obtained for us *and* who he is.

Therefore, believers need not lay awake at night wondering if the obedience and righteousness of their covenant representative will remain intact in the morning. On the contrary, the Church can have assurance that the righteousness given them by the accomplishments of the Son is as sure to remain as his own being. Whereas the *posse non peccare* of the first-Adam led to our condemnation in the Garden; the *non posse peccare* of the last-Adam has led to our essential, necessary, and immutable righteousness in the Kingdom.

Poverty and Procession:
A Non-Kenotic Reading of 2 Corinthians 8:9

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Introduction[1]

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). This paper offers a theological meditation on the "riches" and "poverty" of 2 Corinthians 8:9. While Paul clearly sought to motivate Corinthian generosity with an appeal to Christ's "poverty," one should keep this example in theological context. Christ's economy of redemption accomplished—the *historia salutis*—is held forth to the Corinthians as commendable and worthy of imitation, but this work of redemption accomplished must be considered in the light of God's eternal *a se* life. Which is to say, Paul's statement of Christ "becoming poor" in 2 Corinthians 8:9 does not imply a change in the divine Son's status; even "when he became poor," he yet remained the one "in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3), and in whom "all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Col. 1:19). Thus, this paper will consider 2 Corinthians 8:9 in light of the following systematic categories: eternal processions, inseparable operations and divine appropriations, the hypostatic union, and the *extra calvinisticum*. Like how the triune Life cannot be circumscribed by the Trinity's work of redemption, so too the riches that are Christ's by nature (and Christ's people's by the grace of union) cannot be circumscribed by its application that Paul offers in 2 Corinthians 8:9. Over and against kenotic readings of this verse, which would insist that the Son leaves behind his divine glory in such impoverishment, this paper insists that the practical

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[1] This paper contains sections of reworked material from my doctoral dissertation, "Irresistible Beauty: Beholding Triune Glory in the Face of Jesus Christ," PhD diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020.

application of 2 Corinthians 8:9 (i.e., the Corinthians should imitate Christ in generosity) *adorns,* rather than *exhausts,* the deeper doctrine: Christ's becoming poor for us that we might be rich in him bespeaks no loss or diminishment or variation of change in his eternal richness. Rather, Christ *became* poor, without ceasing to be eternally rich, for if he left his riches behind, his poverty thereby offers no promise of enrichment.

Kenotic Readings of 2 Corinthians 8:9

Many expositors of this passage rightly grasp the central argument of the text: the generosity of the Corinthians in freely giving to the needs of Jerusalem in some way ought to depict and resembles the generosity of Christ in his incarnational, atoning work. Christ generously made himself poor so as to make the Corinthians rich, and so the Corinthians ought to analogously make the Jerusalem believers rich at the cost of the Corinthian's own impoverishment. In her 2018 doctoral dissertation, "Friendship and Gift in 2 Corinthians 8-9: Social Relations and Conventions in the Jerusalem Collection," Ruth Ang-Onn Whiteford enriches this straightforward interpretation with her study of the "friendship topos" of ancient Rome in general, and first century Corinth in particular.[2] "Paul's instructions on the collection begin with the Macedonian example," writes Whiteford, "their response described as wholly rooted in God's χάρισ. After God's gift of χάρισ enabled the Macedonians to become a new creation in right relationship with God and with others, they are freed from competition for advantage, status, and resources; they are able to relate to other Christians in true friendship."[3] The rationale in bringing up both the example of Macedonia—who gave out of their material poverty, having experienced the riches of God's grace—and the example of Christ—"who though he was rich, yet for your sake became poor"—is obvious: "The Corinthians, wealthy by worldly standards, are the ones who find themselves spiritually poor. They have not allowed themselves to be enriched by God's χάρισ, and they have not allowed that χάρισ to bind them with

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[2] Ruth Ang-Onn Whiteford, "Friendship and Gift in 2 Corinthians 8-9: Social Relations and Conventions in the Jerusalem Collection," PhD diss., Concordia Seminary, 2018.
[3] Ibid., 183.

other Christians in friendship."[4] Paul intends to motivate Corinthian generosity with the theological rationale of Christ's generosity shown towards the Corinthians.

The problem is that commentators too often prematurely draw theological conclusions from this straightforward reading without considering what those conclusions imply. As Whiteford explains,

> Most often, the participial phrase πλούσιοσ ὤν in 2 Cor 8:9 is interpreted as concessive, 'although he was rich he became poor.' This allows Christ's riches to be identified as 'the quality of his heavenly, pre-existent status,' which he then renounces, so that his poverty is traditionally interpreted to be the total event of his incarnation.[5]

John Barclay refers to this position as "the standard reading of 2 Cor 8.9."[6] He calls attention to M.J. Harris's description as characteristic of this consensus view, when Harris writes, "Christ himself chose to exchange his royal status as an eternal inhabitant of heaven for a slave's status as a temporary resident on earth... He surrendered all the insignia of divine majesty and assumed all the frailty and vicissitudes of the human condition."[7] A careful reading of these comments reveal their incoherence on the surface level. There is no such thing as "temporary" "exchange" of "eternal" habitation, otherwise "eternal" does not mean *"eternal."* This does not seem to stop commentators from proliferating this view, however. Paul Barnett agrees with Harris,[8] as well as Colin G. Kruse, who writes that Christ's impoverishment refers to "setting aside his pre-existent glory in the presence of the Father."[9] Stated even more

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[4] Ibid., 184.

[5] Ibid., 109-110.

[6] John M.G. Barclay, "'Because he was rich he became poor': Translation, Exegesis and Hermeneutics in the Reading of 2 Cor 8.9" in Reimund Bieringer, Dominika A. Kurek-Chomycz and Thomas A. Vollmer (eds.), *Theologizing in the Corinthian Conflict: Studies in the Exegesis and Theology of 2 Corinthians* (Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2013), 333.

[7] M.J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 579.

[8] P. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 409.

[9] Colin G. Kruse, *2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 203.

strongly, K. Schelkle claims that this verse indicates that "Christ renounced the divine fullness of power in which he dwelt with the Father, abandoned the heavenly glory which was his as the Son of God."[10] Barclay also calls attention to J.D. Dunn's revisionist view—which maintains that Christ renounced not the "wealth" of pre-existent majesty, but rather the richness of his human relationship to God in the specific act of the crucifixion—and points out that even his view, as revisionist as it is, still sticks to the concessive reading of the participial phrase.[11]

In response to this standard reading, Barclay offers up a causal, rather than concessive, reading of ὤν, such that πλούσιοσ ("wealth") is interpreted proverbially: it is a "wealth" of generosity in giving. But, as Whiteford points out, while "Barclay's explanation is satisfying in that he can address the connections between the spiritual and material realms," it is nevertheless insufficient, since "the parallels between this verse and Phil 2:6-11 beg for some stronger reference to Jesus's incarnation, death, and resurrection."[12] In agreement with Mark Seifrid, Whiteford suggests the best path forward is to read the participle as modal, "for your sake he became poor, being rich." "These two realities," writes Whiteford, "are present simultaneously and paradoxically... Christ's wealth and poverty, as well as the riches that God confers through him, can be seen to envelope both the spiritual and material realms, just as Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection happened in the material realm of existence."[13]

Despite the convincing arguments of Seifrid and Whiteford, the concessive reading of the participle remains the predominant view. It may be that expositors reason this way along the lines of the analogy given: that is, since the Macedonian generosity and impoverishment—and the commended Corinthian generosity and impoverishment—means they have less (materially) by giving the believers in Jerusalem more, Christ too must be losing something when he becomes poor. And since all he had before his incarnation was the splendor his glory—his divine attributes and the riches of eternal beatitude—at least a part of this must have been left behind when he assumed a human nature. This

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[10] K. Schelkle, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York, NY: Herder & Herder, 1969), 123-124.

[11] Barclay, "'Because he was rich he became poor,'" 334-335.

[12] Whiteford, "Friendship and Gift in 2 Corinthians 8-9," 110.

[13] Ibid., 111.

line of argument fails to reckon with the fact that analogy implies dissimilarity just as much as it implies similarity.[14]

I will argue that Christ's poverty, for the sake of the Corinthians' enrichment, is not an absence or renunciation at all, it is an addition—the addition of a human nature. I agree with Seifrid and Whiteford that the "two realities" of Christ "being rich" and "becoming poor" are present simultaneously. But this is true not only on account of the grammatical reading—it *must* be true in light of its theological consequences. Nothing whatever of his divine riches were lost in the act of the incarnation, for those very riches are what predicate his saving work. Thus, many interpreters miss the forest for the tree. Or rather, they make hasty pronouncements about the forest in light what they see about the tree that are neither necessary nor helpful. But this is not quite saying enough, because it is not simply that they miss an insight that might benefit their interpretation. It is rather that they draw conclusions that actually serve to undermine their interpretation.

Consider, to change illustrations, a photo of a bridge, wherein its beginning and end are out of the frame, and all that is depicted is the structure suspended between the skies above and the river below. It would be quite right to look at the picture and say that the bridge's purpose—the point of the object depicted in the image—is to provide a means for travelers to walk above the river without getting in the water. It would be quite *wrong* to conclude that the bridge must therefore be suspended on nothing in mid-air. Nor would such a conclusion be helped by the fact that the foundations of the bridge are not the point of the picture, since they are not within the frame. As if to say, "What do these hypothetical 'foundations' have to do with this image? They clearly are not the subject of the image, otherwise we would see them within the frame." This is true, but the bridge *must* have foundations for the original interpretation to make any sense at all. In fact, in another sense, a fuller sense, a sort of visual-artistic *sensus plenior*, one might say that foundations are not just a logical conclusion from the original interpretation, but are an absolutely crucial component thereof. For the

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[14] Boersma makes a similar point about the *analogia entes*, when he writes, "the doctrine of analogy does not just argue for similarity but also insists on the infinite *difference* between Creator and creature. In fact, *dis*similarity is the main point of the doctrine of analogy." Boersma, *Heavenly Participation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 71 (emphasis original).

purpose of the bridge to keep its travelers out of water is only as good as its own stability, because the bridge is only as strong as the foundations (even if they do exist outside of the frame).

So too is a kenotic, or even semi-kenotic, reading of 2 Corinthians 8:9 is not only unnecessary for the central ethical imperative, it undermines the central ethical imperative, because it undermines the theological foundation that grounds the central soteriological indicative. It may be that Christ's immutable divine nature is not the point of 2 Corinthians 8:9, and that his "self-impoverishing" generosity is, but any interpretation of this "self-impoverishment" that does not maintain Christ's *immutable* divine nature is destined for disaster.

Chalcedonian Christology and the (So-called) *extra calvinisticum*

In brief, there is no squaring a kenotic or semi-kenotic reading of 2 Corinthians 8:9 with a classical affirmation of the Son's immutability. To be fair, a kenotic theologian might simply reply, "Who cares? The *classical* doctrine of *strong* divine immutability makes no sense of the biblical account anyway. If the God of the Bible is true, let the philosophers—and their 'God'—be liars." On its surface the incarnation—wherein the Second Person of the Trinity "became" man—itself appears to make short work of the notion of divine immutability.[15] Surely the incarnation must denote mutability in the divine nature, must it not?[16] The answer

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[15] Graham A. Cole, *The God Who Became Human: A Biblical Theology of Incarnation*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 30 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013),145, helpfully frames this discussion: "If we indeed live on a visited planet, then did that even change God, and if so in what ways? After all, John 1:14 claims that the Word (*logos*) became (*egeneto*) something other than the Word, namely flesh (*sarx*). There are several logical possibilities here. One is that the incarnation changed the very being of God. . . . The better answer is the classical one." Though on this matter we should do as Cole says and not as he does, for the answer Cole adopts cannot be properly understood as the "classical" one. He writes that the "Trinity *now relates to itself qua Trinity in a new way* through the humanity of Christ. . . . The plus is the new way the Father, Son and Holy Spirit relate through the assumed humanity of the Son. Rather we are speaking of the Trinity and plus. The change is relational and permanent" (ibid., 145–46).

[16] See Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2015); Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom*; Isaac A. Dorner, *Divine Immutability:*

to this quandary is, in truth, mere Chalcedonian Christology.[17] For example, in answer to Moltmann and other critics of divine immutability who object to its validity on the grounds of the incarnation, Henri Blocher writes,

> The force of Moltmann's argument really hinges on his rejection of the Chalcedonian two natures. He obviously distastes the distinction in the Symbol: unconfusedly, unchangeably. For him, the *human* history of Jesus enters God's being and thus determines Trinity. *We* would maintain the Chalcedonian scheme as not only indispensable if deity and humanity are to be confessed with their Scriptural value, but, as such, already discernable in the New Testament. The logic of Hebrews 1 and 2, and of Paul in Romans 9:1–5, so implies. . . . Turretin's reply to those who argue for divine mutability on the basis of the incarnation, that the *Person* of the Son, the *Logos*, became flesh, took on human nature, and not *deity* as such, has solid biblical foundations.[18]

Central to a Chalcedonian conception of Christology is Christ's two-nature distinction predicated upon the one person.[19] The divine nature did not add to itself a human nature; rather the divine Son—who has a divine nature—added to himself a human nature.[20] This means, while the

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A Critical Reconsideration, trans. Robert R. Williams and Claude Welch (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994).

[17] Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, 64, summarizes, "The Council [of Chalcedon] professes that Christ is God the Logos become man and that in so doing neither what he is (God) nor what he became (man) is confused or changed. Moreover, they are neither divided nor separated. . . . There is no confusion or change because the "becoming" does not pertain to a union of natures, but to the mode of existence of a person. Thus Christ is God the Logos existing as man, and his modes of existing, his two natures, what he is, remain unchanged and unconfused."

[18] Henri Blocher, "Divine Immutability," in *The Power and Weakness of God*, ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1990), 120 (emphasis original).

[19] See Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), ch. 13.

[20] This theme of two natures seems to be the very thing Dorner, *Divine Immutability*, 159, rejects: "[I]f the economic Logos had taken on himself that kenosis, whereas as immanent in God he remained undisturbed by that act and

Son reveals the shared divine nature of the Trinity in the incarnation, the assumption of a human nature was predicated on the *person* of the Son and not the *divine nature* He reveals. In other words, the incarnation added nothing whatsoever to the divine nature.[21] Rather, the Son humbled himself by taking on a human nature[22] in addition to *His* untouched, immutable, eternal divine nature in such a way that the two natures remain "without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation."[23] It is true, as Adonis Vidu has pointed out, that the doctrine of inseparable operations implies that "the incarnation-assumption belongs to the Trinity as a whole," such that "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are together *causing* the assumption" from the perspective of action, that action nevertheless terminates "in the Son... in a state that characterizes the Son alone."[24] The incarnation is a

persisted in his absolute actuality, we would have two Logoi instead of one, and he who alone is the absolute reality of the divine would not have become man at all; the incarnate Logos, however, would be an extra-divine subordinate being, over which the *ano Christos* (higher Christ) hovered until the consummation of the God-man."

[21] Again, Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, 188, is informative, "Thus the incarnational relation, the 'becoming' is nothing other than the full and real humanity coming to be and being related to the Logos as he is to such a degree that the effect of the relation in the humanity is nothing less than the Logos himself, in his divine *esse personale*, comes to subsist *as man*. God's immutability then as *actus purus* is no longer a stumbling block, but the primary prolegomenon for a true Incarnation. It specifies God's incarnational potential. Only if God is immutably and unchangeably perfect can he establish a relation in which he personally comes to exist as man."

[22] Thus Bavinck concludes, "But Reformed theology stressed that it was the *person* of the Son who became flesh—not the *substance* [the underlying reality] but the *subsistence* [the particular person] of the Son assumed our nature. The unity of the two nature, despite the sharp distinction between them, is unalterably anchored in the person." Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics Vol. 3: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 259. For a splendid and concise treatment on the Son's "emptying" by "assumption" of a human nature, see Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 174–82.

[23] "The Chalcedonian Decree" in Edward Rochie Hardy, ed., *Christology of the Later Fathers* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 372–374.

[24] Adonis Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things: Inseparable Operations in Trinitarian Theology*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2021), 162.

Trinitarian act, which terminates in the Son. Thus, it is the subject of the divine person of *the Son*, and not the divine nature as such, that "becomes man."

Further, it is not as though the Son toggles back and forth between His divine nature and His human nature as if they were vehicles; one He leaves vacant while occupying the other (which is what the kenotic reading of 2 Corinthians 8:9 implies). For the divine nature to be vacant of a divine person (or, for a divine person who neglects to act within a divine nature) is an incoherent concept.[25] A divine person is "divine" by virtue of his divine nature. Further, there is no divine nature back of the divine persons; to be the one, simple, divine being is to be the Father who eternally begets the Son, and in that begetting, together with the Son, eternally spirates the Spirit.[26] Since the divine nature is, by definition, simple and pure Triune act, it cannot be anything other than itself eternally.[27]

It is self-defeating to suggest that a divine person can voluntarily suspend the *very* attributes (e.g., immutability, impassibility, omniscience, etc. *divine wealth*) that make Him divine without compromising either His divine personhood or the divine nature itself. On the one hand, He cannot be called divine if His attributes are not eternal (i.e., if His attributes are not characterized by the essential divine

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[25] This seems to be the implication of the proposal by some evangelicals who argue that Christ, while retaining access to His divine nature during the incarnation, chose not to exercise divine attributes through it. E.g., Bruce A. Ware, *The Man Christ Jesus: Theological Reflections on the Humanity of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013).

[26] See Lewis Ayers, "Augustine on the Trinity," in Emery and Levering, *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*; and Stephen R. Holmes, "Trinitarian Action and Inseparable Operations: Some Historical and Dogmatic Reflections," in *Advancing Trinitarian Theology: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics*, ed. Oliver Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014).

[27] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics Volume 3*, 303, is helpful in this discussion: "A deity or a divine attribute that is purely a 'potentiality' and not 'actual' is inconceivable; and a human being who by development can appropriate the divine nature ceases to be a creature and passes out of time into eternity, the finite into the infinite. Even the very idea of a 'God-man' in whom the union of two nature has been replaced by the mingling of the two is an anomaly, with which no one can make any association whatever. Such a being cannot be the mediator between God and humankind, since he is neither."

attribute of eternity—which would be the case by definition if they could be "given up").[28] On the other hand, if a true subject of the divine nature can suspend attributes of said divine nature (e.g., immutability), such attributes are not essential. This, however, is an oxymoron since the divine nature cannot be a composite of essential and accidental properties.[29]

Safeguarding against this kind of reductionism is precisely what the concept of the *communicatio idiomantum* (communication of attributes)[30] is for. Working together with that cherished misnomer, the *extra calvinisticum*,[31] we can affirm that Christ operates fully through

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[28] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I.3. Anselm, *Monologion* ch. 15, in *The Major Works*. Dolezal, *All That Is in God*, 31–66. Dolezal, ibid., 39, states, "The reason God actively operates is because all that is in him is perfect and thus actual."

[29] See Anselm, *Monologion* ch. 25. Cf., Dolezal, *All That Is in God*, 59, Because God's essence is pure act (existence and essence being identical in him) nothing can be superadded to it. Pure and unreceived being is necessarily incapable of having further actuality added to it, even accidental actuality."

[30] Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 424–25, summarizes this "communication of attributes" here: "Thus the church confesses that there are three divine persons who share in one divine nature, such that there is only one God. In this theological sense, *divine nature* refers to *what* an object is: God, a divine being with a corresponding perfection of attributes and capacities. *Human nature* refers to *what* constitutes humanity: a body-soul composite with corresponding capacities, such as will, mind, and emotions. In contradistinction to nature, *divine person* refers to the *who, I, active subject* that subsists in the divine nature and acts through its capacities: the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are each a divine person. Similarly, *human person* refers to the *who, I, active subject* that subsists in a human nature and acts through its capacities. A nature does not act. A person acts through a nature, never vice versa. In the incarnation, then, the person of the Son, who subsists eternally in the one divine nature, acted to assume a human nature."

