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A Biblical Theology of the Israelite Monarchy

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Abstract: In undertaking a comprehensive Biblical theology, one must take account of each and every aspect of the biblical message and from the accumulated data distill its fundamental concepts and concerns, looking for a central theme if one exists. At the very opening of the sacred text and in the first recorded statement of God about mankind, he speaks of the purpose of his creation: "Be fruitful, multiply, and have dominion over all things" (Genesis 1:26-28). That mandate was never rescinded and the Israelite Monarchy was one of its most significant expressions.

Key Words: Israel, Israelite Monarchy, Kingship, David

Foreword

If nothing else, the Bible is a theological treatise originating in the mind of God, revealed to and through the prophets and apostles, and made available to the Church. As such, no part of it, canonically speaking, is non-theological nor is any one of its literary genres intended in the end to communicate anything but theology. This includes the historical books and the events they describe, including, of course, the era of Israel's monarchy. To 'do' theology of a part of the canon, one must view it as an integral part of the whole without the opportunity to do the whole. Our desire and prayer is that this brief study will be read and examined in light of the entire canonical revelation.[1]

Defense of 'Monarchy' as a Theological Theme

By 'theme' in biblical theology is meant a notion or concept that is readably observable, easily understood, and intuitively sensed to be appropriate to the discipline. Many works on the subject fail in one or more of these respects. To a great extent the criteria are determined by such features as (1) the 'space' allocated to it in the Bible; that is, to what extent is it the subject matter of Scripture?; (2) how pervasively is it identified and carried throughout the various writings of the Bible?; (3) is there a perceptible

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1. For a more thorough discussion of this author's theological method, see Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2006), 28-33.

sense of its organic nature, its development from a germination to a full-grown body of truth that informs all its parts and is informed by them as well?; (4) does it reach a climactic point where the creative and salvific purposes of God from the beginning have been realized in history and in the eschatological age? Proposed themes that lack one or more of these should foster concern as to whether the theologian has adequately made a case for whatever central ideas he or she might be promoting to see if their works are indeed credible and persuasive. A legitimate question can now then be raised: Does the topic "Monarchy of Israel" pass muster?[2] Only the reading can supply an answer.[3]

Monarchy in the Ancient Near East and in Israel As Religious/Political Institutions[4]

Creation: The Origin of Israelite Kingship

The concept of kingship or monarchy or dominion was accepted world-wide except, it seemed, in Israel. But this is a misreading of the sacred record. Words like "dominion," "rule," and the like occur first at the very beginning, in Genesis 1: 26-28, even before mankind was created. God as king brought about humankind to represent him as sentient beings, to be his images and to reign on his behalf. "Let us make man as[5] our image," he said, and "let them fill the earth and have dominion[6] over everything." This is followed by the first recorded words uttered by God to man, and in even stronger terms: "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, subdue[7] it, and have dominion…" (v. 28). Part of this concept of having dominion is self-sufficiency, exacting from surrounding creation the means by which he could exercise a certain degree of human autonomy. Even before plants were created, the delay in their springing forth was attributed partly to the fact that "there was no man who could work [the soil]" (Genesis 2:5), clearly referring to the creation dominion mandate.

2. For an older but still important (and in agreement) work on the theme, see Tomoo Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel: A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology.* BZAW142. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977.

3. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion*, 127-162.

4. G. E. Mendenhall, "The Monarchy," *Interpretation* 29 (1975): 155-170; Baruch Halpern, *The Constitution of the Monarchy in Israel* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981); K. M. Heim, "Kings and Kingship," *Dictionary if the Old Testament: Historical Books,* Eds. Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Predss, 2005), 610-623.

5. [5] This subordinate conjunction can (and here does) have the meaning of *beth essentiae*, not "in" but "as." Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 11.2.5e.

6. Hebrew רָדָה (*rādā*), "tread, rule" (HALOT, 1190).

7. A related term is כָּבַשׁ (*kabas*), "subjugate" (HALOT, 460). The idea implicit here is that creation might resist human dominion at times, but it must be made to 'understand' that man is sovereign under the Creator's mighty hand

The Lord then expanded on the notion of "working" the ground by planting a garden in Eden in which he placed the man (Genesis 28-17). As though to communicate to him the marvels of self-sustenance, God made the soil burst forth with plants both beautiful to see (flowers?) and good to eat (v. 9). Man's emulation of these agricultural techniques released him from utter helplessness and taught him what dominion over "all things" might mean. He too could "create" plants, though not by spoken word as had the Lord, but by arduous, fulfilling, labor.

The labor consisted of two stages: to "work" the ground and to "watch over" it (Genesis 2:15). The first, "to work,"[8] intimates bringing soil under control, as it were, through breaking up the ground and making it subservient. "To watch over"[9] was to manage, guard, and cultivate it once it had been properly prepared by cultivation. The agricultural language became translated to kingdom responsibility in due course, the working being the preparation for monarchy, and the watching over to kingly responsibility for maintaining the Creation plan of dominion over all things for the glory of God.

Two examples of the preparation of mankind to be the image of God are (1) the uniqueness of the bestowal upon him of life and (2) its result contrasted to that of lower beings. The text in great detail specifies that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life[10] and [he] became a living being" (Gen 2:7). This tender anthropomorphic moment in effect gives to man certain God-like qualities, but not in essence; the resemblance is in exercise of authority, no matter how derivative and incomparably less glorious it is to that of the King of Heaven and Earth.

Man's (singular) and humankind's (collective) function under God may be conceptualized as levels of "sphere sovereignty" (to use the Dooyeweerdian term), in which, as in pyramidal layers, God is the Apex, the source and distributor of all authority, followed next in descending order by mankind, society, government, institutions, and, at base, all other created things, sentient or otherwise.[11] This is the order as established in the days of creation, but in crescendo reverse order: (1) Heavens and Earth, (2) the Waters, (3) Vegetation, (4) Heavenly Bodies, (5) Creatures of the Seas and Skies, (6) Creatures of the Land), (7) Man, Woman. In opposition

8. The very common verb (800) עָבַד x in BH) in most contexts means "to work" or "to make."

9. The verb שָׁמַר, equally as common, is rendered "watch over," "take care of," and the like (HALOT, 1581-1584).

10. The breathing out (יָפַח) and breathing in (בְּאַפָּיו) clearly suggests a certain transfer of "godlikeness" or authority granted to mankind alone, another step toward dominion. The breathing consisted of the "breath of life" (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּם, *nišmat ḥayyîm*) which produced a "living being" (נֶפֶשׁ חַי, *nepheš ḥay*). Only mankind, of all living things, is said to have been created by God's breathing. Otherwise, it is merely by the spoken word. This alone suffices to mark man as unique in all creation; hence his right to rule.

11. For the pyramidal model, see Figure 1 (below). This notion is associated with the Dutch Reformed 'School,' especially with Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) followed by Herman Dooyeweerd (1894-1977), Gordon H. Clark, and Cornelius Van Til (1895-1987). See John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing), 215-221.

is the order of the Fall: (1) The Animal, (2) the Woman, (3) the Man. The snake subverted the woman and the woman subverted the man and with their disobedience to the Great King of All Things the pyramid collapsed from bottom up until only God stood sublime and supreme to view the wreckage of what he had made in perfection. By divine judgment the animal would thereafter crawl in the dust, the woman cower in the dust in submission to the man, and the man return to the dust from which he was made. But a note of gracious reversal to this calamitous circumstance was sounded: The woman, cursed from then on by the pain of pregnancy and birth, would stand between the two as the source of the restoration of God's glorious creation plan. She, suffering great pain, would be mother of a seed that would in time crush the snake, though her offspring would be wounded in it that act of salvation. By crushing the head of evil, the Seed would also restore man's dignity and sovereignty. The dominion of the man remained intact but in a crippled, disfigured way. He retained the privilege of "working and guarding" the soil, but now no longer in the perfect environment of the Garden. Rather, he was cast out and barred from that special place of uninterrupted fellowship with God to break up and tend to a soil resistant to his labor (Genesis 3:23-24). In a now hostile world, dominion slipped through his hands in many ways. In that first little realm of his wife and two sons rebellion broke out resulting in the death of Abel at the hands of Cain, the first instance of human death recorded, and a violent, murderous one at that. He who was created to be the image of God, ruling like God over all things, could not rule over even his family. Sadly, his descendants from that day to this have done no better. Of generation after generation it was (and has been) dolefully recorded: "And he died." Eight times between Adam and Noah the bell tolled that awful message of man's finitude, failure, and ultimate fate, the universal Flood. And yet there remained grace and hope. With a new post-Deluge second chance came a new expression of the dominion mandate, this time with Noah. In nearly exactly the same verbal expression as before, Yahweh revealed to Noah that he, as "second Adam," would pick up the shattered pieces of broken dominion and sire a race that, like Adam's, would be "fruitful and abundant, filling the earth" (Gen 9:1-7). But in a stark reversal of the codicil spelling out man's dominion over all other living things, Yahweh omitted that phrasing, saying now that the innate authoritative power implicit in "subjugation" and "having dominion" was no longer to be the case. Now man would be lord by virtue of his superior intelligence and forcible discipline upon the 'lower' orders. In this new phase of kingship, motivation to compliance and obedience of the sub-human would come through "fear and terror" (Gen 9:2).[12]

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12. The terms are מוֹרָא and חַת respectively. This combination is likely a hendiadys to be rendered "terrible fear," "fearful terror," or the like.
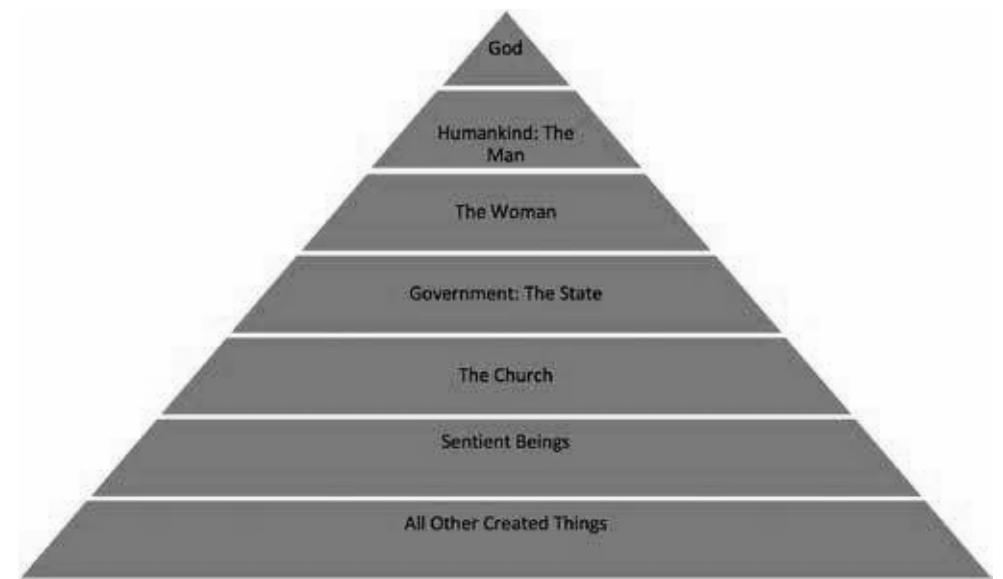
Figure 1 Divinely Established Layers of Monarchy

Babel and the Development of National Monarchy

A natural impulse is for family and friends to stay together, even as nations, because the familiar inculcates a feeling of joy, contentedness, and belonging. At the same time, it stifles the very reason mankind was created in the first place, that is, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). The selfishness of comfort and shared culture of the creature prevailed over the mandate of the Creator. The geo-center of human population had not moved far from Babel and it was there that a great ziggurat was constructed, one so high it would reach up "to the heavens." It would serve as a symbol of defiant unity and oneness, of unbridled hubris flying in the face of the Almighty. They would not leave until evicted, so evicted they were and scattered "over the face of the whole earth."

Apart from this and despite it, human population in time multiplied and spread throughout the earth, a dispersion necessary for the following reasons:

- Natural population growth through the process of reproduction.
- Forced expulsion of the race because of its insistence on remaining geographically concentrated in the Middle Eastern river valleys and plains in direct contradiction to the divine command to multiply and fill the earth (Gen 1:28; 8:17; 9:1, 7; 11:1, 8, 9).
- The natural impulse of travel, adventure, discovery, and incessant quest for a better life somewhere else.

By 3000 B.C. Middle Eastern civilization began to blossom, especially in two major regions: Egypt along the Nile and Mesopotamia, "between" the rivers, that is, the Euphrates and Tigris. Eventual scarcity of land brought about a sort of primitive

urbanism, where people lived in small communities, and with that modest beginning the accompanying onset of labor specialization apart from that of earlier agriculture and pastoralism. Thus there emerged the industries of the potter, the weaver, the tanner, the metallurgist, and the smithy, with his bronze vessels for domestic and military uses. These naturally generated many other craftsmen, merchants, and traders.[13] The 'invention' of writing by the Sumerians ca. 3200 BC enabled merchandising, trade, and distant communication to be undertaken at a highly more sophistical and profitable manner than ever before.

All this spawned the need for expert and powerful leaders in religion, security, defense, and law and order. This presupposes the inevitable establishment of government whereby population entities could enjoy, peace, prosperity, and personal safety and protection. Village chieftains sufficed for small communities, but with the rise of cities more complex political structures must be organized, all of which demanded strong leadership. Again, in the case of minor concentrations of persons, requirements demanding full-time, charismatic, and powerful central control essential to the complications of large urban locations could largely be forgone. Cities of multiplied thousands of inhabitants obviously required wise and strong leadership invested in either councils or, increasingly commonly, in a single individual at the top. The Sumerians called the office and person so selected LU.GAL, literally, "big man." The Semitic Akkadian term was *šarru*, "king."[14] A similar term was *malku*, cognate to West Semitic *melek*, the usual Old Testament Hebrew designation.[15]

Like many institutions of the ancient world, human kingship was connected first and foremost to the rule of the gods from which, it was thought, it derived. Thus the deities of Sumer, Akkad, Egypt, and Hatti ruled over their celestial realms, dealing with all the exigencies of life thrust upon them by virtue of their positions, wisdom, power, and sympathies (or lack hereof).[16] They were the creators and managers of all

things, the arbiters of discord, the benefactors of the weak and poor, and the leaders in conflict against hostile powers in the heavens and on earth that threatened their realms of authority and responsibility and endangered the peoples on Earth who trusted them to protect and preserve them.[17] To whatever degree was possible, earthly kings above all were expected to inaugurate and oversee various religious exercises by which they themselves could be honored and the practice of which would bring religious significance to the monarchs, thus mimicking their heavenly counterparts so as to become models of how governance should be undertaken.[18]

To some extent, this was at the heart of Israelite monarchy as well. The duties of the kings of Israel (and Judah) included oversight of the religious life of the nation as well as political and military affairs. Though most of the kings of Israel and Judah, as it turned out, were written off as "evil," the office itself continued to find favor and common usage as late as the Second Temple period of the Maccabees and Hasmoeans.[19] Jesus was mockingly described as "king" by the Roman authorities and Pharisees, but the same term is ascribed to him in all seriousness in Scripture in a number of times and places, especially in eschatological texts.[20]

Old Testament Pre-Monarchic Statecraft

Following the death of Moses, his brother Aaron, and finally Joshua, Moses' longtime junior associate and leader of Israel's conquest of Canaan (ca. 1350 B.C.), the nation was leaderless and began slowly and then more precipitously to slip away from its moorings in Torah and its monotheistic credo into a watered-down Yahwism and inexorably into outright paganism (Judges 3:1-7). In the plan of God, the time was not right yet for a long-promised monarchy,[21] so he established an order of judges, charismatic[22] persons raised up from time to time to deal with particular crises as

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13. For a brilliant (if somewhat hypothetical) explanation for the 'prehistoric' development of urbanism and division of labor, see Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999).

14. Thorkild Jacobsen made a strong case for what he called "primitive democracy," the model suggested here for the secular realm. He proposed that Sumerian and Akkadian literature, especially the epics, viewed the gods as equal participants in heavenly councils, gatherings chaired by a deity conceded to be the most powerful or wise. Such a system, he argued, collapsed under the weight of increasingly powerful LU.GALS who morphed into outright monarchs answerable to no one. Human monarchy was nothing but a pale imitation of the divine but it eventually came to be the *modus realis* of at least the ancient Middle East. See his "Primitive Democracy in Ancient Mesopotamia," *JNES* 2/3 (1943): 159-172. The biblical model is, of course, diametrically opposite to this view of governance.

15. In Egypt, the corresponding monarch was called *pharaoh*, that is, "big house," obviously referring to the resident of a palatial structure. Without exception, all 42 royal rulers of Israel from Saul to Zechariah were addressed as 'king.'

16. Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 145-151; W. W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr., eds., *The Context of Scripture. Volume Two: Monumental Inscriptions from the Biblical World* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 256-257. King Hammurabi (1792-1750 BC): "When the god Shamash, great lord of heaven and

earth, king of the gods … granted to me everlasting kingship (and) a reign of long days." Byron E. Shafer, *Religion in Ancient Egypt: Gods, Myths, and Personal Practice* (London: Routledge, 1991), 67: "[the king] was originally mortal" but the deity "always divine."

17. On the subject see Henri Cazelles, "De l'ideologie royale," *JANES* 5 (1973); Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Witsells, 1943); Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948).

18. Labat, René, *Le caractère religieux de royauté assyro-babylonienne* (Paris, 1939); S. N. Kramer, "Kingship in Sumer and Akkad: The Ideal King," *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* I:19 (1971):163-176.

19. Out of 42 kings of Israel and Judah together, only 16 escape the opprobrious description "evil." In Judah alone 16 of the 20 kings are described thus. For the Maccabean and Hasmonean kingship see Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 12-16.

20. Matthew 27:11; Mark 15:18; Luke 23:2, 3, 37; John 1:49; 12:13; 18:37; 19:3, 19; 1 Timothy 1:17; 6:15; Revelation 15:3; 17:14; 19:16.

21. Genesis 49:10; Numbers 24:17; Deuteronomy 17:14-20.

22. The term in Judges suggests that the judges did not occupy their offices by human appointment, but as the Spirit came upon them as a sign of God's presence and power (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14).

they arose. This system, almost jerry-built it seems at times, lasted for about 300 years. Problems with surrounding nations—permitted, indeed ordained—by God were met by judges who, having resolved the challenge, retired from view and gave way to succeeding persons called forth for the next emergency.

The first of these was Othniel, nephew of the great warrior Caleb (Judges 3:9). He delivered Israel from a far-off people beyond the Euphrates in Aram-Naharaim. The oppression lasted for eight long years until Othniel drove out the invaders. However, for the next 350 years the cycle was repeated: Israel sinned, Yahweh punished them at the hands of another oppressor, they repented, Yahweh elevated a new judge who saved them, a new peace ensued, only to be broken by a repetition of these stages. The last of these was mighty Samson, he who slew lions and defeated single-handedly whole companies of Philistine warriors (Judges 13:1-16:31). But his 20 years of leadership epitomized the weakness of human flesh to govern and be governed. His lust for foreign women and seeming indifference to the very Spirit who empowered him brought him down to a suicidal death in the temple of Baal (16:28-31). Written as an epitaph over Israel's history for these abysmally wretched years are the somber words: "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 21:25) or similar sentiments (18:1; 19:1). Indeed, there was no king, a situation requiring drastic remedy, and Yahweh had one in view.

Late Pre-Monarchical History and Governmental Failure (1400-1350 B. C.)

The Episode of Conquest

Full Trust in God's Instructions

Israel's impending conquest of Canaan was a most formidable challenge to say the least, but Yahweh gave to Joshua and the priests instructions to be followed to the letter.[23] First in importance was the transfer of the Ark of the Covenant, borne by the priests, epitomizing the presence of God leading the procession as a mighty warrior (Joshua 3:3-6, 8-13). This and following instructions are all elements of so-called 'Holy War' (or, alternatively, 'Yahweh War') in the Old Testament. The principal truths central to the conveyance of the Ark were (1) its pride of place (Joshua 3:3-4);

23. The procedures outlined here are standard elements of so-called Holy War. See Eugene H. Merrill, "The Case for Moderate Discontinuity," *Show Them no Mercy: God and Canaanite Genocide,* ed. Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 63-94. See also now M. Daniel Carroll, R., and J. Blair Wilgus, eds. *Wrestling with the Violence of God: Soundings in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013); Paul Copan and Matthew Flanagan, *Did God Really Command Genocide: Coming to Terms with the Justice of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014).

(2) its association with the supernatural (vv. 5, 7); (3) its metaphorical assurance of the presence of Yahweh (vv. 10, 11); and (4) its function as a standard at the head of the hosts of Israel that enabled a miraculous crossing of the overflowing river and a sure and certain triumph over the nations that would fight to prevent their coming into the land (vv. 10, 13).

