MIDWESTERN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

Spring 2020 Vol. 19 No. 1

MIDWESTERN
JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

ISBN: 1543-6977

The *Midwestern Journal of Theology* is published biannually by Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO, 64118, and by The Covington Group, Kansas City, MO. Information about the journal is available at the seminary website: WWW.MBTS.EDU.

The Midwestern Journal of Theology is indexed in the *Southern Baptist Periodical Index*, *Christian Periodical Index*, and *Atla Religion database*.

Address all editorial correspondence to: Editor, *Midwestern Journal of Theology*, 5001 N. Oak Trafficway, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO, 64118.

Address books, software, and other media for review to: Book Review Editor, *Midwestern Journal of Theology*, 5001 N. Oak Trafficway, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO, 64118.

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EDITORIAL

I would like to extend a special welcome to the Spring 2020 issue of the Midwestern Journal of Theology, published as it is in the midst of the current pandemic. I am therefore especially grateful to all those who have worked so tirelessly this semester to ensure that the Journal still appeared. As usual, particular thanks go to Dr. Jason Duesing, Provost and Academic Editor, for all his invaluable assistance, and a special word of thanks go to the newly appointed Journal secretary, Mrs. Lynae Duarte, for all the time and energy she has already gladly contributed.

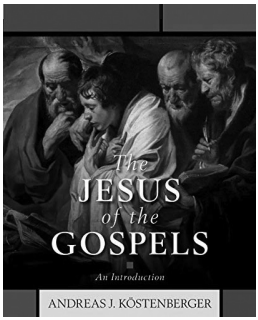
We are very pleased to begin this issue, with the well-received Spring 2020 Faculty Address given by Professor Stephen J. Andrews, entitled, "Reading and Proclaiming the Old testament as Christian Scripture." This is followed by a great article by Midwestern's Distinguished Professor of Church History, Thomas Kidd, with his "Franklin, Whitefield, and Christian Education." Our next article "Equipping for Life: Excellence and Parenting," is a timely and challenging collaborative effort by husband and wife team, Andreas and Margaret Köstenberger, both of whom are professors at Midwestern.

Our final three articles begin with "A Theological Understanding of the Effects of Addictive Habits in Cultivating Addictive Desires," a thought-provoking and careful study by The Master's University's Assistant Professor of Counselling, Greg Gifford. Research Professor Andreas Köstenberger also provides our penultimate article, which is the published version of the 'For The Church' Workshop on John's Gospel that he gave this Spring at Midwestern, consisting of his scholarly research on "The Festival Cycle' in John 5–10." Our final contribution, an original Reformation study of "Martin Luther's Programmatic Use of Romans 1:1–3 for His Understanding of Christ in the Old Testament," was contributed by Cedarville University's Assistant Professor of Theology, William Marsh.

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

BOOKS IN BRIEF

New and Upcoming Releases from the Midwestern Seminary Community



THE JESUS OF THE GOSPELS: AN INTRODUCTION

by Andreas J. Köstenberger (Kregel Academic)

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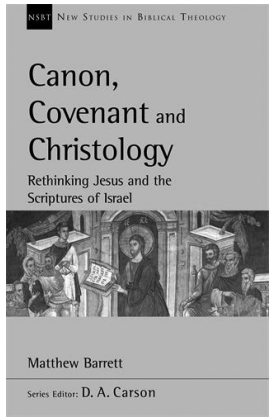

CANON, COVENANT AND CHRISTOLOGY: RETHINKING JESUS AND THE SCRIPTURES OF ISRAEL

by Matthew Barrett (InterVarsity Press)

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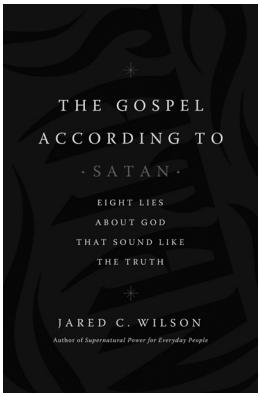

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SATAN: EIGHT LIES ABOUT GOD THAT SOUND LIKE THE TRUTH

by Jared C. Wilson (Thomas Nelson)

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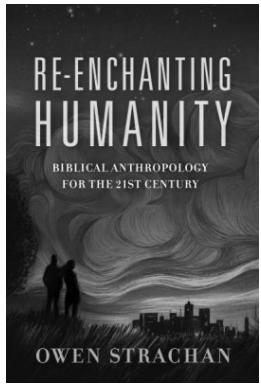

REENCHANTING HUMANITY: A THEOLOGY OF MANKIND

by Owen Strachan (Mentor)

Available Now

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Midwestern Journal of Theology 19.1 (2020): 1-16

The Spring 2020 Faculty Address: Reading and Proclaiming the Old Testament as Christian Scripture[1]

STEPHEN J. ANDREWS
Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

This lecture owes its origin to some of the hermeneutical and homiletical questions raised by our students in the Ph.D. Old Testament Theology and Preaching from the Old Testament seminars I have been honored to teach here at MBTS. My hope is to offer some thoughtful reflection on this subject in a broader context. Obviously, reading and proclaiming the Old Testament is not a new activity for the church. A variety of books have been written on the subject over the years,[2] and pastors and teachers have been attempting to do this since the time of the early church. On the other hand, the added idea that we should read and proclaim the Old Testament in the context of understanding it as Christian Scripture is more nuanced and, I think, less understood and practiced in the church. I consider this issue to be first and foremost exegetical and hermeneutical in nature, and then, secondarily theological. Bad exegesis makes for bad theology. More than ever, the

[1] MBTS Faculty Address, Spring 2020. A few revisions have been added for publication.

[2] To name just a few, see for example, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Preaching and Teaching from the Old Testament: A Guide for the Church (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003); John Goldingay, Do We Need the Old Testament? Letting the Old Testament Speak for Itself (Downers Grove: IVP, 2015); and Christopher R. Seitz, The Character of Christian Scripture: The Significance of a Two-Testament Bible (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011). On Seitz, see Stephen J. Andrews, review of C. Seitz, The Character of Christian Scripture: The Significance of a Two-Testament Bible, Review of Biblical Literature, 3/20/15 (http://www.bookreviews.org/bookdetail.asp?TitleId=8982).

church needs to listen to the discrete voice found in the first part of God's Word, the Old Testament.

My goal here is to offer a small contribution to the discussion in three sections. The first raises selected comments on what it means to understand the Old Testament *as* Christian Scripture. These observations are neither extensive nor comprehensive; they are meant to be heuristic and exploratory. The second contains five orienting questions designed to help the interpreter cross the notorious "hermeneutical bridge" between the word of the text (i.e., what it meant then) and its expression as Christian Scripture for the church (i.e., what it should mean today). The final section offers a test case by providing a Christian Scripture reading of Psalm 117.

The Old Testament as Christian Scripture

Just trying to figure out what it means to say that the Old Testament is Christian Scripture is a weighty hermeneutical problem - perhaps, the most significant of all. Our view of the nature and authority of the Old Testament greatly impacts our understanding of the Christian faith. According to Emil Kraeling, the problem of the Old Testament "is not just one of many." Rather, "it is the master problem of theology. . . All theology that operates in any way with biblical heritage hangs in the air until it is settled."[3] A. H. J. Gunneweg agreed:

> Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to understand the hermeneutical problem of the Old Testament as *the* problem of Christian theology, and not just as one problem among others, seeing that all the other questions of theology are affected in one way or another by its resolution. If the interpretation of holy scripture is an essential task for theology, and if the Bible is the basis of Christian life, the foundation of the church and the medium of revelation, then it is of fundamental importance for the theologian to ask whether and why the collection of Israelite and Jewish writings to which the Christian church has given the name Old Testament are part – indeed the most substantial part of the canon of scripture and what their relevance is. This question affects the extent and also qualitatively the substance of what may be regarded as Christian. No more fundamental question

[3]Emil Kraeling, *The Old Testament Since the Reformation* (New York: Schocken, 1969), 7-8.

> can be posed in all theology; providing an answer for it defines the realm in which theology has to be done.[4]

If Kraeling and Gunneweg are correct (and I think they are), the impact of the problem of the authority and interpretation of Old Testament for the church is patently obvious. Either the church should reject the Old Testament[5] and "unhitch" itself from it[6] or seriously and deeply contemplate how it should be read and proclaimed as Christian Scripture. I strongly advocate for the latter. We cannot figure out how to proclaim the Old Testament *as* Christian Scripture until we discover what it means to say that it is Christian Scripture. Unless we do this, the very authority of the entire Bible is at stake.

The first step to understand the Old Testament as Christian Scripture should be to remember that Christianity was originally an interpretation of the Jewish Bible. However, the thirty-nine books of what we call the Old Testament were actually the Jewish scriptures of Jesus' day. The Jewish scriptures described God's work at creation and his interaction with his chosen people; it also explains God's covenants and proclaims the promise of the coming Messiah. These same books were written a long time before Jesus. How then did the Jewish Scriptures become Christian Scripture?

The New Testament records that Jesus himself confirmed the Jewish Bible as authoritative for his disciples.[7] In fact, the Synoptic Gospels note

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[4]A.H.J. Gunneweg, *Understanding the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 2.

[5] As advocated as early the middle of the second century by Marcion. For a brief summary and list of sources see, David L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: The Theological Relationship Between the Old and the New Testaments* (3d. ed.; Downers Grove, IVP, 2010), 36 and n. 3.

[6] Apparently as advocated by Andy Stanley. See Michael J. Kruger, "Why We Can't Unhitch from the Old Testament," *The Gospel Coalition*, 22 October 2018, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/irresistible-andy-stanley/.

[7] Note the much-quoted statement of C.H. Dodd: "But the New Testament itself avers that it was Jesus Himself who first directed the minds of His followers to certain parts of the scriptures as those in which they might find illumination upon the meaning of His mission and destiny." See C.H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Substructure of New Testament Theology* (London: Nisbet, 1952), 109-110, quoted in R.T. French, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (Vancouver: Regent, 1998), 226. French goes on to say, "The source of the distinctive Christian use

that Jesus quoted approximately 173 times from texts in 19 of the these books to substantiate his messiahship and ministry.[8] On the road to Emmaus, Jesus as our Risen Lord, *interpreted* from Moses and all the Prophets "the things concerning himself" to two of his disciples (Luke 24:27, also see v. 44 where he adds the Psalms). Later in Jerusalem, Jesus again identified the sacred books of the Jewish faith, the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings to be authoritative documents for his disciples and followers (Luke 24:27, 44-45).

The same apostles and disciples willingly received these books and read them as authoritative Scripture; they also based their proclamation of the gospel and the call to a moral and ethical Christian faith upon them. The New Testament bears this out in several ways. For example, forty-nine of the fifty times γραφή "scripture" occurs in the New Testament clearly refer either to the Jewish Scripture as a whole or a specific passage from it.[9] The New Testament uses the authoritative formula "it is written" to quote directly from the Old Testament at least sixty times, and the significant phrase "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled" (or variations of it) is found 12 times. The New Testament also labels the Jewish books as "the Oracles of God," and many of the events contained therein are said to be written down as examples or for our instruction.[10] These books eventually became the Old Testament,[11] and along with the New Testament, they both became the Christian Bible. But it must be remembered that the Jewish Scriptures were the "Scriptures" of the New Testament. Consequently, investigating the Jewish Scriptures, including its cognitive environment, must remain a central focus of the hermeneutical attempt to understand the Old Testament as Christian Scripture.

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of the Old Testament was not the creative thinking of the primitive community, but that of its founder" (Ibid.).

[8] See R. T. French, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, Appendix C, 259-263. A rough count yields 48 times from the Torah, 85 from the Prophets, and 40 from the Writings.

[9] Only 2 Peter 3:15-16 mentions the writings of Paul in connection with the "rest of the Scriptures."

[10] See for example, Acts 7:38; Romans 3:2, 15:4; Hebrews 5:12; and 1 Corinthians 10:11.

[11] The term "Old Testament" appears to come into its distinct usage through Origen. See Goldingay, *Do we Need the New Testament*?, 10.

It also stands to reason that neither the Old nor the New Testament should be considered more or less essential than the other, because together the Old and New are intertwined and form the Christian Bible, the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). For centuries the church has rightly regarded the Old and New Testaments *together* to be Christian Scripture, God's revelation of Himself to humankind, "holy and canonical, for the regulating, founding and establishing of our faith."[12] Theological themes are introduced in the Old Testament and then reach their fulfillment in the New. Doctrinal topics like soteriology, hamartiology, and sanctification should not be considered the exclusive property of the New Testament.[13] It could be said that "the Old Testament is the laboratory of the New Testament."[14] According to Seitz, the tendency of modern scholars to privilege the New Testament hermeneutically silences the distinct voice of the Old Testament in the church.[15]

The Old Testament also possesses ample evangelistic value. For example, according to Paul, Scripture (i.e., Old Testament) was able to give Timothy "wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:14-15). In his doctoral dissertation, Dr. Jason Allen advocates preaching the saving power of the Old Testament. In referring to the overlooked, but important passage of 2 Timothy 3:14-17, Allen correctly notes that the Old Testament has sufficient messianic and Christological focus to present Christ to the lost. Specifically, he states, "So Christological is the Old Testament that it contains enough gospel clarity to convert the one confronted with the message of Christ from it."[16]

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[12] From the Belgic Confession, Articles 4 and 5: "We include in the Holy Scriptures the two volumes of the Old and New Testaments. . . We receive all these [66] books and these only as holy and canonical, for the regulating, founding, and establishing of our faith."

[13] See F.F. Bruce, *New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969). Bruce's purpose is to stand back at a distance and view the whole, to consider "the dominant motifs which recur throughout the biblical literature and bind the two Testaments together" (Ibid., 18).

[14] G. Henton Davies, "Preaching the Old Testament," (H. I. Hester Lectureship on Preaching, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, March 19, 1964), 1.

[15] Seitz, The Character of Christian Scripture, 203.

[16] Jason K. Allen, "The Christ-Centered Homiletics of Edmund Clowney and Sidney Greidanus in Contrast with the Human Author-Centered Hermeneutics

Accordingly, before there was a Johannine or Roman road to salvation there was a Jerusalem road![17]

Likewise, the Old Testament calls the faithful to righteousness and justice. This is usually accomplished within a covenantal context, where, for example, Israel is enjoined to "to do justice and to love faithfulness" (Micah 6:8). In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 Paul "schools" Timothy that all God-breathed Scripture (i.e., Old Testament) was useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. In *Two Testaments, One Bible*, David L. Baker put it this way:

> Since the earliest days of the church, Christians have affirmed that the books of both Old and New Testaments are the foundation documents of their faith, and that through them God speaks to his people. The authority of the Old Testament, like that of the New, is based on the conviction that it is a definitive human expression of the Word of God. Thus both Old and New Testaments are fundamental for theologians in establishing church doctrine, and for believers in providing guidance for living.[18]

Jason Hood argued this moral instruction should not detract from interpreting Christ from the Old Testament. But, on the other hand, "Christ-centred (*sic*) interpretation that overlooks, explicitly excludes, or denigrates the use of moral examples and moral instruction in preaching requires considerable modification."[19] Consequently, by studying the Old Testament, a servant of God could also be thoroughly prepared for every good work.[20]

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of Walter Kaiser" (Ph.D. Diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 139.

[17] The Southern Baptist Messianic Fellowship considers the Jerusalem Road to salvation to contain seven passages from the OT: Isaiah 59:2, Psalm 14:3, Isaiah 64:6; Proverbs 14:12, Leviticus 17:11, Isaiah 53:6, and Joel 2:32.

[18] Baker, Two Testaments, One Bible, 277.

[19] Jason Hood, "Christ-Centred Interpretation Only? Moral Instruction from Scripture's Self-Interpretation as Caveat and Guide," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 27 (2009): 68.

[20] Philip Yancey argues that the Old Testament offers "an advanced course in Life with God." Philip Yancey, *The Bible Jesus Read* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 22. The point could be extended to worship and spirituality. See the

There are methods of proclaiming the Old Testament that are well meaning, but in practice seem to contribute to misunderstanding partially or in whole the authority of the first part of the Bible and the role it should play *as* Christian Scripture in the church. At the last Evangelical Theological Society annual meeting Richard Schultz identified two "Christocentric" or "Christotelic" hermeneutical approaches that he felt devalued the Old Testament's authority and direct spiritual application to the life of the church according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17.[21] The first approach as exercised by progressive evangelicals on the left argued that the Old Testament contained what amounts to be the word of God in the words of men. That is, the morally acceptable material comes from God and harmonizes with the words of Christ (as properly interpreted by the progressives), but the morally offensive material, on the other hand, originates with human authors. Hence, the independent authority of all of the Old Testament as God's inspired word is diminished.

Schultz identified the second "Christocentric" hermeneutic approach as one used by those he identified as neo-Calvinists on the right. For Schultz, this approach tended to push Christocentrism too far by implying that the Old Testament is all or only about Christ. For Schultz, this method seemed to force ineffective parallels between the text and Jesus,[22] and to downplay the manner in which an Old Testament text could speak to the faithful prior to the coming of Christ and also to obedient disciples seeking to serve the Risen Lord today. In either case, it does not spiritually benefit the church to discount the divinely inspired text of the Old Testament. For Jason Allen, the greater part of valor is to proclaim Christ when the text warrants, but to demonstrate "exegetical humility" when it is less clear. [23]

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chapter entitled, "The Costly Loss of First Testament Spirituality" in Goldingay, *Do We Need the New Testament*, 103-118.

[21] Richard Schultz, "The Christocentric Hermeneutic and the Undermining of Old Testament Authority" (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA, 21 November 2019).

[22] As previously noted by Sidney Greidanus, The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 118.

[23] Allen, "Christ-Centered Homiletics," 141-142.

Unfortunately, failing to proclaim the Old Testament as Christian Scripture has contributed to widespread biblical illiteracy.[24] It has even been alleged that the Old Testament is dying or already dead in the church. The iconic W. A. Criswell once opined that the OT is "perhaps the most neglected area of the Bible in modern preaching." When it is used, according to Criswell, "it is often only the text for some topical treatise that soon departs from its context."[25] Twenty years ago, Sidney Greidanus noted that the Old Testament was "like a lost treasure in the church."[26]

More recently, Brent A. Strawn lamented this tragic state of affairs in *The Old Testament is Dying: A Diagnosis and Recommended Treatment*. Strawn compared the knowledge of the Old Testament to a language and then noted the contemporary church is losing the ability to speak "Old Testament."[27] According to Strawn, the reasons for the Old Testament's morbidity arise from such viruses as the New Atheism, Neo-Marcionism, and the shallow preaching of the prosperity gospel. In the end, Strawn prescribed five treatments to save the Old Testament. The first four are positive cures; the fifth is not. Strawn believes that the many attempts "to justify the Old Testament or warrant it somehow, primarily or exclusively, by reference to the New Testament" will just accelerate the disease and hasten the death of the Old Testament.[28] This is often because the New Testament is seen as fixing some deficiency in the Old Testament. Consequently, the Old Testament becomes less relevant and less studied. Instead, he advocates the two be equally yoked, inextricably intertwined.[29] The church needs to recognize the value of the Old Testament itself as Christian Scripture and strive to make sure that it

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[24] For statistics see data cited from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, *U.S. Religious Survey* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2010). https://www.pewforum.org/2010/09/28/u-s-religious-knowledge-survey/

[25] W.A. Criswell, "Preaching from the Old Testament," in *Tradition and Testament*, ed. J.S. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 293.

[26] Sidney Greidanus, Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 15.

[27] Brent Strawn, The Old Testament Is Dying: A Diagnosis and Recommended Treatment (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 18.

[28] Ibid., 222-230.

[29] Ibid., 227.

continues to be alive, energetic, and sharper than any double-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12).

Finally, the best way to read and proclaim the Old Testament as Christian Scripture is to focus on the authorial intent of every passage. I believe that if there is a master key to understanding the Old Testament as Christian Scripture, it is authorial intent. God deliberately "spoke through the vocabularies, idioms, circumstances, and personalities" of the Old Testament writers.[30] Therefore, according to Walter Kaiser, "The sole object of the expositor is to explain as clearly as possible what the writer meant when he wrote the text under examination."[31] This means allowing the Old Testament to speak in its own discrete voice. Greidanus recognized such: "We must first determine the text's message for Israel. This is of vital importance in order to do justice to the Scriptures. This is the foundation of sound interpretation."[32]

Questions about how the New Testament uses the Old Testament, finding Christ in the text, dual authorship, the *Sensus Plenior*, and the analogy of faith should be raised, but they should be addressed properly near the conclusion of the hermeneutical process.[33] Exegetical humility demands as much. Jason Allen stated it well:

> An author-centered hermeneutic does not deny that Christ may be found in the Old Testament or even that Christ is ubiquitous in the Old Testament. Rather, a commitment to an author-centered hermeneutic simply means one has a predetermined governor (the author's intent) on the passage which limits how much one may read Christ into a text. Therefore, the author-centered hermeneutic insists upon an interpretive humility, happily proclaiming Christ from a

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[30] Walter C. Kaiser, "Legitimate Hermeneutics," in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 122.

[31] Walter C. Kaiser, Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 45.

[32] Sidney Greidanus, "Preaching Christ from the Old Testament," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 161 (2004): 9.

[33] On the analogy of faith, see Walter C. Kaiser, "Hermeneutics and the Theological Task," *Trinity Journal* 12 (1991): 13. For concerns about dual authorship and the *Sensus Plenior*, see Allen, "Christ-Centered Homiletics," 126-131, 135-137.

passage when the text warrants it, but demonstrating exegetical humility when the passage is less clear.[34]

Reading the Old Testament as Christian Scripture

Reading the Old Testament as Christian Scripture begins with a thoroughly detailed exegetical investigation of the passage under examination. This must be a formal exegesis leaving no stone unturned. An excellent example is the full exegesis advocated by Douglas Stuart.[35] Saturday-night investigations and sound-bite minings of the biblical text are demeaning to the Word of God and the divinely-inspired revelation it contains. Understanding the Old Testament as Christian scripture comes first and foremost by reading the Old Testament well. Chapman calls for "critical attentiveness and the painstaking, judicious reading of the of Old Testament text."[36] The one treatment prescribed by Strawn to prevent the death of the Old Testament in the church is to use it extensively and regularly.[37]

Reading the Old Testament as Christian scripture *a priori* requires a knowledge of the original Hebrew and Aramaic in which it was composed. I have said this before and will not belabor the point.[38] A knowledge of the biblical languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) enables pastor/teacher to be an independent interpreter as well as a better expositor of the Word of God. Andrew Bartelt's caution is well taken here: "It is, after all, only logical that those who preach in a church body which

[34] Allen, "Christ-Centered Homiletics," 141-142.

[35] Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 4th ed. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2009).

[36] Stephen B. Chapman, *1 Samuel as Christian Scripture: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 9. Chapman says, "I am persuaded that there are crucial theological resources in the books of the Old Testament that today's church badly needs but is not readily receiving, because the church does not attend to these texts as it could" (Ibid., 11).

[37] Strawn, The Old Testament is Dying, 214.

[38] Stephen J. Andrews, "Some Knowledge of Hebrew Possible to All: The Value of Biblical Hebrew for the Church," *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 17.1 (2018), 43-46.

so strongly affirms both sola scriptura and verbal inspiration should have the ability to look at the very verba in scriptura."[39]

Five Questions for Reading and Proclaiming the Old Testament as Christian Scripture

There is a great need for a method that can be employed in the interpretation of the Old Testament that would respect the discrete voice of the text and as the same time recognize its larger context as part of Christian Scripture. William P. Brown has noted that the theological interpretation of Scripture has engendered many new approaches. But in his opinion, these approaches often lack the precision of other interpretive methods: "Whenever theological interpretation does manage to find its way into the discussion, it most often appears as an afterthought."[40] Brown's proposal, which I have adopted and expanded, is to ask the text several orienting questions designed to exercise the reason (*logos*) in a way that engages the mind and heart. I would say that this involves listening to the voice of the text by a redeemed interpreter who is yielded to the guidance of the indwelling Spirit and is submissive and obedient to the will of God as revealed through Scripture. In this case, reason becomes a servant to faith and not faith a servant to reason.

Theo-logic

The first question involves the text's "theo-logic." More specifically, what does the text say about *God's character* and *relationship to the world*. While the Old Testament is generally more theocentric in nature, this question limits the attempt to hear more precisely what this author in this pericope has encapsulated about the nature and attributes of God. The text's theo-logic "points to the text's reasoning about, or making sense of, God and the world" in a way that invites the reader to do the same.[41]

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[39] Andrew Bartelt, "Hebrew, Greek, and 'Real-Life Ministry,'" *Concordia Journal* 11 (1985): 122.

[40] W. P. Brown, "Theological Interpretation: A Proposal," in Joel Lemon and Kent Harold Richards, ed., *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen* (Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 387.

[41] Ibid., 390-391.

Cosmo-logic

As a question, the text's "cosmo-logic" seeks to ascertain what can be said from the text "about the *world in its relationship to God* and *humanity's place within it*. The "cosmo-logic" of the text portrays the interpreter's view of human identity and condition. It is not distant or otherworldly, but describes an anthropology confined to the view of the author in the text.[42]

Ideo-logic

In this case the text's "ideo-logic" question concerns its "kerygma." What is the preachment or proclamation captured in the text? Regardless of the genre or setting, the text will have a message and the "ideo-logic" concerned the explication of the message addressed to the original audience and proffered to the reader of any age.[43]

Christo-logic

The "Christo-logic" question asks to what extent the text may warrant directly or indirectly an investigation in a possible link with the character, ministry, or covenantal reign of the coming Messiah. When this is less clear, the question should seek to identify the divine demand in the text calling for moral faithfulness and obedience to the new covenant mediated through Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 3:16-17). The fulfillment of the divine demand should ultimately lead a believer to be more Christlike.[44]

Pisteo-logic

This last question refers to the interpreter's application to the life of faith. What practical appropriation can be ascertained from the text for the interpreter and the church? What needs to be heard and acted upon. The "pisteo-logic" must arise naturally from the text in response to the

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[42] Ibid., 390.

[43] Herbert C. Brichto, *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics: Tales of the Prophets* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1992, 46-47.

[44] This approach is called *christiconic* interpretation by Kuruvilla. See Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text! A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (Chicago: Moody, 2013), 238-68.

needs and concerns of the church. It is a *meditatio* on the text, a reflective lingering over the text's implication for the church's faith.[45]

A Christian Scripture reading of Psalm 117

Praise the LORD, all nations!
Laud Him, all tribes!
For mighty over us is His covenant love;
And the faithfulness of the LORD is everlasting.
Hallelujah!

Psalm 117 is found in the fifth book of the Psalter as the seventh entry in a larger grouping (Psalms 111-118) known as "Hallelujah" psalms. These psalms either begin or end with the phrase "Hallelujah," meaning "Praise ye the LORD." It is also considered to be the fifth psalm of the great "Egyptian Hallel" psalms (Psalm 113-118). This group was sung or recited traditionally on the eighth day of the Passover celebration. Psalms 113-114 were sung before the meal and 115-118 at the conclusion while drinking the fourth cup of wine.[46]

The psalm contains two lines and a half-line conclusion. Some Hebrew manuscripts connect the psalm either with 116 or 118; but there is no other reason to treat it as anything other than a separate community hymn of praise. Since it contains only 17 words in the Hebrew, it is the shortest psalm in the Psalter.

As a typical hymn of praise, the first line contains a call to praise, and the second lists the reason justifying the call. The elements of the first line are parallel in structure; the elements of the second are chiastic. In typical poetic Hebrew fashion, the subject and verbal word pairs in the first line alternate between a common noun and verb and a lesser known or rarer set. So, the common verb and noun "praise" and "nations" are paired with the less common "laud" and "tribe." The verb "laud" may be an Aramaism, and "tribe" only occurs three times in the Hebrew Bible. The parallelism is not strictly synonymous but serves to advance the meaning. There is also a reduction in the word pair nation and tribe. The psalmist combines the two to effectively mean "every nation" and "every

[45] Brown, "Theological Interpretation: A Proposal," 391-92.
[46] Nancy DeClaisse-Walford, et al., *The Book of Psalms*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 863.

tribe." Also, the Psalms usually call the physical world or the people of God to praise the LORD, or to declare His glory among the nations (Psalm 96:3; 100:1; 106:1). Psalm 117 is unique in urging the pagan nations specifically to praise the LORD. Paul uses the first line in Romans 15:11 to confirm that all the nations will be blessed in Abraham through Jesus Christ and that the Gentiles will glorify God because of His mercy.

The second line describes why the pagan nations are to praise the LORD. The use of the verb *gabar* is significant. It means to "be superior" or "to be lord over."[47] The LORD has conquered us by the power of His *hesed*, His covenant love. The LORD's faithfulness (*'emet*) stands forever. Two items of biblical importance may be noted in the use of these two terms in the second line. First, *hesed* and *'emet* are part of the associative field of covenants. They can be treated as a hendiadys meaning faithful or reliable covenant love. Or, they may stand as two interconnected parts of God's response to the covenants made with the people of Israel. No matter how many times Israel may be charged with breaking the covenant stipulations and abrogating it, it is the LORD who consistently displays mercy and grace in keeping it. Second, hesed and emet are two of the thirteen attributes contained in God's self-description in Exodus 35:6-7. As an inner-biblical allusion, the psalmist may be highlighting these characteristics of God to draw the reader's attention to consider and ponder that great declaration of God's own character on Sinai.

Theo-logic

Psalm 117 is theocentric. Israel's god, YHWH, features prominently in the psalm in several ways. The tetragrammaton refers to God twice in the psalm: at the beginning of the first line and near the end of the second. The alternate attenuated form *Yah* also occurs as part of the concluding rubric *Hallelujah* or "Praise the Lord."[48] Furthermore, God is the recipient of the praise commanded in the community hymn. In the second line, God is to be praised because his covenant love and faithfulness has conquered His people and exists forever. These two attributes are part of the associative lexicon of the covenant and

[47] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. M.E.J. Richardson (New York: Brill, 2001), 175.

[48] The attenuated divine name of the third element of the Psalm may be intended as an inclusio with the tetragrammaton of the first line.

characteristics of God's nature as self-disclosed to Moses on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 34:6).

Cosmo-logic

The author of Psalm 117 speaks about the world in regard to two communities. The first community belongs to the world. They are "every nation and every tribe." They are recognized as the Gentiles by Paul, and they are commanded by the psalmist to praise and laud Israel's God. The other community is the Israelites. They are the recipients of God's covenant love and faithfulness. Because of God's love and faithfulness to His people, the psalmist identifies himself with this community and feels free to challenge the peoples of the world to praise such a merciful and compassionate God.

Ideo-logic

Psalm 117 possesses a missional and evangelistic message. Even though the Gentiles are called to praise God, the kerygma concerns the people of God. First, they are the recipients of God's *hesed* and *'emet* through the covenants made with Him. It is in God's nature to be forgiving and faithful to His people. This covenant love and faithfulness is greater than any other thing in the world. Second, as a grateful response to this covenantal commitment, the people of God should break out in grateful praise. Finally, this grateful praise for God's *hesed* should result in God's people challenging the people of the world to join them in giving praise to the sovereign God of the world. Calling the world to praise God would immediately include explaining why such praise should be given. The message of the kerygma is that the Lord deserves the praise of the world.

Christo-logic

Psalm 117 is not directly Christological; but this does not mean that the "Christo-logic" question is unnecessary or fruitless. Claiming that Christ may have sung this in the upper room with the disciples at the Last Supper is not the best "Christo-logic" connection. Much stronger is understanding the covenantal basis of the psalm as brought out by Paul in Romans 15:11. Paul's exegesis argues that *God's* faithfulness to the covenantal promises to the fathers (e.g., Genesis 12:3) was responsible for Jesus becoming the Messiah for the Jewish people and the church.

Therefore, as result of God's covenantal love and faithfulness through the New Covenant, the Gentiles are now included among those who glorify God. The psalm is still theocentric, but it is in what the text says about the character of God that the "Christo-logic" can be heard.

Pisteo-logic

Meditating on Psalm 117 should provide enough spiritual food to satisfy the reader. On one level, the "pisteo-logic" question should acknowledge that the character of God's covenant love and faithfulness strengthens our trust and faith in Him. On another, Paul's recognition that these same character traits in God which brought about the promise and fulfillment of the messiah should confirm God's purpose for us because He made it possible for us to become part of the community of praise through that same promise. Finally, it should be said that the faith logic of Psalm 117 encourages us to go to every tribe and every nation to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ (Revelation 7:9). Kidner notes that the summons to praise found in this psalm "recoils on those who use it, with the obligation to make its invitation heard beyond their walls and their immediate circle. The shortest psalm proves, in fact, to be one of the most potent and most seminal."[49]

Conclusion

When applied to even the shortest Psalm, the five orienting questions noted above produce ample material for theological reflection and interpretation. Such a method respects the discrete voice of the Old Testament and seeks to identify and be faithful to the authorial intent of the text itself. Engaging the mind and the heart in this way recognizes the message of the passage for the church as well as the individual believer. Ultimately, reading Psalm 117 as Christian Scripture reminds us that we are called to be witnesses of the Good News of the New Covenant "in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

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[49] Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73:150: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Commentary 16 (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1975), 447.

Midwestern Journal of Theology 19.1 (2020): 17-29

Franklin, Whitefield and Christian Education

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Historians allegedly don't care about the future, but in this reflection piece I want to use history to think about the future, specifically the future of Christian higher education. To do that, I will draw on my recent book *Benjamin Franklin: The Religious Life of a Founding Father* (Yale University Press, 2017). We will especially focus on a debate between Franklin and the great evangelist George Whitefield about the purposes of education. Finally, we will use the Franklin project and the debate over education as a springboard to thinking about what Christian higher education - especially in research and teaching - should be doing now. So we're going to look broadly at Franklin's type of religion, a code of spirituality which has become pervasive in American culture and American education. Then we're going to zoom in on the episode of Whitefield and Franklin's debate, and we'll conclude with a few thoughts about how to maintain Christian commitment in institutions of higher education.[1]

So, to Franklin. In 1787, at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, time dragged as delegates bickered about representation in Congress. Virginia's James Madison insisted that states with more people should possess more power. The small states knew that under the Articles of Confederation - America's existing national government - all states had equal authority, regardless of population. Why should the small states give that power up under a new constitution? The convention might have failed at this point. If it had, the country would have continued to struggle under the inefficient (some said feckless) Articles of government. Or the new American nation might have disintegrated.

[1] Most of this essay is drawn from sections of my book on Franklin. This is also an edited version of a talk I have given on the subject in venues including The Gospel Coalition's 2019 national conference.

At this critical moment, the octogenarian Benjamin Franklin took the floor. Calling for unity, he asked delegates to open sessions with prayer. As they were "groping as it were in the dark to find political truth," he queried, "how has it happened that we have not hitherto once thought of humbly applying to the Father of lights to illuminate our understandings?" If they continued to ignore God, "our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a by-word down to future ages." This man, who called himself a deist, now insisted that delegates should ask God for wisdom. This was strange: classic deists did not believe that God intervened in human affairs.

Even more strange, he was one of the few delegates who thought opening with prayer was a good idea. His motion was tabled. What kind of deist was this elderly man, dressed in his signature Quaker garb, calling on America's greatest political minds to humble themselves before God?

Franklin's work at the Constitutional Convention was the culmination of his spectacular career. There seemed little doubt that George Washington, the imposing Virginia general, would become president of the convention. If there was any competitor for chair, it was the venerable Franklin. ("The very heavens obey him," a dazzled Georgia delegate noted.) This son of Boston Puritans had come a long way to get to that Philadelphia meeting hall. Franklin made his proposal for prayer on June 28. He had lived a long time, he reminded delegates, and he had become ever more certain that God oversaw human affairs. Franklin was convinced that Providence had shepherded Americans through the revolutionary crisis. It was foolish not to call on God again.

He reminded them of the early days of the war, when the Patriots prayed, often in that same room, for God's help. At its best, faith inculcated public-spiritedness and it suffocated selfishness. God had led them to the point where they could now frame the best possible government. "And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend?" he asked. Citing Psalm 127, Franklin said that "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Furthermore, he declared, "I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without his concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel." Prideful strife would confound their work and turn their proceedings into a farce.

This was the most remarkable religious episode of Franklin's life. It was stunning and not just because of the stage on which he was proposing prayer. Franklin was nearly alone among the delegates in wishing to bring prayer into the convention's proceedings. Connecticut's Roger Sherman, one of the most devout Christians in attendance, seconded Franklin's motion. And Virginia's Edmund Randolph proposed that they hire a pastor to preach on Independence Day, less than a week later. That minister could then open subsequent meetings with prayer. Beyond these three men, delegates seemed uninterested in arranging for prayers. Someone pointed out that they had not budgeted funds for a chaplain. Alexander Hamilton worried that calling in a pastor might signal that the convention was becoming desperate. So the motion fizzled. Franklin was exasperated, jotting a note at the bottom of his speech that "*The Convention except three or four persons, thought prayers unnecessary*!!"

Franklin and the convention moved on. Perhaps his prayer speech did remind delegates of the need for compromise, even if it prompted no formal recourse to God. In an address two days after proposing prayer, Franklin explained the root of the tension between the large and small states. Both sides were going to have to give up some demands to ensure a successful outcome. Drawing on earlier discussions regarding a two-house legislature, Franklin suggested that the convention create a House of Representatives with proportional representation and a Senate with equal representation between the states. This became the "Great Compromise," arguably the key settlement of the whole Convention. According to an oft-repeated story, when someone asked Franklin after the convention whether they had created a monarchy or a republic, he replied, "A republic, if you can keep it."

Now - to return to the central question of Franklin and faith. Who was this "Franklin, of Philadelphia," and what did he believe? In our mind's eye, the man seems ingenious, mischievous, and enigmatic. His journalistic, scientific, and political achievements are clear. But what of Ben Franklin's religion? Was Franklin defined by his youthful embrace of deism? His longtime friendship with George Whitefield, the most influential evangelist of the eighteenth century? His work with Thomas Jefferson on the Declaration of Independence, and its invocations of the Creator and of "nature and Nature's God"? Or his solitary insistence on prayer at the convention? When you add Franklin's propensity for joking

about serious matters, he becomes even more difficult to pin down. Regarding Franklin's chameleon-like religion, John Adams remarked that "the Catholics thought him almost a Catholic. The Church of England claimed him as one of them. The Presbyterians thought him half a Presbyterian, and the Friends believed him a wet Quaker."

The key to understanding Franklin's ambivalent faith is the contrast between the skepticism of his adult life and the indelible imprint of his childhood Calvinism. The intense piety of his parents acted as a tether, restraining Franklin's skepticism. As a teenager, he abandoned his parents' Puritan beliefs, but that same traditional faith kept him from getting too far away. He would stretch his moral and doctrinal tether to the breaking point by the end of a youthful sojourn he made to London. When he returned to Philadelphia in 1726, he resolved to conform more closely to his parents' ethical code. He steered away from extreme deism. Could he craft a Christianity centered on virtue, rather than on traditional doctrine and avoid alienating his parents at the same time? More importantly, could he convince the evangelical figures in his life - his sister Jane Mecom and the revivalist George Whitefield - that all was well with his soul? (He would have more success convincing his sister than Whitefield.) When he ran away from Boston as a teenager, he also ran away from the city's Calvinism. But many factors - his Puritan tether, the pressure of relationships with Christian friends and family, disappointments with his own integrity, repeated illnesses, and the growing weight of political responsibility - all kept him from going too deep into the dark woods of radical skepticism.

Franklin explored a number of religious opinions. Even at the end of his life he remained noncommittal about all but a few points of belief. This elusiveness has made Franklin susceptible to many religious interpretations. Some devout Christians, beginning with the celebrated nineteenth-century biographer Parson Mason Weems, have found ways to mold Franklin into a faithful believer. Other Christian writers could not overlook those skeptical statements. The English Baptist minister John Foster wrote in 1818 that "love of the useful" was the cornerstone of Franklin's thought, and that Franklin "substantially rejected Christianity."

One of the most influential interpretations of Franklin's religion appeared in Max Weber's classic study *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905). For Weber, Franklin was a near-perfect example of

how Protestantism, drained of its doctrinal particularity, fostered modern capitalism. Franklin's "The Way to Wealth" (1758), which distilled his best thoughts on frugality and industry, illustrated the spirit of capitalism "in near classical purity, and simultaneously offers the advantage of being detached from all direct connection to religious belief," Weber wrote. For Weber, Franklin's virtues were no longer a matter of just obeying God. Virtue was also useful and profitable.

Many recent scholars have taken Franklin at his word by describing him as a "deist." Others have called him everything from a "stone-cold atheist" to a man who believed in the "active God of the Israelites, the prophets, and the apostles." Deism stands at the center of this interpretive continuum between atheism and Christian devotion. But other than indicating skepticism about traditional Christian doctrine, deism could mean many things in eighteenth-century Europe and America. The beliefs of different "deists" did not always sync up. Some said they believed in the Bible as originally written. Others doubted the Bible's reliability. Some deists believed that God remained involved with life on earth. Others saw God as a cosmic watchmaker, winding up the world and then letting it run on its own. Deism meant different things to Franklin over the course of his long career, too. He did not always explain those variant meanings. I am not opposed to calling Franklin a deist - indeed, I do so in my book - but "deist" does not quite capture the texture or trajectory of Franklin's beliefs.

Instead of focusing on Franklin's writings in isolation, I show how much Franklin's personal experiences shaped his religious beliefs. Like Abraham Lincoln, Franklin's early exposure to skeptical writings undermined his confidence in Christianity, but books alone could not erase Franklin's childhood immersion in Puritan piety. His ongoing relationships with evangelical Christians made it difficult for him to jettison the vocabulary and precepts of traditional faith altogether. Although his view of Providence vacillated, the weight of the American Revolution fostered a renewed belief that history had divine purpose. Franklin and Lincoln - both self-educated sons of Calvinist parents, both of whom had much of the Bible committed to memory - gravitated toward a revitalized sense of God's role over history, as war and constitutional crises racked America in the 1770s for Franklin, and 1860s for Lincoln. Neither man's beliefs could escape the influence of their daily relationships and stressful experiences.