[31] This is the concept that the Son of God, while assuming a human nature, never ceased to utilize the fullness of his divine attributes; he never ceased to have "purely actual" nature. See Calvin, *Institutes* 2:12, 13. Although, as E. David Willis points out in *Calvin's Catholic Christology: The Function of the So-Called Extra Calvinisticum in Calvin's Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), the doctrine did not originate with Calvin. Of course, this doctrine was the centerpiece of the Christological controversies between the Reformed churches and the Lutheran churches in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, but these issues do not

both his natures. What can be said about either nature of Christ can be said about His person precisely because *He* does not cease to occupy His divine nature when He assumes His human nature.[32] This seems to be a necessary implication from various New Testament passages. For example, in Colossians 1:15–18 and Hebrews 1:1–3, the Son of God is credited not only for the origin of the created universe but also its continual maintenance (". . . and in him all things hold together" Col. 1:17b; ". . . and he upholds the universe by the word of his power" Heb. 1:2b). If this is true at any point of creation's existence, it is true for every point, including those days in which the earth enjoyed the physical presence of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The cosmos are upheld by the *Son*: this is how creation continues to exist moment by moment. At the risk of redundancy, let us state the point another way: to be creation is to be upheld by the *Son*. Were the Son to ever cease upholding the cosmos by his powerful word, the cosmos would cease to exist, since their continued existence is his divine prerogative. Therefore, Athanasius is more than justified to write:

> For he was not enclosed in the body, nor was he in the body but not elsewhere. Nor while he moved that [body] was the universe left void of his activity and providence. But, what is most marvelous, being the Word, he was not contained by anyone, but rather himself contained everything. And, as being in all creation, he is in essence outside of everything by his own power, arranging everything and unfolding his own providence in everything to all things, and giving life to each thing and to all things together, containing the universe and not being contained, but being wholly, in every respect, in his own Father alone. So also, being in the human body, and himself giving it life, he

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concern the present work. For an overview of that controversy, see, Andrew M. McGinnis, *The Son of God Beyond the Flesh: A Historical and Theological Study of the Extra Calvinisticum* (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2014), ch. 4.

[32] As Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 325, summarizes, "This is why Scripture can say, in reference to the *person* of the Son, that *he* is almighty, omniscient, eternal, and so on (all attributes of the divine nature), since *he* as the Son, subsists in the divine nature and all the attributes of that nature are predicated of *him*. Yet, Scripture also says that this same Son is weak, ignorant, embodied, and even mortal (all attributes of the human nature)."

properly gives life to the universe also, and was both in everything and outside of all.[33]

Not only does this doctrine seem to be a necessary extrapolation from passages like Colossians 1 and Hebrews 1, it seems to be stated explicitly elsewhere in Scripture: "He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God" (1 Pt. 1:20–21). Reflecting on this passage, Steven Duby notes that "we believe in God through Christ in that what God does in Christ is the culminating revelation of God in the economy and is the greatest assurance that we can trust in the benevolence and power of God, whose own life nevertheless does exceed what takes place in the economy."[34]

The incarnation, then, when best understood, upholds divine immutability. Even the κένωσισ and ταπείνωσισ of the Son in Philippians 2:4–8 does not jeopardize this confession. Christ's "emptying" is "explained by the instrumental participles that follow it: Christ empties himself *by* taking the form of a servant and *by* being made in the likeness of human beings. . . . [K]enosis here is not subtraction by addition."[35] By taking on a mutable human nature as the instrumentality for translating divine infinitude for finite creatures, Christ reveals the immutable divine nature precisely by means of κένωσισ.[36] "The act by which the form of God appears in the form of a slave," notes David Bentley Hart, "is the act

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[33] Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* ch. 15.

[34] Duby, *God in Himself*, 17.

[35] Duby, *God in Himself*, 159.

[36] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics Volume 3*, 259, stresses the importance of this point in terms of worship, safeguarding against idolatry: "Christ, accordingly is most certainly to be worshiped as our mediator, just as God is also venerated and invoked as Creator and so on, but the ground for it lies solely in his deity. He is not God because he is the mediator, but he is the mediator because he is God, with the Father and the Spirit the one and only God, to be praised over all forever. The dignity and the works of the mediator can and may be motives for worship and adoration, just as all sorts of benefits prompt us to worship God. They may also be called "grounds" for worship insofar as the divine being works and reveals himself in them. But the foundation is the [mediator's] being God alone."

by which the infinite divine image shows itself in the finite divine image: this then is not a change, but a manifestation, of who God is."[37]

In fact, the incarnation needs the doctrine of immutability for its authenticity; for the Son to be both fully and truly God as well as fully and truly man, the divine nature must be immutable. Without immutability, the incarnation would denote a blended-natured God-man who is neither God nor man. Such a being would be impotent for the work of salvation on account of its failure to represent God (i.e., he could not reveal the divine nature because he would not have it) or any actual human.[38] Thus, as Thomas Weinandy points out, "God's immutability must be maintained not only for theological reasons, i.e., in order to protect God as God; but also for incarnational reasons, i.e., God must remain immutable in becoming man if it is really and truly *God* who is man."[39] The importance of maintaining the hypostatic union of these two distinct natures—truly immutable and infinite *God*, truly mutable and finite *man*—in the one divine person of the Son has been articulated by few people better than Francis Turretin. We quote him at length here:

> The work of redemption could not have been performed except by a God-man associating by incarnation the human nature with the divine by an indissoluble bond. For since to redeem us, two things were most especially required—the acquisition of death for satisfaction and victory over the same for the enjoyment of life—our mediator out to be God—man to accomplish these things: man to suffer, God to overcome; man to receive the punishment we deserved, God to endure and drink it to the dregs; man to acquire salvation for us by dying, God to apply it to us by overcoming; man to become ours by the assumption of flesh, God to make us like himself by the

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[37] Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite*, 375.

[38] McGinnis, *The Son of God Beyond the Flesh*, 71, shows how the doctrine of the *extra* functioned for Cyril of Alexandria and Thomas Aquinas to protect the divinity and humanity of the Son respectively: "Cyril stressed the Son's existence beyond the flesh as a way to guard the Son's complete deity, which is central to the Son's work of redemption of assuming humanity to its ultimate goal of communion with God. Aquinas, while not denying what Cyril teaches, appeals to the *extra carnem* idea as a way of preventing a Valentinian spiritualization and dehumanization of the incarnate Son... Christ is like us and beyond us, united to our nature and not limited to it, incarnate and transcendent."

[39] Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, 187 (emphasis original).

bestowal of the Spirit. This neither man nor God alone could do. For neither could God alone be subject to death, nor man alone conquer it. Man alone could die for men; God alone could vanquish death.[40]

Eternal Processions, Inseparable Operations, and Divine Appropriations

It is not simply the Son's immutability that renders the kenotic and semi-kenotic readings of 2 Corinthians 8:9 an impossibility, however. Maintaining the integrity of Trinitarian theology also necessitates that we refuse this standard reading of the text. The doctrine of the incarnation must never be detached from an understanding of divine appropriations, in light of the doctrine of inseparable operations, or else the Triune *processions* and *missions* are destined for confusion. Vidu frames the issue well:

> The incarnation only appears to present to us *just* one of the divine persons, the eternal Word. Such an appearance is fitting, for the end of the incarnation pertains to the illumination of humanity, leading to the restoration of the divine image in man. And yet this ascription should not be understood in a strict sense, to the exclusion of the presence of the Father and the Spirit in the incarnation. Since the triune persons are inseparable from each other in substance, *the sending forth of the Son cannot entail his becoming untethered from the Father.*[41]

There is simply no reason to assume that Christ's "impoverishment" in 2 Corinthians 8:9 entails his giving up anything related to his divine nature unless the distinction between *procession* and *mission* is blurred. But to blur such a distinction is a fatal mistake. It is true that they are not *unrelated*, but they necessarily relate in an indicating way: to equate the Trinity's existence *ad intra* with His actions *ad extra*—or Triune *procession* with Triune *mission*, or to flatten the difference between the *immanent* Trinity and the *economic* Trinity—is to circumscribe the infinite into the finite. Trinity may not be less truly present in what is revealed, but Trinity is certainly more.

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[40] Turretin, *Institutes*, 2:302–3.
[41] Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things*, 65 (emphasis mine).

While the divine mission of the Son following the Father's sending in assuming a human nature, and the Spirit following the Father and Son's sending in applying the work of redemption, do not bespeak univocal movement in the Trinity's timeless eternal life, they do *fittingly correspond* to that timeless eternal pure act of filiation and procession. It is fitting for the Son, not the Father nor the Spirit, to be sent by the Father to assume a human nature, and to send the Spirit *with* the Father to apply their Triune love to the elect—such a work is only appropriate for He who receives life in Himself eternally from His begetting Father, a life that includes the shared act of spiriting the Holy Spirit eternally. Again, Vidu is helpful here:

> Since God does not become a finite cause, since he has not exhausted himself in finite reality, but remains transcendent, the nature and reality of the divine acts in history is not fully expressed by what may be experienced... There is a depth to this divine activity that may only be contemplated from above, so to speak, or from the direction of the immanent Trinity, or the processions... the divine operations *ad extra* follow from, and are grounded in, the immanent processions.[42]

Unless we maintain this much with Vidu, we are forced to conclude the absurd statement that the eternal processions of eternal generation, filiation, and spiration were (at least) temporarily suspended while the Son impoverished himself of his divine glory. For his divine glory is none other than his eternal filiation from the Father, and their eternal spiration of the Spirit. But "temporary" and "suspend" are time- and space-bound words that ought never approach the eternality of Triune processions. We must affirm, then, the what 2 Corinthians 8:9 describes is nothing other than the eternally rich Son, without ceasing to be rich, becoming man, so that in him, man might become rich (cf., 2 Cor. 5:21).

Riches with Christ: Mystical Union with the Eternally Rich Christ

The eternal riches of Christ must needs be retained in his impoverishment, because without them, he would have nothing with which to enrich the Corinthians. The grace with which Christ enriches the Corinthians is not a substance outside of himself, which he somehow loses and the Corinthians gain. The grace he enriches them with in their

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[42] Ibid., 95.

salvation is inseparable from *himself*, and therefore their enrichment—their salvation—must occur by union.[43]

This discussion, obviously, thrusts us into debates surrounding the relationship between the forensic elements of justification, and the mystical and communal elements of union with Christ as "participation." Such a discussion is beyond the scope of this paper (I have written on this topic at some length elsewhere),[44] but in brief, I agree with Calvin and Turretin that both elements are essential, and that they both imply one another. It is not uncommon to criticize Protestant Reformed soteriology as *merely* forensic, and therefore a far cry from the kind of participatory soteriology embraced by the church fathers. On this kind of participatory element, commenting on Athanasius's statement that "God became man so that man might become God," Robert Letham notes how Athanasius was affirming that "all things receive the characteristics of that in which they participate. Hence, by participating in the Holy Spirit, we become holy; by participating in the Logos, we are able to contemplate the Father."[45] Critics of Reformed theology in general, and Calvin in particular, are not lacking in their claim that Reformed soteriology neglects this participatory element of Christ's person and work, which seems to be so clearly central for so much of the Church's history.[46]

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[43] Relevant to this discussion, but outside of the purview of this paper, is the relationship between the ascension of Christ, Pentecost, the nature of the hypostatic union, and the indwelling of the Spirit. For more on this, see Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things*, Ch. 8-9.

[44] See Samuel G. Parkison, "Irresistible Beauty," Ch. 4.

[45] Robert Letham, *Union with Christ: In Scripture, History, and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 93. Likewise, he goes on to point out how "*participation* is the key term throughout for Cyril, in keeping with the frequency with which he refers to 2 Peter 1:4, 'partakers of the divine nature.' Only the Son is God by nature; we are children of God by participation" (ibid., 94).

[46] "In the words of Catherine Pickstock, Calvin fails to speak of 'incorporation into the Son' to achieve 'reconciliation with the Father,' but rather reduces salvation to 'simply accepting a transaction carried out by God on our behalf.' To these criticisms, one could add a chorus of other voices: Kilian McDonnel, who claims that divinity and humanity became opposites in Calvin, such that a true union in the incarnation is impossible (thus Calvin is said to have. Nestorian Christology); feminist theologians such as Anna Case-Winters, who argues that a binary opposition of God and the world is at play in Calvin's theology, one

J. Todd Billings has convincingly argued, however, that this narrative is profoundly misguided.[47] Rather, "the images of union with Christ, ingrafting into Christ, partaking of Christ, and adoption were drawn from Paul and Johanine writings in the New Testament and were deeply woven into the fabric of [Calvin's] soteriology."[48] Billings does acknowledge that "while the critics . . . are mistaken in thinking that Calvin does not have a theology of salvation as restoration, communion, and union with God," differences do remain between Calvin and other theologies of "participation," namely and chiefly the fact that "Calvin's account of justification is deeply forensic in orientation."[49]

I would contend, however, this is a *feature* of Calvin's notion of union with Christ, not a bug. Rather than conflating justification with sanctification—i.e., conflating the root with the fruit—Calvin and other Reformed theologians distinguish between the two, even while both are connected intimately to the believer's union with Christ. "Reformed theology has generally used the term *union with Christ* to refer to this comprehensive sense of salvation," notes Letham, "taking the form of both forensic and transformational elements."[50] In Christ, the believer is legally justified—by the Spirit, he *already* participates with God in Christ; he is seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6), and he sits there *legally*. And in Christ, by the Spirit, the believer is progressively becoming on earth who he is in heaven. In Christ, he is justified; in Christ, he is sanctified. Vidu relevantly writes, "The work of Christ has been about the at-one-ment of God and humanity. But this at-one-ment is not *merely* juridical but is ontologically transformative; it is the full pneumatization

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characterized by divine 'domination and control', Eastern Orthodox theologian Joseph Farrell, who argues that Calvin erroneously opposes divine and human agency, failing to realize the proper synthesis of these as Byzantine theology does. It would seem from these critiques that Calvin rarely, if ever, speaks about union with God, union with Christ, and the indwelling of the Spirit—or if he does, he qualifies these statements so heavily as to make them empty of content." Billings, *Union with Christ*, 64.

[47] See Ibid., 63-75; *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 68-104; "United to God through Christ: Calvin on the Question of Deification," *Harvard Theological Review* 98, no. 3 (July 2005); 315-34.

[48] Billings, *Union with Christ*, 65.

[49] Ibid., 66, fn. 17.

[50] Letham, *Union with Christ*, 102.

of the human nature of the Son himself, resulting in the outpouring of the 'Spirit of Christ.'"[51] "The heart of the Christian doctrine of salvation," he goes on to say, "is union with the Trinity."[52]

The Protestant Reformed (and, we may be so bold as to say, *biblical*) imperative associated with sanctification, can be summarized as "be who you are" (e.g., Rom. 6; Gal 6; Col. 3). Within this framework, the communal participation believers enjoy with God in Christ is *legal*; it is purchased by the blood of Christ, and is enjoyed (a) *already,* (b) in a *progressively increasing* sense on this side of the believer's resurrection, and will be enjoyed (c) in a *consummated* way in the beatific vision on the other side.[53]

Thus, in this gratuitous act of enrichment, Christ leaves behind none of his riches, and instead brings the believer—by his incarnational act of impoverishment—up into himself, freely giving his storehouse of eternal richness. "In and through Christ," writes Vidu, "the whole creation thus returns to its supernatural source to receive its supernatural end, which is nothing less than communion with the Trinity culminating in the beatific vision."[54]

Conclusion

While the view of taking the participial phrase in 2 Corinthians 8:9 as concessive is "the standard view," as Barclay says, it should not be. Not only because scholars like Siefrid and Whiteford have offered a convincing argument that the participle is modal instead of concessive, but also because—theologically speaking—the concessive view effectively requires some kind of kenotic or semi-kenotic interpretation of 2 Corinthians 8:9, which places the "standard view" well outside of Chalcedonian orthodoxy. Such a view leaves us scratching our heads about all sorts of issues relating to Trinitarian theology, and ultimately undermines the soteriological impact of Christ's "enriching" grace. Tracing out the clear logic and motive of the passage is one thing—i.e., Paul offers Christ's poverty and riches manifested in the grace shown to the Corinthians as theological motivation to inspire Corinthian generosity—but the work of tracing out the theological implications of

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[51] Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All things,* 247.
[52] Ibid., 248.
[53] See chapter 6.
[54] Vidu, *The Same God Who Works All Things*, 158.

such textual logic should not be performed so carelessly. Otherwise, the logic of the text itself falls apart. No, Christ did not give up any of his eternal riches by his poverty. His poverty—like his "self-emptying"—was incarnational, and consistent with the *extra*. He became poor, while remaining rich, to bring us beggars into his richness. The eternally rich Son of God, without ceasing to be rich, became poor, so that in him, we might become rich.

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Romans 6:1-14:
The Case for a Chiastic Q & A

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Introduction

The most cursory reading of the major commentaries on Romans chapter 6 shows that there is no scholarly structural consensus. While some consider 6:1–14 a unit, others see a break at v.11 with vv.12–14 as transitional or incorporated with vv. 15–23.[1] Some link Romans 6 back

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[1] Those who take 6:1-14 as a unit include: F.F. Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans,* Reprint (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans,* ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1975, 1990), J. Denney, *St. Paul's Epistle to the* Romans, TEGT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), C.G. Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), D. J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* NICNT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), L. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), R.H. Mounce, *Romans,* NAC, vol. 27 (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group,1995), A. Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (Philadelphia, PA: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), Sanday and Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans,* ICC, 5th ed. (Edinburgh: T & T. Clark, 1901), T. R. Schreiner, *Romans,* BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), C. H. Talbert, *Romans,* S&HBC (Macon, GA.: Smyth & Helwys Publishing Inc., 2002), et al. Those who see 6:1–11 as a unit include: K. Barth, *The Epistle to the* Romans (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8,* WBC, vol. 38a (Dallas: Word Books, Publishers, 1988), A. Fitzmyer, *Romans,* TAB, vol. 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), E. Käsemann, *A Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), B. N. Kaye, *The Argument of Romans with Special Reference to Chapter 6* (Austin, TX.: Scholars Press, 1979), J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959, 1965, 1968, 1984), et al. J. Shulam, *A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Romans* (Baltimore, Md.: Messianic Jewish

to chapters 5 and/or 3, posing the possibility that Paul digresses to treat questions raised earlier.[2] As we might expect, the way structure is perceived drives theological interpretation. Thus, for example, while both C.H. Talbert and J.D.G. Dunn see vv.1–14 (or vv. 1–11) focus on death to sin, J.A. Fitzmyer sees vv.1–11 as discussing death to sin and life under grace with these verses constituting, "the main discussion of baptism by Paul."[3] In his analysis T.R. Schreiner maintains that vv. 2–14 focus on the power of grace to break the dominion of sin.[4] Others could be included, but it becomes evident that the theological concepts of sin, grace, death, law, flesh, and baptism are nuanced *ad infinitum* driving most structural proposals, with no clear-cut winner.

Is there a solution to this impasse? Here, we suggest one is possible if Romans 6:1–14 is considered chiastic. This proposal is not entirely new for Hendrikus Boers and Sang-Hoon Kim have proffered detailed chiastic schemes, but neither extend its properties beyond v. 11, and we can see why.[5] Most *apropos* literature sees *chiasmus* as consisting of approximate parallel panels,[6] and both Boers and Kim are committed to

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Publishers, 1997), divides the passage into 6:1–2, and 6:3–14. Additionally, both NA28, and UBS5 place a paragraph break at 6:12. However, USB5 begins another paragraph at 6:15.

