for the Church
MIDWESTERN
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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Spring 2023 issue of the Midwestern Journal of Theology, once again I would like to begin by expressing my sincere thanks to all who have contributed to make this happen. Special mention goes to Dr. Jason Duesing, Provost and Academic Editor, for all his invaluable assistance; to Dr. Blake Hearson for all the time and energy he invests in each issue; and to Mrs. Caitlin Collins for all that she does so patiently and efficiently in the background.

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

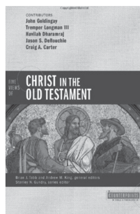
It is our joy and privilege to note that the articles in this present issue have all been all contributed or co-written by teachers at Midwestern. We open this issue with that co-written piece, a very interesting discussion-debate between two influential scholars, Dr. Jason S. DeRouchie and Dr. Wayne Grudem, in which they think about 'How Old is the Earth?' Midwestern's Dr. Todd R. Chipman then contributes his perceptive analysis of 'Roles in Johannine Discourse,' through his article, 'Participating in the Jesus Drama.' This is followed by Dr. Nicholas Majors' scholarly study of 'Saul as a King-Priest.' Our penultimate piece, from Dr. Jason Kees 'The Magi's Fulfilment of the Hebrew Bible's Theme "East of Eden,"' intriguingly re-examines this particular aspect of the birth of Christ.

We conclude this issue with an article in our regular 'For the Church' focused section. This time contributed by Dr. Joe M. Allen III, in which he contemplates Missions at Midwestern by explaining 'Why 'For the Church' means for the Nations!

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

Books in Brief

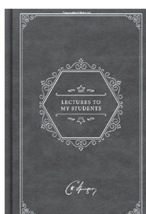
New and upcoming releases from the Midwestern Seminary community



FIVE VIEWS OF CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: GENRE, AUTHORIAL INTENT, AND THE NATURE OF SCRIPTURE

Edited by Andrew King
(Zondervan)
OCTOBER 25, 2022

Five Views of Christ in the Old Testament explores five different approaches on how the Old Testament points to Christ. Five authors display their interpretative approaches along with case studies of various Old Testament passages.



LECTURES TO MY STUDENTS: DELUXE EDITION

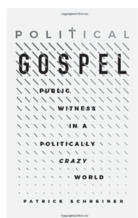
Edited by Jason K. Allen
(B&H Books)
JUNE 1, 2023

Charles Spurgeon founded The Pastors' College in London in 1856, at only twenty-two years of age. He supervised and graduated over 900 men from the Pastors' College, lecturing once a week. Lectures to My Students is a collection of those lectures and is still today a must-read for every gospel minister.

GO OUTSIDE ...: AND 19 OTHER KEYS TO THRIVING IN YOUR 20S

by Jared and Becky Wilson
(Moody Publishers)
MAY 2, 2023

In Go Outside, Jared and Becky Wilson imagine the advice they'd give if they could travel back in time. Like Solomon in Ecclesiastes, as we get older, we lament and regret the desires and behaviors of our youth. But what if you could avoid some of the pitfalls and pain so many people experience?



POLITICAL GOSPEL: PUBLIC WITNESS IN A POLITICALLY CRAZY WORLD

by Patrick Schreiner
(B&H Books)
OCTOBER 18, 2022

In Political Gospel, Patrick Schreiner argues Christianity not only has political implications but is itself a politic. The gospel at its very core is political—Jesus declared Himself to be King. But He does not allow you to put Him in your political box.

for the Church
MIDWESTERN
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Midwestern Journal of Theology 22.1 (2023): 1-29

How Old is the Earth?

JASON S. DeROUCHIE
Research Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology,
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary[1]
and
WAYNE GRUDEM
Distinguished Research Professor of Theology
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Phoenix Seminary

In AD 1658, Irish Archbishop James Ussher (AD 1581–1656) posited that God created the earth and its universe about 6:00pm, October 22, 4004 BC (according to the proleptic Julian calendar).[2] Few today would attempt such exactness, but many evangelicals would still hold that Scripture requires and science supports that the earth is relatively young ranging from 6,000–10,000 years old. Other evangelicals, however, believe that Scripture does *not* require a young earth and that science indicates an earth that is 4.5 billion years old and a universe that is 13.8 billion years old.

In this study, biblical scholars Jason DeRouchie and Wayne Grudem offer arguments for their respective young-earth and old-earth views and then respond to each other.[3] Throughout the process of this exchange, both authors operated independently. They each wrote their initial arguments with no awareness of the other's claims, and then they each responded without seeing the other's response. No changes or updates were allowed after initial submissions. Both Drs. DeRouchie and Grudem

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[1] Dr DeRouchie also serves as content developer and global trainer with Hands to the Plow Ministries.

[2] James Ussher, *The Annals of the World* (London: Tyler, 1658), 1.

[3] The original versions of DeRouchie and Grudem's exchange appeared on July 7, 2022, at DesiringGod.org: https://www.desiringgod.org/series/how-old-is-the-earth/articles. The authors are grateful for the chance to publish their conversation here.

hope their studies and evaluation will serve the church by providing a synthesis of the issue from biblical and scientific perspectives and by modeling respectful yet convictional, conservative Christian dialogue over important but debatable topics.

Our Young Earth: Arguments for Thousands of Years

Jason S. DeRouchie

At stake in the question of the earth's age is faithful exegesis of the biblical text aligned with a faithful interpretation of the scientific data. Because no one but God was present at the beginning, and because the Bible is God's inerrant word, Scripture holds highest authority in answering questions of time and space. Scripture's teaching on a subject must bear guiding weight in assessing all matters related to the created sphere.

Let us be clear: God's role as creator, his purpose for creation, and the historicity of Adam and Eve as the first parents are non-negotiable for Christian belief. Furthermore, evolutionary creationism (i.e., theistic evolution) of any form is unwarranted biblically. Nevertheless, while there is much at stake, the age of the earth is not among the central doctrines that should divide. Conservative Christianity has remained broad enough for both young-earth and old-earth creationism (akin somewhat to credo- versus paedo-baptism or varying millennial views). I remain a convinced young-earth creationist because of the overwhelming biblical data. However, there is no single silver-bullet biblical or scientific argument for my position, and old-earth creationists can craft legitimate, thoughtful responses to each of my claims. The weight of my case is cumulative, and I question whether every argument I make can be legitimately falsified.

Humanity in the First Week

<u>Argument 1</u>*: Genesis 1:1–2:3 places the creation of humanity within the first week of creation.* The most natural reading of the Bible's introduction points to a young earth.

The use of Hebrew *yôm* (meaning *day*) with the refrain "there was evening and there was morning" (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31), along with the mention of light and darkness, day and night, and the one-week structure strongly, suggests that the communicator of this revelation was portraying the equivalent of 24-hour calendar days, even though the

sun is not created until day four (1:14–19). Mankind is here portrayed as being created on day six of God's first workweek. The day-age theory (wherein God created all of physical creation out of nothing in a chronological progression of ages spanning an indefinite period of time) does not seem to fit this context. And the gap theory (which posits a very long span between 1:1 and 1:2) does not appear to be allowed by the Hebrew text.

While later meditations on creation (e.g., Ps 104) never refer to the "days," the fact that Yahweh built Israel's 6+1 pattern of life upon the pattern of the creation week (Exod 20:11) seems best understood only if Israel was already aware of the 6+1 pattern of the creation week (see Exod 16:23–29; cf. Gen 7:4, 10; 8:10, 12) and viewed it as an actual as opposed to figurative or analogical reality. Specifically, Israel's call to keep the Sabbath is grounded in God's original workweek, which is difficult to read analogically: "The seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work.... For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day" (Exod 20:10–11).

In the Beginning

Argument 2: The New Testament closely associates the history of Genesis 2–4 with the beginning of the world. Old-earth models require either that mankind's creation be separated from the "beginning" by millions or even billions of years, or that the Genesis 1:1 "beginning" stretched out for a period of time massively longer than all the time that has followed. The former discounts the New Testament link between the "beginning" of Genesis 1:1 and the creation of mankind in 1:26–28, and the latter forces a strange use of the term of "beginning," wherein what happens in the ninth inning is still the "beginning."

In the New Testament, we read that Jesus saw the institution of marriage as being closely linked to the beginning of creation (Mark 10:6; cf. Gen 2:21–25; Matt 19:4, 8). He declared that Satan's murderous activity (not just his tendencies) through his deception of Eve was closely associated with the beginning of creation (John 8:44). He linked this murderous, sinful activity with the promise that the offspring of the woman would stand in friction with the serpent and his offspring (1 John 3:8; cf. Gen 3:1–6, 15). He saw the first human experience of tribulation as being located near the beginning of creation (likely referring to Cain's

killing of Abel) (Mark 13:19; cf. Gen 4:8; Matt 24:21). He placed the martyrdom of Abel near the foundation of the world (Luke 11:49–50; cf. Gen 4:8; Matt 23:35).

The writer of Hebrews also considered the "foundation of the world" to be the conclusion of the sixth day, placed humanity's rebellion (for which Jesus suffered) very near this time, and contrasted this foundation with the "end of the ages" realized in the work of Christ (Heb 4:3–4; 9:25–26).

Linear Genealogies

Argument 3: The linear genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 point to a recent humanity. While some biblical genealogies are clearly selective (e.g., Matt 1:1; 1:2–17), the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 are so specific that they resist a selective reading and thus require that humanity has existed for a relatively short time.

The linear genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 are unique in all of Scripture with respect to the age detail they provide (see, e.g., Gen 5:3–11). Even if "son" at times means grandson or great- grandson (as can happen in Scripture), the specificity of the ages counters the likelihood of gaps. Moreover, several the seemingly "father-son/grandson/great-grandson" relationships are shown elsewhere to be just that — e.g., Adam with Seth (4:25), Noah with Ham, Shem, and Japheth (6:10), Terah with Abraham (11:31).

A solid explanation for the presence of specific ages in these genealogies is the messianic and missiological purposes of Genesis. Moses seems to have gone out of his way to show that God preserved the line of hope in every generation from Adam to Noah, from Shem to Terah, and from Abraham to Israel. The specified years all highlight the faithfulness of God to preserve his line hoping in the offspring promise of Genesis 3:15. As such, leaving out generations would have gone against the apparent purpose. Adding the ages in the genealogies points to humanity being around 6,000 years old.

Climax of Creation

Argument 4: Adam's high role as head of the first creation and mankind's station as the climax of creation and image of God both support a young earth. It makes less sense to think that God allowed the bulk of creation to exist for millennia without its overseers.

Genesis 1:1–2:3 associates all major "rulers" of the first creation with humanity. The luminaries separate day and night and establish the earth's calendar (Gen 1:14), but they also serve as "signs" for humans that stress the surety of God's promises (15:5; Jer 33:22). Humans are called to "fill the earth and subdue it" and to "have dominion over the fish ... birds ... and every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen 1:28).

Humans are the climax of creation and sole representatives of God on the earth, with some being chosen "in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him, having been predestined in love for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ ... to the praise of his glorious grace" (Eph 1:4–6). Only on the sixth day is the definite article "the" added to the day-ending formula ("a first day, a second day, a third day, ... *the* sixth day").

Day six gets the most literary space and includes the longest speeches. Only at the end of day six does God declare creation "very good" (Gen 1:31). Only at day six does God declare something he makes to be "in his image," giving humanity oversight in the world. Scripture portrays the first man, Adam, as representative covenantal head over the first creation (Gen 2:15; Rom 5:18–19; 1 Cor 15:45). In addition, God's oversight, provision, and protection of animals (Pss 104:14, 21, 24, 27; 145:14–16; 147:9; Matt 6:26; Luke 12:24) is significantly manifest through mankind (Gen 1:28; 2:15; Ps 8:6–8).

Animal Suffering and Death

Argument 5: Scripture usually portrays the suffering and death of living creatures, including animals, as part of the curse, so millions of years of animal death and suffering pre-fall seems unlikely. God initially curses the world on account of human sin, so death and suffering in land animals and birds most likely resulted *from mankind's fall* and were not present before it, as all old-earth models require.

The principal consequence of humanity's garden rebellion was human death both physically and spiritually (Gen 2:17; 3:16–19; Rom 5:12). Humanity's sin in the garden brought negative consequences not only on humanity, however, but also to the created world at large: God cursed the animals (Gen 3:14). God cursed the ground (3:17–19). God subjected the whole world to futility (Rom 8:20–21). Scripture regularly associates animal death with curse and animal life with blessing. Both realities

suggest that death and suffering in land animals and birds would have resulted from the fall and not been present before it.

1. The fact that the serpent is cursed "more than/above" (= Hebrew *min* of comparison) all livestock and beasts of the field implies that the land animals were indeed impacted directly and negatively by humanity's fall (Gen 3:14; cf. 3:1).
2. Second, the curse on the ground (Gen 3:17) shapes the backdrop to Noah's birth (5:29), and the judgment curse of the flood includes the death of all beasts, birds, and creeping things (7:21– 23), save those on the ark, which were set apart to preserve non-human land creatures after the flood (6:19–20; 7:3).
3. Eight of the ten judgment plagues on Egypt included animals becoming pests to humans or the mass suffering and death of livestock in a way that negatively impacted human existence (Exod 8–12).
4. The penal substitutionary blood of the Passover lamb alone secured the lives of Israel's firstborn among both humans and beasts (Exod 12:12–13).
5. Under the blessings of the Mosaic (old) covenant, mankind would live in safety from animal predation (Lev 26:6) and cattle and herds would flourish and increase (Deut 7:13–14; 28:4, 11). In contrast, under curse, humans would stand in fear of animal predation (Lev 26:22), cattle and herds would languish (Deut 28:18), and dead human flesh would be the food of beast and bird (28:26). These realities are all affirmed in the prophets (e.g., Jer 7:20; 12:4, Hag 1:9–11, Mal 3:9–12; 4:6).
6. In the context of his wars of judgment, Yahweh called Israel to slaughter everything that breathes, including the animals (Deut 13:15; 20:16; 1 Sam 15:3).
7. The Preacher in Ecclesiastes associates the death of animals with that of humans (Eccl 3:19–20) and unhesitatingly connects the reality of both deaths with the curse at the fall: "All are from the dust, and to dust all return" (see Gen 3:19–20). This link strongly points to the death of both animals and humans as beginning at the same time.

Old-earth creationists struggle to clarify what changes in the non-human world at the curse, for they believe an extended period (even millions of years) of animal suffering and death already existed pre-fall. In contrast, Scripture points to God's curse of the world as a decisive turning point and then commonly associates animal death with curse.

Eating Meat and the Curse's End

Argument 6: The limiting of animal death in the eternal state as a restoring of Eden suggests that all terrestrial death began after the fall. Specifically, because eating meat likely symbolizes Jesus's victory over the curse, the limiting of animal death in the eternal state to redeemed humanity's consuming of meat likely signals the restoring of Eden rather than an escalation beyond it and suggests that all terrestrial death began after the fall and that, therefore, the earth is young.

Scripture explicitly connects sin, suffering, and death in all its forms only to the fall (Gen 3:14–15; Rom 1:24, 26, 28; 8:18–23). It also highlights Christ's death and resurrection as the only solution to the problem of human rebellion and its consequences, which appears to include all earthly evil, both natural evils like cancer and car accidents and moral evils directly related to rebellion against God. Specifically, the Bible teaches that Christ's work was designed to restore all things (Acts 3:21), to unite all things (Eph 1:10), to reconcile all things to God (Col 1:17), to do away with death, tears, and pain (Isa 25:8; Rev 21:4), and to eradicate the curse and all that is unclean (21:27; 22:3).

This eternal redemptive reality is portrayed both as restoring the garden of Eden (pre-fall) and as escalating beyond it by completing what the first Adam failed to secure. This new/re-creation will bear elements that are similar to the original creation pre-fall (Ezek 36:35; Isa 51:3; Rom 8:20–21; Rev 2:7; 22:1–5, 14, 19), but it will be absent of any past or potential influence of evil or curse (21:27; 22:3), save the sustained reminder of the former rebellion of the elect in order to sustain their awe of the saving work of King Jesus. Examples of such reminders will include lament over sin (Ezek 36:31), the presence of salt in the bogs around the once-Dead Sea (47:11; cf. Gen 13:10; 19:24–26), the presence of transformed multiple tongues rather than a single language (Zeph 3:9; Rev 5:9; 7:9; cf. Gen 11:6–9), and the visual identification of Christ as both sacrificial and conquering Lamb (Rev 5:5–6, 12–13; 7:10, 14; 17:14; 19:9; 21:22–23; 22:1, 3).

In such a context of restoration, reconciliation, and eradication, it is important to recognize that predatory activity among the animal kingdom will cease and that death will be present only in relation to humans eating meat. In the present fallen age, animals' predatory activity is part of God's revealed purposes (Ps 104:21; Job 38:39–41), so long as it does not threaten humans (Ps 104:23; Deut 7:22; Judg 14:5; 2 Kgs 17:25) or domesticated animals (1 Sam 17:34–35; Isa 31:4; Amos 3:12). Only after mankind's fall and the global curse did humans become a target for animal predatory activity and did God grant people permission to consume animal meat, partly to cause the animals to fear them (Gen 9:2–3; cf. 1:30). In this cursed world, eating meat affirms mankind's call to reflect, resemble, and represent God by exerting dominion (1:26, 28; cf. Ps 8:6–8), and it also testifies to God's curse-overcoming power.

Specifically, from the earliest days after God exiled humanity from the garden, humans distinguished clean animals from unclean ones (Gen 7:2–3, 8). After God allowed humans to consume animal flesh, he allowed his people to eat only the clean (Lev 20:25–26). Scripture treats as unclean all animals that in some way symbolically look like the serpent in the garden — whether due to their crafty, predatory, killing instincts (Gen 3:1–5 with 2:17; cf. John 8:44; 10:10) or due to their dust-eating association with death and waste (Gen 3:14). And it is because Christ overcomes the evil one at the cross (Eph 2:16; Col 2:15; cf. Luke 10:18; John 12:31; Rev 12:9) that all foods are now clean (Mark 7:19; Acts 10:10–15, 28; Rom 14:14, 20; 1 Tim 4:4). That makes the eating of all foods a testimony of Christ's curse-overcoming power.

In view of the full redemptive work of Christ, the restored new creation and new covenant will extend to the beasts, birds, and creeping things, resulting in global safety (Hos 2:18; Isa 35:9), as the once-predatory animals (perhaps a picture of hostile nations) become vegetarian and dwell peacefully alongside lamb and the child king, so that no creature need fear them (11:6–9; 65:25; cf. 9:6–7). In that day of consummation, God will put down all enemy oppression, abolish all human disease, suffering, and death, and make an end of the curse (Isa 25; 65:17–25; Rev 21:3–5; 22:3).

In the new heavens and new earth, humans will never fear predators, and terrestrial creatures will not be the diet of one another. These realities are part of Christ's fixing what went wrong at the fall and help

identify the return to the pre-fall state rather than an escalation beyond it.

Furthermore, as a sustained testimony that Christ has fully overcome the curse, humans will continue to eat animals in the new heavens and new earth (e.g., Isa 25:6, 8; Ezek 47:9–10; Matt 22:2–4; Luke 22:15–18, 29–30; Rev 19:7, 9; 21:1, 4, 10; cf. Luke 24:41–43; John 21:12–13). Because God allowed humans to eat meat only post-fall, and because eating that meat testifies to Christ's curse-overcoming victory, which culminates in Jesus's triumph over the unclean serpent at the cross, the restriction in the eternal state of animal death to redeemed humanity's meat-consumption points to the absence of animal death before the fall and, therefore, to a young earth.

Conclusion: Young Earth

The biblical data supports the belief that the earth is young. We see this (1) in the way Scripture portrays creation as a literal work week, (2) in the way the New Testament links the early history of mankind with the beginning, (3) in the unlikelihood that there are time gaps in the linear genealogies of Genesis, (4) in the way the Bible consistently portrays humanity as head of terrestrial creation, (5) in the fact Scripture regularly associates animal death and suffering with curse and makes it unlikely that such was happening before the fall, and (6) in the way human meat consumption in the eternal state testifies to Jesus's curse-overcoming work.

Our Old Earth: Arguments for Billions of Years

Wayne Grudem

I do not believe that God intended in Scripture to tell us the age of the earth. In the following material, I will explain the factors that led me to this conclusion about Scripture and then summarize some scientific indications of the age of the earth.[4]

Meaning of the Word *Day*

The word *day* as used in Genesis 1 translates the Hebrew word *yôm*, which often refers to 24-hour days, but in other contexts clearly refers to

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[4] For more detailed arguments for the old-earth position, see Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 385–413.

an unspecified period of time. We see this in the immediate context, in Genesis 2:4: "… in the *day* that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens." Here, *day* refers to the entire creative work of the six days of creation.

Other examples of the word *day* to mean a period of time include Psalm 20:1 ("May the LORD answer you in the *day* of trouble!"), Proverbs 24:10 ("If you faint in the *day* of adversity, your strength is small"), Proverbs 25:13 ("Like the cold of snow in the *time* [*yôm*] of harvest …"), and Ecclesiastes 7:14 ("In the *day* of prosperity be joyful, and in the *day* of adversity consider"). Even the first use of the word *day* in Genesis 1 does not mean a day of 24 hours but simply the daylight hours: "God called the light *Day*, and the darkness he called Night" (Genesis 1:5).

Genesis 1 in Light of Science

The context of Genesis 1 does not clearly require one meaning of *day* over another, and if scientific data, drawn from many different disciplines and giving similar answers, convinces us that the earth is billions of years old, then this possible interpretation of *day* as a long period of time may be the best interpretation to adopt.

For those who hold to an old earth, the situation is something like that faced by Christians who first held that the earth rotates on its axis and revolves about the sun. They needed an explanation for verses about the sun "rising" or "going down," like Ecclesiastes 1:5: "The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises." (See also Ps 104:22; Jas 1:11; and others.) They did not have to claim that the passages *require* us to believe in a heliocentric (sun-centered) solar system, nor did they have to say that this was the most natural or the easiest interpretation, but only that this is a *possible* legitimate understanding of the texts, seeing these verses as speaking from the standpoint of the observer. From there, observational evidence taken from science shows us that this is, in fact, the correct way to interpret those texts.

Answering Objections

Each of the days of Genesis 1 ends with an expression such as, "And there was evening and there was morning, the first day" (Gen 1:5). Does this require us to conclude that the days must be 24-hour days? Not necessarily, because the phrase may be simply the author's way of telling

us that the end of the first creative “day” (that is, a long period of time) occurred, and the beginning of the next creative “day” had come. In addition, alert readers would recognize that the first three creative “days” could not have been marked by evening and morning as caused by the sun shining on the earth, for the sun does not appear until the fourth day (1:14–19). Therefore, Genesis 1 itself shows that references to “evening and morning” in the chapter do not refer to the *ordinary* evening and morning of days as we know them now.

Does it matter that the days are numbered? Supporters of a young-earth position sometimes argue that, while the Hebrew *yôm* can elsewhere refer to a longer period of time, its use in Genesis 1 is different because numbers are attached, and whenever *yôm* has a number attached, it refers to 24-hour days.

I do not find this argument persuasive because the requirement to consider only cases of the Hebrew *yôm* with a number attached acts as a filter to preselect the desired “24-hour day” answer. This is because, in the course of ordinary human life, the usual kinds of “days” that people count are 24-hour days, not longer periods of time. The creation narrative just happens to be the only context where longer periods of time are counted.

Nevertheless, interpreters who have decided that the days of Genesis 1 must be 24-hour days have another option available to them. The creation days might be 24 hours long, with many millions of years between the days. I think this must be considered another possible way to understand Genesis 1 in a manner that is consistent with an old earth.

Gaps in the Genealogies

In the 1650s, Irish archbishop James Ussher, a distinguished historian and biblical scholar, argued from the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 that the date of God’s creative work in Genesis 1 was October 22, 4004 BC. To arrive at this conclusion, he used both the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 and extrabiblical historical sources.

However, it is doubtful that God’s purpose in these genealogies was to enable us to calculate the date of creation. If that had been God’s intention, he could have done so clearly by having Moses write, “So all the years from Adam to Abraham were 2004 years” (or some similar number). But there is no such summary statement in Genesis 5 or Genesis 11.

It is certainly possible, on the other hand, that the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 contain gaps. For instance, the genealogy in Matthew 1 tells us that Joram was "the father of Uzziah, and Uzziah the father of Jotham" (Matt 1:8–9). But from 1 Chronicles 3:10–12 (which uses the alternate name Azariah for Uzziah), we learn that three generations have been omitted by Matthew: Joash, Amaziah, and Azariah.

So when Genesis 5 says, "When Seth had lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh," it could mean that Seth fathered someone whose descendent was Enosh. Thus, Enosh in Genesis 5:6–8 could in fact be someone who came many generations after Seth. In that case, the large number of years is not meant to give us a chronology that can be added together to get the age of humanity, but rather it is given to show us the health and longevity of someone who could still beget children at more than 100 years old and could even live to 912 years.

For the God who lives forever, for whom "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet 3:8), and who delights in gradually working out his purposes over time, perhaps 13.8 billion years was just the right amount of time to wait for light from vastly distant stars to reach the earth, so that as we discover the age and size of the universe, we would be amazed at the greatness of our Creator, who made such an immense universe and whose eternal existence is far greater than even 13.8 billion years.

Scientific Evidence for an Old Earth

Different kinds of observational (or scientific) evidence from astronomy and the earth sciences seem to indicate that both the earth and the universe are extremely old (13.8 billion years for the universe and 4.5 billion years for the earth).[5]

Expansion Rate of the Universe

Astronomers can measure the distance from earth to various stars and galaxies. They can also measure the speed at which they are moving away from us. With those two values, they can "back up" the process to find how long the universe has been expanding. After summarizing three

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[5] Much of the following material, plus the relevant documentation, comes from the Christian astronomer Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days: Resolving a Creation Controversy*, 2nd ed. (Covina, CA: RTB Press, 2015). Ross interacts repeatedly and specifically with young-earth objections to his arguments.

different methods of measuring such expansion, Hugh Ross says they show an average age of the universe of "13.79 ± 0.06 billion years," and he adds, "The consistency of the three independent methods is remarkable."[6]

Starlight from Events in the Distant Past

Many stars are so far from the earth that it would take millions or even billions of years for their light to reach us. They give us evidence that requires a brief discussion of the speed of light.

The speed of light (in a vacuum) is approximately 186,000 miles per second, and the sun is about 92,960,000 miles from the earth. That means it takes just over eight minutes for light from the sun to reach us. Therefore, when we see a sunrise or sunset, we are not seeing the sun as it is at that very moment, but *we are seeing the sun as it was eight minutes ago*.

This principle also applies to light from other stars. When we look through a telescope at Alpha Centauri (the star that is closest to us, after the sun), we are looking at a star that is 4.4 light-years away, which means the light from that star took 4.4 years to reach us. Therefore, what we see is Alpha Centauri *as it existed 4.4 years ago*. In the same way, some of the stars we can observe are so distant that their light would take 13,800,000,000 years to reach us. This indicates a very old universe.

Young-earth supporters may respond that perhaps God created the universe with light rays already in place, so that Adam and Eve would see thousands of stars on the first night after they were created. This of course is possible. Certainly Adam and Eve themselves had an "appearance of age" (God created them as adults, not as infants), as did all the animals that God created as "grown-up" animals.

But there are difficulties with this suggestion. First, there is the existence of white dwarfs, which are formed when stars reach the end of their lifetimes and run out of nuclear fuel.[7] But "a star takes millions of years, minimum, to burn up all of its nuclear fuel and become a white dwarf."[8] If the universe is only 10,000 years old, and if God created stars

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[6] Ross, *A Matter of Days*, 147, 150.

[7] Ross writes, "White dwarfs are the final state of all stars possessing less than enough mass to become either black holes or neutron stars." Ross, *A Matter of Days*, 156.

[8] Ibid.

with light rays in place, why would he also create optical illusions that *look like* material from stars that died billions of years ago, when in fact those stars never even existed?

The same is true for other events that astronomers observe in space, such as the existence of supernovas, which are massive, extremely bright explosions, lasting several weeks or months, that happen when stars are about to burn out. But according to young-earth advocates, as Ross notes, "The supernova eruption astronomers claim to see in the Large Magellanic Cloud 163,000 light-years away did not occur 163,000 years ago." In fact, according to a young-earth view, it never occurred, since *nothing existed* before 10,000 years ago. When astronomers see such supernovas that explode and then quickly die out, these would be optical illusions placed in outer space to make us *think (wrongly) that supernovas happened* hundreds of thousands of years ago. It would seem contrary to God's character to deceive us like this.[9]

Some young-earth advocates have responded that perhaps the speed of light has changed, and perhaps light traveled much faster a few thousand years ago. But the speed of light is one of the most universal constants in physics, and the need to speculate that it *might have* been vastly different (a million times faster?) seems to me to cast doubt on the entire young-earth viewpoint.

Ice Layers

Scientists have drilled deep into the ice layers in the central parts of Antarctica and northern parts of Greenland. They have found that "three ice cores from Antarctica . . . provide a continuous record of the past 800,000, 720,000, and 420,000 years, respectively."[10] A young-earth advocate might respond that multiple layers could be laid down within a single year, but Ross notes that "within the layers are dust signatures of known volcanic eruptions," including eruptions of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, 472, 512, 968, 1037, 1139, 1631, and 1944. "Counting the layers

[9] I am glad to see that the ministry Answers in Genesis, though holding to a young earth, rejects the idea that God created the universe with light rays from stars and the earth already in place; see Jason Lisle, "Does Distant Starlight Prove the Universe Is Old?," *Answers in Genesis*, December 13, 2007, https://answersingenesis.org/astronomy/starlight/does-distant-starlight-prove-the-universe-is-old/.

[10] Ross, *A Matter of Days*, 190.

between layers that contain the dust signatures of these eruption events, researchers have confirmed that each layer indeed corresponds to one year."[11]

Sediment Layers at the Bottom of Lakes

Geologists Gregg Davidson and Ken Wolgemuth have written an extensively documented article showing that "finely layered sediments from Lake Suigetsu [in Japan] were deposited annually going back more than 50,000 years." They also show that the most recent of these layers of sediment correspond closely with tree rings that go back more than 14,000 years, and that carbon-14 decay rates (measured by various samples taken at various depths of the sediment layers) "have remained unchanged."[12]

Radiometric Dating of Rocks

Igneous rocks are formed when lava or magma (very hot molten material found beneath the earth) cools and changes from a liquid to a solid. Some igneous rocks consist partly of radioactive material that begins to decay as soon as a rock solidifies, and when it decays it changes into another element. For example, uranium-238 decays and turns into lead-206. But uranium-235 becomes lead-207, and thorium-232 becomes lead-208.[13] For every type of radioactive substance, the rate of such decay can be measured. With that information, geologists can measure the amount of each kind of uranium and thorium isotope and the amount of each kind of lead isotope in a rock, and with that information they can determine six independent measures of the age of a rock.

Since each of the uranium and thorium isotopes decays at a different rate, if a rock sample has all three of the uranium and thorium isotopes and all three isotopes of the resulting lead, the proportion of each kind of uranium, thorium, and lead gives us six different independent measures of the age of the rock. Ross reports that "ratios of different radiometric elements relative to the lead end products and the ratios of

[11] Ibid.

[12] Gregg Davidson and Ken Wolgemuth, "Testing and Verifying Old Age Evidence: Lake Suigtsu, Varves, Tree Rings, and Carbon-14," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 70, no. 2 (June 2018): 75–89.

[13] Ross, *A Matter of Days*, 187.

the different lead end products relative to one another provide consistent, accurate dates—all saying that the earth is billions of years old."[14]

Continental Separation

Fossil-bearing rock fields near the coasts of Africa and South America were apparently previously joined together and then separated by continental drift as the continents gradually moved apart. In fact, anyone who looks at a globe can see that, if the continents of North and South America could be moved eastward and the continents of Europe and Africa could be moved westward, with slight rotation the continental shelves would fit together. In addition, underneath the Atlantic Ocean there is a large mountain ridge called the Mid-Atlantic Ridge that follows the curved pattern of a line halfway between these continents. All this is evidence of plate tectonics, the scientific study that explains movements of the plates on which the continents rest.

Now, there are two separate methods to determine how long ago the continents separated. Taking samples from the crust of the Atlantic Ocean at the edges of the continents, "maximum ages of about 180 million years for the Atlantic Ocean crust are obtained."[15] This suggests that the continents separated about 180 million years ago, leaving the Atlantic Ocean between them. If we measure the distance from a point on the North American coastline to the corresponding point on the African coastline, the distance is 3,480 miles. If we divide 3,480 miles by 180,000,000 years, it "yields an average rate of 1.2 inches per year."[16] Repeated calculations at different points vary only slightly, from 1.1 to 1.7 inches per year.

But are these continents actually moving apart at that rate? Long-term precise satellite "measurements of the relative positions of North America and North Africa document a current spreading rate of approximately 1 inch per year, a value in remarkable agreement with the radiometrically determined rates."[17] This confirms that the continents

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Roger Wiens, "So Just How Old Is That Rock?" in *The Grand Canyon: Monument to an Ancient Earth*, ed. Carrol Hill, Gregg Davidson, Tim Helble, and Wayne Ranney (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016), 94.

[16] Wiens, "So Just How Old," 94.

[17] Ibid.

began to move apart 180,000,000 years ago—but that is impossible if the earth is less than 10,000 years old.

Conclusion: Old Earth

I realize that young-earth advocates will disagree with my assessment of this evidence. They will claim that maybe the speed of light was vastly different, maybe the rate of sediment deposit in lakes was vastly different, maybe the speed of movement of the earth's tectonic plates was vastly different, maybe the rate of decay of radiometric elements in rocks was vastly different, and so forth. Eventually this begins to sound to me like, "If the facts were different, they would support my position." But that kind of argument is just an admission that the facts do not support one's position.

As for the biblical evidence, I think it can be legitimately and honestly understood to allow for either an old-earth or a young-earth view. I do not think the Bible tells us or intends to tell us the age of the earth or the age of the universe.

A Response to Old-Earth Arguments

Jason S. DeRouchie

Dr. Grudem usually uses Scripture to ground his Christian doctrine and ethics. However, he supports his belief in an old earth with almost no biblical evidence, dismisses the proposals of scientists guided by God's word, and follows an interpretation of the observable data put forward by scientists who are calculating the universe's age based on naturalistic uniformitarian assumptions.[18]

Day Means Ages?

Context determines the meaning of *day* (e.g., daylight vs. an unspecified time in Genesis 1:5 and 2:4). The weeklong structure of Genesis 1:1–2:3 and the repeated ending formula "evening and … morning" on days 1–6 (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31) indicate that the days are not ages but 24-hour periods. While the week structure could be figurative (as some old-earthers hold), Moses does not portray the "days"

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[18] For more on why uniformitarian assumptions are naturalistic, see Terry Mortenson, "Philosophical Naturalism and the Age of the Earth: Are They Related?" *TMSJ* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 71–92.

as ages. Because God built Israel's workweek (6+1) off his creation week (Exod 20:11), the six workdays in Genesis 1 are most naturally 24-hour periods.

The earth only needs to rotate in relation to a fixed light source to produce evening and morning. In Genesis 1, light is the only matter that simply "was" (Gen 1:3); God "makes" or "creates" everything else (1:7, 16, 25, 26; 1:21, 27) or guides its production (1:11–12). Furthermore, "God is light" (1 John 1:5), and Jesus is "the light of the world" (John 8:12), through whom God made all things and in whom was the life that became the light of men (John 1:3–4). In the consummate new creation, there will be "no need of sun or moon …, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb" (Rev 21:23). Similarly, Scripture suggests that, at the beginning, God sustained the earth and provided evening and morning through his own glory's fixed light, centered in his Son. Indeed, the one who spoke light into darkness is now shining into the new creation (2 Cor 4:6). That God gave light apart from luminaries on days 1–3 adds to the implied polemic against pagan worldviews that "the two great lights … and the stars" are not "gods" but merely secondary, unnecessary agents by which the true Creator supplies life and order to his universe.[19]

Gaps in the Genealogies?

"When Seth had lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh" (Gen 5:6). For Grudem, the presence of selective genealogies elsewhere (e.g., Matt 1:8–9) implies the genealogies in "Genesis 5 and 11 contain gaps." While not common, the Hebrew verb translated "fathered" (Hiphil *yld*) allows for *genealogical gaps* (unnamed descendants), meaning the subject may be the marked direct object's ancestor and not his immediate father (see Deut 4:25; 2 Kgs 20:18). Thus, Enosh could be Seth's son, grandson, or more distant relative.

Nevertheless, Grudem infers that Genesis 5:6 allows for *chronological gaps* (i.e., missing years). Yet the text requires that Seth was 105 years old when Enosh was born, regardless of whether Enosh was Seth's immediate son or more distant relative. Seth's age marks the time when

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[19] See esp. John D. Currid, *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 44–46.

the action and result happened, with no chronological gaps.[20] Even if one allows for genealogical gaps, Genesis 5 and 11 supply a chronological timeline that implies a young humanity.

Death and Suffering Before the Fall?

While unstated, Grudem's position requires millions of years of animal death and suffering *before the fall.* Yet Scripture associates creature mortality and misery only with curse (see my original arguments for a young earth).[21]

Scientific 'Evidence' for an Old Earth?

Grudem has no compelling biblical reasons for believing in an old earth. Furthermore, if any of my biblical arguments for a young earth is sound, then Scripture indicates that Grudem's scientific interpretations are seriously flawed and need to be aligned with Scripture's inerrant testimony.

Grudem's "facts" are actually only interpretations of the observable data growing from his belief that present measurable processes are the key to understanding the remote past. He slights young-earthers for highlighting this, but the point stands: uniformitarian assumptions drive all six of his scientific claims, even though *Scripture and science suggest that scientific means alone will not establish the earth's age.*

First, the Bible portrays creation as the omnipotent God's supernatural work. Grudem upholds this yet hesitates to affirm Scripture's testimony that light and terrestrial vegetation (Gen 1:3, 11) preceded the luminaries, whose sole revealed purpose is to guide life on earth (1:14) and to highlight Yahweh's promises (15:5; Jer 33:22) and

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[20] See esp. Jeremy Sexton, "Who Was Born When Enosh Was 90? A Semantic Reevaluation of William Henry Green's Chronological Gaps," *WTJ* 77, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 193–218; Jeremy Sexton, "Evangelicalism's Search for Chronological Gaps in Genesis 5 and 11: A Historical, Hermeneutical, and Linguistic Critique," *JETS* 61, no. 1 (March 2018): 5–25.

[21] For further reflections on this issue, though with some theological affirmations with which I do not fully agree, see Terry Mortenson, "The Fall and the Problem of Millions of Years of Natural Evil," *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 122–58, https://answersingenesis.org/theory-of-evolution/millions-of-years/the-fall-and-the-problem-of-millions-of-years-of-natural-evil/.

power (Isa 40:25–26; Amos 5:8). Moses had no problem portraying God causing life-giving light to shine without the sun. Why should we?

Second, against scoffers who claim, "All things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation" (2 Pet 3:4), Peter stressed how this conviction overlooks that "the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished" (3:5–6). In the same way that miracles can alter normal time rates in ways unperceived by non-onlookers (e.g., John 2:9–10), so too the global flood's heat and pressures would have radically altered geography, geology, climate, and more. Scientists recognize that energy and force can drastically compress matter's formation time, and because God shaped the earth through cataclysm (see Gen 7:10–24), the process rates the flood affected *must* have been very different from those measured today.