Full Trust in God's Ways

An important component of Holy War in general (but not the only one) was the total destruction of certain persons and places (cf. Numbers 21:1-3; Joshua 6:21; 8:26; 1 Kings 9:11; 2 Kings 19:11; Jeremiah 50:21). [24] So inflexible and precise was the ritual of Holy War that any deviation from it constituted serious disobedience of the Great King, with all its implied consequences. In the case of the Conquest, *ḥērem* had been predicted and commanded by Moses (Deuteronomy 7:1-5; 12:2-3; 13:15; 20:16-18; 31:1-6). Moreover, it had already been exercised in the Exodus[25] and the Conquest of the Trans-Jordan (Deuteronomy 2:34; 3:6; Joshua 2:10). The operation at hand focused on Jericho's total demolition and the annihilation of its populace (Joshua 6:2-5). Once the walls were breached and the warriors could enter the city, Joshua warned them not to take anything for themselves because Jericho was to be dedicated to Yahweh as a whole 'burnt' offering. Anyone who violated this principle would himself become its victim (vv. 16-18, 26). The temptation to loot the ruins for silver and gold and imported finery was too much for Achan, a Judean, and once found out, was stoned to death, along with his family, and all he stole was burned up as mere refuse (Joshua 7:16-26). This focus on Holy War suggests, in a broad sense, that aggressive warfare and moral and spiritual integrity need not be considered counter-intuitive, certainly not where divine holiness and righteousness are at stake. In a narrow sense, a kingly priest could be called by God to be, as He is, a heroic priest-king engaged in the mission of establishing a monarchy over which Yahweh himself would ultimately reign forever.

The Era of the Judges (1350-1100 B. C.)

To return to the central theme of this study, namely, the theology of Israel's monarchy, attention is directed to the chaotic period just before the accession of Saul to the

24. The term can bear the following notions: (1) "to separate;" (2) to enclose; (3) to claim something as one's own; (4) to annihilate something or someone at Yahweh's command as an offering to him. See HALOT, 353-354.

25. This victory hymn, commonly called the "Song of Moses" (Exodus 15:1-18), extols Yahweh as a king who has demonstrated his sovereignty over the sea and over Pharaoh and his mighty armies that have malevolently pursued his chosen people Israel (v. 18). He is also called "a warrior" and he who is incomparable 'among the gods' and "majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders" (v. 11). These attributes far transcend anything that can be said of a mere mortal king, but Israel's monarchy was to be seen as God's earthly agency and therefore was to receive similar accolades and respect.

throne as King of Israel (ca. 1051). External fashion and internal moral, social, and political realities were driving the leading voices of the people to demand some kind of solidarity, something more comprehensive and effective than had been the case in the days of the judges. The dominant theme of the historians who lived in and reflected on the situation at the end of the Twelfth Century is embedded in the laments in the book of Judges as a motif underlying the rationale of and urgent need for a monarchy. "In those days," says the compiler of Judges, "there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Jud 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). This is the very definition of anarchy, society without law and restraint, instability on every hand, breakdown of cohesion, discipline, morality, and civility. Added to all this was the imminent threat from unfriendly neighbor countries ready for war and plunder and slaughter.

False Sovereignty and Idolatry

The first of these laments concerns idolatry, denial of the sovereignty, grace, protection—and judgment of a God to whom they were accountable and in whom their only hope for stability and security lay.[26] The comment of complaint occurs in the midst of a narrative featuring two young men (Jud 17:1-13). The first, Micah, prevails on his mother to give him the funds necessary to the establishment of a household cult including the fabrication and installation of two silver figurines, one sculpted and the other molded, before which his own son would serve as priest for the family. This blatant denial of Yahweh and flagrant disregard for Torah prompted the narrator to summarize "every man did what was right in his own eyes." But this was only half the story. Micah needed a legitimate priest and it so happened that an 'unemployed' priest passed by and offered his services. The mutual need was thus supplied to Micah's great satisfaction: "Yahweh will now do good (things) for me because I have a Levitical priest" (Jud 17:13).

False Governance: Immorality, Violence, and 'Frontier' Justice

Micah's joy was to be short-lived, however, for the lawlessness that inspired Micah to create his own god and a priest to perform ritual in his own chapel turned on him and in his chaotic world he had no one to come to his aid. What prompted Micah's negative turn of events was the forced migration of the tribe of Dan from its original mandated territory between Ephraim/Benjamin on the East and the Mediterranean Sea to the West to a region named Laish at the farthest limit of Israelite territory along the Aramean and Lebanon border (Judges 18:7-10). En route through Ephraim, five men, delegated to find a place of security for the tribe, came across the home of Micah where they saw paraphernalia of syncretistic worship and the young hireling

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26. J. Gadd, "The Hebrew Conception of the Kingship of God: Its Origin and Development," *Vetus Testamentum* 6 (1956): 268-285.

priest. Realizing that they would now be far from Shiloh and the Tabernacle, the five concluded they would have to create their own shrine and, of course, their own priesthood and religious system.

Reaching Laish, the Danites slaughtered all the people there and undertook their own construction of a city with its social and religious institutions, including a new tabernacle. Recalling what the five spies had seen in Ephraim, the tribal leaders sent the five plus a 600-man contingent of soldiers back to Micah's home. There they looted the place of all the idols and vessels of worship and persuaded the young priest to go back with them. Which is better, they asked, to be priest of one man or of a whole tribe (Judges 18:19)? The answer is obvious.

The foregoing litany of broken systems, broken ideologies, and broken people—all because of a lack of strong, godly, obedient leadership—should suffice to justify the insistent clamor of the populace for a king, a central authority who would be able to gather together the loose cultural, political, and religious strands into a cohesive system that would bring stability, peace, and wellbeing to God's chosen nation. To this day, nations in turmoil look to a 'strong man,' no matter how despotic and self-serving, to establish law and order and some sense of civility and normalcy. This is when Samuel sprang into action, he who had seen with his own eyes and rebuked with his own lips the corruption of Israelite society and its futile attempts to pull itself up by its own bootstraps.

Samuel: God-Appointed Kingmaker

Born for the day in which he was sovereignly placed, the prophet began to speak words from God at a time, notes the historian, when "the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions" (1 Sam 3:1[NIV]). But by the time Samuel finished his 'apprenticeship' with Eli it could be said of Samuel that "all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord" (1 Sam 3:20).

Samuel's most important accomplishment was the recovery of the Creation principle of God as King in Heaven who created mankind to be his image and surrogate king on Earth, charged solely with administering the affairs of God in accordance to his designs and purposes. Samuel conceptualized this over-riding biblical idea and served as God's agent to establish, not just theoretically, but politically and theologically, the nexus between Yahweh as universally sovereign and mankind (in his case, a solitary man of God's choice), as a monarch charged with leading his chosen people Israel. What was envisioned, it seems, was that for the first time an actual nation with a human ruler would serve as a proto-type modeling what God had in mind from the beginning and what he was preparing to demonstrate historically and eschatologically through this existing chosen nation[27] and now a chosen king.

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27. This was affirmed in Israel's encounter with Yahweh at Sinai: "If you attentively listen to me

The notion of Yahweh as king is lavishly documented in the Old Testament and was certainly a well-known theological tenet.[28] On the other hand, for a man to be called 'king' and to be considered so in the sense that he was the special image of God and an envoy on earth working out God's plan for Israel would have been at first incomprehensible to most. Israel wanted a king 'like all the other nations,' to be sure, but now they could and would have a veritable 'son of God' as ruler; one, in fact, whose last descendant will one day be called God in the flesh. Had they only reflected on the Torah pledge of the appearance of monarchy climaxing the covenant promises to Abraham and Sarah that someday she would be the 'mother of kings,' how different the nation's mood would have been.

Anointing of Saul

The prophet's first great commission was to accede to the people's demand for a king, though his compliance in doing so was with personal displeasure and apprehension (1 Samuel 8:4-6). Nonetheless, Yahweh made clear to the old prophet that what he as God knew to be a wrong choice for the moment was something from which the nation could and needed to learn. They must wait upon him for that which was best and for what had been promised to the Fathers, namely, the emergence of a human monarchy under divine permission and authorization. The time had come but not in the person of Saul. This tragic figure, so much, it seemed, was to Israel a 'messianic' ruler who could put down the hated Philistines and other foes and at the same time bring internal harmony and an end to the corruptive administration of priests and renegade self-appointed politicians. In the end he was a foil against whom the glory of the God-chosen candidate would be all the more glorious.

But this was not to be, at least on the near horizon. Samuel's own lascivious sons typified the times, enabling him to see up close the cogency of the peoples' outcries. Budding judges though they were, they viewed their ministries as a means to personal social and financial gain (1 Samuel 8:1-3). If this be true of the priest's household, what hope lay ahead for the household of the nation? "Make a king for us," they pleaded, "one to judge us like all the nations" (v. 5). To be fair, they were not asking for kings like other nations had but for a system of justice that other kings of other nations created and administered in their various realms.

Samuel's quandary was alleviated somewhat by Yahweh's assurance that it was not he, Samuel, who was being rejected, but Yahweh himself and his kingship (v.

and keep my covenant, you will become to me סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל הָעַמִּים ("an especially treasured one from among all the nations). The idea will now be applied to David who is to Yahweh אִישׁ כִּלְבָבוֹ, "a man according to my heart," that is, "a man of my choosing."

28. Numbers 23:21; 1 Sam 12:12; Psa 5:2; 24:7, 8, 9, 10; 44:4; 47:2, 6, 7; 48:2; 68:24; 74:12; 84:3; 95 :3; 98:6; 99:4; 145:1; 149:2; Isa 33:22; 41:21; 43:15; 44:6; Jer 8:19; 10:7, 10; 51:57; Zeph 3:15; Zech 14 :16, 17; Mal 1:14.

7). He therefore instructed the prophet to concede to popular demand but to do so with the severest warnings as to the kind of king they could expect. The kings of the other nations demanded their youth to go to war; Israel's God fought Israel's wars for them. Other kings subjected their people to *corvée*; Yahweh set his free to labor for his glory. The others catered to the rich and the powerful; he sought out the poor and needy to give them rest. The kings of the nations behaved as they did for they were merely mimicking the gods they served: exploitative, acquisitive, and, at the end, powerless (vv. 10-18). Surely, this could not be what the people wanted but all the louder they clamored for this very thing until Yahweh confided to Samuel, "Make a king for them."[29]

Anointing of David

The dismal forty years of Saul's reign that followed made one point crystal clear: Kingship in itself was not the answer unless from the beginning it was embodied in a man called by God. That man would now be found in a most unlikely place called Bethlehem, in the home of a peasant shepherd, Jesse by name. It will be recalled that Bethlehem played a somewhat unsavory role in the days of the judges. It was from Bethlehem that the young Levite sallied forth seeking employment, which he found in the idolatrous house of Micah, which he then he left for what he presumed to be a better opportunity as a priest for the renegade tribe of Dan. They spurned him as a traitorous upstart, forcing his ignominious retreat homeward (Judges 17:1-18:26). Bethlehem also was the home of a feckless girl who married a Levite, was unfaithful to him and ran away, was retrieved by him, murdered by a gang of ruffians in Gibeah, and cut to pieces by her Levite husband (Judges 19:1-30). Could the king of Israel come from such a place?

On the other hand, Bethlehem was the home of David's great-grandmother Ruth, a Moabite who had come to embrace Yahweh as her God. She had married a son of a Bethlehem widow named Naomi who himself had died. The two widows took up residence in Bethlehem where Ruth met and married a next of kin to her mother-in-law, Boaz by name. The story behind the marriage is a story of redemption. Naomi, as a widow, was seeking possession of her husband's properties which were in the hands of a lender who was entitled under Torah law to hold it as earnest until it could be redeemed through debt payment by a family member. When it seems there was no close kinsman who could, meet the requirements, Boaz, a more distant relative, agreed to the transaction only to find that he must take Ruth as wife as part of the 'inheritance.' He was happy to do this so he, by this deference, became (obviously unaware) the great-grandfather of King David, the messianic prototype of Jesus Christ. Ruth 4 lists David's ancestry as follows: Perez (son of Judah), Hezron, Ram,

29. The factitive verb form here converts the nominal to a verbal, הִמְלַכְתָּ לָהֶם מֶלֶךְ ("you [Samuel] bring about a king for them." Or, more idiomatically, "Appoint them a king."

Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David. The providence of God in sustaining the Abraham > David > Jesus chain of salvific hope cannot be ignored.

This remarkable backdrop provides a context in which Yahweh's instruction to Samuel go to Bethlehem and there to the house of Jesse can be understood. Any bafflement felt by Samuel initially was certainly allayed when Yahweh revealed to him more specifics: "Fill your horn with oil" and "I have chosen one of [Jesse's] sons to be king" (1 Samuel 16:1). At last the old prophet knew he would live to see the fulfillment of his mother Hannah's prayer:

> The Most High will thunder from Heaven;
> The Lord will judge the ends of the earth.
> He will give strength to his king
> And exalt the horn of his anointed (1 Samuel 2:10)

David having been chosen from all of Jesse's sons, and having been anointed by Samuel, the narrator states that "from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David" (16:12). That statement alone may explain (1) David's immediate awareness of his exalted position even though he had not assumed it, and (2) how and why he apparently began to compose and sing the magnificent poetic psalms attributed to him or speaking of him. Here is the appropriate place to examine them and others referring to him to glean from them the more full extent of his self-understanding of his kingship in light of all that had transpired. Chart 2 lists the 'Davidic Psalms and how they reflect these viewpoints. Chart 3 consist s of so-called "Royal Psalms," those written by David and others that celebrate the kingship of both Yahweh and his anointed one, David

Table 1: The Psalms of David

	Literary Type	Divine Kingship	David's Political Kingship	David's Priestly Kingship
3	Lament		Elevation of his head	
5	Lament	My King and my God		
7	Lament	Enthroned		
8	Hymn	Majestic name	Man's sovereignty	
9	Thanksgiving	Enthroned, Reigns		
11	Lament	Enthroned		
18	Messianic		"his [Yahweh's] king"	
20	Blessings		"the king" (David)	
21	Thanksgiving		"the king" (David) given "splendor and majesty" with a "golden crown" and "un-ending blessings"	
22	Lament	Enthroned, Holy One, dominion over all		

	Literary Type	Divine Kingship	David's Political Kingship	David's Priestly Kingship
24	Entrance Liturgy	King of Glory, Lord Almighty		
29	Hymn	Enthroned as King forever		
55	Lament	Enthroned from of old		
59	Lament	Rules over Jacob		
61	Lament		"increase the years of the king's life," "may he be enthroned forever"	
63	Thanksgiving			"I have seen you in the sanctuary"
66	Thanksgiving	Rules by his power over the nations		
68	Victory Songs	God reigns forever, "Sovereign Lord," majesty over Israel		
103	Hymn	From a throne in heaven, rules over all		
144	Praise and Petition		"the one who gives victory to kings, who delivers his servant David"	
145	Hymn	God the King		

Table 2: The Royal Psalms

2	Messianic	"I have installed my king [David];" Yahweh's son
18	Messianic	"[God] delighted in me," "exalted me," "his anointed"
20	Blessings	"his anointed," "give victory to the king [David]"
21	Thanksgiving	"the king [David] rejoices in Yahweh;" [God] placed a crown on his head
72	Intercession	"royal son," "may all kings bow down to him," "long may he live," "may his name endure forever,"
132	Messianic	"For the sake of your servant David, do not reject your anointed one;" "The Lord swore an oath to David…one of your own descendants I will place on your throne;" I will make a horn grow for David and set up a lamp for my anointed one

Affirmation of David

Perhaps the strongest testimony to the selection, empowerment, and paradigmatic messianic nature of David's kingship is Psalm 89, generally categorized as a royal psalm.[30] It is attributed to 'Ethan the Ezrahite[31].' Structurally, it can be understood as follows:

Introit (vv. 1-2)

30. C. Hassell Bullock, *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books*, revised and expanded (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988), 137-39

31. For 'Ethan the Ezrahite,' the attributive author of the psalm, see Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Psalms*. Vol. III. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n. d.), 32-33.

The name David occurs four times in the psalm out of 14 times in the entire book of Psalms. Together with Psalm 132 (5 times), the two account for nearly ¾ of all in the book. In addition, the term 'covenant' is found four times, once for every reference to David. Clearly, the poet is making a profoundly important theological point, one that demands at least brief attention.

At the outset, the composer connects 'covenant' with 'David, describing the latter as 'my chosen' and 'my servant' (vv. 3-4). Two other concepts are also joined, 'seed' and 'throne.' The referent is, of course, self-evident: David the anointed servant will sire one who will be king. Only Yahweh, the incomparable and omnipotent God, can bring this to pass. Amongst the heavenly hosts and in battle with the monsters of chaos and unrighteousness, he stands alone as Sovereign (vv. 6-17). But his sovereignty he shares with his servant David, says the poet:

> Our shield belongs to Yahweh,
> Our king to the Holy (One) of Israel.

Shield and king are in poetic parallelism as are 'Yahweh' and 'Holy One.' In context, David is Israel's shield, a descriptor found nowhere else in the Bible but an imagery found commonly in the Psalter with reference to God as a shield (Psa. 3:3; 7:10; 18:2, 35; 28:7; etc.). David is thus raised here hyperbolically to a super-human level of being and function. On the other hand, deity is never attributed to David or any other king of Israel, contrary to the traditions of surrounding nations, especially, of course, those of Egypt. In the remainder of the psalm, similar sobriquets surround the king. He was 'found' and 'anointed'[32] (v. 20; cf. vv. 38, 51) and then was promised victory over all his foes, human and otherwise (vv. 21-25). Of particular note is the allusion to the creation mandate of Genesis 1:26-28 in which mankind is commissioned to have dominion over all things including the realms of the seas and rivers.[33] The very powers articulated here were displayed by Jesus Christ, Son of David and Son of Man (Matt. 8:26-27). In the historical circumstances of David,

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32. בְּשֶׁמֶן קָדְשִׁי מְשַׁחְתִּיו. The transliterated form of the adjectival-nominal מָשִׁיחַ is, of course, "messiah," which occurs three times in this psalm as an epithet of David (vv. 20, 38, 51).

33. This brings to mind the Ugaritic (Canaanite) epics of Baal who, in achieving the construction of his palace and throne of kingship, had to slay Nahar, the god of the rivers, and Yamm(u), god of the seas. Such imagery would be of great interest and meaning in the pagan environment surrounding Israel in the 11th Century. For David and his successors to have such power would be an unanswerable claim to the messiahship of David (as lord of the bordering nations) and Jesus Christ (as Lord of heaven and earth).

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these pledges of dominion and of military and material success were conditioned on his adherence to the covenant Yahweh had made with him. However, in the eschatological sense, also in view here (vv. 28-29), terms such as 'forever' (vv. 4, 28, 29, 36, 37) and 'never' make clear that the covenant in view is unconditional. On the other hand, David's historical dynastic descendants could and did break covenant over and over, infidelity that brought both Assyrian and Babylonian exiles and multitudes of troubles in addition (vv. 30-32, 38-52). But in the midst of the statements of the contingencies of the future (vv. 30-31) and the realities of the past (vv. 38-51), the poet returns again to the irrefragability of the unconditional covenant yet to come (vv. 33-37).

Retrieval of the Ark of the Covenant

Samuel's second important mission pertained to the misfortunes of the Ark of the Covenant which, with the defeat of the armies of Israel, had been stolen by the Philistines and taken to Ashdod. The Philistines entertained the idea that this 'box' either contained the God of Israel or was some kind of talisman that evoked the power of that God. In any event, that 'box' spelled nothing but trouble for the Philistines, notably the humiliating fall and fracture of the deity of the place, Dagan, in the presence of the 'box,' thus giving evidence of the superiority of Yahweh.

David: Prophet, Priest, and King

These series of events—good, bad, indifferent—ushered in the turning-point in the history of the monarchy because now crown could be integrated with cult and the two would be one, which was God's plan and purpose from the beginning.[34] In fact, David celebrated the return of the ark by dancing in delirium and clothed in a linen ephod, a theologically significant piece of attire for 'glory and beauty' that marked one as a priest (Exodus 28:2). But how was David (and potentially his dynasty) a priest? The earliest hint chronologically is in David's purchase of Araunah's 'threshing-floor' where he then offered sacrifices as a 'down-payment' for the time when it would be the seat of the temple altar yet to be established (2 Samuel 24:25). Along the way from Kiriath-Jearim to Mount Zion David, not totally surprising now, offered sacrifices in his priestly garb (2 Samuel 6:13, 17); he apparently entered into the quasi-temple he had built without rebuke from any quarter (v. 17; 1 Chronicles 16:1); he appointed Levitical temple personnel (vv. 4-7); and, notably, Asaph and Zadok as priests (vv. 37-39). Prior to David's era, there is no record of a non-Aaronic undertaking such

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34. After eliminating all his brothers from consideration, Samuel anointed David, at first in the confines of the family home (1 Samuel 16:6-13), and later in a public ceremony. But Samuel, previous to that event, had already been informed by Yahweh that the only proper candidate must be "a man after his [Yahweh's] own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). See Zecharia Kallai, "The United Monarchy of Israel—a Focal Point in Israelite Historiography," *IEJ* 27 (1977): 103-109; Eugene H. Merrill, "Royal Priesthood: An Old Testament Messianic Motif," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150 (1993):50-61.

23 times in Psalms). David spoke of him in this manner in many of those psalms, including some where his royal and priestly callings are also at play.