[2] So, for example, Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 296; Kaye, *The Argument of Romans,* 23; Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 244; Fitzmyer, *Romans,* 429; et al. J. Jeremias, "Chiasmus in den Paulusbriefen." *ZNW* 49 (1958), 145–156. Jeremias argues for Romans 6 picking up unresolved issues going back to chapter 3:1, 31.

[3] Talbert, *Romans,* 159; Dunn, *Romans,* 302–303; Fitzmyer, Romans, 430.

[4] Schreiner, *Romans,* 298–299.

[5] H. Boers, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 6:1-14", *CBQ* 63 (2001) 675–682. Boers limits the chiasm to 6:4c–11, with vv. 1-4b and vv. 12-14 as outside the chiasm. S-H. Kim, "*Triple Chiastic Structures in Romans 6*". Paper presented at the International Conference of the Society of Biblical Literature. Tartu, Estonia: 2010. Kim builds his chiasm on 6:1-11.

[6] N.W. Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament: A Study in the Form and Function of Chiastic Structures* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1992), uses "panel" when referring to the two individual halves of the structure, and the central unit. Though other terms are used, "panel" will be used exclusively throughout this paper.

this form.[7] But, is there room for deviation? Here we contend that Romans 6:1–14 reveals chiastic properties somewhat analogous to a Q&A scenario.[8]

Romans 6:1-14: A Chiasm Built on Questions and Answers

As we begin, we do so against a preponderance of scholars who take 6:1b as putting forth the only real question Paul addresses. A review of major commentaries shows that despite vv. 2, 3 being composed of two interrogatives, these verses tend to be read as declarative statements.[9] And even Boers and Kim either leave the questions outside the limits of their chiastic scheme, or treat them as continuous statements.[10] But, does this do justice to the interrogatives as such?

In recent times speech act theorists have educated us as to the nature of "authentic" and "non-authentic" questions, and to the persuasive strategies employed in the latter.[11] Thus, while authentic questions expect to be answered, non-authentic questions are rather veiled statements, conveying emotion, or emphasis, seeking some response act. This is important to keep in mind for the interpretation of this passage may depend on how the questions in vv. 1–3 are understood. In our analysis, question v.1a, Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; is clearly rhetorical, non-authentic, setting the reader up for a new theme.[12] And the rhetorical emphasis continues for the questions at v. 1b and v. 2b both have absurd,

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[7] Note Boers, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 6:1-14", parallels B/B', C/C'; Kim, "Triple Chiastic Structures in Romans 6", parallels A/A', B/B', C/C'.

[8] We do not argue that the modern Q&A pattern dates to antiquity. The characterization of Romans 6:1–14 in this manner is suggestive, not based on any historical link, or precedent.

[9] All commentaries reviewed see 6:1b as the only question, with vv. 2, 3 incorporated into vv. 2–11, see Dunn, *Romans*, 305–306, or into vv. 2–14, see Schreiner, *Romans*, 299. See also B. Witherington, *Paul's Letter to the Romans. A Socio-Rhetorical commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 155.

[10] Boers, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 6:1-14", 676; Kim, "Triple Chiastic Structures in Romans 6", 9.

[11] See P. Verster, "The Implications of Non-Authentic Questions in Galatians", *Acta Theologica,* Supplementum 9 (2007), 142–161.

[12] Ibid, 148. Question v.1a can be classified as a "rational-argumentative question" being too non-specific to expect a response. It is rather an appeal meant to draw the receiver's attention to a new theme.

non-authentic indicators.[13] Yet, despite its break from the rule of politeness, question v.3 seeks knowledge of baptism and is arguably answerable.[14] Generally, we concede persuasive strategies are at play, yet are the questions given merely to supply rhetorical force?

Looking into this further, Ernst Käsemann notes that Paul does not use rhetoric simply for adornment, but rather as "a means of substantive argument".[15] And in this same vein, A.H. Snyman has noted that the progressive lengthening of questions as ours do, can also draw attention to the substance the writer is wanting to communicate.[16] Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words, and here, the questions in question (pun intended) tell the story most dramatically:

v.1a: Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν;

v.1b: ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσῃ;

v.2b: οἵτινες ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ;

v.3: ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι, ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν;

While this lengthening may have a rhetorical function, amplifying the cadence of the questions, are we prepared to say that the only purpose is stylistic? Snyman has also noted that this kind of lengthening can have an epideictic purpose, strengthening the adherence of the audience to the beliefs Paul was emphasizing.[17] It is our estimation, that along with its rhetorical qualities, the progressive lengthening of the questions draws attention to their content. And since the first question v. 1a has

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[13] Ibid, 147. Questions 1b, 2b can be seen as non-authentic, emphatic rhetorical, intent on making a statement. The absurdity of question v.1b, "sinning to increase grace," and question v.2, "dying to sin, yet still living in it" is clarified by question v. 3, making sense of the previous absurdity. Verster sees the placement of μὴ γένοιτο as a strong indicator of emotion.

[14] For example, the absurdity of question A (v. 1b) takes on a more substantive note, if Paul is picking up on an authentic question a chapter 3:7, and doubtless raising the same issue albeit in a different form at 6:15.

[15] Käsemann, *A Commentary on Romans,* 293.

[16] A. H. Snyman, "Style and the Rhetorical Situation of Romans 8.31-39." *NTS* vol. 34 No. 2 (April, 1988), 224, 228. The questions in 6:1-3 expand as follows: v.1a, 3 words; v.1b, 7 words; v.2b, 9 words; v.3, 13 words. Similarly, progression can be seen at 8:31–39.

[17] Snyman, "Style and The Rhetorical Situation," 224, 228.

been classified exclusively as a non-authentic appeal, drawing attention to a new theme (see n.12), the three questions that follow must be authentic with each successive one adding to the seriousness of the topics under discussion.

If we allow that Paul could use creative license, our Q&A proposal remains plausible. As personal experience shows, our questions are sometimes answered with common verbiage (C/C', B/B'),[18] but also without (A/A').[19] Since the questions are authentic, they resist *pro forma* responses that merely mimic the questions. In this chiasm parallels C'/B'/A' do in fact answer parallels C/B/A albeit each in their own unique way. To wit Romans 6:1–14 reveals two panels consisting of three question and answer parallels radiating from a central panel as shown below:

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; (v.1a)[20]

A ἐπιμένωμεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ἵνα ἡ χάρις πλεονάσῃ; (v.1b)

B μὴ γένοιτο. (v. 2a) οἵτινες ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ; (v.2b)

C ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι, ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν; (v.3)

D συνετάφημεν οὖν αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον, ἵνα ὥσπερ ἠγέρθη Χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρός, ως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν. εἰ γὰρ σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα· (vv. 4–5)

C' τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ· ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

εἰ δὲ ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ, πιστεύομεν ὅτι καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ, εἰδότες ὅτι Χριστὸς ἐγερθεὶς

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[18] E.g., Question, "What are you doing **tomorrow**?" Answer, "I will go bowling **tomorrow**." Common words in bold.

[19] E.g., Question, "What are you doing tomorrow?" Answer, "I think I'll stay home and rest." No words in common.

[20] Textual variants for 6:1-14 are negligible with respect to chiasticity. Source text: Greek, NA28th edition.

ἐκ νεκρῶν οὐκέτι ἀποθνήσκει, θάνατος αὐτοῦ οὐκέτι κυριεύει. ὃ
γὰρ ἀπέθανεν, τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ
ἀπέθανεν ἐφάπαξ. ὃ δὲ ζῇ, ζῇ τῷ θεῷ. (vv. 6–10)
Β' οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς λογίζεσθε ἑαυτοὺς εἶναι νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ
ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (v.11)
Α' Μὴ οὖν βασιλευέτω ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι εἰς τὸ
ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ, μηδὲ παριστάνετε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν
ὅπλα ἀδικίας τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ὡσεὶ
ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας καὶ τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὅπλα δικαιοσύνεις τῷ θεῷ.
ἁμαρτία γὰρ ὑμῶν οὐ κυριεύσει οὐ γὰρ ἐστε ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ
χάριν. (vv. 12–14)
Τί οὖν;   (v. 15a)

Of course, one could charge that this chiasm is in the eye of the beholder, so it behooves us to test the merits of this proposal, by applying the most objective and accepted chiasmus criteria.[21]

Ten Criteria for Evaluating Chiasticity

Objectivity: Does 6:1–14 stand out as a chiasm? Admittedly, its chiastic properties are not readily apparent so much so, even enthusiasts of chiasmus fail to identify it in their analysis of Romans.[22] However, this lack of a clear and unmistakable fingerprint, may in part be due to a common error, failing to realize that "all possible chiasms were not created equal" and therefore should not be expected to conform

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[21] Sources: I. H. Thomason, *Chiasmus in the Pauline Letters*. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); J. W. Welch, "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus." Provo, UT.: Research, 1999) 1-9; C. A. Smith, "Identifying Chiasm of Design in New Testament Literature." PhD diss., (University of Bristol, 2009). The criteria of Density and Reduplication, while not formally treated, are addressed throughout the proposal. The criterion of Aesthetics requires its own treatment, and is beyond the purview of this study. On Aesthetics see Talbert, "Artistry and Theology," *CBQ* 32 (1970) 341–366.

[22] Talbert, *Romans*, 159-183. Talbert, a proponent of NT chiasm, fails to note its presence. P. F. Ellis, *Seven Pauline Letters*. (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1984), 200–264. Ellis proposes an overarching chiastic structure of Romans (203–205), but does not identify 6:1-14 as a chiasm.

rigorously to a *received* pre-determined pattern.[23] If we concede that the final shape of a chiasm must align with its necessary form and function, we may come upon a heretofore unforeseen exception to the rule. For a "Q&A" chiasm to be considered, allowance must be made for its logical corresponding form, namely that a long question in the first panel can be answered with an abrupt "yes" or "no" in the corresponding lower panel, or that conversely, a relatively short question in the first panel may be answered in a long and detailed fashion in the lower corresponding panel. This is precisely what our target text reveals. Despite Romans 6:1–14 continuing Paul's exposition, Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; (v.1a) and Τί οὖν; (v. 15a), bracket vv. 1b–14 and invite the possibility that whether consciously, or unconsciously, Paul is employing some form of literary artistry. One thing is certain; C.A. Smith notes, "chiasms of design are more likely to occur in works by authors with a demonstrable affinity for the chiastic form."[24] In this regard, J.W. Welch has listed a number of verifiable chiasms in Paul's uncontested letters, and thirty specifically in Romans.[25] If Paul is capable of using midrash, diatribe, and early hymn and catechetical traditions to couch his message to the church at Rome, chiasmus, prolific in Romans is not out of the realm of possibility in this case.[26] Still, even if the criterion of Objectivity is relaxed as proposed here, this does not by itself prove that 6:1–14 is chiastic. For that to be shown, other chiasmus criteria will need to be considered.

Boundaries: Romans 6:1–14 fits within the category Ian H. Thomason identifies as an intermediate chiasm.[27] Note that at 6:1a, our chiasm is prefaced by Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; while v.15a introduces Τί οὖν; establishing

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[23] Welch, "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus," 1. For a classic description of biblical chiasmus, see Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament*, 40-41.

[24] Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm," 304.

[25] Ibid, 309. Smith cites J. Welch, *Chiasmus Bibliography* (Provo, UT.: Research, 1999), 175. Welch identifies the following numbers of verifiable chiasms in the undisputed Pauline epistles: 1 Corinthians 63, 2 Corinthians 9, Galatians 16, 1Thessalonians 6, and Philemon 1.

[26] See Lund, *Chiasmus in the New Testament*, 9–29; Thomason, "The Classical and Semitic Background of Chiasmus", 14–18, "Paul and the Cultural Context of Chiasmus", 18–22. See also, S. Porter, E. T. H. Olbricht, eds. *Rhetoric and the New Testament* Sheffield: JSNT, 1993.

[27] Ibid, 23.

its limits. Within the text, the two "grace" phrases (v.1b, v.14b), the first with a nominative χάρις, the latter with an accusative χάριν, function as a fitting *Inclusio*.[28]

Length: For Thomason, intermediate chiasms allow for theological development. Smith agrees, ruling out aesthetics and rhetoric as primary motivations for longer chiasms seeing them rather as conveyors of semantic intent.[29] Since a central panel also factors in chiasms with semantic function, 6:1–14 is long enough to support a critical theological message, which we will duly note under the criteria of *Centrality, Climax,* and *Return*.[30]

Dominance: This criterion seeks to discover the degree to which the parallels in both panels exhibit common dominant language and themes proving chiasticity.

C (v. 3) and C' (vv. 6–10): Question C asks, ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε…; eliciting information albeit in an impolite manner and C' answers accordingly with the demonstrative τοῦτο reacting to the negative question.[31] Taking on C, parallel C' asserts that believers do in fact know some things. First, believers know (γινώσκοντες) that the old man has been crucified with Christ so that they might no longer be slaves to sin (v.6). Additionally, in v.9, C' asserts that believers also know (εἰδότες) of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection (vv. 9-10).[32] If one should inquire on what ground believers can base such knowledge, both participles γινώσκοντες and εἰδότες have a causal function,[33] saying in effect, "we know these things

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[28] *Inclusio* is a literary device in rhetorical studies used to bracket a theme or a concept at both the beginning and at the end of a text. *Inclusio* generally employs a word or a phrase intended to introduce the theme, and also signal its closure.

[29] Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm", 272.

[30] Ibid, 280.

[31] E. W. Deibler, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of Romans* (Dallas, TX.: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1998), 142. Deibler sees the cataphorical τοῦτο so pronounced it introduces a new idea with no logical relationship to v. 5.

[32] Cranfield, *Romans,* 313. We agree with Canfield that εἰδότες should be preceded by a colon at v. 8, as γινώσκοντες is at v. 5, thus, meaning, "and we know," introducing yet another consideration.

[33] D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 631; C. L. Rogers, C. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 327.

'because' we have experienced and hope for such things," pointing back to vv. 4–5.[34]

Structurally, Smith observes that some chiasms will have *nested mini-chiasms* embedded in the parallels.[35] In this regard note how both C and C' can be configured along chiastic lines:

Parallel C	Parallel C'
a, have been baptized, (v. 3a)	a, crucified with Christ, freed from sin (vv. 6–7)
b, into Christ Jesus, (v. 3b)	b, if we have died to sin (v. 8a)
b', into his death, (v. 3c)	b', we believe we will live with him (v. 8b)
a', have been baptized (v. 3d)	a', Christ, freed from death, serves God (v. 9–10)

These nested chiasms make our case compelling in light of the surplus knowledge C' offers.[36]

B (v. 2) and B' (v. 11): This parallel focuses on a mental exercise. Following C /C', which is assumed as factual, B basically asks readers to ponder, to think. Knowing they have died to sin (C'), the question, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ; follows inferentially. Thus, B' takes question B as authentic, cautioning readers to λογίζεσθε themselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ.[37] While there is a difference of opinion whether λογίζομαι means "to take stock," "to regard," "to think of oneself," or "to judge,"[38] their obvious reasoning nature is beyond dispute. In Romans, λογίζομαι is limited to the cognitive act of believing (4:3, 5, 9, 11, 19–

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[34] Dunn, *Romans,* 322. Additionally, the causal participles weaken the argument that Paul is introducing knowledge unbeknownst to his readers. The ground of knowledge is their shared experience "in Christ", vv. 4–5.

[35] Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm," 122–125.

[36] R. Jowett, *Romans: A Commentary on the Book of Romans,* Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 392. Jowett also makes note of this chiasm.

[37] H. W. Heidland, "λογίζομαι, λογίζμος" In *TDNT,* vol. iv 288. Λογίζεσθε conforms to the act of thought.

[38] See Käsemann, *Romans,* 170–171.

21), and does not extend to any concrete activity (e.g. performing a physical act such as circumcision).[39] The chiastic relationship is strong.

A (v. 1b) and A' (vv. 12-14): Concerning A', S. Levinsohn notes that with the use of οὖν Paul goes from thought to action.[40] And indeed A' answers to the absurdity of continuing to sin so as to πλεονάσῃ grace (A) with imperatival prohibitions and encouragements. In vv. 12–13a, Μὴ . . . μηδὲ, challenges readers to reign in bodily ἐπιθμίαις not surrendering their bodies to serve as ὅπλα ἀδικίας. The adversative ἀλλὰ, (v.13b) introduces the opposite, to present τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὅπλα δικαιοσύνεις. Preceded by μηδὲ the present imperatives παριστάνετε, παραστήσατε challenge readers both to cease sinning, and to begin ongoing moral actions.[41]

Mavericks: What about μὴ γένοιτο in parallel B, v.2a? Far from being extraneous to the chiastic structure, this strong negation,[42] expresses a heightened sense of outrage, the effects of which are manifested in several directions. First, it is a fitting visceral rhetorical response to question A. Second, as such, it provides the ground for the menacing ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε of C (v.3) and third, it anticipates the strong Μὴ . . . μηδὲ imperatives in A'.

Centrality: One criterion, which strengthens chiasticity, is a central panel.[43] In our target text, vv. 4–5 function as D, the pivotal element. At first blush, one could see vv.4–10 as one continuous whole for language of death/dying (vv. 4, 7), life/living (vv. 4b, 8, 10), and raised/ resurrection (vv. 4c, 5, 9a), would seem to unite these verses. But to do

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[39] Paul uses λογίζομαι eight times in Rom 4. Abraham "reckoned" righteous consistently on the basis of a mental activity, *he believed* (v.3, 5, 9, 11, 19–22). Note that λογίζεσθε, is the first use of the imperative in Romans. See Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 256; Schreiner, *Romans,* 322.

[40] S. H. Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek: A Coursebook on the Information Structure of New Testament Greek* 2nd ed. (Dallas: SIL International, 2000), 16.

[41] Wallace, *Greek Grammar,* 720–721. Wallace sees these two imperatives as ingressive progressives.

[42] There are fourteen usages of μη` γένοιτο in Paul's undisputed epistles: Rom 3:4, 6, 31; 6:2, 15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11; 1 Cor 6:15; Gal 2:17; 3:21; 6:14.

[43] Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm," 290.

so would come at the cost of missing a vital distinction. In our analysis, vv. 4–5 relate to an experience *per se*,[44] while vv. 6–10 describe a person's telling of it. Thus, in panel D, Paul evokes the believer's experience of being united with Christ through mediating baptism, resulting in "newness of life" (v. 4), also sharing in the ὁμοιώματι of his death with hope to share in the likeness (implied) of his resurrection (v.5).[45] Ben Witherington rightly notes that the conditional statement in v. 5 "is in the form of a real or genuine condition, not merely hypothetical."[46] Few note the demarcation line between vv. 4–5 and vv. 6–10,[47] but it is the difference between the telling of an event as something experienced and describing the same experience knowledgably after the fact.[48]

    Beginnings: Under this criterion, the beginnings of the parallel answers should be crisp, relating logically to the questions they address. In our case, C' is not an independent sentence, but continues from v. 5. However, the demonstrative τοῦτο ameliorates this issue through its cataphorical function, shifting the reader forward to a new line of thought, vv. 6–10.[49] With respect to B', οὕτως καὶ is comparative connecting back to v. 10. While v. 11 is a new sentence, its connectivity to C' (v. 10) suggests a direct bond between knowledge of Christian truth

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[44] Commentaries holding this view include: Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans,*124; Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans,* 87; Dunn, *Romans,* 313–314; Fitzmyer, *Romans,* 434–435; Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans,* 168–169; Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 248; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 361–371; Schreiner, *Romans,* 312; Sanday and Headlam, *Epistle to the Romans,* 162–163; et al.