The third reason science alone cannot establish the earth's age is because so many assumptions shape scientific interpretation. I will mention six.[22]

1. With his belief that the universe is expanding,[23] Grudem assumes light's one-way speed is equal to its roundtrip speed (which is unnecessary), that the universe began with no size (in contrast to a mature universe), and that cooling and expansion rates have remained constant over billions of years (which we cannot know and which many physicists question).[24]
2. Because travel effects time, physicists can measure only light's roundtrip speed (e.g., off mirrors = 186,000 mi/sec or 300,000

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[22] I thank my friends Drs. Bill Barrick, Jeremy Lyon, Terry Mortenson, and Andrew Snelling for directing me to resources and for offering helpful feedback. All the assessment is my own.

[23] Physicist John Hartnett thinks this is far from proven: John Hartnett, "Does Observational Evidence Indicate the Universe Is Expanding? — Part 2: The Case against Expansion," *Journal of Creation* 25, no. 3 (December 2011): 115–20.

[24] Please see the following studies by physicist Emily Conover for a more rapid expansion model: Emily Conover, "New Data Fuel Debate on Universe's Expansion Rate," *ScienceNews*, February 2, 2017, https://www.sciencenews.org/article/new-data-fuel-debate-universes-expansion-rate; Emily Conover, "Scientists Still Can't Agree on the Universe's Expansion Rate," *ScienceNews*, July 16, 2019, https://www.sciencenews.org/article/universe-expansion-rate-mystery.

km/sec). Grudem assumes that light's speed is constant in all directions (isotropic), but light's one-way speed could be virtually instantaneous (anisotropic), which is what Genesis 1:14–15 suggests.[25]

3. The polar ice sheets' age and formation determine the expected annual layer compression-thickness in the cores,[26] and this guides where one measures cycles of oxygen isotopes to calculate age.[27] If

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[25] Einstein's relativity physics highlights that light's one-way speed is relative, so long as the roundtrip speed remains constant. Albert Einstein, *Relativity: The Special and General Theory*, trans. R.W. Lawson (New York: Crown, 1961), 22–23. For the basic implications of this fact for a young universe, see Jason Lisle, "Distant Starlight — The Anisotropic Synchrony Convention," *Answers Magazine*, January 1, 2010,
https://answersingenesis.org/astronomy/starlight/distant-starlight-thesis/.
For a more detailed discussion with answers to objections, see Lisle, "Anisotropic Synchrony Convention — A Solution to the Distant Starlight Problem," *Answers Research Journal* 3 (2010): 191–207.

[26] Both old-earth and young-earth scientists generally agree about the annual compression thickness in the highest layers of the polar ice sheets; it is when one gets deeper that one's pre-judgment on the earth's age influences assessment. All the volcanic eruptions Grudem cites come from the higher layers related to recent history and are not linked to the lower core commonly associated with the ice age(s).

[27] Geologists can identify "cycles" of oxygen isotopes, because water evaporation leaves behind heavier oxygen atoms (^{18}O), whereas snowfall has a greater concentration of lighter oxygen atoms (^{16}O). After the initial layers at the top of ice cores, melting and pressure have caused the lower ice cores to get blurry, necessitating a different way for dating. Tracking oxygen isotopes is a common solution, but storms and other phenomena like a moving snow dune can easily skew one's interpretation, especially if the estimated annual thickness is misguided. Note the following quote from a number of old-earth geologists: "In counting any annual marker, we must ask whether it is absolutely unequivocal, or whether nonannual events could mimic or obscure a year. For the visible strata (and, we believe, for any other annual indicator at accumulation rates representative of central Greenland), it is almost certain that variability exists at the subseasonal or storm level, at the annual level, and for various longer periodicities (2-year, sunspot, etc.). We certainly must entertain the possibility of misidentifying the deposit of a large storm or a snow dune as an entire year or missing a weak indication of a summer and thus picking a 2-year interval as 1 year." See R. B. Alley et al., "Visual-Stratigraphic Dating of the GISP2 Ice Core:

weekly storms formed the ice masses rapidly in a single ice age following the flood,[28] then the annual thickness would be greater (not having thinned as much under eons of pressure), and old-earthers would be falsely treating multiple storm cycles in single years as if each one represented a year.[29]

4. Dating old lake deposits assumes their pattern and rate remained unchanged throughout time, but catastrophes like floods, hurricanes, and volcanic eruptions create moving slurries, resulting in storm or flood deposits (called rhythmites) that are indistinguishable from the annual seasonal deposits (called varves).[30] And because varve counts, tree-ring counts, and

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Basis, Reproducibililty, and Application," *Journal of Geophysical Research* 102, no. C12 (November 1997): 26,378.

[28] See especially Larry Vardiman, *Ice Cores and the Age of the Earth* (El Cajon, CA: Institute for Creation Research, 1993).

[29] For more on this, see Michael Oard, *Frozen in Time: The Woolly Mammoth, the Ice Age, and the Bible* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2004), 119–26, https://answersingenesis.org/environmental-science/ice-age/do-ice-cores-show-many-tens-of-thousands-of-years/; cf. Andrew A. Snelling, "Layers of Assumption: Are Tree Rings and Other 'Annual' Dating Methods Reliable?" *Answers Magazine*, January 1, 2017, https://answersingenesis.org/age-of-the-earth/layers-assumption/. The old-earth interpretation of the data assumes that the middle and lower ice-age portions of the polar ice sheets grew up over three or more ice-age cycles, each approximately 100,000 years long. Milankovitch first posited this "astronomical theory of the ice ages"; see M. Milankovitch, "Expansion and Current Status of the Astronomical Theory of Geological Climates," *Experientia* 4, no. 11 (1948): 413–18. For an overview and response, see Oard, *Frozen in Time*, 65–68.

[30] Representing twelve months' deposit in a lake bottom, a *varve* is a pair of contrasting sedimentary layers or laminae—the thick, coarse "summer" layer caused by spring run-off and made of large, light-colored grains of sand or silt, and the thin, fine-grained "winter" layer caused by settling debris and made of dark, clay-like particles from plants. As disclosed in recent major disasters—like Hurricane Donna (1960), the flood in Bijou Creek, CO (1965), and the volcanic eruption of Mount St. Helens (1980), huge amounts of water, landslides, flows of mud or volcanic ash, steam water, and other catastrophic phenomena can deposit many altering laminae in short amounts of time (be it weeks, days, or even hours). Hence, the altering of coarse and fine laminae could result from event-layering and does not necessarily signal annual sediment deposition. Furthermore, the biblical flood would have caused massive amounts of such

radiocarbon-14 dates are inter-calibrated, they should not be used to reinforce one another.[31]

5. While radiometric dating of rocks helps establish relative formation sequence in earth history, Grudem assumes that we know the starting conditions (e.g., only uranium [= parent isotope] and no lead [= daughter isotope]), that no contamination or leaching has altered rock makeup (which can't be measured without an independent benchmark),[32] and that the decay rate has

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sedimentation, which cautions all attempts to date the remote past by means of sedimentary layers. See especially Jake Hebert, Andrew A. Snelling, and Timothy L. Clarey, "Do Varves, Tree-Rings, and Radiocarbon Measurements Prove an Old Earth? Refuting a Popular Argument by Old-Earth Geologists Gregg Davidson and Ken Wolgemuth," *Answers Research Journal* 9 (2016): 339–61; Snelling, "Layers of Assumption."

[31] As Hebert, Snelling, and Clarey note, varve dating is dependent on radiocarbon dating, which is calibrated against tree-ring counts, whose tree-ring chronologies were developed through radiocarbon dating. Thus, "none of these dating methods are truly independent and thus objective. They are inter-calibrated and adjusted to agree because of the assumption they are supposed to agree, due to the assumed uniformity of geologic and physical processes that willfully ignores the evidence for the global Flood cataclysm and its aftermath" (Hebert, Snelling, and Clarey, "Do Varves, Tree-Rings, and Radiocarbon Measurements Prove an Old Earth?" 357). For an overview of radiocarbon dating, its challenges, and a young-earth response, see this three-part study: Andrew A. Snelling, "Carbon-14 Dating: Understanding the Basics," *Answers Magazine*, October 1 2010, https://answersingenesis.org/geology/carbon-14/carbon-14-dating/; Andrew A. Snelling, "Carbon-14 in Fossils and Diamonds: An Evolutionary Dilemma," *Answers Magazine*, January 1, 2011, https://answersingenesis.org/geology/carbon-14/carbon-14-in-fossils-and-diamonds/; Andrew A. Snelling, "A Creationists Puzzle: 50,000-Year-Old-Fossils," *Answers Magazine*, April 1, 2011, https://answersingenesis.org/geology/carbon-14/a-creationist-puzzle/.

[32] "Contamination" occurs when an outside constituent or impurity seeps in and alters a natural material; "leaching" occurs when a soluble chemical or mineral drains away due to percolating liquid, especially rainwater.

remained constant,[33] uninfluenced by altered forces of heat or pressure (i.e., catastrophe) that could speed the decay.[34]

6. Plate tectonics best explains why the continents are no longer united (Gen 1:9–10), but Grudem assumes that the rate of continental separation was always gradual, as it is today, whereas the catastrophe model of rapid separation also aligns with the data, answers why plate movement would have slowed drastically after the flood,[35] and explains both the lack of compression in ocean sediments and the erratic magnetic polarity in the ocean crust (suggesting rapid cooling in non-uniform ways due to contact with chaotic ocean waters).[36]

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[33] The "decay rate" is how long one element (a parent isotope) takes to change into another (a daughter isotope).

[34] For a helpful overview of radiometric dating that details its challenges due to uniformitarian assumptions, see Andrew A. Snelling, "Radiometric Dating: Back to Basics," *Answers Magazine*, June 17, 2009, https://answersingenesis.org/geology/radiometric-dating/radiometric-dating-back-to-basics/; Andrew A. Snelling, "Radiometric Dating: Problems with the Assumptions," *Answers Magazine*, October 1, 2009, https://answersingenesis.org/geology/radiometric-dating/radiometric-dating-problems-with-the-assumptions/; Andrew A. Snelling, "Radiometric Dating: Making Sense of the Patterns," *Answers Magazine*, January 1, 2010, https://answersingenesis.org/geology/radiometric-dating/radiometric-dating-making-sense-of-the-patterns/. Snelling supplies a number of examples where all three assumptions have been called into question based on modern natural disasters.

[35] Once the heavier pre-flood crust was subducted (one plate plunging beneath another) into the mantle and replaced by the lighter, more fluid mantle rock, the continental displacement would have decelerated drastically. See especially John R. Baumgardner, "Catastrophic Plate Tectonics: The Geophysical Context of the Genesis Flood," *Journal of Creation* 16, no. 1 (April 2002): 58–63, https://answersingenesis.org/geology/plate-tectonics/catastrophic-plate-tectonics-geophysical-context-of-genesis-flood/; Andrew A. Snelling, "Hawaii's Volcanic Origins — Instant Paradise," *Answers Magazine*, January 1, 2014, https://answersingenesis.org/geology/plate-tectonics/hawaiis-volcanic-origins-instant-paradise/.

[36] See Andrew A. Snelling, "Can Catastrophic Plate Tectonics Explain Flood Geology?" in *The New Answers Book 1: Over 25 Questions on Creation/Evolution and the Bible*, ed. Ken Ham and Bodie Hodge (Green Forest, AR: Master, 2006), 186–97, https://answersingenesis.org/geology/plate-

Conclusion

God has written two "books" — the word and the world, and the former's infallible and inerrant nature requires that it must always guide our reading of the latter. Grudem attempts to establish the earth's age from science alone. However, he makes far too many assumptions, most of them guided by uniformitarian thinking that runs counter to Scripture's testimony to God's powerful control and to the flood catastrophe. God alone was present at the beginning, and his word strongly points to a young earth and should guide our scientific interpretations of the observable data.

A Response to Young-Earth Arguments

Wayne Grudem

I want to thank Dr. DeRouchie for his thoughtful and clear argument in favor of a young earth. I agree with him that this discussion is one where Christians can hold different viewpoints but still affirm that the opposite position is acceptable within doctrinal orthodoxy.

But I'm not persuaded by his six arguments, as I explain in the following replies.

The 'Most Natural Reading'

Reply 1: Our initial reading of a passage is not always the correct reading.

Dr. DeRouchie says, "The most natural reading of the Bible's introduction points to a young earth," and he gives several reasons why he thinks the six "days" of creation were "the equivalent of 24-hour calendar days, even though the sun was not created until day four (Gen 1:14–19)."

It is not clear what he means by saying that the young-earth view is "the most natural reading." I understand this expression to mean something like "the first-impression reading"—that is, the meaning that an ordinary reader "naturally" gives the passage when first reading it.

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tectonics/can-catastrophic-plate-tectonics-explain-flood-geology/. For a detailed scientific overview of the catastrophic plate-tectonics model, see Steven A. Austin et al., "Catastrophic Plate Tectonics: A Global Flood Model of Earth History," *Answers in Depth* 5 (2010): 1–13, https://answersingenesis.org/geology/plate-tectonics/catastrophic-plate-tectonics-global-flood-model-of-earth-history/.

But many times in Scripture, further inspection of the text allows us to see that our first understanding was not correct. For example, someone could read, "The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises" (Eccl 1:5), and think that Scripture teaches that the sun goes quickly around the earth at night and reappears in the east the next morning. But eventually, scientific observation proved conclusively that the earth rotates on its axis, showing that a first impression or "most natural reading" was not correct. Rather, Ecclesiastes 1:5 was only describing the movement of the sun as it appeared to an observer standing on earth. That is not our first-impression reading, but that is the correct meaning. Similarly, our first impression of the six "days" in Genesis 1 might not be the correct understanding—the "days" might represent long periods of time (as in Gen 2:4) rather than 24-hour days.

And when the original readers saw that the sun was not established to mark "days and years" until day 4 (Gen 1:14), they would realize that the first three creation days (at least) were somehow different from ordinary days.

What About the Science?

Reply 2: The scientific evidence requires explanation.

I was a bit surprised that Dr. DeRouchie gave no explanation for how a young-earth position can explain the many evidences of extreme age in the universe and especially on the earth, such as the radiometric dating of rocks from the earth, the moon, and asteroids; the billions of light-years distance of many stars; the expansion rate of the universe; the observation of distant stars burning out millions of years ago; the rate of continental drift; hundreds of thousands of years of ice layers in the Arctic; tens of thousands of years of layers of sediment in lakes, and so forth. These scientific observations are the reason so many thousands of Christians hold to an old-earth position, and one can hardly expect us to change our minds if no convincing alternative interpretation of this evidence can be given.

Genesis 1–4 as 'the Beginning'

Reply 3: The New Testament views all of Genesis 1–4 as "the beginning" because it all is preparation for the main story of the Bible: the history of

the creation, fall, and redemption of human beings through the work of Jesus Christ.

It is not surprising that the events of Genesis 1–4, for example, are all spoken of as "the beginning," because, from a literary standpoint, that is how Genesis 1–4 functions in relationship to the rest of the Bible. The creation of human beings is not "the ninth inning," as Dr. DeRouchie claims, but all of Genesis 1–4 is more like the first inning, and the rest of the Bible—moving through Noah, Abraham, David; the exile and return; the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus; the establishment of the church; and the return of Christ—is the remaining eight innings of the redemption story.

Role of Genealogies

Reply 4: The genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 lay the groundwork for the New Testament to show the descent of Christ from Adam, and they show the remarkable age and health of the pre-flood generations, but they are not intended to teach us the age of the earth or of the human race.

Dr. DeRouchie agrees that the word *son* in Scripture can sometimes mean grandson or great-grandson, so he (in principle) does not have to hold to Archbishop Ussher's date of 4004 BC for the creation, but he comes close to that when he notes that "adding the ages in the genealogies points to humanity being around 6,000 years old."

But if we agree that the genealogies can have gaps, and that they highlight only certain individuals, and that many individuals in the early generations lived several hundred years, then there is little reason to oppose a figure of 10,000 or even 20,000 years for the human race.

God's Eternity and Patience

Reply 5: An earth that existed for billions of years without human beings can encourage us to ponder with amazement God's even greater eternity and his infinite patience.

Peter writes, "With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet 3:8). We cannot fully understand this reality, but it does suggest that from God's perspective, 13.8 billion years may not seem like a long time at all, and that age does allow for the light from distant stars, traveling at 186,000 miles per second, to have enough time to reach the earth and awaken our awe and worship as we ponder

the infinite wisdom and power of a Creator who could make such an immense universe.

Possibility of Peaceful Animal Death

Reply 6: It is entirely possible that, before the fall of Adam and Eve, animals, like plants, lived a normal life span and then died quietly and peacefully.

The warning God gave to Adam and Eve was that, if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *they* would die, not that animals would also begin to die. Paul writes, "Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (Rom 5:12). At the fall, death spread to "all men" (plural of *anthrōpos*, "men, human beings"), not animals. (Note that animals are never said to sin.)

Back in 1975, in arguing that there will be "no final conflict" between the facts of science and the teachings of Scripture, apologist Francis Schaeffer noted that there was the possibility of "the death of animals before the fall." He said, "If we watch a dog die in a warm chimney corner, there is no struggle. It is like a leaf falling from a tree.... One could think of there being natural cycles for the animals, up to all that does not include man, with death not by the chase and not in agony."[37]

Dr. DeRouchie allows for the death of animals to provide meat for us to eat in the age to come, so there should be no objection in principle to the idea of animals, like plants, living a normal course of life and then peacefully dying on earth—for millions of years, with their bodies decaying and, along with dead plants, decomposing and providing the material that produced the fossil fuels like coal and oil that we find in the earth today. I do not believe that Dr. DeRouchie gave adequate consideration to the idea of peaceful animal death before the fall, which would provide an answer his fifth and sixth arguments.

And so, despite Dr. DeRouchie's thoughtful arguments, I end up where I began: God does not intend in the Bible to tell us the age of the earth, and an overwhelming amount of evidence from many different fields of science leads us to conclude that the universe is 13.8 billion years

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[37] Francis Schaeffer, *No Final Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 31.

old and the earth is 4.5 billion years old. God created a truly amazing, truly gigantic universe.

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Participating in the Jesus Drama: Roles in Johannine Discourse[1]

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Introduction

Systemic Functional Linguistics and Discourse Analysis in New Testament Greek Grammar

In his introduction to *Discourse Analysis of the New Testament Writings*, Todd A. Scacewater catches the reader up to speed on the history and deployment of Discourse Analysis (hereafter, DA). He argues that DA is a discipline that recognizes the social function of language.[2] Authors write to audiences. The words and grammatical forms authors choose, DA presupposes, accomplish the communicative-relational purposes of the author-audience relationship. Interpreters can thus use DA to understand better a text and the author's and audience's social situation.[3] Commentators who employ DA in their study of a text's grammar can help their readers connect the dots between lexical and grammatical phenomena in a text and how the author's choice of those

[1] An excerpt of this paper was presented at the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Denver, CO on November 15, 2022. I wish to express gratitude for comments received there.
[2] Todd A. Scacewater, "Discourse Analysis: History, Topics, and Applications," in *Discourse Analysis of the New Testament Writings*, ed. Todd A. Scacewater (Dallas: Fontes, 2020), 2-3.
[3] "Once we better understand discourse, then as we examine texts, those insights about what discourse is and how it works may help us to better understand texts as holistic entities (not as a linear sequence of sentences), to resolve exegetical problems, and to better discover communicative intent" (Scacewater, "Discourse Analysis," 4).

words and forms (within the broader system of the language in view) communicate to the original audience.[4]

Considering the history of DA, Scacewater notes that while DA investigates the grammar of a language, it differs from the study of grammar in the ancient Greek-speaking world. Ancient Greek grammarians concentrate on sentence-level syntax. While DA does not exclude the study of grammar at the micro level, it is primarily concerned with patterns of lexical and grammatical use in the whole of a text. DA shares points of contact with a different discipline that shapes the ancient world, rhetoric.[5] Ancient rhetoricians like Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian describe how authors can arrange their words and discourses for maximum persuasive effect in light of the situation and argument.[6] For rhetoricians, like interpreters employing DA, language in use cannot be understood apart from social function.

DA and ancient rhetoric recognize the social dynamic of language and texts, and Speech-Act Theory does as well in the modern era. Scacewater notes that in the latter half of the twentieth century, scholars like J.L. Austin and J. Searle describe the relationship between language producers and those producers' social environment(s).[7]

Scacewater notes that New Testament (hereafter, NT) scholars initially employed DA at the micro level, investigating patterns of words that serve as cohesive ties and provide coherence to a text. In the latter portion of the twentieth century and the early decades of the twenty-first, NT scholars recognized how DA could help them explain the macrostructure of a text and the prominent or marked units in that macrostructure.[8] Scacewater offers that authors make ideas prominent

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[4] See Todd R. Chipman, "Preaching Paul's Points: Systemic Functional Linguistics of ἄρα οὖν and Sermon Preparation in Romans," *MJT* 20.2 (Fall 2021): 31-45; Jeffrey T. Reed, "Discourse Analysis," in *Handbook to the Exegesis of the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 189-217.

[5] Scacewater, "Discourse Analysis," 5.

[6] See Aristotle, *Rhetorica*; Cicero, *De oratore*, and Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*.

[7] For a survey, see Scacewater, "Discourse Analysis," 6 n. 20 and Kevin J. VanHoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text: The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Zondervan, 1998), 229-53.

[8] Scacewater, "Discourse Analysis," 9-11. Increasingly, Greek grammarians note the need to analyze syntax with a view to understanding the whole of a discourse. For instance, Richard A. Young states, "The meaning of a discourse is

by increasing their grammatical and conceptual ties within a particular unit of text or across the text as a whole.[9]

Scacewater's observation rests on DA practitioners' findings in the last fifty years. I suggest that Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter, SFL) can help the interpreter as they practice DA. According to M.A.K. Halliday, a pioneer in SFL methodology, systemic grammar rests upon the observation that a matrix of interrelated contrasts encodes grammatical emphasis in any language.[10] Halliday writes that the goal of a linguist is to assist the reader or hearer of a text in understanding why he interprets that text in the way he does.[11] Similarly, Matthew Brooke O'Donnell argues that SFL is built upon the notion that form and

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

[9] Scacewater, "Discourse Analysis," 29. Stanley E. Porter notes that DA has at least three goals: (1) establishing the boundaries of a text unit, (2) identifying phenomena that provide cohesion of the units of said text and provide coherence of meaning therein, and (3) articulating the ideas, persons, or events an author makes prominent in a text (Porter, "Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation," in *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament: Studies in Tools, Methods and Practice* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015], 90-91).

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

[11] M.A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (New York: Routledge, 1976), 328. For Halliday, the meaning of a text cannot be discerned apart from the lexical and grammatical patterns an author chooses to employ in writing that text. Halliday writes: "As the text unfolds, patterns emerge, some of which acquire added value through resonating with other patterns in the text" (Halliday and Matthiessen, *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 63). Mary J. Schleppegrell notes that SFL has the ability to assist interpreters in recognizing and evaluating these patterns stating, "Discourse analysis seeks patterns of linguistic data. Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) offers a means of exploring meaning in language and of relating language use to social contexts so as to contribute to our understanding of language in social life" (Schleppegrell, "Systemic Functional Linguistics," in *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. James Paul Gee and Michael Hanford [New York: Routledge, 2012], 21).

meaning are connected[12] with the result that the grammatical categories in a system must be interpreted with respect to the other categories in that system.[13]

Teun A. van Dijk[14] describes a nine-step process by which the author produces discourse. van Dijk's paradigm provides windows for identifying how a functional linguistic approach can help the interpreter articulate how grammatical forms shape a text's social relationships. According to van Dijk, authors compose a text to express an experience model they have already established. In an author's mind, the actor(s), setting, and goals/intentions of those involved have been identified, and the author uses words and grammatical forms to portray that mental model. This experience model shapes all interactions in the text. Employing SFL on the grammatical and lexical forms of the text helps interpreters describe the author's experience model and identify the social character of the text, fulfilling one of the primary goals of DA.

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[12] Matthew Brook O'Donnell, *Corpus Linguistics & the Greek of the New Testament*, NTM 6 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), 30-33. First, communication is best understood by recognizing the system of a language and understanding the instances of communication within that system. Viewing language as a system views any instance within a framework of possibilities. Second, the concept of lexicogrammar, investigating lexeme on one end of a scale and grammar on the other, helps the analyst grasp the relationship between meaning and function. Third, the idea that within a system, patterns can be recognized. These patterns can be analyzed for probability. For the present study, it is noteworthy that when a form is used outside the range of expectation, it can be emphatic. The quantity and density of substantival participles in 1 John statistically mark this grammatical feature as prominent. Fourth, the concept of register, whose constituents include mode (the form of the discourse; dialogue, academic paper, monologue), tenor (relationships of participants), and field (what is being discussed, semantic fields and ideas of content) help analysts understand the interplay of social situation and patterns of language.

[13] O'Donnell, *Corpus Linguistics & the Greek of the New Testament*, 32.

[14] Teun A. van Dijk, "Discourse and Knowledge," in *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. James Paul Gee and Michael Hanford (New York: Routledge, 2012), 592.

Systemic Functional Linguistics and Discourse Analysis in 1 John

J.A. du Rand

Du Rand is among the first to employ DA methodology on 1 John,[15] establishing a framework of subsequent queries primarily into the flow of thought in the letter. du Rand surveys various proposed structures of 1 John. He concludes that while most offer ways the letter can be divided into sections, few analyze the progress of those divisions and the holistic structure of 1 John.[16]

To identify the progress of thought in 1 John, du Rand summarizes the epistle in 196 cola statements. From these, he traces John's flow of thought in five distinguishable but related units.[17] First is the Introduction (1:1-4), where John witnesses about Jesus Christ and the fellowship that results among those who accept this testimony. Second is Fellowship (1:5-2:17), in which John argues that those walking in the light enjoy fellowship with God, who is light. Third is Filiation (2:18-4:6); John writes that those in God's family conduct themselves according to God's character and revelation of His kindness in Christ. Fourth is Love (4:7-5:5), where John describes how believers walk in love as God is love. Finally is the Conclusion and Resumé (5:6-21); again, John testifies about Jesus Christ and reminds his readers of the lifestyle that demonstrates confidence that one possesses eternal life (5:6-21). du Rand acknowledges that his aim in DA is not concerned with the social situation of how members of John's audience interact with their adversaries.[18] du Rand's lack of attention to relational dynamics of 1 John distinguishes his methodology from DA approaches noted by Scacewater et al. in what precedes.

Du Rand argues that the central theme of 1 John is the audience's identity based upon their conviction that they possess eternal life. This central theme grows out of John's Christology and emphasis on Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God.[19] He notes that John establishes this

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[15] J.A. du Rand, "Discourse Analysis of 1 John," *Neot*, 13 (1979): 1-42.

[16] Ibid., 1-2.

[17] Ibid., 29.

[18] Ibid., 3.

[19] "We know that we possess eternal life. We must show this in our way of life. The source for this certainty lies in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The forms of

theme and theological foundation at the outset of the letter ("what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may also have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ," 1 John 1:3, CSB) and in conclusion ("I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life," 1 John 5:13).

Du Rand investigates 1 John's structure and recognizes the role that lexical repetition and literary features like parallelism and antithesis play in that structure. But du Rand stops short of identifying how grammatical patterns function in 1 John.

Robert E. Longacre

Longacre identifies the flow of thought in 1 John by marking the letter's introduction, body, and conclusion.[20] He begins by analyzing each paragraph, noting how John uses vocatives to initiate most units of thought.[21] Longacre suggests sixteen paragraph units in 1 John, and these he divides into the introduction (1 John 1:1-2:29), body (1 John 3:1-5:11), and conclusion (1 John 5:12-21). Longacre writes that the introduction and conclusion are separated from the body by the use of the verb γράφω, which surfaces only at the beginning and end of the letter.[22] Longacre identifies 1 John as a hortatory discourse stating, "The hortatory forms, although only 9% of the book, are basic to the thinking of the entire book and, in fact, dominate the portions of text in which they occur."[23]

Longacre argues that 1 John includes both hortatory and doctrinal peaks in the introduction and body of the letter. In the introduction, the hortatory peak occurs in 1 John 2:12-17, where John urges his readers to flee worldly affections. In Longacre's schema, the doctrinal peak follows immediately in 1 John 2:18-27, rounding out the introductory section of the letter. Longacre concludes that the order of peaks shifts in

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certainty are fellowship, filiation and love" (du Rand, "Discourse Analysis of 1 John," 29-30).

[20] Robert E. Longacre, "Toward an Exegesis of 1 John Based on the Discourse Analysis of the Greek Text," in *Linguistics and New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Discourse Analysis* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992) pp. 271-86.

[21] Ibid., 276.

[22] Ibid., 276-77.

[23] Ibid., 278.

the body of the letter, where the doctrinal peak (1 John 4:1-6) is followed by the ethical peak (1 John 4:7-21). "Suffice to say, however, that the ethical and doctrinal paragraphs are woven together in both the introduction and in the ethical part to remind us that to be a Christian, to be a believer, involves ethical and doctrinal obligations, and neither one will suffice in the absence of the other."[24] Longacre concludes that the paring of ethical and doctrinal peaks in the letter's introduction and body match the book's dual emphases, faith in Christ and love for others.[25]

John Christopher Thomas

Thomas proposes that 1 John displays a more explicit literary structure than many analysts have been able to identify.[26] Building on Raymond Brown's observed grammatical and thematic patterns in 1 John, Thomas suggests that 1 John exhibits a chiastic structure in the epistle with 1 John 3:11-18 at the center, a unit he labels Love One Another.[27] Concerning this central section, Thomas notes that John connects eternal life and the verb μένω with love. Love among believers is not abstract but an expression of the audience's relationship with God.[28] Thomas emphasizes the role that 1 John 3:11-18 plays in 1 John by discussing it first (as opposed to commenting on the chapters of 1 John in sequence). He concedes that chiastic structures are often in the eye of the proponent and avoids arguing that each section exactly parallels its chiastic counterpart in theme or length. Similar catchwords and themes surface in parallel units, and these ground Thomas's structure of the letter.

Surrounding the central section of 1 John 3:11-18, Thomas identifies 2:28-3:10 (Confidence-Do not Sin)//3:19-24 (Confidence Keep the Commands) as parallel units. Surrounding these three core sections of the chiasm, Thomas identifies four additional parallel sections: 2:18-27 (Antichrists)//4:1-6 (Antichrists); 2:3-17 (New Commandment)//4:7-5:5 (God's Love and Ours); 1:5-2:2 (Making Him a Liar [Walking])//5:6-

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[24] Ibid., 280.
[25] Ibid., 285.
[26] Thomas, "The Literary Structure of 1 John," *NT* 40.4 (Oct 1998): 369-81.
[27] Ibid., 372, 380.
[28] Ibid., 373-74.

12 (Making Him a Liar [Testimony]); 1:1-4 (Prologue-Eternal Life)//5:13-21 (Conclusion-Eternal Life).[29] Thomas offers that his chiastic proposal enables readers to see how the individual units of 1 John fit together. As a result, readers can better understand why 1 John seems so repetitive, especially regarding love.[30]

Beyond references to Brown's observations regarding grammatical patterns that help to structure 1 John, Thomas offers two of his own. First, Thomas suggests that the density of πᾶς followed by an articular participle (seven occurrences) indicates 2:28-3:10 (Confidence-Do not Sin) is a unit of thought in the epistle.[31] Second, the use of νικ* in indicative (2:12, 14), noun (5:4), and participial (5:5) connect 2:3-17 (New Commandment) and 4:7-5:5 (God's Love and Ours) as parallel units.[32]

L. Scott Kellum

Kellum counters proposals of chiastic structure in 1 John, noting that repetition is just part of John's style.[33] He offers that a linear progression of thought can be identified in the epistle. In Kellum's view, 1 John begins with a short prologue (1:1-4) followed by three sections (an overview of the entire argument of the letter [1:5-2:27], detailed statements on the ethics of God's children [2:28-3:24], and the doctrinal emphases God's children should maintain [4:1-5:20)], concluding with an epilogue (5:13-21).[34] Kellum does not employ formal DA methodology but notes that repeated words serve as cohesive ties for the text's various divisions and the epistle's logical flow from one unit to another. Beyond referencing the role of pronouns and conjunctions, Kellum does not

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[29] Ibid., 373.

[30] "Many of the themes which Johannine scholars have identified as central to the thought of the document are, in many cases, revealed in the structure of the work itself. These include the emphasis on love, eternal life, antichrists, confidence before God, walking in the light, and receiving the testimony of God" (Thomas, "The Literary Structure of 1 John," 380).

[31] Thomas, "The Literary Structure of 1 John," 374. In what follows, I investigate the broader function articular substantival participles in 1 John.

[32] Ibid., 377.

[33] Kellum, "On the Semantic Structure of 1 John: A Modest Proposal," *Faith and Mission* 23.1 (Fall 2005): 34-82.

[34] Ibid., 39.

identify how the grammar of 1 John might help the interpreter identify the semantic structure of 1 John.

Judith M. Lieu

Lieu demurs DA's attempts to provide a linear outline for 1 John. In her view, the repetition of themes in the letter resists a Roman Numeral outline.[35] Lieu argues that interpreters should spend less time outlining the text with main points and subpoints and instead investigate the repeated themes and grammatical forms in 1 John and how these advance the author's argument. Lieu employs rhetorical criticism to pronoun references in 1 John 1:1-4, 2:18-26, and 4:1-6, and concludes that all of the author's rhetorical techniques intersect at the nexus of shared presuppositions.[36] In this way, 1 John is a document whose rhetorical strategy reinforces Christian belief and behavior—instead of persuading the audience to act in new ways because of new information shared in the letter.

Lieu's research is valuable for my study of the articular substantival participle in 1 John because she also identifies specific grammatical phenomena in the letter. She suggests that the repeated first and second-person plural pronouns, and verb forms with the same person and number, lay the foundation for two observations. First, there is an ironic author/audience grid in the letter. Why the repeated interpersonal references when the author and specific audience remain unnamed?[37] As a result, the author's authority rests on the audience receiving what he says—and in so doing, they join him. "The audience, by accepting themselves as addressed as 'you,' are therefore already entering into a process that will be determined by that 'we.'"[38] Second, the repeated first and second-person plural references form an explicit chasm between references to the third-person plural "they."[39] The letter's rhetorical

[35] Judith M. Lieu, "Us or you?: Persuasion and Identity in 1 John," *JBL* 127.4 (Winter 2008): 806-07.

[36] Lieu, "Us or you?: Persuasion and Identity," 808. Lieu sketches this framework previously in *The Theology of the Johannine Epistles* (New Testament Theology [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997]), 23-27.

[37] Lieu, "Us or you?: Persuasion and Identity," 808

[38] Ibid., 810.

[39] Ibid., 809.

strategy involves "othering" those falsifying the Christian message or abandoning it altogether.

Lieu writes that in 1 John 4:1-6 the relational triad of we, you (pl), and they reaches its climax. After 1 John 4:4, the second-person plural "you (all)" is nearly absent, replaced by the first-person plural "we." John's rhetorical strategy progresses through the remainder of the letter as John places his audience with him. John and his audience root in one spiritual sphere and the they/them in another.[40] Lieu notes that the change of person and number is a tried-and-true rhetorical strategy orators employ to identify with and persuade their audience. In so doing, Lieu argues, it leaves little room for the audience to disagree, having been taken into the author's perspective. "The effectiveness of 1 John is contingent not on the personal authority of its author, about whom nothing is said, but on the impulse inherent in the desire to become part of that 'we.'"[41]

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[40] "Thus far, the strategy of the letter can be viewed as a linguistic and therefore a rhetorical relocation of 'you' from the position of opposition in the prologue to the inclusiveness of its final chapters. To some extent the third party, 'they,' who emerge in a key role in the central part of the letter, serve to facilitate this relocation by making patent a new or alternative oppositional possibility. The conceptual dualistic world that the letter takes for granted, light against darkness, love against hatred, allows for only a two-way split. This means that 'we' and 'you,' when confronted only with each other, might be in opposition, but once placed in the presence of 'them' are bound to make common cause" (Lieu, "Us or you?: Persuasion and Identity," 814). Kruse traces various ways that "we" and "us" are used in 1 John, suggesting an inclusive vs. exclusive rubric. An inclusive perspective denotes the author, his associates, and his readers; an exclusive perspective includes the author and some associates but without reference to his community or readers. Kruse recognizes that some "we"/"us" references in 1 John are ambiguous (e.g., 2:19 and 4:6a) but suggests that most are inclusive. Kruse's rubric is more granular than Lieu's. Lieu comments that most first-personal plural pronouns after 1 John 4:4 place John and his readers in close association, Kruse notes that ἡμεῖς in 1 John 4:14 (καὶ ἡμεῖς τεθεάμεθα καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ ἀπέσταλκεν τὸν υἱὸν σωτῆρα τοῦ κόσμου), would be exclusive to John and those who physically experienced Jesus' ministry (Kruse, *Letters of John*, 150-51). All references to the Greek text of 1 John and the NT are from Kurt Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

[41] Lieu, "Us or you?: Persuasion and Identity," 817-18.

Lieu's analysis is helpful, but a quantifiable gap of material in 1 John remains untapped. What about references that are translated in the third person singular? Most of the articular substantival participles in 1 John are rendered as such. Lieu mentions the third-person singular in one sentence: "Any encouragement is expressed through second-person plural or third-person singular imperatives."[42] Lieu suggests that the role progress of placing "you (pl)" with "we" from 1 John 4:5 onward leaves the audience no chance to disagree. But I suggest that the large quantity of articular substantival participles, often translated as third-person singular, provide roles the audience will embrace or reject. These nominative singular substantival participles rubric for the audience roles that either go along with John or those he would oppose. The roles the audience embraces determine if they align with the "we" of Lieu's analysis.

Ernst Wendland

Ernst Wendland provides a bottom-up analysis of 1 John that accentuates John's pastoral presentation of Christology.[43] Wendland's DA of 1 John establishes a point of contact with my observation of how articular substantival participles in 1 John function like roles in the script of a drama. Wendland argues that John uttered the text of 1 John intending that the epistle be read akin to a homiletical performance.[44] And according to Wendland, the verbal organization of 1 John, like that of 2 and 3 John, demonstrates John's intention for his letters to be read in a performance or dramatized fashion. Wendland's portrayal of the structure of 1 John rests upon his thesis that 1 John is meant to be heard and performed as an oral-aural text. The units of text are presented in breath spans that consider syntax, content, sound patterning, prose rhythm, breath pauses, and dramatic effect. Wendland writes, "The proposed lineation is of course a hypothetical reconstruction based on my perception of how the Greek text might be orally articulated in a public performance."[45]

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[42] Ibid., 810.
[43] Ernst Wendland, "Johannine Epistles," in *Discourse Analysis of the New Testament Writings* ed. Todd A. Scacewater (Dallas: Fontes, 2020), 651-93.
[44] Ibid., 653, 681.
[45] Ibid., 654n13.

Wendland identifies the first level of verbal organization as spoken-heard utterances or spoken lines; the second is topically-related statements composed in paragraphs; and the third is paragraphs comprising the epistle's themes in larger text sections. Wendland argues that 1 John is an "expository-hortatory homily."[46] Here John offers a dynamic, Christocentric address to encourage his friends facing anti-Christian opposition.