The place of the encounter is called עֵמֶק שָׁוֵה alias עֵמֶק הַמֶּלֶךְ ("Valley of Shaveh"[43] and "Royal Valley" respectively). Melchizedek is asserted to be "King of Salem," almost certainly (Jeru)salem, a place strangely unmentioned in Scripture as early as Abraham. Chronologically and topographically this identification is not difficult to prove. Jerusalem is cited in texts as early as the Early Bronze age (ca. 3000- 2200 B. C.). Its meaning is something like "Peace City."[44] Melchizedek comes with bread and wine, typical articles of peace offerings, but also as a priest of El Elyon, "Exalted God." What religious tradition he served is not disclosed but the fact that he worshiped God by a name that occurs more than 50 times in the Old Testament strongly suggests that he was a man of the true God of the Patriarchs. Moreover, Yahweh is extolled as the creator (קָנֵה) of "heaven and earth," a claim whose meaning, if not exact wording, is also common to Hebrew Scripture.[45]

Now, however, focus must be on the one text in which David[46] extolls his God for having made him, the king, also the "priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek," namely, Psalm 110:[47]

1 Yahweh says to Adoni,[48] "Sit to my right
    Until I place your enemies under your feet."[49]
2 Yahweh will extend

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43. The meaning of the lexeme שוה is uncertain. Most likely it has to do with worthiness or restfulness. HALOT, 1991-92. Neither the name of the valley nor its location can be known with certainty. It may suggest a dry, desert-like place just north of Jerusalem. HALOT, 1438; cf. TDOT 14:524, "plain."

44. Amarna texts (ca. 14th century B. C.) refer to it as Urusalim and later Assyrian inscriptions render it Urusalimmu. The name is likely based on the ancient Sumerian term for 'city' (UR) developed in Akkadian as Uru; or on the Hebrew verb יָרָה ("cast down," "lay a foundation," HALOT 437) + שָׁלֵם ('healthy," "whole," "peaceable," HALOT 1539).

45. The precise wording here ("Creator of heaven and earth") is unique to this passage but the concept of God as creator of all things is, of course, common in the Old Testament.

46. The psalm is attributed to David as are others in which he understands himself to be the royal and priestly messianic prototype. See Psalms 18:50; 20:9; 21:1-7; 27:4-5; 30:6-7; 55:14; 61:6-8; 63:2,11, all of which testify to David's awareness of his kingship, his responsibility in light of it, and his attachment to the Temple, the home of the living God.

47. Author's translation. For an excellent literary analysis and practical applications of the psalm, see Elliott E. Johnson, "Hermeneutical Principles and the Interpretation of Psalm 110," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149 (1992): 428-437.

48. This epithet, not to be confused with Adonai, is the normal term for a person of prestige or honor. It is to be taken here as a highly indirect, politically correct self-reference. David as king is "My Lord" to his subjects and so refers

49. This image of submission originates in Genesis where placing under the foot is seen as a shorthand for dominion (Genesis 3:15). See Eugene H. Merrill, "'Foot'-Notes in Old Testament Texts: A Study of Verbal and Nominal Expressions of Walking," *The Unfolding of Your Words Gives Light: Studies on Biblical Hebrew in Honor of George L. Klein*. Ed. Ethan C. Jones (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2018).

    Your mighty staff[50] from Zion, saying,
        "Have dominion among all your adversaries."
3 Your people are ready for the day of your battle;
        Clothed in holy garments (and) from the earliest dawn
        Your warriors (will arise) for you.
4 Yahweh has sworn and will not recant;
        "You are an eternal priest,
    After the manner of Melchizedek."
5 Adonai will be at your right (hand);
        On his day of wrath, he will crush kings.
6 He will judge the nations, filling [them] with corpses,
        He will crush the heads of all them upon the earth.
7 (Then) he will drink from a stream along the way;
        So thus he will elevate his headship.

An important (and often misunderstood) aspect of the royal priesthood must here come to the fore, and that is the non-Aaronic and non-Levitical designations and public displays of the normally priestly roles carried out on occasion by the Davidic, non-Levitical, royalty. These have been briefly alluded to but must here have a more expanded analysis. In addition to what has been said of David already, the following demand consideration. First, in terms of nomenclature the Samuel record refers to some of David's less well-known sons as בְּנֵי דָוִד כֹּהֲנִים ("sons of David [were] priests"; 2 Samuel 8:18) but 1 Chronicles 18:17 reads בְּנֵי דָוִד הָרִאשֹׁנִים ("ruling sons of David").[51]

Solomon after him also assumed a priestly role, even more vigorously and thoroughly than his father. First, he was admonished to build the temple and was invested by his father with kingly authority to be in charge of its architecture, furnishings, and every detail necessary to its function as the dwelling-place of Yahweh, God Most High. He was then to be responsible for the worship therein and for the appointment of priests and Levites ministering the things of God to the people (1 Chronicles 28:9-10, 20-21). The book of 1 Kings gives examples of Solomon's implementation of his duties, and in bold letters. He relieved Abiathar of his priestly role (1 Kings 2:27), installed Zadok in his place (v. 35); and, of course, oversaw the building of the great temple (6:1-38; 2 Chronicles 3:1-4:22). That Solomon understood his role of priest\king is most clear in his dedicatory prayer (1 Kings 8:23-53; 2

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50. The description of kings in the ancient Near East as shepherds is common. In the prologue to his famous law code, the first epithet employed by the great Babylonian king Hammurabi (1790-1753 B. C.) in in his self-asseveration "I, Hammurabi the shepherd [*ri-iu-um*]." Akkadian *rē'û* is cognate to Hebrew רֹעֶה, *rō'eh*, and its functional and semantic equivalent. HALOT, p. 1261; cf. CAD, Vol. 14, pp. 310-311.

51. Eugene H. Merrill, *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Chronicles*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2015), 233: "the Chronicler, though not adverse to viewing David as a messianic priest…, may not have been willing to cede that privilege over to the sons in view here because only Solomon was qualified to succeed in that office along with the kingship (2 Chr 1:6; 7:4-7; 8:12)."

Chronicles 6:14-42), preceded (1 Kings 8:15-21; 2 Chronicles 6:4-11) and concluded (1 Kings 8:56-61) by prayers blessing the assembly.

An Assessment of the Royal Descendants of David

The Scriptures list 20 kings of Judah before the Babylonian exile of 586 B. C. and they also assess their personal lives and their effectiveness as heirs of the messianic promises invested in David. These will consist of very brief comments that encapsulate these issues.

Table 3: The Dynasty of David from 931-586 B. C.

Names and Dates	References	Assessments
1. Rehoboam (931-913)	1 Kgs 12:1-14:31; 2 Chr 10:1-12:16	Permitted widespread idolatry; Judah "did evil;" did not seek after God
2. Abijah (913-911)	1 Kgs 15:1-8; 2 Chr 13:1-22	Committed the sins of his fathers; did not seek God
3. Asa (911-870)	1 Kgs 15:9-24; 2 Chr 14:1-16:17	Did what was right; expelled idols, destroyed shrines, but left high places; urged the nation to seek Yahweh, commanded obedience to Torah, and renewed covenant vows.
4. Jehoshaphat (873-848)	1 Kgs 22:41-50; 2 Chr 17:1-20:34	Did what was right; followed in the ways of Asa but left high places alone; sought the Lord; sent teachers of Torah everywhere; followed Yahweh in Holy War
5. Jehoram (848-841)	2 Kgs 8:16-24; 2 Chr 21:1-20)	Walked in the ways of the kings of Israel; did evil; forsook Yahweh; made high places; murdered his brothers
6. Ahaziah (841)	2 Kgs 8:25-9:28; 2 Chr 22:1-9	Walked in the way of Ahab (his father-in-law); did evil
7. Athaliah, (841-835)[52]	2 Kgs 11:1-16; 2 Chr 22:10-23:15	Murdered the Judean royal family
8. Joash (835-796)	2 Kgs11:12-12:21; 2 Chr 23:11-24:27	Did what was right; repaired the Temple; tolerated high places; allowed murder of prophet Zechariah, son of Jehoiada
9. Amaziah (796-767)	2 Kgs 14:1-19; 2 Chr 25:1-28	Did what was right, but "not with a perfect heart;" tolerated idolatry
10. Uzziah (=Azariah) (792-740)	2 Kgs 15:1-7, 2 Chr 26:1-23	Did what was right but left high places; entered the Temple to burn incense and became leprous[53]
11. Jotham (750-731)	2 Kgs 15:32-38; 2 Chr 27:1-7	Did what was right; followed his father but tolerated high places
12. Ahaz (735-715)	2 Kgs 16:1-20; 2 Chr 28:1-27	Was evil; sacrificed his son as a burnt offering; open idolatry; paganized the Temple; practiced divination; made idols of Baal; sought alliance with Assyria

13. Hezekiah (729-686)	2 Kgs 18:1-20:21; 2 Chr 29:1-32:33	Did what was right; removed high places; repaired the Temple; destroyed idols; none like him among all the kings; kept Torah; rebuked by Isaiah for pretentiousness; revived the worship of Yahweh; tried to reunify the nation by inviting people from the north to worship in Jerusalem; interceded for all the people before Yahweh; sought God with all his heart.
14. Manasseh (696-642)	2 Kgs 21:1-18; 2 Chr 33:1-25	Did evil as the nations; built high places and fashioned idols, even in the Temple; offered his son as a burnt offering; slew his own people; resorted to divination; after his personal captivity, he repented and "knew that Yahweh was God."
15. Amon (642-640)	2 Kgs 21:19; 2 Chr 33:21-23	Did evil; mimicked his father
16. Josiah (640-609)	2 Kgs 22:1-23:30; 2 Chr 34:1-35:27	Did what was right; walked in the ways of David; refurbished the Temple; received and enforced the 'Book of the Law';[54] was spared the pain of seeing the nation fall to Babylonia in 586.
17. Jehoahaz (609)	2 Kgs 23:31-33; 2 Chr 36:1-3	Did what was evil
18. Jehoiakim (608-598)	2 Kgs 23:36-24:7; 2 Chr 36:5-8	Did what was evil; committed 'abominations' and 'detestable things'
19. Jehoiachin (598-597)	2 Kgs 24:6-17; 2 Chr 36:9-10	Did what was evil
20. Zedekiah (597-586)	2 Kgs 24:18-25:7; 2 Chr 36:11-23	Did what was evil; hardened his heart; permitted the Temple to be defiled

Theological Observations of the Davidic Dynasty in the Divided Monarchy Era

- The summation "he did evil" (וַיַּעַשׂ הָרַע) suggests in the use of the preterite a characteristic behavior, not an evil deed now and then. This is said to be explicitly true of eight of the 20 kings.
- "He did right" (וַיַּעַשׂ הַיָּשָׁר) occurs seven times. This was a mark of these kings' personality and manner of life.
- Six kings tolerated high places, idolatry, and neglect of Yahweh and the temple.
- Three kings openly adopted paganism in some form or other.
- Only two were iconoclastic.
- Only two sought to repair or rehabilitate the Temple.
- Three neglected or paganized the Temple.
- Three attempted to return the people to Yahweh and Torah.
- Only two returned to the covenant and tried to restore the community to it.
- Two offered their sons as burnt offerings.

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52. At this point there is an inter-regnum in which Athaliah, wife of Jehoram and daughter of King Ahab of Israel, exercised wicked leadership over Judah until she was assassinated.

53. The Law states clearly that only Aaronic priests could do this so royal priests were excluded (Numbers 16:39-40).

54. It is clear this is the book of Deuteronomy since this is the term employed therein to describe itself (Deut 29:21; 30:10; 31:26).

Synopsis

The conclusion is beyond dispute: The Divided Monarchy of Judaean kings (i.e., the Davidic Dynasty) fell far short of God's expectations for the continuation of the line of messianic kings who should (1) embody what is inherent in the term 'messianic' and (2) who, at least to some degree, should measure up to the character and godliness of its prototype, King David, who himself was, of course, imperfect by his own frequent admissions. The question then must be asked: In light of the spiritual, political, and genealogical fragility of this stream of successors to David and predecessors of the second David, the Lord Jesus Christ, how could it be that the royal lineage they claimed and, indeed, to which they had been appointed by God, would be a channel of world redemption and eschatological re-enthronement of Yahweh as God in the minds and hearts of all mankind?

Four Responses are Tentatively and Cautiously Offered:

1. The rulers of the divided monarchy—the good, bad, and ugly—were Everyman; that is, they are a mirror into which all mankind—and especially the Church--must peer to see themselves (ourselves) as they (we) really are: liars, thieves, blasphemers, adulterers, murderers, disobedient, disloyal, undependable, sexually impure, unrepentant, and unworthy to be called God's people—his sons and daughters.
2. The irony and grace of it is that the messianic transmission was never broken: from Abraham, through Jacob, Judah, David, Solomon, Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah, and, yes, Jehoram, Ahaz, and Manasseh, to the perfect One, conceived by the Spirit, born of a virgin, He who 'went about doing good,' and who died on a cruel cross only to conquer death and sin by his glorious resurrection.
3. The genetic strain throughout the 345 years of the Divided Monarchy remained Davidic despite its generally sorry record. Never was it successfully overcome by internal or external powers that would, in effect, derail the continuity of the line and thus separate David dynastically from his latter Son.
4. It is said that a chain is as strong as its weakest link, but it is also said that blood is thicker than water. The Ahaziah's, Ahaz,s, and Manasseh's of the lineage, evil as they were, were overcome by the sworn oaths of Almighty God that through David would come ultimate salvation, peace, and righteousness though a better David who will usher in the everlasting Kingdom of God.

A Theology of the Monarchy is more than the history of a nation, no matter how providentially selected and powerfully enabled. But it is history and must be understood as such. These are not random tales of villains and heroes, or a space age mythology of the Battle of the Gods. It is the account of' a profoundly transcendent God, one eternally and absolutely 'Other' from his creation, and to the same degree, one sharing 'Sameness' with it. He who reigns in Heaven ordained that creatures

whom he calls his 'image' should emulate his kingship and reign over his kingdom on Earth. The wicked choice in and by the infancy of the image to serve another god seemed to have jeopardized the experiment, but not so. The 'Fall' was to demonstrate the fallacy of human independence, but God was not so easily manipulated as to end in failure. The sequel was a program of redemption by which the fractured model could be reassembled, having learned its lesson. Now the Master Planner set in motion a plan to 'pick up the pieces,' put them together again, and reshape and repurpose them this time into a line of redemption, of re-creation, formed and designed as a 'Kingdom Model,' a prototype of what he himself will bring to pass in the endless ages of eternity yet to come. The Model in mind took the form of a man, Abraham, called to be founder of a nation through which the nations of the world will find everlasting *shalom*. That nation was Israel and that kingdom his namesake. The theology that integrates all this and more is the topic of this paper.

To God the Great King and to his son Jesus Christ the Lord be all praise and glory given!

Monarchy in Judges: Positive or Negative?

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Abstract: There has been much discussion in the scholarly literature as to whether Judges is pro-monarchic or anti-monarchic. Gideon's rejection of kingship and the disastrous rule of Abimelech have been used in evidence to assert that human kingship is not Yʜwʜ's preferred mode of governance. On the other hand, variations on the refrain "There was no king in Israel; each person did what was right in their own eyes" in the final chapters would appear to support the establishment of dynastic kingship. Reducing the issue of monarchy to an "either/or" situation, however, is to underestimate the message about kingship, and indeed leadership, that the book of Judges presents.

Key Words: Judges, Monarchy, Kingship, Leadership, Anarchy.

Introduction

Before the call of Abraham and the formation of the nation of Israel, leadership was primarily a clan or family matter. The head of a family, often a large extended family, would take the lead in justice and decision making. These leaders were normally male, and the fathers of subgroups would be recognized as elders in the clan. Noah and Abraham are examples of this type of leadership. The surrounding nations did have monarchs, but in fact, many of the early "kings" mentioned in the Old Testament (see Gen 10:6–32; 14:1–16; 20:1–18, etc.) were not monarchs in the sense of the leaders of great powers, such as the Assyrian empire builders and the Egyptian pharaohs, but local tribal leaders.

Even after Abraham left his country to found the people of God, later known as Israel, leadership was largely a family matter, passed down from patriarch to patriarch—Isaac, Jacob, Joseph—and aided by elders from clans and בֵית אָבֹת (fathers' households). Israel was not an "empire" in the sense of others in the ancient Near East (ANE), such as the Akkadians, Assyrians, Hittites, and Egyptians,[1] with infrastructure and the concept of divine kingship, but rather a nomadic tribal

1. See the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago's interesting Ancient Near Eastern Cross-Cultural Time Line at https://oi.uchicago.edu/timeline.

community with leaders who were not monarchs.[2] In the Old Testament, the kingship of Yʜwʜ is implied, and later, overtly stated (e.g., Exod 15:18; 1 Sam 12:12; Ps 10:16). It was not until the end of Israel's captivity in Egypt that centralized charismatic leadership arose under Moses, and then Joshua. Even so, these leaders were not "kings" and there was no "monarchy." Israelite leaders were Yʜwʜ's "servants" or "vice-regents," never kings themselves.[3]

It is not until the time of the Judges that monarchy becomes a significant issue; in fact, it forms a major theme of a book that deals extensively with the issue of Israelite leadership.[4] In the midst of failing leadership, the issue reaches a crisis during the tenures of Gideon and Abimelech, and is resolved—at least temporarily—in in the implications of the refrain: "There was no king in Israel…" (Judg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

Monarchy in Judges

The Decline of Centralized Leadership

Moses and Joshua are portrayed as great leaders over all Israel. In spite of the appearance given by the sequential narratives of the book of Judges, these שֹׁפְטִים are not leaders of Israel as a whole but of individual tribes or coalitions of tribes.[5] A significant change occurs during the tenure of Caleb. The first verse of Judges, "Now it came about after the death of Joshua…"; וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, echoes the first verse of the book of Joshua, "Now it came about after the death of Moses…"; וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת מֹשֶׁה. Later, in 2 Sam 1:1 the motif appears again, this time in the context of David's ascension to the throne as monarch of a united Israel: "After the death of Saul…"; וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי מוֹת שָׁאוּל. Unlike the appointment of Moses, Joshua, and David, however, no specific new leader is appointed to succeed Joshua. When the Israelites exited *en masse* from Egypt and travelled together through

2. For a helpful overview see K. M. Heim, "Kings and Kingship," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 610–23.

3. Regarding Moses, see Exod 14:31; Num 12:7; Deut 34:5; Josh 1:1, 15; 8:21, 23; 18:7; 1 Chron 6:49; 2 Chron 1:3; 24:6; Neh. 1:7; 10:29. This is also true of Joshua (Josh 24:9; Judg 2:8), Caleb (Num 12:24). The term is even used of King David, indicating that his kingship is subordinate to Yʜwʜ's (2 Sam 7:5–8; 1 Kings 8:66; 11:36; 2 Kings 19:34; 2 Chron 17:4).

4. Some of the material in this article is based on Mark J. Boda and Mary L. Conway, *Judges*, ed. Daniel I. Block, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, Forthcoming). See this resource for more detail.

5. According to Trent C. Butler, *Judges*, WBC 8 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009), lxxxiii, "The Israel of the traditional narratives does not appear as a united group of twelve tribes. Rather, each judge works in a specific territory and calls to battle those tribes or clans in the immediate vicinity." See also Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth*, NAC 6 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 33.

the wilderness, it made sense for God to provide a charismatic leader who could inspire and encourage this collection of former slaves. Moses, with his compelling personality and his inside knowledge of the court of Egypt, made a logical choice. When the Israelites first arrived in Canaan, and needed to establish their presence in and right to the land, a strong military general such as Joshua was the best choice.[6] Yнwн provides the type of leader the people need in their situation, and one might expect him to do so at the beginning of Judges, when Israel is about to settle down in a new territory.[7]

At Judges 1:1, the Israelites inquire of Yнwн, "Who should go up for us to the Canaanites at first in order to make war against them?"[8] Yнwн responds: "Judah should go up. Take note, I hereby give the land into its power" (v. 2). The logical candidate for leadership from the tribe of Judah is Caleb.[9] He is one of the two scouts—the other was Joshua himself—who trusted Yнwн to venture into the Promised Land when all the others made fearful excuses because of the Anakim, a tribe of large, dangerous people (see Deut 1:28; 2:10, 21; 9:2) who intimidated them (Num 13:25–33). Once again, here during the conquest, Caleb shows that he has no fear of the Anakim, as the killing of their three leaders, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai indicates (Judg 1:10).

In spite of Caleb's reputation, however, the conquest does not go well. It consists of a few victories that soon become intermingled with setbacks, and eventually devolves into the repeated motif, "but they did *not* dispossess…" (vv. 21, 27–33). The destruction of the three leaders is a victory; however, the actual cities of Hebron (v. 10) and Debir (v. 11) are not "struck down." It would seem that "going out against" (הלך אל) a city does not ensure that the city is defeated, and it appears that Judah's conquests are, as Frolov states, "losing momentum" at this point.[10] Note that at the

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6. For a brief summary of theories as to whether the entry into Canaan was more of a conquest or a settlement, see Richard S. Hess, *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 210–25.