[45] Schreiner, *Romans,* 315. Schreiner sees vv. 6-10 as a restatement of vv. 3-5, failing to take note of the shift from experience (vv. 4-5) to after the fact knowledge of the experience (vv. 6-10).

[46] Witherignton, *Paul's Letter to the Romans,* 158–159. V. 5 is a first class, true to fact, condition. So also v. 8.

[47] Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans,* 372. Moo does take note of this vital shift.

[48] A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology against its Graeco–Roman Background* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987), 49-50.

[49] Levinsohn, "A Holistic Approach," 9, Deibler, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis,* 142. Deibler, drawing from other NT examples of τοῦτο γινώσκοντες (cf. Luke 12:39; 2 Pet 1:20; 3:3) and ἐν τούτῳ in the Johannine corpus, sees this dative prepositional phrase as cataphorical, introducing a new basis, with no logical relationship to v. 5.

and one's contemplation of it. In parallel A', the post positive οὖν is a definite grammatical indicator of a new thought. On balance, the beginnings of parallels A', B', and C' support chiasticity.

Climax: A review of Romans 1:18–8:39 shows that apart from 4:24–25, there is no mention of Christ's resurrection prior to v. 5,[50] then, resurrection references abound.[51] This suggests that "union with Christ in death and resurrection" (however interpreted) is the theme which dominates D, and which most likely serves as the interpretive lens for Romans 6:1–14.[52] This view is further supported by J. Beekman's insights on prominence. Beekman observes that in uneven chiasms, as ours is, "the center tends to be the place of prominence."[53]

Return: Does our proposed structure close the chiastic circle? In our estimation it does, for central panel D gives prominence to a believer's present union with Christ in death and their future hope for resurrection. The theology of D makes knowledge of experience, C/C' and personal reflection B/B' possible, providing the ground for A/A', the imperatival call to moral action. The theme of the central panel and the logical sequence which radiates out, from experience, to knowledge, to mental ascent, to moral action, becomes the semantic structure by which subsequent references to a believer's union with Christ in death, in life, and in future resurrection may be interpreted.

Balance: In assessing the proposal, we note that all three parallels have some words and concepts in common. Nevertheless, every parallel

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[50] Schreiner, *Romans*, 311-312. Schreiner notes the absence of any discussion of the resurrection prior to this point. While Paul does mention the resurrection at 1:4. Within 1:18—8:39, it is treated substantively only at 6:1-14.

[51] Romans 7:4; 8:11, 29, 34. On πρότοκος 8:29, see Romans 1:4, and Colossians 1:18, where, it used metaphorically in reference to Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

[52] Boers' proposal sees v. 6d "so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin" as the pivotal passage, dealing only with the first two questions (vv. 1–2). Kim's proposal, which sees v.6 as the center is dubious, for it gives prominence to what is essentially the continuation of background information, relevant to v. 5. Both Boers and Kim build their chiasms on vv. 1–11, shifting the focus of this text away from resurrection. See Boers, "The Structure and Meaning of Romans 6:1–14," 679; Kim, "Triple Chiastic Structures in Romans 6," 9.

[53] J. Beekman, J. J. Callow, M. Kopesec, *The Semantic Structure of Written Communication,* 5th ed. (Dallas, Texas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1981), 120.

has unique verbiage. Thus, for example, while C speaks of "baptism," C' uses the concepts of "crucifixion," and "slavery," among others. On the other hand, Parallel B' calls on readers "to reckon." Finally, while A speaks of "increase," A' uses language of "forbiddance," of "bodily lusts," of "instruments of unrighteousness," and "of righteousness." While this list is partial, it does force us to ask whether such lexical imbalance eliminates 6:1-14 as a chiasm. Applying Smith's formula for macro-variance, yields a variance of about 72 percent, undermining the possibility of this being a design chiasm.[54] While C. H. Talbert shows that ancient writers eschewed near perfect symmetry,[55] Smith is not keen on extending license to *chiasms* unless, "a compelling reason can be given for the lack of symmetry."[56] To be totally objective it is the criterion of Balance as currently defined, which stands as the strongest case against our proposal. Yet, when each of the above criterion are applied to the target text, it seems incontrovertible that the organizing principle of Romans 6:1-14 is chiastic, putting into question whether this criterion as defined by chiasm scholars should be considered as settled law.

Conclusion

Whether this proposal is inducted into the hall of chiasms remains to be seen. If it has any merit, it should spur interest in investigating other similar structures in the Pauline corpus[57] and perhaps elsewhere in the New Testament. Its validity would call for a reevaluation of both *Objectivity* and *Balance* criteria as currently understood.

With respect to structural issues, this chiastic proposal strengthens the unity of vv. 1–14 thereby challenging any proposal that separates out

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[54] Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design," 190. The raw word count is: upper panel, 29; lower panel, 134 for a macro-variance of 29/134, or 72 percent.

[55] Talbert, *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes and the Genre of Luke–Acts* (Atlanta: SBL & Scholars Press, 1974), 78.

[56] Smith, "Criteria for Identifying Chiasm of Design," 191.

[57] Paul's epistles reveal the following interrogatives: Rom, 74; 1 Cor, 97; 2 Cor, 23; Gal, 19; Phil 1; Col, 1; 1 Thess, 3; 2 Thess, 0; Phlm, 0. Source, NA28th ed. Kaye, *The Argument of Romans,* 14–23. Kaye discusses rhetorical questions.

the questions in vv. 2–3, or cuts out the imperatival vv. 12–14.[58] Additionally, its central panel D, with its prominent "resurrection" theme would call for serious theological reassessment.[59] Among the issues to be addressed would be to ascertain how its concentric message fits within Romans 1:18–8:39. Is this passage a watershed text separating 1:18—5:21from 6:15 to 8:39, and if so, how so and why? Can this passage still be viewed as digressing back to previous chapters, or is equally forward leaning in light of resurrection themes moving forward, or does it have a bi-directional purpose?

Difficult structural issues can often lead to what I call interpretive stalemate, or we can make progress—perhaps—by approaching the challenge in a fresh way.

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[58] This proposal does not make any explicit or implicit claims about the structure of Romans 6:15–23 other than to note that Τί οὖν; (v.15a) would seem to be a non-authentic rhetorical interrogative, introducing a new theme.

[59] Levinsohn, "A Holistic Approach to the Argument Structure of Romans 6," 1. Alas, we agree with Levinsohn, who asserts that ultimately, it is semantic subject matter, or a unifying theme, which makes a paragraph cohesive, and not necessarily a grammatical indicator.

The Holy Trinity in Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship.
Revised and Expanded. By Robert Letham. Phillipsburg: P&R
Publishing, 2019. 650 pp. $23.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-1-62995-377-
9.

No doctrine received more attention in contemporary theology than the
doctrine of the Trinity; however, in his estimation, Robert Letham thinks
that this current renewal of Trinitarian theology departs from the older
tradition by revising the classical doctrine in such a way to fit particular
agendas (xxvii). Robert Letham (Ph.D., University of Aberdeen) is
professor of systematic and historical theology at the Union School of
Theology in Wales. His other published works include The *Work of
Christ, Union with Christ,* and *Systematic Theology.* His first edition of
The Holy Trinity, winner of an ECPA Gold Medallion Book Award, was
published in 2004.

Since then, a raft of works, issues, and debates related to the doctrine
of the Trinity ensued. Thus, it was with great anticipation that I opened
his revised and expanded new edition to see how he brings his
scholarship to bear on the more recent and significant developments in
Trinitarian theology.

Following the first half of the introduction, in which the author points
out the problems and dangers inherent to the formulation of the
doctrine of the Trinity, he states the purpose and limitations of the book.
It is an attempt to recover "the Trinity at ground level, the level of the
ordinary minister and believer." For Letham, such a Trinitarian recovery
will "help revitalize the life of the church, and in turn, its witness in the
world" (xxxv).

The author undertakes the work by dividing the book into four parts,
each of which deals with a distinct aspect of the doctrine of the Trinity:
scriptural foundation, historical development, modern discussion, and
critical issues related to the Trinity. For the most part, the structure of
the book and Letham's intended purpose are similar to Stephen Holmes's
in his work *The Quest for the Trinity* (InterVarsity Press, 2012), though
Letham's work is more extensive than Stephen Holmes's.

In part 1, which covers chapters 1-3, Letham seeks to establish the
biblical foundations for the doctrine of the Trinity. He carefully examines
the biblical evidence in the Old and New Testaments. Rather than merely
providing proof-texts, the author explores the biblical claims and motifs

related to the Godhead that implicitly or explicitly support the doctrine of the Trinity. From his analysis of both the Old and New Testament materials, Letham discovers that the "cautious, gradual and progressive unfolding of who God is" follows the "procedure in the history of redemption." In the Old Testament, the emphasis is on the "oneness and uniqueness of Yahweh." Thus, though the doctrine of the Trinity was not explicit in the Old Testament Scriptures, "the OT's vivid personification of wisdom/word helped lay the groundwork for the eventual leap to persons" and prepare for the reception of "the idea of plurality within the Godhead" in the New Testament era (22). Letham observes how through the historical outworking of revelation, the Godhead seems to disclose himself as "one," then "binitarian" with the coming of the Son and then "trinitarian" when the full splendor of the Trinity shines with the sending of the Spirit from the Father and the Son (23,51). However, to prevent such an observation from counteracting divine immutability, Letham helpfully makes the distinction between the doctrine of the Trinity (the developed formulation of Godhead) and the Trinity itself (the divine being as he has always been).

In part 2, which consists of chapters 4-12, Letham traces the historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity. The author insightfully indicates that the trinitarian discussions and debates in the church for centuries were exegetical rather than a mere discussion of concepts and vocabulary.

Part 2 is one of the most extensive and helpful examinations of the history of the doctrine of the Trinity, covering the period of the early church to the medieval era up to the Reformation that readers will find in a monograph on the Trinity. Letham demonstrates his expertise in historical theology by outlining the respective contributions of each Christian writer and theologian to the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. The length of the historical part of the book is justified because it serves well the author's intended purpose, which is the recovery of the classical doctrine.

Part 3 builds on the previous part as the author considers the Trinitarian theologies of the selected modern theologians (from both the western and eastern traditions) and critically examines them against the backdrop of the older tradition. The recent renewal of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity has added nothing but revision and, in some cases, distorted the traditional doctrine; therefore, there is no better place to

start proving the point than with Karl Barth, by whom "the current vigorous revival of Trinitarian reflection was enabled" (328). Letham fairly and objectively exposes the shortcomings and strengths of their contributions to the doctrine of the Trinity. In doing so, he demonstrates his argument made in the introduction of the book, namely that subtle dangers of subordinationism, modalism, and other theological distortions plague Trinitarian Theology.

The book closes with part 4, which is more practical than the previous parts. Chapters 17-20 show how the Trinity inherently relates to theological topics like the incarnation, worship, prayer, creation, Missions and Persons. With respect to the 2016 controversial dispute on the subordination of the Son to the Father, the author first recommends the depersonalization of the matter in order that one might discuss the arguments. He then notes that "the term *subordination* is problematic" for it conveys a contemporary connotation (either inferiority or posteriority) that is foreign to the sense in which the church through history understood it. To employ the word subordination with no qualification, "it would appear to counteract the full-blooded assertion of the indivisibility of the Trinity, and the homoousial nature of the Son and the Spirit," observes the author (462).

Letham meets the goal he set out to address. It would be hard to walk away from this work without having a comprehensive grasp of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity, which was once settled in the fourth century and maintained through the medieval and Reformation periods until the contemporary period. Whether one agrees with all Letham's criticism of modern trinitarian theologies is another matter, but he provided a thorough and thoughtful examination of the doctrine of the Trinity. Letham is a clear writer, and he gives a summary of his findings at the end of each chapter followed by a set of questions for further reflection.

In conclusion, while there are many books on the Trinity, Letham's work represents one of the topic's more comprehensible treatments. It represents the ripe fruit of many years of laborious study, research, and insights gleaned throughout his pastoral and academic career. Even though the book's length might deter some professors from using it as a textbook at the undergraduate or even graduate level, Letham has offered to the academy, and particularly the church, an accessible and

thorough one-volume presentation on the fundamental Christian doctrine.

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Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze That's Seducing Our Daughters. By Abigail Shrier. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2020. 257 pp. $28.99, Hardcover. ISBN 978-1684510313.

As transgender identities have been mainstreamed in the last two decades, a remarkable shift in data has occurred among teenagers. In the past, the overwhelming majority of cases of gender-nonconformity involved biological males who expressed a female gender identity, but over the last decade there has been a dramatic increase of biological females who express a male gender identity. Many of these girls previously had no experience with childhood gender nonconformity until suddenly embracing a transgender identity during adolescence. *Irreversible Damage* by Abigail Shrier addresses this specific shift in data. Shrier is a graduate of Columbia University and Yale Law School. She also clerked for the Hon. Judith W. Rogers on the U.S. Court of Appeals. Shrier is Jewish and was raised in a Conservative Jewish synagogue, but embraced Orthodox Judaism after graduating from college. Shrier's tone is frank but irenic. This most certainly *is not* a book written in a spirit of hatred.

The basic thesis of *Irreversible Damage* is that gender transitioning for teenage girls with no prehistory of gender nonconformity is ill considered and leads to both physical and emotional damage. She sees this trend as a "peer contagion sweeping the Western world" that "might harm people" (219). Her thesis is narrow and focuses specifically on teenage girls. In contrast, Shrier is affirming of adults who transition and said, "I have spoken to several transgender adults who are living good, productive lives, in stable relationships and flourishing in their careers. I believe there are instances in which gender dysphoric people have been helped by gender transition" (98). She also adds, "Caitlyn

Jenner should feel free to pursue a life of her choosing – that most of America wants" (145).

Much of Shrier's work is rooted in an article published in *PLoS One* in 2018 by Lisa Littman, an OBGYN and professor at Brown University. Littman identified small groupings of teenage girls drawn together in online chatrooms. Within these online communities, teenage girls reinforced their own self-diagnosis of being transgender *before* ever meeting with a medical professional. Pittman gave this phenomenon a name: "rapid-onset gender dysphoria." Chapter two of *Irreversible Damage* is devoted to Littman's work, and Shrier documents two important facts: 1) Littman is ideologically positioned to the left, and 2) many other people on the ideological left were furious at her for publishing the article. Littman's case demonstrates the degree to which a sort of narrow, LGBTQ+ fundamentalism dictates orthodoxy in what may or may not be said in public by researchers. Any perceived deviation from progressive dogma is viewed as heresy to be expunged. What makes Littman's case so intriguing is that, while she disagrees with Evangelicals at multiple levels, she was scorned by liberal elite for suggesting that a teenager's rash decision to transition is unwise.

Some of Shrier's most helpful work is her intelligent handling of the internet's detrimental influence on teenagers. Children become convinced that a stranger in an online video understands them better than their own parents. Many of these videos are similar to testimonies we share in church about how Jesus Christ frees us from sin, but instead of freedom in Christ, these online strangers promise freedom via the process of gender transitioning. Shrier comments on online influencers and says, "They profess love and offer acceptance. Like glitter, they add fun adornment without the weight or encumbrance of an actual relationship" (56). Internet pornography is another variable pushing teenage girls towards a transgender identity. Shrier emphasizes that too many young girls are exposed to violent pornography on the internet, and this terrifies girls about the prospects of future romance with men and makes the idea of transitioning appealing (154). Because the internet is so destructive, Shrier strongly urges parents: "Don't get your kid a smartphone" (212).

Shrier makes an intriguing connection between teenage girls coming out as transgender and the privileged status of LGBTQ+ identities. In Lisa Littman's data, the largest percentage of teenage girls suddenly

identifying as transgender are white, a status viewed unfavorably by some progressives. By identifying as transgender, these girls automatically have a privileged minority status (154-155). Transitioning is seen as a gateway out of a status viewed negatively on many campuses (a white ethnic background) to a protected status (transgender). Christians should think in a serious, sensible manner about Shrier's claims here. It is tempting for opponents of CRT and Intersectionality to seize upon this argument and assert identity politics *causes* a transgender identity. But if Shrier is correct (and the claim can be debated), then her point would be more nuanced, with identity politics serving as a contributing variable which, combined with many other factors, adds to the appeal of a transgender identity.

There are places in *Irreversible Damage* where argumentation could have been improved. At one point, Shrier cites someone affirmatively who repeats the discredited claim that 10% of all people are gay (155). Needless profanity is included in a quote from a transitioning teenager (198). A female-to-male transsexual who produces pornographic movies is described in positive terms (205-208).

Irreversible Damage has a very narrow thesis: It is a bad idea for teenage girls who come out as transgender with no prehistory of gender nonconformity suddenly to start the process of gender transition. The work includes trenchant analysis of the internet's oppressive influence on teenagers trying to navigate the difficulties of adolescence. Conservative Christians who cite *Irreversible Damage* should keep an important point of clarification in mind: Shrier is open to gender transition for adults as an effective method for some people to cope with gender dysphoria. With this noted, the book offers substantive evidence to question the predominant trend to affirm without question a teenager's desire to transition.

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Jesus and the Forces of Death: The Gospels' Portrayal of Ritual Impurity Within First-Century Judaism. By Matthew Thiessen. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021. 254 pp. $33.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-1540964878.

Matthew Thiessen begins his highly original work with an homage to an academic hero of many, Jacob Milgrom. This brief tip of the hat highlights the influence of Milgrom's work on the exploration of ancient Israelite ritual but more importantly his influence on Thiessen's *Jesus and the Forces of Death*. Throughout, Thiessen makes it his mission to interpret Jesus as a fixture within the variegated Second Temple era, recognizing that to dichotomize Judaism and Christianity or Law and Gospel is to do a disservice to the Gospels' portrayal of Jesus of Nazareth. Thiessen stakes out his bold and exciting claim in the first pages of the introduction in positing that an integral part of Jesus's ministry focused on the cleansing of impurity, conceptualized within Thiessen's book as 'forces of death.' As the argument goes, Jesus did not intend to abolish the purity system, as outlined in the priestly legislation, but on the contrary, acted within said system and sought to eradicate the impurity of those afflicted. For those more attuned to New Testament scholarship, specifically concerning the Synoptic Gospels and less aware of ancient Israelite conceptions of purity, to assert such is to fight against the tide; Thiessen however, delivers.

Chapter one reviews the first century Israelite binaries of holy/profane and pure/impure. Sensitive to latent anti-Jewish sentiment in biblical scholarship, Thiessen argues that the tabernacle/temple complex with its ritual system is to be perceived as an act of "compassion" on behalf of deity in order to "safeguard God's presence" (11). He delineates the differences between moral and ritual impurity, describing that the sources of the latter are generated via genital discharges (blood and semen), lepra, and corpses–all associated with death (16). Thiessen stresses that, per the priestly legislation, the perdurance of unmitigated ritual impurity can force God to relinquish his presence in the earthly tabernacle, and therefore the priesthood was entrusted with ameliorating the pervasive impurity of everyday life through ritual detergents (typically blood). In Israelite thought, the stakes could not be higher (15). One quickly surmises where Thiessen is

headed: whereas the *priests* cannot heal the physical abnormalities which create impurity, Jesus is portrayed as doing just that within the Gospels.