It is difficult to overstate just how deep an imprint the Bible itself made on Franklin's (or Lincoln's) mind, or on his ways of speaking and writing. Even many devout Christians today are unfamiliar with large sections of the Bible (especially in the Old Testament) and do not know much about current theological debates. Franklin knew the Bible backward and forward. It framed the way he spoke and thought. Biblical phrases are ubiquitous in Franklin's vast body of writings. Even as he embraced religious doubts, the King James Bible colored his ideas about morality, human nature, and the purpose of life. It served as his most common source of similes and anecdotes. He even enjoyed preying on friends' ignorance of Scripture in order to play jokes on them.

Franklin's Puritan background and cheerful skepticism formed into a pioneer of a distinctly American kind of religion. I'm tempted to call it an early form of "Sheilaism," the individualist religion described in Robert Bellah's celebrated book *Habits of the Heart* (1985). In Bellah's Sheilaism, the individual conscience is the standard for religious truth, not any external authority. But Franklin's protégé, Thomas Paine, might be a better choice as a founder of Sheilaism, with his declaration in *The Age of Reason* (1794) that "my own mind is my own church." No, Franklin was too tethered to external Christian ethics and institutions to be a forerunner of Sheilaism.

Instead, Franklin was the pioneer of a related kind of faith: *doctrineless, moralized Christianity*. Franklin was an experimenter at heart, and he tinkered with a novel form of Christianity, one where virtually all beliefs became nonessential. The Puritans of his childhood focused too much on doctrine, he thought. He wearied of Philadelphia Presbyterians' zeal for expelling the heterodox, and their lack of interest (as he perceived it) in the mandates of love and charity. For Franklin, Christianity remained a preeminent resource for virtue, but he had no exclusive attachment to Christianity as a religious system or as a source of salvation. In Franklin's estimation, we cannot know for certain whether doctrines such as God's Trinitarian nature are true. But we *do* know that Christians - and the devout of all faiths - are called to benevolence and selfless service. God calls us all to "do good." Doctrinal strife is not only futile but undermines the mandate of virtue.

Doctrineless Christianity, and doctrineless religion, is utterly pervasive today in America. We see it most commonly in major media figures of self-help, spirituality, and success, such as Oprah Winfrey,

Houston megachurch pastor Joel Osteen, and the late Stephen Covey, author of *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (1999). Although they might differ on specifics, the common message of these authors (and their countless followers) is that a life of love, service, and significance is the best life of all.

God will help you live that kind of life, but your faith should be empowering and tolerant, rather than fractious and nit-picking. Sociologist Christian Smith says that these characteristically American beliefs amount to "moralistic therapeutic deism." Many of its most prominent exponents, such as Osteen, live out their faith in particular congregations and traditions. Even Winfrey has testified that "I am a Christian. That is my faith." However, she says, "I'm not asking you to be a Christian. If you want to be one I can show you how. But it is not required." Doctrineless Christians agree that people *may* need to believe in doctrines. Our personal understanding of God can help us. We may need particular beliefs to enable our "best life now," in Osteen's phrase. But ultimately, the focus of doctrineless Christianity is a life of good works, resiliency, and generosity - *now*. Faith helps us to embody disciplined, benevolent success in this life. That's what God wants for us.

It is easy to dismiss this kind of pop faith as peddled by wealthy media superstars, but it is America's most common code of spirituality. And for Franklin, doctrineless, moralized Christianity was serious intellectual business, born out of contemporary religious debates and dissatisfaction with his family's Puritanism. Like many skeptics in the eighteenth century, Franklin was weary of three hundred years of fighting over the implications of the Protestant Reformation. Much of that fighting concerned church authority and particular doctrines. Franklin grew up in a world of intractable conflict between Catholics and Protestants, but also between and within Protestant denominations themselves. What good was Christianity if it precipitated pettiness, persecution, and violence? Unlike some self-help celebrities today, Franklin and his cohort of European and American deists reckoned that in promoting a doctrineless, ethics-focused Christianity, they were redeeming Christianity itself. How successful that redemptive effort was, you all will have to decide for yourselves.

Could you really have a nonexclusive, doctrinally minimal, morality-centered Christianity? Or did the effort fatally compromise Christianity? Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and many of their friends in America,

Britain, and France wanted to give it a try. Thirteen years after Franklin's death, Jefferson wrote that he considered himself "a Christian, in the only sense [Jesus] wished any one to be." He admired Jesus's "moral doctrines" as "more pure and perfect" than any other philosopher's. But to Jefferson, Jesus's excellence was only human. Jesus never claimed to be anything else. Christians, including authors of the New Testament books, imposed the claims of divinity on Jesus after he had gone to his grave and *not* risen again, Jefferson concluded.

Franklin did not go as far as Jefferson. He preferred not to dogmatize, one way or the other, on matters such as Jesus's divinity. In a classic tension that still marks American religion, Franklin's devout parents, his sister Jane, and the Reverend George Whitefield all found doctrineless Christianity dangerous. Yes, they agreed that morality was essential. And yes, it was better not to fight over minor theological issues. But true belief in Jesus was necessary for salvation. To the Puritans and evangelicals, Jesus was fully God and fully man. Doubting that truth put your soul in jeopardy. Jesus had made the way for sinners to be saved, through his atoning death and miraculous resurrection. It was not enough to emulate Jesus's life, as important as that was. More than a moral teacher, Jesus was Lord and Savior. Honoring Christ required belief in doctrinal truth. Franklin was not so sure. Perhaps the Puritans and Presbyterians of his youth had gotten it wrong. Perhaps he was the one who was getting back to Jesus's core teaching. But he was sure that doing good was the grand point.

Franklin and George Whitefield's clashing ideas about religion also became an issue in the founding of the Academy of Philadelphia, a predecessor of the University of Pennsylvania. Franklin's hyperactive mind was always planning new ways to do good. By the early 1740s, he had begun to toy with the concept of an academy for Philadelphia. After some failed earlier attempts, in 1749 he published a note in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* explaining the need for a school where the colony's youths could receive a "polite and learned education." Evangelical Presbyterians, allies of Whitefield, had founded the College of New Jersey in 1746, but it was originally located some eighty miles from Philadelphia. But Franklin hardly envisioned the academy as a sectarian seminary.

Drawing on John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), Franklin's *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania*

(1749) laid out plans for the academy, with educational goals of virtue and practical service. Theology and ancient languages (Greek, Hebrew, and Latin) were de-emphasized. English grammar was a primary emphasis because it was more useful than "foreign and dead languages," Locke had written. Franklin proposed a new canon of English "classicks." "Classics" had usually meant the great texts of Greek and Roman antiquity, but Franklin's students would learn to express themselves best in their everyday language.

Historical studies, however, remained at the center of the curriculum. History, unlike Greek and Latin, inculcated practical values. Students could read English translations of the ancient Greek and Roman histories. Among history's chief benefits were its lessons in morality and the value of religion. Quoting John Milton's *Of Education* (1644), Franklin noted that students would find the historical basis of law "delivered first and with best warrant by Moses" in the Pentateuch. Reading about moral exemplars in the past would remind students of the "advantages of temperance, order, frugality, industry, perseverance" and other virtues. It would also reveal the "necessity of a public religion," he argued. Franklin even noted that pupils would learn of the "excellency of the Christian Religion above all others ancient or modern." But on that subject, Franklin was terse.

For explanation of Christianity's value, he footnoted Scottish moral philosopher and Anglican minister George Turnbull's *Observations upon Liberal Education* (1742). Franklin restated Turnbull's view regarding the "excellence of true Christianity above all other religions." Turnbull had contended that Christianity was the best known source of virtue: "That the persuasion of a divine providence, and a future state of rewards and punishments, is one of the strongest incitements to virtue, and one of the most forcible restraints from vice, can hardly be doubted," he wrote. Turnbull's view of Christianity's practical benefits tracked closely with Franklin's own convictions.

What, then, was the aim of the academy? What was the proper goal of education? For Franklin, it was to impress upon the students the desire "to serve mankind, one's country, friends, and family." Franklin knew that some potential supporters would balk at such a human-centered vision. Thus, in an extended footnote, he insisted that the aim of service to mankind was another way of saying the "glory and service of God." Here Franklin was re-stating his notion of true religion: "Doing good to

men is the only service of God in our power; and to imitate his beneficence is to glorify him." Franklin quoted Milton to bolster his point, even though Milton seems to have shared the older Christian view of education, that students should first learn about and glorify God. Milton wrote that the "end of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents, by regaining to know God aright." Knowing God aright would lead us to love God and to imitate him. This would produce virtue, in Milton's formula. Locke and Turnbull were closer to Franklin's view on this matter. For them, virtue was learning's primary aim, not a secondary result.

Franklin arranged for the underutilized New Building, a preaching venue supporters had built for the itinerating George Whitefield, to become the academy's home. He knew that using the building required Whitefield's support, so he sent the itinerant a copy of his plan. Whitefield loved the idea of the school. He did not love the absence of Jesus in the *Proposals*, however. The school "is certainly calculated to promote polite literature," Whitefield told Franklin, "but I think there wants aliquid Christi [something of Christ] in it." The itinerant appreciated the *Proposals'* recognition of Christianity's superior merit, but Franklin mentioned the topic too late and moved on from it too quickly. Virtue in this life was not the main point of education, according to Whitefield. In the context of eternity, this life would pass in a blink. Thus, the great focus of Christian education was not this world but the next. Every Christian school should seek to convince students "of their natural depravity, of the means of recovering out of it, and of the necessity of preparing for the enjoyment of the Supreme Being in a future state. These are the grant points in which Christianity centers. Arts and sciences may be built on this, and serve to embellish and set off this superstructure, but without this, I think there cannot be any good foundation." In case Franklin had not gotten the point, Whitefield circled back at the end of a long letter, saying that he would pray for God to show Franklin how "to promote the best end; I mean, the glory of GOD, and the welfare of your fellow-creatures." Unsurprisingly, the preacher also suggested that each student practice oratory for a couple of hours each day. Franklin's plans for the academy stumbled along until 1755, when the College, Academy and Charitable Schools of Philadelphia, formally received its charter.

I will conclude with reflections on the future of Christian higher education, partly informed by that debate between Franklin and Whitefield. Some of these issues are quite specific to the life of a college or university, so forgive me if some of them don't directly apply to you. My first observation is that those of us who are believers teaching at *Christian institutions are especially well-positioned to address issues of belief and spirituality.* Our students obviously need some good shepherding on these matters, but the watching world also needs lots of believing scholars to be able to represent the promise and pitfalls of faith across the disciplines. Of course, there's always room for strong Christian scholarship that makes no direct connection to faith - but it should be no surprise or embarrassment that many believing scholars and teachers will gravitate toward matters related to religion, virtue, and related topics. My hope is that Christian scholars, indeed, will have a winsome testimony by producing some of the highest-quality, most incisive and critical work on religion - I think of examples like the late Jean Bethke Elshtain in political philosophy (Elshtain's library is now housed at Baylor, by the way), Alvin Plantinga in philosophy, and George Marsden (my doctoral advisor) in history as people who have garnered the highest recognition within their disciplines as people of open Christian profession.

Aspiring to do that status, and actually doing it, are of course not the same thing, but it can be done. If we don't do our part, the gap will be filled by Christian popular writers on history, philosophy, apologetics, and other topics. Those writers may be responsible, or they may not be, but they will almost always have no presence in high-ranking academic discussions. But we need to testify that there is a long tradition of the Christian life of the mind. We are modeling that tradition for our students, who will go on to be the next generation of parents, pastors, and teachers, passing on that tradition to the next generation.

A second point I would emphasize is that Christian educators need to see themselves as *called to outreach for the sake of the Christian mind.* The primary point of outreach is our students, so this is something that every single Christian faculty member can do, whatever his or her other audiences. But there will be some of us who also reach out to broader popular audiences or in broader intellectual debates. I have published books like this Franklin biography with Yale University Press, but I also blog at The Gospel Coalition and am active in outreach on Facebook and

Twitter. Thinking again about my previous point about the pop Christian experts, Christian academics have spent too much time wringing their hands about the work of those popularizers but not actually reaching out themselves. The good news is that social media and blogging have narrowed the distance and lowered the expense of reaching out to that elusive "popular audience." But some of us have to be willing to engage, and department chairs and other administrators have to be ok with, or to even reward, such outreach activities. In an era when the value of college education, in general, is very much in question, scholars having an active public presence is one obvious way to make the case for relevance and value.

In higher education, of course, popular outreach can never substitute for outstanding teaching or scholarly expertise, and I can understand discouraging faculty from blogging and similar activities if they are on tenure track or needing to bolster their research credentials. But I always find it strange that my blogging - usually at least 52 posts a year, with each post garnering thousands of page views - has no category in which to fit in annual performance reviews. Obviously, tweets don't count either, although *Baylor Magazine* did do a nice write-up on Baylor faculty and social media in which my work was included - I know I am primarily connected with some readers here through Twitter. How will we reach a general audience, and pastors and other Christian leaders in particular, if we are not engaged in that work?

The final point I would make regarding the future of Christian higher education is that we likely won't have much of a future if we are not *intentionally, overtly Christian*. I don't have to remind you that there are enormous cultural and bureaucratic pressures coming against us not to be intentionally and overtly Christian. But even if all we care about is student recruitment and tuition dollars, it is hard to imagine why parents would send their student to a Christian college or university that isn't all that Christian anymore. I have certainly visited Christian colleges that have functionally dropped any overt Christian commitment. Some of those schools, regrettably, are on the edge of closing their doors. I realize that the threat to the viability of Christian schools is a much more complicated story than just whether a college stays faithful or not. But for our discussion today, we have to think about what in-particular makes our Christian college distinct from the public school, or secular private school down the road. (I certainly found robust Christian student

groups at Clemson, my alma mater and a public university - and the reigning national champions in football, if you hadn't heard.) It's not enough to have a generically Christian "ethos" of being caring and kind - what liberal arts college would not profess to have that? It's also not enough to Christianize the educational philosophy developed by our friends at secular institutions. Even just having Christian content in student life is not enough - if all I want is Christian student life options, I can find unofficial but powerful versions of that at public universities across the country.

We could examine any number of ways that overt Christian commitment might manifest itself, from required chapel, to mission-oriented administrative decision-making - and I know many of you have given a great deal of thought to such questions. From my perspective on the faculty, the number one issue in maintaining an intentional Christian commitment is faculty hiring. Whether or not you have a statement of faith, Christian schools must go to the next level with prospective faculty candidates and ask probing questions about their involvement with and service in their church. If we expect them to represent the Christian life of the mind before our students, they must be articulate about the Christian life of the mind in their job interview. Are *any* faculty candidates being turned down because of a lack of mission fit, in spite of their other appealing qualifications? If that's never happening, I would suggest it is time to revisit how you are handing your hiring practices, in order to maintain that intentional Christian mission.

In summary, let's make sure amidst all our other plans, that our Christian college or university does not lack "aliquid Christi"- something of Christ. Even better, let's seek to have our schools manifest the fullness of Christ. I believe that if we are outreach-oriented, intentionally Christian, and if we focus on areas of strength where we are likely to make the biggest impact, there can be a vibrant future for Christian higher education.

Midwestern Journal of Theology 19.1 (2020): 30-44

Equipping for Life: Excellence in Parenting

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In a post on the Gospel Coalition website, we identified a focus on character development as "The Missing Ingredient in Our Parenting."[1] This post, in turn, distills the essence of chapter 7 in our book, *Equipping for Life: A Guide for New, Aspiring, and Struggling Parents*.[2] We've been parents for almost 30 years to four children, two boys and two girls, ranging from 26 to 17 in age. Our oldest daughter got married a little over a year ago. She works in public relations and lives with her husband in New York City. Our second daughter is a registered dietician and works in Charlotte, N.C.. Our oldest son works for Chick-fil-A in southern Florida, and our youngest is a senior in high school. Our oldest went to the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the next two attended NC State, and our youngest has been accepted at KU, Kansas State, and Mizzou but is holding out for UNC. We homeschooled all four of our children for the vast majority of their elementary, middle, and high school education, with occasional exceptions. In our experience, even Christian parents often put education above character development, which equips their children well for getting into a good college and moving into a competitive career but prepares them less effectively for serving Christ and his kingdom. What we'd like to do in this paper is to wed some of the insights we share in our parenting book with a previous

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[1] https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/responsible-parenting-priority-character. Accessed 7/23/19.

[2] Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2018; an abridgment, *Parenting Essentials*, is forthcoming in July 2020.

book I Andreas, have written on scholarly excellence where I touch on God's call to excellence for every person and to make a case for the importance of 'excellence in parenting' as we equip our children for life.

Biblical Foundations

Scripture provides a solid foundation for a discussion of excellence in parenting. For our purposes, we will briefly touch on three primary passages or sets of passages in Scripture: (1) the book of Proverbs; (2) the Sermon on the Mount, and in particular the Beatitudes; and (3) the list of virtues in 2 Peter 1:3–11.[3] The book of Proverbs is an excellent place to start, as its very purpose is bound up with equipping young men (and by extension, young women) for a life of wisdom. Combing through the entire book, we can glean the following list of virtues and characteristics parents should seek to instill in their children:[4]

- Diligence and industriousness (6:6–11; 11:27; 12:24; 13:4; 15:19; 18:9; 19:24; 20:4, 13; 21:5; 22:13; 26:13–16)
- Justice (11:1; 16:11; 17:23; 20:10, 23; 31:8–9)
- Kindness (11:17)
- Generosity (11:24; 19:6)
- Self-control, particularly of speech (12:18; 13:3; 21:23) and temper (14:17, 29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; see also 25:28)
- Righteousness (12:21, 28; 14:34)
- Truthfulness and honesty (12:22; 16:13; 24:26)
- Discretion in choosing friends (13:20; 18:24) and a spouse (18:22; 31:10–31)
- Caution and prudence (14:16; 27:12)
- Gentleness (15:1, 4)
- Contentment (15:16–17; 16:8; 17:1)
- Integrity of character (15:27; 28:18)

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[3] Other relevant passages include Gal 5:22–23 and Phil 4:8 (on which see briefly below), as well as the virtues mentioned in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus. On the latter, see my *Commentary on 1-2 Timothy and Titus*, BTCP (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017), esp. the unit on "The Christian Life."

[4] The list is taken from Andreas J. Köstenberger with David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (2nd ed.; Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 95–96. All Scripture references are to the book of Proverbs.

- Humility (16:19; 18:12; 22:4)
- Graciousness (16:24)
- Forthrightness (rather than duplicity; 16:30; 17:20)
- Restraint (17:14, 27–28; 18:6–7; 29:20)
- Faithfulness in friendship (17:17) and otherwise (28:20)
- Purity (20:9; 22:11)
- Vigorous pursuit of what is good and right (20:29)
- Skillfulness in their work (22:29); and
- Patience (25:15)

To this we may add the virtues Jesus names at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, though there is some overlap (Matt 5:3–10; cf. Luke 6:20b–23):

- Poverty in spirit (Luke: poverty; cf. Isa 61:1)
- Mourning over sin (Luke: weep; cf. Isa 61:2)
- Humility or meekness (cf. Ps 37:11: "But the meek shall inherit the land")
- Hunger and thirst for righteousness (i.e., justice; Luke: hunger; cf. Ps 107:5, 9)
- Mercy toward others (cf. Prov 14:21b; Prov 17:5c LXX)
- Purity of heart (cf. Ps. 24:3–4; 51:10; 73:1)
- Peacemaking (crying out for justice, but not taking matters into one's own hand); and
- Bearing under persecution for righteousness's sake (a likely reality for the readers)

Many of these virtues relate to the experience of being needy or even rejected; others pertain to relationships with others (such as being merciful or peacemakers).[5] None of these dispositions is intrinsic to fallen human nature; all are God-initiated and Spirit-wrought—they don't come naturally! Cultivating those virtues in our children's hearts

[5] Cf. Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, WBC 33A (Dallas: Word, 1993), 90–91. Hagner (ibid., 88, 91) also notes that the word "blessed" (*makarios*), while being found also in Hellenistic literature, has firm roots in the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g., Ps. 1:1).

poses challenges in the context of a culture that is awash in materialism, consumerism, and self-indulgence.

In addition to the Beatitudes, Jesus urged his followers that their righteousness ought to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt 5:20; cf. 6:33). He also noted that anger is tantamount to spiritual murder and lust akin to spiritual adultery (Matt 5:21–30). His followers should not retaliate (Matt 5:38–42) and even love their enemies (Matt 5:43–47). In an aspirational sense, they must strive to be morally perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect (Matt 5:48; cf. Deut 18:13). This is a very high standard indeed—emulating the Father rather than comparing oneself to others—in fact, it is humanly impossible to attain. Jesus here enunciates kingdom characteristics that can be fostered only by the Holy Spirit's work in a believer's life. The implications for parenting are palpable, as we will develop further below.

The third relevant passage is found toward the end of the NT canon in 2 Peter 1:3-4, where the apostle writes that God's "divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by (or to) his own glory and goodness. By these," Peter continues, "he [i.e., God] has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire." Based on our relationship with Christ, and our participation in God's very own nature (presumably through the Spirit) in keeping with God's great and precious promises, Peter issues the following exhortation, employing a literary device called *sorites* (a series of building blocks; cf. Rom 5:3–5):

"For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your

- faith with goodness,
- goodness with knowledge,
- knowledge with self-control,
- self-control with endurance,
- endurance with godliness,
- godliness with brotherly affection, and
- brotherly affection with love." (2 Pet 1:5–7)

While it is not immediately apparent how exactly these virtues build upon each other, the list spans from faith to love.[6] Most likely, these virtues are "to give a general impression of the kind of virtuous life which the Christian faith should foster."[7] In the list, faith is presented as the foundation for all subsequent virtues. "Goodness" is a general reference to virtue (*aretē*); the term was rarely used in Christian circles (but see Phil 4:8), most likely because in the Hellenistic world virtue typically referred to human moral self-effort and achievement. "Knowledge" refers to knowledge of God, including wisdom and discernment. "Self-control" (*egkrateia*) corresponds to "the Stoic ideal of the free man who is his own master and to the kind of Hellenistic dualism which sought to minimize the soul's entanglements with material things and therefore valued self-restraint and ascetic control of the bodily passions."[8] "Endurance" (*hypomonē*) denotes perseverance in the face of suffering and adversity as a person entrusts herself to God in faith. "Godliness" (*eusebeia*; cf. 1 Tim 6:11) is a broad term similar to "virtue." "Brotherly love" (*philadelphia*) refers to family relationships in the church among brothers and sisters in Christ, and "love" (*agapē*) is the crowning Christian virtue as in Paul's writings.

Following this list of virtues, Peter adds, "For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 8). By contrast, Peter writes, "The person who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins" (v. 9). He concludes, "Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble. For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you" (vv. 10–11).

In short, Peter here presents God as benefactor, who has given believers everything they need to live a godly life in and through their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. On the basis of God's gracious provision, united with Christ and partaking of the divine nature of the Spirit, believers are able to escape worldly, sinful corruption and are called to actively pursue Christian

[6] Cf. Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC 50; Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 184–85.
[7] Ibid., 185.
[8] Ibid., 186.

virtues through a committed pursuit of moral excellence. In this way, they will confirm their election, put their knowledge of God to effective use, and ensure their future entrance into God's kingdom and their eternal destiny.

While obviously not limited to parenting, we believe that these passages—the book of Proverbs, the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount, and the list of virtues in 2 Peter 1—provide an excellent framework for the development of character in Christian parenting. In my (Andreas) book on excellence, I provide as an additional framework chapters on the excellence of God as well as on holiness and spirituality. As we've seen, Peter refers to God's calling of believers "by (or to) his own glory and excellence" (2 Pet 1:3); the Greek words used are *doxa* for "glory" and *arētē* for "excellence." The latter term recurs twice in v. 5 and elsewhere in the NT only in Phil 4:8 in a similar list of virtues and—in the plural—in a quote from Isa 43:21 in 1 Pet 2:9. In these passages, believers are called to pursue moral excellence based on God's excellence or, in the case of the reference in 1 Peter, proclaim the excellent qualities of their magnificent God.

In my (Andreas) book on excellence, I identify three primary areas of excellence: vocational, moral, and relational (cf. the discussion of the Matthean Beatitudes above). On a foundational level, we believe that God himself, in his very own nature, is the grounds of all excellence, and that it is God's will for creatures whom he has made in his image to emulate his moral excellence and holiness, a call that is both central to and universal in biblical ethics. We also believe that sanctification is fundamentally, and from beginning to end, the work of the Holy Spirit, over against alternative notions of spirituality that detract from the centrality of the Spirit or substitute human self-effort or mystical experience for the Spirit's presence and sanctifying activity in the lives of believers.[9] We further believe that human moral effort is properly based on God's grace which has been extended to believers on the basis of Christ's finished cross-work and is appropriated through life in the Spirit as set forth in passages such as Romans 8.[10]

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[9] See the above-mentioned chapter on spirituality in *Excellence* and a forthcoming full-length study on sanctification co-authored by the two of us.

[10] See here my (Andreas) forthcoming book, co-authored with Gregg R. Allison, *The Holy Spirit* (Theology for the People of God; Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020).

At the same time, however, the NT writers—including Peter—regularly call on believers to exert moral effort. Peter, as we've seen, after speaking of God's divine power which has granted to believers all things that pertain to living a godly life, goes on to write, "For this very reason, make every effort by means of your faith to add moral excellence" (my paraphrase)[11] accompanied by a list of other godly virtues (2 Pet 1:3–5). Paul similarly urges believers to "work out [their] salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in [them], both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil 2:12–13). Properly understood, therefore, God's gracious salvation provided in Christ is intended to stir in believers a grateful response of living a holy life in the service of God, unlike the "ungodly people" condemned by Jude "who pervert[ed] the grace of our God into sensuality and den[ied their] only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). Peter, similarly, speaks of believers "having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire" (2 Pet 1:4).

In this way, while Proverbs and the Beatitudes provide a series of virtues that characterize wisdom and mark citizens of God's kingdom, it is 2 Peter which provides a Christological, pneumatological, and even trinitarian framework enabling believers to pursue a godly life of moral excellence-a framework that can be used profitably in Christian parenting as well. The seven virtues Peter singles out for special attention are: (1) goodness or moral excellence; (2) knowledge; (3) self-control; (4) endurance; (5) godliness; (6) brotherly affection; and (7) love. The list calls to mind several virtue lists in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus where he calls his apostolic delegates to pursue Christian character traits in order to set an example for other believers in their respective congregations. Margaret will now apply the seven virtues in the list in 2 Peter specifically to the task of Christian parenting.

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[11] Cf. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 184, who states categorically, "The usual English rendering, 'add to your faith virtue' (AV), is not what the Greek says." He adds, "Moral effort is required because Christ has given us (a) everything necessary for godly life (v 3); and (b) the promises of immortality (v 4). We cannot expect to escape the mortality which is due to sin (v 4) unless we ourselves avoid sin and make moral progress, the spiritual resources for which are available to every Christian through the knowledge of Christ he received when he became a Christian (v 3)" (ibid.).

Putting a Priority on Character Development in Parenting

How does one inculcate characteristics such as moral excellence, self-control, or godliness in one's children? The first important prerequisite is *making character development the number one priority*. Many parents, while believing that character is important, actually prioritize education while expecting that their children will pick up character along the way. They believe that sending their children to a Christian private school, dropping them off at Sunday School or youth group, and so forth will be sufficient to ensure that they develop character. However, given the general state of the culture, and the fact that the world has invaded the church with a vengeance so that the two realms have often become virtually indistinguishable from one another, means that character development by osmosis is a pipedream. As Paul writes in Romans, only those who, by the mercies of God, offer their lives as a living sacrifice to God as their spiritual worship will experience the inner transformation needed to keep them from being conformed to the world around them (Rom. 12:1–2). This calls for an intentional strategy of disciple-making and spiritual character formation in parenting.

Second, as hinted at in the previous point, *parents must accept responsibility for parenting their children*, even during the notoriously difficult middle and high school years. In *Equipping for Life*, we call for "3R parenting": an approach to childrearing that is realistic, relational, and responsible. This approach grounds parenting in a realistic appraisal of the sin nature of both parents and children, a commitment to engage young people deeply in their thinking, affections, and decision-making, especially during their teenage years, and a consistent effort to hold them accountable and to keep communicating as young people's identities are increasingly formed. What this means is that parents must not simply subcontract parenting to other people or authority figures in their children's lives, whether teachers, coaches, or even pastors. While young people need mentors and role models, the father and mother are irreplaceable.

To continue being engaged with their children's lives, parents will often need to assert themselves over against efforts by school administrators and teachers, church youth leaders and, of course, peers to supplant and sideline parents and to keep them from having any meaningful role in and impact on their children's lives. While perhaps well meaning, such schools, churches, and colleges, in effect, tell parents

to "go away" so that they can educate and shape the thinking of our children. And often as parents we are cowardly or uncaring enough to comply. Partnership with other formative influences in our children's lives, yes; relinquish our role as parents and step aside so others can raise our own children, no. Also, we cannot be careful enough in screening influences to determine if they are wholesome or detrimental. This means we must take the time and care enough to get to know our children's friends and the world in which they live. It also means we need to learn about smart phones and social media and a whole lot of other things, such as the movies they watch, the music they listen to, and the company they keep.

The third important point to remember in putting a *priority on character formation* in our children is *to do so in our own lives*. We may not always be able to influence our children in a Godward direction as they assuredly have minds of their own, but we can put a priority on character in our *own* lives. Our children can smell hypocrisy from a mile away, and nothing will turn them off from our faith faster than our failure to consistently apply to our own lives what we claim to believe and expect of others. While, of course, no one is perfect and we all make mistakes, we must strive to be people of impeccable integrity. In fact, even when we fail, we can model how we respond to falling short and acknowledge and correct our mistakes. Our children were greatly impacted by the way Andreas responded to a mistake he made 20 years ago that only came to light a couple years ago. When the mistake came to light, he immediately took the initiative to correct it. He accepted full responsibility, apologized to the parties involved, and even made appropriate restitution. As a result, our children's respect and esteem for their father grew exponentially.

Fourth, the first three points may have sounded like the musings of an overprotective parent. However, we don't advocate helicopter parenting. *Protective* parents, yes; *overprotective*, no. The model we espouse in this regard is based off of the principle enunciated by Jesus in his high-priestly prayer: *in* the world, but not *of* the world (John 17:6–11). Jesus didn't just send his disciples into the world without proper preparation. Rather, he trained and instructed them and then cautioned them and gave them specific marching orders (John 17:18; 20:21–22). Applied to parenting, we believe parents should *first equip* their children and *then* send them into the world. This means that we should try to

inculcate into our children a stable core of convictions—character—that will provide them with proper grounding when the storms of life threaten to overwhelm them in the form of cultural influences, sinful temptations, and peer pressure.

Fifth, parents need to *take a realistic stance toward the major enemies of parenting*, which can be summarized by the unholy triumvirate of the world, the flesh, and the devil. These are real enemies, and we neglect each and every one of them at our grave peril. Let's not underestimate the power of these enemies, especially in combination with one another. Only the holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit is able to overcome this unholy triumvirate and to enable parents and children to gain and keep the upper hand over these deadly foes. Satan would like nothing more than to disrupt and destroy your marriage and family and will actively work toward that end. This is why parents, likewise, must be strategic, fully committed, and intentional in praying for their children, in working toward their children's conversion, and in helping to build Christlike character in them. In this regard, remember the example of righteous Job, who would "rise early in the morning" and intercede for each of his children (Job 1:5).

Sixth, in a related point, *character formation is often neglected even in our Christian churches and subculture where most attention is given to activities and doing rather than being*. To some extent this is understandable, as *doing* is more visible, measurable, and identifiable and provides an immediate thrill and moment of gratification. As parents, it's easy to focus on our children's success in school—grades, awards, and achievements in sports, music, or otherwise. It's *not* as easy, though infinitely more important, to work at exercising self-control in dealing with adversity, such as when things don't go our way (e.g., the umpire makes a bad call, parents say no to a request, etc.). As Tedd Tripp pointed out in his widely influential book years ago, parents must shepherd their child's heart.[12] This, of course, presupposes that we are not so preoccupied with our own lives that we can take the time to genuinely care for our children's hearts and that we are aligned with God's purposes in this world and in our own lives.

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[12] Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 1995; rev. and up. ed. 2005).

Specific Virtues

Moral excellence

For the remainder of our time, let's now turn to some of the virtues mentioned in the above-cited 2 Peter passage. The first such virtue is moral excellence. The book of Proverbs, Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, and Peter all call for righteousness, or, as Jesus puts it, "a hunger and thirst for righteousness." This heartfelt hunger and thirst for righteousness can only be grounded in Christ himself who "knew no sin but became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor 5:21).

As parents, we should promote and encourage scrupulous honesty and integrity in all our dealings with one another and with others, no matter how small. This is often a grey area where we condone seemingly small moral shortcuts and compromises, failing to realize that we nonetheless model and encourage dishonesty. The opportunities to teach integrity are virtually endless. This includes honesty in doing one's schoolwork and, if you're homeschooling your children, matters such as not misreporting or inflating grades, to give just a few examples.

Knowledge

The next virtue on Peter's list is knowledge (*gnōsis*). Whether through catechisms, AWANA, or other means, the church and parents have sought to teach children and young people about the content of the Christian faith. As Bible teachers and scholars, we are often lacking as we teach our *students* how to interpret Scripture and impart various bits of Bible knowledge such as introductory matters and doctrine survey but fail to do the same with our children. Timothy's grandmother, Lois, and mother, Eunice, serve as powerful examples (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14–15).

Notably, Peter concludes his second letter by writing, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet 3:18). This shows that in God's economy grace and knowledge are inextricably linked. While memorizing Bible passages is good, therefore, we should focus not primarily on achievement (such as earning a Timothy Award at AWANA) but on growth in grace and godliness. Bible knowledge should not foster spiritual pride but be translated into heart transformation and humble service of others.

Self-control

Biblically speaking, self-control (*egkrateia*) entails not only controlling one's temper, speech, or bodily urges and appetites (though it includes self-restraint in those areas) but extends further to cultivating a healthy, sensible way of thinking in approaching a given issue.[13] The book of Acts records how Paul reasoned with the Roman governor Felix "about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment" (Acts 24:25). This places self-control within the framework of God's final judgment and reminds us that we will all be held accountable for our actions. The term is also one of the "fruit of the Spirit" mentioned by Paul (Gal 5:23); elsewhere it refers to self-control in the sexual arena (1 Cor 7:9) and to the kind of self-discipline required of successful athletes (1 Cor 9:25).

In keeping with the biblical emphasis on self-control and wholesome thinking, as parents we should be concerned to help our children develop healthy and godly ways of thinking and decision-making and teach them the virtue of self-restraint and self-control. Now that our son is 22 years old, we've moved mostly to the roles of sounding board and advisor. Occasionally, as we listen to him when he explains to us how he thinks through a given issue, we find ourselves thinking, "I like the way he thinks." For a parent, this is immensely gratifying. In fact, equipping our children to think rightly in keeping with scriptural values and convictions and to make decisions accordingly is one of the most important goals as we raise our children to become responsible adults.

Endurance

The next building block in Peter's list of virtues is endurance (*hypomonē*). Biblically speaking, endurance is often engendered by adversity.[14] "Count it all joy, my brothers," James writes, "when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces *steadfastness*. And let *steadfastness* have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (Jas 1:2–4). Similarly, Paul writes, "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces *endurance*, and *endurance* produces

[13] A related expression is *sōphrosunē* and related terms, which literally means "being of a sound (or healthy) mind" (cf. Acts 26:25; Rom 12:3; 1 Tim 2:9, 15; 3:2; 2 Tim 1:7; Titus 1:8; 2:2, 4, 5, 6, 12; 1 Pet 4:7).

[14] See, e.g., 2 Cor 1:6; 6:4. See also the virtue lists including endurance in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus (1 Tim 6:11; 2 Tim 3:10; Titus 2:2).

character, and character produces hope" (Rom 5:3–4; cf. 8:25). Later, he prays, "May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 15:4–6). Surely this should be every parent's prayer: that "the God of endurance and encouragement" may grant our families "to live in such harmony with one another" that together as families we "may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

How do we cultivate patience and endurance in our children? By God's grace and by the enablement of the Holy Spirit, we first seek to exhibit patience and endurance in our own lives and as we deal with our children and one another, especially when facing conflict or adversity. This also requires a certain measure of conflict resolution skills, diligent communication, and the inner peace that comes from having been made right with God. Rightly understood, endurance is a thoroughly God-given and Spirit-engendered virtue that is grounded in a grace-based work of the Holy Spirit rather than merely being a result of human effort. Thus, we should not try to push our children harder to stand firm in the face of adversity but teach them, and model for them, that we can successfully bear up under trials only in reliance on the Holy Spirit.

Godliness

The next virtue in Peter's list is godliness (*eusebeia*). Interestingly, the word occurs almost exclusively in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus and Peter's second letter.[15] The reference to godliness at the beginning of the letter uses "godliness" as an all-encompassing virtue when Peter affirms that God's "divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and *godliness*" (2 Pet 1:3). The reference to godliness toward the end of 2 Peter provides a fitting commentary: "Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and *godliness*" (2 Pet 3:11). Again, the passage strikes a note of accountability in view of God's end-time judgment. Godliness, therefore, constitutes the bookends of Peter's second letter.

As parents, we will do well to inculcate a fear of God and a holy reverence of him in our children. Truly, godliness is a rare commodity in

[15] The sole exception is Acts 3:12. See 1 Tim 2:2; 3:16; 4:7, 8; 6:3, 5, 6, 11; 2 Tim 3:5; Titus 1:1; 2 Pet 1:3, 6, 7; 3:11.

our world today. As Paul writes to Timothy, "While bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (1 Tim 4:8). Why, then, do we as parents spend entire weekends on the baseball field but take little time talking to our children about God and what it takes to live a life pleasing to him?

Brotherly affection and love

The last two terms in Peter's list of virtues, similar to Paul's teaching (Gal 5:22–23; 1 Corinthians 13), stress the importance of love (*philadelphia* and *agapē*, respectively). There surely is a lot of hatred, gossip, slander, and bullying in our schools and families, including Christian ones. Pure, holy love can emanate only from a regenerate, purified heart. As Peter writes in his first letter, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love (*philadelphia*), love (*agapaō*) one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again … through the living and abiding word of God" (1 Pet 1:22–23). As parents, let's pray and work toward our children's spiritual regeneration and introduce them to the "living and abiding" word of God. Only in this way will they be able to love others "earnestly from a pure heart."

Conclusion

In this short paper, we have attempted to highlight the importance of character development in parenting. While this may seem obvious in theory, parents often fail in this regard to practice. In fact, while many of us make a concerted effort to help our children academically, so they can get into a good college and be positioned well for a successful career, we often expect character to develop almost automatically. This is a serious mistake. Character development requires a concerted focus and commitment on the part of both the parents and the child (or young man or woman).

What is more, both the father and the mother need to be united and individually committed to pursue godly character in their own lives and to have a plan—a strategy—for fostering godly character in their children. While there is no magic formula, and growth in character is harder to measure quantitatively than winning a trophy or performing at

a recital, we must give proper priority to encouraging grace-based, Spirit-engendered moral excellence in our children.

Let's not settle for a goal of raising children who are successful in the world's eyes and who, for the most part, are good citizens and church members and stay out of trouble. As committed Christians, who truly love our children and desire to be God's instruments as parents, let's raise the bar and aim to raise children who have a heart to glorify God, who love and serve him, and who, in turn, will raise children to do the same.

Midwestern Journal of Theology 19.1 (2020): 45-57

A Theological Understanding of the Effects of Addictive Habits in Cultivating Addictive Desires

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Addiction intersects with the dynamics of inner-man and outer-man: of heart and habit. There are both physiological complexities of addiction and complexities found within the habits of a person. In addition to physiology and habits, there are also complexities of wayward desires for the addicted person. Desires that are cultivated through physiology and habits.

In the complexity of addiction, we can offer a theological understanding of addiction based on the same compassionate care of the biblical authors. For instance, in Philippians 2, Paul illumines our understanding of the effects of our habitual actions on our desires. In this paper, I will demonstrate the exegetical flow of Philippians 2, the emphatic call for the Philippians to habitually obey (v. 12), and how the outward expression of habitual obedience affects inward desire change (v. 13) through God's work in a person's life.

The addictive habits of a person cultivate addictive desires, and those addictive desires are re-oriented through faithful habits of obedience to the will of God in a person's life. This is a theological understanding of addiction. Moreover, the psychosomatic interplay of heart and habit are leveraged for the sanctification of the Christian when the Christian understands the Pauline emphasis of Philippians 2—heart and habits. Thus, wayward addictive habits and desires can change through the work of God in a person's life.

From this Pauline understanding of heart and habits, we can then offer compassionate care to those caught in the vicious cycle of addiction.

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Our faithful Creator has left us with direction for wayward, addictive habits and wayward, addictive desires.

Introduction and Thesis

What is the interplay of addictive habits with addictive desires? To say it another way, how does that which a person frequently does shape what a person desires to do? In the conversation of addiction, there are two things that drug abuse does for a person: the first is it cultivates physiological cravings. In this paper the physiological addiction to a substance will be referred to as *craving*. However, the second effect of drug use is that it cultivates *desires*. *Desires* are not physiological cravings; instead this term refers to the inner man and his immaterial *desire* for drug use. The body can physiologically crave a substance, and the heart can desire it (Mark 7:21-23). Yet, it is the habit of substance abuse in a person's body that cultivates both physiological cravings and desires for those substances. This is where habits become of utmost importance. The frequent practices in which you engage shape your desires in addition to your physiological cravings. Conversely, a person does not desire, nor crave, that which they have never experienced. It takes frequent practice to cultivate desire *and* craving in this context and this frequent practice is a habit.[2]

The Apostle Paul understood and advanced the idea of frequent practice influencing desire. Perhaps the clearest understanding of this is demonstrated in Philippians 2:12-13, where Paul speaks of regular obedience and the change of desires that God brings about in a believer's life. *My thesis is that Philippians 2:12-13 demonstrates that frequent practices of obedience by the believer cultivate godly desires.* In this paper, I will exposit Philippians 2:1-13, demonstrate how the outward expression

[2] The author is differentiating between craving and desire to illustrate that both are developed through the frequent practice of substance abuse in the context of addiction. Frequent practice is said to be the backbone of all habit development. "… Every step a man takes he goeth into a new horizon, and gets a further prospect into truth. Motion is promoted by motion, actions breed habits, habits fortify the powers, [and] the new life grows stronger and fuller of spirit" in James Nichols, *Puritan Sermons, 1659-1689*, vol. 4 (Wheaton, IL: R.O. Roberts, 1981), 376. Thomas Doolittle, another English Puritan said: "Moral habits are acquired and strengthened by frequently-repeated acts, and more easily discerned" Nichols 1:276.

of habitual obedience affects inward desire change through God's work in a person's life, and provide a few supporting historical anecdotes.[3] After examining this flow, I will seek to demonstrate the importance of understanding addictive habits as they affect addictive desires.