Wendland alliterates his methodology by attempting to identify the breaks in the text, the cohesive bonds that unify sections between breaks, and the bumps or places in the text that demonstrate a semantic peak.[47] Wendland identifies two main sections in his discourse outline of 1 John:[48] Epistolary Prologue (1:1-4) and an Epistolary Body of Paraenesis (1:5-5:20), divided into eight subsections: (1) Walking in the Light by Loving One Another—Not the World (1:5-2:17), (2) Warning Against Antichrists (2:18-27), (3) Live as Children of God by Avoiding Sin (2:28-3:10), (4) Love One Another as Christ Commanded (3:11-3:24), (5) Test the Spirits by Their Confession (4:1-6), (6) We Love Because God Loves (4:7-21), (7) Believe in God's Son and Accept God's Testimony (5:1-12), (8) Concluding Commands (5:13-21). Wendland further divides these nine total units of text into twenty-two units that he categorizes under the headings of Love, Christ, Obedience, and Other.[49]

Wendland argues against seeing 1 John as a spiral literary arrangement where the author returns to repeated themes because such proposals do not account for how John integrates topics in the letter.[50] Wendland suggests instead that Christology is John's central concern, and around that concern rotate macro themes of love and obedience.[51] In Wendland's tabulation of the twenty-two topical contextual units he identifies in 1 John, eighteen reference Christology, six reference Love, and ten reference Other.[52] Wendland admits that though his categorization of themes in the twenty-two contextual units is rough, it

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[46] Ibid., 653.
[47] Ibid., 654.
[48] Ibid., 679-80.
[49] Ibid., 683-84.
[50] Ibid., 682.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., 683-84.

emphasizes the doctrinal core of the letter and describes how John's pastoral exhortations to love and obey revolve around Christology.[53]

Participles in 1 John

In what follows, I note how SFL might help the interpreter analyze 1 John to convey what John means by his grammatical and lexical choices via the articular substantival participle.[54] In *The Greek Verb Revisited*, Randall Buth offers one of the more comprehensive studies of the Greek participle in recent years. Buth, with other linguists of various schools, observes that an author's choice of word or grammatical form implies meaning. What would incline a speaker or writer to choose a participle instead of a finite verb? What does the author/audience gain through the participle instead of a finite verb?[55] Buth observes that finite verbs mark the phases of action while participles are used to fill in the content of the action.[56] The participle is less specific than a verb; therefore, the participle supports the indicative verb, placing the indicative as the focal point. Because the indicative verb is more precise than the participle, the reader must exert more energy to interpret it.[57]

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[53] Wendland, "Johannine Epistles," 684.

[54] I am thus offering a study in lexicogrammar, a discipline that is the fruit of SFL. Matthew Brook O'Donnell describes the concept of lexicogrammar as "a continuum (or cline) of paradigmatic systems, with grammar (as traditionally described) at one end and lexis at the other" (*Corpus Linguistics & the Greek of the New Testament*, NTM 6 [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005], 31). Lexicogrammar identifies the grammatical form of a lexeme in a particular instance in light of (1) the various related grammatical forms that could be employed to communicate an idea, (2) the semantic range of the lexeme, and (3) the patterns of grammatical forms surrounding the particular lexeme in its context.

[55] Randall Buth, "Participles as a Pragmatic Choice: Where Semantics Meets Pragmatics," in *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis*, ed. Steven E. Runge and Christopher J. Fresch (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2016), 273.

[56] Buth, "Participles as a Pragmatic Choice," 280.

[57] Ibid., 289. "Greek participles provide a mechanism for signaling relative prominence between clauses in a sentence by allowing the more prominent verb to be recorded as a finite verb" (Buth, "Participles as a Pragmatic Choice," 305).

While Buth's analysis of the participle is helpful, his concern is nearly entirely with adverbial participles. What happens when an author includes a definite article? John writes fifty-eight participles in 1 John, and forty-nine are substantival.[58] More than half of the substantival participles in 1 John are in 1 John 2-3, all articular. What should the interpreter do after identifying the density of articular substantival participles in 1 John? What methodology might the interpreter employ to convey what John intends by writing so many substantival participles—when John could have communicated through the more basic finite verb?[59]

Ronald D. Peters analyzes the functional discourse implications of the Greek article, including its presence with the participle. Peters notes that in the development of the Greek language from the Classical to the Koine periods, the definite article replaced the demonstrative pronoun and eventually resembled the relative pronoun.[60] Peters argues that the speaker or writer uses the definite article to subjectively concretize the part of speech that the definite article modifies.[61] He writes:

> The use of the article represents the writer or speaker's *subjective* view. This means that articular structures must be understood from the point of view of the speaker or writer whose perspective may or may not reflect actual reality. Second, the presentation of the head term is a *characterization*. Thus, the referent will sometimes be an actual thing or something that is associated with a specific instance. However, the article alone will not indicate this. Sometimes it will present an item that is representative of *such a thing or instance*, without making a specific identification. In other instances, the

[58] Andreas J. Köstenberger, Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert L. Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek*, rev ed. (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 328n12.

[59] One feature that the participle offers vis-à-vis the finite verb is that it further emphasizes aspect over time while also grammaticalizing noun case (Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms*, 181-83).

[60] Ronald D. Peters, *The Greek Article: A Functional Grammar of ὁ-Items in the Greek New Testament with Special Emphasis on the Greek Article*, Linguistic Biblical Studies 9 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2014), 67.

[61] Peters, *The Greek Article,* 183-85.

> referent is characterized as concrete so that it may be held out for the recipient's consideration, though it is in fact strictly hypothetical.[62]

Recognizing what Peters states concerning the social function of a text can help the interpreter understand the density of articular substantival participles in 1 John.[63] John uses this grammatical form, nearly always in the nominative, to articulate not only the experience model in his mind but also to help his readers understand the real-time experiences of their lives.[64] Many have departed from their community (1 John 2:18-23), undermining their faith and confidence in God. Peters employs the metaphor of the theater to describe how the presence or absence of the article moves the modified noun on or off stage. A speaker or writer might employ a definite article not only to concretize the subject of the participle but also to move them to center stage.[65]

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[62] Peters, *The Greek Article*, 186 (italics original).

[63] Dirk van der Merwe notes that the use of the participle emphasizes the personal nature of 1 John, drawing the reader into the text and heightening their sense of participation in God's eschatological program in Jesus ("1 John: 'Effects' in biblical texts that constitute 'lived experiences' in the contemplative reading of those texts," *In die Skriflig* 49.2, Art. #1930, 9 pages, http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ ids.v49i2.1930).

[64] "In 1 John 2:10–11, the author contrasts two individuals whose identities are based on opposite activities: ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ . . . ὁ δὲ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ *The one who loves his brother . . . the one who hates his brother.* Both of these individuals are characterized as concrete. However, there is no further indication regarding whether or not they are real people. Both are presented as concrete so that they may be held out for the audience's consideration as such a person who may exist. Something that is concrete is something that may be examined" (Peters, *The Greek Article*, 197).

[65] "In the case of the article, when a Greek speaker wishes to move a participant to the background of the stage, he or she may do so in part by characterizing the participant as abstract. Conversely, when a speaker wishes to bring a participant to the foreground of the stage, the participant will be characterized as concrete. Thus, even in a single episode, participants will move in and out, to the front and to the back, based on their immediate role" (Peters, *The Greek Article*, 190).

Articular Substantival Participles and John's Eschatological Script

I suggest that John uses the articular substantival participle in 1 John to concretize particular verbs such that those concretized actions resemble roles one might identify in a dramatic production.[66] John portrays his readers as actors in the eschatological drama and urges them to embrace those roles consistent with the Christian confession and shun the roles of apostasy.[67] Stephen S. Smalley draws attention to the present tense-forms of the articular substantival participle in 1 John and notes that the repetition of present articular substantival participles suggests in John's mind a stable condition in the action of the verb.[68] Nearly all of

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[66] Commenting on the John's portrayal of the great spiritual conflict between the church and the evil powers in Revelation 12:1-14:5, Robert Mounce writes, "The stage is thus set for the final confrontation. Chapters 12-14 introduce the actors who play the major roles" (rev ed. NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 229).

[67] In *Variation Across Speech and Writing: Spoken Language Related to Written Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Douglas Biber suggests six domains that might identify a text as generically written or spoken. Though Biber cautions that texts are multi-dimensional constructs that often resist generic labels (*Variation Across Speech and Writing*, 162-63), he identifies repetition of words as a feature that characterizes spoken genres (e.g., telephone conversations) (*Variation Across Speech and Writing*, 128-132). John may have envisioned future generations orally performing 1 John, and the density of articular substantival participles would contribute to John's persuasive efforts. Martin M. Culy argues that the substantival participle in 1 John has a direct and even accusatory rhetorical force (*I, II, III John: A Handbook on the Greek Text,* Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament [Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004], 26-27).

[68] Smalley (*1, 2, 3 John*, WBC 51 [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984]) comments on the implications of the present tense-form of ὁ μισῶν in 1 John 2:11 (*1, 2, 3 John*, 63), ὁ γινώσκων in 4:6 (*1, 2, 3 John*, 229), ὁ νικῶν in 5:5 (*1, 2, 3 John*, 276). Concerning τῶν πλανώντων in 2:26, Lieu notes that identifying the significance of the present tense form is widely recognized as a difficult endeavor (Lieu, "Us or you?: Persuasion and Identity," 812). Colin G. Kruse comments on the present tense form of τηρῶν in 2:4 (*The Letters of John*, PNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 79), ἀρνούμενος and ὁμολογῶν in 2:23 (*Letters of John*, 106, n. 95), μένων and ἁμαρτάνων in 3:6 (*Letters of John*, 120), ποιῶν in 3:8 (*Letters of John*, 122), and πιστεύων in 5:5 (*Letters of John*, 174).

the articular substantival participles in 1 John are in the present tense-form aligning with my observation that John uses this grammatical form to articulate roles that his audience should embrace or avoid.

John employs a dense lexicogrammatical grid in 1 John, especially but not exclusively concerning the articular substantival participle.[69] I recognize the intricate overlap of lexemes in 1 John and the arbitrary nature of categorizing terms under one heading and not another. However, for convenience's sake, I present the lexemes[70] John writes as articular substantival participles in 1 John under three headings: Speech and Verbal Expressions (λέγω, ἀρνέομαι, ὁμολογέω, πλανάω), Attitudes and Ethical Qualities (ἀγαπάω, φοβέομαι, μισέω, γινώσκω), and Actions and Spiritual States (ἁμαρτάνω, ἔχω, ἔρχομαι, ποιέω, μένω, γεννάω, νικάω, τηρέω, πιστεύω). I offer that John uses the articular substantival participle of these lexemes in a way that reflects a playwright's roles in a script. John describes various roles humans might fulfill in the spiritual drama around them in the last days.

[69] For instance, regarding lexemes, the same six lexemes that occur eleven times in the series of conditional statements in 1 John 1:6-10 John writes twelve times as articular substantival participles in 1 John 2-3. Martin Culy (*Handbook on the Greek Text*, 26-27), following Robert E. Longacre (*The Grammar of Discourse*, 2nd ed; Topics in Language and Linguistics [New York: Plenum, 1983], 9), notes the rhetorical similarity between the third-class conditional clause and the nominative substantival participle but suggests that the latter have a stronger, more direct hortatory force. Culy's observation reinforces the concept of lexicogrammar I articulate in this study.

[70] In the headings below, each lexeme is followed by parentheses listing its Louw-Nida number and general heading (Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. [New York: United Bible Societies, 1989]), and then verse reference(s) in 1 John. My concern in the present study is participles referring to humans. John uses μαρτυρέω in 1 John 5:6, 7 but the subject is the Spirit. Similarly, ἔρχομαι in 1 John 5:6 refers to Jesus's incarnation and is thus outside of the roles humans might fulfill in 1 John.

Speech and Verbal Expressions

λέγω (33.69: Communication)[71] in 2:4, 6, 9

In 1 John 2:4 and 9, John writes the articular substantival participle ὁ λέγων[72] as the first element of a contrast. In 1 John 2:4, the subject/actor proclaims his intimate knowledge of God (ὁ λέγων ὅτι ἔγνωκα αύτὸν).[73] John comments that this self-proclaimed knowledge[74] is a concession to reality if the subject/actor does not keep God's commandments (καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αύτοῦ μὴ τηρῶν). In that case, the subject would be labeled a liar. John's use of the definite article to govern both the λέγων and τηρῶν accentuates the need for integrity in the discipleship talk and walk of his audience. Similarly, John establishes in 1 John 2:9 that if one proclaims that he is in the light (Ὁ λέγων ἐν τῷ φωτὶ εἶναι) but hates his brother (καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αύτοῦ μισῶν), his proclamation is a concession to the reality of his ethical darkness (ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστὶν ἕως ἄρτι).[75] To demonstrate integrity, John writes in 1 John 2:6, the one saying that he remains in fellowship with Jesus (ὁ λέγων ἐν αύτῷ μένειν ὀφείλει), must exhibit Jesus' lifestyle (καὶ αύτὸς οὕτως περιπατεῖν).

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[71] L&N, 1.396.

[72] John writes the aorist subjunctive of λέγω in the apodosis of conditional clauses in 1 John 1:6, 8, 10, establishing the logical grid of the epistle. John sets in the minds of his readers that one's verbal confession of Christ and habits of life identify him or her as a faithful Christian.

[73] Smalley offers that John's formulaic use of the articular substantival participle in 1 John 2:4, 6, and 9 connotes what might have been an actual slogan used in John's community (*I, 2, 3 John*, 47, 51).

[74] Kruse notes the interplay of verbal tense forms in 1 John 2:4 (*Letters of John*, 79). John's perfect ἔγνωκα signals a settled confidence on the part of the speaker, despite beliefs and behavior that contradict knowledge of God as revealed in Jesus.

[75] Howard I. Marshall offers that John may have been writing to a group of believers who knew each other well, small and shrinking as their numbers were. "In this situation failure to care for others was all the more heinous. John's comment is a shocking one, for here and elsewhere he is deliberately awakening us to the need for radical love if we claim to follow Jesus" (*The Epistles of John*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978], 131).

ἀρνέομαι (33.277: Communication)[76] in 2:22[2], 23

The triplet of singular substantival participles of ἀρνέομαι in 1 John 2:22-23a provides the reader with a dense abstract of John's doctrinal worldview script. Here ἀρνέομαι introduces a speech/verbal expression matrix supplemented by ὁμολογέω and πλανάω through 1 John 2:26.

In John's script, historical facts matter. In 1 John 2:22a, John uses the rhetorical question to emphasize that ὁ ἀρνούμενος (the one who denies) that Jesus is the Messiah is a liar. But not a liar of the average stock. Indeed, ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν (the one who denies the Father and the Son) represents the antichrist. To ensure that his readers understand the role of those who deny Jesus, John synthesizes his statement by writing, πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει (No one who denies the Son has the Father).[77]

ὁμολογέω (33.221: Communication)[78] in 2:23

In 1 John 2:23b, ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν (he who confesses the Son) contrasts all those denying the Son (πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν, 1 John 2:23a). John's use of the articular substantival participle of ὁμολογέω in collocation with the same of ἀρνέομαι, portrays the subjects of these participles as if they were embracing established roles.[79] The language is categorical and highly structured. In John's script, an actor's confession or denial of the Son becomes the fulcrum upon which said actor relates to the Father.

πλανάω (31.8: Hold a View, Believe, Trust)[80] in 2:26

In 1 John 2:26, John states that he has written apologetically because he is concerned for those trying to deceive his friends (Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν πλανώντων ὑμᾶς). John's use of the genitive plural stands out from the nominative plural substantival participles that iterate throughout the letter. Lieu notes that "they" references iterate

[76] L&N, 1.419.
[77] Unless noted otherwise, all English translations are from the CSB.
[78] L&N, 1.412.
[79] "The author uses present participles in both these clauses ('no one who denies'; 'whoever acknowledges'), indicating that he is presenting the actions in both cases as on-going rather than complete" (Kruse, *Letters of John*, 106, n. 95).
[80] L&N, 1.366-37

throughout 1 John 2:18-26. "For a moment in v. 26, 'they'—presumably to be discerned behind the genitive participle 'those deceiving' (των πλανώντων)— are brought into direct relationship with 'you,' the accusative υμάς."[81] Eschatological roles are on offer, and the roles one adopts express his eschatological orientation concerning Jesus.

The opponents in view have gone out from the congregation—those who are maintaining their confession that Jesus is the Son of God. The deceivers are persuading John's friends to unwind the tightly bound cords of doctrinal fidelity and ethical purity he taught them from the beginning. John's statement is not just a part of his mental model. Marshall[82] and Smalley note the conative force of τῶν πλανώντων, the latter stating, "The heretics were *intent* upon leading others astray; they were *trying* to do this. But evidently the danger is present, continuing and real."[83] John knows many antichrists have gone out, fulfilling the antagonist role in the eschatological drama.

Attitudes and Ethical Qualities

ἀγαπάω (25.43: Attitudes and Emotions)[84] in 2:10; 3:10, 14; 4:7, 8, 20, 21; 5:1

Of the verbs John employs as articular substantival participles in 1 John, he uses ἀγαπάω most frequently. Each of the eight uses of ἀγαπάω as an articular substantival participle in 1 John is in the nominative case; six have fellow believers as the direct object, and the remaining two (1 John 4:21 and 5:21) have God as the direct object—regarding the need also to love believers. I suggest that the nominative articular substantival participle expresses a concretized action in John's mind. If this is the case, then John presents no role as more important than walking in love with fellow believers.

In 1 John 2:10, John contrasts roles of love and hate toward fellow believers, noting that only the former is in the light (ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ μένει). For John, a person's unfaithfulness in the role of loving other believers (ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ)

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[81] Lieu, "Us or you?: Persuasion and Identity," 812.
[82] NICNT, 162 n. 46.
[83] Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 123 (italics original).
[84] L&N, 1.292-93.

demonstrates that his spiritual ontology is not in God (1 John 3:10). So tight is the correlation between the new birth from God and love for other believers that John can write in 1 John 4:7b-8, ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστιν, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται καὶ γινώσκει τὸν θεόν. ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν οὐκ ἔγνω τὸν θεόν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν (Love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love). The one not loving his brother remains in a state of spiritual death (ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν μένει ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ, 1 John 3:14).

Love for visible brothers, John argues in 1 John 4:20, is prerequisite to claiming love for the unseen God (ὁ γὰρ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ὃν ἑώρακεν, τὸν θεὸν ὃν οὐχ ἑώρακεν οὐ δύναται ἀγαπᾶν).[85] All of this rises to the level of divine command. God commands that those saying they love Him must also love other believers (καὶ ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἔχομεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν θεὸν ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, 1 John 4:21). In 1 John 5:1, John writes that God's sovereignty in granting new birth to believers compels all believers to love the One giving spiritual life and others who have received it (πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν γεννήσαντα ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ).

μισέω (88.198: Moral and Ethical Qualities and Related Behavior)[86] in 2:9, 11; 3:15

It follows that John would dissuade his friends from taking up the role of hatred toward a brother. Three times John uses μισέω as an articular substantival participle in the nominative case. In each instance, τὸν ἀδελφὸν is the object. The one hating his brother is in spiritual darkness, dull to any hope of God's direction in their life (1 John 2:9, 11). For John, the one taking up the role of hatred toward a brother fulfills a secondary, related role: murderer (πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστίν, 1 John 3:15a).[87]

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[85] Lieu comments, "Love brings together the 'objective' experience of God and the visible life of those who believe. It emphasizes too that the sphere of religious life for 1 John is not individual but communal" (*Theology of the Johannine Epistles*, 70).

[86] L&N, 1.762-63.

[87] Concerning the one who takes up the role of hating a brother, "Such a person shares the nature of the devil, the archetypal murderer, and therefore it should

γινώσκω (23.61: Psychological Processes and States)[88] in 4:6

In John's script, characters can take up various roles. The roles one selects exhibit his spiritual orientation as one in alignment with God's revelation in Christ—and concomitant affiliation with the people of God—or departure from Christ and His people. John aims to inspire confidence in his friends as they feel belittled by recent defections (1 John 2:18-21). Countering his audience's faint condition, John writes that the role of knowing God has a dual role of heeding apostolic teaching (ὁ γινώσκων τὸν θεὸν ἀκούει ἡμῶν· ὃς οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὐκ ἀκούει ἡμῶν, 1 John 4:6b).[89]

φοβέομαι (25.252 Attitudes and Emotions)[90] in 4:18

Love for other believers is not the only result of being born again by the God of love. In John's flow of thought in 1 John 4:16-18, knowledge of God's love provides the believer with confidence that they will stand before Christ uncondemned at His return. The role characterized by fear is not consistent with spiritual fulfillment and peace that secure those who know God's love for them (ὁ δὲ φοβούμενος οὐ τετελείωται ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ, 1 John 4:18b).

Actions and Spiritual States

τηρέω (36.19: Guide, Discipline, Follow)[91] in 2:4; 3:24

In both uses of τηρέω (I keep) as an articular substantival participle in 1 John (2:4 and 3:24), the object is τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ (his commands). In the first instance, John coordinates λέγων and τηρῶν with a shared definite article to accentuate the need for those embracing the role of Christian verbal confession also to accept the role of keeping God's commands (ὁ λέγων ὅτι ἔγνωκα αὐτὸν καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ μὴ τηρῶν ψεύστης ἐστίν, 1 John 2:4). In 1 John 3:24, John notes the

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come as no surprise that such a person cannot possibly possess eternal life" (Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 191-92).

[88] L&N, 1.257.

[89] "Over against the false prophets there stands the Christian community of true believers, including John and his readers" (Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 209).

[90] L&N, 1.315.

[91] Ibid., 1.467

reward to be enjoyed by those who embrace the role of keeping God's commands: καὶ ὁ τηρῶν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῷ (The one who keeps his commands remains in him, and he in him).

ἁμαρτάνω (88.289: Moral and Ethical Qualities and Related Behavior)[92] in 3:6; 5:16

Of all the roles John would want his audience to avoid, ὁ ἁμαρτάνων would compete for first place on the list. John's use of ἁμαρτάνω (I sin) as a nominative articular substantival participle in 1 John 3:6 culminates John's teaching about sin in the previous two verses. John's audience should avoid sin not only because all those practicing sin also practice lawlessness (1 John 3:4) but also because Jesus appeared to take away sin, and there is no sin in Him (1 John 3:5). John's teaching in 1 John 3:4-6 resembles a logician's lecture. John deduces that πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν (everyone who sins has not seen him or known him, 1 John 3:6).[93] In 1 John 5:16, John portrays a category of people who are sinning but can be restored to spiritual life via the prayers of other believers (Ἐάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, αἰτήσει καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζωήν, τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσιν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον).

ἔχω (13.2: Be, Become, Exist, Happen)[94] 3:3, 5:12[2]

In John's relational theological worldview, having some spiritual blessing from God (e.g., hope) or a relationship with God obligates one to maintain spiritual fidelity. In 1 John 3:1-2, John describes God's lavish love for believers—love they enjoy now that also assures them of their security with God in the coming age. What is the result of this assurance? Hope and holiness. In 1 John 3:3, John writes πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ ἁγνίζει ἑαυτόν, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἁγνός ἐστιν (everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure). So

[92] Ibid., 1.772-73.

[93] Marshall offers that John sets a choice before every believer (*The Epistles of John*, 182). In the discourse of 1 John, the articular substantival participle regularly brings the reader to the point of decision. It is in this way that 1 John reads like a playwright's script which, upon reading, the cast chooses what roles they wish to perform.

[94] L&N, 1.149.

interpersonal is John's concept of eternal life that he can distinguish those with eternal life and those without it in terms of having or not having the Son (ὁ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει τὴν ζωήν· ὁ μὴ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν ζωὴν οὐκ ἔχει, 1 John 5:12).[95] John portrays dual, antithetical roles here, calling his readers to decide what role they will embrace.[96]

ποιέω (90.45: Case, Agent of a Numberable Event)[97] 2:17, 29; 3:4, 7, 8, 10

John iterates ποιέω as an articular substantival participle throughout 1 John 2-3. In John's eschatological script, one's activity reflects and determines their spiritual orientation. The one who does God's will (ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, 1 John 2:17b) remains forever;[98] all those doing righteousness (πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, 1 John 2:29b)[99] are born of God; the one doing righteousness (ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, 1 John 3:7b) is righteous. Conversely, all those doing sin (Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, 1 John 3:4a) do lawlessness;[100] the one doing sin (ὁ ποιῶν τὴν

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[95] Kruse suggests that idea of having the Son parallels John's language of abiding in Jesus described in the Gospel of John (John 6:56; 14:23; 15:4-7), framing the ontological union believers have with Jesus Christ through faith (Kruse, *Letters of John*, 183).

[96] Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 289.

[97] L&N, 1.803.

[98] "There will come a time when the world which is passing away will have passed away, but those who do the will of God will not have passed away with it, for they will remain forever" (Kruse, *Letters of John*, 96-97).

[99] John Christopher Thomas notes that the seven occurrences of πᾶς followed by an articular participle serve as a cohesive feature in 1 John 2:28-3:10 ("The Literary Structure of 1 John," 374). The roles described via the articular substantival participle shape future beliefs and behavior, as Marshall notes, "The readers themselves can take comfort that, if they do what is righteous, this a sign that they are born of God, and hence that they can have confidence for the day of judgment" (*The Epistles of John*, 169).

[100] Smalley offers that John may have had in mind a specific subset of individuals in the community who argued that sin had no consequence on the believer, secure in Christ (*1, 2, 3 John*, 154). John thus had a mental schema of this role and wished for his audience to reject it.

ἁμαρτίαν, 1 John 3:8a) is of the devil; all those not doing righteousness (πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην, 1 John 3:10b) are not from God.[101]

μένω (13.89, Be, Become, Exist, Happen)[102] in 3:6; 4:16

The verb μένω can be transitive or intransitive and has a spectrum of subject-intensified activity. When John writes μένω as a nominative articular substantival participle in 1 John 3:6 and 4:16, he has in view a higher and not lower degree of activity by the subject. In the first instance, John contrasts all those remaining in Christ (πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων) and those continuing in the role of sinning (πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων ούχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν). John uses a similar grammatical construction and subject-intensified activity in 1 John 4:16, noting that since God is love, the one who remains in love remains in God and God in him (ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἐν τῷ θεῷ μένει, καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ μένει).

γεννάω (13.56: Be, Become, Exist, Happen)[103] in 3:9; 5:1[2], 4, 18[2]

John's use of γεννάω as an articular substantival participle is always in the passive voice in reference to humans, those born of God. In this way, γεννάω is distinct among the verbs analyzed in the present study because nearly all the articular substantival participles in 1 John are in the active voice. What kind of a role might John describe with the passive voice?

John uses γεννάω to articulate the spiritual ontology that he presents as the basis of eschatology and ethics throughout 1 John.[104] Thus John

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[101] "We must not misinterpret the text for pastoral reasons. Properly interpreted, the text remains a source of comfort. John is describing the ideal character of the Christian, ideal in the sense that this is the reality intended by God for him, even if he falls short of it while he still lives in this sinful world. The person who is conscious of the new beginning that God has made in his life will seek to let that divine ideal become more and more of a reality" (Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, 187).

[102] L&N, 1.158.

[103] Ibid., 1.154.

[104] "Nowhere in this letter does the author describe what is involved in the *process* of being 'born of God'. His interest is more practical. He is interested in the *behavior* of those born of God: they do right (2:29), do not sin (3:9; 5:18),

notes in 1 John 3:9a that the person who has been born of God does not continue in a lifestyle of practicing sin because God's seed remains in him (Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, ὅτι σπέρμα αύτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει).[105] John writes similarly in 1 John 5:18, reminding his audience at the end of the epistle that all those born of God do not sin (πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει).[106]

To reinforce the need for his audience to love both God and other believers, John writes that πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν γεννήσαντα ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ (everyone who loves the Father also loves the one born of him, 1 John 5:1b).[107] In 1 John 5:3-4, John writes that those who believe in Christ show love for God and other believers by keeping God's commands despite opposition from the world. And obedience to God is not a burden to believers because the one whose spiritual ontology

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love one another (4:7), believe that Jesus is the Christ (5:1), and overcome the world (5:18)" (Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 124).

[105] John writes various lexemes as articular substantival participles in 1 John. Believers might thus fulfill various roles. But those can be summarized by recognizing binary poles in relation to Jesus. Marshall comments, "John makes his statements in absolute terms: the way in which he can interchange subjects and predicates indicates that there is a one-to-one correspondence between those who are born of God and those who do what is right, love one another, believe in Jesus, overcome the world, and refrain from sin. There are no shades of grey here: it is a case of belonging to the light or the darkness, to God or the devil, to righteousness and love or to sin" (*The Epistles of John*, 186).

[106] As noted already, in the present study, my concern is with articular substantival participles with human subjects. I take ὁ γεννηθεὶς in 1 John 5:18b as a reference to Jesus, in accord with the reading of αυτον in A* and B instead of ἑαυτὸν listed in NA28.

[107] Smalley offers that John's coordination of γεννάω in participial form in 1 John 5:1, tightens the familial bonds of Christian brotherhood. Anyone who loves his parents must also love other offspring of his parents, i.e., his own siblings (*1, 2, 3 John*, 267). Lieu comments similarly, writing, "As a community their sense of corporate identity goes hand in hand with an individualism expressed through the metaphors of religious experience—being born, abiding, knowing" (*Theology of the Johannine Epistles*, 104).

is of God is enabled for victory over the world (πᾶν τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ νικᾳ̃ τὸν κόσμον, 1 John 5:4a).[108]

νικάω (39.57 Hostility, Strife)[109] in 5:4, 5

In 1 John 5:4-5, John uses νικάω first as an articular attributive participle in the aorist tense-form and then as an articular substantival participle in the present tense-form. Kruse notes that this aorist/present tense-form distinction is not so much about time, "rather, it is stylistic, indicating the author's choice to portray the victory of faith as a complete action in the first case and as an ongoing process in the second."[110] Indeed, John writes νικάω in different tense-forms in 1 John 5:4 so that the audience views that action of νικάω from different aspectual vantage points (Kruse's reference to style) but also in different structural positions. As noted, in 1 John 5:4a, John writes that the one born of God conquers the world. The aorist articular participle of νικάω in 1 John 5:4b is attributive, modifying the cognate noun νίκη in the predicate nominative position (καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἡ νικήσασα τὸν κόσμον, 1 John 5:4b). John scaffolds the phrases of 1 John 5:4 to highlight the nominative appositional phrase ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν (our faith) at the conclusion of the sentence.[111]

The believer's faith is potent over worldly temptation—and thus, in 1 John 5:5, John uses νικάω to describe the eschatological role of the victor. John asks the rhetorical question, "Who is the one who conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (Τίς δέ ἐστιν ὁ νικῶν τὸν κόσμον εἰ μὴ ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ;) to underscore the power of the believer's faith in Christ. Smalley comments on John's use of cognates for faith/belief and victory/conquer writing, "The individual believer takes the place of an allusion (in v. 4) to 'faith'; for in the end it is the believing Christian himself who conquers

[108] "Those who have been born of God have overcome the wordily tendency to satisfy their own sinful cravings, and as a result they are free to show love to others and so fulfill God's command" (Kruse, *The Letters of John*, 173).
[109] L&N, 1.500.
[110] Kruse, *Letters of John*, 174.
[111] Kruse notes that this is the only reference to the noun πίστις in John's writings (*The Letters of* John, 173). By contrast, the verb πιστεύω occurs nine times in 1 John and ninety-eight times in the Gospel of John.

the world, rather than belief by itself."[112] John's coordination of different grammatical functions of the same verb νικάω emphasizes John's notion of the believer's power over the world. John would have his friends embrace the coordinated roles of belief and victory—and win the battle against the world and those who have departed from the fellowship of their community.

πιστεύω (31.35 Hold a View, Believe, Trust)[113] in 5:1, 5, 10[2], 13

Throughout this study, I have noted John's dense use of verbs in specific sections of 1 John. In 1 John 5, πιστεύω is on John's mind. He writes the verb as an articular substantival participle—a grammatical form that would describe a role in a script—in 1 John 5:1, 5, 10[2], 13. The impact of this role is seen not only in the density of the term's use in the span of thirteen verses but in each particular instance. John's concern is that his readers believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son; that is, they believe God.[114] Thus, all those believing that Jesus is the Christ have been born of God (Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ Χριστὸς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται, 1 John 5:1a). The one who conquers the world is the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, 1 John 5:5b). The one who believes that Jesus is God's Son, believes God's testimony about Jesus (ὁ πιστεύων είς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἔχει τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν αὐτῷ, ὁ μὴ πιστεύων τῷ θεῷ ψεύστην πεποίηκεν αύτόν, ὅτι ού πεπίστευκεν είς τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν μεμαρτύρηκεν ὁ θεὸς περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αύτοῦ, 1 John 5:10). In John's concluding statement of purpose for writing, he addresses his readers in the second person dative followed by the dative of apposition of the articular substantival participle (Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, ἵνα είδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αίώνιον, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν είς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, 1 John 5:13).[115]

[112] Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 275.

[113] L&N, 1.369.

[114] "While the necessity of right belief about Jesus is stressed, it is God who is the centre of religious experience, God who is light and love, God who is the source of both the commandments and of the believer's begetting" (Lieu, *Theology of the Johannine Epistles*, 103).

[115] Smalley observes that John's use of πιστεύω in 1 John 5:10 and 13 emphasize the individual believer's faith in and commitment, or lack thereof, to

Conclusion

John wants no audience member to be confused about the nature of the Christian message. Despite those who have gone out (1 John 2:18-19), the Christian message and the lifestyle of its adherents will never change. John establishes his argument using a network of verbs for speech and action. The articular substantival participles in 1 John become concretized eschatological roles that various actors fulfill in the drama of salvation history.

I have set two goals for this research. First, I have offered a framework for how interpreters might employ SFL within the broader goals of DA. By identifying lexicogrammar patterns, interpreters can articulate cohesive features in a discourse. These features are the bonds that hold sections of text together. Density in lexicogrammar provides interpreters with an objective basis for recognizing peak units in a text.

Second, I have shown that grammar is a sure guide to theology. By looking at one grammatical feature of 1 John, the dense iteration of articular substantival participles, I have sketched John's vision of ecclesiology as a participatory endeavor. These participles resemble roles in a script, and John goads his audience to embrace roles that demonstrate confidence in Jesus in the last days.

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Christ (*1, 2, 3 John*, 285, 289, 291). I suggest here that one way to understand John's pastoral concern is to identify John's use of the articular substantival participle as portraying a role in a script of a live drama in which his audience—and every human—participates. John has believers in view, believers wrestling with the pressures of sin and worldliness round about them, pressures that have gotten the best of some of their friends. Marshall proposes that John writes not to unbelievers but believers who might be tempted to doubt their Christian experience and forgo the rigorous paths of fidelity to Jesus (*The Epistles of John*, 243).

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Saul as a King-Priest

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At the end of the period of the judges, the elders of Israel request a constitutional switch of Israel's government to a monarchy so that a king would bring justice to the land. The elders present their case upon two premises: Samuel's sons are unjust judges, and the Philistines oppress Israel.[1] The elders validate their request by quoting Deuteronomy 17:14–15, whereby God permitted Israel to have a king.[2] This paper argues that

[1] Robert P. Gordon, "Who Made the Kingmaker? Reflections on Samuel and the Institution of the Monarchy," in *Faith, Tradition, and History: OT Historiography in Its Near Eastern Context* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 255–69.

[2] For the book of Samuel's dependance upon Deuteronomy 17:14–20, see Christophe Nihan, "Rewriting Kingship in Samuel: 1 Samuel 8 and 12 and the Law of the King (Deuteronomy 17)," *HBAI* 2, no. 3 (2013): 325; Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the OT*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1989), 419. For other studies that argue for Samuel's dependance upon Deuteronomy, see Yoon Jong Yoo, "The Shema (Deut 6:4–5) in the Story of Samuel (1 Samuel 1–15)," *ExpTim* 123, no. 3 (2011): 119–21; Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., "Characterization in 1–2 Samuel: The Use of Quotations and Intertextual Links," *BSac* 174, no. 693 (2017): 45–59; P. Kyle McCarter, *1 Samuel: A New Translation*, AB 8 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), 162–63. For a description of how the LXX's translator of Deuteronomy 17:14–20 sought to distinguish between the ideal and the real Israelite king, see Hans Ausloos, "The 'Law of the King' (Deut 17:14–20) in the Septuagint: Between Ideal and Reality," *Sem* 55 (2013): 157–72. Cf. Gary N. Knoppers argued, "the influential view that the Deuteronomic law of the king represents the Deuteronomist's stance on kingship should be abandoned." See also Gary N. Knoppers, "The Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomic Law of the King: A Reexamination of a Relationship," *ZAW* 108, no. 3 (1996): 345. See also Clements, who argued that the Dtr focuses upon divinely chosen kings and those who were not. He argued that the Dtr

the narrator describes Saul as a king-priest priestly through his confirmation to the monarchy in 1 Samuel 9–11. It will analyze how the narrator characterizes Saul as a king-priest in 9–10:1–16. It will do so by first by showing how the narrator foreshadows Saul to lead Israel like a king-priest like all the surrounding nations. Second, it will do so by analyzing the *leitwort* נָגִיד in 1 Samuel 9–10:16 then Saul's priestly portion at the Banquet in 9:22–27. Lastly, it will analyze the signs of Saul's confirmations as king-priest in 10:1–16.

Saul as a King-priest in 1 Samuel 9–11

The narrator introduces Saul in a narrative gap between the elder's request in 1 Samuel 8 and Saul at the covenant ceremony at Mizpah in 1 Samuel 10:17–27.[3] Saul's introduction fulfills God's response to the elder's request for a king in 1 Samuel 8, but also it cast Saul as a king like all the nations. This section investigates the function of Saul's confirmation in 1 Samuel 9–11 in three parts. The first part provides background to Saul's confirmation as נָגִיד. The second part examines how the narrative characterizes the cultic role of Saul with the lead word נגד. The last part will examine Samuel's banquet and the priestly portion that Saul receives.

Background to Saul's Confirmation as נָגִיד

Saul hails from Gibeah of Benjamin, which signals an immoral and synchronistic character because of the events in Judges 19–21.[4] The tribe of Benjamin intermarried with Jabesh-Gilead and Shiloh, and these

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interest in the house of David affected his view of the religious role of the king. See R. E. Clements, "Deuteronomistic Interpretation of the Founding of the Monarchy in 1 Sam 8," *VT* 24, no. 4 (1974): 398–410.

[3] G. Coleman Luck showed how the ending of 1 Samuel 8 expected the rise of the king. See G. Coleman Luck, "Israel's Demand for a King," *BSac* 120, no. 477 (1963): 4.63; J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analyses*, SSN 20, 23, 27, 31 (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1981–1993), 335.