7. Note, however, that there is a temporal overlap between the first chapters of Judges and the book of Joshua.

8. All Bible translations in this article are those of Boda and Conway, *Judges, unless otherwise indicated*.

9. Tribal membership in the ANE was not exclusively based on biological descent but could also be attained by political or economic affiliation, settlement within a group, or shared religious conviction. Although Caleb is described as being from the tribe of Judah (Num 13:6; 34:19) he is also designated a "Kenizzite" (Num 32:12; Josh 14:6, 14; see also 1 Chr 4:13–15). Members of a different ethnic groups were sometimes integrated into Judah over time. See K. Lawson Younger, *Judges and Ruth*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 66 n. 17. See also J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 103; Mark J. Fretz and Raphael I. Panitz, "Caleb (Person)," *ABD, 1:809–10; and J. Kenneth Kuntz, "Kenaz (Person)," ABD, 4:17.*

10. Serge Frolov, *Judges*, FOTL 6B (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), 48. Note that Hebron is not given to Caleb as part of his allotment until v. 20; the reference to "dispossessing" (ירש) the three sons of Anak in this later verse may mean the actual taking of their land ,although they were "struck down "earlier.

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start of their ventures, in v. 1, the people "inquired of Yнwн" (שאל ביהוה). Now, however, when the going gets tough and clear victory eludes Israel, no such inquiry takes place. It is interesting that previously, after their failure to conquer Ai, Joshua—the *other* spy—challenged and questioned God to find the reason behind Israel's defeat in Joshua 7. After dealing with Achan's sin, the Israelites went on to success. Caleb, however, makes no such inquiry. The loss of momentum, and his consequent desperation after the loss of the territory of Hebron and Debir, causes Caleb to offer his daughter in marriage in v. 12 as motivation to any warrior who can successfully *strike down* (נכה) *and capture* (לכד) Debir (Kiriath-sepher).[11]

Some scholars have described the brief vignette featuring Caleb and Achsah as a "charming domestic scene,"[12] but its message is far less positive. When Achsah is disappointed with her father's gift of land, she goes to inquire of him and confidently asks for land with water (v. 14–15), trusting in the goodness and concern of her father to supply her needs. The incident is clearly intended symbolically as reproof: whereas Achsah went and inquired of her father when she was disappointed in his provision of land because she had a trusting relationship with him, Caleb failed to go and inquire of Yнwн when he was disappointed in his provision of land, in spite of his earlier demonstration of trust in the God of Israel.[13] The situation calls to mind Joshua 17:14–18, in which Ephraim and Manasseh hesitated to attack the Canaanites because they also had iron chariots. Then, their leader Joshua—again, the other spy—assured the Israelites that they were powerful and had the ability to conquer the valley. It would appear that Caleb has no such confidence; he acts on his own initiative without consulting Yнwн. It is significant that Caleb disappears from the narrative at v. 20 and is never heard of again. In fact, Israel faces more and more defeats in battle and fails to drive out the Canaanites, who persist in living among them (1:27–36). This is largely due to their apostasy, for another generation arose who "did the evil thing in the eyes of Yнwн, and they served the Baals, and they abandoned Yнwн the God of their ancestors" (2:11–12), and Yнwн "gave them into the power of plunderers…then he sold them into the power of their surrounding enemies" (v. 14).

Tribal Leadership

With the initial stages of the occupation of the land accomplished, but with centralized leadership proving ineffectual, the tribes disperse to their own allotments to attempt

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11. Trent C. Butler, *Joshua*, WBC 7 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 186, calls the event in this parallel passage "the somewhat foolhardy challenge of Caleb (v 16) promising his daughter to whatever brave soul would conquer the city." In fact, in his Joshua commentary, Butler views the entire Caleb-Achsah-Othniel pericope as somewhat farcical. If Judah was beginning to experience difficulty in battle, however, perhaps it was not so foolhardy from a military perspective.

12. See, for example, Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 94.

13. See the chapter "The First Introduction" in Boda and Conway, *Judges, for more detail.*

to establish themselves on their land. From this point on there is no centralized leadership in Israel, but local judges are raised up to lead the various tribes (Judg 2:16). With the people scattered over the land and the need to deal with local issues of cultic worship, civil administration, and military defense, this form of leadership is most suitable. Othniel, the nephew—or possibly brother—of Caleb,[14] is the first judge mentioned and proves to be a very successful leader, empowered by the Spirit of Yʜᴡʜ; he serves as the standard by which all subsequent judges are evaluated. He is from the tribe of Judah. The next judge, Ehud, however, is from the tribe of Benjamin, and then Deborah the Ephraimite and Barak from Naphtali—the first judge to show signs of hesitation and weakness—share the leadership of Israel. It is likely that each of these judges ruled over and defended only a portion of the Israelite territory; in fact, the Song of Deborah laments the fact that a number of tribes failed to get involved in driving off the enemy (5:17). Gideon begins as a leader in Manasseh, but later musters Naphtali, Asher, and Ephraim (7:23–24). It is during the tenure of Gideon, subsequent to Barak's inadequate leadership,[15] that the issue of "kingship" first arises.

Monarchy: Corrupted and Abdicated

The Nature of Israelite Kingship

It is important to consider exactly what "kingship" or "monarchy" entails in Judges. Israel was originally an association of tribes, built initially on kinship relations. However, as Cazelles notes, "Kin-based social organizations [in the ANE] were no longer fully effective for meeting the increasingly complex demands of urban and political development. Leadership passed on to certain officials responsible for military, economic, and civil administration."[16] The titles of these leaders varied, and some could be considered "kings" even if the Hebrew term מלך, "king ",is not used. In Judges ,the terms מלך, commonly translated "to reign"—as well as the cognate,מֶלֶךְ, "king"—and משׁל, commonly rendered "to rule," are both used in varying contexts. Too much weight must not be attached to the different lexis, however, since the two words have an overlapping semantic range and are sometimes used synonymously.[17] The issue in Judges is not simply the role of "king," but the role of "a king like the nations."

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14. See Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., *A Commentary on Judges and Ruth*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2013), 124 n. 32.

15. See the chapter on Deborah and Barak in Boda and Conway, *Judges*, for a detailed argument for the inadequacy of Barak's leadership.

16. Henri Cazelles, "Sacral Kingship," *ABD* 5:863.

17. See note 21 below.

As early as Deuteronomy 17:15–20, Moses foresaw the eventual necessity of kingship, and outlined the characteristics of a king "whom Yʜᴡʜ your God chooses" (v. 15). The king

- must be an Israelite
- must not multiply horses *for himself* (לֹו)
- must not return the people to Egypt
- must not multiply wives *for himself* (לֹו) lest *his heart* (לְבָבֹו) turn away
- must not accumulate silver or gold *for himself* (לֹו)
- must write the law *for himself* (לֹו) and read it daily
- must fear Yʜᴡʜ
- must submit to and carefully observe the law
- must not exalt *his heart* (לְבָבֹו) over his people
- must not turn aside from the commandment

It is interesting how often "for himself" (לֹו) and "his heart" (לְבָבֹו) appear in this passage. There seems to be a major emphasis on the king keeping his heart/mind focused on Yʜᴡʜ and his law and away from himself and his own interests, status, and power. Above all he is not to be arrogant, but must fear Yʜᴡʜ his God. It is also very interesting that the result of following these guidelines is a suggestion of dynastic monarchy: "so that he may lengthen days over his kingdom—he and his sons—in the midst of Israel" (v. 20).[18] A king like the nations would be someone with an inflated ego, who accumulated wealth and power for himself, and who did not honor Yʜᴡʜ and submit to his law, whereas a king that Yʜᴡʜ chooses, or "a man after [Yʜᴡʜ's] own heart," as 1 Samuel 13:14 puts it,[19] would be someone who was humble, who acted as a vice-regent under Yʜᴡʜ, and who served God's purposes rather than his own. It was, after all, Yʜᴡʜ's original intention in creation that humanity, both male and female, should "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over/rule over/take charge of (רדה)[20] the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gen 1:28).

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18. See Tomoo Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel: A Study on the Formation and Development of Royal-Dynastic Ideology*, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 142 (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1977), 41.

19. See Jer 3:15; 2 Sam 7:21; Ps 20:5[4]. This term refers to Yʜᴡʜ's choice of David rather than David's character, therefore saying more about Yʜᴡʜ's heart than David's. For various points of view on the meaning of this term see Benjamin J. M. Johnson, "The Heart of Yʜᴡʜ's Chosen One in 1 Samuel," *JBL* 131, no. 3 (2012); Jason S. DeRouchie, "The Heart of Yʜᴡʜ and His Chosen One in 1 Samuel 13:14," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 24, no. 4 (2014); P. Kyle McCarter, *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 229.

20. See David J. A. Clines, David M. Stec, and Jacqueline C. R. De Roo, eds., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, 8 vols. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993–2011), 7:419.

Gideon: Kingship Abdicated

Gideon begins as an unlikely candidate for kingship; he is hesitant and insecure (6:15), afraid of the Midianites (6:11) and even his own household (6:27). He is not so much humble as weak and afraid. Yʜwʜ spends considerable time carefully and patiently building up his confidence and trust. Gideon takes baby steps at first, destroying his own family altar to Baal (6:28), but finally develops the courage to lead a tiny army against the enemy, trusting in Yʜwʜ's help (7:15). Gideon's taste of victory has an unexpected result, however. When he is chasing Zeba and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian, the reader is told: "Then Gideon entered into the Jordan. (Now he was passing over, and the 300 men who were with him, exhausted yet pursuing.) And he said to the men of Succoth, 'Give loaves of bread to the army which is following me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian'" (8:4–5). Note the change from "*he* was passing over, *and the 300 men* who were *with him*, *exhausted* (pl.) *yet pursuing* (pl.)" to "for *they are exhausted* (pl.) and *I am pursuing* (sg.)." This, followed by a long litany of masculine singular references to Gideon alone, the violent confrontations with the people of Succoth and Penuel, and the slaughter of the two kings as personal revenge for the death of his brothers, shows that Gideon has morphed into an arrogant, self-confident, self-serving tyrant, not a humble servant of Yʜwʜ. Gideon has become "a king like the nations," and the people cry out, "Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson, because *you* have saved us from the power of Midian" (8:22). In their view, Yʜwʜ has not saved them; Gideon has. It may appear that Gideon is merely offered leadership, rather than kingship, since the verb used in v. 22 is from the root "rule" (מֹשֵׁל) rather than "reign" (מלך);[21] however, the two have overlapping semantic ranges. Also, the suggestion that his son rule after him implies a dynastic kingship.[22] It would seem that the situation in Israel has begun to deteriorate. Some local judges are strong and faithful, but some are weak. Yʜwʜ may well have been intending to establish Gideon as a centralized monarch in order to restore order and cultic faithfulness; however, it is not to be.

We cannot know what Gideon was thinking when his men made this appeal, but his attitude and behavior change immediately. It is likely that the men's demand shocks Gideon into an "epiphany" or "anagnorisis" of self-awareness;[23] he suddenly, and justifiably, realizes how arrogant and self-centered he has become in his unrelenting pursuit of power and is appalled at his own behavior. He recognizes that he has exceeded the limits of the authority that Yʜwʜ has given him and distorted it to accomplish his own personal agenda. Thus, in an excess of remorse, and instead of backtracking to an appropriate exercise of power, he completely abdicates his position: "I assuredly will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; Yʜwʜ will rule over you" (v. 23). Gideon goes too far, moving from one extreme to the other. His arrogant, violent pursuit of individual power and personal revenge—kingship like that of the nations—is unacceptable, but so is a false humility that results in his rejection of any sort of rule, even a position of leadership which God has clearly called him to accept—Israelite kingship under Yʜwʜ. All of Yʜwʜ's patient effort in developing a leader who will act as his vice-regent in Israel is frustrated as Gideon reverts back to his previous persona, characterized by impotence, timidity, and a sense of inadequacy.

Many have argued that Gideon's refusal of kingship and acknowledgement of Yʜwʜ's direct rule is a humble and faithful act,[24] but Gideon in fact throws the proverbial baby out with the bathwater. After the incipient weakness shown by Barak, Yʜwʜ desperately needs a faithful and competent leader to guide Israel forward, someone to serve as his vice-regent, perhaps even to establish a dynastic monarchy as David will do later. There is actually no overt condemnation of monarchy as such in the Gideon narrative, only the rejection of self-serving, violent, and power-hungry kingship: "a king like the nations." As Provan remarks, there must be guidelines "if human kingship is not to interfere with divine kingship but express it.…[Israel needed] the right sort of kingship: [David] fights God's battles and not his own."[25] There is no further evidence of effective leadership by Gideon, however, who seems preoccupied with personal and family interests (8:29–31). He leaves Yʜwʜ to rule more or less directly, in spite of the fact that the creation mandate indicates that God planned to rule through faithful and obedient humanity (Gen 1:27–28). The leadership vacuum created by Gideon, who seems to revert to the role of priest—a

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21. The root מֹשֵׁל is in the same semantic range as מלך, although it is a more general term, and can be translated to "rule" or have "authority." It is used of Yʜwʜ's kingly rule, as in Judg 8:23 (see also Ps 22:29; 66:7; 1 Chr 29:12; 2 Chr 20:6; etc.) and human kings such as Solomon, Sihon, and Og (Josh 12:2, 5; 1 Kgs 5:1). See the worthwhile analysis in Yairah Amit, *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing*, BIS (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999), 92–96, who compares the two terms and also compares short term, emergency, military leadership of judges under Yʜwʜ to the long term, hereditary leadership of kings under Yʜwʜ. She concludes that by the end of Judges "the monarchy is not understood as an ideal solution, but as a pragmatic one" (p. 96).

22. As some have noted, the life of Gideon after his victory over Midian certainly resembles that of a king with a harem (Judg 8:29–30), regardless of his refusal. See, for example, Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 302; Butler, *Judges*, 222; Barry G. Webb, *The Book of the Judges: An Integrated Reading*, JSOTSup 46 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 154; Younger, *Judges and Ruth*, 210.

23. Anagnorisis is a kind of "aha moment," also known as "discovery" or "recognition." Aristotle says, "'Recognition', as indeed the word implies, [is] a change from not-knowing to knowing" (Aristotle, *Aristotle's Poetics*, trans. George Whalley [Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997], 124).

24. For differing opinions on the significance of Gideon's response, see Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 299; Lawson G. Stone, "Judges," in *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*, ed. Philip Wesley Comfort, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary 3* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2012), 299–300; Webb, *Integrated Reading*, 152; Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 263; Robert H. O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges*, VTSup 63 (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1996), 168–69.

25. I am indebted to a lecture on Daniel by Iain Provan for initiating this line of thought. Iain W. Provan, *Daniel: Living with Beastly Empires. "3502g.Mp3: Daniel 7 (Cont) Daniel 8."* (Vancouver: Regent College http://www.regentaudio.com, 2004), Audio lecture, see especially 31:00–32:30.

role for which he is definitely not qualified (8:24–27)—is seized by an opportunist: Gideon's own son.

Abimelech: Kingship Corrupted

Gideon has been raised up by Yhwh to act as his vice-regent, but after his first failure he throws in the towel and recedes into the background, reverting to the weakness and insecurity he demonstrated at the start of the narrative. The narrator does note "all the good that he had done to Israel" (8:35), and indeed he does defeat the Midianite oppressors and temporarily restore Yahwistic worship to Israel, but, ironically, he leads them back into apostasy again (8:27).

When responsible leadership abdicates, tyranny results.[26] Jotham's fable (9:7–15) vividly illustrates this truth. The olive tree, the fig tree, and the vine—all of them productive plants providing the staples necessary for life—refuse the leadership role. They focus on their own strengths and cannot see the larger picture: the need for coordinated leadership. It is left to the bramble, a thorny, useless plant, to take on the ruling role by default. According to Butler, "The precise identification of the plant indicated by Hebrew אָטָד is not known. Ps 58:9 (Heb. 10) identifies its use as fuel burned up under cooking pots. Otherwise, it is useless except to stick and prick."[27] Jotham's thornbush is an apt metaphor for the reign of Abimelech.

Note that Abimelech offers to "rule," משׁל, over Shechem, whereas Jotham states that the Shechemites have "made him king," מלך; however, recall that the two words are overlapping in meaning. It is not so much the title that matters as the form of leadership. Abimelech is certainly a "king like the nations" (see 1 Sam 8:5–22) rather than a "king whom Yhwh chooses." Space precludes a detailed analysis of Abimelech's reign;[28] suffice it to say that his tenure is characterized by self-serving violence and apostasy. The leadership vacuum that Gideon created is filled by a self-serving, Baal worshipping, secondary son of a Shechemite woman. For once, external enemies are not a threat to Israel; an insidious internal enemy rises to power and threatens to destroy Israel from within. However, after three short years Abimelech is destroyed by his own machinations. As responsible leadership in Israel continues to deteriorate, the need for strong, faithful, centralized leadership increases.

Degeneration of Leadership in Israel

The Non-Cyclic Judges

The non-cyclic judges form two peaceful clusters that punctuate the apostasy and turmoil of the rules of Abimelech, Jephthah, and Samson.[29] The prosperity and peace of these interludes contrasts powerfully with the turmoil of the surrounding narratives, but their brevity serves to accentuate the extent of the cultic and military chaos in the long narratives that surround them. As Beem notes, "The minor judge narratives depict a peaceful world in which Israel can grow and thrive."[30]

Jephthah

The tenure of Jephthah is the result of a desperate search for effective leadership. Gideon was specifically raised up by Yhwh (6:14) to deliver his people in a time of crisis. His son, Abimelech, ruthlessly set about raising himself up to the position of king over Israel (9:1–6). The non-cyclic judges, Tola and Jair, simply "arise" (וַיָּקָם, 10:1, 3); whether they raise themselves up, or are raised up by Yhwh, or are raised up by the common will of the people is unknown, since no agent is given. Jephthah, however, is sought for and appointed by the elders of the people themselves when Yhwh refuses to come to their aid after they are threatened by the king of Ammon (10:18). The apostasy of the people has become so extreme that Yhwh's patience has run out (10:11–14, 16);[31] they now worship a veritable grocery list of false gods: "Then the people of Israel continued to do the evil thing in the eyes of Yhwh, and they served the Baals and the Ashtaroth and the gods of Aram and the gods of Sidon, and the gods of Moab and the gods of the people of Ammon and the gods of the Philistines, and they abandoned Yhwh and they did not serve him" (10:6). Jephthah's reputation as a courageous fighter makes him a likely candidate for leadership from the elders' perspective (11:1).

29. Although these narratives are extremely brief, and most of the elements that characterize the cycles of the "major" or "cyclic" judges—Sin, Discipline, Cry, Divine Word, Deliverance, Peace, and Death—are absent, they constitute a meaningful part of the structure of Judges. Many now prefer to call them "non-cyclic judges" rather than "minor judges." See Amit, *The Art of Editing*, 84; Younger, *Judges and Ruth*, 43; Alan J. Hauser, "Minor Judges: A Re-Evaluation," *JBL* 94, no. 2 (1975) and E. Theodore Mullen, "The 'Minor Judges': Some Literary and Historical Considerations," *CBQ* 44, no. 2 (1982).

30. Beverly G. Beem, "The Minor Judges: A Literary Reading of Some Very Short Stories," in *Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspectives* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1991), 150.

31. The clause וַתִּקְצַר נַפְשׁוֹ בַּעֲמַל יִשְׂרָאֵל (10:16) is difficult and controversial. Woodenly, it may be rendered, "And/but his soul was short with the misery/trouble of Israel." Some translations interpret the Hebrew to indicate Yhwh's compassion for Israel (e.g., NRSV: "and he could no longer bear to see Israel suffer"; similarly NASB, TNIV, JPS); while others interpret it as demonstrating Yhwh's annoyance with his people (e.g., ESV: "and he became impatient over the misery of Israel"; similarly HCSB); a similar division can be noted among commentators. See the Jephthah chapter in Boda and Conway, *Judges for a detailed analysis.

26. As Stone aptly puts it: "Far from being a critique of kingship, the Abimelech story stands as an affirmation that when legitimate human rule is usurped, divine rule asserts itself in defense of human rule—and (dare I say) dynastic, human rule at that" (Stone, "Judges," 323).

27. Butler, *Judges*, 241. Jack M. Sasson, *Judges 1–12: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 6D (2014), 383, notes that אָטָד is "a term among many in the Hebrew Bible that refer to a variety of plants with prickles or spines."