I. Key Definitions

Habits have been historically understood in two ways: virtues and frequent practices.[4] From Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas to the English Puritans and William James, the regular teaching about habits has focused on been the everyday, frequent practices in which we engage and also the character of a person. This is known as virtue or supernatural habit.[5] In this paper, habits will be referred to consistently as frequent, regular practices.

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[3] Nichols, 1:276.

[4] "It is similar in the case of the appetites and of anger; some people become temperate and good tempered, others intemperate and irascible, because the former behave one way in those situations and the latter the other way. To sum up, states arise from similar acts. Therefore, one must ensure that one's acts are of such a kind; for one's states follow according to the differences of the acts. So one's being habituated one way or another from youth upward makes no small difference, but an enormous one, or rather it makes all the difference" in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C.C.W. Taylor (N.P.: OUP Oxford, 2006), 3. Aristotle would use the virtue and frequent practice in describing habits, yet did clarify that the frequent practice led to the cultivation of the virtue. Also see, "It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference" Aristotle, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 953. William James said, "Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone. Every smallest stroke of virtue or vice leaves its never so little scar." William James, *Writings, 1878-1899* (New York, NY: The Library of America, 1992), 150-151.

[5] John Owen spoke of the supernatural habit when he said, "that, according to the nature of all habits, it inclines and disposeth the mind, will, and affections, unto acts of holiness suitable unto its own nature, and with regard unto its proper end, and to make us meet to live unto God" in John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 3 (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1965), 7.

According to the American Psychological Association, Addiction is a complex condition, a brain disease that is manifested by compulsive substance use despite harmful consequence. People with addiction (severe substance use disorder) have an intense focus on using a certain substance(s), such as alcohol or drugs, to the point that it takes over their life. They keep using alcohol or a drug even when they know it will cause problems. Yet a number of effective treatments are available, and people can recover from addiction and lead normal, productive lives ... .[6]

Although secular literature has difficulty articulating what addiction is or is not acceptable, the APA's definition will be used as a baseline in order to better speak about addictions.

The term *obedience* is intended to demonstrate Paul's call, "to follow instructions, obey, follow, be subject to."[7] When Paul calls the Philippians to obey, he does so in the context of Christ's obedience (Phil. 2:8). To employ the term, *habitually obey* is to not only incorporate Paul's call of obedience but to demonstrate regular or frequent obedience. It is this level of obedience to which Paul calls the Philippians in Philippians 2:12, as will be demonstrated next.[8]

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[6] "What Is Addiction?," APA, accessed October 15, 2019, https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/addiction/what-is-addiction. This is similar to that of the Center on Addiction, who would introduce a disease model of addiction: "Addiction is a complex disease, often chronic in nature, which affects the functioning of the brain and body. It also causes serious damage to families, relationships, schools, workplaces and neighborhoods," "What Is Addiction? | Center on Addiction," accessed October 15, 2019, https://www.centeronaddiction.org/addiction. However, the object of addiction comes with great debate (cf. Howard J. Shaffer CAS PhD, "What Is Addiction?," *Harvard Health Blog*, last modified June 19, 2017, accessed October 15, 2019, https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/what-is-addiction-2017061911870). William Glasser said, "I believe there are a number of addictions that are good as the above-named addictions are harmful. I call them positive addictions because they strengthen us and make our lives more satisfying" in William Glasser, *Positive Addiction* (New York City: Harper Perennial, 1985), 2.

[7] William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1028.

[8] This is also demonstrated in the present tense of κατεργάζομαι in verse 12.

II. A Brief Exposition of Philippians 2:12-13

Paul begins chapter 2 with a call for the unity of the Philippians in verses 1 to 4. Paul makes it clear that the call for unity is the primary thrust of this passage. Paul's emphasis in stating, "same mind … same love" (vv. 2) communicates his intention to call for unity.[9] Contextually, we see Paul appealing for unity in 4:2, as well, where Euodia and Syntyche are to "agree in the Lord."

In verse 5 Paul is making the transition toward why there should be unity in the church (2:2), why the Philippians should put others' interests before their own (2:3-5). In his transition, Paul literally says, "think like Christ." BDAG says, "Let the same kind of thinking dominate you as dominated Christ Jesus."[10] This is the essence of the passage, as Paul has opened in verse 2 by urging the Philippians to have the same "mind," and now he shows them *that* mindset is none other than that of Christ's. In Philippians 3:19, Paul offers a contrast of what this looks like by condemning unbelievers as having their minds set on earthly things. Paul's call for unity and selfless humility is a call to think like Jesus.

Thus, Paul demonstrates the mind of Christ. Jesus came to earth, took on flesh, lived a humbly obedient life to the Father to the point of death. His obedience in verse 8 becomes the exegetical direction for Paul as he moves through the Incarnation and obedience of Jesus.[11] Therefore, his self-denial led to exaltation (vv. 9-11). And all of this has set the stage for verses 12-13, which is the next exhortation Paul is preparing to give the Philippians.

Paul continues: "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (vv. 12-13). In Philippians we see the believer's requirement for participating in the sanctification process. From a call of obedience, Paul segues into a

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[9] Also see his consistent use of the intensive, attributive pronoun αὐτός in verses 1:30 and 2:2. As Wallace notes, "When modifying an articular substantive in the attributive position, αὐτός is used as an identifying adjective" *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 349.

[10] William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, 1066.

[11] Note, Jesus' humility is demonstrated in his perfect, active obedience to the Father (cf. Heb. 5:8). Christ's humility was manifest through His obedience to the Father and because of His obedience, the Father did exalt Him.

conversation on the interplay of the obedience of a believer toward the orientation of that believer's desires. He begins verse 13 by saying, "Therefore, be obedient as God works in you."

Obedience in this context is used synonymously with "working out your salvation." The idea is that a person's salvation is existent and now from that existent salvation, they must work. This is a common theme throughout Scripture.[12] This is of significant importance for the balance of the Holy Spirit and God, the Father, in the believer's sanctification: "work out" literally puts one's salvation into effect.[13] Salvation is effectual, and its manifestation come at the expression of good works. Paul describes what that looks like: he says to do so with fear and trembling.[14]

Yet, something else is noteworthy here: Paul is providing a verbal imperative with middle voice, present tense to emphasize that the Philippians were the one's responsible for this effort.[15] The middle voice of κατεργάζομαι is coupled with the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοῦ. *Work out* is not stated in the aorist tense, as is the term *obedience*. Thus, not only is Paul saying that the Philippians need to work out their salvation, but he is reflecting back the action that the Philippians must accomplish in an ongoing capacity. The idea of habits being defined as that which we

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[12] Ephesians 2:10 Paul says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Also cf. Hebrews 5:8-9; Philippians 1:5, 4:14; 2 Corinthians 10:5; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:10; 1 Corinthians 12:6; Titus 2:14.

[13] BDAG, s.v. "katagerzomai." Of note, this was the argument that Thomas Jacombe, the English Puritan, was making in regard to the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit (cf. Nichols, 3:591).

[14] "To live like Christians, the Philippians were to have an attitude of obedience. The obedience was not to Paul, although apparently his presence encouraged it in their lives. The obedience was to God. The church members were to solve their problems as an act of obedience to God. Such obedience confirmed the fact that they were truly saved. Perseverance, whether in individual purity or harmonious group relations, was expected of Christians." Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 110. Some would argue that the obedience to which Paul is referring is a call to promote the unity amongst themselves, thus to obey is the equivalent with the call to be unified (cf. v. 2).

[15] "Κατεργάζομαι": Verb, present, middle/passive, second person, imperative, plural.

"frequently practice" can find itself in this passage as "working out your salvation." In the next section, I will demonstrate an important link between the use of the term *habit* with the idea of regular, frequent obedience, but for now let it be noted that the habit of obedience is Paul's emphasis in verse 12—regular, frequent obedience.

Outward Obedience Affects Inward Desire Change

Verse 13 says, "For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."[16] God works in believers so they will desire to be obedient and so they will walk by the Spirit in obedience. Paul is employing a play on words as he says, "work out" (v. 12) because God "works in" (v. 13). Literally, Paul is saying that as believers work out their salvation through obedience, God works in them to desire that work.

In addition to God giving the ability to be obedient, there is one more aspect to the passage that has great significance for addictions and addictive habits, and that is work of the God through habit formation. Yes, God gives a believer the grace to work for His good pleasure as a believer is obedient. However, verse 13 also says that God works so that the believer *desires* His good pleasure.[17] This is the connection: *As believers are obedient, working out their salvation through God's grace, He changes the believer's desires to match His desires*. Only through obedience can desires be reoriented, and obedience comes through ongoing, regular practice. Literally, through humble obedience a believer starts to desire what God wants through the work of God in his or her life—this is what Paul is suggesting.[18] One English Puritan, Jeremiah Burroughs, said that

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[16] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Php 2:13.

[17] The desires being used in this passage are not synonymous with emotions; however, they are predicative to emotions. Therefore, as a person desires correctly it overflows into proper emotions or feeling (cf. Mark 7:23; James 4:1-3).

[18] Jeremiah Burroughs used this idea to communicate that true contentment comes through this process: "You should labour to bring your heart to quiet and contentment by setting your soul into the work of your present condition. *And the truth is, I know nothing more effective for quieting a Christian soul and getting contentment than this, setting your heart to work in the duties of the immediate circumstances … .*"Jeremiah Burroughs, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1648), 52. Emphasis added.

this was the melting of the will of a person into the will of God.[19] Regular, frequent obedience changes desires. Addicts find themselves in the throes of regular, frequent practice, and it is that very practice that cultivates desires for the use of drugs.

III. English Puritans' Use of Philippians 2:12-13

Habits, as being part of regular, frequent obedience, are something that the English Puritans thoroughly addressed. Of all of the passages used to teach habits, the Puritans employed Philippians 2:12-13 with regularity. This passage was employed in a few different contexts—perseverance, repentance, leading of the Spirit, and God's work in a believer's good works. However, in each of the below statements, the reader will see a consistent theme of habits as they inform desires. For instance, consider the words of Thomas Cole:

> As he doth other graces; (Phil. ii. 13) not merely in a moral way, by suggesting such reasons and arguments as may excite and move the will to the exercise of repentance; but by the powerful and efficacious influence of his grace drawing out the habit into that exercise, or causing the soul to act suitably to this divine principle infused into it.[20]

The way in which Cole viewed this passage was an example of how God stirred up a believer to repentance through supernatural habits, similar to what Aristotle called a virtue.[21] Cole connects the differences of a moral way juxtaposed to a godly way of repentance and uses Philippians 2:13 to support that claim, meaning one can pursue self-atoning ways of repentance that were indeed of no righteous value. This is significant for the discussion of habits because it suggests the initial development of the habit would be from God as in an understanding of supernatural habits.[22]

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[19] Ibid., 53.

[20] Nichols, 4:348.

[21] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C.C.W. Taylor (N.P.: OUP Oxford, 2006).

[22] However, I acknowledge that understanding the development of habits is something that falls beyond the scope of this paper. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure (Phil. ii.12, 13). In short, we move, we act; and the Spirit concurs and co-operates with us therein: and so we are 'led by' him." Nichols, 3:591.

William Cooper directly employed the term habit when speaking of Philippians 2, as well. He said, "Habits of grace cease acting, if God suspends the influence of grace."[23] And Thomas Parson used Philippians 2:12-13 to suggest that God "worketh habit and principle" and "by supervening grace exciteth to, and assisteth in, acting it."[24] Parson said that the supernatural habit is displayed in the Philippians 2 text, whereas Cooper suggests that the energies found for the good works are given by God in the supernatural habit, which is found in Philippians 2.

Edward Veal said something similar: "And, 'Whatever we are,' saith another, 'whatever we have, whether good actions, or good habits, or the use of them,' it is all in us out of the liberality of God, freely giving all and preserving all."[25] Veal cited Philippians 2 as an encouragement to depend on God for the work, yet ascribed the implantation of supernatural habits, and the exercise of those habits to God, as well.

The connection of habits to Philippians 2:12-13 can be clearly seen in the words of the English Puritans. The Puritans used this passage directly and indirectly to support the subject of habits since habits influence desires. Their conversation in regard to God moving a believer toward action, and the action of the believer, are the same ideas that undergird the habit and the way that habits affect desires, which holds great significance in the context of addictions.

IV. Connecting Addictive Habits to Addictive Desires

Objection #1: Only for Sanctified Desires

It has been demonstrated that the regular obedience of a person is part of the nature of habits, and that those habits are used by the Lord to shape a person's desires. Yet, Philippians 2 suggests that this is primarily in the context of the believer's greater sanctification. Is it possible for this process to be true only of the sanctified desires of a Christian? Emphatically, no! Scripture demonstrates that the opposite is also true—make a practice of sinning and that also shapes a person's desires away from the things of the Lord.[26] From the condemnation of

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[23] Nichols, 3:134.

[24] Ibid., 5:351.

[25] Ibid., 6:196. Of note, Veal is quoting a philosopher by the name of "Durandus" and Philippians 2.

[26] Perhaps there is no better illustration than that of Jeremiah 13:23: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can do good

Israel in Jeremiah 13:23 to Peter's observations about the false prophets (2 Pet. 2:14), it is obvious that not only do frequent acts (i.e., habits) shape a person's desires toward godly desires, but sinful habits will misshape the desires of a person away from God.

John Owen said, "The old man, the body of death, with its members, and the works of the flesh, or the habit, operations, and effects of sin, are all of them intended, and to be respected herein."[27] Owen would not differentiate between the effects of habits, regardless of whether or not it was a sanctifying or a sinful habit.[28] Thus, we know that the workings of habits and desires are interconnected, even for a sinful habit—like addiction. The habitual and frequent use of drugs, for example, cultivates the desires for those drugs—which is different from that of cravings.[29]

To answer the question, then, it must be understood that habits—whether sanctifying or sinful—have an orienting process to them in

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who are accustomed to do evil." Furthermore, see the use of Hebrews 5:14 as being trained to discern between good and evil. And finally, the words of Peter that the false prophets were "trained in greed" (2 Pet. 2:14).

[27] John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 3 (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1965), 92.

[28] Now Owen would obviously differentiate between the two sources of the desires, still upholding that God alone could provide a desire that godly. Thus, the differentiating point for Owen would be the habit done toward the "glory of God in Jesus Christ" (*Works* 3:503).

[29] In this paper, the physiological addiction to a substance will be referred to as *craving*. However, the second effect is that drug use cultivates *desires*. *Desires* are not physiological cravings; desires refer to the inner man and the inner man's immaterial *desire* for drug use. The body can physiologically crave a substance, and the heart can desire it (Mark 7:21-23). Yet, it is the habit of substance abuse in a person's body that cultivates both physiological cravings and desires for those substances. Also see that Jesus had physiological cravings while the Scripture clearly differentiates between those cravings without assigning to them desires (Matt. 4:4; John 4:6, 7). John Flavel would agree with John Owen: "Besides the transgression of the preceptive part of the law, there is an obnoxiousness [sic] unto punishment, arising from the sanction of the law, which we call the guilt of sin; and this (*as judicious Dr. Owen observes*) is separable from sin" in Flavel, *Works* vol. 3, 580. Emphasis added.

regard to desires.[30] Not only do habits of obedience serve as a vehicle by which the Lord changes a person's desires, but the sinful desires of a person also serve as a means of orienting a person away from the things of the Lord.

Addictive Habits

Of great significance is that the addictive habit—a sinful habit—is something that possesses a shaping influence in a person's life by influencing the desire. Paul demonstrates that when a believer regularly obeys, God changes what it is that the believer *desires* to do. Yet, sinful habits also shape the desires of a person. Even the definition of addictions, according to the APA, suggests a regularity in the use of drugs, even if that regularity is harmful. The APA states, "Addiction is a complex condition, a brain disease that is manifested by compulsive substance use despite harmful consequence."[31] Yet, this definition does not account for why a person uses drugs in the first place. It is the motivation of the addict, or the desire, that is of utmost importance because that desire explains why an addict is using drugs to start.

James 1:13-15 reminds us that desire is not the enemy—*sinful* desire is the enemy. Scripture makes it clear that one can have God-honoring desires, like the desire to become an overseer in 1 Timothy 3:1. Desire can be good and harnessed for the glory of God.[32] However, James states

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[30] For a philosophical treatment of this topic, see James K.A. Smith's, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009).

[31] "What Is Addiction?," APA, accessed October 15, 2019, https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/addiction/what-is-addiction. This is similar to that of the Center on Addiction who would introduce a disease model of addiction: "Addiction is a complex disease, often chronic in nature, which affects the functioning of the brain and body. It also causes serious damage to families, relationships, schools, workplaces and neighborhoods," "What Is Addiction? | Center on Addiction," accessed October 15, 2019, https://www.centeronaddiction.org/addiction.

[32] The Psalmist would say, "Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart " (Ps. 37:4). This means that as a person delights in God, that He implants desires to match His desires. Furthermore, when you don't desire to please God in any way, it is indicative of not being a child of God—Jesus says that children of wrath are those that desire to do the will of their Father, Satan (John 8:44).

that if one allows sinful desires to exist in his or her heart, then sin and death will soon follow. The APA does not account for the desires that drive an addict and, thus, misses the interplay of habits as they shape desires.

V. Implications

Heart and Habits

The emphatic role of desires in addictions is at the center of addiction treatment. Why is it that an addict is willing to abuse substances to their own harm? Compulsion may be part of the equation, but it is also the fact that the addict "wants to." The addict *desires* to use drugs, and it is the very use of drugs that has helped to cultivate the desire to use drugs. The interplay of desires and habits is what provides a clear understanding of a treatment path for the addict entrenched in self-destructive patterns.

Thus, when a person 'relapses' with drug use, they are now bringing about harm to themselves and dishonor to God. They are now fueling desires for the drugs in the first place. This is equally devastating since the desires for drugs are what will lead a person to use drugs.[33] Relapse, then, has a mis-orienting effect at the level of a person's desires. So, total repentance of drug abuse not only brings honor to the Lord, it is also used by the Lord to orient a sinful desire.[34]

By way of implication, it must be noted that an unbeliever can change, too. There are many non-Christians who "get clean" without any help of the Spirit or motivation to do what is pleasing to the Lord. However, when you see that desires are of ultimate importance, you understand that the non-believer is unable to get clean from substances in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. A person cannot bear fruit apart from Jesus, even if they "get clean" (John 15:5). The gospel is what sets a person free from his or her sin to serve the living and true God—including the sin of substance abuse.

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[33] Consider the words of James 1:13-15, again, as a reminder of the source of sinful behavior.

[34] Richard Baxter said in this context, "You are able to do much in this way if you will. If you cannot presently suppress the desire, you may presently resolve to deny the flesh the thing desired [i.e., habits], (as David would not drink the water though he longed for it, 2 Sam. xxiii. 15, 17) and you may presently deny it the more of that you have." *A Christian's Directory* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1996), 284-85.

Without the gospel as the centerpiece for change, we are merely swapping idols. Biblical counselor Mark Shaw, in his masterful work *The Heart of Addictions*, notes this with great clarity.[35] The addict needs heart change, which brings about desire change. This is something that can only come about through the new heart that is provided to the believer in his or her participation of the New Covenant mediated by Jesus (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb 9:15). Yet, when the gospel is the centerpiece for change, we are no longer idol-swapping but moving into a meaningful relationship with God where *He* offers fulfillment, comfort, and the satisfaction that we as addicts, were desiring in those substances.

VI. Conclusion

It was my thesis that *Philippians 2:12-13 demonstrates that frequent practices of obedience by the believer cultivate godly desires*. Paul makes it clear that desires are changed by God through the habitual obedience of the believer to the will of God. In fact, this obedience is the call to be like Jesus and to promote unity of the body of Christ, as seen in Philippians 2:1-5.

When understanding addiction, it is this interplay of heart and habits that is axiomatic for treatment. Thus, the gospel is at the centerpiece of careful and wise care for those who are addicted to substances of any kind because only through the gospel does a person find the fulfillment of a new heart, with new desires. And it is through habits that the desires of a person are formed, or de-formed. So, to a degree, we can echo the words of Aristotle: "It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference … ."[36]

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[35] Mark Shaw, *The Heart of Addiction: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2008).

[36] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C.C.W. Taylor (N.P.: OUP Oxford, 2006), 1103b:25.

Midwestern Journal of Theology 19.1 (2020): 58-91

FTC Workshop on John's Gospel: The Festival Cycle (John 5–10)

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A Jerusalem Sign: The Healing of the Lame Man (5:1–18)

Welcome to the second *For the Church Workshop* on John's Gospel. Last year, we made a promising start by discussing rather extensively the authorship of John's Gospel which, I've argued, is exceedingly important in interpreting the book in keeping with its authorial intent and original historical setting. We also studied John's prologue or introduction, the first 18 verses of the Gospel, in some depth and then moved on to take a closer look at chapters 2–4, the so-called "Cana Cycle."

The designation "Cana Cycle" derives from the fact that this literary unit of John's Gospel starts and ends with signs Jesus performed in the small village of Cana in the Galilean north. I argued that John deliberately structured his presentation of the early stages of Jesus' public work in the form of a ministry circuit beginning and ending in Cana, a rather obscure town not even mentioned in any of the other Gospels. John indicated this by referring to Jesus' first and second signs in Cana in John 2:11 and 4:54, respectively.

In between these two Cana signs, we saw Jesus cleanse the temple (one of Jesus' Jerusalem signs; cf. 2:23; 3:2) and go on mission from Jerusalem (2:2–3:21) and Judea (3:22) to Samaria (4:1–45) and to the Gentiles (4:46–54) where he ministered to Nicodemus, the Jewish rabbi, an unnamed Samaritan woman, and a Gentile official. In this way, we saw how the early church's mission (which by the time John wrote his Gospel would already have been in full swing) was grounded in the mission of Jesus himself.

All of this was shown to serve John's overarching purpose: to narrate selected messianic signs of Jesus in order to elicit faith in him among his readers and others with whom they might come in contact (20:30–31).

So, we saw that the "Cana Cycle" featured three messianic signs of Jesus, exhibiting an oscillating geographical movement from Galilee to Jerusalem and back to Galilee, and each in their own unique way shining the spotlight on Jesus and his messianic identity and mission. We also saw that Jesus' actions and teachings met with a variety of responses on a spectrum from faith to unbelief, which the fourth evangelist sought to highlight in the form of representative characters such as Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, or the Gentile official.[1]

Today, we'll build on our previous study by covering the next major unit in John's Gospel, the so-called "Festival Cycle," that is, chapters 5–10. John was a master storyteller who structured his Gospel very deliberately.[2] What is more, as we see in his purpose statement, and in the conclusion to the entire Gospel, he was highly selective in what he chose to include. In his purpose statement, he writes, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:30–31). And he closes the Gospel with the words, "Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (21:25).

Before taking an in-depth look at the healing of the lame man in chapter 5, it will be helpful to discuss a few broader questions, such as: Why does John select these particular signs? Why do scholars believe that chapters 5–10 are a literary unit, and why is this unit commonly called "The Festival Cycle," and how do chapters 5–10 connect with what goes before and comes after this unit?

Why These Signs?

First, we've seen that John acknowledges that Jesus performed "many other signs" and did "many other things." Which raises the

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[1] At times, the expression "fourth evangelist" is used by scholars who don't believe the apostle John wrote the Gospel. I, on the other hand, am a strong advocate of Johannine scholarship. When I use the term "fourth evangelist" in this presentation, I do so primarily to avoid confusion with John the Baptist and at times also for stylistic variation.

[2] See, e.g., Mark W. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

question: Why, then, did John include these particular signs and these other things Jesus did from among all the material from which he drew, whether written material, oral teaching, or eyewitness recollection?[3] I believe one important criterion in John's selection was *material not featured in the other Gospels* that had already been written when John composed his narrative, namely the so-called "Synoptic Gospels," Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

In many ways, when reading John's Gospel one gets the impression that John aimed to complement and supplement (though not replace) the other Gospels.[4] In other words, he tried not to repeat material already found there, or at least attempted to find creative ways to deepen his readers' understanding of that material. Among the unique characters in John's Gospel are Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, the lame man, the man born blind who uttered the famous words, "One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see" (9:25), and Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead.

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[3] James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, Christianity in the Making 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), unfortunately claims that John invented some of the material he features in his Gospel, such as large swaths of Jesus' Roman trial before Pilate. In this he is representative of much historical-critical scholarship that marginalizes John due to his alleged lack of concern for historicity. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), takes the character of the Gospels as eyewitness testimony much more seriously, but even he denies Matthean and Johannine authorship. For a critique of Bauckham, see Andreas J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters: The Word, the Christ, the Son of God*, BTNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 75–79.

[4] The relationship between John and the Synoptics is subject to considerable scholarly debate which we cannot rehearse here; though see Köstenberger, *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, 553–63; and more fully idem, "John's Transposition Theology: Retelling the Story of Jesus in a Different Key," in *Earliest Christian History: History, Literature, and Theology. Essays from the Tyndale Fellowship in Honor of Martin Hengel*, ed. Michael F. Bird and Jason Maston (WUNT 2/320; Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 2012), 191–226. See also the comments below.

John	Character	Significance
Chap. 3	Nicodemus	Teacher of Israel, lacks regeneration
Chap. 4	Samaritan woman	Evangelizes fellow Villagers
Chap. 5	Lame man	Healed by Jesus, Intransigent
Chap. 9	Man born blind	Eyes opened, worships Jesus
Chap.11	Lazarus	Raised from the dead by Jesus

Major Selected Characters Featured Exclusively in John's Gospel

When it comes to Jesus' teaching, among the most noteworthy contributions are several extended discourses such as the "Bread of Life Discourse" (chap. 6), the "Good Shepherd Discourse" (chap. 10), and the "Discourse of the Vine and the Branches" (chap. 15), which in turn is part of the famous "Farewell Discourse" (chaps. 13–17). This final body of teaching (also called "Upper Room Discourse") provides a unique and fascinating glimpse of Jesus' final hours with his followers unparalleled in any of the Synoptics.

John	Discourse
Chap. 6	Bread of Life Discourse
Chap. 10	Good Shepherd Discourse
Chaps. 13–17	Farewell Discourse, incl. Vine and Branches

Major Selected Discourses Featured Uniquely in John's Gospel

A second demonstrable criterion for John's inclusion of material in his Gospel was his avowed *purpose*: to present selected, and, I might add, particularly striking, messianic signs of Jesus so that his readers may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God—or, perhaps better, that

the Christ, the Son of God, is Jesus (20:30–31).[5] In one of my publications, I have argued that John selected seven signs of Jesus, including (as we have seen in last year's lectures) the temple cleansing.[6] But why these particular signs? I believe that what virtually all signs have in common is, as mentioned, that they are particularly striking manifestations of Jesus' messianic mission and often involve significant numbers:

1. Jesus turns *120–150 gallons* of water into wine (2:1–12);
2. He promises to raise the temple of his body in *three days* while the temple had been built *46 years* ago (2:13–22);
3. He healed a man long-distance at *1 o'clock* in the afternoon (or, as it says in the original Greek, at the "seventh hour," since Jews started counting the hours of the day with sunrise at around 6 o'clock in the morning; 4:46–54);
4. He healed a man who had been crippled for *38 years* (5:1–15);
5. He fed *5,000 men* plus women and children (6:1–15; thus the "feeding of the 5,000" was more likely the "feeding of the 20,000");
6. He healed a man born blind (no numbers here; chap. 9); and
7. He raised a man, Lazarus, who had been dead in the tomb for *four days* (11:1–44).

In this way, John highlights particularly striking signs of Jesus, and includes information that eyewitnesses would have typically remembered, whether specific numbers or other minor yet important details, such as that there was much grass in the place where Jesus fed the 5,000 (6:10) or that the fragrance of the perfume Mary poured out at the anointing filled the entire house (12:3).

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[5] See D. A. Carson, "The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel: Jn 20:31 Reconsidered," *JBL* 106 (1987): 639–51.

[6] Andreas J. Köstenberger, "The Seventh Johannine Sign: A Study of John's Christology," *BBR* 5 (1995): 87–103.

John	Sign	Number(s)
2:1–12	Turning water into wine	120–150 gallons
2:13–22	Clearing the temple	46 years vs. 3 days
4:46–54	Healing the official's son	7th hour (i.e., 1 p.m.)
5:1–15	Healing the lame man	38 years
6:1–15	Feeding the multitude	5,000 men (plus women and children)
9:1–41	Healing the man born Blind	Blind from birth
11:1–44	Raising Lazarus	4 days

Numbers Related to Striking Signs of Jesus in the "Book of Signs"

In keeping with his purpose, then, John selected material that underscored the singular and central claim in his Gospel that *Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God*, material that he believed was suited to lead his readers to put their trust in Jesus. This is borne out by the fact that the verb "to believe" (Grk. *pisteuō*) is found almost 100 times in the Gospel and that many Gospel characters serve as representative figures of either a trusting or unbelieving response toward Jesus. In our study of chapters 3–4 of John's Gospel, we've seen this to be the case negatively with Nicodemus, the Jewish rabbi, and positively with the Samaritan woman.

In the "Festival Cycle," as we'll see, John includes a similar study of comparisons and contrasts between the lame man in chapter 5 and the man born blind in chapter 9. In addition, Jesus' signs are often linked with either a major discourse or an "I am saying" of Jesus, or even both. In chapter 6, for example, Jesus performs the sign of feeding the 5,000; proclaims that he is the "Bread of Life" (an "I am saying"; 6:35, 48); and delivers the so-called "Bread of Life Discourse" (6:32–58).

To sum up, John's selection of material for inclusion in his Gospel was guided by at least three criteria:

1. Whether material was already included in one or several of the other Gospels (of the seven signs featured in John, only one is found in the other Gospels, the feeding of the 5,000; John also records another temple clearing and another healing of an official's son than those recounted in the Synoptics);

2. Whether a messianic sign of Jesus was particularly striking and memorable (almost always connected with large or unusual numbers); and
3. Whether a given action or teaching of Jesus could be used to buttress the claim that Jesus was the Christ and Son of God and thus lead his readers to believe in him.

After these preliminaries, let's now turn to a closer study of the "Festival Cycle" in chapters 5–10 of John's Gospel. We saw in the first workshop that chapters 2–4 are still relatively free of major controversy (the temple clearing being an exception) as the "Cana Cycle" depicts the early stages of Jesus' ministry. All of this changes now in chapter 5 and continues to build in the chapters that follow. In fact, a literary *inclusio* binds chapters 5 and 10 together in a concerted focus on Jesus' claim to deity and his opponents' attempts to stone him on account of perceived blasphemy.

	Criterion
(1)	Whether material was already included in one or several of the other Gospels
(2)	Whether a messianic sign of Jesus was particularly striking and memorable (numbers)
(3)	Whether a given action or teaching of Jesus was particularly suited to buttress the claim that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God and thus could lead his readers to believe in him

Likely Criteria for Inclusion of Particular Signs of Jesus in John's Gospel

Why Consider Chapters 5–10 a Literary Unit?

In John 5:18, toward the beginning of the "Festival Cycle," the evangelist tells us, "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him [Jesus], because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, *making himself equal to God*." Then, toward the end of the "Festival Cycle," John narrates Jesus' claim, "I and the Father are one." At once, "the Jews picked up stones to stone him." When Jesus asked them for which of his many good works they were trying to stone him, they replied, "It is not for a good work that we are

going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, *make yourself God*" (10:30–33). All of this, in turn, is building up toward the eventual climax in the Gospel, Jesus' Roman trial, where the Jewish leaders tell Pilate, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because *he has made himself the Son of God*" (19:7). So, we see that the references to Jesus' alleged blasphemy frame the entire "Festival Cycle" in chapters 5–10.

John	**Escalating Conflict: References to Jesus' Perceived Blasphemy**
5:18	"This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, *making himself equal to God*."
10:31–33	"The Jews picked up stones to stone him . . . . 'It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, *make yourself God*.'"

The Literary Inclusio Framing the "Festival Cycle" (John 5–10)

What is more, on a structural level, we can detect an even more all-encompassing *inclusio* that connects the entire material between 1:19 and 10:42. John 1:19, following immediately after the Prologue, starts out like this: "And this is the testimony of John . . . ." In the chapters that follow, John is identified as a witness to Jesus (1:19–36; cf. 1:6–8, 15), the friend of the bridegroom (3:29), and a lamp that shone for a while (5:35).

Notice especially that the last of these references to John, as a lamp that shone for a while, is found in chapter 5 of John's Gospel. Mirroring this reference, we find at the end of the Festival Cycle in chapter 10 a rather surprising final reference to John the Baptist. We read, "He [Jesus] went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. And many came to him. And they said, 'John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.' And many believed in him there" (10:40–42).

John	Opening and Closing References to John the Baptist
1:19, 28	"And this is the testimony of John . . . . These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing."
10:40–42	"He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and there he remained. . . . And they said, 'John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.' And many believed in him there."

The Literary Inclusio Framing John 1:19–10:42

Why this final reference to John the Baptist? As early as at 3:24, the evangelist had told his readers in an aside, "For John had not yet been put in prison."[7] For all practical purposes, John the Baptist has not been a character in the Johannine narrative since the end of chapter 3 where John had announced, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (3:30). This is certainly true literally, and literarily, as far as the Johannine narrative is concerned. References to the Baptist have dramatically decreased ever since his early witness to Jesus.

Why, then, mention John one more time as late as at the end of the "Festival Cycle" in chapter 10, close to the end of Jesus' mission and just prior to the raising of Lazarus, Jesus' final messianic sign recorded in John's Gospel?

The answer, I believe, lies in the fact that the fourth evangelist wants to signal to his readers that chapters 5–10, and on a larger scale even 1:19–10:42, constitute a coherent literary unit, what scholars have called the Johannine "Festival Cycle." In this way, both major ministry cycles and literary units in the first ten chapters of John's Gospel are bracketed by *inclusios*: the "Cana Cycle," as we have seen, by references to Jesus' signs in Cana at 2:11 and 4:54, and the "Festival Cycle" by references to Jewish opposition to Jesus' claim to deity in 5:18 and 10:30–33 and to John the Baptist in 1:19 and 10:40–42.

[7] On the Johannine asides, see my *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, 135–41.

Why Call This Unit the "Festival Cycle"?

Which brings us to another question: Why the label "Festival Cycle"? We should note at the very outset that already in the "Cana Cycle," Jesus is shown to attend a Passover festival in Jerusalem (2:13, 23). So references to Jewish festivals are not unique to the "Festival Cycle" in chapters 5–10. What is unique, though, is that festivals serve as a continual structural marker in the "Festival Cycle."

- Chapter 5 finds Jesus at an unnamed festival in Jerusalem;
- Chapter 6 shows him at Passover in Galilee;
- Chapters 7–8 feature Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths in Jerusalem; and
- The final episode in chapter 10 shows Jesus at the Feast of Dedication or Hanukkah, again in Jerusalem.

In this way, John presents Jesus as the fulfillment of the symbolism inherent in these various festivals, as embodying in his very own person the essence to which each of these festivals pointed. *Jesus was infinitely greater than the entire Jewish festival calendar, and in him all these various festivals found their multi-faceted messianic fulfillment*. This, in addition to Jesus' messianic signs, was yet another compelling reason to call people to believe in Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God.

We've explored the question as to why the fourth evangelist chose to include the teachings and events in Jesus' life that he features in his Gospel. We've seen how John carefully structured chapters 5–10 in his Gospel around Jesus' attendance of and ministry at a series of Jewish festivals.

Since John proceeds chronologically (albeit selectively), we can see just how selective he is by taking a closer look at the festivals Jesus is shown to attend. If the first feast in the Festival Cycle, though unnamed in John's Gospel, is the Feast of Tabernacles, as may be indicated by some textual variants and extrabiblical evidence, a feast celebrated in September or October every year, chapter 5 would occur in the fall.[8] The

[8] The earliest papyri ($\mathfrak{P}^{66, 75}$) and codices (A, B) omit the definite article and simply have, "After this there was *a feast* of the Jews," which makes this the probable original reading. Yet some manuscripts (such as Sinaiticus [א]) include the definite article ("After this there was 'the' feast of the Jews," which most likely would have referred to Tabernacles). What is more, at least one manuscript

following chapter takes place at Passover, which was celebrated in the spring. Then, chapter 7 opens with another Tabernacles festival; thus an entire year has passed since chapter 5 (assuming that the reference in 5:1 is to Tabernacles). This shows how highly selective John was in the material he chose to include. Finally, the Feast of Dedication took place in the winter (10:22). Thus, the entire festival cycle spans a little over a year in Jesus' three-and-a-half-year ministry.

John	Festival	Time Celebrated
5:1	"A feast of the Jews" (Tabernacles?)	Fall
6:3	Passover	Spring
7:1	Tabernacles (or Booths)	Fall
10:22	Dedication (Hanukkah)	Winter

Jewish Festivals in the Johannine "Festival Cycle" (John 5–10)

Jesus' Healing of the Lame Man (chap. 5)

The Setting (5:1–3)

Now that we've been oriented to this second major cycle in John's Gospel, let's turn to the first literary unit in the "Festival Cycle," Jesus' healing of the lame man in chapter 5. In the introduction to this account, John masterfully sets the stage for the first messianic sign of Jesus narrated in the "Festival Cycle." He tells us

(1) that there was a Jewish festival (v. 1);

(2) that Jesus went up to Jerusalem, the Jewish capital (v. 1); and

(3) that there was in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool called "Bethesda," which had five roofed colonnades (v. 2).[9] This area, John tells

actually has, "Tabernacles" (131), which shows that some later scribes interpreted the reference as being to Tabernacles. See the discussion in Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 178.

[9] On the many ways in which recent archeological finds have buttressed the historicity of John's Gospel and aided our understanding of the historical setting of John's Gospel, see Urban C. von Wahlde, "Archaeology and John's Gospel," in *Jesus and Archaeology*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 523–86. On the pool of Bethesda specifically, see pp. 560–66. Von Wahlde concludes, "The discovery of the pools proved beyond a doubt that the

us, was a common gathering place for a large number of invalids, whether blind, lame, or paralyzed (vv. 1–3).

After this, a verse is missing in most of our English Bibles! Verse 4, which is found only in a few later manuscripts, inserts, "waiting for the moving of the water, for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred the water; whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was healed of whatever disease he had." This is just the type of material that was characteristic of so-called "apocryphal" or spurious (i.e., inauthentic) Gospels which contained legendary material and reflected popular superstitions. Therefore, the verse is rightly omitted from the standard Greek text and most English versions.[10]

The Healing (5:5–9a)

After this, the narrative focuses on one such invalid, a man who had been in this condition for 38 years, what must have seemed like an eternity for the man to be languishing without a realistic chance of healing. One of the reasons why John may have chosen to include this sign is that there was virtually no way this miracle could have been staged. The man had been lying there for 38 years and countless people had seen him. This is not an individual who had faked his illness so that Jesus could fraudulently buttress his own messianic credentials! Rather, the man had been indisputably and irremediably crippled and stood in desperate and verifiable need of healing. The longtime and public nature of the man's predicament renders Jesus' healing of this man all the more credible and remarkable. Just as later in the case of Lazarus, who had been dead for four days, this healing definitely passed the smell test! It was without a doubt a genuine healing.

Now that the stage has been set, the healing ensues. The first thing Jesus does is ask the man, "Do you want to be healed?" Well, of course the man wanted to be healed! Why did Jesus even bother to ask? Yet, Jesus' question did not merely stir the man's will to recover, it also, as it turns out, exposed the man's superstition. "Sir," he replied, "I have no

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description of this pool was not the creation of the Evangelist but reflected accurate and detailed knowledge of Jerusalem" (566).

[10] Verse 4 is not found in the earliest papyrus MSS, $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$ and $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$. It is also absent from the earliest codices, Sinaiticus (א) and Vaticanus (B).

one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me" (v. 7). This verse is probably the reason why some later scribes, as mentioned, inserted verse 4 into some later Greek texts, as it alludes to the common superstition of an angel stirring the waters.

To the invalid's mind, his is a futile task, because how can he be first in the water when he is unable to walk? Humanly speaking, he'll never be able to find healing. Yet Jesus pointedly cuts straight through any such nonsense and folklore, telling the man simply, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk" (v. 8). And the man promptly obeys.

In our lives, similarly, there may be times when we think there are insurmountable obstacles to God meeting our needs or answering our prayers. Yet, what we fail to see is that what appears to be impossible to us is possible for God. In Jesus' terms, we need mountain-moving faith (Matt 17:20), or better, we need faith in a God who can move spiritual mountains that we not only find impossible to move ourselves but that we cannot even imagine God can move. But he does!

The Aftermath (5:9b–18)

Now, interestingly, John has withheld one important piece of information until this very point, namely that the healing took place on a Sabbath. This is an indication of the deliberate manner in which the fourth evangelist has crafted his account. He held off on sharing this piece of information until the time at which this becomes an issue in the story. At once, the "Sabbath police" in form of the Jewish authorities confronted the man who had just been healed after a 38-year-long illness. The infraction that drew the leaders' ire was that the invalid, after having been healed by Jesus, picked up and carried his mat or bed, an activity considered work and, thus, forbidden by Jewish Sabbath regulations (though not Scripture itself). So what does the healed invalid do when confronted regarding his supposed infraction? He blames Jesus! In effect, his response is: "Don't blame me, blame Jesus!" Well, thanks a lot! Jesus has just graciously and powerfully restored this man's ability to walk, and he repays Jesus by reporting him to the authorities. I wonder if any of you have experienced this kind of ingratitude from someone whom you have helped in the past. I know I have, and it hurt!