In the second chapter Thiessen describes Jesus's place in a world defined by such binaries. Most poignantly, Thiessen cogently contends for a Luke who portrays Jesus and his family as Jews preoccupied with maintaining ritual purity, contrary to a swath of popular scholarship. Appealing to a wide array of Second Temple writings Thiessen contends against what is oft-cited as a 'mistake' in Luke 2:22-24 where presumably Jesus was in need of purification after his birth *along* with his mother. Succinctly, Thiessen asserts that Leviticus 12:1–8 leaves open the possibility for a child to contract impurity during its birth, a possibility capitalized upon during the Second Temple period. According to Thiessen, Jesus even at birth with the help of his family is portrayed as maintaining *a more stringent* conception of purity which has ramifications for both Jesus's portrayal in the Gospels and Thiessen's subsequent argumentation.

The third chapter is in my estimation Thiessen's strongest, where he argues against the tendency to equate the Greek lepra with modern-day Hansen's disease, and instead calls for a definition of lepra which includes many "conditions similar to psoriasis or fungal infections" (48). Thus, rather than a compassionate act toward pariahs who suffer from a debilitating disease, Jesus's healing of those with lepra should be perceived predominantly as an assault on impurity itself which barred its victims from the temple apparatus. Most persuasive is his novel treatment of Mark 1:40-45. In Thiessen's economy, Jesus's anger exhibited during his healing of the lepros (an anger glossed as 'compassion' in Matthew and Luke) is not a result of incipient rejection of the purity system, a presumed demonic presence, or the lepra itself, but is an anger directed at the man himself (58–59). The anger is a result of the man's questioning Jesus's desire to purify the impure (60). Embracing the ontology of impurity, Thiessen sees Jesus's response– "I desire [to heal you], be pure!" (Mk 1:43) –as indicative of his broader agenda. Throwing a gentle, but pointed jab at standard New Testament scholarship that assumes Jesus's antagonism toward ritual/law Thiessen notes that Elisha's healing of Naaman's skin disease (צָרַעַת) in 2 Kgs 5:10 and Moses's healing of Miriam's skin disease in Num 12 are never argued as critical attacks against conceptions of impurity, leaving Thiessen to ask, why should one assume differently regarding Jesus? Widening his

thesis (see chapter 7 and the appendix), Thiessen summarizes the importance of the fronting of Jesus's healing of the lepros in Mark 1: "By placing this miraculous cleansing early in his narrative and before the series of controversy stories in Mark 2:1-3:6, Mark aims to ensure that his readers will witness Jesus's reverence for the Jewish law" (63).

Chapter 4 concerns Jesus and his battle against a second source of impurity, genital discharges. Thiessen naturally devotes his attention to Mark 5 and the *zavah* ("discharger"). Again, calling upon the compassion of God built into the ritual system itself, Thiessen notes Jesus's own compassion in that by healing the *zavah* the requisite requirements for her to enter the "tabernacle or temple apparatus" are met (73). Showing the affinities between the words of Mark 5:25–34 and passages from Leviticus 12 and 15, Thiessen urges readers to interpret the story through the dense matrix of ritual binaries as delineated in chapter 1. For those wary of Jesus's touching those deemed 'unclean' and the moral ramifications of such acts, Thiessen is adamant to deny the *sinfulness* of contracted impurity, but too dismisses the very possibility altogether by a careful exploration of Jesus's "uncontrollable discharge of power" (88). Accordingly, the woman's touch, rather than passing impurity onto Jesus, instead receives an influx of restorative power, which Thiessen calls a "contagious holiness" reminiscent of his descriptor in Mk 1:24– "the holy one of God." Continuing the analogy, Jesus's clothing is depicted similarly to the temple furniture from which one can contract holiness (92). Thiessen convincingly argues that Jesus's body "is ontologically holy" as portrayed by the gospel writers and instead of possibly contracting impurity, exudes a purifying power (93).

In the fifth chapter Thiessen describes Jesus's confrontation with death itself. Corpse impurity is foundational to and represents the greatest threat to purity within the priestly system. In Mark 5, Jesus boldly "enters the house" of Jairus, described as a reference to Numbers 19 which warns of such entering. Jesus then touches the dead girls' hand (another ritual taboo) separating "the girls' body...from the source of her impurity" (109). Moreover, Thiessen makes a compelling observation that the forces of impurity, the greatest of which is death, could not overwhelm Jesus, and instead he not only raises dead prophets and the righteous from their tombs (Mt 23:29-33) but he overcomes death three days after dying himself (110). The most creative contribution of this chapter concerns his treatment of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10.

Contra typical "Christian attacks upon Judaism, the temple, and the ritual purity system" Thiessen subsumes this parable under intra-Jewish debate concerning the keeping of conflicting commandments (115). Jesus, engaging in legal debate, calls for the precedence of loving one's neighbor *over* the prohibition of contraction of impurity on the part of the priest (Lev 21:1-3) leaning into a Second Temple notion that to bury one's neighbor is an honorable action (115-118). Ending with the revivification of Lazarus, Thiessen drives the point home, corpse impurity is of no consequence as Jesus's own power can conquer the most virulent impurity–death itself.

Chapter 6 concerns demonic activity and its deep interrelatedness to later Jewish thought. Recognizing Milgrom (and Kaufmann's?) demythologizing paradigm regarding demonic activity in Leviticus, Thiessen calls upon vestiges in the Priestly literature (Azazel, the Sotah, Red Heifer, etc.) to explain the gospels *re*mythologizing of demonic activity (124-125) which too is present within the Deuteronomistic literature (1 Sam 16:14–23, 18:10-19:17, 1 Kgs 22:20-22, etc.).

Prior to his elucidation of any biblical texts Thiessen rightly contextualizes demonic activity using ANE and Greco-Roman sources which find congruence with Second Temple and Rabbinic conceptions (127-139). To summarize his survey briefly: the demonic is equated with death (133). Thiessen highlights the "debilitating physical power that demons wield over human bodies" and that their impurity (ἀκάθαρτος, i.e. Mark 7:25-30) continually succumbs to Jesus's holiness (ἅγιος) hearkening back to the foundational binaries of the priestly system (Lev 10:10). In summary, "the holy pneuma that has come down upon Jesus and animates him is more powerful than the impure pneuma that inhabits the man" (142).

Chapter 7 and the appendix deal with similar issues but more expansively: Jewish law observance in general. Thiessen rightly notes, "How can the authors of the Synoptic Gospels portray Jesus's enduring concern for ritual impurity while at the same time recounting stories of him breaking the Sabbath" (151)? Thiessen argues that in the context of legal debate, indicative of the Second Temple period, Jesus's own form of Sabbath observance "fit[s] within a steam of tradition…" which elevates life over strict Sabbath observance (165).

Delving deeper into his thesis, Thiessen argues for a more fluid notion of death within the Israelite worldview and indicates that for Jesus to

heal a person's infirmities on the Sabbath (Mk 3:4) is to have power over death, the animating force behind the three sources of ritual impurity (see Ch. 1). Regarding the food laws (per Mark 7), again Thiessen appreciates intra-Jewish legal argumentation as the proper lens of interpretation as opposed to presumably hackneyed Christian dichotomies of 'law versus gospel' (167).

There is much to commend of Thiessen's final product. First, his arguments are lucid and thorough, written with such clarity and linearity that even an uninitiated reader could easily follow. For those privy to Milgrom's work and who acknowledge the dearth of interaction with such scholarship in New Testament studies generally, Thiessen's argumentation will be much appreciated and the explanatory scope of his thesis will be well received. This leads me to my second commendation: he truly breaks new ground. While post-Holocaust biblical scholarship has done its best to cleanse itself, as it were, of latent anti-Semitic notions, current explorations of Jesus's interaction with Jewish law are often found wanting. Thiessen's work is a great boon in this regard in that the person of Jesus is firmly fixed within his 1st century Jewish context which not only elucidates some of his more vexing actions (i.e. his anger toward the leper and his purification offering in Luke 2:22-24), but via Thiessen's broad synthesis, even the actions often taken for granted are recontextualized for the better (i.e. healing on the Sabbath and the healing of the *zavah*). Third, he offers in an uncomplicated way that the vast knowledge of cultic studies often siloed off to both New Testament scholarship and those not in the guild. In an accessible way, Thiessen brings the latest scholarship of the priestly system to bear on the New Testament texts. Fourth, Thiessen's use of primary sources is masterful. Offering a brief survey within each chapter of the relevant source material from the ANE, Greco-Roman sources, the DSS, and various Rabbinic collections only rounds out his keen analysis.

My only criticism concerns chapter 5 and is slight. While Thiessen's paradigm reframes so much of Jesus's ministry for the better, the paradigm provides only a slight refreshment to Jesus's interaction with death. Again, this observation could be taken less as a critique and more of a testament to the author's high level of erudition exhibited throughout which creates the desire for more.

I anticipate some pushback from certain corners of confessional scholarship especially those who are more convinced that Jesus's stance

towards the law constitutes a cleaner break with the putatively legalistic 1st century Jewish milieu. Typically, Jesus's actions on the Sabbath are often interpreted as abrogating law observance in *toto*, let alone Jesus's "declaring all foods clean" in Mark 7.

I fear that Thiessen's thesis may find most of its empathizers among a younger generation of scholars but perhaps will not find as much traction among the older generation. Moreover, I anticipate Thiessen's refusal to stake a claim in the 'historical Jesus' debate will prove to be a problem for some, but an appreciation of his own intentions indicated early on (xi–xii) would render such criticism moot.

Thiessen's *Jesus and the Forces of Death* is masterful and offers a unique contribution to biblical studies generally and New Testament studies specifically.

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A Model for Evangelical Theology: Integrating Scripture, Tradition, Reason, Experience, and Community. **By Graham McFarlane. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020. 320 pp. $32.99, Paperback. ISBN 9781540960351.**

Graham McFarlane (PhD, King's College London) is the director of research and senior lecturer for the London School of Theology (LST). He has taught systematic theology courses for over 30 years and has written several books on the subject. Being at this point in his career offers McFarlane the perspective of hindsight to address what he sees as a significant gap in systematic theology discussions. McFarlane developed a master's program at LST on the subject of theological method as a way to meet that need. This work stems from the research to develop that course, as well as McFarlane's reflection on his own theological method. In *A Model for Evangelical Theology*, McFarlane presents a uniquely evangelical theological method, adapting the Wesleyan Quadrilateral into the "Evangelical Quintilateral."

McFarlane's book functions as a primer on an evangelical theological method. The first half of the book presents an argument for the purpose

of theology based on what theology is for humanity. McFarlane begins by explaining some skills necessary for theological study. Asking questions within the context of an evangelical worldview results in uniquely gospel centered theological language (21). Because of the subject matter, McFarlane notes theology is not merely an intellectual exercise. Theology, then, must change the theologian. It develops habits that are personal, grounded in tradition and Scripture revealing "knowledge of the triune God of the gospel" (33).

McFarlane then defines theology as "the church's attempt at making sense of God" (41). With this understanding, McFarlane argues that all Christians are theologians. He writes, "Theology, then, is the activity all followers of Jesus Christ engage in as they seek to understand their faith, as they experience their own and others' transformation, as they pray and worship God, and as they seek to live out and be obedient to God's Word" (41). As noted, and repeated several times throughout the book, theology is not merely an intellectual exercise. It begins with Jesus as the self-revelation of the Father and moves out to the teaching of the disciples and then to the practice of theology, solidification of doctrine, which plays itself out in practice (48).

With this groundwork, McFarlane sets out his theological method - the Evangelical Quintilateral. He notes the key difference between his method and the Wesleyan Quadrilateral is the final point which McFarlane calls "community" (62). Since the gospel is the focus of the evangelical, this additional point, argues McFarlane, keeps the theological method away from being merely intellectual. The Christian theologian, in McFarlane's definition, lives in the mission of God. The addition of community helps maintain this focus.

In the second half of the work, McFarlane describes how each of the five points of the Quintilateral function as a tool of the evangelical theological method. Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience all follow typical lines of argumentation from an evangelical perspective. Scripture is the ultimate authority to which all other tools must submit (86). In his method, the roles of Tradition and Reason receive a different proportion than is established in other texts. The role of Tradition increases, while the role of Reason decreases. It is from Scripture to Reason that McFarlane's method moves rather than the other direction (121). This does not mean that it is not necessary to think deeply about Scripture. Instead, McFarlane argues that in the contemporary context,

Christian theologians have a fear of starting with Scripture or Tradition and instead jump to Reason as primary tool for public engagement in theological discussion (123). Instead, McFarlane wants the reader to "resist the pull of alternative, *different* forms of reason. . .that reify reason to a solely intellectual, rational category and ignore the affective and character forming characteristics of reason" (123).

Finally, McFarlane presents his "fifth dimension" of the Quintilateral. He argues for community to be included in theological method because of the place of community in the Christian experience. Starting in the 20th century (and likely earlier), the academy tries to force a bifurcation in theology as being either for the church or for the academy (170). However, theology is to be done for both. McFarlane argues that this is the case because the church has both an internal community and an external one (173). Doing theology, as noted above and numerous times throughout the book, is formational for the internal community and transformational for the external community (185). McFarlane argues that this focus brings in a uniquely evangelical perspective.

Some of the helpful pieces throughout the book are the "pause" sections. These are questions offered by McFarlane to help guide the introductory student in forming their theological method. Since McFarlane's book is designed to be an introduction to theological method, these questions help guide the reader to ensure theological study will be transformative. McFarlane rightly argues throughout the work that theological study needs to conform one into Christ's image. Early on McFarlane rightly asserts ". . .theology should not be an isolated and purely cerebral activity. Rather it should cause spiritual transformation, if only because it comes out of our knowledge of God gained in worship and doxology (31-2). At this point, McFarlane also includes one of his "pause" sections to help drive home the emphasis. McFarlane notes this in almost every section of every chapter. The work is clearly focused on a theological method that tries to force (perhaps too strong a word) the theologian into greater communion with the triune God of the Bible. This is much needed, both in the academy and the church.

Overall, McFarlane's book is a good introduction to theological method. Using the adapted "Quintilateral," McFarlane engages evangelicals to better understand their theological method with the goal of having their theology be transformative. McFarlane's transformation

of the Quadrilateral into a Quintilateral is a welcome move. From the early 20th century and into the 21st, there has been a clear bifurcation of church and academy. This is prevalent in the church as well. I teach several introduction to theology courses and students are tasked with offering their experience with theology in the first week. An overwhelming majority of these students explain that they view theology as a task for those in an ivory tower with little bearing on their lives. That a theological method would focus on transformation makes a connection that has been unstated so long it has become obsolete. In line with others in the Christian tradition, McFarlane pushes evangelicals to appreciate more fully the connection between theology and lived experience.

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Waging War in an Age of Doubt: A Biblical, Theological, Historical, and Practical Approach to Spiritual Warfare for Today. By Robert Davis Smart. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2020. 168 pp. $16.00, Paperback. ISBN 13-978-1601787620.

Robert Smart is an author, speaker, adjunct seminary professor, and senior minister of Christ Church (PCA) in Bloomington, IL. Smart previously authored works on pneumatology and Jonathan Edwards (*Apologetic for the Great Awakening*) along with several works on spiritual formation. *Waging War* is a recent work that challenges Christians to engage in spiritual warfare in the contemporary culture. Pursuant to this challenge, Smart aims to provide a sort of multifaceted textbook to equip Christians in spiritual warfare. Written at a level that both layperson and pastor may benefit from, *Waging War* is targeted for both general and professional audiences within the Christian church.

Smart's goal in *Waging War* is to sound a sort of 'battle call' to fellow Christians to engage in spiritual warfare. Smart notes some common tendencies among Christians, who often respond to issues of spiritual warfare with overt caution (due to the excesses of the past), embarrassment, uncertainty, or even outright doubt (5). Smart is likely correct in this regard – a brief perusal of recent books written on spiritual

warfare will reveal numerous works of outright speculation, including many that are far more concerned with personal experiences and moving narratives than with any substantive appeal to the biblical text.

It may well be that Christians have either succumbed to or strongly reacted against societal pressures concerning the spiritual realm. This response may be manifested by the common tendency of Christians to either spot a demon behind every bush or, conversely, to condescendingly disregard the spiritual realm altogether (whether explicitly in word, or implicitly in practice). Smart astutely observes that we would struggle to biblically claim that demonic presence has ceased in any generation – our spiritual experience is neither *always* demonic warfare, nor is it *never* demonic warfare (142).

As a response against such neglect in the spiritual formation of Christians, Smart advances *Waging War* as a clarion call for the church: "This book is a call for Christians to actually fight, engaging in this spiritual warfare in our age of doubt and standing firm against the Evil One's attacks on our churches and missional efforts to spread the gospel in word and deed" (2).

To facilitate this call to fellow Christians, Smart engages in a rather eclectic approach to spiritual warfare, one that he envisions as a sort of 'military textbook.' Like a military manual that may combine various fields of study and application areas, Smart develops *Waging War* as an interdisciplinary field textbook that combines "knowledge of the Bible, historical theology, contemporary culture, apologetics, practical theology, and biblical counseling" (7). This interdisciplinary approach is certainly an expansive approach for such a concise book. Smart lays out his approach in an orderly fashion, moving from the biblical and theological foundations for his study (Ch. 1) to an eclectic historical overview of the approaches of various Christian figures (Ch. 2), followed by sections dealing with modern skepticism with the encouragement grounded in previous works of revival (Chs. 3-4).

Smart regularly refers to the approaches of the Puritans and Reformers, including some key quotations from various figures concerning spiritual warfare. The latter sections of Smart's work move toward the practical, grounding its discussion in a few biblical warfare passages before moving into the necessity of proper Christian identity and encouragement regarding encounters with evil forces (Chs. 5-7).

Smart's progression through *Waging War* is in keeping with his goals of achieving a wide-ranging 'manual' of spiritual warfare. Spiritual warfare is helpfully framed in a biblical-theological context, as Smart notes: "The storm center on earth is a war between the woman, the Son, and the dragon – the people of God, Christ, and the devil (Rev. 12:1-4)" (154).

His discussion of the satanic and demonic is helpful, though further expansion on many of these points would greatly help bolster his case. Providing a sufficient blend of so many areas of study (7) is challenging in any format, and some of Smart's initial biblical sections leave some room for clarification and development.

One facet that could particularly benefit from clarification is the extent to which a Christian ought to believe reports of spiritual encounters. Simply put, the intersection of biblical theology, pneumatology, and experiential observation raises an inevitable question: how does the Christian weigh what is true regarding the spiritual realm? Smart advocates the approach that Christians should practice the gentle humility of a child when receiving instruction on pneumatological matters (80). Although there are some appeals to biblical texts in Smart's discussion (cf. 121), the weight of Smart's conclusions is not always as grounded in biblical exposition as the direction of his initial chapters may indicate. Taking an example from his survey of historical figures, Smart observes that Luther wrote that the Devil not-infrequently would "thump about and haunt houses" in his brazen manifestations (41).

Later, Smart references the writings of Increase Mather, who accounted for "preternatural providences, of people struck dead for disobeying God, of pacts with the devil, witchcraft, monstrous births" (62–63). These illustrations are compelling, yet they raise that inescapable question for the reader: while Smart observes the benefit of gently receiving instruction in these matters, how do we weigh whether the accounts of Mather (or even Luther) are biblically grounded? The foundation of Smart's work is in biblical study, though his later sections would benefit from expanded scriptural examination of even modest length. For reference, some similar works that engage spiritual warfare with an ongoing reliance on biblical guidance include Graham Cole's *Against the Darkness* (Crossway, 2019), William Cook and Chuck Lawless' *Spiritual Warfare in the Storyline of Scripture* (B&H Academic,

2019), and even Michael Heiser's *The Unseen Realm* (Lexham Press, 2015).

Smart's foray into spiritual warfare is a welcome addition to an area of Christian literature suffering a paucity of biblically grounded works. The eclectic approach of *Waging War* is ambitious, and Smart covers much ground in a rather short form. This work will benefit lay audiences of Christians by introducing the realm of spiritual warfare and encouraging Christians to engage the spiritual realm intentionally in their daily lives.