28. See the Abimelech chapter in Boda and Conway, *Judges for more detail.

The Gileadite elders are fully prepared to give Jephthah the supreme position of "governor" (רֹאשׁ) of all the inhabitants of Gilead" (10:18); however, they begin their negotiations by merely offering him the status of קָצִין, a high-ranking military position, or "general" (11:6). Thus, when Jephthah—still smarting from their previous harsh treatment of him (11:1–3)—proves reluctant and tries to negotiate a better deal, they pull out their trump card—which has been up their sleeve all along—and make the irresistible offer of governorship. Jephthah accepts, not realizing that he is being manipulated by the elders. Although Jephthah is not termed a "king," his power over Gilead, a Transjordanian territory consisting of parts of the tribes of Gad and Asher, is considerable. He conducts negotiations with the king of Ammon as an equal. Although appointed by the elders, he does later seem to be endorsed by Yʜᴡʜ when he sends his Spirit on the judge (11:29). Jephthah demonstrates some control over Ephraim as well, summoning them to battle; however, the deterioration of unity in Israel is evidenced by the bitter dispute between Jephthah and that tribe that results in the decimation the Ephraimites (12:1–6).[32]

Unfortunately, although Jephthah's knowledge of Israelite history is considerable, his knowledge of—and trust in—Yʜᴡʜ is minimal. He doubts that God will give him success and tribes to negotiate with Yʜᴡʜ himself by offering his daughter in sacrifice if he wins the battle.[33] He tries to manipulate Yʜᴡʜ as pagan kings might try to manipulate their gods, and as the king of Moab actually does in 2 Kings 3:26–27 to ensure success in battle. Jephthah is hardly a leader whom Yʜᴡʜ chooses, but a resentful, self-serving, manipulative, syncretistic tribal warrior who first leads Israel into internecine warfare. He merely demonstrates the weaknesses of tribal leadership and the need for responsible, centralized rule. His tenure ends ignominiously with 42,000 Ephraimites, fellow Israelites, dead at the fords of the Jordan (12:6).

Samson

The final judge in the book of Judges is hardly a leader at all.[34] Although Samson is often presented in Sunday school lessons and popular media as a "hero," and the text

32. This contrasts effectively with the way that Gideon dealt with the Ephraimites in 8:1–3.

33. Note that Jephthah does actually sacrifice his daughter; however, the Spirit does not influence or motivate Jephthah's vow, as some commentators fear. The discourse of the Hebrew makes clear that the main narrative breaks at v. 29 with a *QATAL terminal marker and the lexis* עבר (passed over) and בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן (people of Ammon). The making of the vow is a separate paragraph, a digression that may have taken place at another place or time. The narrative is then taken up again in 11:27 with the repeated lexis עבר (passed over) and בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן (people of Ammon), the technique of "resumptive repetition." What the coming of the Spirit motivates is the battle plan. See E. J. Revell, "The Battle with Benjamin (Judges 20:29–48) and Hebrew Narrative Techniques," *VT* 35, no. 4 (1985): 427. See also Shemaryahu Talmon, "The Presentation of Synchroneity and Simultaneity in Biblical Narratives," in *Studies in Hebrew Narrative Art Throughout the Ages* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1978), 9–26.

34. Note that although Samson is placed last for literary reasons, there are indications that he actually ruled much earlier in the settlement period. Also, note that Eli (1 Sam 4:18) and Samuel (1 Sam 7:6, 15) were later judges in Israel.

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twice states that he judged Israel for 20 years (15:20; 16:31), he never demonstrates any evidence of leadership, and, as the messenger states at the very beginning, Samson would only "begin to save Israel from the power of the Philistines" (13:5). His two recorded prayers (15:18; 16:28) are examples of arrogant self-interest. Samson spends his time womanizing or gaining revenge for personal insults and injuries. In fact, he is handed over to the Philistines by the tribe of Judah when his antics provoke threats of a violent response from their enemies. His fellow Israelites view the so-called judge as merely a troublemaker, and have, as a result, sunk into complacency and passive acceptance of their lot (15:9–13).

What the reader is told, but what Samson's parents do not know, is that Yʜᴡʜ is "seeking an opportunity from the Philistines" (14:4). He is actually *using* Samson's weaknesses and flaws to provoke the Israelites into conflict with the enemy, that is, to shake them out of their syncretistic complacency. The Samson narrative demonstrates just how much Israelite leadership has deteriorated. Samson's first dubious exploit was his pursuit of a Philistine woman in Timnah (14:1–4). The narrator informs the reader that "this" was from Yʜᴡʜ, even though Samson broke the Deuteronomic law, because Yʜᴡʜ was actively provoking a situation against the Philistines (v. 14). Exactly what "this" refers to is debatable. It could be Samson's attraction to the Philistine woman, his marriage to her, or the entire situation. It could even be that it was Yʜᴡʜ's will for Samson to break the law of Moses. This is not to imply that Yʜᴡʜ causes anyone to sin, but that he can set up a situation in which, based on his knowledge of the subject's character, he can anticipate that that person *will* sin, and plans to use the results of that sin to achieve his purposes.[35] Olson takes the issue a step further, however:

> Remarkably, God steers Samson to disobey God's own covenant prohibitions against intermarriage in order to help Israel act against the Philistine oppressors. Yet we remain shy in exercising such freedom and want to absolve God by suggesting the language does not require divine causation but only divine permission or allowance.[36]

Klein is more cautious in her analysis: "Yʜᴡʜ's *seeking* does not imply that Yʜᴡʜ incited Samson's desire for the Timnite woman. Rather, it suggests that Samson's irregular actions nevertheless accord with Yʜᴡʜ's will."[37] The situation of Israel

35. See Gregory T. K. Wong, *Compositional Strategy of the Book of Judges: An Inductive, Rhetorical Study*, VTSup 111 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006), 101.

36. Dennis T. Olson, "The Book of Judges," in *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 2*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 849.

37. Klein's interpretation is worth quoting in full: "Samson's desire for the Timnite woman is not justified *by Yahweh, it is attributed to Yahweh by the reliable narrator: 'He was seeking an occasion against the Philistines' (14:4). The narrator is reliable—within human limitations of knowledge. Significantly, he does not present Yahweh as a divinity of magical or unlimited powers, for Yahweh seeks to stir man to enact the divine will. In the covenant relationship binding both man and*

does call for drastic action, however. The Philistines are ruling over Israel (v. 4c) and Israel is sinking further and further into lethargic acceptance of their lot.

The narrator reports that "the spirit of Yнwн began to "trouble" Samson (וַתָּחֶל רוּחַ יהוה לְפַעֲמוֹ) in Mahaneh-Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol (v. 25a–b). Previously in Judges, the Spirit was said to "clothe" or "come upon" a leader.[38] The rare verb פעם is a *hapax legomenon* in the Qal stem, but it is generally agreed that it means to "trouble," "disturb," "stir,"[39] or "agitate," "inspire."[40] Samson is the weakest leader in Judges, and therefore Yнwн himself must step in and take control, acting as the deliverer himself. Perhaps this is why Samson is designated a Nazirite. Numbers 6:1–21 gives the laws pertaining to Nazirites. Either men or women could take a vow to dedicate themselves to Yнwн for a period of time; the specific purpose of this act of dedication is not given, but it was likely in gratitude for answered prayer or blessings bestowed,[41] or as preparation for holy war.[42] Here, however, Samson does not dedicate himself; he is consecrated for special use by Yнwн himself.

A true king in Israel, one that God chooses, should be a faithful vice-regent under Yнwн. Samson is definitely chosen by God, but not as a king. He is so weak that he can only serve as a puppet, a passive tool; he will merely be the agent of a delivering God. The one thing that Samson does accomplish—or at least that Yнwн accomplishes through him—is the destruction of the temple of Dagon (16:25–30), who was considered to be Baal's father and the patron deity of many areas of Mesopotamia. In the ANE, the success or failure of an army, or a leader, was dependent on the power of the god the people worshipped. The defeat of Samson would appear to the Philistines as a defeat for Israel's deity, and a triumph for their own god, Dagon. This is not the first time in Judges that the narrator has brought the

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God, Yahweh does not effect his will by divine fiat, and man's free will is stressed. Yahweh's seeking does not imply that Yahweh incited Samson's desire for the Timnite woman. Rather, it suggests that Samson's irregular actions nevertheless accord with Yahweh's will....Sometimes, as in the Samson narrative, man accomplishes Yahweh's will unwittingly, and the divine purpose is realized as a consequence of man's unethical actions....Yahweh's will is fulfilled despite—even through—human inadequacies" (emphasis original). Lillian R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges*, Bible and Literature Series 14 (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), 116–17.

38. 3:10: וַתְּהִי עָלָיו רוּחַ־יהוה; 6:34: וְרוּחַ יהוה לָבְשָׁה אֶת־גִּדְעוֹן; 11:29: וַתְּהִי עַל־יִפְתָּח רוּחַ יהוה.

39. *HALOT, 952. It does, however, appear in the passive Niphal in Gen 41:8, where Pharaoh is troubled by his dream; Ps 77:5; Dan 2:3, where it means "disturbed" or "troubled." It also appears in a similar context in Dan 2:1 in the Hithpael.*

40. *DCH, 6:731.*

41. Mark J. Boda, "Judges," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 2: Numbers to Ruth*, ed. David E. Garland and Tremper Longman (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 1207. See Lev 7:16–17; Pss 22:25; 50:14; 56:12; 61:5, 8; 66:13; 76:11; 116:14, 18; cf. Gen 28:20; 31:13; Judg 11:30; Jonah 2:9. See also Pnina Galpaz-Feller, *Samson: The Hero and the Man: The Story of Samson (Judges 13–16)*, Bible in History (Bern; New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 44; Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 143. Other examples of Nazirite consecration are found in 1 Sam 1; 1 Macc 3:49–51; Acts 18:18; 21:23–24.

42. See Stone, "Judges," 374, who references Deut 29:6. This is a possible explanation for Judg 5:2: בִּפְרֹעַ פְּרָעוֹת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, "When hair hung loosely in Israel…"

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divine contest into focus; in the Ehud pericope it is implied by the *double entendre* inherent in "God/gods" (אֱלֹהִים), in the Gideon narrative the dispute is between Yнwн and Baal, and in the Jephthah episode between Yнwн and Chemosh.[43] The central issue here in the climax of the Samson narrative is whether Yнwн or Dagon is the true god, and Yнwн ultimately proves the victor.

Descent into Anarchy

Israel set out from Egypt under the strong charismatic leadership of Moses, continued by Joshua. After their arrival in Canaan, local leadership by tribal judges was—or should have been—a more effective mode of governance; however, the increasing weakness and apostasy of individual leaders led to a steady deterioration in the integrity of Israel. Gideon, raised up and prepared by Yнwн, had the potential to drive out the oppressors and clear the land of Baal worship, and perhaps become the first dynastic "king" in Israel, but his success and power went to his head and turned him into a egocentric tyrant. Realizing his error, he abandoned his responsibility and rejected the role of vice-regent under Yнwн; in so doing he left Israel vulnerable to the despotism of Abimelech, the self-made king, and led the people back into apostasy. That cultic aberrance manifested itself again in Jephthah, who used human sacrifice to try and manipulate God, and unlike Gideon, who had the skill to reconcile the diverse tribes (8:1–4), turned brother against brother in internecine strife. By the tenure of Samson, leadership has become totally ineffectual and Yнwн himself must intervene to bring a measure of deliverance to Israel.

It is no surprise, therefore, that the double conclusion (Judg 17–21) is punctuated by variations on the lament, "There was no king in Israel; each person did what was right in their own eyes (17:6) (אִישׁ הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינָיו יַעֲשֶׂה).[44] In a contemporary pluralistic context it might seem commendable to do what one believes is the right thing; however, in the historical and the literary context this is a negative judgment on Israel. The Israelites were in a covenant relationship with Yнwн. In Deuteronomy 12:8 Moses states: "You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every one doing *whatever is right in their own eyes*."[45] Throughout Judges, the accusation has been that Israel "did the evil thing *in the eyes of Yнwн*." It is Yнwн's will that is the standard, not humanity's. The focus in Deuteronomy 12 is the need for centralized worship. As covenant partners, Israel was obligated to obey the covenant stipulations and serve Yнwн, and Yнwн only. Relying on their own assessment of what was right and of what constituted appropriate worship consistently led them into apostasy. As Olson notes, by the end of Judges the reader witnesses their "near disintegration as

43. See Webb, *Integrated Reading*, 167–68.

44. See also 18:1; 19:1; 21:25.

45. See Wong, *Compositional Strategy*, 195.

a covenant community of God."[46] Israel had completely lost their way. In the first conclusion (Judg 17–18), the emphasis is on cultic disobedience. Illegitimate shrines are set up, unqualified people serve as priests, tribes steal from each other, and the worship of Yhwh is corrupted into using him as a "tame god" who will ensure their prosperity. The second conclusion (Judg 19–21) focuses on moral and military chaos, a world where women are gang raped and abducted, whole tribes are slaughtered, and Israel's greatest enemy is itself. The people make token inquiries of Yhwh, but ultimately go their own way. "There was no king in Israel, everyone did what was right in their own eyes" is the final statement in Judges.

The leadership of judges may have been good and effective when it was instituted—witness Othniel, Ehud, and Deborah—but it no longer serves the purpose. Centralized leadership, and centralized worship, was desperately needed. Yhwh was seeking מֶלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יהוה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, אִישׁ כִּלְבָבוֹ, "a man according to his own heart" (1 Sam 13:14), "a king whom Yhwh your God chooses" (Deut 17:15). David had many failings, but, unlike most of the kings that followed him—for human kingship is not a perfect institution—he never turned away from Yhwh to apostasy, and repented when he committed sin. DeRouchie comments, "The negative elements of David's life were probably retained to emphasize the need for one greater than David—a divine royal son (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7, 12; cf. Luke 1:32), "chosen" of God (Isa 42:1; cf. Luke 9:35; 23:35; 1 Pet 2:4), whose faithfulness would be complete (Isa 55:3; cf. 1 Pet 2:22–24) and whose kingship would never end (2 Sam 7:16; cf. Luke 1:33)."[47]

Conclusion

Is the text of Judges pro-monarchic or anti-monarchic? Ultimately, that is the wrong question. It is better to ask, What type of leadership does Yhwh require in a given situation? Or, What kind of king does Yhwh require? There is no "one size fits all" leadership role in Scripture. At various times God has chosen to appoint various types of leaders: family heads, tribal elders, charismatic leaders, local judges, prophets, and kings, among others. Even the lexis overlaps. A tribal leader may be a "king" in his own small realm. The important thing is that these leaders must be "servants of Yhwh," faithful vice-regents of Yhwh in their own domain, who fight Yhwh's battles, not their own. It is worth bearing in mind that throughout the books of Kings, monarchy also deteriorates as a leadership mode. The ultimate kingship belongs to Yhwh.

Is there a message here for contemporary society? Is there an ideal "Christian" form of government or political party?[48] Israel was a theocracy; most contemporary societies are secular or pluralistic. There is no such thing as Christendom any more, and Christianity cannot—and should not—be imposed "top-down" on a society by Christians running for government and trying to *force* their faith on everyone by changing the laws. The church is in exile.[49] This is not the place for a discussion of political theory, but contemporary Christians would do well to listen to the advice of Jeremiah when Israel was taken into exile and was no longer able to establish its own government:

> Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. (Jer 29:4–7 NRSV)

We must humbly live the Christian life and generously seek the common good in the midst of a difficult situation, acting as lights in the darkness, as people such as Ruth and Boaz did during the dark time of the Judges when leadership deteriorated and syncretism was rampant. Ultimately, in the new heaven and the new earth, humanity will assume their rightful role as vice-regents of Yhwh, caretakers of his good creation.[50] Until then, Christians must live as faithful servants of God, doing what good they can and reflecting Yhwh's love into the world.

on the political situation in Israel during the period of settlement, it is unwise hermeneutically to use the book primarily for the reconstruction of political structures. Writing from a deuteronomic/prophetic perspective, the narrator was much more concerned about Israel's spiritual state."

49. See Lee Beach, *The Church in Exile: Living in Hope after Christendom* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015).

50. See J. Richard Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014).

46. Olson, "The Book of Judges," 863.

47. DeRouchie, "The Heart of Yhwh and His Chosen One in 1 Samuel 13:14," 487.

48. See Block, *Judges, Ruth*, 37: "It is doubtful the compiler of the Judges material was concerned chiefly with political structures. And even if the book provides a great deal of information

The Role of the Philistines in the Establishment of the Israelite Monarchy

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Abstract: This essay examines the portrayal of the Philistines in Judges and Samuel as vital to the establishment of a legitimate, divinely-authorized monarchy in ancient Israel. After an opening section that looks at the Philistines and their origins, the essay examines the Philistines as antagonists in the ongoing narrative concerning the establishment of a permanent Israelite royal dynasty as ultimately achieved under David. It is demonstrated that Saul failed in his responsibility to remove the Philistine threat from Israel, but David succeeded precisely matching Saul's failures. After David's reign the Philistines are largely absent from the narrative concerning the Israelite kingdoms—they have become simply one of the surrounding nations.

Key Words: Israelite monarchy, kingship, Philistines, Caphtorite, Casluhite, Samson, Saul, David

Introduction

The establishment of the Israelite monarchy under the aborted reign of Saul and then the successful reign of David was due to a number of factors, not the least of which were Israel's request for a king and God's approval of that request (1 Sam 8:1–9). What has seldom been noticed is the pivotal role played by Israel's main protagonist throughout the book of Samuel as the monarchy comes into being. The words *Philistine or Philistines* occur 183 times in Samuel, more often than any other ethnic designation except Israel (269 times). When one considers that *Philistine(s)* occur a total of 290 times in the OT, it is clear that the Philistines are critical figures in the rise of Israel as a kingdom.

Who Were the Philistines?

Excluding occasional references to places such as the "land of the Philistines," people called Philistines play a prominent role only in a few OT books: Genesis, Judges, Samuel, and Chronicles (mostly in passages that parallel material in Samuel). It is widely held that the Philistines in the later parts of Judges and in Samuel are among

the Sea Peoples from the Aegean basin who attempted to penetrate into Egypt in the eighth year of Pharaoh Ramesses III (c. 1176 BC). Ramesses names a coalition of several groups, including Denyen, Tjeker, Peleset [Philistines?], Sherden, and Weshesh among these Sea Peoples that he defeated. After Ramesses defeated them, they apparently settled them along the Levantine coast in southwest Canaan.[1] This fits much of what the OT says about the Philistines' origin and eventual location in Canaan: According to Jer 47:4 and Amos 9:7 the Philistines came to Canaan from Capthor, called Keftiu in Egyptian texts and Kaptara in cuneiform texts. This is widely agreed to be Crete.[2]

The Philistines are associated with the Cherethites (Ezek 25:16; Zeph 2:5), which some have taken to mean "Cretens" based on the Septuagint rendering of כְּרֵתִים as Κρῆτες. However, this may be no more than a guess based on similar sounding proper nouns.[3] Yet, it would appear that the Cherethites were either a Philistine clan or ethnic group from the Aegean, as probably were the Pelethites. David and Solomon had Cherethites and Pelethites in their employ and who served in something resembling a palace guard (2 Sam 8:18; 15:18; 20:7, 23; 1 Kgs 1:38, 44; 1 Chr 18:17). Judges and Samuel as well as some of the prophets locate the Philistines along the Mediterranean Sea in Canaan and depict them as forming an alliance of five cities: Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron (1 Sam. 6:17; cf. Josh 13:3; Jer 25:20; Amos 1:6–8; Zeph 2:4–7; Zech 9:5–6). It would appear, then, that during the period from late in Judges (Judg 10–16) through the formation of the monarchy and afterward, the Philistines mentioned in the OT are Caphtorim—a people from Crete whose lineage in the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 is traced through Ham's son Mizraim (Gen 10:6, 13–14; cf. 1 Chr 1:8, 11–12).

Before proceeding to our extended discussion of the role of the Philistines in the establishment of the monarchy, there are two side questions that need to be briefly explored:

What accounts for earlier notices of Caphtorite Philistines in the OT (Deut 2:23; Josh 13:2–3; Judg 3:3, 31 and perhaps Exod 23:31)?

What accounts for the mention of Philistines at Gerar in the time of Abraham and Isaac (Gen 21:32, 34; 26:1, 8, 14–15, 18)?

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1. H. J. Katzenstein. "Philistines," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992): 5.326; *CAH*[3] 2.2.371–2; K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 339–40.

2. W. S. Lasor, "Philistines," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, revised, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 3.844; *CAH*[3] 2.2.373; ABD 5.326; K. A. Kitchen, "The Philistines," in *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, ed. D. J. Wiseman (Oxford: Oxford University, 1973), 54.

3. Andrew E. Steinmann, *2 Samuel*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2017), 163.

Early Caphtorite Philistines in the Old Testament

Egyptian sources do not mention the Peleset before about 1176 BC. However, as Kitchen observes, there were much earlier contacts between the Aegean and the Levant.4 Moreover, there notices in Egyptian texts of a number of Aegean peoples for some time before the twelfth century BC, and Hebrew פְּלִשְׁתִּים, unlike Egyptian Peleset may have been a catchall term for these Sea Peoples. Kitchen notes:

> Thus, when the Philistines (Prst), Tjekker, and Weshesh appear with the Sherden, Danuna, Sheklen, and Tursha under Ramesses III, they do so as part of a movement of peoples that had been affecting the Levant—Cilicia, Syria-Palestine, Egypt, and Libya—for over 150 years before c. 1200 B.C., merely reaching a migratory climax by the latter date. As the Sherdan particularly were used as slave troops by the Egyptians, including in Palestine (e.g., up to Qadesh), a passage such as Joshua 13:2 may already reflect the presence of Sea Peoples in South-West Canaan in the late thirteenth century B.C., with their troops used in Egyptian key garrisons in such well-established administrative centres as Gaza.5

Thus, it is not inconceivable that some Sea Peoples groups from the area of Crete settled along the south Levantine coast as suggested already in Deut 2:23:

> The Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed the Avvites, who lived in villages as far as Gaza, and settled in their place. (Deut 2:23 CSB)6

If this is taken as an actual statement by Moses shortly before his death in 1406, it would appear that people who would later be characterized as Philistines had already at that time established a foothold on the coast of southern Canaan "over 150 years before 1200 BC."7 Not much later in time (c. 1400 BC) Joshua not only mentions the Philistines, but notes that they have organized themselves into the well-known pentapolis of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron (Josh 13:3). About 100–125 years later, c. 1275 BC, the judge Shamgar was active against the Philistines (Judg 3:31).