When questioned further, the man admits that he doesn't even know who Jesus is or where to find him. Then, a little later, Jesus finds him in

the temple area ("find" may or may not imply that Jesus was actually looking for him). Jesus sternly warns the man not to sin any longer so that nothing even worse may happen to him (likely implying that the man's original illness had been due to sin).[11] No verbal response on part of the man is recorded. The only thing we are told is that the man at once went to the authorities to tell on Jesus! That's really incredible. Not once, but twice, he puts the blame on Jesus and tries to get him into trouble. What has Jesus done to deserve this? All he has done is heal the man. That's not only unbelief, it's an inexplicable lack of gratitude. But have not all of us been guilty of this kind of ingratitude at one time or another? Jesus died on the cross for our sins, yet prior to our conversion, we essentially told him, "Thanks, but no thanks. We're not interested." We all have treated Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf with contempt, or at least indifference.

Back to the story, John now tells us that "this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath" (v. 16). It appears that Jesus deliberately healed on a Sabbath almost as if to provoke the dispute that ensued. Were there not seven days in a week? He could have healed this man and others like him on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, or Sunday. Why did he have to do it on a Saturday? Well, truth is, he did heal people on other days of the week, as we see in the other Gospels. Not every healing, or even most healings, were performed on a Sabbath. The point here, I believe, is simply that if it was the Sabbath and Jesus encountered a person who required healing, he didn't allow this fact to stand in the way of the healing. To do so would have been to capitulate to the unreasonable, petty, and legalistic Jewish stipulations regarding what was or was not permissible on the Sabbath.[12]

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[11] Notice the previously-mentioned contrast with the man born blind in chapter 9, whose illness was due neither to his own sin nor that of his parents; see the discussion below.

[12] I realize that in the wake of the "new perspective on Paul" spearheaded by E. P. Sanders it raises eyebrows for anyone to refer to first-century Jews as legalistic, but I believe there continues to be sufficient New Testament evidence to detect works-righteousness and legalism on part of many Jews we encounter in the New Testament period. In John, see, e.g., 6:28, where the Jews ask Jesus, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" and 6:30: "Then what sign do you do that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?" In Paul,

Thus Jesus used those Sabbath healings to challenge Jewish traditions that were unbiblical and based not on the Word of God but on faulty human reasoning and conceptions about God. In this way, Jesus asserted his superior knowledge and insight into God's character and requirements. As he said elsewhere, the Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath (Mark 2:27). And he, being God, had authority over the Sabbath (Matt 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5). Thus, the Jewish authorities were correct in discerning that by healing on the Sabbath, Jesus implied he was God.

In the verbal exchange that ensued, Jesus declared, "The Father is working until now, and I am working" (v. 17). Clearly, he put himself on par with God. But what did he mean by his statement, "The Father is working until now?" I believe he here corrected the Jewish assumption that the Sabbath was absolute and that God had forever finished his work. True, the Sabbath commemorated that last day of creation on which God "rested" from his labors, but every child knows that God never sleeps or gets tired and, thus, truly needs no rest. As Isaiah wrote, "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable" (Isa 40:28). So, as Jesus pointed out, God the Father was continually at work, and in the same way Jesus, too, was always working—including his work of healing people, if need be, on a Sabbath.

In this way, in the inexorable dynamic of this Johannine narrative, what started out as an innocuous encounter and subsequent healing, has slowly but surely morphed into a messianic sign, a pointer to Jesus' authority as the Christ and Son of God. The healing was not primarily about the *invalid* whose ability to walk was restored; it was primarily about *Jesus'* identity as the Christ and Son of God. In addition, secondarily, the story is also about people's need to respond to Jesus' disclosure of his true identity with personal trust in him. By that token, the Jewish leaders who opposed him and took offense at his perceived infraction of their Sabbath rules fell short, as did the man who went off physically healed but spiritually still remained in his sin. His ignorance, unbelief, and outright ingratitude toward Jesus serve as perennial

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see, e.g., Rom 9:32: "Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if were based on works."

reminders that such abject disregard of Jesus leaves people subject to God's wrath and renders them without excuse. The fourth evangelist makes this explicit when he writes in another aside, "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him because not only was he breaking the Sabbath (cf. v. 16), but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God" (v. 18).

John	Reason for Persecution of Jesus
5:16	"And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath."
5:18	"This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even *calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God*."

The Real Reason for Jewish Opposition to Jesus (John 5:16, 18)

So the issue was ultimately not Sabbath-breaking; the real question pertained to Jesus' true identity. As the authorities rightly discerned, by calling God his own Father, Jesus claimed equality with God. However, as the believing reader knows, in truth Jesus was not "making himself" equal to God, he truly *was* equal to God! Yet tragically, the authorities were unwilling to consider this possibility because their hearts were hardened due to their own sin. Brothers and sisters, we desperately need hearts that are malleable, open, and receptive to who Jesus is and what he wants us to do. A Christian who hates fellow believers or even works actively to bring about their demise is a total hypocrite. Now you may be saying that you don't *hate* other believers. But do you *love* them? Love means giving your life for others as Jesus did and taking positive action on their behalf, not merely ignoring them or even harboring contempt in your heart toward them. We all need to examine our hearts if we want to learn the lesson John wants to teach us through the story of the invalid and the Jewish authorities who were intransigent toward Jesus because of their sinful, hardened hearts.

Conclusion to the Healing of the Lame Man (Chap. 5)

This, then, was the first sign of Jesus in the "Festival Cycle" of John's Gospel which spans chapters 5–10. In the context of this literary unit, the sign sets the stage for the remainder of the "Festival Cycle," which is

marked by escalating antagonism and hostility toward Jesus. Also in the context of this literary unit, as we will see in my third and final lecture later today, the man serves as a representative and contrasting character when compared with the man born blind in chapter 9, a character who responds very differently to the healing which also took place on the Sabbath.

In both cases, the fourth evangelist uses these healings as pointers to Jesus' identity as Christ and Son of God, calling his readers to put their faith in Jesus. Jesus is so worthy of our trust and allegiance! Praise God for the apostle John who, as Jesus' closest follower during his earthly ministry, here gives us a glimpse of Jesus' heart and true identity: Jesus truly is the Messiah and Son of God, and these signs are written that you and I might put our trust in him.

The Feeding of the 5,000 (John 6)

Let's now continue to explore the dynamic involved in the unfolding "Festival Cycle" in John's Gospel. I pointed out above that generally John wrote to supplement the other Gospels rather than repeating them or that where he does use material already included in the earlier Gospels, he usually recasts it to show the deeper theological significance underlying a given teaching or event. I call this John's "theological transposition" of the Synoptic material, similar to what happens in music when a composer transposes a tune from one key to another. Perhaps the most egregious example of this are Jesus' "signs" (*sēmeia*) in John's Gospel, which correspond to his miracles (*dynameis*) in the Synoptics.

In the Synoptics, Jesus says the only sign he will give in response to the Jewish authorities' demand that he furnish proof for his messianic authority is the "sign of Jonah" (Matt 12:38–41; Luke 11:29–32). Jonah was in the belly of the big fish for three days and three nights, which, according to Jesus, prefigured his resurrection. At the same time, the Synoptics record numerous miracles of Jesus, including demon exorcisms, nature miracles (such as Jesus' walking on the water), miraculous healings, and even a couple resurrections (Jairus' daughter: Matt 9:18–26; Mark 5:21–43, Luke 8:40–56; the son of the widow at Nain: Luke 7:11–17). John, for his part, does not mention the "sign of Jonah"—the only sign given in the Synoptics—but instead relabels and recasts the Synoptic miracles as signs, and records as many as seven of

them (the perfect number) culminating in the seventh and climactic sign, the raising of Lazarus.

This final sign, in turn, prefigures Jesus' resurrection, which is featured at the end of John's Gospel (chaps. 20–21). John's transposition of the Synoptic miracles into another key—the seven Johannine signs—is thus based on the seminal and penetrating theological insight that the primary purpose of Jesus' miracles was not the powerful act itself but the event's function as a signpost to Jesus' messianic identity. In this way, people's response to Jesus' startling manifestations becomes a referendum on who Jesus truly is—the Christ and Son of God. We see the same dynamic at work in the second sign of Jesus narrated in the "Festival Cycle" in chapter 6 of John's Gospel, to which we now turn.

The Feeding of the 5,000 (6:1–15)

The Setting (6:1–4)

As mentioned, the feeding of the 5,000 is found already in all three Synoptic Gospels (Matt 14:13–21; Mark 6:32–44; Luke 9:10b–17). In addition, Matthew and Mark also record Jesus' feeding of the 4,000 (Matt 15:32–39; Mark 8:1–13). Notably, the details cohere in all four Gospels: the 5,000 men plus women and children; the five loaves and two fish; and the twelve basketsful of leftovers. And yet, John supplements the Synoptic presentations (which vary to a minor degree) in some significant ways. To begin with, only John features specific disciples by name (Philip and Andrew). Even more importantly, only John includes the ensuing "Bread of Life Discourse," which unpacks the Christological significance of the feeding and shows how Jesus in his essence embodies the sign he has just provided in his very own person—he is the living Bread that came down from heaven to give life to the world (more on this below).

As in the case of the healing of the invalid in chapter 5, John first sets the stage for the sign. Somewhat puzzlingly, John writes, "After this [the Sabbath controversy] Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias" (v. 1). I say "somewhat puzzlingly" because the previous chapter ends with Jesus being in Jerusalem! The statement "Jesus went away to the *other side* of the Sea of Galilee" seems to presuppose that the readers know he had previously been at the Sea of Galilee already. Thus, there is what you might call a narrative gap here. However, this is merely one of multiple instances in John's Gospel where

the evangelist *implies* movement on Jesus' part rather than explicitly narrating it.[13] In other words, he expects his readers to have little difficulty in filling in the relevant information that Jesus had traveled from Jerusalem to Galilee in the meantime.

In the earlier Gospels, this body of water is always identified as the Sea of Galilee (even though it is really just a large lake, not an actual sea or ocean). In John's Gospel, however, the same lake is twice referred to as the Sea of Tiberias. This, then, is one of several clues in the Johannine narrative that this Gospel was written later than the other Gospels, as we know from extrabiblical sources that the name of the preeminent city on the shores of the Sea of Galilee—Tiberias, named after the Roman Emperor Tiberius (ruled AD 14–37)—was gradually transferred to the name of the entire body of water, hence the change in name from "Sea of Galilee" to "Sea of Tiberias."[14] In fact, while John here speaks of "the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias," at the end of the Gospel he simply refers to "the Sea of Tiberias" (21:1).

Jesus' presence in Galilee at Passover is part of the oscillating pattern of Jesus' movements indicated in John's Gospel from Galilee to Jerusalem and back to Galilee (we've seen this already in the "Cana Cycle" where Jesus went from Galilee to Jerusalem and back to Galilee via Samaria). Here John supplements the Synoptic geographical pattern, according to which Jesus gradually moved from Galilee (where he engaged in multiple concentric circles of ministry) to Jerusalem toward the end of his ministry. In verse 2, John observes that a large crowd was following Jesus because they had seen his previous signs on the sick, presumably including the sign narrated in the previous chapter, the healing of the lame man, which I've discussed in my first lecture. In this way, John shows an organic connection between the first two signs of Jesus included in the "Festival Cycle."

Yet while the previous sign was a healing miracle, this sign involved Jesus' miraculous ability to multiply food. At the outset, Jesus is shown to ascend a mountain (v. 3, perhaps reminiscent of Moses) together with his disciples. As in the previous case with regard to the Sabbath, John mentions only at this juncture that it was the Passover (v. 3); this is now

[13] See on this L. Scott Kellum, The Unity of the Farewell Discourse: The Literary Integrity of John 13:31–16:33 (London: T&T Clark, 2004).
[14] Cf. Josephus, *Ant*. 18.2.3 §36; Sib. Or. 12:104; *t. Sukkah* 3.9.

the second Passover narrated in this Gospel after Jesus' clearing of the temple and encounter with Nicodemus the previous year (cf. 2:13, 23). In this way, John continues to use references to various festivals as structural markers in the "Festival Cycle" in order to show that Jesus fulfilled the entire Jewish festal calendar. Just like Jesus was greater than Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph, and just like he was greater than Moses and the signs and wonders he performed during Israel's exodus, he is greater than all of the Jewish festivals. In fact, he embodies their very essence and constitutes their fulfillment. This is the cumulative point the fourth evangelist seeks to make in the "Festival Cycle" in John 5–10.

The Feeding of the 5,000 (6:5–15)

While in the previous chapter Jesus had performed the healing all by himself, in the present instance Jesus' disciples (who were last mentioned in the story of the Samaritan woman in chapter 4) are integrally involved. This, I might add, was entirely in keeping with Jesus' pattern of relationship with his disciples depicted in the Synoptics, which in turn was congruent with first-century Jewish rabbi-disciple relationships.[15] Jesus confers with Philip and Andrew (who here, as elsewhere in the Gospel, is referred to as "Simon Peter's brother," cf. 1:40). Andrew mentions a boy with five loaves and two fish but holds out little hope that these will go very far in feeding such a large number of people. In response, Jesus rather matter-of-factly has the people sit down, just as he simply told the man in the previous chapter to get up and walk. After giving thanks (Greek *eucharisteō*), Jesus distributed the bread and fish, and everyone ate their fill (v. 11).

When the disciples gather the leftovers, they fill up as many as twelve baskets (one per disciple). People's response is recorded by the evangelist as follows: "When the people saw the sign that he had done, they said, 'This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!'" (v. 14). Thus, the entire pericope (narrative unit) is bracketed by references to Jesus' signs, first to Jesus' previous healing miracle in verse 2 and now to his feeding of the crowd. The reference to the Prophet is transparently an

[15] See Andreas J. Köstenberger, "Jesus as Rabbi in the Fourth Gospel," *BBR* 8 (1998): 97–128; idem, "Jesus as Rabbi" and "The Jewish Disciples in the Gospels," in *A Handbook on the Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans and David Mishkin (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2019), 178–84, 203–6.

allusion to the "Prophet like Moses" mentioned in the book of Deuteronomy (Deut 18:15–19). Yet Jesus, perceiving that people are about to compel him to be their king, again withdraws to the mountain (v. 15; cf. v. 3). Thus, we see here that the crowd is the physical beneficiary of Jesus' miracle—they all eat and have their fill—while people fail to grasp who Jesus truly is spiritually. Rather than comprehending Jesus' true identity and acknowledging the transcendent nature of his calling, the multitudes conceive of him as a national deliverer. This explains why Jesus withdraws, for he does not want to be coopted for people's political agenda. As he will later tell Pilate, his kingdom is not of this world (cf. 18:36).

As in Matthew and Mark (though not Luke), the account of the feeding of the 5,000 is linked with the narrative of Jesus walking on the water (cf. Matt 14:22–32; Mark 6:45–51). While many commentators and study Bibles identify the walking on the water as a Johannine sign, notice that this event is nowhere in John's Gospel identified as such, unlike, for example, the healing of the lame man or the feeding of the multitudes (cf. 6:2, 14). This suggests that while Jesus' walking on the water is a Synoptic-style *miracle*, it is not a Johannine *sign* (notice that Jesus' signs in John typically are of a public nature while his walking on the water took place privately in front of his disciples alone).[16] Instead, John supplements the account of the feeding of the multitude with the "Bread of Life" discourse that ensues.

The "Bread of Life Discourse" (6:25–71)

After setting the stage as taking place "on the next day" "on the other side of the Sea" (i.e., the east side of the lake) in Capernaum (vv. 22–25), John again features Jesus as referring to his signs: "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves" (v. 26). In other words, people benefited physically from the miracle but failed to perceive the sign and, thus, missed the true significance of the event. That is, they failed to draw the necessary connection between Jesus' outward act and the inner spiritual reality of that act, namely, that it identified Jesus as the Christ and Son of God. In the same way, an unbeliever may look at the crucified Jesus with merely

[16] See Andreas J. Köstenberger, "The Seventh Johannine Sign: A Study in John's Christology." *BBR* 5 (1995): 87–103.

human eyes and see a miserable creature die a horrible death while a believer may look at the crucified Jesus and see him die an atoning death for the sins of humankind.

This is the all-important difference between mere physical seeing and spiritual perception which the fourth evangelist highlights throughout his Gospel. As he says already in the Prologue, "We [the apostles] perceived (Greek *theaomai*] his glory" (1:14); and again following Jesus' inaugural sign, the turning of water into wine at the Cana wedding, "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did in Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him" (2:11; cf. 9:3–4 below). Typically, the fourth evangelist points out, people are operating on an earthly plane. Nicodemus only understands earthly things such as natural birth (3:4, 12); the Samaritan woman thinks of literal water while Jesus is talking to her about living water which is emblematic of the Spirit (4:7–15); Jesus has food his followers know nothing about because his true spiritual "food" is to do the will of the Father who sent him and to accomplish his work (4:34).

Similarly, Jesus here tells the crowd, "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you" (v. 27). Thus Jesus provides a penetrating commentary on the human condition: we are inexorably caught up in our earthly, physical existence and tied to our need for food, shelter, and clothing (cf. Matt 6:25–34). Yet Jesus, the God-man, the incarnate Son of God, wants to lift people's eyes up from their earthly existence to perceive the heavenly reality to which Jesus came to introduce them. In fine irony, John records people's question to Jesus, "What must we do to be doing the works of God?" along with Jesus' answer: "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent" (vv. 28–29). In other words, the only "work" God requires is trusting Jesus! And even this trusting response toward Jesus is ultimately God-given (see v. 37 below)! It is this total dependence on the one who came to give his life for us that liberates us from our lesser affections which tie us to our earthly surroundings, possessions, and relationships.

Ironically, then, the crowd applies the same kind of works-oriented, legalistic, self-effort type of thinking not only to themselves but also to Jesus. They ask, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?" (v. 30). Again, they put the emphasis on *doing* rather than *being*. Little do they realize that the order is the

other way around: Jesus' activity is a mere outflow of his identity; his *doing* flows from his very own *being*. Later Jesus would say, "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves" (14:11). Yet people proceed to press for proof of Jesus' prophetic credentials, probing, "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat'" (v. 31). By this they allude to the heavenly bread, the manna, which God provided for the Israelites through Moses during their wanderings in the wilderness.

If Jesus is the Prophet, he must duplicate, if not exceed, the feat wrought by Moses during the exodus (cf. 6:15)! Can Jesus compete with Moses? Jesus responds first with a correction and clarification: "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven" (v. 32). In other words, it was not Moses who gave the bread to the Israelites in the first place but God; Moses was merely God's instrument. Thus people are wrong when they elevate Moses and put him on a pedestal; all credit belongs to God. What is more, Jesus continues, "The bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (v. 33).

With this, Jesus makes clear that the manna is nothing but a preliminary foretaste of Jesus himself who is the true antitype and fulfillment of the manna—he is the spiritual "bread from heaven" who will give eternal life to those who believe in him. In this Jesus provides a remarkable model of explaining the Old Testament with reference to himself (cf. 3:13–14). Similar to the Samaritan woman in chapter 4 when promised living water by Jesus, Jesus' audience here entreats him, "Sir, give us this bread always" (v. 34). Yet Jesus perceives that the people do not understand what they are talking about. They have seen him with their eyes yet have failed to believe in him (v. 36). People must look to the Son (v. 40)! Yet they can do so only if the Father gives them to Jesus (v. 37). And Jesus will lose none the Father has given him but raise them up on the last day (v. 39).

While the crowds were the grateful recipients of the physical food they received from Jesus, however, they are unwilling to receive the spiritual instruction Jesus provides as to the deeper spiritual significance of the sign he has just performed. In this way, the feeding narrative is crucially supplemented by the "Bread of Life Discourse." Just as in the case of the people who witnessed the temple clearing, these people saw

Jesus' sign yet promptly asked for another sign, making clear that they failed to perceive the true significance of the original sign (6:31; cf. 2:18). In response, rather than perform another sign, Jesus here, as at the previous occasion, proceeds to elaborate on the significance of the sign he has just performed. In the previous instance, Jesus' body was identified as the true temple which he would raise in three days. In the present instance, Jesus' body is identified as the flesh and blood that would be given for the life of the world, the nourishment that people must eat and drink in order to receive eternal life.

John	Original Sign	Request for Sign	Explication of Significance of Sign
2:18–21	Temple clearing	"What sign do you show us?"	Jesus' body is the true temple that will be raised in three days.
6:30–33	Feeding of 5,000	"Then what sign will you do?	Jesus is the true heavenly bread that will give life to the world.

The Dynamic of Signs and Discourses in John's Gospel

In the further interaction that ensues, it becomes increasingly clear that people lack the spiritual perception and openness needed to receive Jesus' difficult teaching, and as a result, many even of his disciples no longer follow him. In this way, the feeding of the 5,000 and the interchange that ensues serve as a watershed in John's Gospel, separating those who follow Jesus merely for superficial external reasons and temporary personal expediency from those who do so because they have truly perceived that Jesus is the Messiah—Jesus' emergent new messianic community. When Jesus therefore asks the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter speaks for the entire group when he answers, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God" (vv. 67–69). In response, Jesus makes clear that Peter's confession is proof of the Twelve's election. And yet, Jesus mentions rather ominously, one of the Twelve, Judas, is "a devil," a traitor who

would betray him in order that Scripture may be fulfilled (vv. 70–71; cf. 17:12).

Conclusion to the Feeding of the 5,000 (Chap. 6)

With this, we've come to the end of our study of John's account of the feeding of the 5,000 within the overall framework of the "Festival Cycle" in John 5–10. While John coheres in all specific external details of the event with the information given in the other, earlier Gospels, he alone supplements the narrative with an extended discourse. This discourse, I have attempted to show at some length, adds significantly to our understanding of the inner dynamic and deeper purpose of the miracle. In his vintage transposition of the Synoptic presentation, John shows that the external event of the feeding is the mere outer shell; the heart of the feeding is the person doing the feeding—Jesus himself. The *physical* bread the multitudes are given to eat is nothing but a pointer to the *spiritual* bread, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came down from heaven to give his life for them as the Lamb of God (cf. 1:29, 36) so that by believing they may become God's children and receive eternal life (cf. 1:12).

This is the watershed moment that separates remote followers of Jesus, who enjoy some of the passing temporary benefits of God's provision, from true believers and disciples who grasp the significance of these benefits and penetrate, by God's grace, to the inner meaning of what these benefits are designed to teach them about Jesus. Unlike the Synoptics, the fourth evangelist, rather strikingly, features not a single parable. And yet, in his symbolic discourses he provides extended comparisons between a natural and a spiritual way of perceiving who Jesus is and what Jesus does. And in so doing, he calls us to attain to the kind of discerning perception of Jesus' messianic nature and mission that enables us to join the ranks of true believers in the Messiah and, thus, to participate along with them in Jesus' mission in this world. Just as Jesus told his original followers subsequent to the resurrection, he still tells us today, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (20:21).

The Healing of the Man Born Blind (John 9)

After the watershed moment at the end of chapter 6 (a likely Johannine transposition of Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi), chapter 7 finds Jesus briefly at home with his brothers (7:1–9). The scene

is reminiscent of Jesus' interaction with his mother at the Cana wedding (cf. 2:1–4). Jesus' brothers quite apparently do not (yet) believe in him, urging him to make a name for himself in Jerusalem (7:3–4). However, like his mother, Jesus' brothers misjudge the timing of Jesus' public manifestation of his messiahship and reveal misunderstanding as to the nature of Jesus' mission (7:6–9). Thus, at the midway point of the "Book of Signs," the picture is bleak: unbelief persists in Jesus' own family and even among most of his closest followers, the only exception being the Twelve. And even one of the Twelve will turn out to be a traitor! This ought to give any of us pause who thinks that failure is necessarily an indication that they are doing something wrong or conversely, that success inexorably means they are doing something right. Jesus did everything right and backed up his messianic claims with a series of startling signs, and yet was met with massive unbelief.

The "Festival Cycle" that began with the healing of the invalid and the feeding of the 5,000 in chapters 5 and 6, respectively, continues and concludes with four chapters (7–10) that find Jesus at two additional feasts, Tabernacles in chapters 7–8 and the Feast of Dedication (or Hanukkah) toward the end of chapter 10. The four chapters cohere rather tightly. Chapters 7 and 8 are in some manuscripts separated by the so-called "Pericope of the Adulterous Woman," though scholars are virtually united in their belief that the story was added later and does not form a part of the original Gospel.[17] If so, chapters 7 and 8 jointly show Jesus initially delaying but then going to the Feast in Jerusalem (7:9–10), appearing in public both at the midway point (7:13–36) and on the final

[17] See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 187–89, who says the evidence against inclusion is "overwhelming" and "conclusive." Craig Keener, *John* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 735–36, concurs that the unit is a later addition based on the textual history and preponderance of non-Johannine vocabulary. See also Gary M. Burge, "A Specific Problem in the New Testament Text and Canon: The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 7:53–8:11)," *JETS* 27 (1984): 141–48; Daniel B. Wallace, "Reconsidering 'The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress Reconsidered,'" *NTS* 39 (1993): 290–96; and William L. Petersen, "οὐδὲ εγώ σε (κατα)κρίνω: John 8:11, the *Protevangelium Iacobi*, and the History of the *Pericope Adulterae*," in *Sayings of Jesus: Canonical and Non-canonical: Essays in Honour of Tjitze Baarda*, ed. William L. Petersen, Johan S. Vos, and Henk J. de Jonge, NovTSup 89 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 191–221.

day of the Feast (7:37–39). After this, Jesus engages in a second teaching cycle which culminates in his affirmation that he preexisted Abraham (8:12–59).

Then, with hardly a transition ("As he passed by," 9:1), Jesus encounters a man who had been born blind. The healing, which takes up chapter 9, is in turn followed by chapter 10—the "Good Shepherd Discourse"—again with virtually no transition. Since Tabernacles is celebrated in September or October and Dedication takes place in December, chapters 7–10 are concentrated within a fairly short timeframe. This indicates that the plot is thickening, as previously the narrative gaps were significantly larger. Since chapter 3 takes place at Passover and chapter 6 at the next Passover, the healing of the invalid in Jerusalem is the only event John selects for inclusion in almost an entire year of ministry. This shows just how selective John is. The Festival Cycle, as mentioned, concludes with a reference to John the Baptist who has not been heard from since chapter 5.

Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles (chaps. 7–8)

The Setting (7:1–13)

Jesus' public appearance at the Feast of Tabernacles in chapters 7 and 8 is a perfect example of how John portrays Jesus as fulfilling the very essence of the Jewish festal calendar.[18] The Feast of Tabernacles (also called "the Feast of Booths") celebrated God's provision for the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings. Waterpouring and torchlighting rituals commemorated water coming out of the rock and God guiding his people by a pillar of fire during the night. For Jesus, however, the festival is anything but an occasion for Jewish nationalistic pride or even for reliving the past. Rather, he announces that he embodies the very essence of what the Jewish people celebrate. He is one with the God who led Israel at the exodus and will lead his people in a new exodus through his death on the cross. To be sure, this was not Theology 101; instead, he sought to impart to his listeners a lesson in Advanced Biblical Theology.

[18] For a lengthy interview I gave on John 7, see https://www.whitehorseinn.org/show/the-light-of-the-world.

Halfway through the Feast (7:14–36)

After setting the stage in verses 1–13, as mentioned, John recounts how Jesus made a public appearance at the midway point of the feast. Once again, the evangelist skillfully weaves a reference to a previous event, the healing of the invalid which commenced the Festival Cycle, into the narrative, giving the account additional coherence and connecting that healing with Jesus' teaching at the feast. "I did one work," Jesus said, "and you all marvel at it. Moses gave you circumcision . . . and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision, so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well?" (7:21–23).

Thus, Jesus used the classic "from-the-lesser-to-the-greater argument" against the Jewish leaders who had an excessive concern for the law of Moses while lacking perspective as to its actual purpose. God's purpose for issuing the Sabbath commandment was hardly to keep a longtime invalid from being healed! Jesus gave the example of circumcision which was performed on the eighth day after a child was born (Lev 12:3). If that day fell on a Sabbath, two commands collided. Should one honor the Sabbath or go ahead with circumcising the infant? Jewish first-century practice held that circumcision was to go ahead; the need to obey the circumcision commandment overrode the command to observe the Sabbath rest.[19]

In this way, a precedent had been set; the Sabbath commandment was not absolute but could be set aside in exceptional cases such as circumcision. Based on this precedent, Jesus argued skillfully against his Jewish opponents that if it was appropriate to circumcise a small part of a person's body, why would it be inappropriate to heal an entire person? Why, for argument's sake, were they too rigid to allow for an exception in this case which was of obvious benefit to that person and did not truly violate the spirit of the Sabbath command? It is hard to argue with this line of reasoning. In fact, one cannot help but be impressed with Jesus' skillful use of logic and in-depth understanding of Scripture.

At this point, John uses various voices in the crowd at the feast as representative of variegated Jewish messianic expectations in the day of

[19] See, e.g., Rabbi Yose b. Ḥalafta (ca. AD 140–65): "Great is circumcision which overrides even the rigor of the Sabbath" (*m. Ned.* 3.11; cf. *m. Šabb.* 18.3; 19:1–3).

Jesus. "When the Christ appears, no one will know where he comes from," someone opines (7:27); in Jesus' case, of course, they know that he is the carpenter's son from Galilee. A few verses later, someone else queries, "When the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done?" (7:31); this echoes the Jews' demand for a sign at previous occasions, particularly at the inception of the "Bread of Life Discourse" (6:31; cf. 2:18). Others query, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" (7:42–43). With fine irony, John here exposes people's ignorance as to Jesus' birthplace. The informed reader knows that what to them appeared to be an obstacle actually proved to confirm that Jesus was the Messiah, as he had indeed been born in Bethlehem in keeping with Micah's prophecy (cf. Mic 5:2).

In this way, John shows that people were confused, if not conflicted, about who the Messiah would be when, rightly understood, Jesus fulfilled all of the scriptural expectations in his messianic identity and mission. The problem was not with anything Jesus was, said, or did; it lay squarely with people's ignorance, confusion, and lack of understanding. Little has changed in the last two millennia in this regard. Today as well, the problem with people's lack of faith in Jesus is their lack of understanding of who Jesus truly is and what is the significance of his actions and teachings, and in particular his death on the cross. However, when Jesus does not fit with our expectations, we should be open to readjust them rather than rejecting Jesus and his claims.

The Final Day of the Feast (7:37–44)

We've seen how Jesus spoke up at the midway point of the feast. The second occasion John includes is Jesus' appearance on the final day, the "great day" of the feast. Tabernacles festivities lasted for an entire week, and the eighth day ended with a veritable firework of activities. Thus it is fitting that Jesus makes a final, climactic appearance on the last day of the festival. Issuing an open invitation, he declares, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink." Not only this, but he adds, "Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture says, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water" (vv. 37–38). John adds that this was a reference to the Spirit who would soon be given. Most likely, the Scripture Jesus is referring to here is a composite from various references in the prophets such as Ezekiel.

Not only would believers' own thirst be quenched, they would become a Spirit-empowered source of life for others as well.

The "Paternity Controversy" (8:12–58)

I have noted previously that the "Festival Cycle" is marked by escalating conflict between Jesus and the Jewish authorities. This was clear from the very beginning as Jesus and the Jewish leaders clashed at the occasion of Jesus' healing of a lame man—the Sabbath controversy (chap. 5). In what follows, we see yet another controversy erupt between Jesus and the Jewish authorities, which is sometimes called "the paternity dispute." In essence, the debate revolves around the Jewish claim of descent from Abraham. In chapter 8, Jesus acknowledges that his opponents are ethnic descendants of Abraham but contends that, spiritually speaking, they are actually the offspring of Satan (vv. 37–47).

This strikes at the heart of Jewish self-understanding. Like so many today, first-century Jews did not generally view themselves as sinners but often put their hope in keeping the law of Moses.[20] Now Jesus argued that their opposition to him—the God-sent Messiah—revealed that their true spiritual paternity could be traced to none other than Satan himself. His reasoning went like this: as Scripture testified, Satan's deception at the fall of humanity brought death. Now the Jewish leaders were plotting to put Jesus to death. In this way, they proved that they were aligned with Satan, who had been "a murderer from the beginning" (v. 44). This is strong, explosive stuff! The gloves are now definitely off. Strikingly, John shows that there is no middle ground. People must choose sides; they are either for or against Jesus. You either cast your lot with Jesus, or you are a child of Satan. Neutrality is not an option, as Pilate would find out soon enough.[21]

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[20] The Synoptics preserve the tradition that first-century Jews spoke of Gentiles as "sinners." They did not generally include themselves in this category, as they were God's chosen people. Interestingly, however, John does not feature this contrast, presumably because he believes it to be false. Rather, the Jews are included among the world that has rejected Jesus as Messiah.

[21] See Andreas J. Köstenberger, "'What Is Truth?' Pilate's Question to Jesus in Its Johannine and Larger Biblical Context," *JETS* 48 (2005): 33–62; also published as "'What Is Truth?' Pilate's Question to Jesus in Its Johannine and Larger Biblical Context," in *Whatever Happened to Truth?*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005), 19–51.

The Healing of the Man Born Blind (chaps. 9–10)

There is a beautiful symmetry in John's Gospel, which begins with a Prologue and ends with an Epilogue and in between presents the story of Jesus in two equal halves, often called "The Book of Signs" and "The Book of Glory." The symmetry also extends to the signs in the two major ministry cycles of Jesus included in the "Book of Signs," namely the "Cana Cycle" in chapters 2–4 and the "Festival Cycle" in chapters 5–10. In each cycle, we find Jesus performing three signs, whereby Jesus' movements oscillate between Galilee and Jerusalem. In the "Cana Cycle," Jesus turns water into wine at the Cana wedding; clears the Jerusalem temple; and heals the centurion's son back in Cana (2:11, 18; 4:54).

John	Sign	Location
2:1–11	Turning water into wine	Cana of Galilee
2:13–22 (cf. 2:23; 3:2)	Clearing the temple	Jerusalem
4:46–54	Healing the official's son	Cana of Galilee

Jesus' Signs in the "Cana Cycle" of John's Gospel

In the "Festival Cycle," we've already seen Jesus heal an invalid in Jerusalem (chap. 5) and feed the 5,000 in Galilee (chap. 6). Now, in chapter 9, we see Jesus perform the sixth sign included in John's Gospel (and the third in the "Festival Cycle") when, again in Jerusalem, he heals a man who had been born blind.

John	Sign	Location
5:1–15	Healing the lame man	Jerusalem
6:1–15	Feeding the 5,000	Galilee
Chap. 9	Healing the blind man	Jerusalem

Jesus' Signs in the "Festival Cycle" of John's Gospel

In addition, John's symmetry can also be seen in the fact that he includes a set of contrasting characters in both ministry cycles of Jesus in the "Book of Signs": Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman in the "Cana cycle" (chap. 3 and 4) and the invalid and the man born blind (chaps. 5; 9). This type of symmetry may be less immediately apparent

since, unlike in the case of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, the invalid and the man born blind are not featured in subsequent chapters but rather frame the "Festival Cycle" as the opening and closing sign, but the parallels and contrasts are striking all the same.

John	Negative Character	Positive Character
3–4	Nicodemus	Samaritan Woman
5, 9	Lame Man	Man Born Blind

Contrasting Characters in the "Cana and Festival Cycles" of John's Gospel

Notably, both healings take place on the Sabbath. Both are Johannine signs and identified as such, framing, as mentioned, the "Festival Cycle." Both involve Jesus' healing of men in order to manifest his messianic mission. And yet, while the parallels are conspicuous, the contrasts are even more striking. As we've seen in my first lecture, the invalid is anything but a grateful recipient of Jesus' gracious healing touch. To the contrary, he reports Jesus, not once but twice, to the Jewish authorities, putting the blame of his alleged Sabbath infraction squarely on Jesus. Also, Jesus sternly warns him not to sin any more, lest something worse may happen to him.

By contrast, in the case of the man born blind Jesus makes clear immediately that neither the man nor his parents had sinned; rather, his blindness was sovereignly ordained by God so that God's glory might be revealed in Jesus. Also, the two men's responses to their respective healings could not be more different. Rather than incriminate Jesus with the authorities, as the lame man had done, the blind man (no longer blind) strenuously defends Jesus against the authorities' accusations. Similar to the Samaritan woman (another fascinating partial parallel), the formerly blind man first calls Jesus a prophet; later, he calls himself a disciple of Jesus, and finally worships Jesus, the only instance of worship directed toward Jesus prior to Thomas' declaration of Jesus as his Lord and God following the resurrection (cf. 20:28).

John	The Lame Man	John	The Man Born Blind
5:11, 15	Reports Jesus to authorities	9:24–33	Defends Jesus against authorities
5:14	Condition a result of sin	9:2–3	Condition not a result of sin
5:10–15	Persists in ingratitude and intransigence	9:17, 27, 38	Calls Jesus a prophet, becomes his disciple, worships him

Comparison between the Invalid and the Man Born Blind in John 5 and 9

In this way, the two figures serve as representative characters of contrasting types of faith or lack thereof. Both are healed by Jesus; nevertheless, a trusting faith response is still required. Yet only the formerly blind man emerges as an example of a person who has been touched by Jesus, responds in faith, and becomes Jesus' disciple and worshiper. In this, too, the formerly blind man echoes Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman, who is instructed by Jesus about true worship in spirit and truth and becomes an evangelist to her fellow villagers.

The question John is asking his readers, therefore, is this: How will you respond to Jesus' gracious initiative? Will you respond in faith, like the man born blind (or the Samaritan woman), or will you prove intransigent to Jesus like the invalid (or Nicodemus)? Will you believe or remain in your sin? That is the all-important question all readers of John's Gospel will do well to ponder.

The "Good Shepherd Discourse" (chap. 10)

The healing of the man born blind segues almost seamlessly into the "Good Shepherd Discourse" in chapter 10. As the chapter division may obscure, there is virtually no transition between the healing narrative and Jesus' discourse. Once again, we see how John allows an account of one of Jesus' signs to be accompanied by an extended teaching portion (cf. chaps. 5 and 6). In the present instance, the "Good Shepherd Discourse" casts Jesus as the "good shepherd" over against the Jewish leaders who are irresponsible, self-seeking shepherds as Ezekiel had characterized them in his day (cf. Ezekiel 34). Thus Jesus places the Pharisees and himself within a scriptural trajectory of good vs. bad

shepherding and aligns himself with God, the shepherd of his people Israel, whom David called "my shepherd" (Ps 23:1; cf. Ps 103:1). As I mentioned previously, the conversation continues at the Feast of Dedication, which once again highlights Jesus' appearance at Jewish feasts in the "Festival Cycle." The "Festival Cycle" concludes with the *inclusio* involving John the Baptist.

Conclusion

With this, we've come to the end of our exploration of the "Festival Cycle" in John 5–10. As in our previous study of the "Cana Cycle" in John 2–4, we've found the fourth evangelist to be a very careful writer who executes his game plan to perfection. His purpose in his Gospel is to set forth Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Toward that end, he has carefully selected a series of startling messianic signs of Jesus.

As we've seen, John has structured Jesus' ministry into an early ministry cycle, the "Cana Cycle," and a later cycle, the "Festival Cycle," which is characterized by escalating controversy. In this way, the plot gradually thickens as the reader becomes aware that the Jewish authorities take offense at Jesus' claim to be God. In fact, they accuse him of making himself God. The reader knows, however, that Jesus is, in fact, the preexistent Word-become-flesh.

By being highly selective and by focusing his entire Gospel on the central question of Jesus' identity, John calls each of us to a decision: Is Jesus God in the flesh, as his followers came to believe? Or is he a deceiver, blasphemer, and imposter as the Jewish leaders alleged?

What John would have us do is follow in the footsteps and trajectory of the Samaritan woman and the man born blind who encountered Jesus and were profoundly impacted by him. Both made the journey from recognizing Jesus as a prophet to becoming his disciple, evangelist, and worshiper. This is also the journey on which you and I should embark. Thank you very much for joining me on this journey, and may God bless you as you serve him and join him on his mission.

Midwestern Journal of Theology 19.1 (2020): 92-119

Martin Luther's Programmatic Use of Romans 1:1–3 for His Understanding of Christ in the Old Testament[1]

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Within the history of interpretation of Holy Scripture, Martin Luther figures prominently as a past voice from whom contemporary Christians can learn much on how to interpret the *sacra pagina* (sacred page).[2] One of the central principles recognized from Luther's contribution to the development of biblical interpretation remains his powerful and confessional reading of "Christ in all Scripture." Though many assessments respect Luther's rigorous Christocentric approach, it is often the case that his interpreters regard his pervasive Christological reading of the Bible as imposed by his theological commitments rather than a faithful handling of the scriptural text.[3]

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[1] This article is a revised version of the presentation I delivered under the same title at the 2019 ETS Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA. The conference's theme was, "Christ in all Scripture."

[2] On the characterization of Luther as principally a premodern interpreter of the *sacra pagina*, see the compelling account by Kenneth Hagen, "Luther, Martin (1483–1546)," in *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007), 692–93. For a broader survey and call to return to reading the Bible as the "sacred page," see Hagen, "The History of Scripture in the Church," in *The Bible in the Churches: How Various Christians Interpret the Scriptures*, 3rd. ed., Marquette Studies in Theology, ed. Kenneth Hagen (Marquette, WI: Marquette University Press, 1998), 1–28.

[3] I have already weighed in on this discussion with my 2017 monograph, *Martin Luther on Reading the Bible as Christian Scripture*, and I hope to extend some of its findings in this present study. William M. Marsh, *Martin Luther on Reading the Bible as Christian Scripture: The Messiah in Luther's Biblical Hermeneutic and Theology*, Princeton Monograph Series (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017).