[4] Sara J. Milstein, "Saul the Levite and His Concubine: The 'Allusive' Quality of Judges 19," *VT* 66 (2016): 95–116; Sam Dragga, "In the Shadow of the Judges: The Failure of Saul," *JSOT* 12, no. 38 (1987): 39–46. Cf. Michael Avioz, "Saul as a Just Judge in Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews," *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures V* (2009): 367–76.

marriages united their tribal relationship with Jabesh-Gilead and Shiloh.[5] The text does not say whether Saul's family descends from Jabesh-Gilead or Shiloh, but Saul's grandfather more than likely abducted a wife from one of these towns.[6] The events in Judges 19–21 shape the Benjaminite's identity and Saul's character. Saul affirmed his tribes' inferior position to the other tribes when Samuel proposed that Saul and his tribe shall receive the monarchy, "Am I not a Benjaminite from the smallest tribe of Israel and I am from the smallest from all the clans of my tribe in Benjamin.[7] Why do you speak to me this way?"[8]

Nevertheless, Saul was not a commoner but his father, Kish, was a nobleman (גִּבֹּור חָיִל), and he had high prestige among the people.[9] Saul reflects the physical stature of his father, and Bergen observed that Saul was the only Israelite who was noted for being tall, and elsewhere it mentions Israel's enemies as tall. (cf. Num 13:33; Deut 1:28; 2:10; 9:2; 1 Sam 17:4).[10] The narrative introduces Saul with a mission to find the family's donkeys, but Saul being unable to find them proposes to return with his servant. His servant suggests they inquire from a local prophet, which is Samuel.[11]

Samuel lived in Ramah, which is only 5 miles from Saul's hometown, and the geographical proximity excludes justifying his ignorance. However, the territory of Benjamin has the largest cultic prominence in

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[5] Isaac Mendelsohn, "The Family in the Ancient Near East," *BA* 11, no. 2 (1948): 24–40.

[6] The narrative showed Saul having a close affiliation with the priesthood from Shiloh as the Elide priesthood follows Saul on his campaigns.

[7] Robert D. Bergen, *First and Second Samuel*, NAC 7 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 124–25.

[8] 1 Samuel 9:21. See also Bridge's article for self-abasing as a form of expressing gratitude. Bridge did not cite 1 Samuel 9:21, but his principles apply to Saul. Edward J. Bridge, "Self-abasement as an Expression of Thanks in the Hebrew Bible," *Bib* 92, no. 2 (2011): 255–73.

[9] Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, WBC 10 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 86; McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 173; Henry Preserved Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, ICC 8 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1977), 60.

[10] Bergen, *First and Second Samuel*, 121.

[11] See for a discussion on *na'ar*, David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 265.

Israel, but this does not infer each site shared similar practices.[12] The narrative suggests that Saul travels to cultic sites such as Nob instead of Samuel's circuit.[13] Thus, Saul ties himself to the priest of Eli, who God judged for their impiety.[14] Saul's ignorance of Samuel is a glaring fault since the narrator portrays Samuel as the true prophet in Israel, and other prophets deriving their authority from Samuel.[15] Saul's ignorance reflects his allegiance with the customs of the nations, rather than a follower of Yahweh.[16] The narrative begins to reveal that Saul will rule like the surrounding nations and does not align with Samuel and the Lord, but he aligns with the elder's request for a king like all the nations.

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[12] Scott M. Langston, "The Religious and Political Role of the Tribe of Benjamin: A Study of Iron Age Cultic Sites and Activities" (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992), 202–04. See for the religious environment in Benjamin and its influence on Saul's monarchy in Stanley D. Walters, "Saul of Gibeon," *JSOT* 16, no. 52 (1991): 61–76; Rainer Albertz, *Family and Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of OT Studies, Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Cultural Studies*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 265–78; Herbert Chanan Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land and Afterlife: A Biblical Complex," *HUCA* 44 (1973): 1–54; Langston, "The Religious and Political Role of the Tribe of Benjamin," 199–210.

[13] Samuel began his ministry at Shiloh, but after the fall of Shiloh, he served as a regional judge. The priesthood filtered out to other areas, and Nob showed affiliation with Shiloh (1 Samuel 22:9). Each tribe had regional cultic sites and the Benjaminites had a strong connection with Shiloh. See for a theoretical reconstruction of the cultic life in the early monarchy in light of the archeological and the biblical description in Langston, "The Religious and Political Role of the Tribe of Benjamin," 189–91.

[14] John R. Spencer, "Priestly Families (or Factions) in Samuel and Kings," in *The Pitcher is Broken: Memorial Essays for Gosta W. Ahlstrom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 387–400.

[15] John T. Willis, "Cultic Elements in the Story of Samuel's Birth and Dedication," *ST* 26, no. 1 (1972): 33–61; W. F. Albright, *Samuel and the Beginnings of the Prophetic Movement*, Goldenson Lecture (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1961); Rolf Rendtorff, "Samuel the Prophet: A Link Between Moses and the Kings," in *The Quest for Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders*, ed. Shemaryahu Talmon Craig A. Evans, BibInt 28 (New York: Brill, 1997), 26–36.

[16] Daniel L. Hawk proposed that when Saul built an altar to the Lord, it was his first time. L. Daniel Hawk, "Saul's Altar," *CBQ* 72, no. 4 (2010): 678–87.

Leitwort נָגִיד in 1 Samuel 9–10:16

Martin Buber was the first scholar to identify the *leitwort* נָגִיד in 1 Samuel 9–10:16.[17] Buber highlighted the narrative's focus upon Samuel, the נָבִיא, and his role to declare (הִגִּיד) that Saul was God's נָגִיד. Although Buber pointed out the wordplay, most scholars have not elaborated on the purpose of the wordplay within the narrative.[18] An exception is Shemuel Shaviv, who argued that the wordplay reflected the belief that everything the prophet said (הִגִּיד) will come to pass and that the princes (נָגִיד) are designated or announced (הִגִּיד) by God.[19] The wordplay builds upon the elder's request for a king 1 Samuel 8, where they quote Deuteronomy 17:14–15 that allows for a king but one that the Lord appoints. The Lord responds to the elder's request in 1 Samuel 9–10:16 by designating (הִגִּיד) Saul as the next king.

The *leitworte* הִגִּיד and נָגִיד create a wordplay that centers upon the process of God electing a king through his prophet. The process begins with Saul seeking his father's donkeys in 1 Samuel 9, and his servant suggest in verse six that a prophet would declare (הִגִּיד) to them the location of the donkeys. The Lord reveals to Samuel that he would appoint a נָגִיד in 9:16, which is one designated by God.[20] God reveals to

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[17] Martin Buber, "Die Erzählung von Sauls Königswahl," *VT* 6, no. 2 (1956): 126.

[18] See for scholars who identified *ngd* as a *leitwort* in 1 Samuel 9, McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 176; Shemuel Shaviv, "Nābîʾ and Nāgîd in 1 Samuel 9:1–10:16," *VT* 34, no. 1 (1984): 108–12; Lyle M. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1–12*, BLS 10 (Sheffield: Almond, 1985), 293, 335; Peter D. Miscall, *1 Samuel: A Literary Reading*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 62; Robert Polzin, *Samuel and the Deuteronomist. Part Two: 1 Samuel*, A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 98; Diana V. Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, JSOTSup 121 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991), 44–45; Buber, "Die Erzählung von Sauls Königswahl," 126; Georges Auzou, *La Danse Devant l'arche, Ètude du Livre de Samuel*, Connaissance de la Bible 6 (Paris: Éditions de l'Orante, 1968), 126. V. Philips Long, *1 and 2 Samuel: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale OT Commentary (Downers Grove: IVP, 2020), 110; Cartledge, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 125; Wilhelm Vischer, *Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testaments*, (Zürich: Evangel Verlag, 1942), 126, 76.

[19] See, Shaviv, "Nābîʾ and Nāgîd in 1 Samuel 9:1–10:16," 108–13.

[20] For scholars who argue that נָגִיד means crown-prince/one designated by God, see Wolfgang Richter, "Die nagid-Formel: Ein Beitrag zur Erhellung des Nagid-

Samuel that he is to anoint a man over God's people to save them from the Philistines.[21]

Saul inquires the location of the seer, which Samuel declares (הִגִּיד) to Saul that he is the prophet. However, Samuel declares to Saul more than he expects by appointing Saul to fulfill the desires of all the nation for a king. The narrative reinforces the monarchy under God's sovereign choice so that the rise of the monarchy relies upon God's sovereignty. The formation of the Israelite monarchy begins with appointing Saul with the title נָגִיד.[22] This title has been translated in various ways, such as crown-prince, shepherd, leader, or even chief.[23] The first occurrence of

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Problems," *BZ* 9, no. 1 (1965): 71–84; Timothy C. G. Thornton, "Charismatic Kingship in Israel and Judah," *JTS* 14, no. 1 (1963): 1–11; Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings*, ConBOT 8 (Lund: Gleerup, 1976), 168–73.

[21] See for the narrative genre of 1 Samuel 9 in Michael W. Martin, "Betrothal Journey Narratives," *CBQ* 70 (2008): 505–23; Norman C. Habel, "Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," *ZAW* 77, no. 3 (1965): 297–323. Frolov argued that Saul's anointing in 1 Sam 9:1–10:16 followed the conventions of an 'action fiction' genre. The narrative drew attention to the fact that Israel's first king was inaugurated clandestinely, under the Philistine military occupation. See, Serge Frolov, "The Semiotics of Covert Action in 1 Samuel 9–10," *JSOT* 31, no. 4 (2007): 429–50.

[22]Ludwig Köhler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the OT*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 668. Genesius describes the root as n-d-v "to be willing." Friedrich Heinrich Wilhelm Gesenius, E. Rödiger, and B. Davidson, *The Hebrew Grammar of Genesius: Translated from the Eleventh German Edition*, (London: 1852), 535.

[23] Scholars divide themselves into three main views on נָגִיד in Israel. These three views define נָגִיד as shepherd, crown-prince/designated one, and leader. Each view splinters depending on the scholar's presuppositions on the reconstruction of the text, etymology, and ANE cognates. For 'shepherd', see J. J. Glück, "Nagid-Shepherd," *VT* 13, no. 2 (1963): 144–50; Donald F. Murray, *Divine Prerogative and Royal Pretension: Pragmatics, Poetics and Polemics in a Narrative Sequence about David (2 Samuel 5.17–7.29)*, JSOTSup 264 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 281–301. For crown-prince, see Richter, "Die nagid-Formel," 71–84; Thornton, "Charismatic Kingship in Israel and Judah," 1–11; Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 168–73. For 'leader', see Ludwig Schmidt, *Menschlicher Erfolg und Jahwes Initiative: Studien zu Tradition, Interpretation und Historie in Überlieferungen von Gideon, Saul und David*, WMANT 38 (Neukirchen-Vluyn:

נָגִיד in 1 Sam 9:16 defines the meaning as one who leads God's people to defeat their enemies. The Lord calls the נָגִיד to perform holy war against the Philistines but limits his office to the commands of the Lord.

A נָגִיד expresses leadership over the Lord's heritage, but the preposition *lamed* specifies his role as a steward over Israel.[24] Jenni Ernst classifies the prepositional use as revaluation of a person, which signifies that Saul's duties have changed to a leader over God's people.[25] The chart below summarizes the prepositional use of *lamed*.

1 Sam 9:16	Over my people Israel
1 Sam 10:1, 13:14	Over his people, over his heritage
1 Sam 25:30; 2 Sam 5:2	Over Israel
1 Chron 28:4	Over Israel forever
2 Chron 11:22	From among his brothers

Figure 1: *Lamed* and Its Use with נָגִיד

The Lord entrusts the נָגִיד with his possession; however, Israel does not become the property of the נָגִיד, but he is a steward.

The Lord clarifies the role of a נָגִיד in 1 Samuel 13:14 with the phrase "according to his heart."[26] This phrase expresses that Israel's leader should lead according to God's desires, which he expresses in the law and through his prophets. Saul would later disqualify himself because he leads Israel contrary to the desires of the Lord. The narrative describes Saul fighting the Philistines and all his surrounding enemies.[27] However,

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Neukirchener Verlag, 1970), 668; Albrecht Alt, *Die Staatenbildung der Israeliten in Palästina*, Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel 2. 2 (München: Beck, 1953).

[24] For a detailed description of the function of an infinitive with the *lamed* preposition, see Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblio, 1991), 146.

[25] Ernst Jenni, *Die Hebraïschen Präpositionen. Band 3: Die Präpositionen Lamed*, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), 34, 41.

[26] Jason S. DeRouchie, "The Heart of YHWH and His Chosen One in 1 Samuel 13:14," *BBR* 24, no. 4 (2014): 467–89.

[27] 1 Sam 14:47.

the Lord calls Saul to place the Amalekites under the ban, but Saul fails to administer the Lord's commands.[28] Saul's failure highlights a key function of a נָגִיד which is one who obeys the commands of the Lord and leads the Lord's people to obey the law. His other duties are built upon his obedience to the covenant. The Lord rejects Saul because he is unable to lead Israel spiritually.

In 1 Samuel 9:17, the Lord describes the role of a נָגִיד as one who will "restrain" his people.[29] When Samuel sees Saul, God reveals that Saul is the man, but also describes his purpose with the verb עָצַר.[30] Bergen observed:

> The core meaning is "to restrain/constrict." In the majority of its forty–six occurrences in the Hebrew text, the word possesses a negative connotation, suggesting imprisonment (2 Kgs 17:4; Jer

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[28]1 Sam 15:23.

[29] The word 'עָצַר' has multiple interpretations on how to translate. 1. Muster: McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 179. 2. *Coercere Imperio*: S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel: With an Introduction on Hebrew Palaeography and the Ancient Versions and Facsimiles of Inscriptions and Maps*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 74. 3. Supply ישר because Textual Corruption: Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, 64. 4. Rule: Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 276. Klein, *1 Samuel*, 89.

[30] Baldwin argued that the verb referred to a special form of rule, under the kingship of the Lord. See Joyce G. Baldwin, *An Introduction and Commentary: First and Second Samuel*, TOTC 8 (London: IVP, 1988), 96. Rudman argued Saul's task was to 'rein in' the people. See, Dominic Rudman, "The Commissioning Stories of Saul and David as Theological Allegory," *VT* 50, no. 4 (2000): 519–30. McCarter and Auld argued that Saul was supposed to muster Israel in order to fight the Philistines. See, McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 179. Woodhouse argued that Saul was supposed to restrain Israel from becoming like the nations. See, John Woodhouse, *1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, (2014), 163. Tsumura argued that it referred to holding back those in a military prepared for holy war. He built his argument from H. Seebass' article. See, Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 276; Horst Seebass, "Tradition und Interpretation bei Jehu ben Chanani und Ahia von Silo," *VT* 25, no. 2 (1975): 182. Long suggested that it should be read negatively as though Saul will hinder Israel from realizing the kind of kingship they need. See, Long, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 111.

33:1), sterility (Gen 20:18), silencing (Job 4:2), or holding back (2 Kgs 4:24). In fact, 9:17 is the only location in Scripture where the word can be taken to mean "rule."[31]

Although the usage is unique, the narrator is describing the primary purpose of the new office of the king.[32] Edelman elaborated that עָצַר related to the primary duty of the king, "to restrain the people's tendency to 'become like all the nations' and to adopt foreign practices that will lead them to break the terms of the ongoing Horeb covenant."[33] The role of the designated king is to lead the people in covenant obedience and so that they do not become like all the nations. The נָגִיד is a spiritual leader over Israel that leads the people according to the will and desire of the Lord expressed in the law. If Saul's role is to lead Israel with covenant faithfulness, then why does God elect him?

The narrative does not outright declare God's intentions in electing Saul. However, the narrative insinuates that Saul is not a faithful covenant follower, but mirrors the nations surrounding him.[34] Bergen suggested that the Lord had determined to use Saul's career as a means of punishing the nation. The people ask for a king like all the nations and God gives them a king liked they asked for, but he would not alter from His desire for the requirements of the king. God gives Saul authority over Israel, but He does not relinquish His right over Israel. Thus, the role of the נָגִיד focuses on Israel obeying the covenant externally through fighting surrounding nations and internally obeying the covenant.

Saul's Priestly Portion at the Banquet in 9:22–27

The narrative portrays Samuel preparing a meal and inviting guests in preparation for Saul's arrival. The narrator structures Saul's travel with coincidences that leads him to Ramah, and these events affirm

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[31] Bergen, *First and Second Samuel*, 123.

[32] Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, 48. For further discussion of the sense of עָצַר, McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 179. Ernst Kutsch, "Die Wurzel עצר im Hebräischen," *VT* 2, no. 1 (1952): 57–69.

[33] Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah*, 48.

[34] Karel van der Toorn, "Saul and the Rise of Israelite State Religion," *VT* 43, no. 4 (1993): 528; Serge Frolov and Vladimir Orel, "Gods of Israel: The Religious Pluralism in the Times of Saul and David," *BeO* 39 (1997): 21–39.

God's guidance in Saul's election.[35] Upon Saul's arrival, Samuel honors him with royal honors, which signals to the guest that Saul is the reason for the sacrificial meal. Samuel gives a portion to Saul that a priest might receive in a wave offering.[36] The leg that Saul receives has a unique phrase 'that which was upon it,' which is a nominalization of a prepositional phrase that describes the fatty portion that was given to the priest as their due.[37]

Tsumura argued that the portion referred to a priestly offering because "the two gutturals /'/ and /'/ are normally distinguished in Hebrew, and the fact that 4QSam[a] preserves the spelling 'should not be ignored."[38] The portion that Samuel gives to Saul is a leg, but the text is ambiguous on which leg that Saul received.[39] Samuel gathers the local leaders to announce God's anointed. Jonathan S. Greer stated concerning the importance of feasting with the kings of Israel, "These feasts, then, would have served as mechanisms intended to build solidarity in the formative years of the burgeoning state, celebrating the

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[35] Ferdinand Deist, "Coincidence as a Motif of Divine Intervention in 1 Samuel 9," *OTE 6* 6, no. 1 (1993): 7–18.

[36] Krijn A. van der Jagt, "What Did Saul Eat When He First Met Samuel?: Light From Anthropology on Biblical Texts," *BT* 47, no. 2 (1996): 226–30.

[37] Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 279. McCarter and others follow A. Geiger's suggestion to read' *alyāh*, "a fatty tail." See McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 170; Robert P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 116; Karl Budde, *Die Bücher Samuel*, KHC 8 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1902); Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*; Julius Wellhausen, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).

[38] Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 279. The LXX[L] and other Greek MSS agree with the MT. However, Josephus Ant. 6.52 reads *merida basilikēn*, "a royal portion." Yet, the LXX[B] has the shortest reading with just *ʾt hšwq*. See McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 171.

[39] See for a possible suggestion for the right leg in Jagt, "What Did Saul Eat When He First Met Samuel?," 226–30. See for commentators who argued that it refers to Saul's priestly status, Baldwin, *First and Second Samuel*, 97; Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the OT*, 427; McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 181; Cartledge, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 129. Gordon, Tsumura, and Long argued that the thigh is a token of the new status, which is about to be conferred upon him. See, Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 280; Long, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 113; Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 117. See Klein, who argued that the leg was ambiguous, Klein, *1 Samuel*, 91.

people's unity and reinforcing traditional ties."[40] The meal serves to unite Israel, but also serves as a cultic ritual that Samuel instructs Saul on his role as king. The potential wave offering suggests that the king might receive sacrifices on behalf of Israel, but the evidence from the banquet is not conclusive. However, the narrative hints that the king would participate in Israel's religious festivals.[41]

Saul spends the night at Samuel's, and the narrative suggests that they have a private conversation between them.[42] Samuel anoints Saul the next morning, and Samuel gives him three signs that will confirm his initial election as a נָגִיד, but also confirms his future role as a king.[43] This section traces the role of the three signs that Samuel gives to Saul and their relationship to Saul's cultic role.

Signs of Saul's Confirmations as King-priest in 10:1–16

The following section investigates the three signs of Saul's confirmation and their correspondence with Saul's cultic function with the monarchy. The first sign is two men who will declare to Saul at Rachel's tomb that "the donkeys are found that you were seeking and behold your father has ceased the matter of the donkey, and he is anxious for you." Most commentators interpret the first sign as God reassuring Saul that his original mission with the donkey's is complete.[44] However,

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[40] Jonathan S. Greer, "Sacred Feasting and Social Change at Iron II Tel Dan," in *Feasting in the Archaeology and Texts of the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (2014), 126.

[41] Delbert R. Hillers, "Ugaritic šnpt 'Wave-offering'," *BASOR* 198 (1970): 42–42; Jagt, "What Did Saul Eat When He First Met Samuel?," 226–30.

[42] 1 Samuel 9:25–27. The narrative leaves open the conversation between Saul and Samuel. A reasonable suggestion would be that Samuel instructs Saul concerning the duties of the king, since there is no clear instruction from Samuel until 10:1–8, 15–16, 10:25 and these are not elaborate descriptions of the king's duties. Samuel instructs throughout Saul's ministry until he departs never from seeing him in 1 Samuel 15:35.

[43] Christopher T. Begg argued that Josephus had a mixed text type, and he streamlined Saul's and Samuel's character so that they take on a positive nuance. See, Christopher T. Begg, "The Anointing of Saul According to Josephus," *BBR* 16, no. 1 (2006): 1–24.

[44] Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 111; Bergen, *First and Second Samuel*, 128; Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 75; Klein, *1 Samuel*, 91; J. Robert Vannoy, *1–2 Samuel*, Cornerstone Biblical Commentary (London: Tyndale 2009), 94. Cf. McCarter

Keil and Delitzsch capture the overall thrust of the signs when they argued that the first sign opens a new mission for Saul, and the sign encourages Saul to pursue God's calling to deliver Israel.[45]

The first sign also undermines Saul as the future king with his incompetence in finding the donkeys. Kings in the ANE were depicted as great warriors who hunted large prey, and they were also shepherds who oversaw their people like a flock.[46] In addition, The OT describes many of its leaders as shepherds over Israel, and their duty is to lead the people of Israel. However, the narrative shows that Saul fails as a shepherd since he fails to hunt down a domesticated donkey.[47] The narrative does not directly criticize Saul, but a reoccurring *leitworte* in 1 Samuel 10 is the word "to find." Saul never finds anything, but God's providence brings everything to him. Thus, the narrative devalues Saul as the future king and undercuts his leadership as the covenant leader of Israel. The narrative intentionally questions Saul's ability to lead Israel in covenant righteousness. The second and third signs will elaborate on God's calling for the king of Israel.

The Second Sign of the Bread and Wine

Saul received the second sign near the Oak of Tabor from two men going up to worship at Bethel. They gave part of their sacrifices to Saul, which is the second time that Saul receives a sacrifice in the narrative.[48] Most commentators suggest the bread appeases his hunger, but the

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proposed that it is unclear whether all the signs are confirmation for Saul's anointment. See McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 181. Robert Smith argued the first sign is unintelligible. See Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, 67.

[45] Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the OT*, 2.429. See also F. J. Helfmeyer, "אוֹת," *Theological Dictionary of the OT*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 167–88.

[46] Bergen, *First and Second Samuel*, 122.

[47] Jørn Varhaug, "The Decline of the Shepherd Metaphor as Royal Self-Expression," *SJOT* 33, no. 1 (2019): 16–23.

[48] Keith W. Carley, "Two Loaves for Saul: An Exegetical Study of 1 Samuel 10.3–4," *Colloquium* 9, no. 2 (1976): 17–22. See for the DSS in Andrea Ravasco, "Saul and the Feast of Weeks: 1 Sam 10:4 in 4QSam and Later Tradition," *RevQ* 25, no. 3 (2012): 473–80.

narrative does not insinuate that Saul needs food.[49] Carley argued,

> But at no stage does hunger emerge as a theme of the basic saga. To begin with, Saul's lack of bread is mentioned not because of his hunger but because he required a gift suitable for a man of God. Moreover, when he met the man food was of no concern to him, for he shared a sacrificial meal as one of the man's guests (9.24b). When the two loaves were given to Saul then, they were less likely to have been meant to satisfy his hunger than to designate him as a man worthy to receive a gift of bread.[50]

He does not have food upon arrival at Samuel's, but he leaves full for a five-mile journey.[51] Samuel hosts a large banquet in Saul's honor and it would be shocking that Samuel does not give anything to Saul for his

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[49] See for scholars who argue that the bread was meant for hospitality, Schmidt, *Menschlicher Erfolg und Jahwes Initiative*, 169; Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 112. See for scholars who argue that the bread signified Saul's role as king, Carley, "Two Loaves for Saul," 18; Bergen, *First and Second Samuel*, 129; Long, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 116; Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the OT*, 431. Ralph Klein argued that the bread was the first installment of royal tribute and suggested Saul's priestly dignity. See, Klein, *1 Samuel*, 92. McCarter argued that the tribute referred to Saul's priestly share of a sacrifice. See, McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 182. Tsumura argued that portion from the banquet and the men indicated the sacredness of Saul's kingship. Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 286. Henry Smith argued that the men were impressed with Saul and signified the later his later tribute. Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, 69. Joyce Baldwin argued that the second referred to Saul as a sacred person and meeting Saul's and his servant's need. Baldwin, *First and Second Samuel*, 98.

[50] Carley, "Two Loaves for Saul," 18. See also Paul Shalom who argued that fees were given to kings as well as prophets. Paul, "1 Samuel 9:7: An Interview Fee," 542–44.

[51] Edelman reconstructed Saul's journey in light of Asherite genealogy in Chr 7:35–44 and 2 Kgs 4:42; 1 Sam 13:17; and Gen 35:16–20. See Diana V. Edelman, "Saul's Journey through Mt. Ephraim and Samuel's Ramah (1 Sam. 9:4–5; 10:2–5)," *ZDPV* 104 (1988): 44–58.

journey.[52] The importance of food in the ANE is significant and marks significant junctures in the Biblical narrative. The narrative highlights a greater issue than Saul's possible hunger. Carley commented:

> But that the three were 'going up to God at Bethel' indicates they were on their way to participate in some form of worship. Thus, the food and drink they carried is generally assumed to have been intended for sacrifice — an animal, cereal and drink offering for each man. It is the diversion of a considerable part of these goods to Saul, and the purpose to which he was expected to put it, that arouses the reader's curiosity.[53]

The men offer the loaves to Saul in the context of his anointing as the newly appointed king which describes his right to partake in the sacrifice.

The importance of the sign relies upon the description of the event as a sign.[54] Carley stated, "'Signs' were creative realities, which not only confirmed the truth of prophetic words or deeds but helped bring about what had been predicted. Moreover, they pointed beyond themselves, as symbols requiring interpretation in the broader context of divine activity."[55] The sign predicts the type of leadership that Saul would assume over Israel.[56] The bread is a token of leadership of his responsibility for leading his people.[57] The bread symbolizes his ability as a leader to provide for his people, which is a major theme throughout the OT.[58] This encounter underscores that Saul's status has changed and that he is God's anointed ruler of Israel.[59]

The cultic role of the king develops in Samuel because there was no king in Israel when Moses wrote Deuteronomy. A key distinction that the book of Samuel clarifies is that role of the king is subservient to the

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[52] Stuart Lasine, "Guest and Host in Judges 19: Lot's Hospitality in an Inverted World," *JSOT* 9, no. 29 (1984): 37–59; Victor Harold Matthews, "Hospitality and Hostility in Genesis 19 and Judges 19," *BTB* 22, no. 1 (1992): 3–11.
[53] Carley, "Two Loaves for Saul," 18.
[54] Ibid., 19.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 20.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Long, *1 and 2 Samuel*, 116.

prophet in matters of cultic performances. Saul will become the reigning king, but he must submit to Samuel's leadership in regard to covenant obedience. For example, Samuel commands Saul to believe on the signs that he declares, because he speaks on behalf of the Lord. Thus, Saul receives sacrifices, but he receives them under the authority of Samuel.[60]

The meeting between Saul and the three men symbolizes the initiation of the political relationship that Saul begins with Israel.[61] Saul is not from a priestly tribe, but his actions reflect a similar account in Genesis 14.[62] Melchizedek brings bread and wine to Abram because they finalize a treaty between them. They express their treaty through a covenant feast.[63] A similar ANE account is Tudaliya IV, King of Hatti, who wrote, regarding Shalmaneser I, King of Assyria, "If he [Shalmaneser] would enter my land or if I was to enter his, we would eat bread of one another."[64] The meal that Saul receives from the men going up to Bethel formalize his covenant relationship as the king of Israel.

Saul's narrative echoes Abram's encounter with Melchizedek as he leaves a battle and receives food and drink from a king-priest. Similarly, Saul leaves a covenant meal with Samuel to go to battle the Philistine garrison and receives food from worshippers on his journey. Deuteronomy 17:14–20 grants the Canaanite kingship model of a king-priest, which Abraham encounters with Melchizedek.[65] However, 1

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[60] Walter T. McCree, "The Covenant Meal in the OT," *JBL* 45, no. 1–2 (1926): 126.

[61] Elgavish traced the political significance of a person receiving bread and wine. He argued that Saul receiving the bread and wine symbolized the initiation of the political relationship. See, David Elgavish, "The Encounter of Abram and Melchizedek King of Salem: A Covenant Establishing Ceremony," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction and History* (Leuven: 2001), 499.

[62] Eugene H. Merrill, "Royal Priesthood: An OT Messianic Motif," *BSac* 150, no. 597 (1993): 59–60.

[63] Elgavish, "The Encounter of Abram and Melchizedek King of Salem: A Covenant Establishing Ceremony," 499. Cf. the man of God in 1 Kings 13, who prophesies against the altar at Beth-el but refuses to eat bread or drink water from the king.

[64] KUB XXIII, 103: RS 4'–5 Heinrich Otten, "Ein Brief aus Ḫattuša an Bâbu-aḫu-iddina," *AfO* 19 (1959): 42–43.

[65] Israel Knohl, "Melchizedek: A Model for the Union of Kingship and Priesthood in the Hebrew Bible, 11QMelchizedek, and the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Text, Thought, and Practice in Qumran and Early Christianity: Proceedings of the*

Samuel 10 specifies only that Saul is a king and leaves it to the broader narrative to clarify how he is a priest-king. Thus, Samuel anoints Saul as a נָגִיד then inaugurates the monarchy as a priest-king, and the broader context confirms the priest-king role through Saul's and David's reign.[66]

The Third Sign at Gibeath-Elohim

The third sign for Saul's ordination consists of three parts.[67] Each part centers around announcing that Saul was the newly elected נָגִיד. The first sign announces to the covenant community that God elected his anointed through a band of prophets. The second sign reveals God's designated king through Saul prophesying. The third sign verifies Saul as God's future king through a mighty act of the Spirit against God's enemies.[68] God ordains these signs for establishing the kingdom, but God also commands Saul to obey them so that he establishes his kingdom.

Part One: Band of Prophets

The first part of the third sign occurs when Saul sees a band of prophets prophesying from Gibeath-elohim, and he joins their procession.[69] The tone indicates that these prophets were Yahweh's and

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Ninth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, Jointly Sponsored by the Hebrew University Center for the Study of Christianity, 11–13 January, 2004, STDJ 84 (New York: Brill, 2009), 255–66.

[66] This paper rejects Martin Noth theory that the priestly traditions reflect post-exilic developments from a rite applied only to kings. See Daniel E. Fleming, "The Biblical Tradition of Anointing Priests," *JBL* 117, no. 3 (1998): 401–14.

[67] V. Philips Long, "How Did Saul Become King? Literary Reading and Historical Reconstruction," in *Faith, Tradition, and History: OT Historiography in Its Near Eastern Context*, ed. David W. Baker (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 278; Bergen, *First and Second Samuel*, 126–28.

[68] See Rolf. P. Knierim for an elaboration on how the Spirit verifies the messiah in Rolf P. Knierim, "Messianic Concept in the First Book of Samuel," in *Jesus and the Historian: Written in Honor of Ernest Cadman Colwell* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 20–51.

[69] For background information on the instruments that the prophets played, see Bo Lawergren, "Distinctions among Canaanite, Philistine, and Israelite Lyres, and their Global Lyrical Contexts," *BASOR* 309 (1998): 41–48; Anne Draffkorn Kilmer, "The Musical Instruments from Ur and Ancient Mesopotamian Music," *Expedition* 40, no. 2 (1998): 12–19; Marcelle Cuchesne-Guillemin, "A Hurrian

not pagan prophets. Their celebration in the narrative context signals to the broader community that God elected his king.[70] The narrative does not inform the reader on whether the prophets knew about Saul's anointing, but Gibeath-elohim is five miles from Ramah.

Samuel's banquet was a public event that identified Saul as fulfilling Israel's request for a king. The guests leave the narrative stage, but the narrative assumes their knowledge about God's anointed. Thus, the narrative suggest that the surrounding communities know about Samuel's banquet and God designating his king. For example, a similar event occurs when Samuel prepares a banquet at Bethlehem in 1 Samuel 16:1–5. The elders tremble at Samuel's presence because they know God rejected Saul, and Samuel seeks the next king. The banquet and sacrifice signal to the elders that Samuel will anoint the next anointed. Therefore, these prophets stem from Samuel's prophetic authority, and they celebrate in light of God designating a king over Israel.

Part Two: Saul Prophesying

The second part of the third sign occurs when the Spirit of the Lord rushes upon Saul to prophesy.[71] The Spirit compels Saul to prophesy, and

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Musical Score from Ugarit: The Discovery of Mesopotamian Music," *SANE* 2, no. 2 (1984): 65–94.

[70] See Fokkelman for his argument on how the narrative context suggest the prophets connection with Samuel in Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel*, 4.420.

[71] Scholars focused on the distinction between mantic and ecstatic prophecy, but they neglected the literary purpose of the narrative. See examples in Klaus-Peter Adam, "'And He Behaved Like a Prophet Among Them.' (1Sam 10:11b): The Depreciative Use of נבא Hitpael and the Comparative Evidence of Ecstatic Prophecy," *WO* 39, no. 1 (2009): 3–57; Victor Eppstein, "Was Saul Also Among the Prophets," *ZAW* 81, no. 3 (1969): 287–304; David G. Firth, "Is Saul Also Among the Prophets?: Saul's Prophecy in 1 Samuel 19:23," in *Presence, Power and Promise: The Role of the Spirit of God in the OT* (Downers Grove: IVP Acadamic, 2011), 294–305; Christophe Nihan, "Saul Among the Prophets (I Sam 10:10–12 and 19:18–24): The Reworking of Saul's Figure in the Context of the Debate on "Charismatic Prophecy' in the Persian Era," in *Saul in Story and Tradition* FAT 47 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 88–118; Simon B. Parker, "Possession Trance and Prophecy in Pre-Exilic Israel," *VT* 28, no. 3 (1978): 271–85.

this act subordinates him to Samuel the prophet.[72] The saying, "Is Saul among the Prophets," does not question Saul's ability to prophesy, but it questions, "Who is his prophetic father that gives him the right to prophesy?"[73] The people wait for God to anoint a king and the prophet Samuel to declare who is God's anointed. If Samuel is his father, then he is the newly elected king.

God commands Samuel to appoint a king in 1 Samuel 8, and the people await God's answer. Samuel's statement to Saul highlight the hope of Israel for God to reveal His king, "And for whom all the desire of Israel? Is it not for you and for all of your father's house?"[74] Fokkelman argued that Israel knew that God sought Saul as the king, "Its connotation is, at the same time, the persuasive point, which can be formulated for this context as follows: 'surely everyone knows that you are indeed the one who is sought!' The entire mass of this rhetorical pressure gravitates towards that 'you.'"[75] Fokkelman oversteps in suggesting all Israel knew Saul was God's anointed at their initial meeting, but he rightly highlights the longing of Israel for God to reveal their king. As R. P. Gordon wrote, "Saul is to become the focus of Israelite hopes against the reality of Philistine aggression."[76] Samuel sends Saul to

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[72] Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 292–93; Auld, *I & II Samuel*, 112; Bergen, *First and Second Samuel*, 128. Sturdy argued that it represented a Davidic propaganda against Saul. John Sturdy, "Original Meaning of 'Is Saul also Among the Prophets?'," *VT* 20, no. 2 (1970): 206–13. Nihan argued that it was a late post-Dtr creation to reassert the Deuteronomistic view of prophecy and prophetic authority promoted by Jerusalem. Nihan, "Saul Among the Prophets (I Sam 10:10–12 and 19:18–24): The Reworking of Saul's Figure in the Context of the Debate on "Charismatic Prophecy' in the Persian Era," 110.

[73] Scholars took the initial sign as either negative or positive. See for negative view in Bergen, *First and Second Samuel*, 129–30; McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 187; Matthew Michael, "Saul's Prophetic Representation and Its Parody in 1 Samuel," *OTE* 26 (2013): 111–36; Sturdy, "Original Meaning of 'Is Saul also Among the Prophets?'," 206–13. See for a positive view in Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 75–76; Baldwin, *First and Second Samuel*, 98–99; Klein, *1 Samuel*, 93. Fokkelman argued that Saul was no longer associated with his Father Kish, but the author associated him as a son of the prophets. See, Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel*, 4.375.

[74] 1 Sam 9:20.

[75] Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel*, 4.401.

[76] Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 115.

testify at Gibeah that he is the newly appointed king, and the Spirit verifies that Samuel sent him. Saul's prophesying unveils that he is God's choice via Samuel, the prophet. Saul is the only king who prophesies in Israel; therefore, his actions are unique and not paradigmatic for future kings.

Part Three: Gibeah-Elohim

Samuel tells Saul that when he arrives at Gibeah-Elohim, "he should do whatever his hands find to do." This phrase implies a military action against the Philistine garrison.[77] The Spirit rushes upon Saul, and he prophesies, but then hides until Samuel confirms his role publicly. The majority of commentators focus upon the apparent discrepancy in time in 1 Samuel 10:9 and in 13:8, so that they neglect to comment on Saul's failure to perform his duty that Samuel command "to do what your hands find to do" at the Philistine garrison.[78] Saul finds it right to presume to attack the Ammonites instead in the following chapter.

Saul creates his own agenda, and he seeks validation from Israel, Samuel, and the Lord. His agenda mirrors that of the kings of the ANE who attempt to manipulate the gods towards their desires.[79] He rejects Samuel's directive to war against the Philistines but follows the elders' initial request for a king to fight their battles.[80] Thus, the Jabesh-Gilead

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[77] See for a further description of the "do whatever his hands find to do" in Vannoy, *1–2 Samuel*, 39; Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel*, (New York: Norton, 1999), 55; Bruce C. Birch, *The Rise of the Israelite Monarchy: The Growth and Development of 1 Samuel 7–15*, SBLDS 27 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1976). Tsumura argued that the phrase might refer to the military action against either the Philistine garrison or the Ammonite attack. See Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 289.

[78] These scholars argued on the basis of the literary analysis that Saul failed to fulfill Samuel's command. See Vannoy, *1–2 Samuel*, 95–96; V. Philips Long, *The Reign and Rejection of King Saul: A Case for Literary and Theological Coherence*, SBLDS 118 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1989), 51–66; Long, "How Did Saul Become King? Literary Reading and Historical Reconstruction," 271–84.

[79] Walton, "A King Like the Nations: 1 Samuel 8 in Its Cultural Context," 197.

[80] Samuel reproved the elders' desire to have a king to fight the Ammonites in 1 Samuel 12:12, but the context suggested that they reiterated their desire to have a king in light of the attack by Nahash the Ammonite. The manuscript 4QSam[a] provided additional background information that Josephus and the chronicler reference in their works. The additional month does not remove the narrative

incident undermines Saul's authority with the Lord but solidifies it with the elders.