Later, Samson was active against the Philistines in the mid-eleventh century (c. 1068–1049). This was about a century after the time of Ramesses III, so it is difficult to classify this as an anachronism. However, it should be noted that in Samson's time, the head of the Philistine pantheon was Dagon (Judg 16:23), which is clearly an

adaptation of a Canaanite deity.8 If the Philistines did not arrive in Canaan until the early part of the twelfth century, their adoption of or adaptation to Canaanite religion must have happened at a very rapid rate. However, if they had established a thriving pentapolis already by the late fifteenth century during the days of Moses and Joshua, it is much more reasonable to assume that Philistines had been living in Canaan for some centuries by the time of Samson and had gradually adapted their culture toward that of native Canaanites. Then, when some Philistines were driven away from the Nile Delta by Ramesses III, they found a welcome home among Philistines who had previously colonized the southern Levantine coast.

Thus, we ought not conclude that simply because Egyptian sources do not mention Peleset in Canaan before the time of Ramesses III, there were no Aegean peoples who had settled there and whom Israelites called by the general term *Philistine*. That is simply an argument from ignorance—that is, if we do not know about something, it must not be or must not have been. Thus, the oft-quoted aphorism that "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence" applies to the extra-biblical evidence for Philistine presence in Canaan before the early twelfth century.

It is interesting to note that these Caphtorite Philistines and Israel appear to have entered Canaan about the same time. Both were relative new newcomers, and both were expanding into a land where they would displace the Canaanites. Thus, they were rivals of sorts destined to clash. As we will see, the rise of the monarchy in Israel revolves around whether the founding monarchs can outstrip the Philistines for political and territorial dominance in Canaan.

Philistines in Genesis

Because Egyptian sources do not mention the Peleset [Philistines] before the time of Ramesses III, critical biblical scholars often opine that Philistines mentioned in Genesis are anachronisms.9 In Genesis Abraham and then Isaac encounter Philistines at Gerar (Gen 20:1–17; 21:22–32; 26:1–31). In these cases the Philistines are ruled by an Abimelech who is said to be king (Gen 20:2; 26:1, 8). Moreover, the commander of Gerar's army in both cases is named Phicol. Are these anachronistic references to the Philistines? There are significant reasons to believe that they are not.

First, if this is an anachronism, why are the Philistines said to be at Gerar? Later sources only mention the five cities of the Philistine pentapolis. Surely if this was an anachronistic account by a later redactor, one of those cities would have been made Abimelech's city.10

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4. Kitchen, *Reliability*, 341; Kitchen, "The Philistines," 58–60.

5. Kitchen, "The Philistines," 58.

6. The destruction of the Avvites mentioned in this verse must refer only to those Avvites living on the coast (i.e., "in villages as far as Gaza"), since Avvites are mentioned later and located further into the interior of Canaan in the territory allotted to Benjamin (Josh 13:3; 18:23).

7. Throughout this paper dates for biblical events are taken from Andrew E. Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul: A Biblical Chronology* (St. Louis, Concordia, 2011).

8. *CAH*³ 2.2.374.

9. R. K. Harrison, "Philistine Origins: A Reappraisal," in *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C Craigie* (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, 1988), 11; *ABD* 5.326; Kitchen, *Reliability*, 339–40; Kitchen, "The Philistines," 56.

10. Kitchen, *Reliability*, 340.

Second, Abimelech is called *king* (מֶלֶךְ), not *ruler* (סֶרֶן). Yet later sources always employ the native Philistine term *ruler* (Josh 13:3; Judg 3:3; 16:5, 8, 18, 23, 27, 30; 1 Sam 5:8, 11; 6:4, 12, 16, 18; 7:7; 29:2, 6-7; 1 Chr 12:20). If the narratives concerning the Philistines in Genesis are anachronisms, why was the term consistently used for the later Philistine leaders not employed?

Third, Genesis does not trace the Philistines to Caphtorim, but to the Casluhim (Gen 10:13–14; cf. 1 Chr 1:11–12):

> Mizraim fathered the Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, Casluhim (the Philistines came from them), and Caphtorim.

These verses characterize both the Caphtorim and the Casluhim as descendants of Ham's son Mizraim, thereby making them related ethnic groups. Some critical scholars contend that the words "the Philistines came from them" must have been accidentally misplaced from its original position following "Caphtorim."[11] The textual evidence, however, does not support this. There is no Hebrew text of Genesis that places "the Philistines came from them" after "Caphtorim." Moreover, the reflection of Genesis 10:14 at 1 Chronicles 1:12 also places the phrase after Casluhim, not Caphtorim, demonstrating that the Chronicler's source (his text of Genesis) agrees with our surviving textual evidence for Genesis. Septuagint Genesis 10:14 agrees, providing another ancient source to confirm that MT Genesis does not contain a misplaced phrase at Genesis 10:14.[12]

Rendsburg has argued that Gen 10:14 preserves an authentic Israelite tradition concerning the origin of the Philistines.[13] He notes that the names of three of the last four peoples listed as descended from Mizraim all have the same vocal pattern.[14] *Pathrusim* is a Hebraization of Egyptian "the southland," that is, Upper Egypt. *Naphtuim* is a Hebraization of Egyptian "those of Ptah," that is, the people of Memphis in the middle of Egypt, where Ptah was worshiped as a major deity. He then proposes that the Casluhim were most likely people of the Nile Delta in Lower Egypt. If Rendsburg is correct, then the Philistines in Genesis may be the Casluhim, and they migrated from the Nile Delta to the area near Gerar.

In support of this theory, we may note that the name *Philistine* was often translated as "foreigner" (ἀλλόφυλος) in the Septuagint. Recently, Abulafia has proposed that Egyptian *Peleset* (assumed to be cognate of Hebrew פְּלִשְׁתִּים and

Akkadian *Palastu*) originally meant *foreigner*.[15] Therefore, it may be that Genesis is using the term *Philistine* in a wider sense to denote non-Canaanite peoples in the land, in this case Casluhites who had migrated from Egypt and settled near Gerar. Later, notably in Judges and Samuel, the term would be used in a slightly different way to denote peoples who had their origins in the Aegean basin.

These Casluhite Philistines in Genesis and their conflicts with the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac serve to foreshadow the later conflict between the Caphtorite Philistines and Israel. Like Israel's patriarchs, the Casluhite Philistines were relative newcomers to the land of the Canaanites. Both Abraham and Isaac have conflicts with the Philistines over possession of wells (Gen 21:22–33; 26:12–33). Moreover, in the end the patriarchs have the upper hand in gaining possession of wells, since in both cases it is the Philistine king whose hand is forced and must ask for a treaty guaranteeing that he and his people will not be harmed (Gen 21:22–23; 26:28–29).

Thus, these stories present intriguing parallels with Israel's later conflicts with the Caphtorite Philistines for dominance of Canaan. Considering that the patriarchs' interaction with the Philistines do not portray them in the most favorable light (Gen 20:1–18; 26:7–11), we might ask why Genesis includes these narratives about Abraham and Isaac interacting with the Philistines. However, if Genesis was written for Israel who would soon be entering the land of Canaan and vying with another Philistine culture that would also be seeking to dominate the land, the parallels are quite important. They demonstrate God's determination to ensure that Israel, not the Philistines, would obtain dominance. Thus, the patriarchs' earlier experiences with Philistines are included in Genesis to assure Israel that God would, indeed, keep his promise to give his people that land promised to Abraham and Isaac.

The Philistines Among the Later Judges: Preparing the Way for the Monarchy

The Philistines as Israel's External Threat

Among the later Judges, Philistines are mentioned at the beginning of the account of Jephthah's activity (Judg 10:6, 7, 11) and again throughout the Samson narrative. Though introduced into the account of Jephthah's accomplishments, the Philistines are curiously absent from the action until the beginning of the Samson cycle at Judg 13:1. Jephthah defeated the Ammonites, but he did not deliver Israel from the Philistines. This itself argues that the Ammonite oppression and the Philistine oppression that is related in the Samson cycle were concurrent.[16] However, while the

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11. This is reflected in some English versions, notably NRSV at both Gen 10:14 and 1 Chr 1:12. Curiously, TANAK moves the phrase to follow *Caphtorim* at Gen 10:14, but does not do the same at 1 Chr 1:12. See G. von Rad, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 143; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 68; Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2009), 113.

12. The oldest Septuagint manuscripts do not contain 1 Chr 1:12.

13. Gary A.Rendsburg, "Gen 10:13–14: An Authentic Hebrew Tradition Concerning the Origin of the Philistines," *JNSL* 13 (1987): 89–96.

14. *CaCCûCîm* (where C = consonant).

15. David Abuafia. *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2011), 55.

16. Andrew E. Steinmann, "The Mysterious Numbers of the Book of Judges," *JETS* 48 (2005): 495–96; Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth*, New American Commentary, vol. 6 (Nashville, TN:

Ammonite oppression lasted eighteen years (Judg 10:8), the Philistine oppression lasted forty years, the last twenty of which Samson was active as a judge "in the days of the Philistines" (Judg 13:1; 15:20; 16:31).[17]

Samson's time as judge is spent exclusively in conflict with the Philistines. However, unlike any of the other major judges, neither he nor the other major judge during this period—Jephthah—is ever said to have brought peace to the land.[18] Jephthah "subdued" the Ammonites without ushering in an era of peace for the land (Judg 11:33; cp. Judg 3:30; 8:28). In Samson's case, it is clear that God never intended Samson to be the final solution to the Philistine threat. His mother was told that "he will *begin* to save Israel from the power of the Philistines" (Judg 13:5). Thus, at the end of the line of judges the reader is left with the impression that there is unfinished business—the Philistines have not been subdued and are still a present threat to Israel.

Spiritual Malaise as Israel's Internal Threat

Of course, there is another impression left on the reader who completes the rest of the book of Judges: that Israel needs a king. As is well-known, the last five chapters relate no exploit of the judges but instead is a series of vignettes that illustrate spiritual corruption within Israel during this period. Four times in these chapters the reader is told that "there was no king in Israel" (Judg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). Any thoughtful reader who had read all twenty-one chapters of Judges would be left with the impression that Israel had two problems that had yet to be solved: The Philistine threat and the lack of a central authority—a king—to place a check on Israel's spiritual malaise. These two problems are not directly linked to each other in Judges, but they will continue to be intertwined as Israel transitions from life under judges whom God raises up to a monarchy established under God's authority.

Internal and External Threats to Israel in the Opening Chapters in the Book of Samuel

The Philistine threat to Israel is related in two separate narratives in 1 Samuel 1–8: the capture and eventual return of the ark (1 Sam 4:1–11; 5:1–7:1) and Israel's victory at Mizpah under Samuel's leadership as judge (1 Sam 7:2–17). These two narratives are also closely intertwined with the continuing internal threat to Israel—spiritual malaise. It is introduced in the behavior of Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas (1 Sam

Broadman and Holman, 1999), 35–36; David L. Washburn, "The Chronology of the Judges: Another Look," *BSac* 147 (1990): 424; Eugene H. Merrill, "Paul's Use of 'About 450 Years' in Acts 13:20," *BSac* 138 (1981): 248.

17. Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul*, 96–104.

18. See the periods of peace that resulted from the service of Othniel (Judg 3:11), Ehud (Judg 3:30), Deborah (Judg 5:31), and Gideon (Judg 8:28).

2:12–17), and underscored by the contrast to Samuel's faithful service (1 Sam 3:1). Eli is also condemned as complicit in his son's sins (1 Sam 3:11–14), and he, too, is contrasted to Samuel who is God's prophet (1 Sam 3:19–20).

The Ark narrative joins these two themes when the Ark of the Covenant is taken out to battle and captured by the Philistines as Hophni, Phinehas, and Eli die (1 Sam 4). The sojourn of the Ark in Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron demonstrated Yahweh's superiority to the Philistine god Dagon as well as his ability to humble the Philistines. Yet, the deliverance from Philistine domination that Israel sought when they took the Ark out to battle is not one of the results of the seven-month sojourn of the Ark in Philistia.

The account of the Ark's capture and return, however, does allow another contrast between Eli's failed leadership as judge (cf. 1 Sam 4:18) and Samuel's successful leader as prophet and judge (cf. 1 Sam 7:6, 15). After the Ark's return to Israel, the author of Samuel quickly summarizes the next twenty years (1 Sam 7:2) before slowing the pace in the narrative relating Samuel's time as judge beginning with a convocation at Mizpah. At Mizpah the two major threats to Israel—spiritual malaise and the Philistines—are at least temporarily solved in under the leadership of Samuel. Spiritual renewal was the purpose of the convocation, and Samuel dealt with that (1 Sam 7:5–6). However, the gathering at Mizpah also was perceived by the Philistines as an opportunity to attack Israel once again. Israel's victory comes through the ministry of Samuel as God hears his pleas and thunders against the Philistines (1 Sam 7:7–11). Unlike the failure of leadership under Eli, who allowed the Ark to be removed from Shiloh's Tabernacle and taken to war, Samuel's service before God was effective leadership that dealt with both with Israel's internal malaise as well as the external menace embodied by the Philistines. Samuel's continued service as judge offered as sustained check on Philistine aggression (1 Sam 7:13), peace with the Ammonites, who had been active during the Philistine oppression mentioned in Judges (1 Sam 7:14; cf. Judg 10:7), and steady guidance to prevent further spiritual corruption in Israel (1 Sam 7:15–17).

Internal and External Threats to Israel in the Choice of Saul as King

Like the twenty years that the Ark was at Kiriath-Jearim, the ministry of Samuel as judge is summarized briefly (1 Sam 7:15–17), and the next time the narrative slows is to relate Israel's request for a king (1 Sam 8:1–22). The external threat of Philistine aggression is not in view. Rather, the internal threat of corruption—specifically the dishonest practices of Samuel's sons (1 Sam 8:3–5)—prompted Israel's request. In fact, in Israel's initial request, this is the only reason given, and the purpose of the king was "to judge us like all the nations" (1 Sam 8:5). Samuel had been judge and had provided the authority to stanch spiritual decline. Moreover, the narrator specifically points out Samuel's taking offense to Israel saying "Give us a king to judge us" (1

Sam 8:6). It is perhaps telling that Samuel was the only judge who attempted to make the office hereditary, which may have led to Israel thinking about a hereditary ruler, a king.[19]

It was not until Samuel warned Israel about the rights of the king (1 Sam 8:11–18) that Israel's demand for a king included the royal responsibility to defend the people from both internal and external threats: "our king will judge us and go out in front of us and fight our battles" (1 Sam 8:20). The specific external threat in view was not specified by the people, but later by God when he revealed to Samuel that he was sending him a man from Benjamin to be anointed: "He will save them from the Philistines because I have seen the affliction of my people, for their cry has come to me" (1 Sam 9:16 CSB).

The importance of defeating the Philistines as part of establishing the monarchy comes to the fore in Samuel's instructions to the newly-anointed Saul. After telling the king-designate two signs will confirm God's choice of him as king (1 Sam 10:2–4), Samuel instructs Saul:

> After that you will come to Gibeah of God *where there are Philistine garrisons*. When you arrive at the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place prophesying. They will be preceded by harps, tambourines, flutes, and lyres. The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully on you, you will prophesy with them, and you will be transformed. When these signs have happened to you, *do whatever your circumstances require because God is with you*. Afterward, go ahead of me to Gilgal. I will come to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice fellowship offerings. Wait seven days until I come to you and show you what to do." (1 Sam. 10:5–8 CSB)

"Gibeah of God" designates Saul's hometown.[20] There was a Philistine garrison there. Surely Saul, who was from Gibeah knew the situation there. Yet Samuel went out of his way to point out that the Philistines maintained a garrison in Gibeah despite no longer being able to mount a successful invasion of Israel's territory (cf. 1 Sam 7:13). Moreover, Samuel told Saul to "do whatever your circumstances require, since

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19. It is interesting to note that Gideon specifically refused the offer of making the office of judge hereditary (Judg 8:22–23). However, the suggestion led to Gideon's son Abimelech being declared king by the Shechemites (Judg 9:1–6).

20. There are three reasons for this identification: 1 Sam 10:10 identifies it as Gibeah, Saul's hometown, 10:11 notes that there were people there who recognized Saul, and 1 Sam 13:13 connects Gibeah and a Philistine garrison. J. P. Fokkelman, *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel: A Full Interpretation Based on Stylistic and Structural Analysis,* 4 vols. Vol 4: *Vow and Desire (I Sam 1–12)* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1993)*,* 419; Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, Second Ed., Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 10 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 91; P. Kyle McCarter, Jr., *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction Notes and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 8 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 181–82; Henery Preserved Smith, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1899), 68; Andrew E. Steinmann, *1 Samuel*, Concordia Commentary (St.Louis, MO: Concordia, 2016), 192; David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 285.

God is with you." By these words Samuel was implying that Saul had a specific task to undertake in order to demonstrate to Israel his fitness for the throne: attack the garrison and drive the Philistines out of Israel. This would have revealed to Israel that he was God's designated king whom Israel requested to "go out in front of us and fight our battles" (1 Sam 8:20). Saul was guaranteed success, since Samuel had assured him that God was with him. Then Saul was to go to Gilgal and wait for Samuel, where his public confirmation as king would be accompanied by the appropriate sacrifices to Yahweh, who had designated him to be king (1 Sam 10:8). Following this Samuel would have told Saul what to do next, presumably in a campaign that would once and for all pacify the Philistines.

Saul, however, was a failure in that he did nothing. Long notes:

> Unfortunately, in the aftermath of his anointing and the fulfillment of all three signs, Saul simply fails to do what lies at hand. Indeed, it is not until 1 Samuel 13 that the Philistine garrison comes under attack, and it is not Saul but his son Jonathan who launches the attack (13:3). Jonathan's bold action had the desired effect (13:4a), and the Philistines come out in force (v. 5). Meanwhile Saul repairs to Gilgal (v. 4b) to await Samuel's arrival, in keeping with the second part of his first charge (10:8).[21]

While these observations are helpful, what Long and others miss is that Saul is consistently portrayed as hesitant to attack the Philistines. His inability to initiate a campaign against them is underscored repeatedly in that Jonathan would have to attack the Philistine garrison at Gibeah (1 Sam 13:3) and again at Michmash (13:23–14:23).[22] Later Saul would send David to battle Goliath (1 Sam 17:37) and then send him out to defeat the Philistines (18:5–30). Before his final battle, Saul would cower in the face of the Philistine threat (1 Sam 28:5). Nowhere in the book of Samuel is Saul depicted as initiating war with the Philistines. He is constantly reactive to the successes of Jonathan or David when they are victorious in their conflicts with the Philistines. However, Saul is never proactive in his fight against Philistine forces. He never acts in faith that God would grant him victory against them, even though Samuel had assured him that "God is with you." (1 Sam 10:7)

Saul's cowardice in the face of Philistine aggression is a major factor that leads to his budding dynasty being disqualified as providing permanent rulers of Israel. In fact, Saul's foolish action in sacrificing at Gilgal in the face of gathering Philistine forces instead of waiting for Samuel to preside over the sacrifice led to his being

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21. Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 212.

22. At 1 Sam 13:3 MT reads "in Geba," while LXX reads "in Gibeah." The reading "Geba," may be due to an accidental loss of the final *he* in the proper noun *Gibeah*, confusion caused by the similarity of the names of these two cities, and/or the assimilation of this verse to 14:4–5 where Jonathan is present at Geba. However, 13:2 located Jonathan at Gibeah, and in 10:5 we are told that the Philistines maintained a garrison at Gibeah, not Geba. See Steinmann, *1 Samuel*, 232.

rejected in favor of another choice for king (1 Sam 13:10–14). It would fall to another king who would not cringe when confronted by Philistine armies to establish a lasting dynasty by Yahweh's choice and blessing.

Breaking Philistine Supremacy: David and the Founding of Israel's Great Dynasty

David's Victories over the Philistines during Saul's Reign

In 1 Samuel David is a study in contrast with Saul. While Saul was explicitly assured at his anointing that God was with him, no such assurance is recorded for David at his anointing (1 Sam 16:13). Yet David acts as Saul ought to have acted. He confidently engages Goliath in battle and defeats him (1 Sam 17). He rose to become a commander in Saul's army, and God repeatedly gave him success against the Philistines (1 Sam 18). In fact, David's time in Saul's service—about four years—is spent entirely in conflict with the Philistines.[23] David also exhibits mastery of a different type over the Philistines after being driven from Saul's court: he outwits them. First, in feigning madness he escapes from Gath (1 Sam 20:10–14). Then later as a mercenary for Achish, he manages to deceive the Philistine king as to the true nature of his raids into Canaan (1 Sam 27:1–12). Thus, by the time that Saul commits suicide during his final battle with the Philistines, the reader of 1 Samuel has come to see David as the one who is poised to succeed in accomplishing a major goal set forth when God first allowed the establishment of an Israelite monarchy—to save Israel from the Philistines (1 Sam 9:16).