The purpose of this study is to analyze Luther's programmatic use of Romans 1:1–3 for his understanding of the nature of what it means to say that "Christ is in the Old Testament."[4] Or perhaps more precisely, this study will seek to illumine how Luther looks to Romans 1:1–3 as an apostolic warrant for regarding the Old Testament as distinctly *Christian* Scripture. The Apostle Paul's statements in Romans 1:1–3 function as what Luther calls in one place, "apostolic precedents [*Exempel*]."[5] Among key works throughout his writings where he turns to discuss directly the matter of Christ as the literal sense (*sensus literalis*) of all Scripture, the Reformer enlists Romans 1:1–3 in order to justify his Christological interpretation of the OT's "letter" according to the communicative intent of the biblical authors.[6] On several occasions, Romans 1:1–3 serves as a gateway to a network of scriptural texts that form a consistent biblical-theological framework for presenting Christ as the literal sense of the

[4] By "programmatic," I mean usage that resembles a plan or method.

[5] *On the Last Words of David* (1543), *LW* 15:344; WA 54:93, "Darumb man als von offentlichen dieben wider nemen sol die Schrifft, wo es die Grammatica gerne gibt und sich mit dem Newen Testament reimet, wie *die Aposteln uns Exempel* reichlich gnug geben." See Marsh, *Martin Luther on Reading the Bible*, 186. Mark Thompson calls Luther's deference to the apostles' reading of the OT "a truly biblical theology." He writes, "Throughout his life Luther emphasized the continuing importance of the Old Testament in these terms. In this he felt he was following the practice of the New Testament. As he read them, both the Gospels and the Epistles sought to explain Christ in light of the Old Testament and his apostles illustrated and supported their teaching by quotation of and allusion to the Old Testament. Here then was a precedent for a truly biblical theology." Mark D. Thompson, *A Sure Ground on Which to Stand: The Relation of Authority and Interpretive Method in Luther's Approach to Scripture*. Foreword by Alister McGrath. Studies in Christian History and Thought (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2004), 179; italics mine.

[6] I borrow "communicative intent" from Iain Provan's main contention about how the Reformers understood reading Scripture according to its literal sense in, Iain Provan, *The Reformation and the Right Reading of Scripture* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017), 81–106. Provan indicates that his ultimate argument "will be that to read Scripture 'literally,' in line with the Reformation perspectives on this topic, means to read it in accordance with its various, apparent *communicative intentions* as a collection of texts from the past now integrated into one Great Story, doing justice to such realities as literary convention, idiom, metaphor, and typology or figuration" (Ibid., 85–86; italics mine).

OT. This collocation of biblical-theological passages, often with Romans 1:1–3 at the helm, appear in a relatively stable pattern of witness across many years and a diversity of Luther's writings.[7]

To pursue this study, I will begin by introducing Luther's programmatic use of Romans 1:1–3. In doing so, I will seek to highlight the larger biblical-theological network of scriptural texts that tend to follow behind Roman 1:1–3 that the Reformer leans heavily upon to promote his Christological reading of the OT. In closing, I will offer some reflection upon Luther's use of "scriptural proofs" that situates him within this ancient practice and brings him into contemporary discussions over the relationship between Scripture and theology.

Door Wide Open: Luther's Use of Romans 1:1–3

Upon completion of his *First Lectures on the Psalms* (1513–1515), Luther transitioned to Paul's Epistle to the Romans, lecturing on the letter from November 1515 to September 1516. These lectures have been preserved in a combination of students' notes and some from Luther himself. Volume 25 in the American Edition of *Luther's Works* published the manuscript in a twofold set: *Glosses* and *Scholia.* Observing the former, Luther adds a marginal gloss to his note on "Concerning His Son" from Romans 1:3, announcing, "Here the door is thrown open wide for the understanding of Holy Scriptures, that is, that everything must be understood in relation to Christ, especially in the case of prophecy. But Scripture is completely prophetical, although not according to the

[7] A programmatic use of Romans would be fitting to overall estimations of the normative role the Epistle plays in Luther's reading of the whole biblical canon. Reformers such as Luther, Melanchthon, and Calvin utilized rhetorical analysis learned from the Humanism of their day to locate the *argumentum* for individual books of the Bible, that is, their central message or argument. Interpreters like Erasmus or Luther typically set forth the basic "argument" of a biblical book by giving it a "preface." At a greater level, Luther strove to discern the *argumentum* of all Scripture. "What Luther and Melanchthon argued," according to Timothy Wengert, "was that Scripture itself contained such an *argumentum* or *scopus*—namely, the book of Romans." Timothy J. Wengert, *Reading the Bible with Martin Luther: An Introductory Guide* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 56. See also, Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God: The Wittenberg School and Its Scripture-Centered Proclamation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 162–63.

superficial sense of the letter."[8] This early comment captures succinctly the approach Luther will continue to develop throughout his forthcoming lectures on Galatians (1516–1517) and Hebrews (1517–1518) as well as his return to the Psalter (*Operationes*) in his second series on this OT book from 1519–1521.[9]

The Wittenberg professor's consistent engagement with the interpretation of the Scriptures alongside his early days of reform should not be neglected. Once Luther embarks upon his translation work on the Bible hidden away at the Wartburg in 1521 following his imperial questioning and condemnation at the Diet of Worms, much of his thought expressed in the prefatory material he provided for his German Bible starting in 1522 with the *Preface to the New Testament* manifests established convictions about the nature of Christ's relationship to both Old and New Testaments. The aforementioned key insight from the marginal gloss on Romans 1:3 several years prior consists in the declaration: "Here the door is thrown open wide for the understanding of Holy Scriptures." [10] Moreover, it previews the way in which the Reformer will utilize the Apostle Paul's own epistolary prologue to cast a holistic vision for understanding the character of the OT as none other than a *Christian* book.[11]

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[8] *LW* 25:4; WA 56:5.

[9] Kolb, *Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God*, 145–46; cf., Erik H. Herrmann, "Martin Luther's Biblical Commentary: New Testament." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. 29 Mar. 2017. https://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-289.

[10] *LW* 25:4; WA 56:5.

[11] On the opening of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, see Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 2nd ed. New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 37–38. For considerations of Paul's prescript to Romans as a canonical introduction to his corpus, see Robert W. Wall, "Romans1:1–15: An Introduction to the Pauline Corpus of the New Testament," in *The New Testament as Canon: A Reader in Canonical Criticism*, eds. Robert W. Wall and Eugene E. Lemicio, Journal for the Study of the New Testament (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 142–60; Brevard S. Childs, *The Church's Guide for Reading Paul: The Canonical Shaping of the Pauline Corpus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 65–69.

The Old Testament as Holy, Christian Scripture

Luther was unabashed in his confessional outlook upon the OT Scriptures as well as its characters like Moses, whom he identified as a "Christian" in his 1543 treatise, *On the Last Words of David*.[12] In his later years of intense polemic against fears of the influence of rabbinic biblical interpretation to the supposed detriment of the Christian faith, Luther devoted extra exegetical effort to demonstrate with force that the proper interpreters of the OT are Christians since, "We . . . have the meaning and import of the Bible because we have the New Testament, that is, Jesus Christ, who was promised in the Old Testament and who later appeared and brought with Him the light and the true meaning of Scripture."[13] All of the so-called *Judenschriften*[14] feature lengthy exegetical defenses of how the OT "letter" prophesies and proclaims Jesus Christ.[15] As valuable

[12] *LW* 15:299; WA 54:55.

[13] *On the Last Words of David* (1543), *LW* 15:268; WA 54:29. For a study on the intersection of Christian Hebraism with Luther, see the thorough work of Stephen G. Burnett, "Reassessing the 'Basel-Wittenberg Conflict': Dimensions of the Reformation-Era Discussion of Hebrew Scholarship," in *"Hebraica Veritas?" Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Allison P. Coudert and Jeffrey S. Shoulson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 189–95.

[14] Standard writings of Luther that are identified as *Judenschriften* are: *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew* (1523; *LW* 45:199–229; WA 11:314-336), *Against the Sabbatarians* (1538; *LW* 47:65–98; WA 50:312–37), *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1539; *LW* 47:137–306; WA 53:417–552), *On the Ineffable Name and On the Lineage of Christ* (1543; WA 53:579–648), and *On the Last Words of David* (1543; *LW* 15:265–352; WA 54:28–100). For additional works from Luther pertaining to his Jewish polemics as well as a helpful introduction to the vast and complex field of research on "Luther and the Jews," see Brooks Schramm and Kirsi Irmeli Stjerna, eds., *Martin Luther, the Bible, and the Jewish People: A Reader* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012). Part one of *On the Ineffable Name* appears in a new English translation by Brooks Schramm, "On the Shem Hamphoras and On the Lineage of Christ," in *The Annotated Luther: Christian Life in the World*, vol. 5, ed., Hans J. Hillerbrand (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017), 609–66. A full English translation is set to appear in Volume 61 of the expanded American Edition of *Luther's Works*.

[15] For example, John Slotemaker traces the development of Luther's exegesis of 2 Samuel 23:1–7 from *Against the Sabbatarians* to *On the Jews and Their Lies* to its culmination in *On the Last Words of David* (1543), in John T. Slotemaker, "The Trinitarian House of David: Martin Luther's Anti-Jewish Exegesis of 2 Samuel

as these engagements with the biblical text for the sake of Christ might seem, observers on this side of the Enlightenment and the rise of the historical-critical methods have tended to dismiss Luther's biblical interpretation as "unhistorical, unreasonable, unscientific, and just plain wrong," as Luther scholar John Maxfield laments.[16] For instance, OT scholar Ralph Klein suggests in an article, "Reading the Old Testament with Martin Luther—and Without Him," that to read the OT *without* Luther "means that we recognize that the Old Testament does not literally proclaim Christ."[17] Additionally, Klein repeatedly indicates throughout the essay that Luther, as well as others in the precritical tradition of biblical interpretation, implement exegesis that is "excessively Christological."[18]

Probably regarded as the definitive study on Luther's handling of the OT, Heinrich Bornkamm in his book, *Luther and the Old Testament*, minces no words in his "Postscript" concerning the doubtful, abiding relevance of the Reformer's interpretive approach:

> Modern historical research differs from Luther's interpretation of the Old Testament especially in that it can no longer revive the radical prophetic-Christological interpretation of many parts of the Old Testament which were self-evident to Luther. . . . [A]ny research which thinks historically will have to give up, without hesitation or

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23:1–7," *Harvard Theological Review* 104 (2011): 233–54. He categorizes Luther's approach as "polemical exegesis." Ibid., 250.

[16] John A. Maxfield, "The Enduring Importance of Luther's Exposition of the Old Testament as Christian Revelation," in *Defending Luther's Reformation: Its Ongoing Significance in the Face of Contemporary Challenges*, ed. John A. Maxfield (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 125. Childs similarly responds, "Of course, Luther as a sixteenth-century interpreter did not make the clear distinction between an exegesis that worked from an original historical context, and one that had consciously shifted to a theological context provided by the full corpus of canonical scripture. Ever since the Enlightenment, Luther's Christological approach has often been rejected as a naïve distortion of the text's true meaning because he imposed an alien dogmatic system on the biblical text. *Such a criticism has failed to grasp the heart of Luther's approach.*" Brevard S. Childs, *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 203; italics mine.

[17] Ralph W. Klein, "Reading the Old Testament with Martin Luther—and Without Him," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 36 (2009): 103.

[18] Ibid., 99.

> reservation, Luther's scheme of Christological prediction in the Old Testament.[19]

Shortly afterwards, in the final words to the book, Bornkamm affirms that, "It is an urgent matter for Christians to interpret the Old Testament correctly," and perhaps, the best lesson learned from Luther is what *not* to do.[20] In Bornkamm's estimation, Luther remains guilty of "Christianization," and thus, "We cannot use [his work] with a clear conscience much longer if we cannot give clear and new reasons to justify such an interpretation. If we take this task just as seriously as we take the inviolable truthfulness of historical research, then we can let go of the 'swaddling clothes' of Luther's interpretation of the Old Testament and once again salvage the treasure in the manger."[21]

The historicist approach opens up another assessment of Luther's Christian reading of the OT, namely, that of supercessionist or anti-Semitic.[22]A case in point would be Eric Gritsch's intimation that Luther's intensification of "the traditional view of the church that Christ was prefigured in the Old Testament" for further concretization of "the unity of the Bible as the Christ-centered Word" led him to distinguish the "faithful synagogue" in Israel from a supposedly accursed "Talmudic Judaism" due to their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah.[23] "The

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[19] Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther and the Old Testament*, trans. Eric W. and Ruth C. Gritsch, ed. Victor I. Gruhn (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 262. Clearly at work in Bornkamm's assertion that modern "historical" exegesis must "give up" Luther's "radical prophetic-Christological interpretation" of the OT is the sort of "methodological naturalism" that Darren Sarisky disputes in his case for *Reading the Bible Theologically*. "The basis of this exclusionary principle," Sarisky describes, "is that, whether the text ultimately is holy or sacred or whatever else, Christian doctrine is not necessary in order to grasp the features that give it the meaning it has: doctrine does not tell a reader what the text is insofar as its nature informs how it should be read." Darren Sarisky, *Reading the Bible Theologically*, Current Issues in Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 354–55.

[20] Bornkamm, Luther and the Old Testament, 266.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Maxfield, "Luther's Exposition of the Old Testament," 132–35.

[23] Eric W. Gritsch, *Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism: Against His Better Judgment* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 35. A notable comment from Gritsch in this

distinction between 'faithful Israel,' known through the prophets, and an anti-Christian Judaism," according to Gritsch, "is the foundation of Luther's anti-Semitism."[24]

Maxfield acknowledges that "Luther's anti-Jewish mentality and prejudiced opinions must be rejected and left in the past where they unfortunately were more commonplace than unique"; nevertheless, what ought not to be missed is that the underlying motivation for Luther's exegetical efforts in these later years was driven by "fears" that "the very heart and lifeblood of Christian faith and life" were under attack, namely, "Christ and the Gospel as witnessed and proclaimed through the Bible, in both the Old and the New Testaments, and through Christian preaching."[25] Wider study of patristic and medieval biblical interpretation will show that Luther continued standard messianic, exegetical arguments for "Christ in the OT," so to speak.[26] "What distinguished Luther's interpretation as a new and significant contribution to interpretation in his day," proposes Maxfield, is the Reformer's "christocentric and Gospel-centric understanding of the Old Testament in its *entirety*."[27] Put another way, Maxfield believes Luther has "enduring importance" as a biblical interpreter because he exposited the OT as uniquely Christian "revelation." Luther's conviction that "the Old Testament . . . teaches Christ and the Gospel of Christ" is to make the

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passage adds that Luther takes this "Christ-centered" approach instead of following "the new, historical-critical hermeneutics of the Humanists."

[24] Ibid., 35–36. See also Eric W. Gritsch, "The Cultural Context of Luther's Interpretation," *Interpretation* 37 (1983): 272–74.

[25] Maxfield, "Luther's Exposition of the Old Testament," 138.

[26] Brooks Schramm, "Martin Luther, the Bible, and the Jewish People," in *Martin Luther, the Bible, and the Jewish People: A Reader*, eds. Brooks Schramm and Kirsi I. Stjerna (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 12–13. On the other hand, others such as Mickey Mattox have noted Luther's somewhat unprecedented selection of 2 Samuel 23:1–7 to demonstrate Christological and Trinitarian exegesis in light of the history of Christian biblical interpretation. Mickey L. Mattox, "Luther's Interpretation of Scripture: Biblical Understanding in Trinitarian Shape," in *The Substance of the Faith: Luther's Doctrinal Theology for Today*, Dennis Bielfeldt, Mickey L. Mattox, and Paul R. Hinlicky (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 47–49.

[27] Maxfield, "Luther's Exposition of the Old Testament," 143; italics mine.

assertion "that it is a *prophetic revelation* of God."[28] For Maxfield, describing Luther's view of the OT as "Christian revelation" conveys the confessed character of these "sacred writings" for the Reformer. In other words, Luther upholds a pervasive, holistic understanding of the nature of the OT Scriptures as distinctly Christian "revelation," which grounds his exposition of it "in the conviction that God has spoken and continues to speak through the Old Testament, that the Bible as a whole is the revelation of God that has come to its completion in Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh (John 1:1, 14)."[29] The OT is a "Christian Book," and Luther's use of Romans 1:1–3 serves a programmatic purpose to commend this confession to the church and the world.[30]

Luther's Scriptural Proofs

Interestingly, Romans 1:1–3 fails to appear in the later so-called *Judenschriften*. At the other end of his career as a Reformer around 1521, however, clear indication occurs that these verses played a programmatic role in Luther's thought as he labored to acquaint new evangelical ears to the unified witness of Holy Scripture to Jesus Christ and his gospel of grace. As the "new Wittenberg theology" gains popularity, Luther strives to clarify the truth of the gospel in distinction from his inheritance of the Later Medieval church and scholastic theology. In these moments, Luther's intent appears to be aimed at establishing the nature of the gospel as "promise" (*promissio*), which originates in the manner of the

[28] Ibid., 130; italics mine. See also Maxfield's prior attempt to portray Luther's understanding of the OT (i.e., Genesis) as "Christian Revelation" in his fine study, John A. Maxfield, *Luther's Lectures on Genesis and the Formation of Evangelical Identity*, Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 59–63.

[29] Maxfield, "Luther's Exposition of the Old Testament," 135.

[30] For studies that give particular attention to Luther's holistic vision of the OT as a "Christian Book," one should consult, Marsh, *Martin Luther on Reading the Bible*, 197–99; James S. Preus, *From Shadow to Promise: Old Testament Interpretation from Augustine to the Young Luther* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 76–99; A. S. Wood, *Captive to the Word: Martin Luther: Doctor of Sacred Scripture* (Great Britain: The Paternoster Press, 1969), 169–78; Schramm, "Martin Luther, the Bible, and the Jewish People," 13; John Goldingay, "Luther and the Bible," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 35 (1982): 47–51.

OT's literal sense testimony to Christ.[31] The gospel that Luther seeks to promote must not be perceived as a "new teaching." In fact, he wants his hearers to recognize that this "new evangelical theology" is "the old [gospel] that you had from the beginning. The old [gospel] is the word that you have heard" (1 Jn 2:7), to borrow John's manner of speech.

In the *Glosses* of the *Lectures on Romans*, Luther declares that Paul's words, "Concerning his son," serve as the wide open door for understanding all of the Holy Scriptures.[32] The *Scholia* provides further expression to Luther's thought here. On Romans 1:2, "Which He promised beforehand," Luther submits, "This is the greatest power and the proof of the Gospel, that it has the witness of the old Law and Prophets that it would be so in the future. For the Gospel proclaims only what prophecy has said it would proclaim."[33] The "power" and "proof" of the gospel of God "concerning His Son" originates with the Law and the Prophets, namely, the OT Scriptures. When he comes to Paul's phrase, "Through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures," he roots the prophetic Word's proclamation of the gospel even further back than the OT Scriptures:

> For this promise is the predestination *from eternity* of all things to come. But through the prophets the promise is given in time and in

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[31] On Luther's hermeneutical development in relation to understanding the OT Scriptures as *promissio*, see Preus, *From Shadow to Promise*, 226–71; See also Brevard S. Childs, "The *Sensus Literalis* of Scripture: An Ancient and Modern Problem," in *Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen Theologie: Festschrift für Walther Zimmerli zum 70. Geburtstag*, eds. Herbert Donner, Robert Hanhart, Rudolf Smend (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 86, "In sum, it was the letter of the text properly understood as promise, that joined the two testament in the one message of the Gospel." Childs is dependent upon Preus' study. Cf. Oswald Bayer's proposal of how Luther's understanding of the Word as God's direct and effective promise places *promissio* at the center of his theology and interpretation of Scripture in, Oswald Bayer, "Luther as an Interpreter of Holy Scripture," trans. Mark Mattes, in *The Cambridge Companion to Martin Luther*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 75–77; idem., *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 50–58. It should be noted that Bayer locates Luther's shift to his centralizing commitment to *promissio* in 1518, which would put this "Reformation discovery" later than the *Lectures on Romans*.

[32] *LW* 25:4; WA 56:5.

[33] *LW* 25:144–45; WA 56:165.

> human speech. This is a wonderful proof of the grace of God, that above and beyond the eternal promises He gives the promise also in human words, not only in spoken words but also in written ones. All this has been done so that when the promise of God has been fulfilled, it should in these words be apparent that it was His plan to act thus, so that we might recognize that the Christian religion is not the result of a blind accident or of a fate determined by stars, as many empty-headed people have arrogantly assumed, but that it was by God's definite plan and deliberate predetermination that it should turn out so.[34]

What the "old Law and the Prophets" proclaim is the Word of promise God has spoken "from eternity" delivered not merely in oral speech, but authoritatively and definitively in the "temporal mission," we might say, of the "Holy Scriptures" [*in Scripturis sanctis*].[35]

Next, Luther considers Romans 1:3–4, and presents Paul's teaching in these verses as the central subject matter of the prophetic Word expressed by the OT Scriptures. On God's gospel concerning his Son, Luther explains, "The contents, or object, of the Gospel, or—as others say—its subject, is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of the seed of David according to the flesh and now appointed King and Lord over all things in power, and this according to the Holy Spirit, who has raised Him from the dead."[36] Although other features could weigh in, one central factor in this statement that exhibits Luther's dependence upon the OT for his definition of the gospel is the description, "born of the seed of David according to the flesh." Luther recognizes that what makes Jesus Christ the central subject matter of Scripture, or more specifically, the literal sense of the OT's "letter," is its messianic hope promised from "the seed of the Woman," beginning in Genesis 3:15.[37] In the following series of comments, Luther will emphasize this point by adding, "This is the Gospel, which deals not merely with the Son of God in general but *with Him who has become incarnate* and *is of the seed of David.*"[38] He will, then,

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[34] *LW* 25:145–46; WA 56:166.
[35] *LW* 25:145; WA 56:166.
[36] *LW* 25:146; WA 56:167.
[37] Marsh, Martin Luther on Reading the Bible, 100–22; Kolb, Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God, 126–27.
[38] *LW* 25:146; WA 56:167; italics mine.

close this section on Romans 1:3–4 with a summary of the message God promised beforehand through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures (Rom 1:1–2):

> The Gospel deals with His Son, who was born of the seed of David but now has been manifested as the Son of God with power over all things through the Holy Spirit, given from the resurrection of the dead, even Jesus Christ, our Lord. See, there you have it: The Gospel is the message concerning Christ, the Son of God, who was first humbled and then glorified through the Holy Spirit.[39]

The logic of God's promise "through the prophets" located "in the Holy Scriptures" (i.e., the OT) about the gospel "concerning his Son" will function in a programmatic way in Luther's thought and instruction in the years to come as he seeks to introduce others to the Bible's primary subject matter, Jesus Christ, whose incarnation and cross are for sinners "in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3–4). This practice can be clearly observed in the analysis of the writings to follow.

A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels (1521)

Luther wrote this piece to serve as a preface to the publication of the *Church Postils* in 1521. Two sections within the writing include Luther's use of Romans 1. In the first place, Luther suggests a certain grasp of the gospel by positing, "For at its briefest, the gospel is a discourse about Christ, that he is the Son of God and became man for us, that he died and was raised, that he has been established as a Lord over all things."[40] From here, Luther makes an intriguing point that Paul explains as much in his epistles, yet without recourse to the "four gospels" while still expressing the "whole gospel."[41]

Why raise this distinction? Because Luther desires to commend the OT as sufficient on its own terms to provide the saving hope of the gospel in God's Messiah, Jesus Christ. He does so by immediately quoting Romans 1:1–4, and afterwards responding, "There you have it. The gospel is a story about Christ, God's and David's Son, who died and was raised and is established as Lord. This is the gospel in a nutshell. Just as

[39] *LW* 25:148; WA 56:168–69.
[40] *LW* 35:118; WA 10.1.1:9.
[41] *LW* 35:118; WA 10.1.1:9.

there is no more than one Christ, so there is and may be no more than one gospel. Since Paul and Peter too teach nothing but Christ, in the way we have just described, so their epistles can be nothing but the gospel."[42]

As one can see, Luther wishes to apply the label "gospel" to writings other than the Fourfold Gospel. Paul and Peter's letters could be regarded as "gospel," since they tell of "God's and David's Son," and furthermore,

> Yes even the teaching of the prophets, in those places where they speak of Christ, is nothing but the true, pure, and proper gospel—just as if Luke or Matthew had described it. For the prophets have proclaimed the gospel and spoken of Christ, as St. Paul here [Rom. 1:2] reports and as everyone indeed knows. Thus when Isaiah in chapter fifty-three says how Christ should die for us and bear our sins, he has *written* the pure gospel.[43]

The apostolic gospel begins in the prophetic Word. In particular, Luther believes Romans 1:2 supports the outlook that the OT Scriptures, like Isaiah 53, paint a portrait and proclaim a promise of the saving person and work of "God's and David's Son," and thus should be regarded as "pure *Euangelium*."

In the second section, Luther returns to this subject after a discussion on Christ as "gift and example," and the warning not to turn the Lord Jesus into a Moses. He laments "the sin and shame" of how neglectful Christians in his day have become of the gospel, requiring "other books and commentaries" to show "what to look for and what to expect in it."[44] Now Luther will reintroduce the significance of the OT as the primary source for understanding the true nature of the gospel, but in this occasion, Romans 1 does not hold the first position whereas in the prior section, it stood alone in programmatic fashion. Rather than his own "preface," Luther says,

> Now the gospels and epistles of the apostles were written for this very purpose. They want themselves to be our guides, to direct us to the writings of the prophets and of Moses in the Old Testament so that

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[42] *LW* 35:118; WA 10.1.1:10.

[43] *LW* 35:118; WA 10.1.1:10; italics mine. Scriptural references that appear in brackets represent exact biblical citations provided by editors, or in some cases, myself (outside of direct quotation of Luther) in order to refer to Luther's use of various texts where a citation (e.g., Book, chapter, verse) is not given.

[44] *LW* 35:122; WA 10.1.1:14.

> we might there read and see for ourselves how Christ is wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in the manger [Luke 2:7], that is, how he is comprehended in the writings of the prophets.[45]

The apostolic writings are intended to function as "guides" back into the Law and the Prophets to see how they garment Christ.[46] To recognize that he is "wrapped in swaddling clothes" is to discern how Christ Jesus should be "comprehended" according to the terms of "the writings of the prophets." And so Luther exhorts his readers, "It is there that people like us should read and study, drill ourselves, and see what Christ is, for what purpose he has been given, how he was promised, and how all Scripture tends toward him.[47]

To support this claim, Luther enlists a series of "scriptural proofs," or "apostolic precedents/warrants," starting with John 5:[46] and [5:39]. Next comes Romans 1 quoting only from vv. 1–2 to reiterate the point, "This is what St. Paul means in Romans 1[:1, 2], where in the beginning he says in his greeting, 'The gospel was promised by God through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures.'"[48] In light of the Apostle Paul's "guidance" here, Luther responds, "This is why the evangelists and apostles always direct us to the Scriptures and say, 'Thus it is written,' and again, 'This has taken place in order that the writing of the prophets might be fulfilled,' and so forth."[49] He continues to undergird this approach by alluding to and quoting from an anticipated grouping of NT

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[45] *LW* 35:122; WA 10.1.1:15.

[46] On how the NT provides a "guided" reading of the OT in Luther's thought, see Marsh, *Martin Luther on Reading the Bible*, 156–61. Thompson suggests that Luther regarded the NT as a sort of "hermeneutical control" upon the OT, yet not in such a way that subordinated the first Testament to the second with respect to content and authority. As Thompson reflects upon Luther's practice, "Apart from Christ the Old Testament remained a sealed book. . . . Yet in Christ the light has shone and the purpose of the New Testament is to drive us back into the Old Testament. . . . Of course, the New Testament was more than simply an aid to be consulted when the interpreter was faced with *prima facie* obscurity in the Old Testament text. The New Testament was to operate as a control whenever one sought to understand the teaching of the Old." Thompson, *A Sure Ground*, 180–81.

[47] *LW* 35:122; WA 10.1.1:15.

[48] *LW* 35:122; WA 10.1.1:15.

[49] *LW* 35:122; WA 10.1.1:15.

texts: Acts 17:[11], [1 Pet 1:10–12], Acts 4 [3:24], Luke [24:45], and John 10:[9, 3].[50] "Thus it is ultimately true that the gospel itself is our guide and instructor in the Scriptures," Luther says, "just as with this foreword I would gladly give instruction and point you to the gospel."[51]

Still, Luther regrets the "fine lot of tender and pious children we are."[52] His concern pertains to his readers' reception of the OT as "Christian revelation," or lack thereof, when he writes, "In order that we might not have to study in the Scriptures and learn Christ there, we simply regard the entire Old Testament as of no account, as done for and no longer valid. Yet it alone bears the name of Holy Scripture."[53] If one wants to know what to look for or expect in Gospels, then he or she cannot and must not dispense of the OT, for it is the Triune God's speech concerning the promise of his Son by the prophets. The apostles proclaim nothing else than what has already been promised by God beforehand in these *Christian* Scriptures. Luther remains convinced on this matter because of various "apostolic precedents," particularly in his programmatic use of Romans 1:1–3 in this preface.

The Gospel for the Main Christmas Service, John 1[:1–14] (1521–1522)

It is fitting that the next significant sample of verses from the Apostle Paul's own prologue to Romans for outlining Luther's understanding of Christ's relationship to the OT appears in a sermon from the *Church Postils* for which *A Brief Instruction* prefaced. Luther begins this Christmas sermon displaying his fondness for John's Gospel: "This is the most important Gospel of all."[54] And despite perceptions of it as obscure, Luther calms his hearers that nothing else is required to exposit "the Gospel's meaning" than "simple and plain attention to the words of the text."[55] So then, how might one proceed with this instruction? The first step Luther prescribes is, "We should know that everything taught and written by the apostles comes from the Old Testament. For in the Old Testament all is prophesied which was to be fulfilled in Christ and to be

[50] *LW* 35:122–23; WA 10.1.1:15–16.
[51] *LW* 35:123; WA 10.1.1:16–17.
[52] *LW* 35:123; WA 10.1.1:17.
[53] *LW* 35:123; WA 10.1.1:17.
[54] *LW* 52:41; WA 10.1.1:181.
[55] *LW* 52:41; WA 10.1.1:181.

preached, as St. Paul says in Romans 1[:2]: 'God promised the gospel concerning his Son Christ through the prophets in Holy Scripture.'"[56]

Similar to the first enlistment of Romans 1 in *A Brief Instruction*, key verses (vv. 1–2) from Paul's prologue appear by themselves, playing a programmatic role for Luther to cast a vision for his readers of the Christian character of the OT Scriptures. On the basis of Romans 1:1–2, Luther contends for the inseparable relationship between the gospel and the OT explaining, "Thus their preaching is based on the Old Testament, and there is no word in the New Testament that does not look back into the Old Testament where it was first told. We have noted in the Epistle how the divinity of Christ is confirmed by the apostle from the Old Testament passages. For the New Testament is nothing but a revelation of the Old."[57] It would be difficult not to suspect that Luther's description of the NT as a "revelation" of the OT either brought to mind or came from his plan to incorporate the image from the Book of Revelation itself that he mentions next. "It is as if somebody had a sealed letter and later on broke it open," imagines Luther. He goes on, "In like manner the Old Testament is a last will and testament of Christ; after his death he had it unsealed and read through the gospel and preached everywhere. This is signified in Revelation 5[:1–5] where the Lamb of God alone opens the book with the seven seals which, otherwise, nobody could open up, neither in heaven, nor the earth, nor under the earth."[58]

For Luther, the OT certainly proclaims Christ on its own terms, out of its own grammar, yet a Christian reading of it now lies at the disposal of every believer because of the spiritual, epistemic illumination available through the Lamb of God who has "unsealed" this Book with his cross and resurrection. And so, Luther encourages his hearers, "In order that this Gospel might become clearer and brighter, we must go back to the Old Testament, to the passages on which this Gospel is based."[59] But where might one start? With little surprise given this sermon's focus text is John 1, Luther recommends, "That means going back to Moses, to the first chapter and beginning of Genesis; there we read: 'In the beginning

[56] *LW* 52:41; WA 10.1.1:181.
[57] *LW* 52:41; WA 10.1.1:181.
[58] *LW* 52:41–42; WA 10.1.1:181–82.
[59] *LW* 52:42; WA 10.1.1:182.

God created heaven and earth.'"[60] Once again, Luther returns to Romans 1:1–2 to set up this understanding of the OT as "Christian revelation."

The Gospel for the Sunday After Christmas, Luke 2[:33–40] (1521–1522)

Another rich example of Luther's use of Romans 1 occurs in a sermon from the *Church Postils*. From the start, Luther aims to make sense of Joseph and Mary's amazement at Simeon's prophetic words about their son, Jesus (Lk 2:33). Although one could be distracted by the miraculous wonders surrounding their child like the angelic annunciation or that "[Mary] had conceived him of the Holy Ghost," Luther locates their amazement within the knowledge of faith in response to Simeon's words.[61] In a sort of "spiritual" sense interpretation, Luther suggests that for his parents "to bring Christ into the temple means nothing else than to follow the example of the people in Acts 17[:11]. When they had accepted the gospel with complete desire they went into Holy Scripture, examining daily whether things were so."[62] Even though miracles have surrounded their child, Joseph and Mary recognize they possess no ordinary son. In Luther's assessment, they are models of faith because they resolve to wonder at this young boy in "disregard [to] the *external evidence* [i.e., miracles] and cling to Simeon's *words* with a firm faith; therefore, they marvel at his speech."[63] Next, Luther strives to link Simeon with the distinctive ministry of the OT prophets as those who spoke of Christ "carried along" by the Holy Spirit supporting this view with scriptural proofs from Acts 4[3:24] and Matthew 11[:13], and the added reflection, "Luke says of Simeon that he is a personification of all prophets filled with the Holy Ghost."[64] Like Joseph and Mary, all Christians should know, "If we come into the temple in this manner with Christ and the gospel and look at Holy Scripture that way, then the statements of the prophets take their places warmly next to him [Simeon]."[65]

For those who take up this interpretive counsel, Luther encourages that they shall find the prophetic Word in the OT Scriptures offering up

[60] *LW* 52:42; WA 10.1.1:182.
[61] *LW* 52:104; WA 10.1.1:382.
[62] *LW* 52:105; WA 10.1.1:384.
[63] *LW* 52:104; WA 10.1.1:383; italics mine.
[64] *LW* 52:105; WA 10.1.1:384.
[65] *LW* 52:105; WA 10.1.1:385.

"beautiful testimonies" of "how this Christ is the Savior, the light, the consolation and glory of Israel—and everything else that Simeon is saying and preaching."[66] How can Luther be confident of this result? Quickly Luther turns to his choice programmatic passage, assuring his hearers that, "Concerning this St. Paul says in Romans 1[:2] that God promised the gospel through the prophets in Holy Scripture. He explains the meaning of Simeon and the temple."[67] The invocation of Romans 1:1–2 sets in motion a familiar pattern of scriptural proofs that seem to be a part of a larger network of biblical-theological texts that ground his approach to and understanding of the OT as entirely Christian Scripture. The scriptural proofs in view from this portion of the sermon are: Rom 3:[21]; Jn 5:[39], [46]; Deut 18[:15]; Acts 8[7:37], 13[3:22]; Isa 28[:16]; Rom 4[:23], 15[:4]; 1 Pet 1[:12].[68]

Preface to the New Testament (1522/46)

This preface exhibits structural and material similarities to *A Brief Instruction* (1521). One instance can be observed in that both writings feature (1) a statement of the gospel followed by (2) use of Romans 1:1–3, and then (3) a restatement of the gospel to form an *inclusio*.[69] Additionally, Luther's formulation of the gospel in these places shares affinities to his comments on Romans 1:1–4 in the previous *Lectures on Romans* (1515–1516). In the *Preface to the New Testament*, Luther's first definitional summary of the gospel proceeds as: "Thus this gospel of God or New Testament is a good story and report, sounded forth into all the world by the apostles, telling of a true David who strove with sin, death, and the devil, and overcame them, and thereby rescued all those who

[66] *LW* 52:105; WA 10.1.1:385. Prior to this point of the sermon, Luther has already described the gospel as preached by Simeon in related terms: "Thus the evangelist wants to say that Simeon delivered a heartwarming, beautiful sermon, preaching nothing but the gospel and God's word. What else is the gospel but a sermon about Christ, declaring that he is a Savior, light, and glory of all the world; such a sermon fills the heart with joy, and it marvels joyfully at such grace and consolation, provided it is received in faith." *LW* 52:104; WA 10.1.1:383.

[67] *LW* 52:106; WA 10.1.1:385.

[68] *LW* 52:106–07; WA 10.1.1:385–86.

[69] For further analysis, see Marsh, *Martin Luther on Reading the Bible*, 106–07.

were captive in sin, afflicted with death, and overpowered by the devil."[70] The apostolic proclamation of this "new testament" in Christ delivers forgiveness of sins and righteousness without merit to "poor," sinful men and women, who "can hear nothing more comforting than this precious and tender message about Christ; from the bottom of his heart he must laugh and be glad over it, if he believes it true."[71] The consolation and certainty of this gospel promise in the "true David" receives further strengthening, Luther says, in the reality that, "God has promised this gospel and testament in many ways, by the prophets in the Old Testament, as St. Paul says in Romans 1[:1], 'I am set apart to preach the gospel of God which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David,' etc."[72] As has been demonstrated so far, when Luther resorts to Romans 1 in programmatic usage, a pattern of scriptural proofs tend to come with it that appear to function as a kind of biblical-theological hermeneutic. In this instance, Luther endeavors "to mention some of these places" that he believes the Apostle Paul envisions in Romans 1:1–2: Gen 3[:15]; Gen 22[:18]; Gal 3[:16], [3:8]; 2 Sam 7[:12–14]; Micah 5[:2]; Hosea 13[:14].[73] What Luther conveys by sampling this network of biblical texts is his conviction that the affirmation of Christ as the literal sense of Scripture finds ultimate warrant in the prophetic witness to the Messiah in the OT's "letter." The substance of the Reformer's definition of the gospel is formed by the OT's prophecy of the messianic hope.[74] And so, Luther restates his summation of the gospel against this backdrop: "The gospel, then, is nothing but the preaching about Christ, Son of God and of David, true God and man, who by his death and resurrection has overcome for us the sin, death, and hell of all men who believe in him."[75]

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[70] *LW* 35:358; WA *DB* 6:4.
[71] *LW* 35:359; WA *DB* 6:4.
[72] *LW* 35:359; WA *DB* 6:4.
[73] *LW* 35:359–60; WA *DB* 6:4, 6. The list of scriptural proofs for the messianic hope from the OT does not appear in *A Brief Instruction* in between the structure of (2) and (3) outlined above.
[74] Marsh, Martin Luther on Reading the Bible, 105.
[75] *LW* 35:360; WA *DB* 6:6.

Sermons on The First Epistle of St. Peter (1522).

Alongside his fervent translation efforts, Luther continued to preach regularly on the Bible. In his 1522 sermons on 1 Peter, Luther found occasion to illumine again the Christian character of the OT during his comments on 1 Peter 1:10–11. Luther explains that "St. Peter refers us to Holy Scripture in order that we may see there how God keeps His promise not because of any merit on our part but out of pure grace."[76] Scripture's end is "to tear us away from our works and to bring us to faith. And it is necessary for us to study Scripture well in order to become certain of faith."[77] Diligent study of Scripture yields the certainty of faith, in Luther's view, because of his confidence in what the OT promises. Luther puts these pieces together through his pairing of Romans 3:21 with Romans 1:1–2 while he invokes the latter in his programmatic manner to grant understanding of the OT as "Christian revelation." "Thus St. Paul," Luther preaches, "also leads us into Scripture when he says in Rom. 1[:2] that God promised the Gospel 'beforehand through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures.' And in Rom. 3[:21] he says that the Law and the prophets bear witness to the faith through which one is justified."[78] Fitting to practice, a network of scriptural proofs follow Luther's recourse to Romans 1 that present Christ as the literal sense of Scripture on the basis of the OT's messianic hope: Acts 17[:2]; Jn 5[:39], [46]; Matt 7[:12]; Gen 22[:18].[79] These "apostolic precedents," in particular, warrant a Christian reading of the OT as faithful to its own nature, for "the books of Moses and the prophets are also Gospel, since they proclaimed and described in advance what the apostles preached or wrote later about Christ."[80]

Preface to the Old Testament (1523/45)

Romans 1 does not loom as large in this preface, though it appears in similar usage nonetheless. With the first translation of the German New Testament (*Septembertestament*) in 1522 behind him, Luther's rendering of the Pentateuch in German was published in mid-1523.

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[76]*LW* 30:18; WA 12:274.
[77]*LW* 30:18; WA 12:274.
[78]*LW* 30:18; WA 12:274.
[79]*LW* 30:18–21; WA 12:274–77.
[80]*LW* 30:19; WA 12:275.