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Theology Is for Preaching: Biblical Foundations, Method, & Practice (Studies in Historical and Systematic Theology series). Edited by Chase R. Kuhn and Paul Grimmond. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018. 343 pp., $29.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-1-68359-459-8.

What exactly is the relationship between theology and preaching? The editors believe that while most pastors find theology important, less are clear as to why or even how it affects the task of preaching (xix). Chase R. Kuhn and Paul Grimmond will try to untie this theological and homiletical knot. Both serve at Moore Theological College, Sydney. Kuhn is coordinator of the John Chapman Preaching Initiative and lecturer in theology and ethics. Grimmond is dean of students and ministry lecturer. They gather an evangelical cohort (21) to lend insight for "when we preach, we come to every text with a theology, and each text refines our theology as we carefully listened to the word" (xix). Each contributor comes from a reformed perspective and holds a steadfast commitment to the Scriptures and its consistent exposition.

The editors' intent is to supply a resource to pastors that outlines the theological foundations (primarily systematic theology) of preaching, to produce more faithful practitioners. Consequently, the central argument is that preaching and theology are mutually informed (xx, 296). This unfolds in five sections: Part 1: *Foundations*, Part 2: *Methodology*, Part 3: *Theology for Preaching*, Part 4: *Preaching for Theology*, and Part 5:

Theology Preached. The reader will understand that 1) faithful preaching requires both biblical and systematic theology, 2) preaching is located within the plans and purposes of God for His world, 3) because Scripture is the substance of what is preached, there is a proper mode of delivery in proclamation, and 4) it is the *evangel* that we preach, and so there is an appropriately Christological focus to proclamation (xx-xxi).

Part 1 covers foundational elements of theology and preaching. Scripture is inherently theological in character and likewise, preaching is theological by nature (or should be) (1). Theology is not of human invention but instead springs from the revealed Word of God. The author insightfully points out that "theology does not hijack the sermon, but the sermon must be theologically informed" (13). Preaching is a theologically rich activity and not by *content* alone but also *as an activity* since God is primarily working (18). God's people must have the Scriptures taught, for persuasion, encouragement, rebuking, reasoning, disciplining, and training. Preachers are to do everything they can to speak God's Word clearly and faithfully, so believers hear, learn, repent, believe, and obey (49).

Methodology is the emphasis of Part 2. Certainly, "Exegesis, theological interpretation, and the task of preaching God's word to his people belong together, in a close and mutually informing relationship" (95). If not, then the preaching endeavor will offer only random and opinionated application or an ineffective textual summary of the "exposition," with no real application (94-5). Proper method ensures that preachers will find encouragement as they preach and can expect Christ to be powerfully present by the Spirit working to convert sinners, transform believers and edify the church (140). Paramount to the preacher's conviction is the centrality of the cross of Christ as both his message *and* method (142).

Part 3 reveals a *Theology for Preaching*. God's people believe that preaching has an immense and eternal impact (199), and if biblical preaching is not gospel preaching, then it is insufficient as biblical preaching (202). Sermons are therefore an instrumental cause of salvation, not the meritorious cause—which is *Solus Christus* ... Nevertheless, while preaching the gospel is not the *only* means, it is the *ordinary* means God has sovereignly ordained to use so sinners might believe (208-209). In all this, the efficacy of the preaching ministry is less about intellect or oratory, even expositional skill, as indispensable as

they are—it depends as much on the preacher's faithfulness—indeed, faithful pulpit ministry is simply the sanctified life itself (223).

Part 4 includes *Preaching for Theology*. Just like the connection between theology and transformation – our preaching moves from theology to application (254), concurrently "knowledge leads to transformation … and transformation leads to knowledge" (255). Often overlooked in the preaching equation is the listener (269). Obviously, humans have a problem with listening and the author distinguishes between actual listeners and ideal listeners. The author offers some practical questions for the ideal listener to ask in response to a sermon and supplies thirty-five ideas to aid listeners in hearing God in the sermon. Part 5 (*Theology Preached*) highlights the book's content with two sermon samples based on Jeremiah 23:16-32 and Luke 5:1-11.

Twenty-one meaningful chapters are included, but a couple were stellar. Heinrich Bullinger's statement in The Second Helvetic Confession, "The preaching of the word of God is the word of God" (54) serves as the catalyst for Timothy Ward's *Preaching and Revelation: Is the Sermon the Word of God* by (Chapter 5). Ward asks, "is this obviously right or a dangerous move?" He insists that, "There persists into the present, then, an unwritten form of the word of God—and that is what the church's proclamation is" (58). This is not new revelation, still beyond the conclusion of the Word of God "the word persists in unwritten form, but only in dependence on its written form" (58), and as the preacher faithfully expounds God's Word, then it is in fact, Christ proclaiming and bearing witness (60).

The second chapter of note is *Old Testament Challenges: Christocentric or Christotelic Sermons?* by Daniel Y. Wu (Chapter 8). He asks, "Is there a consistent, satisfying way to connect Old and New Testament—first, in our biblical understanding, and then in our preaching?" (111). Wu defines and reveals benefits and limitations of two hermeneutics—*Christocentric* (all God's plans and purposes in the Old Testament *center* on Christ) and *Christotelic* (all God's plans and purposes in the Old Testament *find their goal, or end*, in Christ) (112). Wu favors the *Christotelic* approach, feeling that the text is often "highjacked" paying no attention to the specific text meaning and its original context (115). Wu believes "the two need not—and *should not*—be mutually exclusive" (117).

Nota bene, first, the emphasis on proper systematic theology will enhance one's preaching. To be sure, biblical theology and systematic theology do not compete, they complement (9). Second, a puzzling perspective on some famous examples of "thorough" exposition, William Gouge (Hebrews series – 36 years) and Joseph Caryl (Job series – 29 years), "this was certainly conscientious expository preaching!" (170). One might wonder if the series timeframe was due not to covering every *jot and tittle* but to preaching one's theology more than the text. Finally, the most poignant line of the whole work – "A dumb preacher with a deaf congregation presents a fearsome barrier to communication" (273).

This work covers an inventory of issues pertinent to the preacher and will be a welcome addition to the pastor's carrel. It would truly be a complement to Walter C. Kaiser Jr. *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Baker, 1998) or J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (Zondervan, 2012). Theology is for preaching and conversely preaching is for theology—the true God is a speaker; He speaks with clarity to humans, and human sin does not hinder His self-communication—this is true in theology and preaching (24).

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Who is God? Key Moments of Biblical Revelation. **By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020. 120pp. $22.99, Hardcover. ISBN 9781540961907.**

If "what comes into your mind when you think about God, is the most important thing about you," as Tozer rightly claims, then *Who is God* is a must-read for every living soul. Bauckham embarks on an "impossible mission," aspiring to describe God in a thin book that is chock full of theological essence concerning God's Being.

Educated at the University of Cambridge, Richard Bauckham is a scholar and professor and has an eminent calling as a prolific writer on an astounding array of topics. However, Bauckham is not a novice when

it comes to the revelation of God. Bauckham also penned *Jesus and The God of Israel* (2008), where he explores the relationship between the identity of Jesus as seen in the New Testament and God's identity. Bauckham's expertise concerning God's revelation comes into sharp focus in *Christology and the Trinity: A History of Doctrine*, *Knowing God Incarnate*, and other books.

Who is God is relatively short, consisting of an introduction and four chapters. From the beginning, the author captures the interest of his audience by emphasizing the importance of answering the question: Who is God? Nobody can answer that question apart from God Himself. Bauckham argues that "intensively the Bible is about the identity of God; extensively it tells the story of God and the world" (2). The book's thesis is that "there are key moments of revelation...moments in which God defines who God is for us" (2). Bauckham maintains that the critical moments selected by him are "moments whose meaning is never exhausted" and are "undoubtedly the most significant" (2).

Bauckham rightly argues in the first chapter of the book that the definite step toward knowing God has to be initiated by God. Thus, the first pivotal moment of revelation is the dream of the patriarch Jacob at Bethel. The uniqueness of this event is evident in the fact that "it is not Jacob who turns to God, but God who turns to Jacob" (8). The ripple effect of this event is found throughout the Bible and culminates with the coming of the New Jerusalem. The encounter between God and Jacob is an essential event in the history of redemption because it establishes the pattern of the presence of God with man. "From now on, argues Bauckham, the leitmotif of Jacob's life will be God's presence with him" (9). The importance of the little word "with" is emphasized and it makes all the difference in the life of people who God chooses to be "with" (12).

Bauckham continues to strengthen his argument by bringing Immanuel into the picture, arguing that "the Hebrew Bible's concept of God's "with-ness" is adopted and surpassed in the New Testament" (19). As such, Jesus described Himself as being "the way to heaven" (26) because "he is the staircase or ladder between heaven and earth" (27). Finally, Bauckham brings his argument full circle to the book of Revelation where "for the first time God's "with-ness" presence becomes a universal presence...with humans who become God's people" (32).

Bauckham's argumentation is brilliantly logical. Thus, in chapter two, the revelation of the Divine Name is in focus. The disclosure of the Divine

Name is described in the story of Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3), and nobody can argue about this matchless moment in biblical revelation. The burning bush incident is a unique form of theophany (37). Bauckham underlines the uniqueness of this event also by mentioning that "this is the first time one would encounter the word 'holy' in the Bible" (37). After offering a detailed exegesis concerning the meaning of God's name, the author admits that it is plausible that the Divine Name constitutes the center of Old Testament theology (45). Also, in this chapter, Bauckham has an elaborate discussion concerning Jesus and the Divine Name. According to Bauckham, "Jesus used the word Father as his substitute for the Divine Name" (54). The author of this review believes that Jesus often used the word Father when talking about God to underscore the relationship between him and God the Father. Bauckham concludes chapter two, maintaining that "by giving his name to Jesus, God indicates that it is in Jesus that he makes himself knowable and accessible to all people" (59).

The third pivotal moment is the revelation of the Divine Character. The disclosure of God's character in Exodus 34 is without a doubt a singular moment in the whole Bible. Bauckham argues that Exodus 34 is "the fullest description of God's character to be found anywhere in the Bible" (62). "Like the burning bush, this theophany is utterly unique," claims the author rightly. Bauckham describes and explains the five qualities of God's character in great detail and the two distinct ways in which God behaves (68). Despite Israel's sin with the golden calf, God's mercy sets an extraordinary precedent for God's future dealings with his people (69). To reinforce his argument, Bauckham brings other biblical passages from the books of Joel, Jonah, and Psalm 145, that speak about the character of God. Bauckham maintains that God's character is consistent not only toward his covenant people but "it must be how he is in his dealings with all people and all creation" (80). Chapter three ends with an argument about God's character seen in Jesus. Bauckham rightly concludes that "because Jesus is uniquely close to the Father, because he gazes into that face that expresses the infinite goodness of God, alone has made him known" (83).

In chapter four, Bauckham discusses the revelation of the Trinity. Like in the previous two chapters of the book where Bauckham talks about "three stages" in revealing himself to Moses, also in this chapter, the author is selecting "three key moments of revelation in the Gospel of

Mark" (89). The first pivotal moment is The Vision at the Baptism (Mark 1). This is a moment like no other in the unfolding of God's revelation in history. Bauckham rightly claims that "this is a Trinitarian event" (92). The second critical moment is The Transfiguration (Mark 9). Bauckham claims correctly that "this is a foretaste of Jesus's divine glory" (99), and explains the context, and offers reasons why there is Moses and Elijah, but the Holy Spirit is not present. The last key moment is The Centurion's Confession (Mark 15). Bauckham concludes chapter four fittingly discussing the "Trinitarian form of blessing" (2 Corinthians 13).

Bauckham has argued his thesis successfully. The critical moments selected were indeed unique in the entire biblical revelation. Only in the fourth chapter, some of the key moments selected were not Trinitarian in essence. Nevertheless, overall, most of the biblical passages discussed had a direct connection with who God is. One shortcoming of the book is regarding the bibliography. Bauckham explains in the preface why he did not provide an elaborate bibliography. Still, a bibliography is important for the reader for further study.

Who is God is a gem indeed. The outline is simple, clear, and logical. Anyone can get a good glimpse regarding who God is using this quick read. I recommend this book wholeheartedly.

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Perspectives on Paul: Five Views. **Edited by Scot McKnight and B.J. Oropeza. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020. 285 pp. $29.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-1-5409-6075-7.**

Even the most seasoned scholar struggles to stay current with recent developments in Pauline studies. For the non-expert, attempting to grasp an understanding of the state of the field can feel insurmountable. This reality makes *Perspectives on Paul: Five Views* a welcome offering for those trying to get a handle on a rapidly changing landscape. In this volume, Scot McKnight and B.J. Oropeza chose contributors to summarize five key influential perspectives in Pauline studies. An added benefit of this volume is that each contributor is allowed to respond to

the various presentations. This lets the reader identify the perceived strengths and weaknesses of each view quickly.

McKnight and Oropeza open *Perspectives on Paul* with a summary of significant developments in Pauline studies since the publication of E.P. Sanders's seminal work *Paul and Palestinian Judaism.* Following an overview of Sanders's contributions, attention is given to the New Perspective on Paul. Finally, several post-New Perspective developments are highlighted, including "The Paul within Judaism Perspective," mediating positions between the old and new perspectives, sociological readings of Paul, and more recent apocalyptic approaches.

Brant Pitre begins the discussion with a summary of "The Roman Catholic Perspective on Paul." Pitre opens the chapter noting that many of Sanders's most significant conclusions square nicely with Catholic readings of Paul. Pitre stresses that from the Catholic perspective, "justification involves both the remission of sins and a real participation in the death and resurrection of Christ" (27). More than just providing a forensic declaration, justification for Paul includes the changed status of the believer, which leads to moral transformation. This transformation undergirds Pitre's emphasis that, for Paul, initial justification is by grace alone, but works determine final justification or judgment. In the most thorough review of Pitre's essay, Barclay wonders if this "two-stage justification" is a Pauline idea. On the contrary, he argues that this "runs contrary to everything Paul says about grace, the Spirit, and participation in Christ, even if these operate in the past, present, and future tenses" (73).

The second perspective is "The Traditional Protestant Perspective on Paul," presented by A. Andrew Das. He orients the traditional view around three ideas. First, some segments of first-century Judaism were beset by legalism. Second, Paul proclaimed his gospel of free grace in response to this idea. Finally, this grace ultimately relates to justification and salvation. However, Das attempts to incorporate several insights from the new perspective in his presentation. This includes the idea that Paul employs the language of "works of the law" to describe Jewish identity markers in some contexts, while in other passages, "works of the law" speaks more broadly to the contents of the entire Torah. The reception of Abraham's story in the Second Temple period is a crucial piece of evidence for Das's argument that an emphasis on works righteousness plagued at least some segments of Judaism.

"The New Perspective on Paul" is presented by James D.G. Dunn. Dunn focuses on Galatians 2 to emphasize his point that works of the law in Paul primarily referenced ethnic identity markers (e.g., circumcision). The issue troubling the early church was "whether gentiles who came to faith in Christ should be regarded as proselytes—that is, proselytes to Judaism—and should therefore act accordingly" (136). This social setting, and the conflict that resulted, provided the backdrop for Paul's formulation of justification by faith alone.

Magnus Zetterholm provides "The Paul within Judaism Perspective." Rather than viewing Paul as in conflict with Judaism, this perspective argues that Paul continued to identify as a Jew and live accordingly, even after he decided to believe in Jesus. Zetterholm highlights several scholars in this camp who say that Paul promoted a *two-way solution* regarding how individuals are made right with God. The Jews could still be saved through the Torah, but non-Jews needed Christ to enter a covenant with Israel's God. Because of this, Paul's mission focused solely on the Gentiles. However, more than one of the contributors raised a similar question. If Paul's mission and message were focused exclusively on non-Jews, how does "The Paul within Judaism Perspective" understand texts like Romans 1:16-17, where Paul explicitly states that his message is for Jews *and* Gentiles?

Finally, John Barclay provides "The Gift Perspective on Paul." Barclay contends that gift and grace language gives Paul's theology its unique identity. This language can be perfected in six distinct ways, radically shaping what an author means when employing these concepts. For Paul, it is the incongruity and circularity of grace that are most distinct. This incongruity brings Jews and Gentiles together as God's grace is distributed "without regard to the worth of the recipient" (223). The circularity of grace, or the response it elicits, leads to transformed individuals and communities who demonstrate a posture of reciprocity.

Perspectives on Paul accomplishes its goal of providing readers with an introduction to critical recent developments in Pauline studies. What is most helpful about this volume is that it allows readers to see just how much agreement there is between these various perspectives. For example, one finds an advocate of the old perspective employing key conclusions from the new perspective in his argument. In a culture that is growing increasingly tribal and insular, this volume models how scholars can find common ground and disagree respectfully with voices

from competing viewpoints. All the models represented in this book have something to teach the reader about Paul and his world if they are willing to listen to voices outside their favored camp.

There are a few minor issues some might take with this work. First, *Perspectives on Paul* primarily deals with Paul's views of works, faith, grace, salvation, and judgment. Those desiring to understand developments in Pauline studies beyond these issues might be disappointed. Second, it would be impossible to include all the advances in Pauline studies over the past forty years in a work this size. However, it is surprising that at least a few other influential viewpoints (e.g., apocalyptic readings of Paul) did not receive a seat at the table. Finally, it is worth remembering that these individuals focus on their own areas of interest even within the perspectives presented. Readers would benefit from consulting the works cited in each chapter to gain a more nuanced understanding of each perspective.

A few small criticisms aside, anyone interested in Paul and his writings would be well served by this volume. It does provide a helpful summary of key figures and works over the past forty years in Pauline studies, and students will be much better equipped to enter the conversation with *Perspectives on Paul* as a guide. While it is a daunting task to try and stay current with the scholarly discussion on Paul, McKnight and Oropeza have made the challenge a little more manageable.

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The Seminary as a Textual Community: Exploring John Sailhamer's Vision for Theological Education. Edited by Ched Spellman and Jason K. Lee. Dallas, TX: Fontes Press, 2021. 191 pp. $22.95, Paperback. ISBN 978-1-948048-60-6.

In our modern context, a conversation on ministry training often revolves around the role of the seminary. Is seminary really necessary? If so, why? Should one study residentially or online? The Master of Arts or the Master of Divinity? Are the Biblical languages truly necessary for

ministry preparation? And on and on, more questions could be added. How to adequately train those who have been called to ministry becomes a complex issue rather quickly.

In their new book, *The Seminary as a Textual Community*, editors Ched Spellman and Jason K. Lee bring forth what Old Testament scholar John Sailhamer had to say on this topic and more. Dr. Sailhamer taught at Biola University, Bethel Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Western Seminary, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He authored 15 books as well as numerous articles and reviews, and, perhaps, he is most remembered for his work on a compositional approach to the Pentateuch.

In the first part of the book, editors Spellman and Lee feature a previously unpublished essay by Sailhamer on the "the nature, purpose, and tasks of a theological seminary" (3-45). This essay serves as the backbone for the book. Sailhamer divided his essay into two parts. Part one focused upon "the nature and purpose of a seminary text-community" (4) in which he argued that the seminary exists "because of and in behalf of the Christian Church" (4). Yet, since Christianity is a religion of the book, the seminary also exists "because of and in behalf of the Scriptures" (10). That is, a seminary is a "textual community" that is constituted by and sits underneath the authority of the word. Furthermore, the seminary also has relationship with and responsibility to the academy. He states, "The idea of a biblical text-community turned in on itself (concerned only with Ecclesia) and away from the world (the object of Academia), would contradict the central message of Scripture" (20).