Conclusion

1 Samuel 9–11 describes the role of the king as one who fears God, listens to the word of God, and faithfully observes His commands. The narrator characterizes Saul as a king-priest. However, Saul does not fear or listen to God, but he presumes that God will follow his desires to build his kingdom. The narrative cast Saul as a reflection of the people and their desire to become like the nations. Yet, God does not waiver in his desire for the monarchy, but He upholds his covenant standards with Saul.

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focus on the Philistines or Samuel's command. See, Frank Moore Cross, "The Ammonite Oppression of the Tribes of Gad and Reuben: Missing Verses from 1 Samuel 11 Found in 4QSamuelua," in *History, Historiography and Int: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Literatures* (Jerusalem: Magness 1983), 148–58.

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The Magi's Fulfillment of the Hebrew Bible's Theme "East of Eden"

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"Where sky and water meet,
Where the waves grow sweet,
Doubt not, Reepicheep,
To find all you seek,
There is the utter East."[1]

The story of the magi is found in Mt 2.[2] Jesus, the Messiah (ὁ Χριστὸς), has been born (Matt 1:18–25) in Bethlehem of Judea where Herod the King presently reigns.[3] After the birth, magi come from the east (μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν) inquiring where the "King of the Jews" was born because they saw his star rise in the east (ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ) and have come to worship him.[4] Herod gathers together the chief priests and scribes (2:4)

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[1] C.S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (New York: Harper Collins, 1980), 22.

[2] I would like to thank Kevin Chen, Nathan Harris, Wes McKay, Charles L. Quarles, Michael B. Shepherd, and Eric Turner for their helpful feedback and critiques of this article. Any shortcomings are my own.

[3] For an overview of Herod's tumultuous life, see Helen Bond "Herodian Dynasty," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Second Edition, eds. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013), 380–381; Harold Hoehner, "Herodian Dynasty," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, eds. Craig A. Evans and Stanley Porter (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000) 485–489. See also Andrew E. Steinmann, "When Did Herod the Great Reign?" *NovT* 51 (2009): 1–29.

[4] There is no doubt a hint of irony here in the address from the magi to Herod when they call Jesus "the King" (ὁ βασιλεὺς) rather than Herod king. See David R. Bauer, "The Kingship of Jesus in the Matthew Infancy: A Literary Analysis,"

and asks them about where the Christ is to be born, to which they reply with the quotation from Micah 5:2–3 (MT 5:1–2).[5] So Herod sends them to Bethlehem, the magi go and find the Christ-child, present the gifts to his mother Mary, and then go a separate way after being warned not to return to Herod.

When commenting on these magi, scholars have chosen to focus on a possible nation of origin, ethnicity, or occupation to identify them. After all, Matthew only indicates they are μάγοι; neither their identity nor their origin of residence is identified.[6] They depart as mysteriously, and quickly, as they appeared.[7]

CBQ 57(1995): 306–323. For a helpful study on the theme of irony in Matthew, see Karl J. McDaniel, *Experiencing Irony in the First Gospel: Suspense, Surprise, and Curiosity* (London: T&T Clark, 2013). Jonathan Pennington identifies this note as "foreshadowing." Jonathan T. Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 190.

[5] "The quotation follows neither the LXX nor the MT of Mic 5:2. The differences are in fact sufficient to tempt one to speak of an 'interpretation' instead of a 'quotation' of Scripture. The text has been freely altered by Matthew in order to make it best serve his ends." W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, ICC (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 1:242.

[6] Outside of Mt 2:1 and 7, Acts 13:8 is the only other instance that μάγος appears in the Greek New Testament. See Charles L. Quarles, *Matthew*, eds. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger, EBTC (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2022), 123.

[7] See David Instone-Brewer, "Balaam-Laban as the Key to the Old Testament Quotations in Matthew 2" in *Built Upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew* eds. Daniel M. Gurtner and John Nolland (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 218–219; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:227–229. Gerhard Delling remarks, "There is no means of determining whether the μάγοι ἀπ' ἀνατολῶν of Mt. 2:1 (7, 16) are specifically Babylonian astrologers or astrologers in general. The former is more likely, since it is only in Babylon, by contact with the exiles, that the μάγοι would acquire an interest in the Jewish king (Messiah)." Gerhard Delling, "Μάγος, Μαγεία, Μαγεύω," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:358. Colin J. Humphreys, "The Star of Bethlehem, a Comet in 5 BC and the Date of Christ's Birth," *TynB* 43 (1992): 32–34.

The magi have been labeled as "astrologers/astronomers" that looked to the stars and their movements.[8] Possible nations of origin include Chaldea, Persia, and one associated with Babylonia.[9] Because they analyze stars and/or practice some type of magic, they must not be Jews[10] but Gentiles.[11] If one accepts these conclusions, then, once again, irony is related by Matthew within this narrative. These Gentile magi, who are

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[8] "They combined astronomical observation with astrological speculation." Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew* NAC (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 63; Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 1:42; David Hughes, *The Star of Bethlehem* (New York: Walker, 1979), 193. See also Mark Alan Powell, "The Magi as Kings: An Adventure in Reader-Response Criticism, "*CBQ* 62 (200): 459–480.

[9] John Calvin, *Harmony on the Evangelists* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 1:127.; R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* NICNT (Downers Grove: IVP, 2007), 66. France remarks that the gifts they brought suggest they are "associated with Arabia." Tony T. Maalouf, "Were the Magi from Persia or Arabia?" *BSac* 156 (1999): 423–442; Harrington, *Matthew*, 1:42; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1993), 26–27; R.T. France, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1992), 35–36; Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey*, Second Edition (Nashville; B&H Academic, 2009), 235; John A. Broadus, *Matthew* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1886), 16–17; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 63; D.A. Carson, "Matthew," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 84–85; Charles L. Quarles, *Matthew* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017), 24; "μάγος" sf BDAG.

[10] Calvin, *Harmony*, 1:127–128; France, *Matthew*, 67; Harrington, *Matthew*, 1:42; Mark Alan Powell, "The Magi as Wise Men: Re-examining a Basic Supposition," *NTS* 46 (2000): 5–8; David R. Nienhuis, *A Concise Guide to Reading the New Testament: A Canonical Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 21.

[11] David Sim examines seven common arguments for Gentile ethnicity for the magi, concluding that since Matthew did not identify the magi as either Gentile or Jew, "we have to presume that Matthew assumed this knowledge on the part of his readers. Unfortunately we modern readers are not privy to this information, so we are faced with a choice between the two alternatives." David C. Sim, "The Magi: Gentiles or Jews?" *HTR* 55/4 (1999): 1000. R.E. France believes they are Gentiles from Mesopotamia, and their appearance likely echoes Ps 72:10ff; Isa 60:6, and the Queen of Sheba from 1 Kgs 10:2. See R.E. France, "The Formula-Quotations of Matthew 2 and the Problem of Communication," *NTS* 27 (1981): 239.

not followers of the one true God, have traveled far from the east in order to worship the King of the Jews. As such these Gentiles, and not the scribes and chief priests in 2:4, are the first to worship the Messiah.[12]

Of particular note for this present study is Matthew's usage of ἀνατολῇ as a possible interpretation of the function of the Magi within the Gospel of Matthew as a whole. Many have noted that Matthew uses ἀνατολή twice in Matt 2:1–2 in order to, first, identify the origin of the magi and, second, the action of the star as it rose (ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ). The first usage is in the phrase μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν, which designates the origin of the magi as "from the east."[13] Again, Matthew does not specifically identify their nationality or the starting point of the journey, but rather leaves it ambiguous.[14]

The second usage is similar to the first in its ambiguity since ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ is translated as an intransitive verb "at its rising" in some of the more modern-day translations.[15] BDAG lists this option as a possibility,

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[12] Leroy Huizenga, *The New Isaac: Tradition and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 170. "The appearance of magi from the East to worship Jesus in his infancy is a jaw-dropping display of Jesus' intention to save Gentiles as well as Jews, and of his power to summon even the worst of sinners to repentance and faith." Charles L. Quarles, *A Theology of Matthew: Jesus Revealed as Deliverer, King, and Incarnate Creator* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 35.

[13] Pennington remarks that the magi from the East were often connected with Daniel and the Babylonian Exile. See Jonathan Pennington, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 289. For ἀπὸ as place of origin, see *BDF*, 113 (§209); Quarles, *Matthew*, 24; A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), 577–580. France, believes the reference to East serves to show that the "Messiah of Israel has thus been shown to be at home also in the wider Gentile world, and the places of Israel's exile in the Old Testament period, Egypt and 'the East', have played their part in the preparation for his ministry." France, "The Formula-Quotations of Matthew 2," 239.

[14] "Once we have decided that the original use of Magi is not in view, which in the East rather loses its importance. For Matthew, the importance of the Magi is not in their specific identity, and so it is likely that the generality of 'the East' serves his purposes better than a particular place of origin would." John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 109n101.

[15] These translations include: ESV, CSB, NIV, NRSV, LEB, NAB, NRSV.

noting several instances in which this translation appears viable.[16] David Turner argues that this phrase should not be translated literally (i.e., "in the east") for two reasons. First, "points of the compass occur without the article" in the New Testament, and second, translating the phrase literally might "imply that the magi came from the west toward an eastern star, which would contradict 2:1."[17] Grant Osborne notes the geographical problems if the phrase is translated "in the east," since Judea was to the west of Persia and Babylon.[18]

But what are we to make of Matthew's indication that the magi came "from the east"? The phrase μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν does signify a place of origin for the magi, that they came from somewhere in the east. Geographically speaking, then, they are moving directionally west in their journey to follow the star in its rising. The place of origin and the direction in which the magi travel may provide a theological undertone for Matthew's narrative, as he draws from the Old Testament narrative of moving "East from Eden," away from God's presence, in order to arrive in God's presence in the incarnate Son.

In this article, then, I propose that Matthew is providing an intertextual clue as to further the significance of this child in his infancy narratives; that is, ἀνατολή is used here by Matthew to conclude the journey "East of Eden." This thesis will be accomplished in three observations. First, it is important to clarify what I mean by "intertextual," so a brief discussion of intertextuality is discussed. Second, the theme "East of Eden" will be observed through the Old Testament utilizing observations from both the MT and LXX. Finally, theological observations about the significance of Matthew using ἀνατολή are provided.

Clarifying the Terms

When one speaks of "intertextuality," one must seek to define the usage of the term with specificity rather than offering the potentially

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[16] BDAG, "ἀνατολή". See also Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:236.

[17] David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008). 80.

[18] Grant Osborne, *Matthew*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 87. Quarles remarks that the change to the singular ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ from the plural ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν in 2:1 account for the phrase to be translated as "at its rising." See Quarles, *Matthew*, 24.

vague claim of how one text uses another text.[19] The seminal work by Michael Fishbane focused on the inner-biblical exegesis of biblical authors on the parts of scribal, legal, aggadic, and mantological exegesis.[20] Fishbane utilizes the term "inner-biblical exegesis" in his discussion of the *traditium* and *traditio*, emphasizing the stability of the literary "formulation as its basis and point of departure."[21] For Fishbane, whose extensive work on inner-biblical exegesis should be utilized, each category differs in their usage within the exegetical task, but their standards by which they are used remain the same.[22]

Fishbane's work has not gone without its criticism, however. In his extensive review of the work, James Kugel questions whether or not the material found within Fishbane's book is best determined from the categories he has utilized.[23] William M. Schniedewind agrees with Kugel and further suggests that Fishbane's work has too much of a reliance on a textual model, which brings about the suggested weakness of Fishbane's work, that of terminology.[24] Lyle Eslinger believes that Fishbane's assumptions are twofold. First, "an author does not write an interpretative gloss on his own text," and, second, "if there is some interconnection of separate texts…any discussion of the supposed

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[19] The work of Julia Kristeva has influenced the studies of intertextuality, as she is known for coining the term itself. See Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel," in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Language and Art*, ed. L.S. Rouidez; trans. T. Gora, A. Jardine, and L.S. Rouidez (New York: Colombia, 1980), 64–91. See also Ulrich Luz, "Intertexts in the Gospel of Matthew," *HTR* 97:2 (2004): 119–124.

[20] Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Clarendon: Oxford, 1985).

[21] Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 7. Walter Kaiser defines inner-biblical exegesis as "the study of the relationship between earlier Biblical texts (which have already assumed a normative or even a canonical status in the community) and their reuse in subsequent texts." Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "Inner Biblical Exegesis as a Model for Bridging the 'Then' and 'Now' Gap: Hos 12:1-6," *JETS 28.1* (1985): 34.

[22] For a helpful overview of Fishbane's usage of inner-biblical exegesis, see Russell L. Meek, "Intertextuality, Inner-Biblical Exegesis, and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Ethics of a Methodology," *Biblica* 95.1 (2014): 285–289.

[23] James L. Kugel, "the Bible's Earliest Interpreters," *Proof 7* (1987): 247–276.

[24] William M. Schniedewind, "'Are We His People or Not': Biblical Interpretation During Crisis," *Bib* 76 (1995): 541.

exegesis presumes a demonstrable precedence."[25] He provides a few examples, concluding in his first critique of the work that Fishbane's approach to the task of inner-biblical exegesis is not "well-thought out."[26] One does not have to agree with Eslinger's conclusion on Fishbane's work, but it does serve to exemplify how the debates on proper terminology and what one author does with a biblical text continues.[27]

For the purposes of this article, I will use the term "intertextuality" to acknowledge how one author of the biblical text employs the usage of another text within his respective book.[28] This attempt follows in a similar vein to that of Richard B. Hays, who writes that intertextuality is the "imbedding of fragments of an earlier text within a later one."[29] Elsewhere he remarks that the appeal of the term "intertextuality" provided a way for scholars to discern the "literary, thematic, and theological linkages within the biblical canon" and avoid discussions on the events that lay behind the text itself.[30] Of course, there must be a diachronic relationship between the texts; otherwise, there can be no claim of intertextuality.[31]

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[25] Lyle Eslinger, "Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Question of Category" *VT 42* (1992): 49.

[26] Eslinger, "Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Inner-Biblical Allusion," 51.

[27] Jeffery M. Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case" *JBL 127* (2008): 242–245.

[28] For an example, see James A. Sanders, "Canon" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:848; Paul E. Koptak, "Intertextuality" in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 332.

[29] Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 14. Two more works (*Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014], and *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016]) follow the same pattern.

[30] Richard B. Hays, "Preface," in *Reading the Bible Intertextually* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), xiii.

[31] Contra Kristeva, Word, Dialogue, and Novel," 285; Luz, "Intertexts," 121–122. See also Meek, "Intertextuality, Inner-Biblical Exegesis, and Inner-Biblical Allusion," 282–284.

Moving East in the Pentateuch

Adam and Cain (Gn 3–4)

The journey east begins in the Pentateuch in Gn 3:24 when God casts out (וַיְגָ֫רֶשׁ/ἐξέβαλεν) Adam and Even from the Garden of Eden.[32] Here, the MT describes that

אֶת־הַכְּרֻבִים is placed "east of Eden" (מִקֶּ֫דֶם לְגַן־עֵ֫דֶן), but this expulsion still implies that both Adam and Eve now dwell East of Eden.[33] Gordon Wenham posits that the reason the כְּרוּב is placed east of the garden is, following Cassuto, that the entrance to the garden was there.[34] Nonetheless, there is a definitive shift in the narrative due to mankind's attempt to gain a divine nature (3:5) by means of trusting the words of

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[32] "On either view the assumption is that the first abode of mankind was east of the garden." John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, ICC (New York: Scribner, 1910), 89. For an overview of Eden as a sanctuary, see Richard Davidson, "Earth's First Sanctuary: Genesis 1-3 and Parallel Creation Accounts," *AUSS* 53 (2015): 65–89.

[33] Alan H. Hauser, "Linguistic and Thematic Links Between Genesis 4:1-16 and Gen 2-3," *JETS* 23 (1980): 298. The LXX describes that they dwell opposite the garden of paradise (ἀπέναντι τοῦ παραδείσου τῆς τρυφῆς). "Dwelling in an ambiguous place 'opposite' (ἀπέναντι) the garden could imply Adam's oppositional relationship to the garden (i.e., against) or his view of the garden (i.e., in front of)." Susan Ann Brayford, *Genesis*, Septuagint Commentary Series (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 247; Raanan Eichler, "When God Abandoned the Garden of Eden: A Forgotten Reading of Genesis 3:24" *VT* 65 (2015): 20–32; Bruce K. Waltke, An *Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 256. "The entrance was envisaged as being on the east side, facing the rising sun. It is assumed that Adam and Eve could walk back into the garden if they so desired. Steps must be taken to prevent this from occurring." Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2002), 30.

[34] Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-11* WBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 86. He further remarks, "Again one is reminded of the orientation of the tabernacle and temple, which were entered from the east." See also Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26* NAC (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 257. See also "The Garden of Eden as God's First Sanctuary," Lifsa Schachter *JBQ* 41 (2013): 73-77; Derek Kidner, *Genesis* TOTC (Downers Grove: IVP, 2013), 77. Sarna remarks, "Neither here nor anywhere else is there a clearcut definition or description of these beings." Sarna, *Genesis*, 30.

the serpent over the promises of God.[35] Work, a blessing given to man and woman (Gn 1:28), is now part of the divine curse East of Eden.[36]

It is here, at this point, that the term "east" has only a locality reference, but the term will come to mean much more as the narrative unfolds. John Sailhamer's observation is worth quoting at length:

> The mention of the direction "east" is an important detail. Throughout the book of Genesis the author carefully apprises the reader of the direction of humankind's movement and in doing so often leaves an important narrative clue to the meaning of the events being recounted. At this point in the narrative, "east" has only the significance of "outside the garden." Later on, the notion of "east" will suggest that humankind is moving in the direction of "Babylon" (11:2) and the "cities of Sodom and Gomorrah" (13:11). To return "from the east" is to return to the city of "peace" ("Salem," 14:17-20).[37]

This "narrative clue" is the author's evaluation of the actions of the characters, with the implication that the further east they move the further they go from God's presence.[38]

Adam and Eve have now left the garden, east of Eden, where they attempt to live out the divine status they have "earned" through disobedience to God.[39] In Gn 4, the reader now finds both Adam and Eve

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[35] R.W.L. Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 79–80.

[36] "Life east of Eden will no longer be a God-directed activity designed to mirror his sovereign munificence, but a self-centered labor consumed by its own need to survive." Scott Hafemann, "Work as the Divine Curse: Toil and Grace East of Eden," *BET* 2 (2015): 10.

[37] John H. Sailhamer, "Genesis" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* Revised Edition, eds Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 95.

[38] John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 110; Kevin S. Chen, *The Messianic Vision of the Pentateuch* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), 57.

[39] In Gn 3 "the reception of forbidden knowledge by the first human couple leads not only to their becoming 'god-like' but also to their fall into a corrupt, sinful state and expulsion from paradise. Genesis 4–11 then portrays the long-term consequences of the at least partially-successful attempt by Adam and Eve to obtain divinity by procuring this knowledge." David P. Melvin, "Divine

east of Eden, away from God's presence, and is introduced to Cain and Abel, the two offsprings of Adam and Eve. Cain murders his brother Abel after the Lord refuses Cain's sacrifice (4:5), and the Lord sends Cain toward Nod, "east of Eden" (וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּאֶרֶץ־נוֹד קִדְמַת־עֵדֶן).

The refrain of "east of Eden" provides a direct link back from Cain to the Adam and Eve narrative in 3:24. "Both parents and son must dwell away from Eden, the ideal paradise God had intended for man before the onslaught of alienation."[40] Another emphasis is the fact that Cain, similarly to Adam and Eve, no longer dwells in the presence of the Lord, but the "narrative clue" of Cain moving further east from God's presence is emphasized here by the bluntness of the evaluation: וַיֵּצֵא קַיִן מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה. The implication here, then, is that Cain dwells further from the garden than Adam does, and now even further from God's presence.[41]

Babel, Lot, and Isaac

The journey east from Eden continues until the building of Babel, which is strategically placed between two genealogies (10:1–32; 11:10–32) that are traceable to Shem (cp. 9:26). Both descendants of Shem find their dwelling either in the city of Babylon or in the line of Abraham, and there is an irony by the author here as the descendants of Shem (שֵׁם) attempt to make a name (שֵׁם) for themselves in the construction of Babel.[42]

The account of Babel's construction begins with a geographical note from the author. The people "migrated east" (בְּנָסְעָם מִקֶּדֶם) to the plain in Shinar (11:2) in order to construct this city.[43] This comment by the author is significant for our present study, for the inhabitants of Babel are intent to make a name for themselves (11:4) rather than a name for

Meditation and the Rise of Civilization in Mesopotamian Literature in Genesis 1-11," *JHebS* 10 (2010): 12.

[40] Hauser, "Linguistic and Thematic Links," 304.

[41] Matthews, *Genesis 1-11*, 278; C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 1:114–115.

[42] Sailhamer, "Genesis," 143.

[43] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Creation, Un-creation, Re-creation: A Discursive Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011), 165.

God.[44] This act is the height of arrogance, and the Lord does not delay in confusing their one language (cp. 11:1) and dispersing the people over the face of the land (11:9). Thus, moving east of Eden continues the focus of judgment, and the "mention of similar journeyings here may be intended as a reminder of mankind's earlier sentence."[45]

Perhaps we are reminded of the initial storyline of Genesis; that is, the Lord intended to provide "good" for humanity, but humanity has rejected this attempt and sought to declare "good" for themselves. Babel is no anomaly to this storyline, for the inhabitants of Shinar sought to use their expertise in technology to "build a city and a tower for the express purpose of honoring themselves and avoiding God's command to fill and rule the earth."[46] The focus of God's blessing, or the center, is the land, and to leave this land and seek another is to forfeit God's blessings of provision and to live "east of Eden."[47]

The account of Abram and Lot's separation provides the final mention of the author emphasizing a character going east. After the Tower of Babel and the people of the land are dispersed, the author focuses on Abram, for the Lord will make of him a "great nation" (לְגֹוי גָּדֹול) as he leaves his kindred and his father's house.[48] Abram and Lot go into the Negeb after the events in Egypt (12:10-20), and settle there, only to

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[44] Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in his Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 15; John Calvin, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 326–327.

[45] Wenham, *Genesis 1–11*, 238–239. Also, Matthews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 478.

[46] Paul House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1998), 70. See also T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 29.

[47] Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 136.

[48] Does Abram disobey the Lord's directive here by bringing his nephew Lot when the Lord instructed him to leave "his father's house"? Wenham believes that bringing Lot shows the great relationship between uncle and nephew (Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 278). It is perhaps noteworthy that the author mentions Lot twice in 12:4–5, suggesting that perhaps Abram thought Lot would serve as the fulfillment of this promise. See William K. Bechtold, "'The Eyes of Both of Them Were Opened" A Rhetorical-Theological Analysis of the Theme of Visual Perception in the Narrative of Genesis," (Ph.D., diss Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014), 106. Furthermore, there is more emphasis on Lot in 13:1 and 5. The point, however, is debatable.

separate shortly thereafter due to strife between "the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock" (13:7).

From here, the narrative emphasizes several interesting features. Lot observes that the Jordan Valley is well watered like the garden of the Lord (כְּגַן־יְהוָה) and chooses the Jordan Valley and travels east (וַיִּסַּע לוֹט מִקֶּדֶם), though everything is not as hopeful as it seems. The author provides the ominous remark concerning the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (cp. Gn 19:1–29) in the direction of Zoar, where Lot fled to safety during the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in 19:22. Furthermore, Lot continues to "travel east," echoing the judgment of Adam and Eve (3:24), Cain (4:26), and the Tower of Babel (11:2). In each of the previous incidents the journey east has been a direction away from the Lord.[49] Here, there is perhaps even more irony in the observations made by the author; namely, what Lot thought was like the "garden of the Lord" was quickly consumed by fire and sulfur.[50]

The final incident occurs, albeit quickly, in Gn 25:6. There, Isaac has just been born and Abraham, not wanting to compromise Isaac's future position, sends the rival offspring to the east (אֶל־אֶרֶץ קֶדֶם), and the language there is similar to that of exclusion from Eden.[51]

What should be made of these observations? First, it is clear that to go east is to move from Eden and away from the presence of the Lord. When the term occurs, it does so in either judgment (Adam and Eve/Cain) or a prediction for judgment (Babel/Lot). There are also occurrences that when God sends forth judgment it is from the east (cp. Gn 41:6; Ex 10:13; 14:21; Ezk 19:12; Hos 13:15; Jnh 4:8; Ps 48:7). Second, as the narrative of the Hebrew Bible unfolds, it is apparent that the term קדם can be used to indicate either persecution from an outside source (cp. Jdg 6:3; 7:12; 8:10; Ezk 25:4) or a description of wickedness (Isa 2:6).[52] These instances within the biblical text suggest that to go "east of Eden" is to be removed from the intimacy of God's presence (cp. Gn 4:14).[53]

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[49] Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 144.

[50] Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26* (Nashville: Broadman, 2005), 136

[51] Matthews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26.* 355.

[52] For the various meanings of קדם, see *BDB, HALOT.*

[53] "Expelled from Eden, Adam and Eve will no longer enjoy the intimacy of God's presence. Although this does not mark the end of God's relationship with

Theological Observations

Since the motif of "east of Eden" in the Old Testament has showed a trajectory away from God's presence, now returning once more to Mt 2:1–12, we can perhaps see a clearer picture for this reference from Matthew. Rather than referencing the location of the Magi (μάγοι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν), Matthew is using ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν as an intertextual connection to the overarching narrative of moving east from Eden.

First, there is little hesitation to affirm that Matthew's gospel is written as a fulfillment of several key themes from the Old Testament. The gospel begins with the affirmation that Jesus is from the line of David (cp. 2Sm 7:12–16; Is 11:1; Jr 23:5–6). Matthew also does not hesitate to remind his reader several times within his work of a specific fulfillment from the Old Testament Scriptures as having been "fulfilled" by using πληρόω (Mt 1:22; 2:15, 27, 33; 4:4; etc.) and γράφω (Mt 2:5; 4:4; 11:10; etc.) throughout the work. Furthermore, there are specific themes within Matthew which provide the reader a key element of direct correlation between the work of Jesus and his fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures. After all, Matthew's gospel is certainly written with the Jew in mind, but also for the encouragement of the Gentile believer who is grafted in by God's mercy (cp. Mt 12:15–21; 28:18–20).

Second, the broader pericope of the magi's visit must also be considered because there appears to be several Old Testament allusions that Matthew makes, notably the connection with Balaam's prophecy in Num 24:17.[54] The broader section of Balaam's story appears in Num 22–24, where Balak, the Moabite King, calls for Balaam to curse the people of Israel. Balaam, who is from the east (ἀπ' ἀνατολῶν; Num 23:7) goes with his two servants (Num 22:22) but blesses rather than curses Israel (Num 22–24) at the direction of the Lord (Num 22:20,35,38). Balaam blesses Israel three times until Balak urges him to go home (Num 24:11); yet Balaam offers one more blessing that predicts the destruction of

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humanity, it does indicate a dramatic change. The special relationship that was established at creation will exist only with those to whom God now makes himself known." T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch*, Third Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 163.

[54] For other potential references, see Bernard P. Robinson, "Historical and Theological Questions for Today's Readers," in *New Perspectives on the Nativity*, ed. Jeremy Corley (London: Bloomsbury, 2009), 122–123, 125.

Moab by Israel (Num 24:15–19).[55] It is the star that will come out of Jacob (ἀνατελεῖ ἄστρον ἐξ Ιακωβ / קָרוֹב דָּרַךְ כּוֹכָב מִיַּעֲקֹב) that alone will crush (וְקַרְקַר) the forehead of Moab. The magi and Balaam appear to mirror one another in some regards. Both are a type of "seer," both are foreigners, both are from the east, both appear to travel in a party of three (Num 22:22), and both possess some secret wisdom.[56]

Furthermore, most commentators rightly connect the star in Mt 2:2 with the star in Num 24:17.[57] B.T. Viviano, attempting to identify *what* the star is in Mt 2:9, believes the star is "inspired" by the Messianic reference in Num 24:17 "in a sort of midrash or fulfillment of prophecy."[58] Kevin Chen notes the significance of this Messianic prophecy and also connects "star" in Num 24:17 to Joseph's second dream in Gn 37:9.[59] Davies and Allison believe it is no surprise that Christians understand the star to be the reference to the star predicted by Balaam since Jesus identifies himself as the "bright and morning star" in Rv 22:16.[60]

Perhaps one should further consider the allusions to the two kings present in both sections as well, that of Balak the Moabite king and Herod, the illegitimate king of Jerusalem. Balak entices Balaam to come and curse Israel (Num 22), yet Balaam never curses Israel but instead blesses them. Although viewed negatively in the New Testament (2Pt

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[55] George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers*, ICC (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1903), 308.

[56] See Delling, "Μάγος, Μαγεία, Μαγεύω," 4:358. Also, John Nolland observes that "both are outsiders who by God's interventions are caused to bless what he is doing with/for his people; both are, by a specific revelation from God, kept from acting in a manner which would be destructive of God's purposes." Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 111.

[57] Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:234–235.

[58] B.T. Viviano, "The Movement of the Star, Matt 2:9 and Num 9:17," *RB* 103.1 (1996): 58–59. Although Tobias Nicklas

[59] Chen, *The Messianic Vision of the Pentateuch,* 132, 221. As John J. Collins also rightly mentions, Num 24:17 was viewed as Messianic during the time of the Second Temple. See also John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: The Messiahs of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 80–82.

[60] Davies and Allison, *Matthew,* 1:235. See also William Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1998), 92–93.

2:15–16; Jude 11; Rev 2:14), Balaam is seen favorably in this story since he prophesied in Israel's favor and spoke what was said to him from the Lord (Num 2; cp. Num 31:8; Dt 23:4; Jos 13:22). Thus, the one who came from the east foiled the plans of the Moabite King by foretelling of Israel's great future and its rising of their royal ruler.

In much the same way the magi foiled the plans of King Herod. In their story they were dictated by Herod to return so that he too may worship the newborn King of the Jews, but the warning they received in a dream made them depart to their own country by another way (Mt 2:12). Raymond Brown summarizes the two stories by commenting, "And when [Balaam] came, he foiled the hostile plans of King Balak by delivering oracles that foretold the future greatness of Israel and the rise of its royal ruler. In other words, the wicked king sought to use the foreign magus to destroy his enemy, but the magus actually honored his enemy. Obviously this is very close to the story of Herod and the magi."[61] Tobias Nicklas disagrees and does not believe Herod and Balak correspond; rather, he sees the possibility of identifying Herod with Edom in Num 24:18, for "then the text can be understood in a way that his power will find an end when the prophesied scepter rises in Israel."[62] I disagree with Nicklas on two points. First, the parallels are too similar to overlook. Second, although the literal reign of Herod did not end there at the time of the announcement from the wise men to Herod and the subsequential visit of the magi, the reign of Christ had already begun.

Third, it is well attested that Matthew serves to present Jesus as a new Moses.[63] Quarles examines how Matthew shows Jesus to be like Moses in his infancy, teaching ministry, fasting, miracles, and transfiguration and concludes that "although Jesus is like Moses, he is vastly superior to Moses. He leads his people on a greater exodus. He serves as a Mediator of a greater covenant. He offers his people salvation

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[61] Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 193–194. Interestingly, he equates the Matthew Herod with both Pharaoh and Balak.

[62] Tobias Nicklas, "Balaam and the Star of the Magi," in *The Prestige of the Pagan Prophet Balaam in Judaism, Early Christianity and Islam* (eds. George H. Van Kooten, Jacques van Ruin (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 240–241.

[63] Brown, *Birth of the Messiah*, 49–54; esp. 113; Quarles, *A Theology of Matthew*, 33–69; Bryan D. Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus: Tracing a Biblica Motif* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018), 226–234.

through a greater sacrifice."[64] Thus, if Matthew utilizes his Gospel to show the distinctions between Jesus and Moses and how Jesus is now this new a greater Moses, there is reason to believe he also could do the same with showing the fulfillment of our theme.

Fourth, "east" occurs twice more in Matthew's gospel—not including 2:9—but the usage is keyed to the geographic traveling of people (8:11) and lightning in the sky (24:27). Of these two references, 8:11 further strengthens the "east of Eden" theme because it provides an eschatological glimpse of the banquet feast prepared by God. In 8:5–13 Jesus commends the faith of a centurion who believed Jesus could heal his sick servant only by speaking a word (8:8). Jesus marvels at his faith and says, "many will come from east and west to share the banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (CSB). Hays argues that Matthew dramatically transforms an "apocalyptic *topos*" by alluding to Ps 107:2–3 and Isa 43:5–7 and the inclusion of "Gentile outsiders being gathered to the feast."[65] This banquet is the eschatological meal of Isa 25:6, and "Jesus insisted that his gentile followers would dine with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the promised eschatological feast, showing that they now belonged to the chosen people of God."[66]

Finally, one also should consider the location of both narratives within their respective portions of the canon of Scripture. The "fall" narrative of Old Testament begins with man being driven from Eden (i.e., God's presence), and the New Testament begins with the genealogy of Jesus Christ (Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Mt 1:1).[67] Both books, as

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[64] Quarles, *A Theology of Matthew*, 65–66.

[65] Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 182. For Hays, the proverbial nail in the coffin is Bar 4:36–37. "Look toward the east, O Jerusalem, and see the joy that is coming to you from God. Look, your children are coming, whom you sent away; they are coming, gathered from east and west, at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing in the glory of God." This text makes "explicit what is implicit in the others." Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 182.

[66] Quarles, *Matthew*, 220. For the other possibilities, Davis and Allison believe it is not so much to the believing Gentiles and unbelieving Jews but rather between "privileged and unprivileged Jews." For their comments and many other possible interpretations of those who will come from the "east and west," see Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 2:27.

[67] "Matthew's opening line may function as a title for the Gospel as a whole, suggesting that the story of Jesus is in fact a 'new Genesis,' the story of an

it were, provide the foundation for reading the rest of their corpus of literature by identifying the prominent themes, characters, and theological truths that percolate for the rest of the canon. Matthew is full of Old Testament quotations and allusions, which may also be the reason why Matthew regularly appears at the forefront of the canon lists.[68]

Conclusion

In this article, I have argued that the story of the magi is not merely about identifying who these men were, their origin, or what purpose their gifts served. Rather, as I have tried to show, the magi served to fulfill a key Old Testament theme of moving to the East and away from God's presence. For Matthew, the place of origin and the direction in which the wise men traveled is a clue not just for their geographical journey but rather to show how these men came from the east and arrived in God's presence and fulfilled the journey East of Eden. Thus, as Sailhamer stated, to "return 'from the east' is to return to the city of 'peace;'" although here, it is to be with the Prince of Peace (Is 9:6), God in flesh (Jn 1:14), and the journey east of Eden has ended.[69]

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eschatological redemption that begins the world anew." Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 110.

[68] Estelle, *Echoes of Exodus*, 226; Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 106. For canon list, see Edmon L. Gallagher and John D. Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity: Text and Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). In most, if not all cases, the appearance of Matthew is at the forefront of the New Testament canon list. There are instances within Gallagher and Meade's book where they write "Four Gospels" for what begins the New Testament canon list.

[69] Sailhamer, "Genesis," 95.

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Missions at Midwestern: Why For the Church Means For the Nations

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Missions at Midwestern

At Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, our vision is "for the church." Midwestern's commitment to the church, far from diminishing our stewardship to global missions, directs and strengthens our dedication to the Great Commission. We place a high priority on establishing worshipping communities of growing disciples around the world. The aim of this article is to unpack our understanding of the connection between the church, theological education, and missions.

The Mission of God

Mission is all about God. At Midwestern, we emphasize the study of who God is (theology) and what God does (mission). Good theology is crucial to missiology because the mission begins and ends with God.[1] The one true God has one unified mission, and each person of the Triune God

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[1] Zane Pratt, Vice President of Assessment/Deployment and Training, International Mission Board, SBC, writes, "The doctrine of God affects every aspect of our understanding of missions. Because God is infinitely glorious, absolute in his Being, creator of everything, and transcendent over all he has made, the mission of his people is about him. The glory of God and the advance of his agenda in the world are the focus of the church's mission. It is not about us, and it is not ultimately about the lost among the nations. Because God is who he is, he is the center of everything, and everything must be done under his direction and for his glory. God's plan is to fill the earth with the knowledge of his glory as the waters cover the sea. Our mission, under his sovereign rule, must advance the knowledge and worship of God using the means he has prescribed so that both the end and the means glorify him." *https://www.mbts.edu/2021/10/how-theology-drives-missions/.*

distinctively carries out this mission as it unfolds in history. God the Father is the author, planning and initiating the mission. God the Son is the agent, executing and fulfilling the mission. The Holy Spirit is the administrator, applying and empowering the mission.[2] The object and ultimate end of the mission is God's own glory.[3]

God's perfection, holiness, and glory far surpass all human conceptions. Because God's eternal nature is self-revealing, communicative, and loving, He put into motion a plan to manifest His glory to the whole universe. Theologians call this cosmic plan and action of God the *Missio Dei*, the mission of God. Mission is not primarily about human efforts, but God's own work in history to glorify Himself. God invites us—and yes, commands us—to participate in His mission.[4]

The God of the Mission

A vibrant missiology begins with an accurate and grand vision of God as revealed in the Bible. The God of the Bible is not a weak, needy, or changing deity. Nor is God an isolated, abstract, absolute monad. Instead, the Bible presents God as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three divine persons who are united as one divine being. The doctrine of the Trinity bears directly on missiology in that it reveals God as more awesome and glorious (and more mysterious) than humans can imagine, and therefore infinitely worthy of worldwide worship. As John Piper says, "Worship is the fuel and goal of missions."[5]

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[2] Each Person of God participates and coinheres in the mission of the other Persons so that there is only one mission of God. The interlocking of participation by the three Persons of God encompasses the whole mission so that the distinctions neither erase the unity nor does the unity erase the distinctions.

[3] According to Patrick Schreiner, Associate Professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology at Midwestern, "It is the mission of God to confront us with the reality of Himself (His glory)." Patrick Schreiner, *The Mission of the Triune God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2022), 154.

[4] Paul distinguishes the work of God who causes the growth, from servants who plant or water (1 Cor 3:5–9). God designates His chosen servants as "fellow workers" (ESV) or "co-workers" (NIV).

[5] John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad!: The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022), 7.

Love and the Mission

Love sits at the heart of God's mission. The doctrine of the Trinity helps explain the words "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). In a few scattered verses, Scripture gives a tantalizing glimpse into what God was doing for all eternity, quite apart from time and space. One of those verses is John 17:24, which is part of a prayer that Jesus addressed to God the Father. Jesus said, "You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24). This verse indicates that God the Father has been forever loving the Son. God has eternally existed in perfect love between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Meditating on the mystery of the Trinity, Augustine of Hippo suggested that God the Father is the lover, God the Son is the beloved, and the Holy Spirit is the love that exists between them.[6] Similarly, Thomas Aquinas writes, "The Father and the Son love each other and love us by the Holy Spirit."[7]

The missionary enterprise starts with the eternal love of God and then moves toward humanity through the gospel. "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). Thus, through the gospel, believers experience God's love, which provokes in them a response of love for God. "We love, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Then, as believers receive the love of God, it bubbles up and spills out on others.[8] The Apostle Paul expressed his love for the believers in Thessalonica this way: "We had a fond affection for you and were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us" (1 Thess 2:8; cf. 2 Cor 5:14–15; Rom 10:1).