This preface likely sought to introduce recipients to a Christian reading of the OT as well as to the individual books of the Pentateuch.[81] In this light, one should note the strong tone with which Luther begins the preface repudiating any suspicions that the OT has no abiding value for Christians. He acknowledges two points of misunderstanding that might lead some people to disregard the OT. First, Luther wants to dispel a historicist view of the OT "as a book that was given to the Jewish people only and is now out of date, containing only stories of past times."[82] The second concern is the attitude that, "They think they have enough in the New Testament and assert that only a spiritual sense is to be sought in the Old Testament."[83] To reveal the falsity of both of these views, Luther cites Christ himself who says, "in John 5[:39], 'Search the Scriptures, for it is they that bear witness to me.'"[84] He calls Jesus to witness in objection to these unhealthy postures towards the OT, but then moves quickly to the apostles starting with Paul's charge to Timothy to "attend to the reading of the Scriptures [1 Tim. 4:13], and in *Romans 1[:2] he declares that the gospel was promised by God in the Scriptures*, while in 1 Corinthians 15 he says that in accordance with the Scriptures Christ came of the seed of David, died, and was raised from the dead. St. Peter, too, points us back, more than once, to the Scriptures."[85] Taken together, these scriptural proofs "teach us that the Scriptures of the Old Testament are not to be despised, but diligently read. For they themselves base the New Testament upon them mightily, proving it by the Old Testament and appealing to it."[86] Luther upholds the "Thessalonians" [i.e., the Bereans] in Acts 17[:11] as examples to follow in recourse to discerning the gospel promised beforehand in the OT.[87] For all true "Bereans," according to Luther, should confess that, "The ground and proof of the New Testament is surely not to be despised, and therefore the Old Testament is to be highly regarded. And what is the New Testament but a public preaching and proclamation of Christ, set forth through the sayings of the Old Testament and fulfilled through Christ?"[88] Undoubtedly, Romans 1 informed Luther's thought here in agreement with other "apostolic precedents/warrants" that make similar claims about the nature of the OT Scripture. A possible way to construe Luther's outlook upon the gospel's relationship to the OT from these selections could be to say that the OT is what explains the NT. This interpretive dynamic is made possible because the OT itself is a "Christian Book." As Maxfield posed, such statements from Luther show that one could argue that the

Reformer's "new" and "significant contribution" to biblical interpretation in his context was "his christocentric and Gospel-centric understanding of the Old Testament in its *entirety*."[89]

On Bound Choice (1525)

Several years after Luther's initial output as a condemned heretic and established Reformer, Luther found himself embroiled in a public dispute with the Humanist, Erasmus of Rotterdam. In a popular section of Luther's "Comments on Erasmus' Introduction," concerning the "internal" and "external" clarity of Scripture as the proper "test of truth," Luther's programmatic use of Romans 1 reappears. By the time he has reached the NT, Luther has already examined the principle of "divine light" that the OT promotes regarding the ability of the external Word, particularly the Law, to shed "clear and certain" light upon right judgments and actions.[90] When he consults the NT on this matter, Luther's first turn is to none other than Romans 1:1–2. He writes, "Paul says in Romans 1[:2] that the gospel was promised through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures, and in Romans 3[:21] that the righteousness of faith is witnessed to by the Law and the Prophets. Now, what sort of witness is it if it is obscure?"[91]

The certainty of the gospel of Jesus Christ depends upon the clarity of its scriptural witness. In view of the pattern established in earlier writings, the next set of scriptural proofs that appear comes to little surprise, once Romans 1 has been invoked. Luther asks,

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[81]Marsh, Martin Luther on Reading the Bible, 53.
[82]*LW* 35:235; WA *DB* 8:11.
[83]*LW* 35:235; WA *DB* 8:11.
[84]*LW* 35:235; WA *DB* 8:11.
[85]*LW* 35:235; WA *DB* 8:11; italics mine.
[86]*LW* 35:235–36; WA *DB* 8:11.
[87]Luther has the practice of pointing to the "Thessalonians" in Acts 17:11 to highlight them as models for engaging the Scriptures, principally the OT. For Luther, to be a "Berean" is to be someone who understands the OT as "Christian revelation," a witness to Christ in its literal sense instead of the popular notion of "Bereans" as people who search the Bible to ground a truth claim.
[88]*LW* 35:236; WA *DB* 8:11.
[89]Maxfield, "Luther's Exposition of the Old Testament," 143; italics mine.
[90]*LW* 33:91–92; WA 18:654.
[91]*LW* 33:92–93; WA 18:654.

And what are the apostles doing when they prove their own preachings by the Scriptures? Are they trying to obscure for us their own darkness with yet greater darkness? Or to prove something well known by something known less well? What is Christ doing in John 5[:39], where he tells the Jews to search the Scriptures because they bear witness to him? Is he trying to put them in doubt about faith in him? What are those people in Acts 17[:11] doing, who after hearing Paul were reading the Scriptures day and night to see if these things were so?[92]

To assign obscurity to biblical interpretation clouds the scriptural witness to the consoling promise of the righteousness of faith through the gospel of Jesus Christ revealed ultimately not in the NT, but in the Law and the Prophets, that is, the OT. And so Luther continues to probe at Erasmus, "Do not all these things prove that the apostles, like Christ himself, point us to the Scriptures as the very clearest witnesses to what they themselves say? What right have we, then, to make them obscure?"[93] The "Scriptures" in this case are the OT, and once again, Romans 1 (esp. vv. 1–2) serves a programmatic purpose to portray Luther's understanding of the OT as "Christian revelation," the origin and ground of the one gospel.

Sermons on Jeremiah 23:5–8 (1526)

On November 18, 1526, Luther preached a sermon on Jeremiah 23:5–8 for the Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Trinity, making it no further than v. 5. One major backdrop to the sermons during this period was Luther's role in the Eucharistic Controversy, which gave him concern that Zwingli and others would fail to confess properly the divinity of Christ, or either outright deny it.[94] The first lines of the sermon enter this topic. Luther moves quickly to direct attention to how Jeremiah testifies to the identity of Jesus Christ, when he opens the sermon, "In this Epistle reading or prophecy of Jeremiah, we are told who Christ is, what His kingdom is, how He will reign, and how those who are subject to His

[92]*LW* 33:93; WA 18:655.

[93]*LW* 33:93; WA 18:655.

[94]One will find a concise introduction to the Eucharistic Controversy of 1520s from Luther's perspective in Amy Nelson Burnett, "Luther and the Eucharistic Controversy," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 56, no. 2 (2017): 145–50.

kingdom will dwell in safety."[95] "Who Christ is," for Luther, starts with his identity as the promised Messiah; thus, Luther declares,

> First, the prophet says that Christ is the Shoot and Seed of David. Likewise, St. Paul says to the Romans (1[:1–4]) that God caused the prophets to announce His Gospel concerning His Son beforehand in the Scriptures, namely, that He would be a Lord who would descend from the seed of David according to the flesh, and yet be declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit who sanctifies [Rom 1:4].[96]

Romans 1, then, offers a twofold service for the sermon: In the first place, the Apostle Paul's teaching in his own prologue lends warrant for faithful recourse to the OT in order to discern the truth about Jesus. And in the second place, Romans 1:1–4 provides a doctrinal norm for the type of Christology one ought to find in both the prophetic and apostolic Word across the two Testaments. The latter will continue to be explored for much of the remainder of the sermon. Primarily in view for our purposes is the former.

Following the invocation of Romans 1, Luther immediately enlists two key scriptural proofs of Jesus' identity as the long-promised Messiah that often gravitate to Luther's programmatic use of Romans 1:1–2: [Gen 22:18] and [Gen 3:15].[97] For a brief moment, Luther weaves together these two texts to demonstrate the full divinity and humanity of Christ according to the OT messianic hope. Then, he reflects,

> In all these passages, we plainly see that Christ must be God and man, that He will have to die and rise again and receive an eternal kingdom here on earth, and that this will happen by His Word alone. Although this is not stated with explicit words in these passages, nevertheless it is certainly contained in them, and the words give good indication of it if the text is examined and reflected upon properly.[98]

The character of the OT as Christian Scripture, in Luther's view, allows it to make its own material contribution to the faith confessed.[99]

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[95]*LW* 56:184; WA 20:549.
[96]*LW* 56:184; WA 20:549.
[97]*LW* 56:184–85; WA 20:549–50.
[98]*LW* 56:184; WA 20:550.
[99]Christine Helmer critiques the historical-critical method's dominance precisely for its preclusion of the OT to make an independent material contribution to

"Apostolic precedents" like Romans 1 especially support this understanding. Thinking of the way that Jeremiah 23:5 will witness to Christ in the manner that the Apostle Paul attests in Romans 1:1–4, Luther asserts, "The *whole* Old Testament, moreover, serves to show us that everything we now preach and believe happened as it had been made known and foretold."[100]

Scriptural Proofs as the Interpretation of Scripture

The practice of "proof-texting," or rather, the use of "scriptural proofs," has ancient roots.[101] Luther's participation in this interpretive activity fit with his medieval inheritance and the conviction that *sacra doctrina* must come from the *sacra pagina*.[102] In recent years, "proof-texting" has become a term often regarded with disdain, but not all recommend its dismissal. Michael Allen and Scott Swain come to proof-texting's "defense," at least the kind that best resembles its use within the history of biblical interpretation.[103] With an understanding to its classical function, they suggest that revived practice of proof-texting can "serve as a sign of lively interaction between biblical commentary and Christian doctrine."[104] Moreover, they clarify that the practice

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Christian theology in, Christine Helmer, "Luther's Trinitarian Hermeneutic and the Old Testament," *Modern Theology* 18 (2002): 49–50.

[100]*LW* 56:184; WA 20:550; italics mine.

[101]For leading studies on this practice within the history of interpretation and doctrinal development, see Oskar Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr's Proof-Text Tradition: Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile*, Novum Testamentum, Supplements 56 (Leiden: Brill, 1987); Frances Young, "Exegetical Method and Scriptural Proof: The Bible in Doctrinal Debate," in *Studia Patristica*, vol. 19, ed. Elizabeth Livingstone (Louvain: Peeters, 1989), 291–304.

[102]On Luther's reception of medieval biblical interpretation, see the excellent treatments from Erik Herrmann, "Luther's Absorption of Medieval Biblical Interpretation and His Use of the Church Fathers," in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology*, eds. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L'ubomír Batka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 71–90; Christopher Ocker, *Biblical Poetics before Humanism and Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 184–213.

[103]R. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain, "In Defense of Proof-Texting," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 54.3 (2011): 589–606.

[104]Ibid., 589.

historically was not meant to convey that "a cited proof-text should be self-evident to the reader apart from the hard work of grammatical, historical, literary, and theological exegesis."[105] Instead, theology was taken to be a "sacred science, whose 'first principles' are revealed by God alone and therefore that constructive theological argumentation must proceed on the basis of God's revealed truth, particularly as that revealed truth is communicated through individual passages of Holy Scripture, often as *sedes doctrinae*."[106]

As this study has shown, Luther's programmatic use of Romans 1:1–3 tied to a network of other scriptural passages that form a biblical-theological hermeneutic for discerning Christ as the literal sense of all Scripture works in the twofold manner outlined above. His use of scriptural proofs assume the prior hard work of interpretation and manifest that theological argument must flow directly from the *sacra pagina* of Holy Scripture.[107] Luther scholar Kenneth Hagen contends that actually, "One needs to know the full page of Scripture in order to follow Luther's argument. . . . Only a few words had to be supplied in print in order to trigger the memory of the whole text, chapter, and letter. For Luther, the whole sacred page is a part of his argument."[108] Not always concerned with an exact proof-text, Hagen says that Luther did not think of the biblical text as a "series of chopped-up verses."[109] The Reformer's practice of elliptical reference or scriptural proofs was meant to offer "a portion of some text [as] shorthand for a whole piece."[110] Luther was accustomed to the medieval tradition of interwoven Scripture and

[105]Ibid.

[106]Ibid., 589–90.

[107]Concerning the latter, Robert Kolb notes, "Luther used biblical citations as the deciding factor in his polemics. In this context Luther's understanding of the epistemological principle that the Revealed God is to be found 'in Scripture alone' (sola Scriptura) must be understood. Parallel to the humanist demand for a return to the sources, Luther expressed his intent to remain faithful to all that flowed from the biblical text." Kolb, *Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God*, 85.

[108]Kenneth Hagen, "It Is All in the Et Cetera: Luther and the Elliptical Reference," in *The Word Does Everything: Key Concepts of Luther on Testament, Scripture, Vocation, Cross, and Worm*. Also on Method and on Catholicism, *Marquette Studies in Theology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2016), 207.

[109]Ibid., 208.

[110]Ibid.

commentary. Hagen exposes the common bad habits of contemporary reading on Scripture in contrast to Luther's medieval approach to the *sacra pagina*, when he remarks, "The modern scholar is trained to skip over the citations and look for the interpretation. Through the use of quotation marks, Scripture is set apart."[111] If this reading strategy is applied to how one follows Luther's programmatic use of scriptural proofs like Romans 1:1–3, then Hagen believes the point of the practice has been missed. "The use of Scripture in such a manner," Hagen corrects, "*is* the 'interpretation.'"[112]

The invocation of scriptural proofs was an enactment of the pattern of the Bible's own self-reference, its own self-interpretation. For Luther, Scripture was already "a *catena*, a chain of scriptural citations and allusions. Scripture is full of echo."[113] Yet, the use of biblical reference in Luther's hands had less to do with "proof" than it did "promotion." Through scriptural proofs, according to Hagen, Luther promoted "what Scripture promotes throughout: GOD."[114] Biblical reference confronted readers with the "performative power" of God's Word(s), allowing Luther "to drive (*was Christum treibt*) . . . the same that Paul was seeking to promote, namely, Jesus Christ."[115] "As a theologian," Hagen advances, "Luther was conscious of his task to publish an *enarratio*, to go public with the voice of the Gospel, the words of Christ, the Word of God."[116] The Reformer's programmatic use of Romans 1:1–3 to demonstrate

[111]Ibid.

[112]Ibid.

[113]Ibid., 209. Allen and Swain make a similar point, "All of the charges brought against the use of proof-texts in Christian theology could be lodged against the Bible's own use of the Bible." Allen and Swain, "In Defense of Proof-Texting," 597.

[114]Hagen, "It Is All in the Et Cetera," 216.

[115]Ibid., 209.

[116]Ibid. For background on Luther's understanding of the genre of *enarratio*, see the standard treatment by Kenneth Hagen, *Luther's Approach to Scripture as seen in his "Commentaries" on Galatians, 1519–1538* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1993), 1–18, 49–66. David Fink has disputed some of Hagen's forceful points of interpretation concerning *enarratio* over commentary as the primary way to view Luther's own understanding of his engagement with Scripture in, David C. Fink, "Martin Luther's Reading of Galatians," in *Reformation Readings of Paul: Explorations in History and Exegesis*, eds. Michael Allen and Jonathan A. Linebaugh (Downers Grove: IVP, 2015), 32–37.

God's promise concerning his Son by the prophets is an interpretive practice that aims to promote what the Triune God preaches in all of Scripture.

Conclusion

This study has endeavored to analyze Luther's programmatic use of Romans 1:1–3 to gain a better grasp of the way he approaches the matter of "Christ in all Scripture." Undeniably, Luther's practice of exegesis takes a Christological course from Genesis to Revelation. On the other hand, Luther operates as a biblical interpreter out of a more fundamental commitment to the ontological reality of the OT as "sacred writings," as "Holy, Christian Scripture." Thus, a more precise understanding of how Luther envisions the OT in relation to Jesus Christ will seek to grapple with his confession of it as distinctly Christian Scripture, or as Maxfield has put it, "Christian revelation." Examination of his dependence upon Romans 1, particularly vv. 1–2, for this position before and around 1521 manifests how he might be permitted to fling the "door wide open" for a proper "understanding of the Holy Scriptures" according to "the gospel of God concerning His Son."[117]

[117]In a recent update to some of his earlier work on Luther's "Christological principle" of biblical hermeneutics, David Dockery has entertained the idea that instead of Romans 1:17 or 3:21–26, Romans 1:1–4 might have played the most significant role in shaping the Augustinian friar's interpretive method manifest in his "new evangelical" understanding of the gospel, preaching, and theology. David S. Dockery, "Martin Luther's Christological Principle: Implications for Biblical Authority and Biblical Interpretation," in *The Reformation and the Irrepressible Word of God: Interpretation, Theology, and Practice*, ed., Scott M. Manetsch (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), 41–42. Dockery credits this insight to Steven D. Paulson, *Lutheran Theology*, Doing Theology (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 13–26. For Dockery's older contribution, see David S. Dockery, "Martin Luther's Christological Hermeneutics," *Grace Theological Journal* 4 (1984): 189–203.

***Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition: Recovering the Genius of Premodern Exegesis*. By Craig A. Carter. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018. 279 pp. $14.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-0-80109-872-7.**

Craig A. Carter (Ph.D. University of St. Michael's College) is Professor of Theology at Tyndale University College and Seminary in Toronto, Canada. With his combined specialties of Systematic Theology (including Bibliology) and Historical Theology (including the fourth and fifth-century church), Carter is well within his expertise in addressing the historical and theological topic of hermeneutics offered in this book.

The volume has an introductory and concluding chapter bookending each of the two main divisions of the book. The introductory chapter begins with a personal anecdote of the author, wherein he struggles with the task of preaching Isaiah 53 as a "Christian" sermon. This conundrum leads to a mental conflict over his hermeneutical training in which he discovers what he calls a gulf between his learned method and the preaching of an OT text to his NT flock. With this brief sketch, Carter begins a critique of modern exegetical practices. He complains that the Enlightenment has greatly influenced it and that the remedy is to return to the premodern practices of the confessional church (27). To state his thesis briefly, "The classical approach to interpretation has always allowed for a fuller meaning (*sensus plenior*) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit without opening the door to interpretive anarchy" (27).

Carter labels Part One of his book "Theological Hermeneutics." In these four chapters, Carter argues that the nature of the Bible demands a specific type of reading. Though various authors write Scripture, its divine origin unifies its message (45). The key to understanding this is in what Carter labels "theological metaphysics." His definition thereof is "the account of the ontological nature of reality that emerges from the theological descriptions of God and the world found in the Bible" (63). Recognizing that some will criticize "metaphysics," Carter's challenge is that they are also working from a metaphysical presupposition without realizing it, though different from what he is proposing (64). The metaphysics that he is commending is one in which the believer recognizes Scripture as God's Word, illumined by the Spirit (65). Carter maintains that this metaphysic is in line with some of Plato's views and, therefore, labels it "Christian Platonism" (66). He did not coin this idea

but quotes Ivánka, who states, "The phenomenon which characterizes the whole of the first millennium of Christian theological thought…is the use of Platonism as the form for [its] philosophical expression and the framework of the world-picture in terms of which the proclamation of revealed truth was made" (66).

Carter concedes that these terms seem to be in opposition to one another but upholds that Augustine was able to critique Platonism rightly while finding some of it useful. He goes on to say that the modern theological rejection of metaphysics is hypocritical, due to the Enlightenment's own (even if unrecognized) metaphysics. Carter concludes that there should be a reconsideration of the history of biblical interpretation. Though modern hermeneuticians, such as Ramm, point to Fathers who would subscribe to a literal-historical methodology, Carter maintains that these are rare and that the terms "historical" and "literal" do not mean the same today as they did then (95). He contrasts the premodern and post-Enlightenment methodologies, stating that the latter does away with the spiritually natured understanding of the first, replacing it with a mechanized view of the world. The modern believer must then force the supernatural back into this mechanized world, rather than see categories such as natural and supernatural as the normal operations of a transcendent and immanent God. Carter argues that the bankrupt metaphysic of Modernity is reason without room for special revelation (124).

With the first section as his foundation, Carter now moves into the second section of his volume, "Recovering Premodern Exegesis." Within, Carter centers on three Fathers and their understanding of Christ as the unifying center of Scripture: Ambrose of Milan, Justin Martyr, and Irenaeus of Lyons, concluding that "The Church Fathers believed a Christological reading of the Old Testament is the *true* reading of the Bible. For them, the Bible is not a jumble of often contradictory human thoughts about divine matters but the unified product of a divine Author who worked through providence and miracle to put meaning into the text that was partly, but not totally, comprehended by the human authors" (158). Carter shows that premodern exegesis was not in opposition to the literal sense and that any spiritual sense was "contained within, or [was] an expansion of, the literal sense" (165). Therefore, the grounding of the spiritual sense is the literal and is consistent with it (170). In short, Carter argues that the Enlightenment has reduced literal and historical

to mean philosophical naturalism and that it does not leave room for a premodern understanding. He continues to show this hermeneutic by giving examples from Calvin and a lengthier treatment from Augustine. In his concluding chapter, Carter revisits his original challenge of Isaiah 53, refocusing it through the lens of what he has laid out in the content of his volume and publishing the actual sermon for the reader to see.

Carter's work in this volume is thorough, and he makes an appealing case. Likely, even the widest read person in the area of hermeneutics has not encountered this level of work on premodern exegesis. Most works of our day focus upon varying degrees of the same school of exegesis, with varying convictions of how their system fits within. Carter, however, is taking the reader back to an earlier time and adjusting our understanding of what the Fathers, and even the New Testament writers themselves, understood as literal, grammatical, and historical. Some may find his entreaty to "Christian Platonism" as leaking philosophical poison into the serene waters of true biblical exegesis. However, he deftly demonstrates that metaphysics plays some role in each hermeneutical coterie, but that the one of Modernity is not willing to recognize its Enlightenment bedfellow. Many may recoil at Carter's use of such terminology. Yet the encouragement would be that even if one disagrees with his conclusions, they should also admit the presuppositional nature of all hermeneutical practices and come to terms with them.

This reviewer hopes that even those who do not arrive at the same suppositions as Carter will take up his task to think deeply about the metaphysical nature of Scripture and the philosophical presuppositions that likely influence it. Beyond this, the expectation is that these same thinkers will write to further this conversation, even if they rebuff Carter's conclusions.

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***The God Who Gives: How the Trinity Shapes the Christian Story*. By Kelly M. Kapic with Justin Borger. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018. 289 pp. $22.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-0-310-520269.**

The God Who Gives: How the Trinity Shapes the Christian Story, by Kelly M. Kapic with Justin Borger, is a revision of an earlier work entitled *God So Loved, He Gave: Entering the Movement of Divine Generosity* (Zondervan, 2010). The book came about after a series of conversations between Kapic and others, including his former student and co-author Justin Borger. Motivated by the conviction that believers are greatly edified and encouraged when the Christian story is appreciated "through the lens of 'Gift,'" the project, in Kapic's own words, "took over [his] life" (264). *The God Who Gives* provides welcome opportunity for believers to appreciate anew the glorious message of the gospel as the ultimate gift, one that shapes and informs every aspect of the Christian life.

Following a biblical-theological trajectory, *The God Who Gives* traces the theme of generosity through the biblical storyline, specifically as it pertains to God, his gospel, his creation, and his church. This full circle "movement of divine generosity" begins with the triune and sovereign God, who gives *all of himself* to reclaim *all of his creation*. Divided into three sections, the book gives attention to the theme of divine generosity from creation and fall (section one) to redemption and restoration (sections two and three). Each section contains four-to-six chapters with a brief prologue and epilogue.

The first section ("From Belonging to Bondage") provides the theological framework for the book, establishing God's generosity as a theme that can only be properly understood against the backdrop of his sovereignty and ownership of all things. With frequent reference to the works of G. K. Beale and T. D. Alexander, Kapic and Borger demonstrate how the opening chapters of Genesis are key to understanding the destination of the biblical narrative and everything that lies in between. The biblical narrative begins by stressing God's sovereignty and ownership of all things and ends with all things returning to God. This should shape how God's generosity is understood. Paradoxically, "[the sovereign] God does not own by keeping, but by giving" (29), and this giving by God results in his creatures worshipping him. The remainder of the book builds upon this foundation of God's ownership through giving and the Church's response in worshipful giving.

In section two ("God Reclaims All by Giving All: Son, Spirit, and Kingdom"), Kapic and Borger address the question, "[H]ow is God going to reclaim and reveal *full* ownership over everything" (97). Here we find an exegetical analysis of the incarnation and atonement of Christ as climactic expressions of God's great love and of his self-giving to reclaim ownership of what is already his. God, the Father, reveals his greatness and his abundant generosity through the sending of his Son Jesus Christ who, as the God-man, humbly dies on a cross, is raised again, and reigns in the church through the Holy Spirit. Contrary to how the love of God is popularly understood, the authors do not gloss over the hard reality of Christ's bearing the wrath of God on the cross for sinners who fully deserve it. On the relation between God's love and God's wrath, they write: "Although the love of God is often pitted against the wrath of God in popular imagination, the Bible insists that the wrath of God is actually a consequence, not a contradiction, of his love. God hates evil precisely because he loves good" (104). God applies the benefits of Christ's victory through his death and resurrection to his people by the work of the Holy Spirit. As those who have been miraculously transformed, the church is empowered by the Holy Spirit to spread the good news of God's generosity on earth. In giving his all, God defeats sin and death and exalts Adam's race so that we might give our all in the preaching and living out of the gospel. In this way, the church carries out God's commission to Adam to fill the earth with his glory.

Section three ("Living in the Gifts: Cross, Resurrection, Church") further extends the call of the church to put her theology into action. As a response to the preceding sections, this final section answers the question, "How are we as the church to respond to God's abundant generosity?" God's abundant generosity, as demonstrated in the gospel, "constitutes the basis and motivation for the church's life together and in its outreach to the needy world" (242). Just as God keeps by giving, and as Christ inherited all by giving all, the church gives her all and inherits the promises of eternal life because her all is found in him. God gave his all not only to redeem us, but to furnish for us an example that we might follow and, by it, that we might find rich satisfaction in the life that he provides.

The God Who Gives aptly relates many precious doctrines to the overarching theme of divine generosity: creation, incarnation, atonement, baptism, the Lord's Supper, church government, and

eschatology. The authors take pains to present the fruits of sound and responsible exegesis, citing recent scholarship throughout in support of their work. The content of the writing also demonstrates its own claim that theology is best done in community, not only by the fact that the work is co-authored, but in the many references to great theologians throughout church history such as Melito of Sardis, Augustine, John Owen, and others. We find in *The God Who Gives* a work that does not neglect, gloss over, or compartmentalize the vital doctrines of our faith, but weaves a beautiful tapestry, showing the Christian story as Scripture develops it and as the church has reflected on it.

While *The God Who Gives* is a welcome addition to any pastor's or scholar's library, there are some potential drawbacks to be aware of. If one is looking for a theological treatise focused primarily on the persons of the Trinity, this work may not satisfy. This is not to say the book does not give attention to the Trinity, but that its emphasis is on the triune God's generosity and does not provide a systematic analysis of the Trinity proper. Additionally, the author has chosen to write in a conversational style that feels a bit repetitive and cumbersome at times when a succinct exegetical or systematic analysis is desired.

The God Who Gives is an excellent work, encouraging the reader that God's overwhelming and abundant love is far deeper than ever we could fathom. *The God Who Gives* challenges the reader to give his or her all because of the great God, who gave his all for the world he so loved. "As recipients of God's great treasure, we become people who give our treasures" (125).

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***Knowing and Growing in Assurance of Faith*. By Joel R. Beeke. Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, UK: Christian Focus, 2017. 203 pp. $14.99. Paperback. ISBN: 9781781913000.**

Scripture is clear on the nature of faith as the "conviction of things not seen" (Heb 11:1 ESV). For the sinner, accustomed to natural means of perception, to seek the "unseen" God to provide earthly prosperity,

forgiveness, and restoration requires supernatural intervention. Joel Beeke's work *Knowing and Growing in Assurance of Faith* is a timely draught of water for the parched spiritual traveler. Beeke writes to address the assurance of faith available to the reader on a practical and simplified level from his earlier dissertation work on the topic (12). He prefaces his work with his understanding of assurance as "the conviction that one belongs to Christ through faith and will enjoy everlasting salvation" (11).

A True Christian, who lives without assurance, will be limited in their ability to serve faithfully and effectively, since their hope in Christ is in a constant state of uncertainty. In Chapter two, the author directs his purpose in writing to help the individual who has struggled with the personal reality of their Christianity "for years-even decades" (25). His intended audience consists of churchgoing people who have a foundation of biblical understanding and church involvement, which Beeke argues is a potential answer to one's lack of assurance—the common culprits being sin (26), misunderstanding of God's character (27-8), lack of clarity of faith and fruits of grace (29-30, 33-4), disobedience (32), and spiritual warfare (39-40). He encourages the reader to see God in Christ and view the God-centered work of redemption as evidence that he wants to be known by people and see his people receive his mercy and love in Christ.

Beeke's treatment of assurance is distinct from other works like Robert Wennberg's *Faith at the Edge,* in his thorough priority of Scripture and illuminating Puritan testimony. Beeke believes that the Puritans codified the greatest treatise on assurance in the eighteenth chapter of the Westminster Confession, which structures a significant portion of his discussion to explain the theological issue of assurance (55). The unregenerate, who by their mode of living and self-assertiveness believe themselves to be in the good graces of God, are distinct from the true believer, who is held by Christ through faith. Beeke applies the confident unregenerate to the Western Christian, who professes to be under the lordship of Christ, yet whose life betrays his or her self-confidence (71). Summarily, the false assurance of the religious unbeliever is betrayed by the lack of actual faith in the actual Christ, which grows the believer in grace (72-4).

God's promises form a solid and dependable foundation for the Christian's assurance, which Beeke encourages his reader to apply in faith, no matter how small their faith (85-7). The self-examination of

motives and desires shows the work of grace in the believer, since grace in Christ is transformative. Beeke uses the language of reflex actions to describe the natural overflow of a person's heart in the way that one reacts to situations and trials, asking the question of what reactions show about one's professed hope in Christ or lack thereof (96-8). If a Christian can find some evidence of grace at work in his life then, since God is the only source of grace in the believer's life, the unbeliever cannot exhibit the fruits of grace, then one can be assured of their salvation, despite one's feelings (99-105). Beeke concludes the chapter on subjective assurance with three elements of faith that provide the best and most objective rule for one's introspections. These three rules should have received a more prominent place in the chapter as a structure for the subjective content or a natural anchor for the questions that Beeke presents throughout (104-5).

Next, Beeke unfolds the Holy Spirit's role in assurance, specifically His witness to the believer, whether through Scripture or by individual testimony of God's love. The author provides several interpretive options from Puritan sources but culminates with his personal story as an example of a middle ground between antinomian and ecstatic experiences as evidence of assurance. The Puritans navigate as Beeke engages the Holy Spirit's role in granting assurance of faith. Perhaps the application to contemporary issues of worship and spiritual giftings would be an apt place to see these Puritan discussions bear contemporary fruit. Nevertheless, the author's personal example masterfully applies the Spirit's work with four cautions (118-20).

In the concluding chapters, the author addresses practical means available to the believer to grow in assurance through daily activities of faith and spiritual disciplines (121-36). Assurance spurns the Christian toward personal holiness, provides to the practiced believer hopefulness in trial and contentment, and speeds one toward heaven (137-42). Sin and backsliding will harm the Christian's grasp of assurance and numb their heart to spiritual activity, yet the beloved of God will persevere since "God is above us" in His sovereignty (150). Romans 8:12-17 illustrates the Spirit's positive role in growing the believer's assurance, where He mortifies sin; leading in the embrace of a God-honoring nature and persuading the Christian that they belong to Father God (157-76).

A strength of this work is Beeke's pastoral heart, evident throughout the book. Each chapter is focused on driving the reader before the throne

of grace to ask God that one's adoption into eternity with Christ would be a known reality. His hope with each page is the health and vitality of each Christian reader. This endearing and tender presentation of his vast content drives Beeke's voice into the reader's heart and strengthens the value of this work.

Beeke also shows his roots as a scholar of Puritan theology. *Knowing and Growing* is a compendium of Puritan voices, allowing the reader to take a brief look at their thinking and enticing him to further study thereof. This is both a strength and a weakness of the work. The theological foundation of the book is strong due to its sampling of Puritan sources, but the sampling might be so extensive as to limit the work's readership to pastors and specialists.

Overall, Beeke's work stands out over other books that address the subject of assurance and doubts as a thorough biblical perspective on the Christian's assurance of salvation. He effectively presents the reader with the Scripture as measure and questioner of faith, encouraging one's growth in godliness.

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***The Preacher's Portrait: Five New Testament Word Studies*. By John Stott. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017. 120 pp. $10.00, Paperback. ISBN 978-0-8028-7553-2.**

Thanks to the revised and updated edition of *The Preacher's Portrait*, a new generation of readers may experience the wisdom of famed evangelical John Stott. Numerous books by Stott have helped define the evangelical movement and have inspired many pastors throughout the 20th and 21st century. Through this particular work, Stott attempts to clarify the role of a "preacher," specifically by answering the preacher's first important questions: "What shall I say, and whence shall I derive my message?" (1). To accomplish this task, Stott examines five metaphors which the Apostle Paul used to describe his personal ministry: steward, herald, witness, father, and servant.

Before Stott can identify what defines a preacher, however, he first explains what a preacher is not. Stott's definition of "preacher" is often left ambiguous, sometimes applying specifically to the pastorate and other times applying to all Christians. Still, he clearly separates the preacher from other biblical positions such as apostle and prophet due to their different answers to the preacher's first questions. Prophets and apostles receive their messages from different avenues than preachers, namely, the voice of God. Stott wrote, "We are called to preach under the authority of the Bible, not to preach claiming the same authority as the Bible for ourselves" (6). Readers can begin to see how the important questions that Stott highlights in chapter 1 help him structure the rest of the book.

Stott's first word study is the term, steward. Preachers have been given a specific task from the master of the household of God. Stott wrote, "The metaphor of stewardship also reminds us that preachers do not supply their own message; they are supplied with it" (13). In this sense, the steward is not to deviate from the instructions of his master. He is neither to add nor take away from the message he is to proclaim. The preacher follows his master's message to the letter of the law in order to be found trustworthy when his master returns. Therefore, the authority of the preacher does not stem from eloquence or scholarship, but from the head of the household who has provided the message.

Second, the preacher is a herald. Preachers are not to merely guard their message within the family of God but also to proclaim this word in the streets. In chapter 2, Stott summarizes a classic evangelical understanding of the gospel and encourages the preacher to share this message with the lost. The proclamation, however, cannot be isolated from the preacher's appeal. On one hand, Stott wrote, "The gospel is not fundamentally an invitation to do something. It is a declaration of what God has done in Christ on the cross for our salvation" (36). Yet, Stott continued to argue, "Proclamation without appeal is not biblical preaching. It is not enough just to teach the gospel; we must urge people to embrace it" (38). Both proclamation and appeal must be present for the herald to succeed.

Third, Stott takes his readers into the courtroom as he explores the metaphor of witness. Preachers are called to testify for Christ, who sits on trial before the world. Stott wrote, "Much of what is called 'testimony' today is really autobiography, and sometimes even thinly disguised self-

advertisement. We need to regain a proper biblical perspective" (45). Preachers are not called to point their listeners to themselves, but to Christ. Jesus is not limited to one witness, however, as preachers are joined by the witness of the Father, the Spirit, the Bible, and the Church. In remembering this truth, preachers may remain humble as they recall that they are not the subjects of their own message.

In chapter 4, Stott explored the metaphor of father. Preachers are not to distance themselves from their congregation but should be fueled in their ministry by a love for their people. When preachers are tempted to become bitter, "it is love that will keep us sweet" (69). As such, preachers should lead their congregations with gentleness and pray earnestly for Christ's Church. Likewise, preachers should exemplify the Christian life for their people as parents lead their children. Stott wrote, "What we do to build up the church in our preaching will be torn down by our lives. We must thus put the same amount of effort into living well that we put into preaching well" (75).

Finally, Stott concluded the book by examining the metaphor of servant. As with the previous metaphors, the title of servant should promote true humility and holiness. Ultimately, power for salvation is not found in the servants but in the master. Preachers, therefore, are in need of supernatural power if they wish to see fruit within their congregation. As such, preachers should proclaim that which has true power: The word of God, the Cross of Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Stott concluded, "It should be clear from what has been said that the source of power in preaching is Trinitarian . . . In other words, the origin, content, and delivery of the preacher's message are all divine" (95).

Stott's work is devotional, gospel-saturated, orthodox, and pastoral. This work contains undebatable characteristics that should be universal for all pastors. Few evangelicals, for example, would argue against Stott's call to herald the gospel or to rightly steward the word of God for the sake of a congregation. Stott does not attempt to be exhaustive of all pastoral attributes but is thorough enough that readers will most likely find some aspects of both encouragement and challenge. In that way, this book may serve potential ministers well, especially young believers who do not know what designates a proper pastoral character. In the same light, this book is easily understood with no prior knowledge required, and a new believer could immediately take up this work and benefit.

Readers should be aware, however, that this book includes admitted editorial revisions. The editor, Isobel Stevenson, confessed to deleting and modifying both quotations and sentence structure (x). Additionally, Stevenson added, "I have also modified pronoun use as there are many readers today for whom 'he' and 'man' do not function as generic pronouns when applied to all of humanity" (x). The problem, however, is that Stott rarely uses pronouns in the way Stevenson suggested. Instead of referring to all humanity, as Stevenson claims, Stott frequently used pronouns to refer to the ambiguous term "preachers." While it is certainly possible that all believers, male and female, are called to "preach" the word through evangelism, it is difficult to believe that "all of humanity" can embrace the metaphor of father of a local congregation. Without more context, readers are sometimes left to wonder if the voice they hear belongs to John Stott or to the editor. While there is evidence of Stott's mid-point position between egalitarianism and complementarianism, little evidence of that belief is given in this particular work and the idea of editorial revisions looms over the reader at times. While Stevenson does argue that Stott supported male and female pastors, the evidence provided is incredibly weak, one example of an ambiguous note Stott wrote in the margins of his Bible in his seventies (60). In the attempt to remove distractions between Stott and modern readers, it may prove that the editor has done just the opposite by updating Stott's use of pronouns.

Still, Stott's work is devotionally rich and lacks overt controversy. While readers may be left to wonder if the modern language updates were truly necessary, the book's overall message does not suffer. While the position of "preacher" may be ambiguous to some, one cannot argue with the character traits that Stott puts forward. Preachers are called to receive their authority and message from their master as they pursue faithful obedience in their ministries. Preachers, however one defines the term, should be people of God who care about the people of God with a desire to be led by the Word of God-as all Christians should. This message has aged well and helps make Stott's work, *The Preacher's Portrait*, a timeless book.

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***The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*. By Michael S. Heiser. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015. 368 pp. $12.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-1-577-99556-2.**

Today's typical Bible reader has filtered out its supernatural elements, argues Michael Heiser (Ph.D. Hebrew and Semitic Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison), author of *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*. Though Heiser wrote this accessible volume on "the unseen" nearly five years ago, his work is anything but invisible today, having spun off two additional books from Lexham Press (a third forthcoming), hundreds of episodes of Heiser's popular podcast, myriad explainer videos and online courses, and even a comparison between the book's themes and the Netflix phenomenon *Stranger Things*. This popularity is probably due in part to Heiser's stint as Scholar-in-Residence for Logos Bible Software (owned by Faithlife and sister company to Lexham Press), but it is certainly also due to the fascinating nature of the topic, Heiser's rhetorical skill, and his expertise in Semitic languages and ancient Near East backgrounds. Many excellent reviews of *The Unseen Realm* were penned after its initial release, but the exponentially increasing popularity of Heiser's work in the past half-decade merits yet another review, building upon those first evaluations.

The Unseen Realm opens with Heiser's own story of how a single verse of Scripture in the Hebrew changed his academic trajectory: Psalm 82:1 (ESV) reads, "God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment." For Heiser, the conclusion was shocking but undeniable: "The God of the Old Testament was part of an assembly—a pantheon—of other gods" (11). Though this concept of a "pantheon" did not at first seem to fit into Heiser's (orthodox and evangelical) theology, it eventually illumined much of the Scriptures for him. The concept of a divine council—sharing their unseen place of residence with the Lord in the heavens, but infinitely distinguished from Him in their finite and created nature—became Heiser's dissertation topic and the focus of his academic career thus far. Part 1 of *The Unseen Realm* describes this journey and prepares the reader to go on a similar one, hoping to overcome the obstacles of ignorance and apathy in order to present to readers a "biblical theology of the unseen world" (18).

Heiser's biblical theology falls somewhere along the lines of the 'metanarrative' or 'theme-tracing' categories, with Parts 2-8 developing

his thoughts in generally chronological order. Part 2 lays out the biblical case for the Lord's heavenly household, explaining especially the term "sons of God" in light of its biblical and ANE usage, that is, the language of royalty. It is in this royal context, Heiser argues, that the creation of humanity in God's image should be understood. Part 3 surveys the descent of humanity in Genesis 3-11, arguing that the sin of human beings and the meddling of spiritual beings (from the serpent in Gen 3 to the spiritual 'sons of God' in Gen 6) culminate in the division of humanity into nations in Gen 11, a division which also introduces over each nation a spiritual mediator. This view of the "Babel incident" depends on ANE context for the Tower as a *ziggurat* (a place of pagan worship) and a contested reading of Deut 32:8, and it forms the foundation of Heiser's work: what he calls the "Deuteronomy 32 Worldview." Part 4 explains Israel's covenant and election as the beginning of God's reclamation of the "disinherited" nations, as seen in the election of Abraham (Gen 12, immediately following the Babel incident in Gen 11), God's varied revelation to the Patriarchs, the nation-making event of the Exodus, and the Eden-tinged giving of Israel's law and cult. Part 5 explains the *kherem* destruction of the Canaanites in light of the supernaturally-produced giants in the land: only the Anakim and their descendants were to be destroyed wholesale, while the rest of the inhabitants were to be driven out of the land (213). Part 6, titled "Thus Says the Lord," argues from texts like Jer 23 that prophets (including primeval and patriarchal men of God) were those who stood in the Lord's council, and many of them—especially Daniel—prophesied of the spiritual conquest of the coming divine Messiah and His "re-inheritance" of the nations. Thus, parts 2-6 provide an overview of the supernatural in the storyline of the OT.

Like other recent evangelical works of biblical theology, *The Unseen Realm* builds extensively on an OT foundation for its understanding of the NT. Part 7 surveys the spiritual warfare in the earthly work of the incarnate Christ and the Spirit-empowered mission of the church. Christ's 'new exodus' is a victory over the 'principalities and powers,' the Gentile mission is the reclamation of the nations from corrupt *elohim*, and the ordinances of the church are a declaration of allegiance to the Lord over against those gods. Part 8 discusses eschatology in terms of a final victory in the spiritual war and describes the final vindication of saints—the "holy ones"—as an induction to the divine council (a furtherance of, not an end to, embodied humanity). Heiser's epilogue

reiterates his hermeneutical presuppositions and his purpose in writing the book.

Heiser's work should be read with care by pastors, students, and scholars. There is a great benefit to the whole church when biblical scholarship takes seriously the more obscure or disputed claims of Scripture—understood in their likely cultural contexts—and demonstrates how they fit within and contribute to the broader canonical context. *The Unseen Realm* is representative of this benefit. Heiser writes from years of peer-reviewed scholarship in Hebrew, Old Testament, and adjacent disciplines. Perhaps most impressive, Heiser presents a biblical-theological synthesis of his work that is engaging and accessible (if not to the average layperson, at least to the seminary-educated). Heiser skillfully accomplishes his "ambition to parse [the biblical] data and synthesize it so that more people can experience the thrill of rediscovering the supernatural worldview of the Bible" (385).