In the second part of the essay, Sailhamer considers "the tasks and skills of a seminary text-community" (26). The bulk of his discussion revolves around two important terms: tasks and domains (26). According to Sailhamer, there are three domains or "distinct areas or concrete social settings where specific tasks are defined and performed" (26): the seminary, the church, and the world. Each domain has different tasks (exegesis, doctrine, Christian life, homiletics, ethics, etc.), though there is some overlap. Sailhamer speaks in terms of tasks and domains for two reasons. First, he believes it "provides a suitable context for speaking of tasks" (27). Second, "The concept of a domain enables us to assign a relative value to a task. Tasks which relate to central domains of the seminary (as a text-community) are valued as central tasks. Tasks which

relate to other domains are valued as peripheral. Such a hierarchy is invaluable when planning such structured strategies as curricula." (27). Sailhamer then works through the three different domains and the tasks associated with each one.

In the second half of the book, Spellman and Lee follow Sailhamer's essay with their own reflections "on the setting, substance, and significance" (47-72) of Sailhamer's work. Then, they include other various Sailhamer essays which help the reader better understand his views concerning theological education, including "What Have They Done to My Genesis? (83-86), "Reading the Bible as a Text" (87-92), and "Archaeology and the Reliability of the Old Testament" (93-100). Next, there are several book reviews followed by an interview on the meaning of the Pentateuch with Collin Hansen, and the book concludes with a comprehensive bibliography of Sailhamer's works.

Overall, Spellman and Lee have greatly served the church and the academy in publishing this book. Sailhamer's previously unpublished essay on "the nature, purpose, and tasks of a theological seminary" is thought provoking and will certainly challenge many in higher education. Spellman and Lee's analysis of Sailhamer's essay clarified some of the finer details of his thoughts. Finally, the additional works by Sailhamer included in the second part of the book display his brilliance, his thoughtfulness, and his biblical conviction.

Though this book has many strengths (and many more could be listed), one aspect of Sailhamer's essay on "the nature, purpose, and tasks of a theological seminary" posed a potential weakness to this author. In his essay, Sailhamer is critical of the dichotomy between practical and theoretical disciplines amongst the faculty at a seminary (11). According to Sailhamer, "a textually defined *theologia* means that at a fundamental level, every aspect of a seminary curriculum involves a similar task, that is, the interpretation...of Scripture." (11). Ultimately, Sailhamer's ideal faculty is a "multi-disciplinary faculty who can work across disciplines ('trans-disciplinary')" (11). This would create a "pervasive unity of purpose within a textual community such as a seminary in that each member is entrusted with the same theoretical problems–meaning in texts" (11). The potential weakness of this vision for faculty is found in its practicality. The type of professor that Sailhamer describes is not the typical professor at the standard Bible college or seminary. Most professors pursued a PhD (or other terminal degree) in a specific

discipline that is often their only true field of expertise. Therefore, this vision, though admirable and understandable, could not be widely implemented at existing institutions. Perhaps Sailhamer was aware of this and would admit that it would be a timely process to truly have a transdisciplinary faculty, or, perhaps, he was more so stating that the goal is to transition an institution towards greater health in this regard. One wonders though if such a faculty could only exist at an institution where solely generalists were hired from the start.

Furthermore, the vision of a trans-disciplinary faculty could present another potential problem based upon what Sailhamer laid out in his essay. As Sailhamer subsequently argued, if the seminary has a responsibility to engage the Academy (20-21), then it would likely serve the Academy better if there were actual experts representing conservative beliefs in every field, rather than generalists in all fields who lack depth and precision in any particular field. Due to the amount of literature and the vastness of each discipline, it may prove impossible for professors to remain adequately familiar with current academic discussions happening in each academic discipline. Therefore, it appears that Sailhamer's vision of the ideal faculty could potentially undermine the seriousness with which the seminary could actually engage and combat the secular or liberal academy.

Neither of these thoughts should keep one from reading *The Seminary as a Textual Community*. As one can tell from reading the endorsements for the book, Sailhamer is a hero to many, and his works continue to impact all who read them. Though he is most known for his writing on the Pentateuch, his thoughts concerning theological education should be considered by all those in higher education. One may quibble with certain details here and there, but his overall vision is compelling and would lead to greater health in conservative institutions. This book should prove to be fodder for those in higher education for many years to come.

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The Church: An Introduction. By Gregg R. Allison. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021. 181 pp. $14.99, Paperback. ISBN 9781433562464.

Gregg Allison is a longtime professor of Christian theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and an elder at Sojourn Community Church East in Louisville, Kentucky. He has written on many areas of theology, including historical theology (*Historical Theology,* 2011), ecclesiology (*Sojourners and Strangers,* 2012), Roman Catholic theology (*Roman Catholic Theology and Practice,* 2014), pneumatology (*The Holy Spirit,* 2020), and human embodiment (*Embodied,* 2021). In his recent introductory ecclesiology *The Church,* Allison surveys the various aspects of the church, examining for each what comprises a *mere ecclesiology* ("the common ground shared by most churches throughout history" [18]; the essence or core) and a *more ecclesiology* ("how this essence expresses itself in the actual practices and structure of particular churches").

Allison divides *The Church* into two parts. Part 1 focuses on foundational issues concerning the church: the relationship between the Trinity and the church (Ch. 1) and a biblical framework for ecclesiology (Ch. 2). Part 2 applies the *mere/more* organizing principle to various aspects of the church (identity, leadership, governance, sacraments or ordinances, ministries, and the future; Chs. 3–8). In chapter 3, Allison reviews the church's four historic identity markers (oneness, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity) and how Roman Catholics and Protestants understand those markers differently. In chapter 4, the author engages the relationship between leaders and members as well as the offices of apostleship, eldership, and the diaconate. In chapter 5, he covers the church's governmental structure and the particularities of episcopalianism, presbyterianism, and congregationalism—and their varieties. In chapter 6, Allison surveys the commonalities of baptism and the Lord's Supper shared among most evangelical churches, the disagreements concerning the recipients and nature of baptism represented by paedobaptism and credobaptism, and the divergent views on the meaning, nature, and effects of Communion (transubstantiation, consubstantiation, memorialism, and spiritual presence). In chapter 7, Allison discusses the threefold ministry of the church (to God, to members, and to the world), the provision of spiritual gifts for ministry, men and women's roles in ministry vis-à-vis eldership and the diaconate

(complementarianism and egalitarianism), as well as whether the Holy Spirit still distributes the "miraculous" or "sign" gifts to the church today (continuationism and cessationism). In chapter 8, Allison considers the future of the church—that "all churches look forward to events at the end of the age and the subsequent glorious future of the church" (154)—and how churches understand the Bible's vision of the future differently (amillennialism, postmillennialism, and premillennialism [historic and dispensational]).

As intended, *The Church* is a succinct, helpful introduction to the fundamentals, key aspects, and critical issues concerning ecclesiology. Typical of his writing and in accord with other entries in the Short Studies in Systematic Theology series, Allison presents a biblically grounded, historically informed, and theologically rich treatment of his subject. He also brings his previous scholarly endeavors to bear on his thinking and writing. There are several unique features of this book: the author implicitly affirms a continuationist account of the "miraculous" gifts, explicitly affirms a moderate discontinuity account of the relationship between Israel and the church (i.e., the church is *not* Israel), and emphasizes the local—as opposed to universal or heavenly—realities of the church. Additionally, beyond scope and depth, Allison's *The Church* is distinct from his earlier *Sojourners and Strangers* (*SS*) in that it employs the *mere/more* paradigm (whereas *SS* argues for a decidedly Baptist ecclesiology); considers the church's identity in terms of its historic four markers (as opposed to the church's seven-prolonged identity in *SS*); reviews *minimum*, *moderate*, and *maximum* forms of contemporary complementarianism (absent from *SS*); engages the arguments for both continuationism and cessationism (only briefly mentioned in *SS*); and offers a full chapter on the future of the church (absent from *SS*). In addition to these distinguishing elements, readers should appreciate the clear, valuable explanations of the different understandings of church governance and the sacraments or ordinances. Moreover, Allison showcases a laudably amicable tone throughout his work—especially concerning contentious issues. He highlights distinctives without being divisive. He is *pro* women but *contra* complementarian-egalitarian discord and the under- and overemphasis on the subject.

Despite these praise- and noteworthy features, *The Church* evidences a few omissions, inconsistencies, or odd choices. For example, while

Allison examines the different views of Roman Catholics and Protestants, he fails to interact with Eastern Orthodox ecclesiological beliefs and practices. While this omission is telling in a work on *ecclesiology*, it is especially apparent in the chapter 3 discussion on the church's historic identity markers—given that the East and West remained mostly unified throughout the church's first millennium and that the Orthodox Church is alive and well today. Next, in chapter 7 on the church's ministries, the author offers reasons for supporting complementarianism over egalitarianism (after an objective survey), but he does not state and support his position on continuationism versus cessationism (after a similarly objective survey). Moreover, Allison does not declare his views on baptism and the Lord's Supper (Ch. 6) or on the future of the church (Ch. 8), so his explicit affirmation of complementarianism in an introductory volume on churches' shared commonalities (*mere*) and particular beliefs and practices (*more*) is a bit out of sync. Some readers, however, may be disappointed that the author does not argue *even more* for a specific ecclesiology—but Allison clarifies from the outset that doing so is not the aim of the book.

Overall, *The Church* is a commendable volume that should appeal to a broad evangelical audience. Those needing a refresher or fresh start on the doctrine of the church will benefit from this book. However, those seeking a more advanced treatment should move on to *Sojourners and Strangers*.

We know the church. Or do we? If not, Allison's latest work helps us get started.

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Hearers and Doers: A Pastor's Guide to Making Disciples through Scripture and Doctrine. By Kevin J. Vanhoozer. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019. 259 pp. $19.99, Hardcover. ISBN 978-1683591344.

Why should pastors care about theology? What does doctrine and biblical interpretation have to do with making disciples? Kevin J. Vanhoozer sets

forth his answer to these questions in his book *Hearers and Doers*. Vanhoozer is Research Professor of Systematic Theology in the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School at Trinity International University. He is the author of numerous scholarly monographs dealing with the interrelationship between theology, interpretation, doctrine, and discipleship. *Hearers and Doers* is the third book Vanhoozer has written explicitly for pastors (cf. *Faith Speaking Understanding: Performing the Drama of Doctrine* [2014]; *Pictures at A Theological Exhibition: Scenes of the Church's Worship, Witness and Wisdom* [2016]). "My hope," Vanhoozer writes, "is that the present book will help pastors recover Calvin's vision for theology as a help to reading the Bible in ways that enliven and encourage disciples to walk its way of wisdom" (xxii). He contends that "making disciples involves more (but not less) than informing minds or forming habits. It also involves transforming imaginations, that is, the primary ways they see, think about, and experience life" (xxv).

The book has two parts that look at the why (Pt. 1) and how (Pt. 2) of discipleship. Part one (chs. 1–4) addresses why discipleship matters and why theology matters for discipleship. Vanhoozer applies Charles Taylor's concept of "social imaginary" (a "picture that frames our everyday beliefs and practices," 8) to the church, arguing that theology plays the decisive role in discerning true and false ways of seeing the world (ch. 1).

He then examines three culturally ascendant social imaginaries competing with the gospel (e.g., good health, diet, and fitness). He not only critiques these imaginaries but also demonstrates points at which the gospel and its *telos* more aptly appropriates these images (ch. 2). In chapters three and four, Vanhoozer argues that the telos of disciple-making is living that is "fit for purpose" (i.e., godliness; 44), and he elaborates theology's role in training disciples who "[live] in accord with the truth of the gospel" (3 John 1:4).

In part two (chs. 5–8), Vanhoozer describes how discipleship works out. He examines how the pastor as a minister and doctor of the word works to form and reform the imaginations of parishioners such that they see the world rightly and embody Christ in the world (ch. 5).

Chapter six focuses on how and why the church is *the* place for disciple-making. Preaching and liturgy are key instruments for explicating the theodramatic story of the gospel and shaping

congregations to live in ways that participate in it. Chapter seven examines the disciple-making role of reading the Scriptures theologically with the "communion of saints" (spanning time and space). In the final chapter, Vanhoozer locates the *telos* of discipleship in Christlikeness. "Every disciple is to be like Christ—his image—but not every disciple is like Christ in exactly the same way. Disciples are not spitting but *fitting* images of Christ" (205). To live as "fitting" images means shaping the disciple's imagination and inculcating wisdom so that he or she might live out what it means to be in Christ "at all times, everywhere, and to everyone" (215, 217).

There is much to appreciate in this little volume; two strengths are noteworthy. First, Vanhoozer synthesizes key insights from previous works in an accessible way. For example, chapter six draws upon key themes from *The Drama of Doctrine* (e.g., theodrama) and *Faith Speaking Understanding* (esp. in his discussion of the ordinances). In chapter seven, the reader will hear themes previously pursued in *Biblical Authority after Babel* (e.g., *sola Scriptura*). This recycling of themes is significant because *Hearers and Doers* is arguably the most accessible volume Vanhoozer has written to date. As someone who has benefitted from his more academic works, I am glad to see him write such an accessible book that brings forth theological riches that might otherwise remain buried.

Second, the core exercises included in chapters 4–8 offer practical ways for pastors to help their congregants grow in Christ-imaging wisdom. For example, chapter five suggests helpful ways to evaluate social imaginaries that are misshaping the church's understanding of leadership, identify these various imaginaries, and strengthen the congregation's "eschatological imagination" to see one another through the lens not of who they were but who they are destined to be in Christ (119–22). The exercises are not laid out in a step-by-step format, but the descriptions are sufficient to facilitate use.

Vanhoozer's construal of theology as wisdom for living as Christ is compelling. The ability to improvise and live out the gospel in the varied contexts of life is a faithful and fruitful way of describing the task of disciple-making. *Hearers and Doers* is warmly recommended to all disciple-makers, but it will prove most helpful to pastors and Christian teachers (in a variety of contexts) as they seek to fulfill their calling to

make disciples who not only hear but also do all that Christ has commanded us (Matt 28:19).

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The Hope of Israel: The Resurrection of Christ in the Acts of the Apostles. By Brandon D. Crowe. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020. 256 pp. $29.99, Paperback. ISBN: 978-0801099472.

The resurrection of Christ from the grave is the hinge on which the message of the good news of Jesus Christ swings. It separates the divine Jesus of the New Testament from all other religious deities. Jesus was not only present on earth, fully man and fully God, but he also died and was raised up, redeeming sinners. The resurrection has always been central to the Christian message, but many scholars have overlooked its prevalence in Lukan material. In *The Hope of Israel*, biblical scholar Brandon Crowe lays out a thorough argument for the resurrection in Acts as "the crucial point for proving the messianic status of Jesus from the Scriptures" (3).

Before delving into the material, Crowe notes two characteristics of the book of Acts. First, Lukan Acts is a *transitional* book, recording a number of nonrepeatable events and situations at a unique period of history. Secondly, it is a *programmatic* book, supplying guidance to subsequent generations of believers. At times it seems as though these two issues are at odds. However, Crowe argues that "the resurrection of Christ is one of the major emphases of Acts, which unifies and provides coherence for the theology of Luke's second theme" (5).

Crowe's methodology is biblical-theological in nature, with part 1 containing exegetical groundwork, and part 2 containing the theological extrapolations from the overarching story. Using this method, Crowe makes the bold case that the book of Acts hinges on the resurrection of Christ.

Crowe's exegetical work is categorized by character in the narrative. He begins with the apostle Peter, carefully analyzing the Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:1-21). If the Spirit's manifestation as tongues like fire is

the fulfillment of John the Baptist's proclamation in Luke 3:16, then "it is the *risen Christ* who pours out his Spirit in Acts 2" (21). Peter also quotes Joel 2:28, highlighting the *latter days*. Peter continues with an exposition of the resurrection in vv. 24-36. Peter's speech at the beginning of the book is no coincidence as it "sets the precedent for the following Petrine speeches in Acts" (29). Not only this but Peter's Pentecost speech and its focus on the resurrection sets the stage for Paul.

Paul's story does not begin with a bold speech as does Peter. Luke first introduces Paul as a persecutor of God's people. However, Luke details how the *risen* Lord appears to Paul in Acts 9. This event leads to Paul's own *resurrection* whereby he identifies himself "with the crucified and resurrected Christ" (49). Crowe moves on to Paul's speech at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:16-41). In this speech Paul draws the Davidic connection to the risen Christ. He particularly notes that "David is the prototypical, royal figure from whom will come the people's ultimate Savior—Jesus" (50). Paul's speech in Acts 13 hinges on the resurrection showing that it fulfills the Davidic promises, offers forgiveness of sins, and brings this good news to the gentiles (65).

The chapter on Paul is the longest of the book, but its importance to the overarching argument cannot be understated. First, it is the risen Christ who visits Paul on the road to Damascus. Second, Paul's sermons and speeches rotate around the resurrection. Third, Paul uses the resurrection as a key defense on multiple occasions (23:6; 24:21). And finally, there are other narrative pieces that prove a parallel between the resurrection of Christ, the risen Lord, and the experience of Paul the apostle.

Crowe then shifts to a chapter which summarizes how the resurrection fulfills key Old Testament promises, particularly, the promise of the tent of David (restoring of the Davidic kingdom). For Luke, the promise of a restored kingdom (2 Samuel 7; Amos 9) is fulfilled through the resurrection of Christ. Included in this chapter are sections on Stephen, Philip, Ananias and Sapphira, Gamaliel I, and Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos.

In part 2, Crowe sets out to answer the following questions: what does it mean that Jesus is exalted Lord? How does the newness of the resurrection relate to the faithfulness of God and his saving actions through history? How does the resurrection relate to Israel? How does the resurrection speak to the uniqueness of early Christian belief?

To address these questions, Crowe begins with the *historia salutis*. He argues that the resurrection "is the great turning point in the history of salvation" (105). In other words, the resurrection of Christ inaugurates the coming kingdom and looks to its ultimate consummation. The resurrection when seen through the lens of salvation history, does not become greater than the ascension and exaltation. Instead, it becomes great among equals. The resurrection is the "vindication of his perfect obedience" (108). Without the resurrection, the narrative of Acts would remain unresolved. Furthermore, the resurrection marks the coming of the Spirit and the salvation of God's people. This salvation has a profound effect on Jewish practices such as the temple, the Sabbath, food laws, circumcision, and mission. The resurrection is the hinge from which these practices transition because of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the new people of God.

Furthermore, *ordo salutis* hinges on the resurrection. For if the new people of God had believed in a non-resurrected Jesus, they would have none of the redemptive benefits. But Jesus was raised up, so God offers redemptive benefits such as forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. The means to experience all of God's redemptive benefits is "union with the *resurrected Christ*" (129). We see an example of this in the baptism of John the Baptist. John's message of forgiveness is no longer sufficient after the coming of Christ as we see with the re-baptism of his disciples (Acts 19:1-7). In these two chapters, Crowe synthesizes the *historia salutis* with the *ordo salutis*. This magnificent biblical theological work displays the union of the programmatic and the transitional within Lukan Acts.

In the last two chapters Crowe proves that Luke employs the resurrection to defend the "veracity of the Scriptures" (149) and that the early church depended on Lukan resurrection theology in developing orthodox theology. In this segment, Crowe looks at how Luke employs the OT in his narrative concluding that for Luke the resurrection derives from the OT and fulfills this message. In conclusion, Crowe states that "if Acts is a key cog contributing to the coherence of the New Testament, then it follows that present-day articulation of the Christian message do well to feature the resurrection as a prominent emphasis as well" (193). Having followed the argument closely, the reader is fully convinced with Crowe's argumentation and recommends his work to anyone interested

in the profound impact the resurrection has on Christian history and praxis.