The two Great Commandments, to love God and to love others, mutually reinforce each other. As Ray Ortlund says, "The kind of God we really believe in is revealed in how we treat one another."[9] The Apostle John puts the matter bluntly, "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates

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[6] Augustine, *The Trinity* 9.1.

[7] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Ia.37.2

[8] Lesslie Newbigin writes, "Anyone who knows Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior must desire ardently that others should share that knowledge and must rejoice when the number of those who do is multiplied." Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 142.

[9] Ray Ortlund, "'One Another's' I Can't Find in the New Testament," The Gospel Coalition, January 4, 2022, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/ray-ortlund/one-anothers-i-cant-find-in-the-new-testament-2/.

his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20). The Great Commandments should arouse a great commitment to the Great Commission, and the church's obedience to the Great Commandments will determine the church's effectiveness at fulfilling the Great Commission.

While the mission of God refers to God's broad purposes to glorify Himself in all that He does, the Great Commission specifies the mission of the church and missionaries, namely, to go, and make disciples of all the nations, to baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and to teach them to follow all that Jesus commanded (Matt 28:19–20). Disciple-making, and its precursor evangelism, are the chief occupation of missionaries because these activities glorify God by proclaiming the gospel and impelling those far from Him to see and savor His majesty.

Love motivates missionaries. The gospel does not rely on a sense of guilt, fear, or duty to propel missionaries across geographic, cultural, or linguistic boundaries. No, a sense of love drives them—first, a love for God and then a love for those who have never heard the gospel. The awareness that millions of people have no access to the love, joy, and peace that comes through the gospel should weigh heavily on the heart of believers, pushing them out of their comfort zone and toward involvement in God's mission.

This gospel-shaped love is active, always seeking to express itself in concrete ways, such as meeting physical needs, speaking truth, being a good listener, or giving hugs. However, the most loving thing a believer can do for another person is to *give them the gospel.* Charitable deeds adorn the gospel, but they are not the gospel (Titus 2:10).

The gospel, according to the Apostle Paul, is the life-giving message "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared …" (1 Cor 15:3–5). Through faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit unites believers to Him, who brings them into fellowship with God the Father. The gospel alone meets humanity's greatest problem (alienation from God) and allows them to experience the greatest of all blessings (union with God).

God's Mission in Creation and Redemption

God's act of creation is one aspect of God's mission to manifest His glory and to put His character on display (Ps 19:16; Rom 1:20). Because God is love in Himself, God did not create humans because He needed someone to love Him, fulfill a deficiency, or to satisfy loneliness. Instead, God created out of the generous overflow of His love—the eternal love that God has always expressed, known, and enjoyed among the Trinity.[10] Creation comes as the fruit of divine love, not divine need.[11]

The plan of redemption reveals another aspect of the *Missio Dei*. Like creation, the plan of redemption comes from the overflow of God's gracious and merciful love. When God's image bearers, Adam and Eve, rebelled against Him, God's mission did not change. God's mission to manifest His glory remained constant, but accomplishing that mission now involved redeeming people from every tribe, nation, people group, and tongue (Rev 5:9; 7:9). Noted New Testament scholar Andreas Köstenberger writes, "God's saving plan for the whole world forms a

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[10] Jonathan Edwards writes, "The emanation of God's glory is in itself worthy and excellent, and so God delights in it; and this delight is implied in His love to His own fullness; because that is the fountain, the sum and comprehension of everything that is excellent." Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 1.IV.4, Accessed online at *https://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/works1.iv.iii.iv.html*. The word *overflow* is a modern way of expressing the ancient Christian idea of God's fullness, plenitude, bounty, or fecundity. John of Damascus, for example, calls God, "The fountain of being." John of Damascus, *An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 1.8. John Owen, in his discussion of 1 John 4:8, writes, "[God's love] is the fountain and prototype of all love, as being eternal and necessary.... All love in the creation was introduced from this fountain, to give a shadow and resemblance of it." John Owen, *Christologia* (Grand Rapids: Generic NL Freebook Publisher, 1999), 111–12, eBook.

[11] God's eternal love is expressed in creation *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). Because God is perfect love, His love so abounds that He can call things into existence from nothing. Trinitarian love, then, is not just the source of our redemption, but the source of our very existence and sustainment. British theologian Michael Reeves says, "There is something gratuitous about creation, an unnecessary abundance of beauty, and through its blossoms and pleasures we can revel in the sheer largesse of the Father." Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 57.

grand frame around the entire story of Scripture. The *missio Dei* is bound up with his salvation, which is like a colorful rainbow that spans from creation to new creation. Its focus is on God's gracious movement to save a desperately needy world that is in rebellion against him and stands under his righteous judgement."[12]

The Scope of God's Mission

God's glory is of such magnificence and worth that He deserves nothing less than global worship. God's glory is not like localized pagan deities, worthy of little more than the worship of a small band of devotees. Indeed, to say the scope of God's mission is merely global is inadequate; His mission is *cosmic*.

Paul writes that God's plan involves making known the "manifold wisdom of God … through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places" (Eph 3:10). The church is God's vehicle for putting His glory on display, not only to the nations, but also to "rulers and authorities in the heavenly places," a heavenly audience beyond the terrestrial sphere.[13]

The Biblical Language of Missions

The word "mission" comes from the Latin word translated "to send." Theologians use the phrase *missio Dei* primarily in reference to God's sending of the Son and the Spirit. As God the Son and God the Holy Spirit fulfill their mission to glorify God the Father in history, they reveal God's Triune nature. While mission (singular) usually refers to God's plan to make Himself known among the nations, mission*s* (plural) generally refers to human participation in God's plan (in a limited way and with respect to only some aspects of God's broader mission). At Midwestern, we believe the Bible theologically grounds missions in God's own mission, His eternal purpose to manifest His glory.

Mission is a major theme that unites the entire biblical storyline. Many biblical doctrines are true, even when the Bible does not use the

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[12] Andreas Köstenberger, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission,* New Studies in Biblical Theology 53 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 254.

[13] Worship is such an imperative that if people will not praise God, the very rocks will (Luke 19:37–40).

exact term, while some may argue mission is a case in point, the word *mission* does appear in the New Testament, although it is sometimes obscured in English translations. Eckhard Schnabel points out, "The Latin verb *mittere* corresponds to the Greek verb *apostellein*, which occurs 136 times in the New Testament (97 times in the Gospels, used both for Jesus having been 'sent 'by God and for the Twelve being 'sent ' by Jesus)."[14]

The concept of mission permeates the Scripture. Biblical missiology emerges from five interlocking themes. Attention to these themes can sensitize readers to the prevalence of mission in the Bible.

1. When the Bible speaks of God's purposeful action in history, He is fulfilling His mission.
2. When God reveals or communicates His glory, He is accomplishing the goal of His mission.
3. When the Bible uses the language of sending, it is usually talking about God sending agents of His mission. Whether God the Father is sending prophets, the Son and the Spirit, or members of His Church, God is fulfilling His mission.
4. When the Bible speaks of the nations, as it does throughout the Old and New Testaments, it is speaking about the scope and sphere of God's mission.
5. The plan of salvation occupies a central place in God's mission. First John 4:14 says, "The Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." In this one, simple, gospel verse, three major poles of theology converge: Trinitarianism, soteriology, and missiology. This short verse is Trinitarian because it speaks of the *Father* and *Son* (and the preceding verse mentions the *Holy Spirit*). It is soteriological because it refers to Jesus as the *Savior*. It is also missiological because it mentions the Father *sending* the Son, and because it talks about the *world*.

To summarize, the themes of *purpose*, *communication*, *sending*, *nations, and salvation* all point to God's mission. As someone said, "If

[14] Echkard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategy and Method* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 27–28.

you take mission out of the Bible, all you're left with is a front cover and back cover." Truly, the whole Bible is a missionary document.[15]

Theology, Worship, and Missions

The missionary imperative springs from the recognition that God's glory is of such beauty and grandeur that all the nations of the world must know and worship Him. On the one hand, good theology undergirds the gospel and feeds authentic worship, which drives missions. On the other hand, bad theology and false teaching misrepresent God, distort the gospel, twist evangelistic motivations, and destroy authentic worship, all of which choke out the missionary impulse.[16]

Missionary-theologian Lessie Newbigin writes, "Mission is an acted-out doxology. That is its deepest secret. Its purpose is that God may be glorified."[17] Therefore, theology directly influences missiology because missions should be the overflow of worshipping God. In other words, theology leads to doxology, which drives missiology, and missiology should result in doxology.

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[15] "The Bible is a narrative record of God's mission in and through his people for the sake of the world. It tells a story in which mission is a central thread—God's mission, Israel's mission, Christ's mission, the Spirit's mission, the Church's mission." Michael Goheen, *Introducing Christian Mission Today: Scripture, History, and Issues* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 37.

[16] Adam Dodds argues, "A demise in the belief in and confession of the Triune God will inexorably lead to a partial or faulty understanding of the gospel. Misunderstanding this good news, which contains within itself missional momentum, will result in a corresponding decline in missional consciousness and practice." Adam Dodds, *The Mission of the Triune God: Trinitarian Missiology in the Tradition of Lesslie Newbigin* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017), chapter 6.

[17] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 127.

Theology is extremely practical for missionaries.[18] Missionaries bear the responsibility of representing God and communicating the gospel to people who have never heard it. They lay the foundation of the church in new places. As D. Jeffrey Bingham (Research Professor of Historical Theology; Jesse Hendley Chair of Biblical Theology; Director, Center for Early Christian Studies at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) says, "Evangelists are frontline theologians."[19] That is why seminary training is so crucial. Midwestern seeks to train ministers of the gospel in sound theology because we take the worship of God seriously. Midwestern's motto, "for the church," expresses a commitment to equip men and women with the tools they need to establish radiant, theologically rich, worshipping churches worldwide.

[18] Martin Kähler famously declared missions "the mother of theology." As long as the gospel remained in its original Jewish context, evangelists could assume a high level of shared understanding with their audience. But when the gospel began to cross linguistic, cultural, and geographic boundaries, the need for theologizing grew urgent. Missionaries had to work hard to define key terms to make the gospel intelligible among the nations. These missionary efforts eventually culminated in confessional statements like the Nicene and Chalcedonian Creeds. Paul, the most important theologian of all time, self-identified as a missionary or "the apostle to the Gentiles" (Rom 11:13). He wrote the letter to the Romans, the most theologically dense work ever written, as a missionary support letter, urging the believers in Rome to assist him as he sought to "bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles (ἔθνεσιν, *ethnos*) for His name's sake" (1:5; cf. 16:26). Paul's theological output flowed from his missionary calling to bring the gospel to the nations.

[19] D. Jeffrey Bingham, Systematic Theology II, Class 6, Part 1, https://youtu.be/8g4igX6ztvw, accessed 9 May 2018.

The Academic Life, the Contemplative Life, and the Missional Life

Another way of describing the interplay between theology, worship, and missions is to think in terms of the academic life, the contemplative life, and the missional life. At Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, the professors in every department design their curricula to give their students a world-class education. Professors assign readings that engage with the top scholars in every field as they develop students into theologians. But no professor at Midwestern would be content with producing mere academics. Each one believes the life of the mind should feed the life of the soul. The professors at Midwestern want to cultivate worshippers. We long for our students to really know God, to see His beauty, and to stand in awe of Him. Professors would be grieved if their students stopped with the academic life and failed to move on to the contemplative life.

Yet even the contemplative life is stunted unless it overflows into a missional life, a life of active love for others. Matthew Barrett, Associate Professor of Christian Theology at Midwestern, writes, "Gazing at the beauty of the Lord is the premier ambition of the theologian, but the theologian's task is incomplete if his heavenly gaze is for himself alone."[20] Contemplation of God should lead to definite steps to invite more people to encounter the majesty of God. In short, the contemplative life should inspire the missional life. Newbigin, with characteristic incisiveness, says,

> "All true vitality in the work of missions depends in the last analysis upon the secret springs of supernatural life which they know who give time to communion with God. All true witness to Christ is the overflowing of a reality too great to be contained. It has its source in a life of adoration and intercession."[21]

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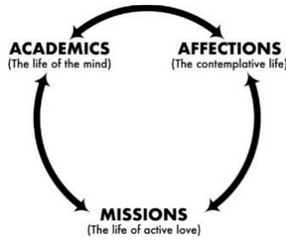
[20] Matthew Barrett, "Classical Theology: A Spiritual Exercise," *Journal of Classical Theology* 1 (2022): 5–19.

[21] Lesslie Newbigin, "Developments during 1962: An Editorial Survey," *International Review of Mission* 100 no. 2 (Nov 2011), 401.

This dynamic can be diagramed as follows:



God's Mission through Agents in History

From the beginning of history, God has worked through agents to carry out His mission. Schreiner writes, "[God] enacts His mission and furthers His mission specifically through His people."[22] First, God created Adam and Eve as His image bearers on earth. God blessed them and commissioned them "to reflect, resemble, and represent his greatness and glory on a global scale."[23] Later, God chose Abraham, sent him from his own country, and promised to bless the nations through him (Gen 12:1–3; 17:4–5; 22:18). The Old Testament records how God deputized and sent many other emissaries on His behalf, people like Moses, David, and Elijah. In fact, God sent the entire people of Israel to fulfill His plan.

Israel's God-given mission was to be a kingdom of priests and a light to the nations (Ex 19:6; Is 49:6). Their mission was to display the joy and peace of living in obedience to God, and in the process, draw the nations to worship the true and living God. Jason DeRouchie, Research Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology at Midwestern, writes that Israel's mission "to the nations was centripetal," which involved "calling others to 'come and see.'"[24] While Israel did not have a commission to "go" to the nations in the same way that the church has the Great Commission, the most fervent lovers of God in the Old Testament repeatedly expressed their dissatisfaction with provincially limited praise and, therefore, longed for all nations to glorify God. For example, Psalm 67:3–4 says, "Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy…." God affirms that He will

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[22] Schreiner, *The Mission of the Triune God*, 154.

[23] Jason DeRouchie, "By the Waters of Babylon: Global Missions from Genesis to Revelation," *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 20, no. 2 (Fall 2021): 7.

[24] DeRouchie, "By the Waters of Babylon," 12.

fulfill their longing. In Psalm 46:10, God promises, "I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." And yet, for generations, the people of Israel turned away from God and failed to fulfill their intended mission.[25]

When the fullness of time came, God sent His Son and Spirit as the ultimate agents of mission. Köstenberger writes, "The Lord of the Scriptures is a missionary God who not only reached out and gathers the lost but also sends His servants, and particularly His beloved Son, to achieve His gracious saving purposes."[26] The incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Jesus and the arrival of the Spirit form the centerpiece of history and mark the climactic events in God's mission.

Where other agents failed to perfectly reflect, resemble, and represent God, Jesus succeeded. Jesus fulfilled His mission by perfectly glorifying His heavenly Father through His words and works (John 17:4–5). In the greatest display of love in history, Jesus voluntarily sacrificed His life on the cross, securing redemption for all who trust in Him. Then God raised Him up from the dead and exalted Him (Acts 2:32–33; Rom 1:4).

After His resurrection and before His ascension, Jesus said to His disciples, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21). Jesus commissioned His disciples to be agents of His mission, saying:

> "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:18–20).[27]

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[25] Israel came the closest to fulfilling their mission of being a "come and see" people during the prosperous reign of Solomon. First Kings 10:24 says, "All the earth was seeking the presence of Solomon." Yet even Solomon turned away from the LORD, failed in his mission, and left a glaring hole that only the true Messiah could fill.

[26] Köstenberger, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, 261.

[27] The old canard that claims that the word 'go' (*poreuthentes*) is a participle that should be translated "as you are going" is wrong. This oft-repeated falsehood undercuts the imperatival force for Christians to move across boundaries. Making disciples of all nations simply is not possible unless some people "go" to the nations. Additionally, most Greek and New Testament scholars maintain

Yet Jesus instructed His disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "I am sending the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes, "He will glorify Me" (John 16:14). Just as Jesus's mission was to exalt the Father, the Holy Spirit's mission is to exalt Jesus.

Ten days after Christ's ascension, God sent the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1–4). Immediately, the Spirit went to work. He empowered the small band of believers in Jerusalem to testify to the death and resurrection of Jesus to people from all over the world (Acts 2:5–36).[28] As this band of believers quickly grew in numbers, they faced persecution. The believers started to spread out from Jerusalem as agents of mission, filled with the Spirit of mission, and began to "turn the world upside down" (Acts 17:6 KJV).[29]

The Spirit first saves people, then gathers His people, and then sends His people.[30] To this day, the Spirit is choosing a people for His own possession and empowering them to proclaim the excellencies of Christ (1 Pet 2:9). Those whom the Spirit unites to the eternal Son through faith, the Father adopts as His children.[31] The three Persons of God are

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that the word "go" is a command. For example, Daniel Wallace, author of *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, identifies *poreuthentes* in this context as a particle of "attendant circumstance," which means that the participle takes on the mood of the verb. In this case, the word "make disciples" (*matheteusate*) is a command, which means the participle should also be translated as a command. Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 640–45.

[28] Patrick Schreiner writes, "The Spirit compels boldness in speaking of Jesus. The Spirit is also always pointing back to the work of Jesus. [His] mission is always to exalt Christ." Schreiner, *The Mission of the Triune God*, 152.

[29] "The Spirit is about mission, [and] the mission is to save, recreate, and reconcile a new people." Schreiner, *The Mission of the Triune God*, 67.

[30] Schreiner argues that the book of Acts presents the Spirit from three perspectives, soteriological, ecclesiological, and missiological. Schreiner, *The Mission of the Triune God*, 67.

[31] Adoption as a motif for entrance into God's family is unique to Paul in the NT (Rom 8:15; 8:23; 9:4; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:4). John emphasizes new birth to describe a believer's entrance into the family of God (John 1:12; 3:16; 1 John 3:1–4). John marvels at God's work, saying, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are" (1 John 3:1).

involved in salvation because it is a Trinitarian phenomenon. God fills His children with the Holy Spirit of Jesus, who empowers them to cry out, "Abba, Father" (Rom 8:15). The Spirit unites the children of God to one another as brothers and sisters. The family of God, the church, is a new community in the Spirit.

The *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* defines church in Section IV, which says, "A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth."[32] It is significant that this definition includes extending the gospel to the ends of the earth as one of the church's primary duties.[33]

Today, the church is God's agent of mission in the world.[34] The Spirit leads the church to continue His mission of exalting Christ.[35] According to the pattern in Acts 13:2–4, the Holy Spirit, in response to the prayers of the church, sets apart and sends out missionaries. The church prays for them, ordains them, and dispatches them. Missionaries remain connected to their sending church, but they serve as envoys where no church exists.[36]

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[32] The Baptist Faith and Message 2000, section IV. Available at *https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/#vi*.

[33] The *Foundations* document of the IMB elaborates on the BF&M 2000 by providing guidelines for church planting, leadership training, and statistical reporting. It also discusses 12 characteristics of a healthy church. *Foundations*, v. 4, IMB, 78–83. Accessed December 1, 2022.
Available at *https://www.imb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Foundations-2022-FINAL-FILE-spreads-0623-opt.pdf?_gl=1*16c7m76*_ga*ODQ2ODcxMi4xNjYwMjU0NTc2*_ga_1RQXXFJB7G*MTY2MDU4MTQwOC40LjEuMTY2MDU4MTQyMy40NQ.*

[34] For a fuller discussion of the church and mission, see Robin Dale Hadaway, *A Survey of World Missions* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020) 53–54.

[35] "We believe God uses the local church to disciple believers, to discern their giftings and callings, to train potential cross-cultural workers in the basics of Christian evangelism and discipleship, to assess their readiness for service, and to send them out to the nations (Ephesians 3:10)." *Foundations*, 19.

[36] The missionary task is a group assignment. The picture of a lone missionary heroically pioneering new regions is unbiblical. Except in rare cases, Paul, the

Missionaries are not merely concerned with evangelizing lost people, but also bringing the gospel to and discipling unreached and unengaged people groups.[37] The difference between "lost" and "unreached" is a matter of *access to the gospel*. Paul embodies the heart of a missionary when he says, "My aim is to preach the gospel where Christ has not been named" (Rom 15:20). The core missionary task is to enter new contexts, preach the gospel, make disciples, establish churches, train leaders, and entrust the church to the local believers. In this way, God blesses the nations with the gospel through the church.

For the Church *and* the Nations

Midwestern exists "for the church," and, as Christopher Wright says, "The church was made for God's mission."[38] The church gathers for worship and scatters for witness. That witness then creates new worshippers who gather as the church and testify to the reality of the gospel both in their local vicinity and "to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

As a seminary community, we are committed to *biblically educating God-called men and women to be and to make disciples of Jesus Christ*.[39] Midwestern's president, Jason Allen, explains the global scope of this commitment and makes the connection between the church and missions when he says, "To be for the Church means to be for the nations. Our objective is to see the gospel preached and churches planted around the four corners of the earth."

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible reveals that God's heart is for the nations. So, when the Holy Spirit of God dwells in a person's heart by faith, they find their heart drawn to the nations. As Charles Spurgeon said, "If Jesus is precious to you, you will not be able to keep the good

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prototypical missionary, did not work alone. In his letters, Paul identifies well over 70 men and women as his ministry associates, and specifically calls many of them "coworkers."

[37] The Foundations document clarifies the concept of unreached. It says, "Unreached peoples and places are those among whom Christ is largely unknown and the church is relatively insufficient to make Christ known in its broader population without outside help." *Foundations*, 88.

[38] Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 62.

[39] Midwestern's mission statement.

news to yourself."[40] Those who have experienced the love of God through the gospel should respond with love, both love for God and love for those whom God loves.

What is true on an individual level is also true on a corporate level: churches are only healthy to the degree they are the involved in the Great Commission, sending and supporting missionaries.[41] At Midwestern, we help students and churches align with God's heart and participate in God's mission.

Midwestern and the International Mission Board

Midwestern is a Southern Baptist seminary that intentionally partners with the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). While Midwestern helps churches *prepare* missionaries, the IMB helps churches *send* missionaries. While we gladly partner with other ministries and missions agencies, we have designed our degree programs, specifically the Fusion Masters program, to prepare graduates to meet the IMB's application requirements.

Both Midwestern and the IMB are theologically aligned and affirm the same doctrinal statement, *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000.* Missiologically, Midwestern is aligned with the IMB's *Foundations* document, which describes the IMB's self-understanding and purpose.[42] The *Foundations* document seeks to define and describe critical missiological convictions about methodological and strategic topics such

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[40] Charles H. Spurgeon, "A Sermon and a Reminiscence," *Sword and the Trowel* (March 1873), as cited on *http://www.spurgeon.org/s_and_t/srmn1873.htm.*

[41] Michael Goheen and Timothy Sheridan write, "If the church is to faithfully be the church of the New Testament, it must be a missionary body. This is not an optional extra or something that might enrich the church. Mission is about the *esse* (essence or being) of the church, not its *bene esse* (well-being)." Michael W. Goheen and Timothy M. Sheridan, *Becoming a Missionary Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2022), 3. Kindle Edition. Of course, missions engagement is only one metric of church health, and active involvement is no guarantee of complete health in the church. Still, a church without missions involvement shows serious symptoms of disfunction.

[42] *Foundations*, v. 4, IMB. Accessed December 1, 2022. Available at *https://www.imb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Foundations-2022-FINAL-FILE-spreads-0623-opt.pdf?_gl=1*16c7m76*_ga*ODQ2ODcxMi4xNjYwMjU0NTc2*_ga_1RQXXFJB7G*MTY2MDU4MTQwOC40LjEuMTY2MDU4MTQyMy40NQ*

as the missionary task, twelve characteristics of a healthy church, and principles of contextualization.

The Missions Department's Goals and Objectives

At Midwestern, we aim to inform, inspire, and equip students to fulfill the Great Commission. This goal involves engaging students intellectually through rigorous academic studies, engaging their hearts through fueling their passion for the gospel and the lost, and preparing them to practically apply cutting-edge ministry strategies.

Upon graduation, we want students to be utterly and unshakably convinced of the following truths:

- God is perfect, powerful, and personal—infinitely worth living and dying for! The God of the Bible is superior to any other god in any other religious system (Ps 96:5; Exod 18:11; Rev 9:20).
- The Bible is completely true and reliable and provides a rock-solid hope for life with God. It is the ultimate authority for life and godliness. It alone contains the message of salvation, without which humans are doomed (2 Tim 3:14–17; Deut 17:19; Ps 19:7–10; Rom 15:4; 2 Pet 1:19–21).
- Lostness is a real and urgent problem because separation from God in hell is eternal and horrible (Matt 18:8–9; Luke 16:19–26; 2 Pet 3:7; Rev 20:11–15).[43]
- The gospel is the best news in the whole world. God's grace, secured by Jesus's death on the cross, makes the gospel *so, so good*. God's love expressed in the gospel is real and life-changing (Luke 4:18; Acts 4:12; Rom 1:16–17; 10:14–17).
- Jesus is alive. He really came back to life and conquered sin, death, and Satan. He now rules from heaven and will return someday soon (Luke 24; Acts 1:6–10; 7:55–56; 1 Cor 15).
- Every believer can be a part of the *Missio Dei*, God's plan to rescue, redeem, and recreate the world. While not every believer should be commissioned as a cross-cultural missionary, every believer should intentionally play his or her role in fulfilling the Great Commission (Acts 6:1–6; 13:1–3; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4:11–12).

[43] God's judgment is never evil, but a display of His perfect righteousness.

• Missionaries must practice patience and gospel faithfulness, which involves, in part, learning the local language and culture, and resisting sub-biblical pragmatism and revivalistic strategies.
• The gospel is worth enduring embarrassment, scorn, discomfort, and even persecution and martyrdom (Matt 5:10–11; John 15:18–25; 21:19; Acts 5:40–42; 7:59–60).
• The promises of God are real and sure, and the rewards God offers far outweigh temporal suffering. The highest reward for faithful service to God is an increased capacity to glorify God for all eternity (Matt 19:27–29; Mark 9:41; Phil 3:13–5; Rom 8:18; Jas 1:12).

No higher joy exists than living in daily fellowship and dependence on God to accomplish the good works He has prepared for His children. Newbigin says, "I think that the deepest motive for mission is simply the desire to be with Jesus where he is, on the frontier between the reign of God and the usurped dominion of the devil."[44] Joy exists in being near to God, which means following Him to the nations.

Conclusion

God is accomplishing His mission with divine perfection. He who created us, sustains us, and redeems us, also calls us to be coworkers in His mission. The *Missio Dei* is to display His glory to all creation. God put His glory on display in a unique way in the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God. At the heart of God's mission is the gospel, the life-changing story of Jesus Christ. Individuals glorify God by responding in faith and embracing the gospel. The church glorifies God by taking the gospel to the world.

At Midwestern, we draw a close connection between theology, ecclesiology, and missiology. Theological education serves the church, which serves the nations, which crescendos in the glory of God. Being "for the church" is intimately tied and interconnected with being "for the nations." We pray that all of our efforts ultimately result in resounding doxology for the One who is worthy.

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[44] Lesslie Newbigin, *A Word in Season: Perspectives on Christian World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 129.

***A Classical Response to Relational Theism: A Reformed Evangelical Critique of Thomas Jay Oord's Evangelical Process Theology*. By Brian J. Orr. Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2022. 228 pp. $28.00, Paperback. ISBN: 978-1666710625.**

Brian J. Orr is a pastor at Sovereign Way Christian Church in Hesperia, CA. He holds a PhD from the London School of Theology. His doctoral dissertation "A Reformed Evangelical Critique of Thomas Jay Oord's Evangelical Process Theology" is the subject of the book under review, though with revisions.

As the title suggests, Orr is critiquing so-called relational theism through the lens of classical theism, particularly in the work of Jay Oord, who labels himself an Evangelical process theologian. For some, these terms may not be clear. Orr remedies this in his opening chapter as he gives the reader a short history lesson on relational theism (RT from here), showing how it roots itself in the early days of open theism (perhaps a term which is more easily recognized). Orr gives ample evidence from open theists that RT is a proper labeling of what they understand about God over against the classical understanding of God for which Orr is arguing. This "turn," as Orr describes it, is not simply due to an overemphasis on God's immanence over His transcendence but also to "aberrant views of divine impassibility" (p. 3). Thus, the aim of RT is to emphasize God's love, insisting that "God can only be passionate, compassionate, empathetic, and 'love' if his experiences are phenomenologically human" (p. 4).

Orr chooses Oord as his interlocuter, stating, "Oord's theology is what I determine to be the most progressive form of open theism. He sees the severe misstep with the prevailing model of open theism in its failure to follow through on its 'claim that God's preeminent attribute is love.'" (p. 21).[1] Oord, therefore, departs from open theism's view of God's sovereignty and adopts a more consistent version, as Orr sees it (pp. 21-22). Once again, it is pertinent to mention that Orr is arguing against Oord's view of God over against a classical theistic rendering.

Each chapter offers an in-depth view of Oord's theology and the author's critique from a classical theistic view. After his introductory chapter, Orr's chapters are titled as follows: 2. Oord and Process

[1] Oord, *The Uncontrolling Love of God*, 133 in Orr, p. 21.

Philosophy, 3. Oord's Divine-Love Theology, 4. Scripture and Metaphysics, 5. Essential Kenosis—Oord's Relational Account of Divine Providence, and 6. Conclusion.

Each chapter contains sections in which Orr examines a piece of Oord's process theology, explaining and evaluating it, and then critiquing it through the lens of Scripture with a classical theistic hue. Due to the limitations of this review, the examination of chapter five will suffice to show Orr's methodology and give the reviewer ample material for an evaluation of the work. This method works because, as Orr admits, "Chapter [five] examines the *apex* of Oord's process theology [and furthermore expresses Oord's] relational model of divine providence ... [and] ontological expression of God. For Oord, it defines the essential essence and being of God" (p. 124, emphasis original). In other words, this chapter in Orr's volume takes the cumulative aspects of his earlier study to examine the zenith of Oord's process theology.

From here Orr extrapolates Oord's view of the kenosis theory and shows how he uses it as a catalyst for defining a process-theological view of God's providence. In fact, Orr states that, "[Oord's] understanding of kenosis as espoused in his Essential Kenosis model is the guiding presupposition behind his Evangelical process theology" (p. 125). Quoting Oord's own words brings clarity to why Orr has concerns. Oord says, "The Essential Kenosis model of providence 'allows us to say God is not culpable for failing to prevent the dastardly deeds free creatures sometimes do. Because of God's immutable nature of self-giving, others-empowering love, God cannot prevent genuine evil'" (p. 125).[2] Further Orr explains that this is Oord's solution to theodicy and a way to understand God apart from classical theism's "monarchial God ... revealing the Deity who truly meets us where we are" (pp. 125-26). After wading through various kenosis options, especially through the rubric of the Philippians 2 passage, Orr shows that Oord opts for a "self-giving, others empowering love" (p. 127).[3] Because God is love, this self-sacrificial expression becomes the prime attribute of God, thus making kenosis essential (p. 127).

Orr continues by giving other ways in which Oord defends his views and then offering his evaluations and critiques of those views. Again, due

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[2] Oord, *ULG*, 170, in Orr, 125.
[3] Oord, *ULG*, 160, in Orr, 127.

to limitations this review will address just one of these critiques, namely, "Essential Kenosis: God's Necessity to Love" (p. 135).

Oord contends that love is God's most prominent property, and "his essentially kenotic nature means that he is not free to not love" (p. 135). Orr demonstrates from Oord's writing that every aspect of who God is comes back to this main attribute. Therefore, even God's divine foreknowledge is hindered if it is rendered according to classical theism. Orr writes, "Oord's God must have the freedom to choose. If the future is settled, then God is constrained to choose the most loving option. If God knows the future with certainty, then he knows, with certainty, what the most loving action would be in any situation" (p. 137). However, Orr contends:

Oord's argument is not persuasive because he does not successfully demonstrate that an eternal God is less-free than a time-full God and, more importantly, he does not exegetically use Scripture to support his arguments; rather, he sparsely uses texts that speak about God's love and then philosophically defines and implies what those texts mean. And lastly, he does not engage with biblical texts that speak contrary to his view. Oord rejects a deterministic view of God because that means God cannot do other than what has been determined, according to divine exhaustive foreknowledge. Well, if God necessarily loves his creation (Oord's claim), no matter what, because his nature necessitates (i.e., it compels him to love) that he cannot do otherwise, then it seems that God cannot do other than what has been determined—he *must* love. Determinism, then, *is* part of Oord's theology, he just qualifies it in a different manner. (p. 139)

The examples this review provides above are adequate to move on to an evaluation of Orr's work. First, Orr's writing is superb. Even if one does not agree with his conclusions, one would likely see how his content deftly defends his position. The one critique on this point is that one might find the outline of each chapter cumbersome with such repetitive section titles as "critical evaluation." These elements are likely holdovers from Orr's dissertation, and the academic nature of such things is understandable. Second, Orr allows Oord to speak for himself. Orr quotes or summarizes his interlocuter copiously. Admirably, Orr even has personal interaction with Oord via email to clarify points and receive corrections if there is misrepresentation. One does not often find this sort of interface at this level of writing; it is quite refreshing.

The overall stance of this reviewer is a commendation of Orr's volume to those who agree and those who do not. The current climate concerning classical theism lends itself to more heat than light and those who stand on either side of the debate would do well to read such a fine work as this to broaden their understanding of at least one case in favor of classical theism over against one of its critics.

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***Echoes of Jesus in the First Epistle of Peter*. By Timothy E. Miller. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2022. 276 pp. $35.00, Paperback. ISBN 978-1666733372.**

In this book, Timothy Miller identifies where and how Peter alludes to or echoes Jesus Tradition (JT) in 1 Peter (1P). Readers may conceive of this monograph in three parts. The first part is foundational. After a brief introduction (ch. 1), Miller surveys the history of scholarship on the reception history of JT in 1P (ch. 2). Miller then defends the availability and authenticity of the JT to the author of 1P, defines his criteria for locating JT in 1P, and describes how he will interpret the use of JT in 1P (ch. 3). In the large second part of this monograph (75 percent of the whole), Miller identifies possible or probable allusions and echoes to JT in 1P in each section of the letter (chs. 4-9). From the letter's salutation (1P 1:1-2) through its introduction (1:3-12), body (1:13-2:10; 2:11-3:7; 3:8-4:11), and conclusion (4:12-5:14), Miller explains how thirty-four proposed allusions or echoes to JT function in 1P. Miller's conclusion summarizes the results of his study in three tables and suggests implications of his research for future scholarship, whether on the historical Jesus or on the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament in general and in 1P in particular (ch. 10).

Seminary and postgraduate students who read this book will welcome Miller's discussion of intertextuality in chapter 3. Miller clearly defines quotations, allusions, echoes, and traces. He defines a quotation as "a direct reference to a source text with verbatim (or near verbatim) imitation of four or more words" (p. 39). An allusion is an author-

intended "indirect reference to a source text, event, tradition, person, or thing," which the reader must recognize in order to have a complete "understanding [of the] meaning of the text" (p. 42). An echo differs from an allusion in that it is "*non-essential* to fully understanding the meaning of the text" (p. 43, emphasis in original). Finally, a trace "is imitative rather than functional" (p. 44). Miller agrees with past Petrine scholarship that 1P does not quote JT, and since his study focuses on the use of JT in 1P, he does not propose any traces. Intertextuality is an immense subject, and even intertextual studies on biblical literature are too numerous for any one reader to master. Miller's section on intertextuality in chapter 3 will give any reader an accessible introduction to this subject, and this book exemplifies how to apply intertextuality to biblical studies.

Both academic professors and church pastors may profit from Miller's exposition of the use of JT in 1P. In Table 10.1, Miller lists thirty-four allusions and echoes to JT in 1P and describes them as "possible," "likely," or "very likely" (pp. 227-33). Since a reader must recognize an allusion in order to understand fully the text's meaning, the "likely" or "very likely" allusions to JT in 1P that Miller proposes are most significant to note. First Peter 1:3 likely alludes to John 3:3-7 (pp. 75-80). First Peter 1:23-25 is a very likely allusion to Jesus's Parable of the Sower (pp. 119-24). First Peter 2:12 very likely alludes to Matthew 5:14-16 (pp. 137-40), as does 1P 3:9 to Luke 6:27-30//Matthew 5:39-44 (pp. 162-69). First Peter 5:2-4 very likely alludes to JT later recorded in as disparate contexts as Luke 22:25-30, Mark 10:42-45, and Matthew 20:25-28 (pp. 207-11). In 1P 5:5, the author very likely alludes to JT regarding the Last Supper later recorded in John 13:1-17 (pp. 211-13). Historical Jesus scholars and those who study the early reception history of Jesus should weigh the evidence of all Miller's proposed allusions and echoes to JT in 1P as to whether 1P is "a witness to early JT" (p. 237). Petrine scholars will find most intriguing the ways that these allusions and echoes support various themes in 1P, especially imitation (13x), reward (11x), and perseverance (10x). (For the full list of ten themes in 1P that JT grounds, see Table 10.3, "Themes of Peter's Dominical Reflections," pp. 237-38.) Pastors will find these allusions and echoes to JT in 1P to provide helpful examples for illustration and application as they preach 1P or relevant Gospel texts.

Given Miller's comprehensive list of thirty-four potential allusions or echoes to JT in 1P that are at least possible, if not likely or very likely, each reader may be unconvinced by a few of the proposed allusions or echoes to JT in 1P. However, the cumulative weight of the evidence Miller marshals in this monograph should gain wide acceptance in scholarship, especially among his fellow evangelical scholars. On the other hand, some New Testament scholars may wish that Miller had proposed a few additional echoes or allusions to JT in 1P. The one that may have been most helpful for Miller to consider is a potential echo of Matthew 5:48 in 1P 1:14-16. Miller's dismissal of this suggestion is almost cavalier (p. 102n14). Granted, four scholars proposing it is not strong evidence in its favor, but Miller does not consider that at least the vast majority of New Testament scholars consider Jesus to be echoing Leviticus 19:2 in Matthew 5:48 and that the author of 1P seems to reapply that same text in a way consistent with Jesus's teaching, which would provide "conceptual agreement" (one of Miller's primary criterion for identifying allusions) between Matthew 5:48 and 1P 1:14–16 and "significance" (another primary criterion) to the shared echo of Leviticus 19:2 (p. 48). Furthermore, an echo of Matthew 5:48 in 1P 1:14–16 would be an excellent example of the confirming criterion of "multiple attestation," since fifteen of the fifty-nine echoes or allusions to JT in 1P are to Jesus's Sermon on the Mount/Plain (pp. 53, 234). Miller may be justified in concluding that this evidence is not sufficient for an echo of Matthew 5:48 in 1P 1:14–16, but refuting this evidence in a paragraph within the body of the text rather than relegating this proposed echo or allusion to a footnote would have only improved Miller's already impressive monograph on the use of JT in 1P.

Slight disagreements aside, *Echoes of Jesus in the First Epistle of Peter* makes an excellent contribution to New Testament studies, especially Petrine studies and the early reception history of Jesus. Every theological library should own a copy of this book for scholars and students to consult. The scores of exegetical insights in this book will also stimulate those who are preaching 1P or one of the Gospels. This monograph deserves a wide readership for its demonstration that 1P frequently alludes to and echoes not only the Old Testament but also Jesus Himself.