Despite the book's benefit, the reader attuned to broader biblical and theological scholarship gets the sense that *The Unseen Realm* might have been written more carefully. Two concerns rise to the top for many reviewers after reading and reflecting upon Heiser's work. The first concern is perhaps the most obvious and has been noted by many: Heiser sometimes makes bold claims with very little argumentation. For instance, much of Heiser's "Deuteronomy 32 Worldview" depends on a textual variant in Deut 32:8. Though Heiser makes a good case for his reading elsewhere, it seems a crucial point to treat in only two paragraphs (113). One ought to remember, of course, that *The Unseen Realm* is a biblical-theological work tracing a theme throughout the canon of Scripture; thus, it must by necessity be broad and not stay on any one point too long. In the opinion of this reviewer, this kind of concern is mostly unmerited; Heiser has written on his finer points in more depth in journals and in his dissertation, and a thorough discourse on a textual variant would not further the purpose of this work. However, the reader might wonder if Heiser should have written a thousand-word, scholarly book first (and invited scholarly conversation) *and then* penned a more introductory work like *The Unseen Realm*. This order, of course, might be by the author's design.

This stance brings us to the second primary concern with *The Unseen Realm*: the author's tone is occasionally reductionistic or dismissive toward his perceived opponents. Of course, Heiser is entitled to a distinct

scholarly 'personality' (and his engaging prose is refreshing in an academic work), but this borders at times on sensationalist. Heiser promises that the reader will "never be able to look at [the] Bible the same way again" (13), but he also implies that readers may be ostracized, since "[t]hat sort of thing happens when you demand that creeds and traditions get in line with the biblical text" (13). Heiser casually mixes in a discussion of the foreknowledge of God and His sovereignty over evil and claims, "There is no biblical reason to argue that God predestined the fall, though he foreknew it" (66). This may very well be a defensible position, but it represents Heiser's penchant for dismissing an entire complex theological question without argumentation. Of course, *The Unseen Realm* may deliver on Heiser's promise to change Bible readers, and he is in some ways only stating a general Protestant maxim in his warning about traditions. However, there seems to be no distinction for Heiser between the biblical illiteracy of some streams of popular contemporary evangelicalism and the rich tradition of interpreters, theologians, and pastors throughout church history. What of Jonathan Edwards's *A History of the Work of Redemption*, in which the Puritan preacher agrees with Heiser that God the Son was the angelomorphic "Captain of the Lord's Hosts" and "Angel of the Presence"? What of Augustine on the "repopulation of the heavenly city" by believers, necessitated by the fall of the unholy angels? Heiser might find more allies than he expects if he gives the believers of days gone by a chance to join the conversation.

Despite the criticisms it has received—some less deserved than others—*The Unseen Realm* is an example of both the value of accessible biblical-theological works and of the impact that biblical studies and historical backgrounds can benefit the task of theological retrieval. How theological retrieval might benefit biblical studies in understanding the heavenly council remains to be seen, but there is good reason for hope. Regardless, Heiser's work on this topic is the most important and impressive contribution in recent history. Students, pastors, and scholars seeking to understand the whole counsel of Scripture should read *The Unseen Realm*—with care.

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***A History of Mind and Body in Late Antiquity*. Edited by Anna Marmodoro and Sophie Cartwright. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019. 438 pp. £74.99, Hardcover. ISBN 13: 978-1107181212.**

A History of Mind and Body in Late Antiquity is the first of its kind. It is a robust summary of mind and body relations from pagan and Christian authors from roughly the second to sixth centuries. Nothing like it has been available until now, filling a scholarly void. Moreover, since mind-body relations is entangled with "anthropology, cosmology, soteriology, Christology, and many more" doctrines, those interested in any of these doctrinal loci should read on (207). The authors range from various universities around the world and from various disciplines (theology, philosophy, history) and religious commitments, making it a robustly interdisciplinary achievement.

The book is structured in two parts. The first provides chapters on various pagan thinkers in Late Antiquity while the second is on Christian thinkers. There are also several overview chapters that help set the social and theological context and provide an overview of the pagan and Christian thought on the topic. There is also a chapter that is overtly biblical, focusing on the Apostle Paul's usage of the term "body" in 1 Corinthians. The well-known pagan figures include Plotinus, Porphyry, and Proclus. The Christian thinkers are all likely well-known to the seminary trained besides Synesius of Cyrene. These include Origen, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, Augustine, and Dionysius the Areopagite. Laden throughout the book are Platonic, Neoplatonic, and Stoic conceptions of cosmology and anthropology. One is introduced to how various thinkers in Late Antiquity appropriated, modified, and rejected these schools of thought.

Given this very brief summation of the book, there are several reasons to dislike and avoid the book—even if it does fill a void and have wide ranging theological consequences. From a writing perspective, some of the chapters are written in an overly dry style. If the reader is already unmotivated to read a historical and philosophical overview, he will likely not finish. From a content and argumentative perspective, some of the chapters are unclear, lacking a focused thesis and sustained argument. However, several others, as I will mention below, are brilliant pieces of writing. Finally, from a pastoral perspective, the first half of the book is

probably irrelevant for pastoral ministry. While I would love to argue that every pastor should be acquainted with figures like Themistius and Damascius, there is only so much time available for the pastor and, quite frankly, these are not thinkers worth their precious time. They would be better served reading others, studying Scripture, and loving their flock. Finally, the second half of the book might be overly scholarly at times depending on the readers' prior training. Without having significant background knowledge, some of the content is unattainable for the uninitiated.

Despite these potential challenges for those not steeped in Late Antiquity, *A History of Mind and Body in Late Antiquity* is a treasure trove of theological insights for pastors and scholars alike who are committed to dense reading. Several chapters are superb and likely of special interest to the evangelical Christian scholar and pastor. These are Benjamin P. Blosser's chapter "Ensoulment of the Body in Early Christian Thought" and Sophie Cartwright's chapter "Soul and Body in Early Christianity: An Old and New Conundrum." Of more interest to the scholar (and maybe the pastor depending on their interests) is Ilaria Ramelli's chapter on Origen and Christopher Shield's chapter "Theories of Mind in the Hellenistic Period." Ramelli argues that Origen has been misunderstood and misinterpreted on his thinking about the mind-body relation. Origen did not affirm the pre-existence of a disembodied soul despite popular opinion to the contrary. I am persuaded by the argument and agree. Shield provides a helpful overview of the theories permeating this time period. It serves as a superb introduction to the time period on mind-body relations.

In sum, this work is one of keen interest to the pastor and scholar, even if only for several of the chapters. However, I recommend the whole work with moderate caution. It is an investment. It is not a popular-level book. The reader without prior knowledge of the technical terminology in the philosophy of mind, classical history, and Greek is likely to flounder. Therefore, I would suggest that those without a seminary education find and read other introductory resources before reading this book. But while it can be a labor, it will turn to a labor of love for those committed and willing. The current cultural milieu is dominated by anthropological confusion. For evangelical Christians, the need for sharp and clear thinking is acute. Recycling well-worn popular tropes will not fill the void. Only intense struggle with Scripture, the Christian tradition,

and significant monographs such as *A History of Mind and Body in Late Antiquity* will provide solutions to the morass that is contemporary anthropology. I find the editor's argument wholly persuasive that thinking about the past impacts and illumines our present "by giving us a richer range of viewpoints, more awareness of how certain strands of thought developed" and ample fodder for imagining new solutions to old and new problems and testing our own intuitions and presuppositions (1). Therefore, I recommend those willing to embark on a challenging book to take up and read. Those not yet ready should find a way to read the selected chapters I mentioned as especially delightful. Not every important or useful work is always a joy to read, unfortunately. But the payoff is worth it in the end with this one.

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***An Introduction to the Greek New Testament Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge*. By Dirk Jongkind. Wheaton: Crossway, 2019. 128 pp. $14.99, Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-1433564093**

The Greek New Testament, Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge (THGNT) was published by Crossway in 2017, edited by Dirk Jongkind, Peter J. Williams, Peter M. Head, and Patrick James. The THGNT is the product of over ten years of diligent work, based on the nineteenth-century edition of Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, which was used by B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort in preparation of their own widely influential edition (1881). In *An Introduction to the Greek New Testament Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge*, Jongkind, lead editor and vice principal of Tyndale House, Cambridge, expands upon the brief introduction included at the end of the THGNT.

The book is divided into eight short chapters with the first three serving as a primer on New Testament textual criticism. In Chapter One, Jongkind briefly discusses the transmission of the Greek New Testament, the origins of critical editions, and the ongoing need for editions. In Chapter Two, he addresses a few practical matters in reading the THGNT including the apparatus and some notable features such as

the order of the books, paragraphing, and spelling. Chapter Three covers manuscripts, where he highlights features such as the use of the *nomina sacra* and explains the manuscripts cited in the THGNT.

After reviewing some basic material on textual criticism, Jongkind addresses how textual decisions are made in Chapter Four, which represents the heart of the volume. He explains that the majority of textual decisions in the THGNT are informed by four areas of information: distribution of evidence, knowledge of the individual manuscripts, knowledge of groupings of manuscripts, and knowledge of scribal behavior. He also discusses the process of copying to inform readers on the context in which textual variants came into being. He closes this chapter by noting some important variants including the ending of Mark (Mark 16:9–20), the *pericope adulterae* (John 7:53–8:11), the angel and the sweat-like drops of blood (Luke 22:43–44), and Jesus's prayer of forgiveness on the cross (Luke 23:34a). Chapter Four is followed by two chapters on why Jongkind and the majority of text critics do not favor the Textus Receptus (Chapter 5) and the Byzantine text (Chapter 6). He lucidly demonstrates that these textual traditions are later and not supported by evidence in the early centuries. Chapter Seven represents a unique contribution, "Biblical Theology and the Transmission of the Text," where he addresses the preservation of the text and argues from a theological perspective for a nuanced understanding of the transmission of the text. Jongkind affirms God's preservation of the text while still accounting for variants in the textual transmission. He argues that dealing with variants is a "consequence of the church's history and is indicative of the decentralized and dispersed situation of the people of God" (108). Jongkind closes the book in Chapter Eight with a brief word on the current state of the field which privileges contemporary researchers with an abundance of manuscripts available in high-quality digital editions. A short glossary of key technical terms is included at the end.

Readers of the THGNT are exposed to a fresh approach to the Greek New Testament that prioritizes early witnesses including all papyri, all majuscules from the fifth century or earlier, and a select group of later manuscripts that provide additional support or represent important variations. On account of this approach, scholars will want to familiarize themselves with the edition, and the present volume provides a concise point of introduction. The section on some of the THGNT's unique

features including paragraphing and orthography are particularly insightful. The THGNT may provide an impetus to reconsider our understanding of the function of a paragraph as a basic building block to a potential highlighting tool or some other uses.

At the outset, Jongkind clearly identifies the main goal of the present volume to be an aid for reading the THGNT. Nevertheless, while not a textbook, *An Introduction* serves as an excellent supplement to introductory material on New Testament textual criticism. The work's brevity facilitates the new student's introduction to textual criticism.. At the same time, for students who are familiar with the introductory literature, the present volume provides a useful reintroduction to basic material and a brief overview of some new approaches. More advanced students may be interested in how specific variants are handled but will only find a few notable cases covered in the present volume. A textual commentary on the THGNT's decisions is still eagerly anticipated.

By and large, the THGNT has been welcomed by textual scholars as an additional resource for students of the Greek New Testament, reflecting several distinguishing features from the layout of early manuscripts. Bearing this in mind, *An Introduction* serves as a useful guide to this important edition.

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***Biblical and Theological Studies: A Student's Guide.* By Michael J. Wilkins and Eric Thoennes. Wheaton: Crossway, 2018. 127 pp. $11.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-1-4335-3489-8.**

Michael Wilkins and Erik Thoennes have completed a book that is essential to understanding the meaning and the importance of biblical and theological studies, and with an explanation that is simple enough to understand while still being sufficient to educate and edify. The layout of the book is simple and productive with Wilkins and Thoennes spending the first chapter introducing the reader to biblical and theological studies. The following chapter is dedicated solely to biblical studies, while the third, and final chapter, is dedicated to expanding theological studies.

The first chapter opens with, "God has spoken" (17), explaining that God has revealed Himself in the Bible and that this self-revelation of God is the most fundamental belief of a Christian. The introduction chapter of the book is designated to familiarize the reader to biblical and theological studies, the definition of both, answering the why, and offers absolutes of the characteristics of God and absolutes of God's Word. A great summary is found in the author's words, "As evangelicals, we do not pretend to study the Bible without presuppositions. We consciously, intentionally, and unapologetically seek to be informed and motivated by explicitly biblical thinking as we study the Bible" (26). The Bible and the knowledge of God guide Christians in our interactions with others and inform us how we ought to view the world. When we understand the importance of knowing God and his Word, we are better equipped to "fulfill our primary purpose, which is to glorify and delight in God through deep personal knowledge of him" (38).

The authors dedicate the second chapter to the discussion of Biblical Studies and the disciplines of studying the Bible such as hermeneutics, interpretation, Old and New Testament study, and historical and theological analysis. Wilkins and Thoennes explain the importance of practicing such disciplines as studying, reading, and engaging the Bible so that we may know what the Word says, see how the Word serves, mimic how the Word lives, and hope as the Word promises. We often neglect the Old Testament in some of our studies of the Bible, since Christ is not physically present in it; yet, the neglect of Old Testament study will lead to a foundationless understanding of the New. As the authors say, "The Genesis accounts of the creation of the earth, the creation of humans to rule for God, and the fall of Adam and Eve and the entrance of sin in this world lay the foundation for the New Testament understanding of humans created in the image of God (1 Cor. 15:49), the new creation (Rom. 8:19-23; 2 Cor. 5:17), and the kingdom of God on earth (1 Thess. 2:12)" (45). The second portion of the second chapter speaks about the foundational issues in biblical studies such as languages, understanding the historical Jesus, biblical theology, and theological reading of the Bible. Knowing the historical Jesus is a desire and passion Christians should have, along with reasoned information, so that we can provide answers when we are questioned about our beliefs. Wilkins and Thoennes summarize by saying, "A necessary posture for students in Gospel studies is one that embraces two types of knowledge.

We can know Jesus subjectively. He is our Savior and Lord whom we walk with daily. We can also know Jesus historically, which entails knowing the messianic agenda of his life and ministry" (70). Biblical studies as a discipline and as a focus will bring Christians near to God through our nearness to His Word.

The third, and last, chapter focuses on the discipline of Theological Studies and why we should become students of it. "Theological studies are all about holistic discipleship, and they equip us to obey the Great Commandment and fulfill the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20)" (85). A common notion of theological studies is one of fear and restraint, as if theology is left for those who received doctorates and special education and not for the common Christian. There is no special qualification to be a student of theological studies; theological study is not restricted to deep philosophical questions or deep study into original languages. As the book says of theological studies, "The study of theology is learning to think God's thoughts after him so that our minds and hearts and actions are conformed to his image" (86). Where biblical studies focus on the understanding of the Bible, theological studies focus on the understanding of God. Wilkins and Thoennes offer ways of studying theology by first allowing Christians to be comforted knowing that "everyone who thinks about God is a theologian" (91) and then breaking down the Theological Process (94). The authors provide brief recognition to major theological categories like Anthropology, Hamartiology, Christology, Pneumatology, Soteriology, Ecclesiology, and Eschatology (95). The study and discipline of theology will ultimately strengthen our study of the Bible, since "the foundational, authoritative source of our theology must be Scripture" (96).

Biblical and Theological Studies: A Student's Guide serves as a detailed and easily read book to help instruct Christians who desiring to deepen their knowledge of God and the things of God. The goal of this book is to refine our love for Christ, his Word, and his lordship through practical use of biblical and theological studies.

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***Was the Reformation a Mistake? Why Catholic Doctrine Is Not Unbiblical.* By Matthew Levering and Kevin J. Vanhoozer. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017. 204 pp. $16.99, Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0310530718.**

Catholics and Protestants continue to find themselves divided. The division is rooted in complex theological issues. One of the issues dividing these two branches of Christianity is whether or not certain doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church are biblical. Protestants have held that particular Catholic beliefs are, in fact, unbiblical. Catholic believers and theologians demur, arguing that their beliefs are in line with Scripture when it is rightly interpreted. Furthermore, if Catholic doctrine is shown to be "not unbiblical," it is legitimate to ask whether or not the Reformation was a mistake. Dr. Matthew Levering currently holds the James N. and Mary D. Perry, Jr. Chair of Theology at Mundelein Seminary in Mundelein, IL. As a Roman Catholic, steeped in historical theology and exegesis, Levering is well-suited to address the issue at hand. Therefore, Levering takes up his pen to defend the position that Catholic doctrine is "not unbiblical." According to Levering, Roman Catholic beliefs are indeed biblical, as he defines the term, and therefore "do not justify ecclesial division" (29). Yet, Levering stops short of saying the Reformation was a mistake. Instead, he notes his appreciation for Protestant gains and friends, while asserting that certain Reformers certainly made mistakes along the way. Importantly, after Levering writes the book, he invites Dr. Kevin Vanhoozer to offer a response. Vanhoozer is research professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Divinity School in Deerfield, IL, and a (Protestant) friend of Levering. Widely published in the areas of theology and biblical interpretation, Vanhoozer offers an incisive critique of the main ideas Levering presents.

Levering is clear from the outset concerning his aim. He wishes to show that, at least on nine disputed doctrinal points, there are "grounds for challenging the view that the Catholic positions…are unbiblical" (20). He does not intend "to persuade Protestants that the Catholic positions are in fact correct" (19). Instead, through modes of biblical reasoning, he desires to "show that even if one disagrees with judgments made in the course of Catholic doctrinal development, the Catholic positions on the nine disputed doctrines should not be rejected as unbiblical or as lacking biblical grounding…" (29).

One must pay attention to what exactly Levering is doing. The Reformation was ignited because the Reformers noted that certain beliefs held by the Roman Catholic Church were, according to those like Luther, unbiblical. Levering wants to show that this is not the case. Yet, one must grasp how he defines "unbiblical" and "biblical" in order to make sense of what follows in the main body of the work. For Levering, "unbiblical" means conclusions "derived from modes of reasoning not warranted by Scripture and/or being not rooted in Scripture" (20). In contrast, positions are "biblical" if they are derived "by means of biblical reasoning" (21). Thus, for Levering, Catholic doctrine is "not unbiblical" precisely because it is developed via legitimate modes of biblical reasoning.

Once this is grasped, however, one must ask what Levering considers legitimate "modes of biblical reasoning." Vanhoozer notes that "everything depends" on this point (206). Levering, the careful writer that he is, does not leave the reader wondering. "Catholic doctrine arises from Scripture, but it does so through a liturgically inflected and communal process of 'thinking with' Scripture in ways that cannot be reduced to an appeal to biblical texts" (20). Yet, the question arises, and Vanhoozer ultimately asks, which liturgical community authorizes how we "think with" Scripture and finally (authoritatively?) gives rise to doctrinal conclusions?

Regardless, the stage is set for Levering. He moves into the body of the book to show, through his conception of biblical reasoning, that at least nine disputed Catholic doctrines meet the criteria for being biblical and, thus, do not warrant a division between Protestants and Roman Catholics. The nine doctrines Levering engages are Scripture, Mary, the Eucharist, the Seven Sacraments, Monasticism, Justification and Merit, Purgatory, Saints, and the Papacy. Within each chapter there is much to appreciate. Levering leans into the Bible to make his case, displaying his skill as an exegete and theologian. In each chapter, Levering opens by showing how Luther, standing at the headwaters of Reformational theology, challenged the position under discussion. Then, Levering marshals texts of Scripture to show how Catholic doctrine is derived from Scripture. In so doing, he believes he has shown each doctrine under discussion to fit into the category of being "biblical." Because there are certain texts behind Catholic doctrine, Levering believes he has shown "that the church-dividing controversies between Catholics and

Protestants cannot be a matter of one side holding that the other side is simply unbiblical" (189). In short, because Levering (and Catholics in general) reasons from the Bible, they should not be considered unbiblical.

Vanhoozer offers an appreciative, yet damaging, response. The reader is not left to doubt whether there is a sincere appreciation of Levering from Vanhoozer. "Matthew epitomizes the best kind of interlocutor: one who listens before he speaks" (192). Yet, Vanhoozer's response delivers two damaging blows to the interpretive house Levering builds. Before delivering those blows, however, Vanhoozer takes time to appreciate Levering's Catholic spirit. That is, "his irenic and inclusive tone and desire to converse with the universal church" (193). Though Vanhoozer appreciates Levering, he must part ways with him when it comes to the main arguments.

Vanhoozer's first blow takes aim at Levering's "Protestant Strategy." What Levering does is what Eck failed to do with Luther. Luther wanted to debate the Bible. Eck simply quoted the Fathers. Levering finally gives Protestants what they want: biblical texts. Vanhoozer, however, refrains from diving into exegetical debates over certain passages. This would simply rehash exegetical debates already conducted. Instead, Vanhoozer takes the time to show that the real debate is not over whether or not Catholics use the Bible but is "rather whether or not [Catholics] accord Scripture's authority in its own interpretation" (202). Thus, Vanhoozer aims his blows at the superstructure of Levering's (Roman Catholicism's) positions. According to Vanhoozer, Rome does not afford Scripture the supreme authority in and of itself. Instead, Scripture is authoritative only as it is interpreted within the liturgical community, namely that of the Roman Catholic Church.

The second blow builds the case and takes aim at Levering's "Roman Substance." What Vanhoozer shows is how, for Levering, the interpretive strategy is necessarily linked to ecclesiology, "where the conflict really lies" (216). "What disagreements I still may have with Levering have less to do with his drawing on Catholic tradition, much less biblical theology, than they do with the way his underlying Romanism…" (217). Again, interpreting the Bible is tied to one particular tradition, the Roman Catholic Church. "In the Catholic framework of biblical reasoning, all roads—soteriological, ecclesiological, and interpretive—lead through Rome" (217). Thus, while there is an appreciation of Levering's Catholic

spirit, the Protestant Strategy and Roman Substance leave Vanhoozer calling Levering home to the gospel, not Rome.

Vanhoozer's response distills my main takeaways from the book. It is certainly refreshing to read a Roman Catholic who takes time to listen to Reformation critique and respond with charity. Furthermore, it was encouraging to read as Levering sought to ground his conclusions in exegesis and biblical theology. But in the end, the question is not mainly about Catholics and their use of the Bible to build their doctrine. No, the charge that Roman Catholicism holds unbiblical positions is not a reference to their lack of exegetical energy. Instead, the charge of being unbiblical is aimed at where they locate final authority and the conclusions finally authorized. Yes, Roman Catholics use the Bible, but so do the Jehovah's Witnesses that knock on my door. The problem for Catholics is that Scripture is subjected to the authority of the Roman Catholic magisterium, and the magisterium has too often gotten it wrong. So, when Catholics come to conclusions that are not in line with Scripture as interpreted on its own terms, and affirmed by the whole church, not just the liturgical community of Rome, then those unbiblical conclusions render certain Roman Catholic doctrines unbiblical. Make no mistake, to counter unbiblical doctrines that have taken hold of the highest levels of church leadership requires no less than reformation.

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Romans, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. By Frank S. Thielman. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018. 812 pp. $59.99, Hardcover. ISBN 978-0-310-10403-2

With the variety of perspectives on Paul's theology, modern commentaries face the prospect of becoming unwieldy. Perhaps no epistle encounters this challenge more than Paul's letter to the Romans. This is why *Romans* by Frank S. Thielman is a welcome resource for pastors and students who seek to understand Paul's important letter without feeling overwhelmed by the many possible interpretations. Thielman, professor of New Testament at Beeson Divinity School, cuts

through the complexity of viewpoints to present a comprehensible and compelling exposition.

Thielman's commentary is part of the Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (ZECNT) series. The goal of this series is to provide evangelical interpretations of Scripture that bring insight "without getting bogged down in scholarly issues that seem irrelevant to the life of the church" (9). It is tailored toward those who have studied Greek but without assuming its readers are experts.

This series offers a number of helpful components. For instance, in each section the author describes the passage's literary context and how it connects to the rest of the letter. There is also a "Main Idea" segment in which the author encapsulates the meaning of the passage into one or two sentences. These components help the reader to identify the basic meaning and contribution of each passage. Another useful feature is ZECNT's visual diagrams and explanation of the passage's structure. Such explanations help readers understand the flow and logic of the letter's arguments. For pastors, these diagrams can help shape the points or sub-points for a sermon.

The majority of ZECNT is verse-by-verse exposition. This section draws on the insight from Greek words, grammatical concepts, and background/socio-historical issues (12). Greek terms are placed in parentheses following the English translation so that readers uninitiated with Greek can still follow and understand. Finally, every section ends with "Theology in Application." This segment summarizes the theological contribution of the passage and gives suggestions for how it might apply to the church today.

While the layout of *Romans* is constrained by the format of ZECNT, the content reflects Thielman's own style and interests, particularly as it pertains to the historical and socio-cultural setting of first-century Christianity. This interest is most clearly demonstrated in Thielman's introduction. Thielman devotes thirteen pages to a detailed depiction of life in first-century Rome. Questions of authorship, provenance, date, and purpose receive only six pages total. Regarding Paul's reason for writing, Thielman suggests three purposes. First, Paul sought to proclaim the gospel in the multicultural setting of Rome to encourage believers in the capital city. Second, Paul hoped to raise support from the Roman Christians in his missionary endeavor to Spain. Third, Paul desired their

prayers as he transported funds to the impoverished Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (38-39).

Thielman's commentary on Romans possesses a number of strengths, many of which characterize the ZECNT series. The clean visual layout makes engaging with the text easy, and the Greek text is used in a way that promotes learning and growth rather than assuming proficiency. Thielman's insights into the language will sharpen students in their exegetical abilities. Furthermore, those interested in first-century Roman society will find this commentary intriguing. The introduction alone makes for a fascinating read, painting a vivid portrait of life in the capital city.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of *Romans* is its usefulness to pastors and Bible teachers. The "Main Idea" summaries, exegetical outlines, visual diagrams, and theological applications all combine to make this commentary an exceptional resource. Thielman's application of the text, especially, is highly relevant and thought-provoking.

While many of the strengths of *Romans* naturally accompany the ZECNT series, so do its limitations. The greatest limitation is the lack of perspectives represented. For example, in the contentious genitive debate of Romans 3:22, Thielman grants only one paragraph (three sentences) to the *subjective* ("faithfulness of Christ") interpretation before endorsing the *objective* ("faith in Christ") interpretation (204). Thielman's quick dismissal of the subjective view minimizes both the difficulty and importance of this question. Another example is Thielman's treatment of 10:4, where Paul claims Christ to be the *telos* ("end" / "goal") of the law. Despite the importance of this verse, Thielman gives no arguments for the termination view. In fairness, however, it bears reminding that the goal of the ZECNT series is not the rigorous exposition of various viewpoints. Rather, the aim for is for relevance in the life of the church (9). The examples above simply illustrate the limitations of this approach, and students searching for more thorough discussions may want to look elsewhere.

Thielman's knowledge of background material, his insights from the Greek text, and his relevant and insightful applications make this commentary a highly useful resource for pastors and students alike.

I highly recommend this resource for anyone teaching or preaching through Paul's letter to the Romans.

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***Theoretical-Practical Theology: Prolegomena*. By Petrus van Mastricht. Translated by Todd M. Rester. Volume 1. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018. 336 pp. $50.00, Hardcover. ISBN 978-1-601-78559-6.**

Petrus van Mastricht (1630-1706) ministered as a pastor and professor during the Dutch Further Reformation of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Paralleling Puritan efforts in England, the Netherlands' *Nadere Reformatie* emphasizes practical piety with Reformed doctrine. The movement's leaders challenge the tendency for reformation to remain in the Christian's head and never venture into the Christian's heart and hands. The title of Mastricht's *magnum opus* reflects this experiential emphasis. In *Theoretical-Practical Theology* (*TPT*), Petrus van Mastricht champions the study of theology as the method of living unto God (91). As the first of seven volumes, this volume introduces English readers to Mastricht and frames his theological system. The volume begins with a biographical sketch of Mastricht's life and a short work on preaching titled, "*The Best Method of Preaching*." In this work on prolegomena, Mastricht explores the nature of theology, the doctrine of Scripture, and the distribution of theology.

Mastricht bore witness to his chief theological principle throughout his life as a minister and professor. In Mastricht's funeral oration, Henricus Pontanus boasts, "The model he constructed for shaping the character of Christians was the same model to which he conformed himself his whole life long" (lxxxviii). The burden to produce a practical theology grew from Mastricht's pastoral heart. Mastricht ministered among Protestant refugees from the totality of Europe who faced the pressures of Catholic armies and apologists, tensions with nominalism within Dutch Christianity, and adversity from Cartesian epistemology

that redefined traditional understandings of God and the world. Recognizing the essential connection between belief and practice, Mastricht engaged in polemics as a shepherd leading his flock, conscientious of the poisonous spiritual fruit of Catholic and modern theology within the believer's life.

Mastricht's convictions concerning the relationship between theology and piety manifest themselves in his instructions for preachers. During his time as professor at Frankfurt an der Oder (1667-1670), he published his first work on homiletics. In this work, he advocates for preaching that adopted a fourfold approach—exegesis, doctrine, elenctic, and practice (xxxii). This model grounds his approach to *TPT*, as an exposition of a relevant passage begins each chapter. Mastricht ensures that his readers understand both the vital importance of theology for preaching and the nature of preaching as the fruit of theology by placing a work on preaching at the beginning of his first edition of *TPT*. He says that "this method alone...is full and complete" and "I will claim that it is the best method until I am convinced by arguments to the contrary" (5). One must require all preachers to read this essay to learn from the professor who balances theological formulation for preaching with practical considerations in preaching delivery.

One finds the essence of Mastricht's theological system in his exposition of 1 Timothy 6:2-3. Drawing upon Paul's admonition to Timothy to "teach" and "exhort" the Christian faith "according to godliness," Mastricht charges the theologian with the task of instructing the mind and exhorting the will (64-66). From this text, he concludes that the only approved method of teaching theology must both teach and exhort—theoretical-practical—truth in accordance with godliness (73). "Theology must be taught according to a certain method, and it must be the kind of method in which theory and practice always walk in step together" (67). The theologian must not only pursue a comprehensive system of dogmatics, but "the study of theology, to the extent that it is true theology, is not sufficient, unless...it is earnestly devoted to practical theology and practice" (95). Truly, "this theoretical-practical Christian theology is nothing less than the doctrine of living for God through Christ, in other words, the doctrine that is according to godliness (1 Tim 6:3), and likewise the knowledge of the truth that is according to godliness (Titus 1:1)" (98). The last section of the work examines the

distribution of theology. Mastricht uses 2 Timothy 1:13 to undergird the necessity of order within theology. Order serves to rebuke false theologies and allocate the proper relationship between belief and practice.

Developing a theoretical-practical theology requires a *principium*; a norm or a rule. Mastricht places his doctrine of Scripture within his prolegomena. Since the skill of living for God is an acquired faculty, this virtue requires a rule from above (113). Using the *locus classicus* for bibliology, he argues from 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that Scripture is this perfect rule of living for God (117). He surveys the perfections of Scripture and seventeenth-century debates to accentuate the necessity for laypersons to receive Scripture as the Word of God (182). He encourages pastors and theologians to enliven a love for the Word through a vibrant pulpit ministry: "A living and effective ministry of the Word does much for kindling a love of the Word" (188).

Mastricht speaks in a theological dialect distinct from contemporary Christians. His work originates from a period when rationalists like Descartes were planting the seeds of Modernism. This work contains prophetic warnings to a generation of scholars eager to find a rational basis for understanding apart from the existence and revelation of God. One sees the inevitable consequences of Descartes's ideas today, as most people deny the possibility of certainty in knowledge. These philosophical developments have not left Christians unscathed; Mastricht's work should unsettle most theologians, pastors, and laypersons. Mastricht's vision for the pursuit of theology to acquire the skill of living unto the glory of God escapes most congregants in today's churches. Modernism succeeded in bifurcating belief and practice. Scholarly societies and editors belittle application within a researcher's prose while "Christian Living" works lack significant theological reflection. Mastricht condemns both approaches as deficient for aiding the Christian in living for the glory of God.

While this work serves as an introduction to forthcoming volumes of Mastricht's *magnum opus*, theologians and pastors benefit from his comprehensive vision for theology. Various sections reveal the depth of Mastricht's wisdom and knowledge for ministry and pedagogy. For example, he lists eleven rules for academic study that would rebuke most seminaries and candidates for ministry (94). Also, this work models

Mastricht's ability to uncover soul-piercing application from theological truths. As a critique, some readers will struggle to follow Mastricht's polemical interactions with foreign seventeenth century thinkers and debates.

The translation of this volume contributes to a growing library of works in theological ethics. This work joins recent translations of historical titles such as Willem Teellinck's *The Path of True Godliness* and Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics* in presenting a theological system for practical piety. As pastors and scholars work to correct the shallow piety and feeble belief systems of modern Christians, Mastricht models an exemplary approach to theology and ministry. This volume contains the potential to initiate a modern *Nadere Reformatie* that recovers the skill of living unto the glory of God.

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***Preaching by the Book: Developing and Delivering Text-Driven Sermons*. By R. Scott Pace. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2018. 123 pp., $24.99, Hardback. ISBN 978-1-4627-7334-3.**

Scott Pace is uniquely qualified to pen this volume as he is a pastor, preacher, and homiletician. His works include *Pastoral Theology* (B&H Academic, 2017), *A Legacy of Preaching* (Zondervan, 2018), and a forthcoming volume on Colossians and Philemon in the *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary* series (B&H, 2021). He holds a Ph.D. from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (Wake Forest, N.C.), serving as Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Preaching, Dean of The College at Southeastern, and occupies the Johnny Hunt Chair of Biblical Preaching.

Preaching by the Book serves as a guide to crafting and delivering sermons from the inspiration of the preached text through the invitation after the preaching of the text. The subtitle is no misnomer, as Pace capably articulates the theological foundations and praxis of "developing and delivering text-driven sermons." His work consists of: *The Foundation* (biblical inspiration and the basis for the text-driven

preaching), *The Framework* (interpretation, application, and structure), and *The Finishing Touches* (introduction, illustration, and conclusion).

Pace views the full inspiration of Scripture as the source from which all preaching flows. Can one preach and not understand God's grand design for preaching? No. God's unfailing Word "underscores the reality that preaching is fundamentally a theological endeavor" (4). Preachers speak because God spoke-about His existence and the redemption found in Christ. God chose preaching as the means to accomplish that redemptive purpose and His Spirit is "the divine agent that unifies all the elements of preaching, from preparation to proclamation" (6). Pace calls for textual preaching, since God revealed Himself "through personal and propositional truth" (8). Everything the preacher does is text-based–from text selection to the final sharing of that text as God's spokesman. Sound hermeneutics allow for a step-by-step process of proper scriptural interpretation, yet "Scripture interpretation and sermon preparation are as much of a spiritual endeavor as a systematic one" (17).

Pace's sermon framework entails interpretation and implementation. The study of Scripture need not be laborious, as preachers can transform "I study because I have to preach" into "I preach because I have studied" (32). This includes sound exegesis, textual interpretation, theological understanding, and relevant implications. The preacher summarizes the main text idea into a past-tense, historically and contextually accurate appraisal, then transforms that into a contemporary, present-tense statement for the congregation. He then simplifies the main idea, which will serve as the unifying text-driven truth, since "meaning is fixed and does not change over time" (34). Examination of the details of the text will help discern the timeless theological, doctrinal, and spiritual truths. Application provides a means for listeners to live out scriptural transformation; therefore, application must come from the text, focus on the truth, encourage listener trust, and give steps to take.

The concluding section calls for integration of the introduction, the illustrations, and the invitation. Every sermon has an introduction—best to use those moments to *involve* the listeners in the sermon and introduce them to the subject. The introduction should be brief, purposeful, intentional, and decisive—allowing easy flow to exposition, and Pace encourages illustrating with variety and purpose. Alliteration may spur memory, but used in this trilogy of elements, it may have been best to simply call the invitation the conclusion. Appeals or calls for

decisions are appropriate, welcomed, and encouraged in a conclusion, but for some, invitation may be more synonymous with an altar call than with a sermon component, yet that may be picayunish. Certainly, *invitation* is not a "tack-on" or homiletic postscript as "the Spirit's work is not synonymous with sermonic freelance, and to approach the invitation this way is spiritually irresponsible" (97).

While there is agreement with everything the author says regarding "truth through personality," the continued usage of the quote by the dubious Phillips Brooks may warrant a reconsideration or, at the least, re-wording (3). We may sanitize, even baptize the quote, but what Brooks meant is divergent with evangelicals. As Charles Fuller has cogently pointed out, Brooks may have said truth *through* personality, but what he meant was truth *from* personality, namely, the preacher's personality was to become the attention *of* preaching rather than an instrument *for* preaching (*The Trouble with "Truth through Personality,"* Wipf & Stock, 2010). Next, one may commend the scope, substance, or success of this work, but any praise for this work should be based on content, not brevity. Though Pace does cover significant material in 115 pages, any appearance of "brevity" is due in large part to an exceedingly small font. It may be a quick read but not for the visually impaired. Surely, this is no fault of the author but is likely in accordance with publisher decisions and in line with other volumes in this anthology (*Hobbs College Library Series*).

Positively, Pace's high view of Scripture characterizes his work, stating, "We can affirm that the Scriptures are the inspired, and inerrant, and infallible Word of God. Therefore, the Bible is both sure and sufficient" (9). This being the case, Pace exhibits a deep reverence for God, the things of God, and the sacred task of preaching. Next, whereas the book is an easy read, that does not mean there is neither depth nor breadth to the content. Likely not meant to be exhaustive, the material is comprehensive, clear, and compelling. Though not a work on theology, hermeneutics, or pastoral ministry, Pace allows each of those disciplines to properly inform his text-driven homiletic. Finally, since preaching is "fundamentally a theological endeavor," if every preacher could consistently apply two of Pace's implementation features, it would revolutionize that theological endeavor: 1) sermon sentence points should be complete, concise, and congruent—each point reflecting the main idea, establishing the timeless biblical and theological truth and

each point can be applicational, and 2) do not hesitate to use imperatival language in sermon points—because they carry force (i.e., ought, should, must, need, can) (60-61).

This book finds its place within a host of homiletic volumes on sermon preparation and delivery, such as Vines and Shaddix's *Power in the Pulpit* (Moody, 1997/2017) or Merida's *The Christ-Centered Expositor* (B&H Academic, 2016). *Preaching by the Book* may be just a tier below, but it is still a beneficial companion volume, serving easily in a church ministry or preaching class on either the undergraduate or seminary level. Pace's work will prove valuable for 1) the ministry novice, who will find it a clear and compelling guide to faithful text-driven preaching, and 2) the seasoned expositor needing homiletic refreshing or simply seeking to hone his craft. Certainly, there is a lot of bad preaching out there, yet the clear mandate is to "*preach the Word*" (2 Tim 4:2). Scott Pace cogently reminds the preacher of that fact. He is not seeking to be trendy or worldly wise, just faithful—"The process and principles outlined in this book are sermon development tools designed to that end in order to help us all fulfill our ministry" (16). *Preaching by the Book* is a sermon development tool that every preacher must have in his homiletic toolbox.

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Biblical Theology: The Convergence of the Canon. **By Ben Witherington III. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019. 508 pp. $34.99, Paperback.** **ISBN: 978-1108712682.**

Biblical theology assumes theological unity in the Bible. Ben Witherington traces the convictions of the biblical authors through the canon regarding the major theme of God. Witherington drew out several theological conclusions based on his study, which included topics such as election, Trinitarianism, covenant, *hesed* and grace, all the while emphasizing the process toward theological conclusions, as much as the conclusions themselves.

Witherington sought to demonstrate that the one God of the OT is the same God of the NT. He first established that the various authors,

supplying different articulations within different contexts, shared a symbolic universe comprised of common presuppositions about God, which informed, influenced, and (might we say) converged their theologies. God having revealed Himself to a chosen people further allowed for a shared history among the biblical authors, referred to as "narrative thought world." These presuppositions regarding God's involvement in human history culminated toward redemption. Therefore, to summarize what the Bible says coherently about God, one must first recognize that the authors shared symbolic universe and narrative thought world. For Witherington, the result was a Trinitarian deity progressively revealed in Scripture, intent on redeeming a lost humanity. A pitfall of Protestant theology, argued Witherington, is that Paterology is often overridden by the two Persons revealed later within the canon. The OT must be allowed its own voice, rather than a Christ- or Pneumocentric reading of God if a proper theology of the biblical authors is to be established.

The next three chapters examined the shared symbolic universe of the biblical authors with specific attention on God, emphasizing the progressive revelation of God's complex personhood. Conclusions included a consistent portrait of YHWH, Jesus as God's wisdom as well as the Son of Man, and the Spirit assigned distinct personhood only in the NT. These early chapters established the shared presuppositions about God within the symbolic universe, and the next two chapters examined the shared narrative thought world by moving through select stories from both Testaments. Conclusions included, again, the consistency of God's character with the addition of consistent human sinfulness, the NT's Christocentric reading of the OT, an established Trinitarian worldview, and the culmination of the biblical stories in Christ. With both the symbolic universe and narrative thought world established, Witherington returned again to examine the theology of the biblical authors in both Testaments.

In this final stage, there was particular refutation of any biblical covenants being unilateral and unconditional, meaning every covenant required responsibilities upon all the parties involved. How this best explained God's restraint in Genesis 9 to never re-flood the earth was unclear. Witherington also understood covenants as ongoing rather than eternal, implying that they continue until they don't—the point being that the New Covenant is entirely new, not a continuation of an old

covenant. His explanation for interpreting *'olam* as ongoing was brief. Should *'olam* be translated as ongoing because of the context alone; can it ever have an eternal sense? In discussing Psalm 139:24, Witherington understood *'olam* to mean "the way that leads to everlasting life." Does this mean that life is ongoing until it ends? Further clarification in such moments would have been helpful. Further, God's *hesed* was detached from covenant language as not meaning covenant faithfulness or love but referring to His mercy and kindness. If the human party continually broke a covenantal agreement, then God was not violating his *hesed* by voiding the covenant—the implication being that there are many covenants throughout the canon under one faithful administration, not one covenant loyally guarded and maintained. While Witherington disagreed with many scholars on this point, he provided some balance to the argument as presented in his discourse with Chad Thornhill.