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A Guide to Theological Reflection: A Fresh Approach for Practical Ministry Courses and Theological Field Education. **By Jim L. Wilson and Earl Waggoner. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020. 185 pp. $18.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-0-310-09393-0.**

When one considers Jesus's parable of the talents, it is clear that those who engage in the Lord's business have a responsibility to make the most of what they have been given for the task. Authors Jim Wilson and Earl Waggoner want to help those who minister do just that. In their book *A Guide to Theological Reflection*, they argue that the quality and effectiveness of ministry events often suffer from a "gap between what we say we believe and how we live" (44). In other words, when a minister does ministry in a way that is not consistent with his understanding of God's Word, the ministry suffers, as do those receiving the ministry. This book lays out a plan for intentionally closing that gap between the minister's understanding of God's truth and the minister's behavior (166).

Wilson and Waggoner declare that the gap between what the minister believes and how he acts "is never closed without thoughtful reflection" (21). There must be "a pause in the action long enough to reflect and make adjustments before acting again" (21). That pause is the subject of the book and is called "theological reflection," which the authors define as "identifying how our beliefs, thoughts, and feelings" are influencing "our actions, aligning them to our best understanding of God's truth, and exploring possibilities for future ministry responses" (23).

Both authors are involved in theological higher education. The book's back cover lists Wilson as "professor of leadership formation and director of the doctor of ministry program at Gateway Seminary." It lists Waggoner as "dean of biblical studies and theology" at Colorado Christian University's College of Adult and Graduate Studies. Being committed to

training students for the ministry, they have written what they say they wish they had in their early days of ministry: "an instruction manual" for ministering well—a "bridge between the classroom and the ministry field." They "needed theological reflection," they say, and so they have written this book as a "guide" to introduce "students and ministers . . . to effective, transformative theological reflection" (16).

The book is divided into two sections. The first consists of chapters 1-3 and looks at the *process* of theological reflection. Chapter 1 argues the need for theological reflection as an essential aid to the minister in building "a bridge between lofty theological ideas and the application of those ideas in the real world" (17). A ministry event may appear to have been effective in that it accomplished what was intended (e.g., it met a need), but was it done in a way that was not faithful to the Lord and His Word? Theological reflection can help sort that out.

Chapter two gives the definition of theological reflection. It stresses the need for ministers to pause from activity and spend time thinking "about their actions in a previous ministry encounter," not "for sentimental reasons," but so that they might discover if a ministry action "was as effective as it could have been" and determine how they might minister going forward "in ways that are more aligned with their understanding of God's truth" (24). Such *theological* reflection, the authors state, "not only changes the way we approach ministry but also affects who we are as ministers" (26). Chapter three describes various theological reflection models that have been put forth by other authors and then presents and argues for the model developed by Wilson and Waggoner.

The second section of the book is significantly longer than the first and deals with the *tools* of theological reflection. One tool is a ministry support system of people with whom the minister meets regularly. A second tool is a written journal to provide the minister "with a record of what [he has] done, thought, believed, and felt over an extended period" (80). A third tool is the intentional planning and evaluating of the following: one's use of time, one's expenditure and replenishment of energy, and one's pursuit of accomplishing God's purpose for his life. A fourth tool involves written case studies and verbatim reports of ministry actions. These, along with the journal, become "ministry artifacts" to be used for personal reflection and in discussions with a mentor or a peer group. A fifth tool is the making of growth covenants

whereby the minister promises to pursue specific steps over a specified time period with the intention of achieving professional and personal growth. A sixth tool is an ongoing pursuit of "ministerial success," which the authors define as "obedience, faithfulness, and achieving one's potential" (158).

Throughout the tools section of the book are "Reflections" boxes. These contain practical testimonies from "colleagues, graduates, and DMin candidates from Gateway Seminary" who have implemented the various tools and found them helpful (11). Also found throughout the tools section are things like sample forms for recording the details of ministry events, sample journal pages, and explanations of how to employ the tools to do theological reflection.

This is a very readable book to which those who thrive on detailed systems and organization might be drawn. The lesser organized may consider it difficult to implement. It does seem quite time consuming. In fact, the authors state that "you will spend a significant amount of time recording your activities, thoughts, and spontaneous reflections in your ministry journal" (99). This should be done every day, "even on vacation and days off" (83). And the journal is not the only ministry artifact to be produced. There are also the case studies and verbatim reports. Not that any of this is busy work. The artifacts help to ensure that reflection is done upon accurate recounting of ministry events rather than upon memory alone. In addition to creating the artifacts, the minister takes them into meetings with his support group (assuming he can find people who will commit to being in a such a group), which requires more time.

For some ministers, the addition of time-consuming activities to their schedules might mean that some of the ministry they are doing would have to suffer, which seems counter-productive. Consider, for instance, the solo pastor who finds nearly everything at the church falling to him. In addition to preparing sermons, he may make the bulletins, lead the youth group, teach a midweek Bible study, counsel people, lead the worship, and perform any number of other activities that help a small church run. There would seem to be precious little time left over to implement such a system, especially if he has a young family or is bi-vocational. That is not to say he cannot do theological reflection at all. The call to pause and reflect is a good one—an essential one, even. But some ministers might need a less time-consuming system for that. Nevertheless, the book is worth looking at to discover the value of

theological reflection and consider how it might be implemented into one's ministry.

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Christian Physicalism? Philosophical Theological Criticisms. **Edited by R. Keith Loftin and Joshua R. Farris. London: Lexington Books, 2018. 458 pp. $130.00, Hardcover. ISBN 978-1-4985-4923-3.**

Christian Physicalism? edited by Keith R. Loftin and Joshua R. Farris is a robust and original critique of the growing trend of thinkers beginning to affirm physicalism about human persons within Christianity. The editors are clear about what motivates the volume: "Short of calling Christian materialism a heresy, it is a deviation from the received wisdom of ecumenical Christianity" (xx). Thus, the editors and authors think that Christians who have accepted physicalism have made not only a scientific and/or philosophical mistake but a grave theological mistake. Given that the editors have serious worries about this development, it includes a wide collection of authors and topics—ranging from historical thinking to specific dogmatic accounts to contemporary science.

The book is made up of twenty chapters and lacks any basic structure besides various arguments against physicalism/materialism (the view, *generally*, that there is no non-physical aspect to the human person). The appeal of the book is the unified agreement among the authors that physicalism is wrong. Most of the chapters are dedicated to various dogmatic problems for physicalism. For example, there are chapters on the knowledge of God and physicalism, divine eternality and physicalism, Holy Saturday and physicalism, the Incarnation and physicalism, etc. But it also includes historical, biblical, philosophical, and scientific arguments. It is relatively unique in including chapters on ethics and physics as well—most theological criticisms focus on other worries. Each chapter also has a list of "suggested reading" to further guide the reader.

Given this very brief summation of the book, I offer several potential qualms to critically engage with the book. I must confess, however, that my qualms are related to specific chapters only and not the entirety of

the book. Overall, the book is well done. The only potential overarching criticism would be the lack of structure regarding the topics—but this does not hurt the book as much as it could have increased its usability. The first chapter I found problems with was slightly surprising—it was J.P. Moreland's chapter on the unity of consciousness. While Moreland is typically strong on this subject, I found his argument quite unoriginal and lacking at times. For example, he simply assumes no one needs to be taught to be a dualist (44). He also makes a strikingly strong claim, saying, "If there is anything that physicalists agree upon, it is that there is no such thing as teleology" (51). Again, I found this to be an unnuanced assertion that fails to meet the evidence. Throughout his essay I found him making assertions without argumentation or clarification that are highly controversial. I also found the chapter from Matthew Hart arguing that Christian Materialism entails Pelagianism rather disappointing. The argument hinged on several rather tenuous assumptions that would not be accepted by all of his opponents, rendering the force of the argument rather mute. His argument is primarily related to the ability to bring about faith in Christ based on physical manipulation. But there are numerous counterexamples to vindicate physicalism from these worries. A final qualm of note is John Cooper's chapter on the intermediate state. I simply found it lacking in rigorous argumentation that a physicalist would find persuasive. It makes several large assumptions that would be rejected or contested by the physicalist.

Despite these criticisms, the book is an immense achievement. No other source available offers such a wide range of philosophical objections to physicalism from a Christian perspective. Before any Christian chooses to adopt physicalism, they will be required to counter these arguments. Moreover, most of the chapters are philosophically and theologically rigorous, being of benefit to anyone whether they are a physicalist or not. Three especially helpful chapters were from R. T. Mullins on the Two Sons Worry, Bruce Gordon on Quantum Theory, and Paul Gavrilyuk on the history of incorporeality of the soul. Each of these chapters provided unique insights and challenges to physicalism from a Christian perspective. For example, Mullins argues that physicalism does not avoid Nestorianism (the view that there are two persons in Christ) because it violates the anhypostasia/enhypostasia distinction. Gordon provides an incisive critic from physics and Quantum Theory that physicalism is outright impossible. He states baldly, "the physicalist

thesis is rendered untenable by the phenomena of quantum physics" (372). Gavrilyuk explains much of the nuance and development of the nature of the soul that is often glossed over and unclear.

In sum, I think the volume is excellent and I heartily recommend it. There is no other resource available that offers such a wide range of arguments engaging with physicalism from a distinctively *Christian* perspective. It should be required reading for those researching and writing on anthropological debates. It is likely to best serve academics and students who are interested in anthropology and the philosophy of mind, but several chapters may be of special interest to pastors as well. For example, pastors may find the chapters on sanctification, sin, and Christian ethics to be relevant to their own teaching and counseling ministries.

<div align="right">

Jordan L. Steffaniak
University of Birmingham, UK

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Uncovering Calvin's God: John Calvin on Predestination and the Love of God. By Forrest H. Buckner. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2020. 221 pp. $105.00, Hardcover. ISBN 978-1-9787-0384-1.

The term "Calvinism" has been contentious among Christians a long time. However, the average church member may not know anything about Calvin or his theology except that it is something they should "know to disapprove" of (vii). *Uncovering Calvin's God* by Forrest H. Buckner takes aim at enlightening pastors and laypeople alike on Calvin, particularly on his theology of predestination. The author contends that his goal is not to idealize Calvin's theology (4), but rather to "[d]etermine God's disposition toward humanity in Calvin's theology." (5) Buckner is Assistant Professor of Theology at Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington (221) and earned his Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from the University of St. Andrews writing on the very topic of this book.

Uncovering Calvin's God consists of eight chapters spanning 221 pages. The book is a deep dive into Calvin's theology of predestination in chapters one through four. Once Buckner establishes Calvin's position,

he tests his findings in Calvin's preaching to see if the theologian was consistent in chapter five. In chapter six Buckner discusses meaningful recent scholarship on Calvin and then shows how Calvin's theology fits into the dialogue with other theologians historically. In the last chapter, the author sums up his findings on Calvin by stating God has one loving disposition towards humanity and one secret will expressed in a twofold, asymmetrical manner towards humanity (191-192).

While the length is relatively short, this book is not a simple read. Buckner covers twenty-one different works from Calvin in order to obtain a broad sample of his theology of predestination (xiii-xv). Many of these works are translated from the original languages including French and Latin. Buckner also interacts with other theologians such as Karl Barth bringing German into the mix. While the level of scholarship in original languages is high, the reader does not need to learn Latin in order to read the book. One of Buckner's strengths is that he translates the words and phrases from the original text, explains the meaning, and then includes the original word or phrase in parentheses next to the translation. This allows readers to engage with the original text and language while having an expert guide (Buckner) to help them understand. While Buckner's extensive use of the primary sources in the original languages is helpful for research and understanding, they also can become distracting. The reader can become overwhelmed by the myriad of references to the original languages and miss the bigger point of the paragraph or chapter.

Buckner accomplishes his goal to "[d]etermine God's disposition toward humanity in Calvin's theology" (5). He does this by writing in a way that feels as though he is teaching the reader about Calvin along the way. For example, in a subsection of chapter three, Buckner covers the topic of "God's Revealed Electing Will" (60). The author spends four pages breaking down the topic in Calvin's theology using multiple references to Calvin's works and Bible references. Lastly, he ends the section with a phrase that is familiar throughout the book, "In sum, for Calvin, . . .". This format is repeated in each chapter throughout the book and serves as a helpful guide as the reader attempts to take in the vast amount of information provided. Buckner writes in a systematic way (not surprising for a Systematic Theologian) that builds upon itself as each chapter goes by. He provides a summary at the end of each chapter

that helps bring all the information contained within together in a paragraph or two.

Buckner demonstrates throughout the book that he is an expert on Calvin. However, this does not equate to a two-hundred-page apology for Calvin's theology. True to form, Buckner makes good on his promise to avoid "idealizing" Calvin's work (4) and offers a strong critique of the Reformer's "missteps" in the last chapter (193). Most notably, the author points out the inconsistencies between Calvin's written theology and his pastoral/preaching ministry. In one example about predestination Buckner says, "By suggesting that (depending on the day), only 1 to 20 percent of a group of people listening were elect because only that number responded in faith, Calvin claimed knowledge that only God can have" (196). The author shows that Calvin did this to "comfort" discouraged preachers (196) but unintentionally sowed seeds of doubt among the faithful during and after his ministry (197). Buckner displays a balance in his writing about Calvin that is refreshing to read. He is not overly critical, but also does not go out of his way to praise Calvin on every page. The reader receives a straightforward assessment of Calvin's theology of predestination.

On Calvin's God is recommended for both pastors and laypeople. Particularly, pastors who are struggling to preach through biblical passages about predestination or perhaps are fielding questions about the topic from their congregation will find this book useful. Laypeople who have not read Calvin or are looking to understand more about predestination would also benefit from reading the book. Both groups will find Buckner's work accessible yet scholarly and will have a treasure trove of both primary and secondary resources at their fingertips thanks to the author's extensive research.

Martin Gilow
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The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution. By Carl R. Trueman. Wheaton: Crossway, 2020. 425 pp. $34.99, Hardback. ISBN 978-14335-5633-3.

Carl R. Trueman is professor of biblical and religious studies at Grove City College. He is a well-respected church historian and previously served as the William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and Public Life at Princeton University. Trueman has authored several books, contributes to *First Things (Journal of Religion and Public Life)*, blogs regularly at Reformation21, and cohosts the Mortification of Spin podcast. In this book, Trueman skillfully enlightens his readers by explaining the origins of the modern self. His aim is "to explain how and why a certain notion of the self has come to dominate the culture of the West, why this self finds its most obvious manifestation in the transformation of sexual mores, and what the wider implications of this transformation are and may well be in the future" (31). Trueman deftly accomplishes this aim in a book that brings understanding to a very complex and confusing historical moment.

In Part 1, Trueman explores the architecture of the revolution and how the self and Western culture has been reimagined by examining the writings of three analysts of modernity: the philosopher Charles Taylor, the psychological sociologist Philip Rieff, and the ethicist Alasdair MacIntyre. Trueman begins with Taylor's helpful concepts of the social imaginary and mimesis and poiesis. Next, he marshals Rieff's view of culture—cultures are primarily defined by what they forbid, and at least historically, cultures direct people to receive and learn their identity from their community rather than create their identity themselves. Trueman then explains Rieff's "psychological man" and Taylor's politics of recognition to make sense of why identity has shifted to an inward quest for psychological happiness that must be acknowledged by others. Trueman uses Rieff's idea of culture to argue that the Modern West is a Third-World Culture that does not root its moral imperatives in anything sacred. "Ethics, therefore, becomes a function of feeling" (79). This Third-World Culture ethic is further supported by MacIntyre's understanding of emotivism that contends all moral judgments are nothing but expressions of preference, attitude, or feeling. Trueman argues that Third World Cultures become anti-cultures and antihistorical

in order to destroy and erase anything that would cause supposed psychological harm. Trueman concludes Part 1 by discussing deathworks—pieces of art that attack an established cultural norm that are designed to undo the moral structure of society. He mentions abortion as the epitome of a deathwork because it brings literal death to a person, profanes that which use to be sacred—a human life, and is antihistorical because it erases the consequences of sex between a man and a woman.

In Part 2 Trueman elucidates how Jean-Jacques Rousseau laid the foundations of modern selfhood with his views of psychology and culture in his *Confessions.* Rousseau focuses on the inward psychological life as the root of personal identity and blames society or culture for the problems that individuals have, not the individuals themselves. This line of thinking leads to "the collapse of this metaconcept of human nature" so that "ethics descends into...subjective emotivism" (128). In Chapter 4, Trueman asks how these ideas that originated in intellectual circles have become so imbedded and widespread in our society. The answer, Truman says, is the poetry of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Blake who strongly used radicalized sentiment to drive radical politics. These poets influenced the culture to see internal feelings as more important than external social structures. In Chapter 5, Trueman explains how the ideas of Nietzsche, Marx, and Darwin led to "the elimination of the notion that human nature is something that has authority over us as individuals" (164). By dispensing with God, Nietzsche destroyed "the very foundations on which a whole world of metaphysics and morality have been constructed and depends" (168). Marx took Hegel's thinking and redefined human nature as something that is "dynamic, not static" (177). Lastly, Darwin's theory of natural selection allowed no room for humanity to see itself as special, or to have divine significance. Instead, his theory "effectively made any metaphysical or theological claim concerning the origins of life irrelevant" (186). No longer were humans made in the image of God for a divine purpose; instead, they were lowered to the status of mere animals.

In Part 3, Trueman articulates how the development of the psychological self that he has traced in Part 1 and 2 became overtly sexual, that is "the move from understanding sex as an activity to seeing it as absolutely fundamental to identity" (202). More than any other figure, Sigmund Freud is to blame. Trueman argues, "Freud provided a

compelling rationale for putting sex and sexual expression at the center of human existence and all its related cultural and political components in a way that now grips the social imaginary of the Western world" (204). In Chapter 7 Trueman discusses the contemporary political scene that is dominated by issues of identity—racial, sexual, ethnic, and otherwise—and how much of this is driven by critical theory which draws deeply from Marx and Freud.

In Part 4, Trueman outlines the triumphs of the revolution. In Chapter 8 he shows the triumph of the erotic in surrealism and the pornification of mainstream culture. Chapter 9 covers the triumph of the therapeutic and how expressive individualism has come to dominate society. He does this primarily by looking at the Supreme Court's path to finding gay marriage in the Constitution, the Ivy League ethics of Peter Singer, and the current pressure on freedom of speech on college campuses. Finally, in Chapter 10 Trueman explains how gays and lesbians formed a coalition based upon their shared victimhood as marginalized sexual minorities despite their social, economic, biological, and philosophical differences. This led to grafting transgenders into the group, though in doing so they have destabilized lesbians, gays, and bisexuals as meaningful categories.

The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self is a masterful work that explains one of the most confusing societal developments in world history, the rise of the modern self. Trueman lays out his argument clearly and in an organized manner that is easy to follow. He explains step-by-step how the notion of the modern self developed from one philosopher and thinker to another and how it infiltrated all of Western culture. Trueman defines his terms carefully and shows time and again that ideas have consequences. This work is a brilliant success that accomplishes its purpose. It is accessible yet well-informed.

While the book is well-organized, it can be repetitive. Sometimes Trueman summarizes his conclusions at the end of one chapter and then repeats them again at the beginning of the next chapter almost verbatim. For the academic reader, this feels unnecessary.

Overall, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* is a book that should be read by anyone who wants to understand the current cultural moment. Pastors, professors, academics, and government and community leaders would especially benefit from reading this work. The thinking and intentional parent who reads this work would also be well-

equipped to understand the culture that their children are growing up in.

Brady Hanssen
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

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Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

PhD Graduates (2021) from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, with their PhD emphases, dissertation title and supervisory committee members.

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