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Redeeming Power: Understanding Authority and Abuse In The Church. **By Diane Langberg. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2020. 207 pp. $19.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-1587434389.**

Bill Hybels. Brian Houston. Ravi Zacharias. The stream of respected Christian leaders who have brought shame to the body of Christ seems to flow unchecked, so much so that one has anxiety about what impiety will be revealed next. One author who has influenced the manner in which many Christians reflect on the abuse of power by church leaders is Diane Langberg. In *Redeeming Power: Understanding Authority and Abuse in the Church,* she sternly criticizes the Evangelical church for its abuse of power. While *Redeeming Power* makes some valid criticisms and rightly alerts Christians to the oft-overlooked connection between the dynamics of power and abuse, the book also has some points where appeals to Scripture are imprecise and argumentation is weak.

Langberg is a licensed psychologist with a practice based in Jenkintown, PA, and her career has focused on those who have experienced trauma and abuse. She earned her PhD from Temple University, teaches at Missio Seminary in Philadelphia, and is also a board member of a nonprofit group called Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment (GRACE). Previous books by Langberg include *On the Threshold of Hope* (1999), *Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse* (2003), and *Suffering and the Heart of God: How Trauma Destroys and Christ Restores* (2015).

In *Redeeming Power,* Langberg's thesis is that ministerial abuse, sexual and otherwise, is rooted in abuse of power. She begins by saying, "Power can be a source of blessing, but when it is abused, untold damage to the body and name of Christ, often *in* the name of Christ, is done" (p. 3), and later says, "Some corners of Christendom today have, I fear, become less interested in truth and more interested in power" (p. 146). The book is divided into three parts: 1) Power Defined, 2) Power Abused, and 3) Power Redeemed.

Langberg rightly emphasizes that a pastor's or Christian leader's authority is on loan from God and should be stewarded in a manner which honors the Lord, and not for the leader's own benefit. Langberg connects this concept to the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20, stressing that all authority has been given to Jesus Christ, and she then makes a healthy point of application, "Jesus holds all authority. That

means any little bit of power you and I have is derivative; we are dispatched *under* his authority" (p. 10). Such power should be used to bring glory to Jesus Christ.

In the context of a local church, many people are drawn to the gospel out of backgrounds of profoundly broken relationships and families of origin that were not safe. Pastoral abuse is especially evil because people from such backgrounds are craving safety and security, and they long for a protective relationship. When a pastor abuses his power, the experience creates loss of dignity and shame in the victim. Most tragically, abusive pastors create a theological crisis in the church members they hurt, and Langberg notes, "Victims of abuse often view God through a gravely distorted lens, seeing him as the source of the evil they experience" (p. 7).

As a seminary professor, I think Langberg's observations about the backgrounds of many people who come to seminary are quite helpful. She notes a pattern I have observed in some cases, saying, "I have found that many young church leaders grew up unchurched, came to Christ in college, headed for seminary (maybe), and then landed in a pulpit with little to no supervision." She then observes, "Character work and understanding of one's personal history are not usually emphasized in training for ministry" (p. 130).

I think Langberg should be heard here. The overwhelming majority of ministerial students I have taught come to seminary with the sincerest of motives and a strong desire to serve the Lord and win the lost to Christ; but each of us have our own backgrounds which shape our motives to preach, often in ways which we do not understand. Furthermore, as an ethics professor, my classes focus heavily on the major issues of our day such as the sanctity of human life and marriage, but more could and should be done regarding ministerial ethics and character formation. In a worst case scenario, a student from a confused background might see ministry as an opportunity to achieve a level of power and control denied to him in an unsafe environment as a young person. A sound approach helps ministerial students investigate their backgrounds and how each person's own story can shape someone for good or for ill.

Because Langberg says things which are needful, I am sad I cannot give an unqualified endorsement of *Redeeming Power*. Most problematic are several places where Langberg gives imprecise references to

Scripture. For example, she claims John 10:14-15 says, "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me. I provide security and food for all. I lay down my life for them" (p. 138). But that is not what John 10:14-15 says; instead the passage says, "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me, just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep." Langberg has added the words, "I provide security and food for all." She also cites Acts 20:28 as saying, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, to feed the church of the Lord, which he purchased with his blood" (p. 138). Apparently she is citing the ASV, but this is an inaccurate citation, because without using an ellipsis to indicate she is skipping some words, she omits the phrase, "in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops." The phrase she has omitted (without telling the reader) is a vital one for the topic at hand, because it emphasizes that God the Holy Spirit appoints pastors—a vital concept to be kept in mind in a discussion of the proper use of authority in the church. She also has a confused and imprecise citation of Malachi 2:16 (p. 95). As best as I can tell, at times Langberg paraphrases passages of Scripture and makes inferences from these paraphrases, but cites her own inferences as if this is exactly what the text says.

Some of Langberg's definitions of biblical terms left me confused as well. For example, she says the word "hate" in 1 John 3:15 can mean "to spit on someone in your heart." I searched the standard lexicons and could not find anyone who gives this option, and since she gives no source as a citation, I am at a loss as how to evaluate her claim. She also said one of the meanings of the Hebrew adjective עָקֹב ("deceitful") in Jeremiah 17:9 is "foot-tracked" and then proceeds from this definition to make two paragraphs of application about tracking the footprints of abusive behavior, specifically saying we must "find the trail of evidence that helps to explain the outcome" (p. 124). But here Langberg confuses the meaning of the Hebrew noun עָקֵב (which means *heel*), the verb derived from it, and the adjective עָקֹב used in Jeremiah 17:9. All three Hebrew words— the noun, the verb, and the adjective—are related but have different meanings in different contexts, and only the adjective is used in Jeremiah 17:9. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* says the verb derived from the noun עָקֵב can mean "to track down" in Jewish Aramaic and Syriac, but the Hebrew adjective עָקֹב used

in Jeremiah 17:9 simply means deceitful or sly.[4] Perhaps finding the trail of evidence which leads to abusive behavior is wise in preventing others from doing the same thing, but Jeremiah 17:9 hardly supports all that Langberg attempts to derive from it. When dealing with the subject of abuse, careful handling of the text of Scripture is essential because weak lexical work can lead the reader to think the author's argumentation might be weak elsewhere as well.

If I may be ever so gentle in my critique, at a couple of points in her argumentation, Langberg adds and subtracts from the Word of God. I want very badly to think the best of the author and perhaps she was paraphrasing her own thoughts about the applications of these particular verses, or maybe an editor failed to assist her in precision when citing particular verses. But in a book about spiritual abuse, it is especially incumbent on the author to be clear and precise in biblical citations. A common characteristic of manipulative spiritual leaders is taking Scripture out of context to gain leverage and power over followers. I sense Langberg loathes such charlatans, and I concur, but she herself needs to exercise more care in explaining to readers how or in what manner she is citing particular texts as opposed to paraphrasing her own insights derived from the text.

Chapter 7, "Power Between Men and Women," is also quite problematic because of its caricature of the complementarian position. She seems to imply that adherence to a complementarian position is abusive in and of itself and says, "God help us if with our labels and categories we ignore or silence women around this globe who love him and have faith in him. We deprive his body of these prophetic voices, given by his authority, who pronounce that he is risen" (p. 104). What labels and categories does she have in mind? She says, "Today, one of the main questions seems to be 'Are you complementarian or egalitarian?' Often hidden in that question is 'I will approve of you if you choose the right label.' These categories are not found anywhere in the Scriptures" (p. 100).

When Langberg thinks of the term *complementarian,* she seems only to have a caricature of abusive and negative experiences in mind. She recounts no instance of a complementarian congregation which handled an incidence of abuse in a healthy manner or in which women are

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[4] *HALOT*, s.v. "עָקֹב."

honored and treated with dignity. She says, "Sadly, authoritarian treatment of females (and all church members) is often supported using the concept of headship" (p. 103). As a complementarian myself, I have met Christians who took concepts out of context to justify unbiblical forms of subordination of women, but I have also enjoyed fellowship and served in churches that operate from a complementarian perspective in which women are honored, protected, treated with respect, and valued. My latter experiences far outnumber the former. To suggest a complementarian view necessarily leads to an abuse of power is a misrepresentation of the position, and I might add that I have known people from egalitarian positions who have abused their power. However, when I explain why I am a complementarian and not an egalitarian, I try my best to be as charitable as I can towards Christians with whom I disagree.

All in all, Langberg would have been more helpful if she had said, "I don't agree with everything complementarians teach, but I understand many churches and individuals operate in sound, healthy, and Christlike ways from that perspective. If you hold to that view, here are some ways you can avoid abuse." Instead, her suggestion seems to be, "Labels are divisive! Abandon complementarianism."

Redeeming Power rightly stresses the evil nature of abusing power in the church and of ignoring those who have been abused within the church. All Christians should grieve such horrific things, and Langberg rightly excoriates leaders who have been unresponsive to hurting church members. I almost wish I could see a second edition in which Langberg cites specific passages with more care, tries to understand the complementarian position in a more charitable light, and offers specific examples of churches who handled things the right way. As it stands, the work is a mixed blend of correct moral indignation and weak argumentation at points where greater attention to detail is much needed.

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***Preaching Life-Changing Sermons: Six Steps to Developing and Delivering Biblical Messages*. By Jesse L. Nelson. Grand Rapids: Kregel Ministry, 2022. 144 pp. $16.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-0825446955.**

Jesse Nelson's target audience for *Preaching Life-Changing Sermons* is people who are called to preach but do not have the opportunity to attend seminary. He describes the book as a way of bringing "the seminary classroom to the minister's study" (p. 12). His goal is for it "to be practical, not theoretical" (p. 12), and while this volume is not entirely devoid of theory, it is primarily a useful guide to the task of pulpit ministry. Concise and written in plain language, a preacher with little-to-no training in the creation of sermons could follow this book's steps and produce a message to preach.

Nelson is the senior pastor of Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in Panama City, Florida. He is a board member of the Evangelical Homiletics Society and has served as its president (p. 143). He has been an adjunct professor of pastoral ministry at the Baptist College of Florida and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and has conducted preaching workshops in Haiti and the Dominican Republic (p. 143). He is also the author of *Spiritual Victory: How to be an Overcomer* and *My Prayer Book*, both published through Jesse Nelson Ministries. Such a résumé from "more than twenty years of ministry experience" as "a pastor and scholar" (p. 19) qualifies Nelson to write this volume.

Nelson offers a six-step process to sermon development. Each of the book's six chapters covers one of those steps. Three appendices provide helpful tools for applying the steps. Appendix one is a sermon preparation guide that lays out a Monday-through-Friday schedule for sermon development. Appendix two contains eight examples of sermon outlines, and appendix three provides sample sermons for the five types of sermon structures mentioned in the book.

This is a short, easy read. The introduction through the conclusion consists of only 84 pages. This would seem helpful to a preacher who might want to follow the book's steps without having to flip through hundreds of pages to find them. At the same time, an untrained preacher seeking to use the book as his sole instruction in the task of sermon development might wish there were more thorough explanations for some aspects.

A strong element to the book is Nelson's explanations of the spiritual nature of biblical preaching. For instance, he declares the first step in sermon preparation to be seeking the Spirit. He notes why this is so and explains how to seek the "Spirit of God through spiritual disciplines," chief of which are prayer and Bible study (p. 23). Nelson narrows these two down to a focus on prayer because, he says, "I believe prayer is the most neglected discipline for preachers" (p. 23). He discusses what prayer is, why and how we should pray, and examples of praying preachers in the Bible and the church. He offers a powerful quote from Charles Spurgeon's *Lectures to My Students*: "Use prayer as a boring rod, and wells of living water will leap up from the bowels of the Word. Who will be content to thirst when living waters are so readily to be obtained? The best and holiest men have ever made prayer the most important part of pulpit preparation" (qtd. in p. 30). Nelson closes the chapter by calling readers who may have lapsed in their prayer lives to "start praying more today ... right now" before moving on to step two of sermon preparation (p. 31).

Step two is selecting the Scripture. Nelson usually preaches through books of the Bible (pp. 39-40), but he offers advice on sermon selection for those who do not. A preacher, he says, must ask two questions through prayer: (1) "What does God want to say to the people?" (pp. 34-35) and (2) "What do the people need to hear from God" (p. 35)? The second question is tied to ways the people need to grow in Christ, what sins are prevalent in their lives, what doctrine needs to be taught, what spiritual discipline that needs to be emphasized, and the question of what book in the Bible parallels the current season in which the church finds itself (p. 35).

Step three is studying the Scripture. Nelson offers four steps to doing this: prayer, completing a historical background study of the text, reading the text multiple times, and exegesis. Along with descriptions of how to do these things, a chart recommends resources for a preaching library, such as study Bibles, commentaries, Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias, software, online resources, and more (pp. 44-46). Two portions of the chapter are sectioned off, one to explain the steps to doing a word study and the other to explain how to preach the various genres in the Bible.

The fourth step is structuring the sermon. Nelson lays out how to take what one has studied and begin to put it down on paper, ultimately

transforming the information into a sermon with an introduction, body, conclusion, illustrations, applications, and a title. While this chapter covers many items, it sometimes does so with too much brevity. For instance, in a mere four pages and a few lines, Nelson covers how to determine the main point of a Scripture text, how to develop the main point into a textual/exegetical outline (complete with major points and subpoints), and how to transform that outline into a sermon outline (including turning the main point into a life-changing principle). For someone who has received some instruction in sermon development, the brevity of this section might work well as a quick reference to guide the process of sermon construction. But, for Nelson's claim that this book brings the seminary classroom to the pastor's study (p. 19), a more thorough explanation of sermon development is needed. While the appendices do help to flesh out the instruction of step four, more detailed instruction seems necessary.

Step five is speaking in the Spirit. Here again, in discussing the spiritual aspect of preaching, Nelson shines. When he says, "speaking in the Spirit," he does not mean in a Pentecostal sense. He simply means being filled with and submitted to the Holy Spirit to the point that the preacher is neither alone in the pulpit nor reliant on his own power. Nelson is speaking of the preacher being anointed to preach. The chapter covers things like how to be anointed and what hinders a preacher's anointing. Examples of anointed preachers in Scripture and the church are also given.

Step six is sharing the Savior. This deals with how to extend a gospel invitation that transitions smoothly from the sermon's conclusion so that it does not seem disjointed from the message.

Overall, *Preaching Life-Changing Sermons* is a good and useful book. For the experienced preacher, it could help expose some habits that have developed that might need some tweaking. For the preacher with minimal experience, it could be a guide to ensuring a sermon is clear and focused. And for the person learning from scratch how to preach, its brevity might keep one from feeling bogged down in the learning, but it might also cause one to seek additional resources to flesh out the learning process.

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***The Gloss and The Text: William Perkins on Interpreting Scripture with Scripture*. By Andrew Ballitch. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020. 365 pp. $28.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-1683593911.**

Ballitch received his PhD from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is currently the Associate Pastor of Preaching and Ministries at Westwood Alliance Church in Mansfield, OH. He edited *The Wholesome Doctrine of the Gospel: Faith and Love in the Writings of William Perkins* and *The Works of William Perkins, Vol. 7*. He has also taught church history courses at Boyce College, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Crown College, as well as editing books and articles on 16th and 17th century Puritans. Ballitch's background enables him to see Perkins not as a scholar that is creating esoteric and philosophical conclusions but as a pastor who cares for the well-being and spiritual edification of the church. As such, Ballitch is able to bring his academic training of analyzing primary sources while presenting their essence in a usable and understandable way.

Ballitch acknowledges that Perkins has become a key figure in English Puritanism, even noting that some refer to him along with John Calvin and Theodore Boza as the Holy Trinity of Christian Orthodoxy (p. 1). However, Ballitch notes that while several scholars have noted Perkins' influence particularly in *The Art of Prophesying*, none have carefully distilled Perkins's particular hermeneutical method and analyzed it throughout Perkins's works. Seeing this gap in scholarship, Ballitch endeavors to rectify this situation (pp. 2-3). Ballitch's corpus mainly rests in a selection of Perkins's original work. Outside of the second chapter, Ballitch does not interact much with other scholars, because none have done the work he is attempting.

In the second chapter, he notes the influences for Perkins's method, noting that Perkins draws on the best of patristic, medieval, and standard Reformed sentiments regarding the Scriptures (pp. 28-46). From the patristics, Perkins takes the Rule of Faith idea as an overarching control. From the medieval scholars, he takes the idea of the multiple senses of Scripture. From the Reformation, he maintains a strict respect for the literal nature of the Word of God. As such, Ballitch notes that Perkins's theological method rests on context, correlation, the Rule of Faith, and common sense—in that particular order. He sees context influencing correlation and the Rule of Faith with common sense as the

guard rails for correlation to be sure the interpreter does not go out of bounds. For Perkins the Rule of Faith consists of key scriptural elements like the Decalogue, the Gospels, and Reformed doctrines (p. 55).

At the beginning of each chapter, Ballitch provides a brief historical overview regarding the content to be covered. In the second chapter, for instance, he gives a brief overview of the life of Perkins (pp. 22-26). In the fourth chapter, where he discusses Perkins's practical works, he gives a brief overview of the cultural milieu of England at the time of Perkins (pp. 127-29). These brief introductions help to give readers an understanding of Perkins's situation for the writing without being encumbered by unnecessary details.

Through the majority of the book, Ballitch traces Perkins's hermeneutical method not only in his biblical commentaries, but also in his practical and theological works. In some of these examples he provides several examples of each category, occasionally even noting when the section of Perkins's hermeneutics is utilized. For example, in chapter 3 Ballitch focuses on Perkins's sermons and commentaries of the biblical text, not only demonstrating Perkins's method but also some theological distinctives that he had from modern readers. For example, Perkins's thought of the church being in the Old Testament as the people of God. In chapter 4, he focuses on Perkins's practical works, specifically ones focusing on the Christian life and ministry, demonstrating that even though these works were born out of concern for his culture, Perkins's main motivating force was Scripture. In chapter 5, he focuses on Perkins's exegesis and theological work, focusing on catechism and God's sovereignty in election. In the Apostles' Creed, he separates the aspects of Perkins's theological method into individual sections (pp. 166-76). Finally, in the exegetical and polemical works of chapter six, he focuses on the church of Rome, witchcraft, and astrology. In all of these sections, Ballitch notes the consistency of Perkins's method, sometimes explicitly and other times implicitly. While Perkins let his situation determine his subjects, he still used correlation and the clarity of Scripture to establish an answer to what was needed in his time.

Ballitch's presentation not only helps to illuminate the method of a key Elizabethan Puritan, it also helps us reclaim his method in a functional way that we can easily incorporate it into our own exegesis. This, according to Ballitch, was ultimately the purpose of *The Art of Prophesying*: not to be just a preaching manual but practical instruction.

Ballitch thus enables us to go on a journey to discover Perkins's method and also to edify ourselves.

While Ballitch acknowledges the debate of the philosophical influences of Perkins, he quickly moves on to discuss and demonstrate Perkins's methods and thoughts in a practical way, not only by stating Perkins's general thoughts, but guiding readers through Perkins's own works, enabling the laity to understand and appreciate a subject which might otherwise be kept out of their reach.

The language of this book is approachable not only to the scholar, but especially to the layman, encapsulating the spirit of Perkins. Because of the nature of this book, it would be useful not only to the scholar who is interested in church history but also the layman who is looking for a clear, biblical method of interpretation. As far as reclaiming Perkins's method, the only modifications necessary for contemporary readers is a consciousness of the impact of theological views. Perkins would incorporate theological views into the Rule of Faith. However, it is important for modern interpreters to hold these loosely and acknowledge them.

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A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Studies: Understanding Key Debates. **By Nijay K. Gupta. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020. 196 pp. $24.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-0801097577.**

Beginning students of New Testament studies are often inundated by information, finding themselves amid such topics as the historical Jesus and the synoptic problem. Spending copious amounts of time wading through the data, students often are overwhelmed. Recalling his own experience, Nijay Gupta said that going into New Testament studies, a "roadmap" of sorts would have been helpful to introduce and guide his studies (p. xi). Cue Gupta's *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Studies.* In this book, Gupta specifically targets individuals new to this field. In his own words, the book aims "to aid the uninitiated in

understanding, in a simple way, some of the most important and hotly debated issues in academic study of the New Testament" (p. xi).

The book is divided into thirteen chapters, twelve focusing on controversies in New Testament studies, with the last chapter examining the application and use of Scripture. In addressing the controversies, Gupta followed a predictable pattern: he first summarized the issue, then gave the leading explanations and theories, and finally offered conclusions and reflections (p. xii).

In chapter one, Gupta considered the synoptic problem. After providing a brief explanation, Gupta summarized various theories attempting to answer the problem: Augustine's view, Griesbach's hypothesis, the four-source theory, and the Farrer hypothesis. Gupta also noted that in the past, most scholarship has focused on written tradition but observed the shift towards considering oral tradition as a significant reason for variation amongst the Gospels (p. 8). He concluded by drawing a connection between the synoptic problem and discovering the historical Jesus; specifically, how "we have testimony and proclamation about a real person (Jesus), and that witness is based on how Jesus was remembered by his followers" (p. 11).

Chapter two delved more deeply into the quest for the historical Jesus. After a concise history, Gupta outlined four approaches to the historical Jesus: Jesus the Prophet, the Wise, the Social Revolutionary, and the Messiah. Mindful of certain presuppositions and biases, Gupta acknowledges that different scholars studying the historical Jesus and "arriving at the same singular identity" is practically an unattainable goal (p. 28). Nevertheless, Gupta surmises that the quest will continue as it has proved resilient in New Testament studies.

In chapter three, he examined the fourth gospel and history. After indicating some of the differences between the Synoptics and John, Gupta considered various approaches taken by individuals attempting to understand the gospel of John: not historical, historical, and testimony. Moreover, while in the past some scholars were perhaps skeptical of the Fourth Gospel, Gupta claimed that "its period of neglect or exile is apparently over" (p. 39).

In chapters four through six, Gupta focused on the apostle Paul. First, he presented several positions on the relationship between Jesus and Paul, particularly the idea of Paul beyond Jesus and Paul following after Jesus. He also surveyed theories on Paul's theological perspective:

justification by faith, salvation history, the apocalyptic Paul, and participation in Christ. To close out the three chapters on Paul, Gupta spent an ample amount of time discussing the New Perspective on Paul.

Chapter seven focused on interpreting the book of Revelation. The genre of Revelation is important to interpretation. Additionally, how scholars apply different methodologies to interpret John's apocalypse (preterist, historicist, futurist, and idealist) plays a large role in its understanding.

In chapter eight, Gupta sought to explore the theories of pseudonymity surrounding the New Testament letters. He concluded that the discussion is active and "far from reaching a consensus" (p. 116). Chapter nine outlined various perspectives between the New Testament and the Roman Empire. Is the New Testament to be viewed in opposition to the Empire, or is there an alternative ideology? Chapter ten considered the role of women in leadership in the New Testament, giving a survey of the hierarchical male and egalitarian outlooks. In chapter eleven, Gupta considered the role between faith and works. Lastly, to conclude the book, Gupta contemplated how the New Testament relates to the Old Testament; essentially, did the Old Testament context matter to New Testament interpretation?

This book has several strengths, especially Gupta's intentional avoidance of overly technical language to communicate effectively to anyone who desires to understand the critical debates in New Testament studies. Indeed, students and laypeople alike can benefit significantly from this work. Even scholars can benefit from the work, if not from the brief memento, from the bibliography found at the end of each chapter included for further study.

Conversely, one of the book's shortcomings is directly linked to one of its strengths: its simplicity. Gupta was able to reduce an exorbitant amount of material into diminutive chapters that often condensed and diminished scholars' views. Though with this kind of work, compressed material is part and parcel; while it can be a hindrance, it should be expected. Thus, I recommend this book to anyone desiring to familiarize themselves with New Testament studies.

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Called to Preach: Fulfilling the High Calling of Expository Preaching. **By Steven J. Lawson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2022. 203 pp. $15.39, Paperback. ISBN 978-0801094866.**

I serve in a church where I preach twice a week. Preaching takes time, energy, and more time! Sometimes this vocation has me worn out and burnt out. Whenever this happens, I do two things. First, I seek the Lord. Second, I listen to and read Steve Lawson. His passion for preaching will light a fire in the heart of anyone. No matter what season I am in, Lawson has a way of reminding me how important a preacher's calling is. This is certainly the case with his most recent publication *Called to Preach.*

In the book's introduction, Lawson stated, "This book is a bold call to those summoned by Christ to preach the word" (p. 10). Lawson presents this call over the course of nine quick chapters, but the content can be summarized as answering the following three questions: who should preach, what is preaching, and how do you preach?

Lawson answers the "who" question by arguing there are seven "markers" that identify those called to preach (pp. 13-34). The chapter is basic, but it is arguably the best part of the book. Lawson informs or reminds the readers that preaching is a *calling* from God. Preaching is not a vocation one just nonchalantly does. It is a vocation one should only do if they are called by God. Lawson says those called by God will have a desire to preach (1 Tim 3:1). They will have an ability given by God to teach effectively (3:2). Their character will be blameless (3:2-7). God will use others to affirm those He is calling (3:10; 4:14). God will bless the ministry of those He has called to preach with spiritual fruit. The called will find themselves at a point where they cannot do anything else, and God will open a door into ministry for them.

What is preaching? Lawson says 2 Timothy 4:1-5 describes preaching in eight ways (pp. 41-52). From this passage, he argues preaching is consistent, exposes sin, calls for repentance, exhortative, sober, endures persecution, evangelistic, and fulfills the calling God has given. Although his description of each of these characteristics is helpful, Lawson does not explain why all five verses describe or define preaching. All he says is that the passage opens with the command "preach the word" and is followed by eight imperatives that describe what it looks like to do that (p. 42); however, it is not clear that each command is meant to be seen as a description of how to preach. Many pastors have job descriptions that

have all kinds of duties that are not all necessarily related to each other. Could this also be the case in 2 Timothy 4:1-5? A more thorough explanation could have been provided in this section.

How should one preach? Lawson answers this question by discussing how one studies for a sermon (pp. 71-96), writes a sermon (pp. 97-116), and delivers a sermon (pp. 117-38). For each section, Lawson provides several bullet points that provide an introduction on everything from preparing a sermon to delivering it. The information is brief but helpful. If one has never been trained on how to do what Lawson describes in these sections, then the information provided will not be adequate to train an expositor; however, that does not seem to be his goal. In fact, he openly states, "If God has called you to preach, you should pursue the proper training that best prepares you to exposit His word" (p. 73).

Overall, *Called to Preach* is a great book to remind preachers how important their calling is and to help someone outside the ministry think through whether they are called into the preaching ministry or not. This book should be read by seasoned pastors needing encouragement and newbies feeling an itch to enter the preaching ministry.

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***Five Things Theologians Wish Biblical Scholars Knew*. By Hans Boersma. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2021. 152 pp. $12.76, Paperback. ISBN 978-0830853908.**

Since the eighteenth century, there has been a disciplinary divide between the fields of biblical studies and systematic theology (p. 2). In this volume (as with its companion volume by Scot McKnight[5]) Hans Boersma seeks to close that divide by articulating five key theological concepts from the Great Tradition's reading of Scripture that have come under suspicion in the modern period but should be accepted by biblical scholars (p. 11). Boersma is currently the Order of St. Benedict Servants

[5] Scot McKnight, *Five Things Biblical Scholars Wish Theologians Knew* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2021).

of Christ Chair in Ascetical Theology at Nashotah House Theological Seminary in Wisconsin. He has authored or contributed to several books, including *Seeing God: The Beatific Vision in Christian Tradition, Scripture as Real Presence: Sacramental Exegesis in the Early Church,* and *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry.*

Boersma begins by arguing that the primary task of theology is to use the Scriptures "as a means of grace in drawing the reader to Jesus Christ" (p. 5), which implies that biblical interpretation is not a historical discipline aiming at the text itself but is *mystagogical* and should seek to bring the reader into the mystery of God. Therefore, Boersma argues that the believer has arrived at the highest meaning of Scripture only when he has arrived at Christ and has been pressed to love Him (p. 133). On this foundation, Boersma argues in chapter one that recognizing Christ's presence in Scripture is essential for upholding its authority (p. 13). Since Christ is the ontologically prior archetype, He has already made Himself known in the Old Testament so that finding Him there does not "impose an alien meaning on the Old Testament Scriptures" (p. 24). Therefore, Boersma argues, a hermeneutic that aims simply at historical reconstruction of authorial meaning falls short of the intent of Scripture, not leading one to discern and savor Christ (p. 38). Boersma then continues in chapter two by arguing that, since people exist in a certain context, interpreters never approach the Bible without prior metaphysical commitments. He then posits Christian Platonism as the metaphysical lens needed to interpret Scripture (p. 40). Focusing on antinominalism (the conviction that reality is made up of objects which are not ontologically isolated, but partake in a shared essence), Boersma explains that Christian Platonism is the best framework to understand doctrines such as the Trinity and our salvation *in Christ* (p. 62).

Boersma then argues in chapter three that God's providential work has made Scripture unlike any other book; this providential attention presses us to read Scripture with a special hermeneutic that recognizes God's self-revelation in Christ as the starting point of interpretation (p. 80). In chapter four Boersma maintains that the church (not the academy) is the primary domain for reading Scripture (p. 87), and that Scripture, tradition, and the church cohere through the ministry of the Spirit to mutually preserve God's self-revelation (pp. 92-93). In its ecclesial context, Scripture must be interpreted in light of the church's canon, creeds, and liturgy (p. 97). The final point Boersma advocates for

in chapter five is that the "the Bible cannot be read apart from its spiritual end, which is the heavenly contemplation of God in Christ" (p. 113). Exploring the relationship between action and contemplation, he argues that contemplation is primary since we become what we contemplate. But this contemplation leads us to virtuous action as we partake in Christ who is virtue. Moreover, Boersma asserts that our moral lives shape the way we read Scripture and that we learn what excellent interpretation is as we participate in God's excellence. Boersma concludes by explaining that love has in fact been the underlying principle at stake throughout this book and that the rule of love (heavenly contemplation of the love of God in Christ) must be a primary distinguisher of correct biblical interpretation (p. 133).

In his introduction, Boersma explains that part of his goal in this book is to demonstrate that theology is not a secondary, possibly unnecessary step in exegesis, but is in fact necessary in "earlier" steps since the task of exegesis cannot be neatly divided (p. 5). Each chapter then demonstrates how theological commitments impact exegesis at every level, but chapter two is his strongest argument for this position. He urges biblical scholars to recognize that theological neutrality is not possible in interpretation (p. 63) and that rejecting a certain metaphysic does not eliminate metaphysics, but rather adopts a different kind of metaphysic (p. 46). While Biblical scholars have recognized the impact of preunderstanding on interpretation since Gadamer, this recognition is not always extended to metaphysics, but Boersma argues persuasively for the importance of metaphysical reflection. Biblical scholars will also benefit from the continual reminder that Scripture is ultimately intended to lead believers to God in Christ, and exegetical work should aim at enabling the church to reach that end. It can be easy to get lost in the weeds of interpretation and forget the doxological aim of life, so Boersma's emphasis is a helpful reminder.

A difficulty that biblical scholars may encounter in this volume is lack of familiarity with Boersma's terminology. As Scot McKnight rightly noted in the foreword, realism and nominalism are central to Boersma's argument throughout the work (xv). However, if one is unfamiliar with these concepts, Boersma's explanation may not go far enough to help the reader understand its meaning and significance. Boersma's use of sacrament can also lead to confusion. He helpfully equates the term with "means of grace" in his conclusion, but there are times in this book

(especially in chapters three and four) that the reader gets the sense that there is a much larger conversation surrounding the term "sacrament" then apparent in this book. Given the titles of some of Boersma's other works, sacrament is clearly an important concept in his theology and the reader should pursue his publications mentioned above to gain a better understanding of how he uses the term.

In conclusion, this book serves as a needed challenge to biblical scholars to evaluate their exegetical method and aims. It would also be a great introduction for anyone interested in the place of theology in biblical interpretation and the theology of the Great Tradition—not that it fully explains these concepts, but it makes the reader aware of key issues. If the reader is interested in gaining more understanding of Great Tradition hermeneutics, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition* by Craig Carter would be an excellent overview for the concepts Boersma touches on here.[6]

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***The Global Church—The First Eight Centuries: From Pentecost to the Rise of Islam*. By Donald Fairbairn. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2021. 373 pp. $39.99, Hardcover and 3 DVD set. ISBN 978-0310097853.**

In *The Global Church,* Donald Fairbairn (PhD, Cambridge) sets out a bold case to shift the focus of church history from one with a focus on the west to one with a broader view. Fairbairn has written extensively on church history and a summary work covering a broad section of church history fits well in his corpus. Fairbairn notes that he has written with special attention to Protestant evangelical readers, both pastors and laypeople, who would greatly benefit from a serious engagement with those outside of the branch of the church that led to the Protestant Reformation. The book seeks to broaden the Western-centric nature of much of

[6] Craig A. Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition: Recovering the Genius of Premodern Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018).

contemporary scholarship. Fairbairn's goals are to the global extent of patristic church history and to explain how it is a single story, rather than stories of a specific sect of Christianity (p. xi).

Fairbairn frames the book according to three periods, Pentecost to 300, 300-600, and 600-800. Fairbairn argues that this offers a cleaner division than many other histories since it allows one to divide along a more logical progression in Christian history (p. xv). He also argues that it helps to accomplish the goal of situating Christianity as a global story rather than one so fixated on Western development (p. 8). The common ideas that the church declined rapidly, upon gaining political power, or that there was never any true orthodoxy to begin with, should be set aside for a more appropriate understanding of history. Fairbairn rightly notes that all history is complex. The history of the church is no different. The approach taken, Fairbairn argues, allows for one to acknowledge any bias toward the historical data one might have and allows "the material of history to reshape our perspective where needed" (p. 11).

After setting out his prolegomena, Fairbairn begins engaging the historical content. Each section addresses the major people, places, ideas, and doctrines necessary for the reader to understand the role of the church in the given period. He addresses the church in both the East and the West to varying degrees. Each chapter concludes with a reflection on how modern American Protestants should consider understanding the issues of history. For Fairbairn, history is not simply a list of people and places to be memorized. Instead, these facts help the reader better understand the contemporary setting. From there, the student can apply the concepts and methods of history to our own context in a way that is honoring to God in thought, word, and deed.

Fairbairn's work has several strengths. First, the approach in trying to tell a more global story of church history is commendable. As noted, American Protestantism has had an inordinate focus on its own formation. This focus often keeps pastors and lay people reading Western late medieval and Reformation histories and missing an entire branch of the church. Fairbairn rightly argues that in many cases, western Christians "ignored and continue to ignore much of the patristic period" (p. 261). Instead of offering a critical, yet charitable analysis, the West has instead ignored those Christians it did not desire to engage. This leads, Fairbairn argues, to a focus on different theological issues than what loomed largest and a sort of cherry-picking of sources to drive

home the church's support of whatever topic the reader finds most important (p. 281-82).

Another strength of the work is Fairbairn's clear writing style. The work is very accessible. The accompanying lectures also allow the reader to hear Fairbairn's voice and that carries into the text. There were few, if any, pieces of the text where Fairbairn was difficult to follow. Fairbairn clearly presents the key issues in ways that all readers will appreciate.

While there are many strengths, the work does have one primary weakness. This weakness is due, in part, to Fairbairn's aim. As he attempts to tell the one story of Christianity, the text bends back and forth between the East and West. This is not an easy goal given the vast geopolitical differences between the empires in which Christians found themselves. In many chapters, Fairbairn picks one side of the church on which to focus while ignoring the other. For the earliest period, Fairbairn's primary focus in on the West. This may be to the number of available sources from the second and third centuries, but the focus is most certainly there rather than on the global church.

In other chapters, Fairbairn seems to counter this by focusing primarily on the East. He does this most prominently in the chapters "God and Country" and "Still Foreigners and Exiles." In "God and Country," Fairbairn presents a clear picture of the how the church became the official religion of Armenia, Georgia, and Ethiopia around the same time as the Roman Empire. As it is arranged, one would think that the non-Roman nations became Christian first, but that is not the case. These nations converted around the same time as the Roman empire, and some after, as the requests by Mirian, an early fourth-century king of Georgia, for Constantine to send priests makes clear (143).

Fairbairn's goals are difficult to accomplish. With the number of contemporary texts written to laypeople or those with an interest in history, he has much competition. Standard introductory texts, such as Everett Ferguson's *Church History: Volume One From Christ to the Pre-Reformation* (Zondervan, 2013) and Justo Gonzalez's *The Story of Christianity: Volume One The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (HarperOne, 2010), are strong, well-entrenched texts. However, given that they place their focus primarily on the ideas that led directly to 16th century, or the development of Western Christian thought, there is a gap that Fairbairn's text fills. While addressing these periods from a Protestant perspective, Fairbairn guides his readers

through the passage of time without either losing his Protestant identity or falling into the easy trap of being overly critical of those on whose shoulders Christians today stand. This book would be an excellent introduction to church history for pastors, laypeople, and students alike.

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Tolkien Dogmatics: Theology Through Mythology with the Maker of Middle Earth. **By Austin M. Freeman. Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2022. 432 pp. $26.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-1683596677.**

Anyone who grew up in Evangelicalism has seen books that were obviously marketed to make a quick bit of cash without worrying about substance, let alone academic rigor. Indeed, even reading this book title is enough to give one pause and ask how someone could possibly write about Tolkien's theology when he never published a major theological work. Take heart, dear reader. Austin Freeman has written a book that is both rigorous and scholarly, yet surprisingly fun to read.

The market for this book may not be vast—after all, the number of Tolkien fans who happen to be into theology is unlikely to be an eye-popping number. Yet, those who are in that niche will find his book to be a tremendous amount of fun. As to its purpose, Freeman said, "This book is about Tolkien's theology—that is, about what Tolkien wrote regarding God, Jesus Christ, the church, and the other concomitant points that directly relate to God's relationship to his world" (p. 14). It is laid out similarly to a normal theology work as he explains what Tolkien believed about a wide range of issues. Freeman explains that "we should look for Christian theology not in the explicit elements of the tales … but in the deep structure of the story, in its metaphysics, ethics, and in the shape of its plot" (p. 3). Citing from his letters, Freeman demonstrates that Tolkien claims "his fiction corresponds to Christian belief" (p. 9).

The reader who typically skips introductions should strongly resist that urge as it is one of the most important parts of the book. Freeman goes out of his way to explain what he is and is *not* doing, and indeed, in a book like this, what he is *not* doing is just as important as what he is.

He makes clear that he is not merely collecting ideas that might correlate to what Tolkien believed about these topics. He spends this section setting the "ground rules." He said, "Not all of Tolkien's works can be set on the same level, nor can truth be drawn from every document in the same way" (p. 15). Part of that requires him to spend half a page explaining what this book is not intending to do (p. 14). One of the best words to describe this book is *responsible*. Freeman goes out of his way to explain when something is his opinion or only likely to be true, and to lay before the reader the documentation needed to support his claims when he argues something to be fact.

The book is broken up into four parts. The first is the most thorough, examining whether or not "Middle-earth is a Christian realm" (p. 4). The next warns against the error of too closely associating the theology within Middle-earth to the theology of Tolkien himself. The third section asks and then answers the question of whether or not his constantly changing views prevent a singular theological picture from forming. Lastly, the professor's theology is compared and contrasted with that of the Roman Catholic Church, to which he belonged.