Witherington commented on how single covenant theology is more supported among Reformed theologians, and indeed, he seemed to consider anything remotely resembling a tulip repugnant. This was clear in his discussion regarding perseverance of the saints, where he designated hardline Calvinism, not as something biblical, but as "theological comfort food" for a culture uncomfortable with eternal ambiguity. Yet he also discussed rather off-handedly prevenient grace with no biblical support for its existence, simply assuming it to be one of the many gifts from God. Such comments occasionally caused the book to feel imbalanced.

The charm of the book was Witherington's humor. His focus on the full Trinity was helpful and provided important considerations for interpreting God throughout the canon. His engagement with Second Temple and deuterocanonical literature exemplified the importance of this material when attempting to grasp the thought world of the biblical authors. Witherington came across definitive in his conclusions, yet humbly acknowledged that this was but one work of biblical theology. He explained that biblical theology is different from a Calvinist, Arminian, Catholic, or Orthodox theology because biblical theology focuses on what concerned the biblical authors, not what succeeding generations later established and applied. Witherington acknowledged the dangers in writing a biblical theology, primarily the influence of theological predilection upon the data and conclusions. The danger is not limited to the biblical theologian, either. As much as he must labor, so too must his

readers by not readily dismissing the data because of their own previously accepted and cherished doctrines.

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***Forged from Reformation: How Dispensational Thought Advances the Reformed Legacy*. By Christopher Cone and James I. Fazio, eds. El Cajon, CA: Southern California Seminary Press, 2017. 582 pp. $38.61, Paperback. ISBN-13 978-0986444234.**

Forged from Reformation is a collection of essays edited by Christopher Cone, President and Research Professor of Bible and Theology at Calvary University, and James I. Fazio, Dean of Bible and Theology and Professor of Biblical Studies at Southern California Seminary. Classical dispensational scholars combine to assess the relationship between the theological insights of the Protestant Reformation and the subsequent development of dispensational thought. Among works on the history of dispensationalism, *Forged from Reformation* is unusual in its attempt to connect dispensational theology with the core issues championed by the sixteenth-century Reformers.

The initial chapter introduces the book and articulates its central thesis: "Dispensational thought upholds and advances the legacy of the Reformation unlike any other theological system in Christian tradition" (8). It includes an outline of the book's structure, information about contributing authors, and a summary of each chapter's argument. The first of two main sections comprises chapters two through seven, wherein the various authors consider issues in the historical development of Reformation thought and dispensationalism. Chapter two traces the development of biblical hermeneutics from the early church to modern dispensational thought, arguing that the Reformers' rejection of allegory and return to literal hermeneutics ultimately led to dispensational eschatology. Chapters three, four, and five focus on the thought of Martin Luther and argue for evidence of incipient dispensational principles in his *Ninety-Five Theses*, assert similarities between Luther and John Nelson Darby, and attempt to demonstrate

from each man's controversial writings that Darby advanced Luther's principles through the establishment of local autonomous churches. Chapter six surveys the historical eclipse of local church autonomy and its recovery during the Reformation, concluding that dispensational churches are its best expression. Chapter seven returns to Luther, arguing that the deeply troubling sentiments expressed in Luther's anti-Jewish writings arose from his use of allegorical interpretation, which is corrected by dispensational hermeneutics.

Chapters eight through seventeen constitute the second main section and assess how each of the five *solas* of the Reformation has been developed by dispensational thought as contrasted with Reformed theology. The first five of these chapters focuses on *sola scriptura*. Chapter eight proposes that the Reformers restored literal biblical interpretation but did not consistently apply it, and that subsequent Reformed theology failed to further develop their hermeneutic, leaving dispensationalism to apply it to all of Scripture. Chapter nine argues that the Reformers' approach to eschatology was inconsistent with their rejection of allegory, and only dispensational premillennialism results from a literal hermeneutic. Chapter ten asserts that, in championing *sola scriptura* and individual interpretation, Luther and Calvin rejected allegory in favor of literalism, and that dispensationalism arises from a more consistent application of the literal hermeneutic than does contemporary Reformed theology. Chapter eleven attempts to demonstrate that Luther's Christocentric interpretive approach was incompatible with his rejection of allegory and commitment to the perspicuity of Scripture. Finally, Chapter twelve concludes that among the Reformed, Lutheran, Millerite, and dispensational traditions, the last has remained most faithful to the Reformers' hermeneutical insights by steering a middle course between allegory and wooden literalism.

Sola gratia is the topic of Chapter thirteen, which surveys the biblical concept of grace and its development by the Reformers, arguing that after the Reformation the Protestant emphasis moved toward works and obscured grace, and that dispensationalism corrects this fault. Chapter fourteen covers *sola fide*, averring that dispensational thought has maintained the Reformation emphasis on salvation by faith alone and mounting a defense against the allegation that dispensationalism teaches different ways of salvation in different dispensations. *Solus Christus* is taken up in Chapter fifteen, which compares the Reformers'

emphasis on the sufficiency of Christ to the prevailing Roman Catholic doctrine of the time, and argues that dispensational focus on Christ's work as the sole ground of salvation and the uniqueness of the believer's union with Christ represent faithful extensions of this principle.

Chapter sixteen proposes that dispensationalism advances *soli Deo gloria* by its unique emphasis on God's purpose to glorify himself in all of history, while Reformed theology has conflated God's subordinate salvific purpose with his central doxological purpose. Chapter seventeen completes the discussion of this *sola* by surveying the centrality of God's glory in the thought of the Reformers and key dispensational thinkers, arguing that dispensationalism uniquely highlights God's glory in history through its structure of seven dispensations. A concluding chapter exhorts readers to embody the principle of *semper reformanda* and is followed by Scripture and subject indices.

Contributors to this volume are clearly aware of the criticism that dispensationalism is a theological novelty with little organic connection to the historical theology of the church (525). *Forged from Reformation* represents a thorough and systematic attempt to respond by framing dispensational theology as a faithful outworking of the insights and correction of the errors of the Protestant Reformers. In so doing, the book creatively seeks to fill a lacuna in dispensational literature. The combination of substantial length, complex subject matter, and popular writing style suggests that the intended audience is the informed layman or pastor rather than the casual reader or scholarly academic.

However, a number of authors omit discussion of key terms and major theological presuppositions, apparently assuming they are already understood and shared by readers. The resulting sense is that the non-dispensational reader is an interloper eavesdropping on a conversation between dispensationalists, with the arguments intended more to edify dispensational readers than to persuade non-dispensationalists. Moreover, it is unlikely that Reformed readers will be satisfied that the book as a whole represents their position fairly or interacts helpfully and accurately with Reformed scholarship.

Forged from Reformation is open to several additional criticisms, though it includes chapters representing significant exceptions to each of them. Generally speaking, many contributors pair an over-reliance on secondary sources with a lack of extended, careful interaction with primary sources. Logical fallacies undermine a number of authors'

arguments. Most significantly, several authors assert key propositions without substantial evidence or argument. For example, the book's overall argument seems to assume the equation of *sola scriptura* with application of a literal hermeneutic, but this is not persuasively demonstrated; nor is the premise that the Reformers defined literal interpretation in the same way as modern dispensationalists. The equation of non-dispensational hermeneutics with Origen-style allegory is also not proven, since the few comparisons offered appear completely inapposite. In one example, an author equates blatantly allegorical interpretation of historical narrative in gospel passages with a symbolic understanding of imagery in Revelation's apocalyptic vision reports (323-4). The author assumes rather than argues the propriety of this comparison.

Forged from Reformation, however well-conceived, is inconsistently executed. The critical reader may justifiably conclude that many of the authors have not proven their theses and that the book's main thesis has consequently not been demonstrated. The volume may, however, prove encouraging for dispensational readers while providing points of debate for others seeking to promote dialogue with dispensational scholarship.

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***Riddles and Revelations: Explorations into the Relationship between Wisdom and Prophecy in the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by M. J. Boda, R. L. Meek and W. R. Osborne. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies: 634. T&T Clark, 2018. 306 pp. $114.00, Hardback. ISBN-13: 978-0567671646.**

Riddles and Revelations contains a cacophony of perspectives that argue for some sort of relationship between wisdom and prophecy in the Hebrew Bible. The essays divide into four sections. The first section wrestles with the methodology of wisdom literature/traditions and their relation to the prophets. Russell Meek proposes a methodology that defines wisdom's influence upon the prophets. Meek borrows Crenshaw's methodology and applies it to prophetic literature (6). He

proposes a four-step process for determining wisdom's influence on the prophets. One should begin with a form-critical analysis of the text, then investigate their correspondence with other texts. This leads to the second step, inner-biblical allusions. The inner-biblical allusions clarify the authorial intent through shared lexical features, and inner-biblical exegesis will determine wisdom's influence.

The second chapter, written by Will Kynes, is "'Wisdom' as Mask and Mirror: Methodological Questions for 'Wisdom's Dialogue with the Canon.'" Kynes critiques Meeks' methodology as impractical and in conflating terms (20). Kynes proposes two key questions that govern his methodological investigation. The first is "Is the Term 'Wisdom' More of a Hindrance Than a Help?" Kynes argues that "wisdom" is not a helpful term, that it is a scholarly construct (26). In the second question, "Is Form Criticism the Best Starting Place?" Kynes reverses Meeks' proposed methodology to suggest analyzing connections of text, followed by identifying types of literature, since identifying types of literature is the most subjective component of a methodology (28).

In the third chapter, Mark Sneed writes on "Methods, Muddles, and Modes of Literature: The Question of Influence Between Wisdom and Prophecy." Genres are systematic, and the social context of a genre does not dictate its later instantiation. Genres are rarely controlled by a certain group of individuals since anyone can alter them (36). He pushes against the notion of a separate school for priests, prophets, and sages in favor of one collective scribal institution. The influence of the wisdom genre upon the prophetic corpus is a mixing of modes of literature by scribes who composed with both types (43).

In the fourth chapter, Stuart Weeks writes "Overlap? Influence? Allusion? The Importance of Asking the Right Question." Scholars should accept the text on its own terms instead of forcing foreign categories upon the text (52). The gathering of allusions or attempts to establish a methodology for such a collection makes the minor cases overrule the majority (50). John W. Hilber writes the fifth chapter, "The Relationship of Prophecy and Wisdom in the Ancient Near East." He argues that the integration of wisdom traditions and prophetic material is scarce (59). Hilber provides a survey of Ancient Near East material to argue that wisdom is not direct revelation, in contrast to the prophets (72). Wisdom and prophecy affirm the role of revelation but stress the acquiring of knowledge differently (72).

In section two, the focus shifts to wisdom among the prophets; the authors detail examples of wisdom's influence in various prophetic writings. Eric Ortlund writes the first chapter, "Spiritual Blindness and Wisdom Traditions." Ortlund argues there is not an attack upon wisdom traditions but a critique against the spiritual blindness of the people (90). Leslie C. Allen argues in "The Structural Role of Wisdom in Jeremiah" that "wisdom" and "the wise" function as keywords in chapters 7-10 to relate to the exile (96). The false wisdom of Judah and the nations stands against the wisdom of God.

William R. Osborne writes "Who Gets 'Tyred' in the Book of Ezekiel," investigating potential wisdom relatedness in Ezekiel through three aspects: literary forms, societal influence, and semantic and thematic overlap. He believes the sage in Ezekiel is the prophet himself who critiques false wisdom (123). Andrew E. Steinmann writes "Daniel as Wisdom in Action" and argues for "a constellation of Old Testament books of wisdom or books that promote pious and efficacious thought and life" (125). Steinmann investigates examples of wisdom vocabulary in the story of Daniel but avoids the terms like "wisdom" and "genre" since they have too much baggage. The book of Daniel shows how wise people act and displays the wisdom of God delineated in Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes (146).

The third section analyzes prophecy among the sages, and Martin A. Shields begins with "You Can't Get a Sage to Do a Prophet's Job: Overcoming Wisdom's Deficiency in the Book of Job." He argues that Job functions as a bridge between the sages and the prophets (198). The book of Job supplanted intellectual wisdom by appealing to prophecy at the end of Job. The author highlights the inadequacy of human intellect and suggests that prophetic revelation has greater weight (198). Richard Schultz writes "Was Qohelet an Eschatological or an Anti-Apocalyptic Sage? Hebel, The Evil Day, and Divine Judgement in the Book of Ecclesiastes." Timothy Johnson writes "From Where Should Apocalyptic be Found? The Book of Job as a Key to Von Rad's Theory." He investigates the source of apocalyptic language and argues that Job provides a possible source for the transition from wisdom to apocalyptic.

The last section provides responses to the previous sections from key scholars. Katherine J. Dell responds to the methodological essays with five sections: genre issues, defining wisdom, wisdom influence, scribal culture, and wisdom and prophecy in the ancient Near East. She states

plainly that genres are not static but complex (237). She highlights the abuse of definitions of wisdom and prophecy and encourages a clear methodology that does not smuggle in presuppositions. She supports Kynes' methodological assessment: "Where wisdom influence ends and wisdom membership begins is a question yet to be satisfactorily answered" (243).

Next, Mark Boda responds to "Wisdom in Prophecy"; he argues that one should pursue lexical links and give priority to the constellations of lexical data and collocations (250). A form may rise from a particular group but that form has a life of its own and can be employed in multiple contexts (258). The challenge remains to reflect wisely on the reader's context so that the text can speak prophetically to modern readers (258). Tremper Longman III responds lastly to "Prophecy and Wisdom: Connections, Influences, Relationships." He argues that the category of wisdom literature should remain as a viable category (259).

Riddles and Revelations attempts to answer a modern question: the extent of the influence of wisdom literature. This volume stimulates constructive discussion on wisdom and prophecy's relationship. Two articles in particular will benefit anyone wrestling with intertextuality between the prophets and wisdom literature. The first is Will Kynes's article, wherein he rejects the historical methodology of grouping the wisdom corpus. Kynes flips the current practices on their heads in such a way that bogles and confounds current methodology. Students and scholars should familiarize themselves with Kynes' argument and methodology because it is a forerunner of a larger movement. He argues for a more natural reading of the text that develops genre categories from the text and not superimposed upon by the reader. The issue that Kynes presses within his article is the issue of etic versus emic methodology.

The second article that stands apart from the rest of the article is Andrew E. Steinmann's, his methodology of constellation of the text. He argues for "a constellation of Old Testament books of wisdom or books that promote pious and efficacious thought and life" (125).

Kynes argues for this same approach in his new book *An Obituary for Wisdom Literature* (124-125). The text should be analyzed from a multi-dimensional approach instead of one-to-one correspondence.

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***Clash of Visions: Populism and Elitism in New Testament Theology.* By Robert W. Yarbrough. Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, UK: Mentor, 2019. 116 pp. $16.99, Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-1527103917.**

Robert W. Yarbrough is a seasoned evangelical academic scholar who is well known for, among other significant contributions, his translations of several important works by evangelical German authors (like Eta Linnemann, Gerhard Maier, and others) for English-speaking audiences. This brief book is an expansion of the author's 2018 Gheens Lectures at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In this work, Yarbrough reflects on the "clash of visions" between the popular (traditional) Christian's approach to Scripture and that of the elite (academic) scholar.

The book consists of three short chapters. Chapter one is titled "The Enduring 'Critical' Objection to 'Confessional' Reading of Scripture (15-37). Here Yarbrough notes the clash, primarily in the West, between the hyper-skeptical and rationalistic, post-Enlightenment, elite scholars (and scholarly trained ministers) and the simple faith of ordinary believers, including evangelical scholars and ministers, who hold to traditional Christian beliefs. He cites, as an example of this clash, a recent conflict in Sweden between James A. Kelhoffer (an elite scholar) and Anders Gerdmar (a charismatic, evangelical scholar), in which Kelhoffer harshly critiqued Gerdmar simply for holding to basic orthodox positions. Yarbrough notes that the "elitist guild consensus" often functions "like the papal magisterium. Against these truths no warranted objections are possible" (37).

Chapter two is titled, "The Enduring Appeal of Neo-Allegorical Interpretation: Baur and Bultmann Redux" (39-60). Yarbrough first clarifies the distinction between the "elitist" and "populist" approaches to Scripture. Elitist scholarship attempts to reinterpret the Bible's message "on the basis of an endless progression of self-referential methods based on skepticism toward it" (40). The author laments the fact that American evangelicalism, in particular, has been tainted by this academic elitism. He contrasts this with the rise of populist Christianity in the non-Western world, offering assurance that "American evangelical decadence does not automatically taint the 89 percent of Protestants in the world who reside elsewhere" (42). He suggests as evidence of current

Western "decadence" the contemporary revival of interest in F. C. Baur and Rudolph Bultmann, radical critics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The title of chapter three asks, "Is Rapprochement Possible … Or Even Relevant?" (61-83). Yarbrough begins by asserting, "that for over two centuries a subgroup associated with the Western Protestant church has assumed and asserts control of the meaning of the Bible… and exerted profound influence on pastoral training and cultural perception of the truth of the Bible, not only in the West but worldwide" (61). He sees hope, however, in the emergence and growth of global Christianity: "It is my hope and contention that we are on the verge of a time when the populist harvest that has seen hundreds of millions added to church membership will result in fruit in the form of reclamation of biblical hermeneutics for Christ and His kingdom in parts of the world where elitist interpretation has gained undue sway" (64). Yarbrough suggests that the resurgence of Christianity in the non-Western world is producing more martyrs than elitist scholars, and "The martyr church is not asking scholars if they can affirm that Paul wrote Ephesians, that the Gospel words of Jesus are authentic, or that the one who is faithful unto death will receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10)" (72). In the end, Yarbrough sees "populism," as he defines it, providing "a promising framework for theologically rich exegesis and exposition of the Bible" (75).

The work concludes with two brief appendices. First, there is a short article by German Lutheran churchman and scholar Ulrich Wilckens (translated by Yarbrough), who in his later years saw the dangers of elitist scholarship and affirmed confessional Christianity (85-92). Second, there is a brief article by Korean-American New Testament scholar Sydney Park, tracing her experiences with racism as an immigrant and her embracing of Christianity (93-98).

In this work, Yarbrough offers a succinct and compelling description and analysis of the divide that has existed since the Enlightenment between "elitist" and "popular" approaches to the Bible and Christian theology. He points to inherent problems that have arisen as Western Protestant evangelicals, in particular, have embraced the historical-critical method in biblical studies, while still attempting to affirm traditional Christian theology. In the end, he expresses hope for fruitful

"rapprochement" between the two perspectives, especially with the rise of non-Western Christianity.

Yarbrough's insights are salient and helpful, especially his critique of contemporary American evangelicalism and its embrace of academic scholarship, but some questions might also be raised. Yarbrough offers a broad definition of "populist" Christianity (see his list of foundational Christian views on p. 16). Some will see this definition as too broad and ecumenical. He suggests, for example, that evangelicals can find "allies" in Roman Catholics in their common affirmation of biblical inerrancy (77-78), but this overlooks fundamental and intractable differences between the two. The same applies to his enthusiastic hopes for the rise of non-Western Christianity. Perhaps some of these hopes, however, should be tempered with anxiety, as some of these movements have proven to be cultic, syncretistic, and unorthodox. An example would be the explosion of so called "African independent Churches," which blend nominal Christianity with traditional African religions. Yarbrough uses the term "confessional" simply in reference to those who "confess" faith, not to those who embrace a historical Protestant confession of faith. One wonders how a resurgence of robust and well-defined creedal faith might positively affect Christianity *wherever* it might exist. One might also ask if the "elitist" approach is inherently corrosive to the faith and why rapprochement should be sought with it?

Yarbrough's work is thought-provoking. It offers valuable reflections on the inevitable disconnect or "clash" which results from the attempt to embrace Enlightenment methods of academic study, while also affirming the inspiration and authority of the Bible. This comes from a scholar uniquely situated to offer such a critique, given his training and expertise in the historical critical method, his awareness of the worldwide Christian movement, and his personal evangelical convictions. Like those whose works he has previously translated (e.g., Linnemann and Maier) Yarbrough offers his own compelling and insightful evaluation of the "clash" between "elitist" scholarship and "populist" faith.

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***Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective: Ancient and Contemporary Approaches to Theological Anthropology*. By Marc Cortez,. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2016. 264 pp., $18.93 paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0310516415.**

Marc Cortez (Ph.D., University of St. Andrews) is Professor of Theology at Wheaton College Graduate School in Wheaton, Illinois, where he has served on faculty since 2013. Cortez is a leading expert in theological anthropology, a discipline focused on questions related to human beings in light of Christian theology. It is to this concept that he devotes his 2016 book *Christological Anthropology*.

As the title suggests, *Christological Anthropology* is set within the realm of systematic theology. Its guiding thought is that Christology should comprehensively (or "ultimately") inform anthropology (224). Extending past mere assertions of Jesus being "truly man," Cortez suggests Christology should be applied to *all* anthropological data, thus reaching beyond applications of ethics or the *imago Dei*—the latter being a reduction more customary in traditional theological anthropologies (e.g., Calvin).

Using what he calls a "bottom up" or descriptive method, Cortez's thesis is fleshed out in eight chapters surveying various Christocentric thinkers throughout history as to how they applied distinct Christological elements to their vision of humanity (23). In this manner, the author does not attempt to offer the *de facto* approach to christological-anthropology. Rather, Cortez's goal is more modest, seeking to "explore a variety of possible approaches in order to generate a better understanding of how Christology has been used to inform anthropology" (23). In chapter one (31–55), Cortez probes Gregory of Nyssa's anthropology in one of the earliest of theological anthropologies, *On the Making of Man*. It is specifically Gregory's "incarnational perspective" of the humanity of Christ that Cortez focuses on in order to inform sexual/gender issues (26). Human sexuality is, according to Gregory, an "add-on to human nature" suggesting sexuality is something entirely extrinsic to humanity. Cortez explores the obvious difficulties of Gregory's view, namely that the Son of God was definitely incarnated as

a gendered *male,* thus proving that sexuality is indeed vital for a human to be fully human.

Chapter two (56–82) considers medieval mystic Julian of Norwich's contribution to Christological-anthropology, which is grounded in her multiple visionary experiences of Christ crucified. Cortez presents Julian as offering an anthropology inextricably tied to a "crucicentric vision of divine love" enveloped in the suffering of Christ. Informed by her 16 mystical visions, Julian believed for one to truly understand humanity, one must intently ponder the humanity of Christ revealed on the cross (57). For this medieval thinker, God demonstrated His love for mankind exclusively in the death of Christ and thus, "Julian's crucicentric theology is inescapably a theology of love, the love displayed on the cross" (61).

Chapter three (83–110) is centered on Martin Luther's view of justification as not merely a soteriological doctrine, but one that is also anthropological, acting as the chief article of humanity. Cortez presents Martin Luther's Christological-anthropology as an all-embracing true humanity in light of "justification by faith." True humanity, according to Luther's position, has always been defined by justification viz., a human possessing an extrinsic or "alien righteousness" through faith in Christ, giving him a right standing before God (86–89). Thus, justification is far more than soteriological for Luther; it is the very essence of true humanity.

Chapter four (111–40) explores Friedrich Schleiermacher's contribution. For Schleiermacher, religious experience in relation to others is the central motif of being human—a conclusion yielded by his "experiential-redemptive" and "religious self-consciousness" presuppositions. Thus, Cortez presents Schleiermacher's unique Christological-anthropology as one that emphasized the function of the church and community in sketching human identity. As the founder of theological liberalism, Schleiermacher rejected Scripture, doctrine, or tradition as the starting point for theological anthropology, "but with the redemption that is actually *experienced* by Christians through Jesus" (111, emphasis added).

Chapter five (141–62) traces Neo-orthodoxy founder Karl Barth's intense Christocentrism which, probably more than the other authors surveyed, explicitly impacted his anthropology. For Barth, true humanity can only be understood in light of God's election of Christ. As such,

Barth's unique understanding of election (only Christ is the "elect One") resulted in his Christological-anthropology, dubbed: "God-for-humanity." Throughout the chapter, Cortez draws out various links to Barth's thinking, stemming from his position that God has determined from eternity past for Jesus to be God-for-humanity, resulting in true humanity being "covenantal copartners" in His outworking of redemption (a concept that Cortez terms "covenant ontology," 155).

In chapter six (163–89), Cortez gives a focused look at Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas's grounding of personhood in a Christology informed by his understanding of the Trinity. Zizioulas understood human personhood as a unique creature shaped by "free-communion" with other persons (27). For Zizioulas, anthropology must be understood in terms of community, as human beings reflect their triune Designer who exists in eternal community within His own being. Christ is not merely in "relation" to man, He is man's very ontological grounding as the incarnate second member of the Trinity (163).

Of all the thinkers surveyed in the book, James Cone, with his "The Black Messiah," (190–217) is the most controversial (Cortez describes Cone's understanding as "exemplarist," 28). Cone's historical Jesus, or "black Messiah," sets the example for true humanity, which can be traced to the Exodus, where God liberated His people from oppression (192–93). Cortez traces the black-liberation theologian's anthropology to his understanding of Christology, which is itself dominated by Marxist political themes.

The concluding eighth chapter is Cortez's own summing up of all the views surveyed in the book (218–33). He also provides a two-tiered definition of "Christological-anthropology" in light of points drawn from each theologian's view of humanity. The first, "minimal," posits that Christology warrants "important" claims about true humanity going beyond mere themes of the *imago Dei* and ethics. The second one Cortez favors, calling it "comprehensive," in that Christology warrants "ultimate" claims about true humanity that apply to "all anthropological data" (225). Being careful not to propose *the* definitive approach to all Christological-anthropology or conclusive understanding of humanity, Cortez modestly ends his book of case studies recognizing "the question of the human remains" (233).

In *Christological Anthropology*, the author has exposed a notable disconnect in systematics. Too often, Christology and anthropology are dichotomized to the extent that *claiming* Jesus is the truest expression of humanity (Chalcedonian orthodoxy) is rent from *demonstrating* how this should inform our understanding of humanity in general. On this issue, the book answers that a logical corollary to understanding Jesus as truly human must be that Jesus reveals true humanity (cf. 19). Written in an engaging style, the book meets its goal by surveying a select group from church history who were convinced that human personhood must be understood Christologically. Of course, given the book's purely descriptive nature, some questions inevitably do rise to the surface that cause unresolvable tension. For instance, the majority of representatives Cortez chose for his study have a penchant for theologizing using sources other than the concrete Scripture. Consequently, an inference can be drawn supporting extra-biblical phenomena such as visions, psychology, or politics to inform one's theology over Scripture. Chapter two's presentation of Julian of Norwich, for example, appeals not once to the biblical text (a common thread in the book), as the medieval mystic seemed to rely on everything but the Bible—an unfortunate method that Cortez seems to legitimize, dubbing it "fairly standard" (60, n. 16).

Further, of all the thinkers surveyed, Martin Luther is the only voice representing a more conservative perspective familiar in evangelical circles, with Barth a distant second. Thus, while the book is written by a professed evangelical, most of the thinkers that he chose for his study are not—something never explicitly acknowledged. This can leave the reader with an uneasy impression that all the voices surveyed should be considered on an even keel, as if they all represent biblical Christianity in their respective theologies. To his credit, Cortez does point out in the intro and final pages of the book that his method is purely descriptive and his aim is merely to add to the ongoing discussion (23–25; 231–33). Admirably, his follow up work *Resourcing Theological Anthropology* (Zondervan, 2017) attempts to answer some of the questions left behind from the current work.

The critiques notwithstanding, Cortez's work is to be commended. The dual conception that Jesus *is truly human* and as such *reveals true humanity* is a profound thought. As Cortez's survey demonstrates: Man is man only because Jesus is *the* Man—the God-man. Cortez's survey of past voices helps bring to light a richer view of true humanity revealed in

Jesus Christ, making *Christological Anthropology* a welcome mediation to this historical dialogue.

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The Synoptic Problem: Four Views. **Stanley E. Porter and Bryan R. Dyer, eds. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016. 208 pp. $23.00, Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0801049507.**

The so-called "Synoptic Problem" addresses the question of the literary relationship between the first three canonical Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The challenge of harmonizing the canonical Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus stretches back to Tatian's second century *Diatessaron*, to Augustine's *Harmony of the Evangelists* (c. 400), and to Calvin's combined commentary on Matthew, Mark, and Luke (1555). With the rise of modern historical criticism in the nineteenth century, the study of the relationship of the Gospels took a dramatic turn with critics applying source criticism, advocating for Markan Priority, and proposing Q as a hypothetical sayings source.

As we enter the twenty-first century, the "Synoptic Problem" scholarly enterprise is indeed at a crossroads. The editors of this work acknowledge that "it is an important and potentially productive time in the history of the Synoptic Problem" as the major proponents of various theories have passed on and "a new generation of scholars have picked up the mantle left behind" (24). This makes this book and its presentation of four distinct proposed solutions to the Synoptic Problem all the timelier.

The book follows this format: After an introduction by the editors, four scholars each present the case for their solution to the Synoptic Problem. Each scholar then provides an essay responding to his colleagues. Finally, the editors offer a concluding summary and reflection. The four positions presented and defended are as follows:

First, Craig Evans, an evangelical scholar from Houston Baptist University, defends the scholarly "two-source" hypothesis. He suggests that the major argument for this theory is its "explanatory power" in

suggesting Mark as a common source to explain the agreement among the first three Gospels (28). He argues that Q is a "logical necessity" to explain the agreement between Matthew and Luke (36) and that a "solid case" can be made for its existence (38). Evans concedes that the so-called "minor agreements" (the places where Matthew and Luke agree in not following the sequence or wording of Mark) constitute the "most vulnerable" aspect of this theory (40).

Second, Mark Goodacre of Duke University presents the "Farrer Hypothesis" (named for Austin Farrer, a scholar who suggested an earlier version of this theory), also known as the "Farrer-Goulder-Goodacre Hypothesis." This theory holds that the evidence for Markan Priority is "overwhelming" (66), but it denies the existence of Q. It suggests that Mark was written first, Matthew was written second, borrowing from Mark, and that Luke was written third, borrowing from both Mark and Matthew. Thus, the agreements between Matthew and Luke do not need to be explained by the existence of Q. Goodacre has indeed led the contemporary challenge to the Q hypothesis among mainstream academic scholars. He notes: "...it is always useful to remind ourselves that there is no ancient evidence of any kind for Q's existence. There are no textual witnesses, no fragments, no patristic citations—nothing. It is purely a scholarly construct, a hypothetical text" (59). He concludes: "The time has come to build on the cornerstone of Markan priority and to dispense with Q" (66).

Third, David Barrett Peabody who taught at Nebraska Wesleyan University, makes the case for the "Two Gospel Hypothesis," with Matthew and Luke written first, and then Mark drawing on these two sources for his abbreviated Gospel. One intriguing argument based on external evidence is the so-called "Western" order of the Gospels found in some early manuscripts: Matthew, John, Luke, Mark (82-87). According to Peabody, this "order of dignity" in which the Gospels written by apostles are listed first, may also reflect their compositional order (82-83).

Fourth, Rainer Reisner, of Dortmund University in Germany, presents the "Orality and Memory Hypothesis." Drawing on his research in the areas of memory and orality in the composition of the New Testament, Reisner argues for what might be considered a version of an

independent development theory. The agreement among the Synoptic Gospels does not come from literary dependence but from their reliance on common oral traditions. Thus, he concludes: "The Synoptic Gospels are not mutually dependent but partially used the same intermediary sources" (110).

In his rejoinder to his fellow scholars, Goodacre refers to the Synoptic Problem as "the beating heart of academic study of the New Testament" (137) and "one of the most intriguing issues in the study of ancient Christianity" (138). In their closing summary, however, the editors of this volume ask whether the now one-hundred-year-old discussion has resulted in a "stalemate" (177). Is there any reasonable hope that modern historical-critical scholars will ever reach a consensus solution to this literary problem? The editors conclude that "the impasse is not unbreachable" and that "progressive discussions are necessary," which will provide "more sophisticated and developed arguments that will push the discussion forward" (177). This reviewer is less hopeful.

At one point, it is observed that, in 1850, the priority of Mark was "little known even as a hypothesis" (165). This is a reminder that the Synoptic Problem is, in fact, a novel idea in the history of Christianity. It has had its day in the sun and now seems to be fading. The Q theory, in particular, is weakening. One oddity of this book is that an evangelical, Evans, is given the task of defending the old "two-source" theory, and he makes some perplexing statements in doing so. At one point, for example, he suggests: "The evangelists interpret and apply the Jesus tradition. It is edited, rearranged, recontextualized, sometimes paraphrased" (37). Does this mean it does not accurately record what Jesus actually said and did? At another point he suggests that John's account of the healing of the nobleman's son in John 4:46-54 is simply a Johannine "version" of the healing of the Centurion's servant in Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-11 (40-42).

This book is a helpful review for pastors or scholars who want to keep up with the latest currents in academic study of the origins of and literary relationship among the Synoptic Gospels. The canonical Gospels remain a touchstone of the Christian faith. Faithful believers, pastors, and scholars will continue to read, preach, and teach from the first three Gospels, along with the Gospel of John, trusting that the Lord Jesus

Christ did indeed send the Comforter to his disciples in order perfectly to bring to their remembrance all the things spoken by him (John 14:26).

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***Christ and the Law: Antinomianism at the Westminster Assembly.* By Whitney G. Gamble. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2018. 208 pp. $40.00, Hardcover. ISBN 978-1601786142.**

Christ and the Law by Whitney G. Gamble is focused upon the impact of Antinomianism in the theological formulations of the Westminster Assembly. Gamble makes use of recently published documents, including Chad Van Dixhoorn's transcription of the assembly minutes and the newly discovered journal of John Lightfoot (4–6). The first provides a more accurate transcription of the minutes than previous publications, and the second details the early months of the assembly that are missing in the assembly minutes.

In the first section of the book, Gamble traces the arguments between Antinomianism, Arminianism, and Reformed theology starting with theological debates in their political and social context in the 1630s. The movement toward Arminianism in the promotion of William Laud to the See of Canterbury by Charles I is seen as a foil to the Calvinist populace movement leading up to the Parliament-backed Westminster Assembly during the English civil wars.

The debates between the members of the Westminster Assembly are then described, with special attention to Antinomianism. The arguments over the Old Testament Law, the relationship between justification and sanctification, and the existence of justifying faith during the revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles in 1643 are treated at length in the first half of the book. Intermixed with the details of the arguments taking place in the early days of the assembly, Gamble outlines key figures in Antinomianism and their distinct theological outlooks. The first part of the book concludes with a description of the debates in the first year of the Westminster Assembly over whether the Antinomians should be

deemed heretics and provides a glimpse into the punishments that ensued when Parliament officially declared them heretics in 1646.

The second section of the book opens where the Assembly's arguments left off in the first section: the revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles. In the first two chapters of this section, the debates over Articles 11, 12, and 13 are described and their final forms are given. Special attention is paid to Article 11 in the entire first chapter of the section and half of the second, and the second chapter closes with the submission of the Thirty-Nine Articles to Parliament. The last chapter of the second section describes the writing of the Westminster Confession of Faith. It deals only with Chapter 11, "Of Justification," in an attempt to show the influence of the Assembly's earlier work revising the Thirty-Nine Articles and the impact of Antinomianism.

Gamble concludes with the impact, or lack thereof, of the assembly during and after its meeting. The doctrines laid out at Westminster were mostly discarded by the time of Oliver Cromwell, and Antinomian theology continued to have a large following. The Confession of the Westminster assembly took many years to gain the influence and respect that it currently has in English-speaking Reformed circles.

Gamble's work brings to light many details and complex arguments from the early days of the Westminster assembly. Drawing heavily upon the primary sources, she creates dialogues between different leaders of the assembly. The attention to detail in the arguments and focus upon the nuances of the debates makes the work valuable for viewing the religious background within which the assembly members were positioning themselves.

Within these detailed debates, Gamble outlines the key figures of Antinomianism, from John Eaton in the 1610s to his successors who were brought before the Antinomian committee of the Westminster assembly. This background information is informative even for someone familiar with the Westminster assembly. The variety of Antinomian positions shown in these key figures adds depth to their theological viewpoint. Also, the story of their appearance before the committee at the beginning of the Westminster assembly is not widely discussed now, nor was it addressed in later writings by the assembly members.

However, this detail given to the first year of the Westminster assembly is also one of the book's weak points. In the introduction and the conclusion, the scope of the work appears to be the full range of the

Westminster assembly. Undoubtedly, detailing the debates that took place over the entire ten years of the assembly would take volumes, even before any analysis or broader historical information was provided. It is unfortunate that the limitation of Gamble's work is not clearly stated from the beginning. The description of the Confession of Faith also feels like an afterthought. With the first five chapters confined to the Thirty-Nine Articles, one final chapter on section 11 of the Confession of Faith seems out of place.

Another weak point of the book, and more specifically of the last chapter, is a long discussion of a debate between Gataker, an assembly member, and Saltmarsh, an Antinomian. The debate concerned the role of faith in justification and was carried out through pamphlets. The arguments are detailed only through Gataker's pamphlets and continue for six pages (145–50). However, they take place outside of the Westminster assembly and the presentation in the chapter does not detail any direct effect of this discussion upon the writing of the Confession of Faith. Though the debate is interesting, it is told only from Gataker's point of view, and within the chapter, it appears to be an unrelated excursus.

Overall, *Christ and the Law* is a valuable contribution to the study of the background and early history of the Westminster assembly. The number of primary sources from the early days of the assembly and the religious background leading up to the Westminster assembly are invaluable for understanding the theological formulations coming out of it. It is a strong starting point for the study of Antinomianism in the early 17th century and the beginning stages of the Westminster assembly.

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***The Lectio Continua Expository Commentary on the New Testament: Revelation.* By Joel Beeke. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016. 601 pp. $40.00, Hardback. ISBN-13: 978-1601784575.**

The popular apocalyptical series *Left Behind* sold over 80 million copies throughout its run in the 1990s and 2000s. In 2014, Charismatic preacher John Hagee produced a doomsday-prophecy book entitled *Four Blood Moons*; it became a New York Times best seller. Regardless of the medium, eschatology remains a curiosity in the West. Fortunately, there are also voices like Joel Beeke to consider.

Beeke, an ordained Pastor in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, holds a Ph.D. from Westminster Theological Seminary. Beeke has written several works: *Striving against Satan* (2006), *Living for God's Glory* (2008), and *Calvin Today* (2010).

Beeke serves with Jon D. Payne as an editor of *The Lectio Continua Expository Commentary on the New Testament,* which argues that "The greatest need of the church today is the recovery of sound biblical preaching. We need preaching that faithfully explains and applies the text, courageously confronts sin, and boldly trumpets forth the sovereign majesty, law, and gospel promises of God (xi)." The nature of this series is to pursue a method of preaching that has hermeneutical integrity and congregational application.

Beeke's commentary is applicational, born of his pulpit ministry at the Heritage Netherlands Reformed Congregation in Grand Rapids, Michigan. From 2012 to 2014, Beeke preached through Revelation, and his collection of sermons became the basis of this commentary.

The commentary has thirty-six chapters contained within 602 pages. Beeke explains in the preface that an exposition of Revelation requires a missional mindset, stressing that the reader must learn to interpret the special language and culture of John's Revelation (4). Additionally, Beeke curtails futurist tendencies by explaining that "The Bible was not written to satisfy the hunger of the human mind for knowledge of future events." Beeke laments, "Many Christians use the book of Revelation as a kind of horoscope" (5).

Though Beeke has written a practical commentary, it is inescapably a theological work that provides careful analysis of the popular interpretive approaches: the preterist, historicist, futurist, idealist, and

eclectic approaches (6-8). Further, Beeke gives careful oversight to the three popular views of the millennium: premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism (510-521). Beeke informs the reader along the way that he subscribes to eclectic amillennialism.

Beeke breaks down Revelation into seven sections: "The Son of Man and the Seven Churches" (1:1-3:22), "The Lamb and the Seven Seals of God's Scroll" (4:1-8:1), "The Seven Trumpets" (8:2-11:19), "The War with the Dragon" (12:1-14:20), "The Seven Bowls of Wrath" (15:1-16:21), "The Fall of Babylon the Whore" (17:1-19:21), and "The Victory of Jerusalem the Bride" (20:1-22:21).

There are many strengths to Beeke's work. First, for being a non-technical commentary, it remains doctrinally weighty. Second, Beeke is lucid throughout the work, especially in difficult interpretive minefields like Revelation 20:1-7. Third, Beeke has the preaching pastor in mind and has given a helpful tool in this manual to assist the preacher through an extended exposition of Revelation. Pastors who would like to embark on a long journey in Revelation will find themselves encouraged by Beeke's guidance.

One criticism is that Beeke may have been able to accomplish the same effect with a shorter work. For example, Ian Paul's *Tyndale Commentary on Revelation* is 387 pages; Mounce's scholarly *New International Commentary on the New Testament: Revelation* is 475 pages; and Danny Akin's *Christ Centered-Exposition Commentary: Revelation* is 384 pages. For being a practical work, Beeke's book errs on the side of being unnecessarily bloated. Beeke could have reduced the size of this work into a more palatable 350-to-400 pages.

Nonetheless, the homiletical task of the preacher is greatly strengthened by Beeke's work. This was a timely review, as I will preach through Revelation this summer. Having preached in a Southern Baptist context for almost 20 years, my advice to other preachers and pastors is to use Beeke side-by-side with a technical commentary (G.K. Beale is *par excellence*).

Beeke's work is commended to all those serious about the task of expository preaching, especially in the Calvinist tradition. Beeke provides a sound voice of instruction in what can sometimes be a daunting textual maze. The Christian West, filled with superstition, blood moons, and bibliomancy finds a steady hand in Beeke's theologically robust and

down-to-earth application. Beeke's commentary is a shelter in what can sometimes feel like the storm of biblical interpretation.

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