David's Establishment of His Throne in Defeating the Philistines

After the death of Saul the Philistines disappear from the narrative during David's seven-year reign over Judah in Hebron. However, 2 Samuel reports two battles with the Philistines early in David's reign over all Israel that firmly establish his supremacy over them (2 Sam 5:17–25). In both cases the Philistines were the aggressors and in both cases David inquired of Yahweh as to how to defeat them. With these two victories Philistine advances into Israel come to an end. Later, David would take the fight to the Philistines and wrest Metheg-Ammah from their control (2 Sam 8:1). This, however, would be part of a larger expansion of his hegemony over the region around Israel (2 Sam 8:2–14). Thus, later in David's reign the Philistines had simply become one of the surrounding peoples whom he subjugated. Their reduction in status from the prime opponent of Israel to merely another ethnic group over which Israel exerted its dominance signals that David's throne had been established by his removal of the Philistine threat.

23. For the chronology of David's service see Steinmann, *From Abraham to Paul*, 114–15.

In 2 Sam 21:15–22 we read of four more conflicts with the Philistines which most likely took place after the Ammonite War and the capture of Rabbah (2 Sam 12:26–31) but before David was granted peace from his enemies and began to build his palace (2 Sam 7:1, 9, 11).[24] After the first battle, David's men vowed that he would not go out to war with them again (2 Sam 21:17). The other three battles take place without David—but his throne has been established and his men are now capable of extending his victories over the Philistines. In these latter four battles defeat of specific Philistine warriors contain elements reminiscent of Goliath.[25] The message of these parallels is that as Yahweh was with David and delivered him from Goliath, so Yahweh was with David's troops to grant them continued victory over Israel's enemies. This is later emphasized by the illustrious accomplishments of David's three elite soldiers Eshbaal, Eleazar, and Shammah whose deeds included victories over the Philistines (2 Sam 23:8–17).

Thus, one key to David's dynasty becoming the most long-established among all the dynasties of ancient Israel is found in David's victories over the Philistines. These victories, of course, were possible because of God's blessing. Yet God was with Saul, also, according to Samuel. The difference between Saul's failed attempt to establish the monarchy and David's success in firmly establishing his dynasty is found in David's bold trust in God's promises versus Saul's lack of confidence in God's word given through the prophet Samuel and Saul's resulting cowardice in the face of every instance of Philistine aggression.

Final Thoughts

After the reign of David, the Philistines largely fade from view during the reign of Solomon and the subsequent reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel. In David God had removed the Philistine threat from Israel, and they play only a small role in the rest of the history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Yet there is one more king whose exploits against the Philistines is noted: Hezekiah. At 2 Kgs 18:5–8 we read:

> Hezekiah relied on the Lord God of Israel; not one of the kings of Judah was like him, either before him or after him. He remained faithful to the Lord and did not turn from following him but kept the commands the Lord had commanded Moses. The Lord was with him, and wherever he went he prospered. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. He defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and its borders, from watchtower to fortified city. (2 Ki. 18:5-8 CSB)

The language used to describe Hezekiah calls to mind David. Just as there was no king of all Israel like David, there was no king of Judah like Hezekiah. Like David, Hezekiah, too, defeated the Philistines.

24. I.e., between 997 and 980 BC. See the discussion in Andrew E. Steinmann, *2 Samuel*, 78–79,
25. See Steinmann, *2 Samuel*, 411.

Isaiah 7:12–16 — Cutting Down the Davidic Tree: Pivotal Point in the Israelite Monarchy

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Abstract: The focus of this brief study is the *contribution* and *role* played by Isaiah 7 within the plot structure of the Old Testament as a single, unified, literary work—as a whole. The main thesis is that the brief conversation recorded between Ahaz and Isaiah is *a pivotal point* in the narrative plot-structure of the *Old Testament* that causes the tree of the Davidic dynasty to be cut down.

Key Words: almah, virgin, Immanuel, Davidic Covenant, Isaiah 7

Introduction

Debates have raged over Isaiah 7:14 for over two thousand years. Does the word *'almâ* necessarily mean "young virgin" or may it mean "young woman?" Is the prophecy a direct prediction of the birth of Jesus or typological? If the former, how can it be a sign for Ahaz? If the young woman is from the time of Ahaz, then how does it work as a prediction of Jesus? While many readers may and ought to require further detail on grammatical and lexical positions adopted herein on key points to be fully persuaded,[1] the focus of this brief study is nevertheless on the *contribution* and *role* played by Isaiah 7 within the plot structure of the Old Testament as a single, unified, literary work—as a whole. The main thesis is that the brief conversation recorded between Ahaz and Isaiah is *a pivotal point* in the narrative plot-structure of the *Old Testament* that causes the tree of the Davidic dynasty to be cut down. In the Old Testament, kings and kingdoms are portrayed as stately trees.[2] The Assyrians are pictured as lofty trees in Isaiah 10:33-34. In Isaiah 11:1, however, we come to the first reference of the stump of Jesse. This employs an identical metaphor to show that the kingdom of the House of David is a tree cut down; all that remains is a stump. This

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1. Full discussion of all details is given in an essay to be published in a forthcoming FS by B&H Academic.

2. See William R. Osborne, "Trees and Kings: A Comparative Analysis of Tree Imagery in Israel's Prophetic Tradition and the Ancient Near East," Ph.D. diss. Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, ٢٠١٥.

is a critical moment, indeed, for the role of the Davidic Covenant in the plotline of Scripture. It is the pivotal point in the Israelite Monarchy.

The Context and Historical Setting

The Exile and Promised Return from Exile

We all know that Israel, disloyal and faithless, broke the Mosaic Covenant inaugurated at Sinai and supplemented in Deuteronomy, and that *exile* was the final judgement for their covenant violation (Deut 28). Christians, however, frequently fail to grasp properly two things about the Exile and also the Return from Exile.

First, the exile was *not a singular event* that occurred at one particular moment in the history of Israel. It was a *process* of gradual loss. The most northern tribal territories were the first to be lost. Later on, the Northern Kingdom suffered significant destruction in the attack by Tiglath-Pileser III in 732 BC, but was not conquered and exiled until 722 BC. Then, in 701 BC Sennacherib came and attacked the Southern Kingdom of Judah and boasted that he had conquered 46 cities in Judah and had Hezekiah in Jerusalem shut up like a bird in a cage. Jerusalem was all that was left and yet God gave her three more chances to turn back to Him. The first captives were taken in 605 / 604 BC. Then the city was conquered in 597 by the Babylonians, and Nebuchadnezzar II set up a puppet king named Zedekiah. This king was murdered ten years later, so that Nebuchadnezzar came back in 586 and burned and razed the city to the ground. The following illustration charts, at least partially, the *process* of exile:

1 Kgs 9:10-14	Towns in Galilee given to Phoenician King (20)
1 Kgs 15:20	Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah, Chinnereth, Naphtali
2 Kgs 12:17	Hazael of Aram captures Gath
2 Kgs 15:29	732 Tiglath-Pileser III attacks Northern Kingdom
2 Kgs 17:5-6	722 Fall of Samaria (Northern Kingdom) to Shalmaneser
2 Kgs 18:13-18	701 Sennacherib attacks Judah
Daniel 1:1	605 Nebuchadnezzar II conquers Jerusalem
2 Kgs 24:10-16	597 Nebuchadnezzar II conquers Jerusalem
2 Kgs 25:1-21	586 Nebuchadnezzar II conquers Jerusalem

Second, the *return from exile* occurs in two stages. This is clear from both statements in the text and also from the literary structure of Isaiah 40 – 55.[3] First there is physical exile in Babylon, and then they return from exile in Babylon in roughly 70 years (Jeremiah 25:7-14). Secondly, there is spiritual exile caused by their

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3. See Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 437.

idolatry and social injustice so that the covenant relationship with God is completely broken. As the vision in Daniel 9 makes clear, the return from spiritual exile will take much longer, i.e. seventy sevens, and not just seventy years. Daniel 9:24 is focused on dealing with rebellion and sin and restoring everlasting righteousness. Daniel must understand that a physical return from Babylon does not adequately deal with the need for circumcision of the heart and proper restoration of the covenant relationship. Zechariah shows that this return from exile and restoration entails the forgiveness of sins, the rebuilding of the temple, the renewing of the covenant and the physical return of Yahweh in person to dwell amidst his people as king. Only when we understand this will we grasp that some of Isaiah's visions apply to the physical return, and some apply to the spiritual return. Moreover, there is no chronological arrangement, so that events to be fulfilled in the distant future are *set side by side* with those to be fulfilled in the near future.[4]

Outline of Isaiah 7:1-25

I.	The Threat to the Davidic House	7:1-9
	A. Conspiracy Against the Davidic House	1-2
	B. Response of the Prophet	3-6
	C. The Conspiracy Will Fail	7-9
II.	The Immanuel Sign	7:10-25
	A. Birth of Immanuel / Difficult Future	10-17
	B. Invasion of Egyptians and Assyrians	18-20
	C. Famine in Judah	21-22
	D. Desolation in Judah	23-25

The Book of Isaiah is divided into seven sections that treat the theme of the transformation of Zion: how we get from a *corrupt* Jerusalem in the *old* creation to a *restored* Zion in the *new* creation. The first section is 1:1 – 2:4 and the second is from 2:5 – 4:6. Chapter 5 begins the third segment developing the topic of idolatry and social injustice resulting first in judgement and later in restoration. The judgement will come in the form of exile, first by the Assyrians, and then by the Babylonians.

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4. For examples, see Peter J. Gentry, "The Literary Macrostructures of the Book of Isaiah and Authorial Intent," in *Bind up the Testimony: Explorations in the Genesis of the Book of Isaiah* edited by Daniel I. Block and Richard L. Schultz (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2015), 227-254.

Exposition of the Text

The Threat to the Davidic House (7:1-9)

A brief outline of Assyrian History shows in external terms, the threat to the Davidic House in Judah and Jerusalem:

Outline of Assyrian History

1. The Rise of Assyria	1741 – 1274
2. The Middle Assyrian Empire	1273 – 1076
3. The Late Assyrian Empire #1	883 – 824
4. Interval of Decline	782 – 745
5. The Late Assyrian Empire #2	744 – 612

The death of King Uzziah in 740 BC corresponds roughly with the rise of the Late Assyrian Empire in Phase Two and explains the time of trouble experienced by Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah as kings of Judah.

It is the year 734 BC. These events are described and detailed in 2 Kings 15:32-16:16. In a period of resurgence Assyria was growing in power and in international influence. Under Tiglath-Pileser III, who is called Pul in the Bible, Assyria began to advance first to the west and then south into Palestine. The country of Aram, later known as Syria, with its capital in Damascus, put pressure on the Northern Kingdom of Israel to form an alliance to meet the advancing power of Assyria. The Northern Kingdom of Israel is called Ephraim in vv. 2, 5, and 9 probably because Jeroboam I, the first king, was from the tribe of Ephraim and also because Ephraim was one of the largest and leading tribes. By this time, the territory of the Northern Kingdom had been greatly reduced in size so that it may not have been much larger than the territory of Ephraim. The capital of (Northern) Israel was the city of Samaria and the capital of Aram was Damascus. Syria and Ephraim wanted to expand their anti-Assyrian alliance to include Judah, but King Jotham, Ahaz's father, refused to join them. So they decided to team up against Judah and plotted to lay siege against Jerusalem, depose Ahaz and install a puppet king, called the son of Tabeel, in his place. This action would have brought about a dramatic and inglorious end to the Davidic dynasty. Then what of the covenant God made with David in 2 Samuel 7 guaranteeing an everlasting dynasty, kingdom, and throne?

Naturally this prospect is a frightening one for King Ahaz and the people of Judah. Verse 2 provides a vivid picture: their hearts are shaking just like the forest trees waving before a strong wind. Ahaz is probably torn between two fears. First, he is panic-stricken at the thought of being attacked by Syria and Israel. A much greater fear, however, is the prospect of being attacked by the King of Assyria, which is what

will happen if he joins the coalition. When he is confronted by Isaiah in v. 3, he seems to have already decided to hold out against Syria and Israel and seek the help of the King of Assyria against Israel and Samaria by submitting to Assyria as a client-king or vassal state. This is clear because he is out inspecting Jerusalem's water supply in preparation for a siege. The city of Jerusalem was in a difficult situation because their main source of water was a spring that was situated just outside the city gates. It was Ahaz's successor, Hezekiah, who would build the famous 500 meter long tunnel bringing the water supply right inside the city wall.

In vv. 3-6 Isaiah commands Ahaz and his people not to fear the kings of the Syro-Ephraimite coalition but rather to trust Yahweh. The paragraph closes with an announcement that the conspiracy arising from the Syro-Ephraimite Coalition will fail utterly.

Isaiah offers Ahaz a radical alternative: foreswear all military and political alliances and put his trust wholly in Yahweh! There is a play on words at the end of v. 9: "If you do not believe, you will not endure." Both the verb 'to believe' and the verb 'to endure' are from the same root (אמן). The NIV attempts to show this by using the word "stand": "If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all."

Isaiah also invites Ahaz to ask for just about anything as a sign. The answer given by Ahaz is pious, but insincere and completely lacking in covenant loyalty to Yahweh. He declares that he will not put the Lord to the test. From the history of Israel, we know that there is a sin of "testing God" exemplified at Massah during the Exodus (Exod 17:7). Essentially it is the sin of unbelief that says, "I will not believe nor I will not trust God unless he first proves himself trustworthy by some miraculous sign." When God brought the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land through the wilderness, they put Him to the test at a place called Massah. The events are recorded in Exodus 17. God wanted to know if the people would trust him to provide water for them on the basis of their recent experience of his trustworthiness. The people "tested" God by suspending their trust in Him until He did a miracle in providing water. This essentially treats God like a stunt man who has to demonstrate his ability to do tricks before we will accept proof of his person and power. In this text, it may seem that Ahaz is acting very piously by refusing to put God to the test, but in reality, he is demonstrating that he is a willfully unbelieving man. As we have seen, he has already decided what he will do. He is going to hold out in a siege attack from Syria and Israel and become a vassal of the King of Assyria in order to get the alliance of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and Aram (Syro-Ephraimite Alliance) off his back. In view of Ahaz's refusal to trust the Lord, Isaiah announces in vv. 17-25 that Judah will soon be overrun and devastated by that very Assyria that Ahaz has foolishly decided to turn to for help. Set in between the *Threat to the Davidic House* in vv. 1-9 and the *Announcement of Desolation by Attacking Armies* in 17 – 25 is the paragraph in vv. 10 – 16 where Isaiah presents the Immanuel Sign.

The Immanuel Sign (7:13-25)

We come now to vv. 13-16 which speak of the Immanuel Sign. These verses are the heart of the section. Verses 1-12 lead up to them and vv. 17-25 which follow indicate the results of Ahaz's decision. From the New Testament, we know that this prophecy finds its ultimate fulfillment in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:21-23), but what is the meaning of the prophecy in Isaiah's time?

When Matthew and the other writers of the New Testament say that a particular prophecy in the Old Testament is fulfilled, they do not discuss how to interpret the text in the Old Testament. Some prophecies are what we might call direct prediction, and some involve typological prediction, i.e. events or people in the Old Testament are a model or pattern for what will happen in a greater event or person at a later time and so are said to foreshadow or predict the later event or person.

Examples of Different Kinds of Fulfillment

A couple of examples from the Gospel of Matthew will illustrate the approach of a gospel writer such as Matthew. In Chapter 2:3-6 Herod asked the Jewish leaders where the Messiah would be born. They respond by quoting the prophecy from Micah 5:2:

> But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
> are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
> for out of you will come a ruler
> who will be the shepherd of my people Israel

The prophecy in Micah is an example of a direct prediction. The prophet is simply describing the details of a future event which has no fulfillment in his own day and time.

Another example is the prophecy from Hosea 11:1 which says, "Out of Egypt I called my son." This is applied to the fact that Joseph was warned about the threat of Herod in a dream and was instructed to take his family to Egypt until the danger was over. When he then brought his family back to and settled in Nazareth, this was considered a fulfillment of the statement in Hosea. The statement in Hosea, however, has to do with the original Exodus. The nation of Israel was called the son of God (Exodus 4:22-23) and in the great events of the Exodus, God brought his son, Israel, out of Egypt. How is this a prophecy of the Messiah? In the gospel of Matthew, the life of Jesus is patterned after the history of the nation. Or, to put it the other way round, the history of the nation foreshadows or models the events that would later happen to the Messiah. The Exodus is a type and so we have a kind of typological prediction. When an Old Testament prophecy is fulfilled, the authors in the New Testament never pause to clarify whether it is a direct prediction or a typological prediction.

Common Interpretations of 7:14

It is impossible in a brief space to describe and evaluate all explanations given in the history of interpretation for Isaiah 7:14. Common interpretations are as follows: (1) Immanuel is Hezekiah, i.e. a wife of Ahaz will bear a son; (2) Immanuel is Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, i.e. a wife of Isaiah will bear a son; (3) Immanuel is a son born to an unknown woman who was a contemporary of Isaiah; (4) Immanuel is the Messiah born to a virgin in the (distant) future; and (5) a birth contemporary with Isaiah is a model/pattern/type of the future birth of the Messiah. Each interpretation depends heavily on how certain exegetical issues are handled. While it is not the purpose here to *defend* in detail the best handling of each of these issues, it is possible to briefly *present* them and *explain* how they are handled here. So while *exhaustive proof* is forthcoming, we need not be sidetracked by the main purpose of this treatment of Isaiah 7.

Exegetical Issues in Isaiah 7: 10 – 16

To whom is the prophet speaking in vv. 10-16?

It is not always possible from a modern translation to track the pronominal references throughout the brief segment of vv. 10 – 16. Verse 10 begins, "And Yahweh continued to speak to Ahaz saying…" This introduction clearly marks the beginning of a new segment of conversation or discourse. The conversation partners are clearly identified as Yahweh and King Ahaz. From the context, the medium of the message is Isaiah the prophet; he is the one through whom these words are presented to Ahaz.

Verse 11 continues, "Ask for yourself a sign from Yahweh your God. Make it deep to Sheol or make it high above / upwards." These three clauses contain imperative verbs—all second person masculine singular in form, as well as two pronouns, also both 2 m. s. Clearly these commands are issued directly and specifically to Ahaz. It is Ahaz who is to ask for a sign.

Verse 12 contains the brief response of King Ahaz: And Ahaz said, "I will not ask nor will I test Yahweh." The verbs are first person common singular in form and Yahweh is referred to in the third person since the medium between him and God is the prophet.

Verse 13 continues the conversation by the simple verb "And he said." This is obviously Yahweh / Isaiah speaking and giving a response to the answer given by Ahaz. The quoted speech begins as follows: "Hear O House of David, Is it too trivial for you to weary humans that you must also weary my God?" The two verbs, "hear" (שִׁמְעוּ) and "you must weary" (תַּלְאוּ) are second person plural in form. The one pronoun employed with the infinitive "to weary" is also second person plural. Yahweh/Isaiah is no longer addressing Ahaz directly or specifically; he is addressing the entire dynasty of David past, present, and future—the whole House of David.

The two pronouns in verse 14 are also second masculine plural in form. The sign was offered specifically to Ahaz. Ahaz declined. Regardless of Ahaz's response, Yahweh gave a sign. The sign he gave was for the *entire family line* of David.

Verses 15-16a speak in the third person masculine singular about the promised child. Then remarkably, verse 16b switches back to second masculine singular in form. The translation of this sentence is problematic, but it clearly is addressed specifically to Ahaz.

This analysis of the pronouns resolves one issue: the sign given in v. 14-15 is not *necessarily* for Isaiah's contemporaries or time. It is a sign that spans the entire history of the remaining Davidic family tree, an issue to be clarified in the prophecy in 11:1.

The Verbs in Verse 14

Difficulties arise in dealing with the verbs in verse 14. The first clause is clear: "Therefore the Lord, He will give to you a sign." The verb is 3 m. s. and the subject is the Lord. The clause employs what is known as Left-Dislocation as a discourse grammar marker. If, for example, I have a clause "I like Charlie," I can say, "Charlie, I like him." By putting 'Charlie' in front, or in Extraposition, emphasis or focus is placed on the fronted item.

The second half of v. 14 is problematic. The first five words form a verbless clause: "Look! A virgin will conceive and bear a son." The verbs "conceive" and "bear" are in fact participles. The helping verb "to be" required by English has to be supplied from the context. One could render with present progressive tenses in English: "A virgin is conceiving and bearing a son." Or one could construe the participles as describing a future, as is normal syntax in Hebrew: "A virgin will conceive and bear a son." Both options are grammatically possible.

The next verb is וְקָרָאת. First, this is a *waw*-consecutive Perfect and must be translated as a future tense. Thus construing the preceding participles as future is highly probable. Second, the verb could be 2 f. s. or 3 f. s.: "You shall call," addressing the virgin, or "She will call," where the referent is the virgin. The latter is the preferred reading as detailed analysis shows.