In the chapter on angels, he starts by asking, "What is the point? Is this chapter not speculative? Does it not fallaciously blur the line between fiction and fact?" (p. 126). Freeman shows initially how the Valar are similar to angels but even points out in his early comments that his brief remarks to that point are inconclusive (p. 128). Then Freeman spends the rest of the chapter conclusively demonstrating this very idea: the Valar are Tolkien's outworking of how he believed angels function in their duties from God. Freeman further shows that Tolkien refers to the wizards as angels with the Greek term *angelos* and that he has in reference specifically guardian angels (p. 147), an interesting insight to be sure.

The fascinating purpose of the "Secret Fire" is revealed to be the fictional equivalent of the Holy Spirit (p. 32). Scholars seem to validate a conversation Clyde S. Kilby had with Tolkien in which the professor explained that this was indeed its purpose. This observation was further confirmed when the early Elvish lexicon from 1998 described "ritual fire" as "a mystic name identified with the Holy Ghost" (p. 33). While not describing Secret Fire specifically, this confirms that the connection is more than mere speculation.

There were a few instances when Freeman overreached in some of his conclusions. This includes one section where he surmises Tolkien may have used the character Ramer as a stand-in for himself to show that the Middle Earth writings were received from God (pp. 59-61). Later, he asks the question of Tolkien's intentions, "Are we meant to understand Jesus to be not only the seed of David, but of Earendil and Luthien?" (p. 248). These ideas that do step outside of the realistic are extremely rare within the scope of this book. Further, the reader is never confused in instances like these how tightly he holds to such thoughts. It is obvious in both instances that he is saying such notions are *possible* rather than claiming them with any amount of dogmatism.

Far from being a sloppily conceived and hastily published work many may expect from some circles, Freeman's book is anything but. He argues and proves that "Tolkien has something to say about virtually every aspect of a traditionally structured systematic theology" (p. 1). For the group of people who appreciate theology and Tolkien, this book will be an immense pleasure to read. The creativity and intellectual rigor that it took to produce such a volume is impressive, and it is not hyperbole to call it a triumph. It is a significant contribution to both theology and Tolkien literature. Freeman manages to give us an even deeper appreciation for our friend, Professor Tolkien, and his brilliant, creative mind. Even more than that, he helps us delight all the more in our God, the Creator of man's mind, and the world He created that brings forth such imaginative beauty.

Most importantly, Freeman shows that theology should end in doxology that is directed toward the beatific vision. Such beautiful imagination reveals the inner longing of the soul and is a window into the greatest story ever told. Freeman said, "We are homesick for our eternal city. Humans are ultimately meant to escape the world and its bounds into eternity in the direct presence of God" (p. 102). This can only be found in Christ. He is the ultimate end for which our souls long. "Christ's birth and life is the eucatastrophe of human history," says Freeman. "His resurrection is the eucatastrophe of his incarnation. Both beginning and ending in joy. It also bears the indelible stamp of reality. Indeed, there is no other story we would rather find to be true" (p. 47). Maranatha.

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***The Oxford Handbook of the Minor Prophets.* Edited by Julia M. O'Brien. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. 608 pp. $150.00, Hardcover. ISBN 978-0190673208.**

The Oxford Handbook of the Minor Prophets, edited by Julia M. O'Brien, is part of the Oxford Handbooks series which offers up-to-date surveys of research in narrow subject areas. The book brings this approach to the field of Minor Prophets studies with essays from notable scholars. O'Brien explains in the introduction that each contributor was tasked with exploring matters of structure, themes, relationship with the rest of the Minor Prophets, and debated questions (p. xxiv). Despite this guiding set of directions, the contributions are quite broad in terms of method, focus, and theological approach.

The volume is neatly broken up into four parts. Part One delves into historical considerations such as dating, manuscript evidence, and the degree to which the Minor Prophets should be read as a single book. In this section, Anna Sieges's article titled "One Book or Twelve Books?" sets the stage well for the debate over unity in the Minor Prophets. Part Two contains essays exploring literary concerns such as genre and metaphor, major themes, and intertextual relationships between the Minor Prophets and other portions of the Old Testament. In the themes section, notable essays include Daniel C. Timmer on the nations and Mark Boda on the future. James Nogalski's attempt to trace out the picture of God in the Twelve is helpful for compiling a list of important texts, even if his conclusions may invite disagreements from some readers. In the intertexts section, Rannfrid Thelle demonstrates one example of an approach to intertextual work between the Twelve and earlier parts of Scripture, such as the Torah and Former Prophets.

Part Three analyzes the history of interpretation for the Minor Prophets. Some essays discuss interpretation of the Minor Prophets in relation to contemporary issues such as gender, sexuality, economics, and postcolonial studies. Other essays discuss interpretation of the Minor Prophets during a specific time period. For example, Michael Shepherd helpfully traces interpretation of Minor Prophets in early Christianity by analyzing early church sources to see how they saw unity or disunity within the Minor Prophets. Marvin Sweeney examines the history of interpretation from the eighteenth century through the early

twenty-first century in a way that helps build on what Shepherd noted in the early church.

Finally, Part Four contains an essay on each book of the twelve Minor Prophets. The chapters seek to overview current research in their book and focus on matters such as structure, themes, and contested issues. For someone researching a particular book of the Minor Prophets, the essays in Part Four would serve as a valuable introduction to the relevant issues and scholars. Particularly helpful in this regard would be the bibliography at the end of each chapter. Being a recent volume, these bibliographies serve as up-to-date lists of relevant works for each book, which would be helpful for any scholar looking for a starting point in order to research a particular topic.

Towards the end of her introduction, O'Brien identifies three goals for the volume. In order to judge its merits, we must consider whether these goals were achieved. First, O'Brien notes that she has organized the structure of the book according to methodological approaches (p. xxv). Rather than a pragmatic decision, this reflects the goal of the volume to systematically work through the multitude of issues that connect with Minor Prophet studies. This organization is seen in the major sections as the volume moves through historical, literary, interpretive, and book-specific conversations. The structure results in readers being able to begin with any essay and appreciate its standalone contribution. However, there is also benefit in seeing how different scholars understand a debated issue, such as how Ehud Ben Zvi, Anna Sieges, and James Nogalski demonstrate different perspectives on the unity (or lack thereof) of the Twelve Prophets.

Second, O'Brien notes her desire for the volume to reflect the current state of scholarship. Therefore, she states that "it devotes more attention to the history of reception than earlier treatments, and as noted earlier, asks more about how real readers engage these texts" (p. xxvii). This is an important distinction to make in creating expectations for the volume. The volume is heavy on history, literary matters, and textual reception rather than providing extensive commentary on the message and theology of the books. Because of this focus, the book would be more beneficial to those doing specific research rather than pastors seeking to preach through the Minor Prophets.

Finally, O'Brien notes her desire to seek a diverse group of interpreters, including a diversity of ideological and confessional

perspectives (p. xxvii). Her justification for this move comes early in the introduction due to her assertion that Scripture has been accepted by diverse faith communities and has also been interpreted by secular cultures (p. xix). As a result of this decision, the scholars come from different religious perspectives (including some that are non-confessional), and some employ critical methodologies. This becomes apparent with some of the topics discussed in Part Three. Such an approach does not necessarily mean that readers should not engage the volume, but rather, that they should engage with an understanding what the volume offers: surveys of academic research from scholars who may not share the same convictions.

In summary, *The Oxford Handbook of the Minor Prophets* accomplishes what it purposes to do: offer a thorough discussion of historical, literary, and interpretive issues related to the Minor Prophets. It would mostly benefit those seeking to survey the field of Minor Prophet studies or become more familiar with issues in a particular book, rather than pastors.

Readers must also understand that the essayists come from a wide spectrum of confessional and non-confessional perspectives. With these caveats in place, readers are prepared to engage the book and the breadth of research it contains in order to better understand the history and future of Minor Prophet studies.

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How Effective Sermons End. **By Ben Awbrey. Eugene: Resource Publications, 2022. 459 pp. $47.00, Paperback. ISBN 978-1666740189.**

You will not read a more important and informative book on preaching this year than *How Effective Sermons End*. It not only defines the necessity and development of sermon conclusions, but more importantly, it describes the preachers who effectively preach them. Dr. Ben Awbrey brings a wealth of preaching and pastoral wisdom, as well as enlivened homiletic instruction to the topic of sermon conclusions. Awbrey is Senior Professor of Preaching at Midwestern Baptist

Theological Seminary where he has been teaching expository preaching since 1996. This work completes the Awbrey trilogy of the formal elements of exposition following *How Effective Sermons Begin* (Mentor, 2008) and *How Effective Sermons Advance* (Resource Publications, 2011). The argument of the book "is that the sermon conclusion should be the highpoint of the sermon ... [and it is] overwhelmingly absent in these days" (pp. xiii, xiv, 79, 177-78).

The book unfolds in twenty chapters, with nine areas of focus. "General Matters about the Sermon Conclusion and Preachers" (chs. 1-4) asserts that there is no aspect of the sermon more defining as the conclusion and the preachers that preach them (p. 3). In "A Synopsis of the Sermon Structure" (ch. 5) shows the restating of the sermon propositions and each point of the main structure (p. 82). Providing "A Vital Transition to the Conclusion" (ch. 6) helps the preacher to recognize that at the most vital juncture in the message (the conclusion), when his hearers are the most fatigued, he will need to regain their attention (p. 98). In "The Purpose of the Sermon Achieved" (chs. 7-8), the conclusion is not simply the end of the sermon; it is its apex, the crescendo (p. 140). "The Closing Appeals of a Sermon Conclusion" (chs. 9-11) must by necessity be tied to the purpose of the text/sermon for they are the means whereby the obedient hearer can accomplish the purpose (p. 194).

Concerning "Application in a Sermon Conclusion" (ch. 12), Awbrey helps the preacher understand that the most effective sermons are those that have affected the preacher as he probes his own conscience, making application to himself first (p. 234). Chapters 13-14 ("A Preaching Pastor's Personal Relevance in a Sermon Conclusion") is a much-needed word on relevance in preaching—which, if not derived from the accurate explanation of Scripture, only leads to foolishness (p. 265). "Persuasive Preaching in the Sermon Conclusion" (chs.15-17) is a balm for the weary pew, for many preachers fail at being persuasive and, sadly, some are even unaware that they should be (p. 328). In "Proclaiming Christ in a Sermon Conclusion" (chs.18-20), Awbrey informs the reader that the irreducible core that the preacher declares is the free offer of eternal life in the pardon of sins through the person and work of Christ (p. 397).

Several high points appear in this work. First, Awbrey emphasizes earnestness, a quality that comes through the means of prayer (p. 43), and a deficiency of which will prove ruinous to preaching. "If the man in the pulpit is not earnest, he is no preacher" (p. 38). To be sure, a lack of

earnestness will distort the truth (pp. 43, 45). Second, against the grain of most contemporary thought, Awbrey speaks to the issue of moralizing. Awbrey believes—and rightly so—that inherent within God's revealed truth is a moral obligation to act. Moralizing, in the sense of laying that obligation on the hearer's conscience to act on that truth, is the consummation of preaching (p. 187). Many would question this as a corruption of preaching, but Awbrey concludes: "The result of complying with this unfounded phobia is populating the pulpit with people, who are not preachers, that discuss everything and preach nothing. Non-prophets, not false prophets because there is nothing prophetic about their speaking, who misrepresent God as being satisfied with everything and intent on changing nothing" (p. 187n52). Further, a sermon that makes no moral demand is not a sermon (p. 198).

For the third high point, Awbrey's explanation of implications versus applications proves beneficial. Implications are applications that emerge from the truth(s) of the preaching passage, whereas applications are made through closing appeals related to the sermon's purpose, which constitute "application proper" since these provide what the hearers need to do for the purpose of the sermon to be achieved in their lives (pp. 199, 254).

Fourth, Awbrey's elevation of Scripture in the preaching endeavor is commendable: "If the authority of Scripture is not honored in the preaching of it, not only will the preaching of it be other than expository preaching, but whatever is articulated in the way of meaning and implications of its meaning must be viewed with a great deal of suspicion" (p. 267). For, "Only Scripture is profitable to equip God's people so that they may be adequate for every good work" (p. 223; cf. 114, 181, 197, 211, 220, 349).

Fifth, despite authoring a book on "how to conclude a sermon," Awbrey affirms the sovereignty of God in preaching. "God is not bound by anything that we might understand as a law of preaching, or principles of preaching, that would cause God to do, or prevent God from doing, what he desires to do and see accomplished in the preaching of his Word" (pp. 316, xv).

Lastly, Awbrey supplies some helpful lists on certain facets of the sermon conclusion: 1) Three implications of how God commonly works in preaching (p. 327), 2) Seven components of persuasion of the hearers in a sermon conclusion (pp. 336-42), 3) Seven presuppositions regarding

Christian preaching, the preaching that occurs when believers assemble for worship (pp. 415-16), 4) Six certainties that are sufficient to cause one to be faithful in proclaiming the gospel in the preaching services of the church (pp. 429-37), and 5) Ten essential components in the preacher's declaration of Jesus Christ (p. 437).

Words will fail this review of the homiletical gold contained in Awbrey's *magnum opus*. He knows that a sermon is only as successful as its conclusion. The preacher needs "the significant substance that can be provided by a skillful usage of the six elements of a sermon conclusion" (p. 74). "Of course, in expository preaching the information, the exposition of Scripture, is the medicine not just information about the medicine. However, the conclusion would be the prescription for the medicine so that it could be acquired and administered personally" (p. 8n19). "The role of a preacher is to be a good assistant of the Great Physician, that is, he is to be a good Physician's Assistant, and prescribe detailed, specific medicine from the pharmacy of Scripture" (pp. 233-34).

And so, the homiletic trilogy is complete. Awbrey has taught us how effective sermons begin, advance, and end. It is the introduction where the shepherd prepares the way for the sermon to be *heard*; it is the conclusion where the shepherd prepares the way for the sermon to be *heeded* (p. 127). It is in the body of the sermon where the shepherd *feeds* the sheep; it is in the conclusion where the shepherd *tends* the sheep (p. 8). Awbrey has concluded with the skill of a surgeon and the heart of a true pastor, understanding that "when all has been heard, the *conclusion* of the matter is this: fear God and keep his commands" (Eccl 12:13).

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***Luke-Acts in Modern Interpretation*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter and Ron C. Fay. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2021. 398 pp. $31.99, Hardback. ISBN 978-0825445699.**

Anyone who wants to approach an area of New Testament scholarship that they are unfamiliar with is faced with a daunting challenge. They are stepping into the middle of a conversation that has been ongoing for

hundreds of years, and finding one's bearings can feel impossible. This is where a work such as *Luke-Acts in Modern Interpretation* becomes a valuable resource. Stanley E. Porter (Professor of New Testament at McMaster Divinity School) and Ron C. Fay (Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies at Liberty University) assembled a group of ten scholars to assess the contributions of ten individuals who have made a significant impact in the field of Luke-Acts studies since 1870. Each chapter of this work focuses on one significant scholar. Readers are provided with a brief biography of the individual, a summary of key ideas, and an assessment of how these ideas were received and critiqued.

The book opens with an introduction from Porter and Fay, which helps orient the reader to the broader lay of the land in Luke-Acts scholarship. This chapter highlights several figures who do not receive sustained attention in the rest of the book but who still made significant contributions to the field. Following this overview, attention shifts to the selected scholars whose ideas "represent milestones in previous interpretation in Luke-Acts" (p. 12).

The following ten chapters proceed as follows. Zachary Dawson notes Adolf Harnack's views on "many of the crucial issues still debated among Lukan scholars" (e.g., the identity of Luke, the date of Luke-Acts, and the use of sources in composition)(p. 91). James Dvorak then summarizes Martin Dibelius's contributions, primarily looking at the results of his use of form criticism. Osvaldo Padilla assesses Henry Cadbury's views on the author, language, and genre of Acts. Next, Karl Armstrong highlights the impact of Ernst Haenchen's focus on Luke as "a theologian, historian, *and* writer" (p. 162). F. F. Bruce receives one of the longer treatments in the book. Porter notes that Bruce's greatest influence on Luke-Acts studies stems from his defense of the historical reliability of Acts in the face of "the prevailing German criticism" of his day (p. 385).

Alan J. Thompson discusses the importance of Hans Conzelmann's focus on Luke as a theologian, even though Conzelmann's "framework for the theological intention of Luke-Acts" was mostly rejected (p. 268). John Byron summarizes the conclusions of C. K. Barrett, who argues that Luke wrote to detail "the history of the development of Christian mission but not the historical development of the church" (p. 387). Later, David K. Bryan details Jacob Jervell's emphasis on the Jewishness of Acts. Fay reviews the impact of Richard Pervo's scholarship and his willingness to challenge many of the prevailing opinions regarding introductory

matters related to Acts. Finally, Laura Hunt details the significance of Loveday C. A. Alexander's conclusions regarding the genre of Acts and the quality of the Greek language employed by the author. Porter and Fay close with some reflections on what can be learned from assessing the state of the conversation as a whole.

The biggest benefit of this work is that it provides those unfamiliar with Luke-Acts scholarship with a starting point for becoming conversant with the most significant scholars and ideas in the field over the past 150 years. Additionally, the fact that the authors provide a brief biographical sketch of each scholar reminds readers that the individuals who produce biblical scholarship are not blank canvases. Rather, there is a mix of culture, experience, time, and place that heavily influenced the conclusions each scholar reached and their areas of focus. For example, Henry Cadbury's Quaker convictions and C.K. Barrett's role in unification talks between Methodists and Anglicans seemed to shape aspects of their scholarship. In turn, readers are encouraged to consider how their circumstances and experiences might shape their own study of Luke-Acts.

One final benefit is that readers are able to recognize how scholars who took seemingly extreme positions, which were never widely accepted, helped lay the groundwork for future fruitful areas of research in Luke-Acts studies and New Testament scholarship as a whole. In many ways, Haenchen's focus on Luke as a writer foreshadowed future narrative and literary approaches to Acts. Jervell's insistence on the Jewishness of Acts, and the Jewishness of Paul for that matter, can be seen as a move toward significant areas of contemporary New Testament scholarship, such as the New Perspective on Paul and Paul within Judaism. While not every conclusion of these scholars was fully embraced, readers can see that it often requires someone willing to criticize the status quo and move the scholarly conversation in a new direction to open fresh avenues of study.

In a volume like this, a handful of issues naturally lend themselves to criticism from readers. Depending on what one hoped to gain from this work, the number of biographical details provided for some scholars might feel unnecessary or cumbersome. Additionally, the chapters are a bit uneven regarding how much attention is given to biography, summary, and analysis. Several chapters provide a great deal of biographical information, while others offer only a page or two of career

highlights. Surely, some of this results from the biographical information available to each author.

Along with these quibbles, the reader should be aware that this work skews toward scholarship on the book of Acts as opposed to Luke. The editors are aware of this and note that the book of Acts may have provided an area of research more conducive to fresh and creative avenues of scholarship. Finally, one could always take issue with the scholars or ideas that were left out in this type of summary. Trying to narrow Luke-Acts scholarship since 1870 to just ten figures is almost impossible. While receiving some attention in the introduction, the neglect of literary or narrative approaches to the book of Acts feels like a bit of an oversight. Still, in the end, the editors did a commendable job in selecting ten significant figures in this field.

Anyone interested in the scholarly conversation in Luke-Acts, particularly Acts, would benefit from reading this work. It will quickly catch readers up to speed on the scholars, issues, and discussions that have tended to dominate the field in recent history. Once again, including biographical material is a welcome addition to a study like this. As much as this work summarizes the key ideas that set the foundation for current conversations on Luke-Acts, it also serves as a reminder that, ultimately, scholars are people. As such, readers should not expect past scholarship to be free from many of the external factors that influence our reading of Scripture today.

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Preaching: A Simple Approach to the Sacred Task. **By Daniel Overdorf. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002. 240 pp. $20.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-0825447228.**

In *Preaching: A Simple Approach to the Sacred Task,* Daniel Overdorf attempts to deliver exactly what the title says, "a simple approach to the sacred task [of preaching] for those who are new to preaching or those who need a refresher course in the fundamentals" (p. 14). Daniel Overdorf currently serves as Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Director

of the Preaching Program at Johnson University in Knoxville, TN. His other written works include *One Year to Better Preaching, Rediscovering Purposeful Community,* and *Applying the Sermon,* as well as the novel *A Death Well Lived.*

The core of the book consists of eight chapters covering sequential steps in the sermon writing process. Each chapter also includes exercises that fit that step in the process as well as "bonus articles" that dive deeper on a topic related to that step. The first chapter covers "Convictions" that "drive preaching" (p. 17). Overdorf explains that "what we believe directs what we do and who we become" (p. 18). He concisely lays out the basics of evangelical Christian belief, focusing on how beliefs about God and Scripture influence beliefs about preaching and the preacher, concluding with a definition of "preaching" (p. 26).

In the second chapter, Overdorf describes how to "research the Scripture text." He reminds the preacher to think of his congregation—the Smith family that he sat in the hospital room with during the week, the lonely widow, the mother who just miscarried—in order to "read the text with the listeners in mind ... agonize with them" (p. 39). Only once the preacher has his community in mind does Overdorf recommend reading the text itself. Overdorf strongly encourages expository preaching, though he does discuss how to preach a topical sermon faithfully (pp. 41-43). After reading the text multiple times, the preacher may turn to various tools and resources (pp. 44-45). Based on those tools, he examines the literary form (pp. 47-55), the context (pp. 55-57), and "cultural historical elements" (p. 57) in addition to analyzing the passage itself (p. 58), listing cross references (pp. 58-59), and noting additional observations (p. 59).

The third chapter describes how to formulate a sermon thesis, or "focus on a single idea" (p. 66). Overdorf explains "effective sermons focus on a single idea, stated succinctly and memorably... [which] gives our sermons clarity, precision, and memorability" (p. 69). He offers four steps to determine a sermon thesis (p. 72), giving examples (pp. 76-77) and tips on how to "polish" that thesis (pp. 77-79).

In the fourth chapter, Overdorf discusses how to "shape the flow of thought" (p. 87). He reminds the preacher that the sermon is not a "research paper" but an "event" with listeners (p. 89). For Overdorf, the sermon should "consider the text's form." A preacher will proclaim a narrative text differently than a poetic passage or an epistle (p. 89).

Though he recognizes there are more than just two forms, he presents two broad forms for preaching—inductive and deductive sermons (p. 91).

The fifth chapter focuses on "moving from skeleton toward sermon" (p. 112) by "developing each segment" (p. 111). For Overdorf, this task means "explaining ... where in the text we discovered" individual points (p. 113), "illustrating" those points (p. 114) and then applying them to the preacher's listeners (p. 121). In addition, Overdorf describes ways to transition between points (p. 123).

The introduction and conclusion of a sermon are covered in chapter six. The preacher must gather the attention of his listeners or else they will "check their watches and calculate when they'll make it to the local restaurant for lunch" (pp. 134-35). Preachers have a critical thirty seconds of introduction to "convince [listeners] that the next thirty minutes will be a worthy investment" (p. 135). After describing ways to gain the listeners' attention, Overdorf offers "suggestions to keep our introductions sharp" (p. 141). The conclusion is the "landing of the sermon" (p. 142). Overdorf recommends emphasizing the thesis (p. 142) and painting one final real-to-life picture to get the point across (p. 143). He also offers brief suggestions for the conclusion (p. 146).

Chapter seven is all about "polishing with descriptive language" (p. 157). Overdorf encourages using "specific nouns and verbs" and spoken pictures (pp. 159, 161), speaking to experience and to the senses (pp. 162-63), and utilizing dialogue (pp. 163-64). He reminds the speaker to engage all five senses because "when we engage multiple senses, people pay attention, understand and remember God's truths better" (p. 169). He also gives advice on the best ways to utilize technology in the sermon (pp. 172-77).

The eighth and final chapter considers how to "embody the sermon in the preaching event" (p. 187). Overdorf reminds the preacher to "not adopt voices or personas different from our own" but "embrace how God uniquely created us and allow him to empower us" (p. 190). He gives brief insights into how to use voice variety, pauses, and repetition (pp. 191-92), as well as posture, movement, gestures, and eye contact (pp. 193-94). He also encourages the preacher to minimize reliance on written notes and gives advice on how to do so (pp. 198-200), as well as miscellaneous other suggestions including how to dress, how to deal with live-streaming, and a final reminder to pray (pp. 200-201).

Overdorf's work can be compared to writings such as Haddon W. Robinson's *Biblical Preaching* or Fred Craddock's *Preaching.* Overdorf makes an essential and significant contribution to those books in his addition of a chapter including presuppositions about God, Scripture, and the act of preaching itself. Though perhaps outside of the scope of Overdorf's intent, Craddock's discussion of the preacher's character in that work (p. 24) may have been a useful addition in this contribution. Overdorf does not discuss the calling of the preacher or who should preach.

Overdorf emphasizes the priority of Scripture in the sermon writing process, but has the preacher consider his audience before reading the text in his research process in the second chapter. Reading the Scripture first and then considering the listeners may be a more consistent process. In addition, though the exercises and "Sermon Worksheet" are useful tools, they are not designed to be tearable from the book. This oversight hinders their ability to be readily used to homework assignments or classroom tools. Barring making these pages perforated, a link to online printables may have been beneficial.

These minor critiques do not take away from Overdorf's overall success in presenting a "simple approach" to preaching. This work can certainly be set beside Craddock's or Robinson's as an introductory textbook. At 240 pages, the book is not intimidating and can be read in three to four hours total. Those looking to dive deeper into preaching practice may need another one of Overdorf's works, but this book has a place on the shelf of the Bible college or seminary student taking homiletics for the first time or, as Overdorf hoped, "those needing a refresher course in the fundamentals" (p. 14).

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Political Gospel: Public Witness in a Politically Crazy World. **By Patrick Schreiner. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2022. 212 pp. $16.59, Paperback. ISBN 978-1087755175.**

In *Political Gospel,* Patrick Schreiner attempts to offer "a framework" for what he calls "political discipleship," doing politics as a Christian (p. viii). Schreiner serves as associate professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri. He has written a commentary on *Acts*, as well as *The Visual Word*, *Matthew: Disciple and Scribe,* and several other books. He has also contributed to academic journals and popular level publications including *The Gospel Coalition* and *9Marks.*

In the introduction to the book, Schreiner explains, "I don't think the average Christian is nearly political enough" (p. 3). He believes this statement because the confession "Jesus is King" is political (p. 3). He is, however, careful to express that being political does not mean being partisan (pp. 4-5). He laments that the church has become partisan (p. 7). On the other hand, too many have "privatized their faith," dividing their "personal and political ethics" (p. 8). These "malformations" (p. 9) are what Schreiner hopes to correct through this book.

The rest of the book is divided into three major sections labelled "political past, present and future" aligning with the gospel itself, the church, and Christ's return (p. 15). Each of these time periods demonstrate Schreiner's thesis that "*we are to subvert and submit to governing authorities*" (p. 15). In the first major section, focusing on political past, Schreiner addresses the political nature of the gospel itself. When Jesus "stepped onto the scene," His first words in Mark 1:15 were laden with political language with words such as "gospel," "kingdom," and even "believe," which were political and subversive in nature (pp. 23-30). Jesus also performed politically significant actions like casting of the Legion of demons (pp. 32-34). And yet "God's kingdom does not come by the sword, but through the flight of the dove" (p. 42). Jesus does not foment rebellion; in fact, He demands His followers pay their taxes. Jesus does "subordinate" governmental authority under God's rule (p. 49).

In the third chapter of this section, Schreiner attempts to synthesize these two positions of subversion and submission. He points out that many, in their frustration, go to "one of two extremes in terms of political engagement: nationalism and nonconformity" (p. 60). They either want

to align God's kingdom and earthly authority or become a separatist and have nothing to do with politics (pp. 60-61). Schreiner therefore gives some basic principles to guide Christian discipleship, including that the civil government is "legitimate, but not ultimate" (p. 65) and because the civil authorities are not ultimate, they are accountable to God and can be "critiqued, subverted, and reformed" (p. 68).

Schreiner follows a similar pattern in the second major section focusing on the political present, i.e., the church. He shows how Paul was accused of "turning the world upside down" and "defying the decrees of Caesar" in Acts 17:6-7 (p. 83). He also describes how the word for "church" (*ekklesia*) was itself a political term both for the Romans and within the Old Testament (pp. 88-89). He shows how baptism is a "political pledge" of allegiance (p. 92) and communion is a subversion of the Roman focus on status and power (pp. 94-96). Yet, Paul was declared innocent of those accusations (p. 100). Paul was a "dual citizen … actually working for Rome's well-being" (p. 102). He wrote in Romans 13 that "everyone" should "submit to the governing authorities" (p. 106). Schreiner describes baptism as not just a "rite of resistance but also power for peace" (p. 117). Communion "embodies Jesus's sacrificial politic" (p. 120).

In the synthesis chapter, Schreiner addresses the tendency toward "escapism" and "triumphalism" (p. 124). He notes that to "claim that America is a Christian nation is a confusion of categories" (p. 131), but the truth of that statement is not "grounds for divorce" (p. 132); "to love our country or homeland is not a bad thing" (p. 133). Instead, the call of the Christian is to "be the church" (pp. 135-38) even if there are times when reform, disobedience, or protest are called for to stop the government from violating, neglecting, or stepping outside of its God-ordained role (p. 138).

The third major section of the work covers the political future and the role of the return of Christ. Schreiner reminds the reader that New Jerusalem will eventually replace Babylon (p. 158). He compares the *advent* or *parousia* of Jesus Christ to the those of various emperors (pp. 160-62). Yet the believers' "conquest" for God comes not from sheer power but by their "witness" to the coming King (pp. 146-47, 169), refusal to worship Satan (p. 172) and "holy and hopeful waiting" (pp. 176-77). Synthesizing, Schreiner lays out four possible options for political approaches using the characters of Judas, Jonah, Jeroboam, and

Jeremiah, representing compromise, detachment, utopianism, and "witness and wisdom," respectively (p. 182).

In the conclusion, Schreiner returns to his thesis and reminds the reader of what it means to submit and subvert (p. 198-99). He reminds his readers that though he began by stating that the average believer is not political enough, there is also a sense in which they are "too political in the wrong way" (p. 207). By this Schreiner means that "by manically and incessantly" talking about political systems and by paying attention to every new scandal on social media, etc., we give the media and those very political systems inordinate influence over our lives (p. 208).

Schreiner's work compares well with the themes of Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon's *Resident Aliens*, as well as more technical works like *Christ and Empire* by Joerg Rieger. This work positively compares to especially *Christ and Empire* as that work's language of "support and surplus" is less readily understandable than Schreiner's language of "subversion and submission." *Political Gospel* does an excellent job of drawing out the imperial backdrops to the New Testament texts. Its inclusion of personal and historical stories demonstrate how practical the material in the book is.

However, despite these positives, the book is not without minor faults. First, the wording Schreiner selects—partisan, nationalism, triumphalism, utopianism, privatism, non-conformity, escapism, and detachment—come across as repetitive and indistinct from one another; that Schreiner only lines these up at the end of the book (p. 205) detracts from otherwise useful language. Second and similarly, Schreiner only tacks on the concept that believers can be "too political" at the end of the book (p. 207); this theme, while important, takes away from his thesis of Christians not being political enough. Third and finally, though Schreiner claims the book is not about the actual issues, he brings up such issues as Trump, January 6, the Black Lives Matter protests, and more. At times these comments seem partisan and are enough to pull the reader away from his otherwise solid discussion.

Though Schreiner writes for "all Christians thinking about politics" (p. viii) with an emphasis on those in the western cultural of America, this book probably remains best for two groups: pastors wanting to learn more about how to address politics from the pulpit and within their congregations, as well as seminarians looking to understand more about the imperial backgrounds to the Scripture. The tables throughout the

book are in the style of a textbook and other laypeople of the church might get bogged down in some of the historical backgrounds. Others may find this work useful and beneficial, but it should certainly have a place on the shelves of these two groups.

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***Fountain of Salvation: Trinity and Soteriology*. By Fred Sanders. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021. 576 pp. $39.00, Softcover. ISBN 978-0802878106.**

The relationship between the doctrines of the Trinity and soteriology has received significant attention since the dawn of the Enlightenment. Modern theology, critical of Patristic theology for its assumed focus upon the independence of God at the expense of His work for His people, has advocated for greater economic and experiential views of the Trinity. However, though this effort has highlighted the importance of salvation towards understanding Trinitarian doctrine, it has done so using categories foreign to Scripture and theological tradition while jeopardized God's aseity (p. 180). Since the networking of the Trinity and soteriology has significant impact upon theology and the Christian life, an incorrect understanding of their association can lead to theological deficiencies with ensuing practical ramifications (p. 2). Thus, there is great need to balance these mega doctrines for the sake of the church's theology and ministry.

Seeking to explore and specify the relationship between the Trinity and salvation against this contextual backdrop (pp. 2-4, 154-55), Fred Sanders (PhD, Graduate Theological Union), professor of theology in the Torrey Honors College at Biola University, offers his latest work, *Fountain of Salvation: Trinity and Soteriology*. For Sanders, the relationship between the Triune God and salvation "is not a problem to be solved," but is rather "the nexus of theology, the blazing core of biblical revelation where the reality of God and the truth of the gospel are composed in dynamic unity" (p. 5). To demonstrate this union and its importance for the Christian life, Sanders engages the various theological

challenges generated by this relationship with Scripture's witness in dialogue with both patristic Trinitarian soteriology and late twentieth century Trinitarian revival theologies. Sanders is certainly qualified for such a project, having produced numerous publications in the field of Trinitarian scholarship over the last two decades. These works include his books *The Image of the Immanent Trinity* (2005), *The Deep Things of God* (2010), and *The Triune God* (2016), as well as numerous journal articles and other projects in which he served as co-editor (e.g., *Retrieving Eternal Generation* in 2017, co-edited with Scott R. Swain).

The content of *Fountain of Salvation* naturally divides itself into three parts. Following an introduction, chapters 1-4 address how the Trinity informs and shapes theology. Chapter 1 addresses the Trinity's role as the foundation for theology, including its structuring of the biblical story and theological categories, but most importantly its shaping of soteriology. Chapter 2 justifies the centrality of the economy of salvation towards maintaining an equilibrium between the immanent and economic Trinity. Chapter 3 analyzes the problems relating the Trinity to the atonement, particularly the implications resulting from the logical ordering of these doctrines. Chapter 4 explores possible relationships between the nature of the Trinity and the mission and structure of the church.

Chapters 5-8, what Sanders calls the "soteriological core of the book" (p. 8), explore the importance of the Trinity towards the doctrine of salvation. Chapter 5 demonstrates the impact of the eternal processions upon the believer's sonship and its implications for the Christian life. Chapters 6 and 7 explain the significance of the generation of the Son and procession of the Spirit towards the doctrine of salvation, respectively. Chapter 8 addresses various issues pertaining to the role of the Trinity in theological education, stemming from the previous three chapters.

Chapters 9-10 shift the focus of the text towards theological retrieval. Chapter 9 surveys the development of Trinitarian thought in reaction to the Enlightenment. Chapter 10 concludes the text with a justification for Trinitarian retrieval in response to movements that revise the Trinity in unbiblical ways.

There is much to commend in *Fountain of Salvation*. Perhaps the text's greatest strength is its framing of and response to the modern Trinitarian debate, one which often assumes that the doctrine of the

Trinity was lost or misinterpreted and thus needs recovery. Not convinced by this narrative, Sanders reminds his readers that there has been great constancy in Trinitarian thinking from the earliest days of the church to the present (pp. 131, 176-77, 180). Furthermore, Sanders argues that such modern efforts to recover the Trinity are actually revisions of Trinitarian theology, and often harmful ones at that (p. 182). Nevertheless, while still recognizing the problems of modernistic interpretation, Sanders encourages his readers towards further Trinitarian reflection while being faithful to Scripture and tradition (pp. 180-81).

On this point, *Fountain of Salvation* excels in its ability to justify the urgency of its program. For example, a key element of Sanders's argument is that unity between the Trinity and soteriology is strengthened when one interprets Scripture through the economy of salvation, as it serves as a link between various Trinitarian proof-texts and God's plan for redemption (pp. 47-49). Many arguments historically used to defend the Trinity have been heavily scrutinized (e.g., Prov 8; the Johannine Comma), and thus linking various aspects of Trinitarian thought with various aspects of soteriology has offered a renewed defense of Trinitarian theology (pp. 103-104). A strong bond between the Trinity and soteriology is also informative for the Christian life. Sanders reminds his readers that salvation is not just being saved from judgment but being saved to a right relationship with the Triune God (pp. 90-91, 97-98), an act which consequentially impacts one's spiritual duty. In this way, Sanders articulately demonstrates that the unity and balance of Trinity and soteriology is important for the present day and thus effectively presents his own response to the modernist project.

While *Fountain of Salvation* covers many topics effectively, there are two areas in which further research might strengthen the thesis of the text. First, how does the relationship between the Trinity and soteriology relate to God's work during the Old Testament period? Sanders recognizes the importance of the question but hands it off to the work of biblical theology (p. 15). While this is the right play as far as theological method is concerned, readers may not be satisfied with Sanders concluding that the Father sending the Son and Spirit is "a summary of the entire Bible" (p. 15; see also p. 134) with little discussion on how the Old Testament demonstrates this. Furthermore, Sanders notes that the Trinity is the answer for unity across biblical disciplines, including the

Old Testament (pp. 151-52), further forcing the need for significant Old Testament focus. This is not to say to that Sanders never addresses the Old Testament, since he does on occasion when noting God's eternal purpose in Christ (e.g., pp. 59, 102), yet a more robust discussion on the Old Testament's informing of the relationship between the Trinity and soteriology would strengthen the book's thesis.

Second, how does one's understanding of the gospel impact one's understanding of the Trinity? Sanders is aware of the significance of the question, as he notes that the three main branches of Christianity have different views on the application of salvation even though they share similar views on the Trinity (p. 52). Sanders himself seems to take a traditionally evangelical view of the security of salvation (p. 143), one that is not commonly shared with other varieties of Christendom. However, Sanders argues that one's conception of God defines salvation (p. 89), so how might one reconcile differing views of the gospel with similar Trinitarian doctrine?

Outside of further areas of research, there are two minor and direct criticisms of the text. First, *Fountain of Salvation* is a collection of edited chapters and journal articles (pp. 201-202). Naturally, the text will offer greater benefit to those who have not read these other works. Second, the compiling of these works creates editing and structural challenges. For example, due to content overlap, sometimes the text repeats material (e.g., pp. 30, 34). Furthermore, chapters 5-8 seem to slow the flow of the text. The content of chapters 6 and 7 could have been synthesized into earlier chapters, while chapters 5 and 8 may have fit better at the end of the text as they serve to address the more practical implications of Sanders's study. Chapters 9 and 10 may have been more effective at the beginning of the text as they address the core challenge prompting the text.

These criticisms aside, *Fountain of Salvation* is an effective contribution to studies in Trinitarian theology. It provides solid evidence demonstrating the unity of the Trinity and soteriology while handling modern and patristic positions graciously yet calculatedly. Advanced theological students who are ready to tackle more demanding historical debates will benefit the most, as will professors seeking material to supplement their Trinity or soteriology lectures.

Daniel P. Wiley
St. George, ME

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