The Meaning of *'almâ*

There is a consensus among scholars today (regardless of whether one is conservative or liberal) that this word means only "young girl" or perhaps "young woman" and does not necessarily entail virginity. Four arguments are normally used to support this view: (1) etymology, (2) the fact that there already exists in Hebrew a word for virgin (*bĕtûlâ*), (3) the occurrence in Proverbs 30:19 where the word *'almâ* seems to indicate a girl who is not a virgin, and (4) Jewish tradition—both ancient and

solid—does not permit an equation between *'almâ* and *parthenos*, the Greek word for virgin.

The consensus has been challenged recently in a monograph by Christophe Rico which, in fact, represents the first comprehensive and exhaustive research done on the basis of modern linguistic semantic principles.[5] Rico claims analysis only as a linguist, and not as a theologian. Although Rico's research will be explained in depth elsewhere,[6] we can briefly summarise it as follows: (1) analysis particularly of Ugaritic shows the consensus is wrong in etymology.

(2) The fact that there is already a word in Hebrew for virgin is an inadequate reason for thinking that *'almâ* cannot also mean virgin. The word *bĕtûlâ* indicates a virgin regardless of age, whereas the word *'almâ* denotes specifically a young virgin. The following evidence from Rico show that it is common to have both words in Indo-European languages and is possible also in Semitic languages.[7]

Indo-European Languages

	"Young girl"	*"Young virgin"*	*"Virgin"*
Russian	*devuška*	*devica*	*devstevenica*
Classical English	*girl*	*maid*	*virgin*
Classical French	*jeune fille*	*pucelle*	*vierge*
Classical Spanish	*muchacha*	*doncella*	*virgin*
Catalan	*noia*	*poncella*	*verge*
Classical Italian	*giovinetta*	*pulzèlla*	*vergine*
Japanese	*shōjo*	*otome*	*shōjo*

Semitic Languages

	"Young Girl"	*"Young Virgin"*	*"Virgin"*
Arabic	*fatâ'ah*	*bikr*	*'aẓra'*
Hebrew	*na'ărâ*	*'almâ (?)*	*bĕtûlâ*

Just as the norm in Indo-European languages is to distinguish 'virgin' and 'young virgin', so this appears to be the pattern in at least some Semitic languages. Rico's analysis of usage in Hebrew strongly supports the denotation 'young virgin'.

(3) Proverbs 30:19 entails a problem in the history of the transmission of the text. The evidence can be summarised as follows, employing sigla standard for *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*.[8]

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5. Christophe Rico, *La mère de l'Enfant-Roi Isaïe 7,14: « 'Almâ » et « Parthenos » dans l'universe biblique: un point de vue linguistique* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2013). The author is currently collaborating with C. Rico on a translation in English of this work.

6. As already noted, an English Translation of Rico's monograph is in preparation. Details will be supplied in the essay to be published in a forthcoming FS by B&H Academic.

7. The charts are adapted from Christophe Rico, *La mère de l'Enfant-Roi Isaïe 7,14*, 45-46.

8. This codification and nomenclature is derived from Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique*

30,19 cor בעלמיו [C] G Th Aq Syriac Vulg // err-graph: Sym M T בעלמה

What this diagram means is that the following manuscripts support the reading "in his youth": the Septuagint (G), the Jewish revisions of the Septuagint by Theodotion (Th) and Aquila (Aq) made before 120 AD, the Syriac translation (S) coming from the Second Century and the Latin Vulgate (Vulg), based on a Hebrew Text from the Fourth Century AD. Alternately, other manuscripts support the reading "in an *'almâ'*": the Masoretic Text attested from about 900 AD, the Targum from a medieval period, and Symmachus, a Jewish Revisor from perhaps 200 AD. The difference between the readings is a *hē* for *'almâ* at the end of the word while a combination of *waw* and *yodh* ends the word reading "in his youth." Anyone familiar with the Herodian script of the Dead Sea Scrolls would know how easy it is to confuse these two paleographically. Contra the review by Hugh Williamson,[9] Rico is not proposing to emend the text, but rather choosing the reading that has the earliest support spread wide among five witnesses and also best explains how the less meaningful reading in MT arose. In any case, it is unwise to claim a text that is uncertain in textual transmission as a strong argument against *'almâ* as 'young virgin'.

(4) Rico shows that because the difference between *'ayin* and *ġayin* was lost in Hebrew already in the Second Century BC, the entire Rabbinic tradition is based on a false etymology and is erroneous. Before the coming of Jesus of Nazareth whom the Jewish tradition rejects as fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, the Septuagint got the translation of Isaiah right.

It is important to note, however, that the main argument of this essay does not depend on understanding *'almâ* as young virgin. Other interpretations are possible which would support the thesis of this study.

The Meaning of the Verb in vv. 6 and 16

Two verbs are crucial to our understanding of the entire passage from 7:1-25. They are וְנַקִיצֶנָּה in 7:6 and קָץ in 7:16. In the first instance, the case is one of four verbs of actions proposed against Ahaz of Judah by the Syro-Ephraimite Coalition. In the second instance, in 7:16, the subject of the verb is Ahaz: Isaiah or Yahweh is accusing Ahaz of doing something. It is likely that there is a play on words here or that the two instances are connected in a literary manner.

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textuelle de L'ancien Testament. 1. Josué, Juges, Ruth, Samuel, Rois, Chroniques, Esdras, Néhémie, Esther. Rapport final du Comité pour l'analyse textuelle de l'Ancien Testament hébreu institué par l'Alliance Biblique Universelle, établi en coopération avec Alexander R. Hulst, Norbert Lohfink, William D. McHardy, H. Peter Rüger, coéditeur, James A. Sanders, coéditeur (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 50/1. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982).

9. Hugh Williamson, Review of Christophe Rico, *La mère de l'Enfant-Roi Isaïe 7,14: « 'Almâ » et « Parthenos » dans l'universe biblique: un point de vue linguistique* (La Bible en ses Traditions: LD 258; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2013) in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 76* (2014): 338-339.

Most lexica derive these forms from the root קוץ meaning "to be disgusted, feel loathing" (so BDB, KB3, DCH, Ges18).[10] The form in v. 6 is usually analysed as a Hiphil Imperfect and the form in v. 16 as a Qal Participle. The lexica also argue that "be in dread" (Qal) or "frighten, terrify" (Hiphil) is an appropriate secondary sense for these two texts. The ESV illustrates the resulting translations.

> 6. Let us go up against Judah and terrify it, and let us conquer it for ourselves, and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it,"

> 16.…the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted.

Some translations like the NRSV and the NIV construe the meaning in v. 6 from קוץ "to cut (off)" and the meaning in v. 16 from קוץ "to dread." One of the problems faced by interpreters is how to construe the Qal Stem in v. 16 and the Hiphil Stem in v. 6. An exhaustive analysis of all (weak) roots in Hebrew sharing the consonants ק and צ suggests a better approach. The root is probably קיץ as in Old South Arabic. Therefore both the form in v. 6 and the form in v. 16 are Qal and mean "cut" or better "break, split" » "tear apart, demolish, destroy." This resolves the issue of a form in the Hiphil that is apparently not causative. As some lexicographers have already realised, this meaning fits better in v. 6. It *also fits better* in v. 16, as Zorell recognised,[11] depending on how we render the relative sentence.

The Translation of the last sentence in 7:16

The final sentence of 7:16 is תֵּעָזֵב הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה קָץ מִפְּנֵי שְׁנֵי מְלָכֶיהָ. A standard translation can be illustrated from the NRSV:

> … the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.

Instead we propose, along with Murray Adamthwaite,[12] "the land which you (*Ahaz*) are tearing apart (*by your unbelieving policies*) will be forsaken of the presence of her two kings."

The pronoun on the suffixed noun, "her kings" must refer to "land" since the pronoun is feminine singular. So the two kings are the king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the King of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The two kings *cannot* be the King of Israel and the King of Aram, the two kings in the Syro-Ephraimite coalition, because one could not say of them, that "the land had two kings." This

10. BDB = Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1907); KB3 = L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament*, 6 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1967-1997); DCH = Clines, David J. A., ed., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, 9 vols. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993-2016); Ges18 = R. Meyer, H. Donner, and J. Renz, *Wilhelm Gesenius Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 18th Edition (Heidelberg: Springer, 2013).

11. F. Zorell, ed., *Lexicon Hebraicum Veteris Testamenti* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1989).

12. Murray R. Adamthwaite, "Isaiah 7:16 – Key to the Immanuel Prophecy," *The Reformed Theological Review* 59.2 (2000), 65-83.

could only be said of the territory known as Israel after the time of Solomon. Thus the interpretation of the NRSV is highly unlikely because it contradicts the grammar of the text.

What is the Meaning of Eating "curds and honey" in VV. 15-16a?

Insufficient thought has been given by interpreters to the statement that the child born to the virgin will "eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good." First, refusing evil and choosing good is connected to the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis 2:9, 16. It refers to making moral choices on one's own and hence refers to the age of accountability. In biblical culture, this is around 13 years old, the time of one's Bar Mitzvah.

Nogah Hareuveni has best explained "eating curds and honey."[13] Curds are a product of pastoralists, those who herd flocks of goats or sheep and cattle. Honey comes from bees and refers to the forests as opposed to cultivated land because honey bees flourished in the wild. In the land of Canaan there was always a struggle over the use of land. Pastoralists, those who grazed animals, would look for uncultivated areas for pasturage. Farmers, on the other hand, were terracing the hillsides and turning areas that grew wild into cultivated fields and vineyards. What Isaiah is saying is that the region will be so devastated by the Assyrians that there will be few farmers and the cultivated fields will return to regions left to grow wild. This would allow bees and pastoralists more territory. So eating curds and honey is not a statement of blessing, but rather a sign of devastation and judgment in the land. The fact that the child will eat curds and honey means that the land will be dominated by pastoralists and not farmers. This is an indication of the devastation and destruction resulting in exile and the conquest by the Assyrians and Babylonians. Therefore, a person reduced to eating curds and honey is a person in exile, not a person enjoying the good life. In the case of Jesus of Nazareth, this is fulfilled in the fact that the country was dominated by foreign overlords and in exile before the boy reached the age of accountability.

The Larger Literary Structure

The interpretation proposed fits the larger literary structure better since Isaiah 7:14 is construed as a prediction of the distant future.[14] First, it is the normal pattern of the author to place predictions of events to be fulfilled in the far future side by side with predictions of events to be fulfilled in the near future. There are three panels or

13. Nogah Hareuveni, *Nature in Our Biblical Heritage* (Kiryat Ono, Israel: Neot Kedumim, 1980), 11-22.

14. See Peter J. Gentry, "The Literary Macrostructures of the Book of Isaiah and Authorial Intent," in *Bind up the Testimony: Explorations in the Genesis of the Book of Isaiah* edited by Daniel I. Block and Richard L. Schultz (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2015), 227-254.

sections announcing the coming king: (1) the birth of Immanuel in 7:10-17, (2) the gift of the son El-Gibbor (Mighty God) in 9:1-7, and (3) the future reign of a shoot from the stump of Jesse in 11:1-9.[15] In each case, these predictions of the far future are placed side by side with predictions relating to the near future, such as the invasion of the Assyrians in 8:5-8. Note that in Isaiah 8:8, the country of Judah is designated as Immanuel's land. Such a designation would be appropriate for a king or even Yahweh himself—El Gibbor! Also note that the third section on the coming king predicts a shoot from the stump of Jesse. The shoot comes from the stump of Jesse because what is needed is not another David but a new David!

The Message of Isaiah 7:8 – 9

Isaiah gives incredible options to Ahaz: either put your trust in Yahweh, or be destroyed (you will not stand at all). One of the main points of Isaiah 1-39 is that a king is needed who is not only better than bad king Ahaz but better than good king Hezekiah.

This is also the reason that the author does not present the events of Isaiah 38 and 39 in chronological order. In Isaiah 38, Hezekiah finally puts his trust in Yahweh alone. In Isaiah 39, he is hedging his bets on Babylonian help. By ending with this narrative, readers know that Hezekiah is not the coming king for whom they hoped and prayed.

Moreover, we see that Manasseh, the most wicked king in the history of Judah, was born during the time God extended Hezekiah's life fifteen years. Furthermore, from a canonical perspective, Josiah is given a higher rating than Hezekiah (2 Kings 23:25), but his reforms were too little, too late. So events connected with Hezekiah's illness and political policies are significant factors in the cutting down of the Davidic tree, but the pivotal moment is the decision put before Ahaz in Isaiah 7:9. It was Ahaz's decision that brought down the Davidic House until "the falling shack", as Amos puts it, was later restored (Amos 9:11). Only the New Covenant prophesied in Isaiah 54-55, Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36-37 can save the Davidic Covenant in the plot structure of the storyline of the Bible. Thus Isaiah 7:9 is a pivotal moment in the history of the Israel Monarchy.

15. See Christophe Rico, *La mère de l'Enfant-Roi Isaïe 7,14*, 136-156.

King Hezekiah in Isaiah

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Abstract: The book of Isaiah presents three episodes that feature interactions betweenthe God of Israel and King Hezekiah, Isaiah 36-37, 38, and 39. These three episodes give a complex portrait of this king of Judah. This essay explores the different sides to this complex portrait.

Key Words: Hezekiah, Isaiah 36-39, trust, pride, contrast between kings

Introduction

The opening verse of the book of Isaiah locates Isaiah's ministry "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, the kings of Judah" (Isa 1:1). That last king will receive the focus here. The book narrates three encounters between the prophet Isaiah and King Hezekiah, in Isaiah 36-37, chapter 38, and chapter 39. These three encounters set forth a complex portrayal of this king of Judah. It is this complex portrayal that I wish to explore in this essay. My approach will process the characterization of King Hezekiah presented in chapters 36-39 based upon a reading of the preceding chapters.

The Sequence of Isaiah 36-39

The narratives of Isaiah 36-39 are not sequenced in chronological order. Hezekiah's illness and recovery described in chapter 38 took place before the deliverance of Jerusalem. Chapter 39 on the envoys from Merodach-baladan is set after Hezekiah's recovery (39:1). The events of chapters 36-37 occurred after Hezekiah's illness and recovery. The chronological order is: chapters 38-39 and then chapters 36-37.[1]

The reader of these chapters can detect their non-chronological order. Isaiah 38 places King Hezekiah's sickness and recovery in the general time of the Assyrian crisis, "in those days" (38:1). We can tell from 38:5-6 that it took place before the deliverance of Jerusalem. In these verses God gives a twofold promise to King Hezekiah through the prophet Isaiah.

1. The chronological issues are extremely complicated. Basically there are two views. Hezekiah's recovery and the subsequent visit of Merodach-baladan's envoys took place in 712 and Hezekiah died in 698 BC or they occurred in 703 BC and Hezekiah died in 687 BC.

"Go and say to Hezekiah: 'Thus spoke Yahweh, the God of David your father: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Look! I am about to add fifteen years onto your days. And from the palm of the king of Assyria I will deliver you and this city, and I will defend this city.'"[2]

It is this promise which the Rabshakeh and King Sennacherib later tried to debunk (36:15, 18; 37:10). Various reasons have been suggested for the non-chronological order.[3] In this essay I will follow the present order of the chapters in the book of Isaiah.

King Hezekiah Trusted in Yahweh to Deliver from the King of Assyria

One side of King Hezekiah's character in the book exhibits a strong contrast with King Ahaz. One can see that contrast simply by reading Isa 7-8 and Isa 36-37 side-by-side. As generally recognized by commentators, the two narratives are meant to be correlated. Note the same place given in both accounts: "the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer's Field" (7:3; 36:2).

Each king faced an external threat. King Ahaz faced the threat of the Syro-Ephraimite coalition under the king of Samaria and the king of Damascus and his being deposed. Isaiah 7 spells out the threat.

"And it was told to the house of David, saying 'Aram has settled down upon Ephraim,' his [=Ahaz'] heart and the heart of his people shook as the shaking of the trees of the forest before the wind.… at the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and the son of Remaliah. Because Aram, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, have devised evil against you, saying, 'Let us go up against Judah and let us terrify it, and let us divide it for ourselves, and we will set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it'" (vv. 2, 4-6).

Through Isaiah Yahweh exhorted King Ahaz to trust. Isaiah was sent to say to him:

"Take heed and show quietness, do not fear, and do not let your heart be timid because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands… Thus spoke the Lord Yahweh: 'It shall not stand, and it shall not happen… If you (plural) are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all'" (vv. 4, 7, 9).[4]

Through the prophet Yahweh spoke to King Ahaz a second time:

2. All translations are by the author.

3. On possible reasons why chapters 36-39 are not chronological, see Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39, New American Commentary*, 15a (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2007): 635-6. The same sequence occurs also in 2 Kings 18-20 and 2 Chronicles 32.

4. Some translations capture well the word play of a Hiphil plus Niphal of the same root אמן (*'aman*), "firm in faith… firm at all" (ESV, NRSV).

"Ask for yourself a sign from Yahweh your (singular) God, going deep to Sheol or going high to the height above." King Ahaz replied, "I will not ask, and I will not put Yahweh to the test."

King Ahaz did not want to discard his own plans, and so he disingenuously hid behind Deuteronomy 6:16. The text clearly indicates that his response was displeasing to Yahweh. Isaiah then said to King Ahaz,

"Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you (plural) to weary men, that you weary my God also?" (vv. 10-13).

Note the shift from "your God" to "my God." By his response King Ahaz in effect disavowed and disowned Yahweh as his God. When faced with the external threat of the Syro-Ephraimite league, King Ahaz refused to look to Yahweh in faith.

King Hezekiah found himself in a similar predicament, facing an external threat. This time the threat was the army and king of Assyria. The narrative is presented in Isa 36-37. My interest here is to focus on how these chapters depict King Hezekiah. They display King Hezekiah's faith as becoming stronger throughout the ordeal.

According to the speeches by the Rabshakeh, King Hezekiah put his trust in Yahweh and encouraged Jerusalem to do so as well. The Rabshakeh deliberately tried to dissuade his hearers from following Hezekiah's advice.

In his first speech he bid the palace delegates to repeat the message of Sennacherib to Hezekiah (36:6-7):

"Look! You have trusted upon this broken staff of reed, upon Egypt… . But if you say to me, 'Toward Yahweh our God we trust,' is it not he [Yahweh] whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has removed and has said to Judah and to Jerusalem, 'Before this altar you shall worship'?"

In the past Hezekiah relied upon Egypt, a reliance ridiculed by the Rabshakeh and in fact condemned by Isaiah (20:1-6; 30:1-7; 31:1-3). Then the Rabshakeh turns toward reliance on the deity named "Yahweh." His argument is based on the common notion that the more sanctuaries and altars in operation to a deity, the "happier" that deity is. Based on that notion he insinuated that the "god" of Israel must be unhappy with Hezekiah's reforms and therefore will not help (see 2 Kings 18:4).

In his second speech to the people on the wall the Rabshakeh announced on behalf of the king of Assyria:

"Do not let Hezekiah make you trust toward Yahweh by saying, 'Yahweh will surely deliver us. This city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria'" (36:15).

The Rabshakeh repeated his warning later:

"Don't listen to Hezekiah… lest Hezekiah mislead you by saying, 'Yahweh will deliver us'" (36:16-18).

According to 38:6, Yahweh gave his promise to Hezekiah: "and from the palm of the king of Assyria I will deliver you and this city." Since that promise was given before the Rabshakeh episode, the reader assumes that King Hezekiah in fact did trust in that promise and encouraged the city of Jerusalem to do the same. Notice that the same verb is reused, "to deliver" (Hiphil of נצל, *natsal*). The Rabshakeh was confrontationally trying to dissuade the people from following Hezekiah's exhortation. He argued that the deity of Jerusalem was as weak and impotent as the deities of the other conquered nations and city-states, just another deity on the smorgasbord of deities (36:18-20).

Isaiah 37 narrates King Hezekiah's response to the threat, a response in striking contrast with that of King Ahaz. King Hezekiah displayed the signs of lamentation and went to the temple. He sent a delegation to Isaiah to say:

> "Perhaps Yahweh your God will hear the words of the Rabshakeh, whom
> his master the king of Assyria has sent to taunt the living God, and will reprove
> the words which Yahweh your God has heard, and you will lift up a prayer
> on behalf
> of the remnant that is left'" (37:1-4).

King Hezekiah first went to the temple. He wanted Jerusalem to worship there (36:7), and he himself had a theocentric-temple-focused view of things (38:20). He did not know for certain how Yahweh and Isaiah would respond to the mocking. So he prefaced his remarks with "perhaps." He wanted to hear of Yahweh's response to the Assyrian king's blasphemy, and he besought Isaiah the prophet to intercede. Yahweh's response began with the same exhortation given to King Ahaz: "Do not fear" (37:6//7:4). He has indeed heard the reviling of the Assyrians.

The narrator continues. The king of Assyria sent a message to King Hezekiah:

> "Do not let your god in whom you are trusting deceive you by saying:
> 'Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria'" (37:10).

The rhetorical heat is turning up. Here the Assyrian king's message was not directed to the people urging them not to listen to Hezekiah. Now it was addressed to Hezekiah himself not to be "deceived by his god." Then he supported his warning with his past military history. None of the other gods delivered the other nations conquered by the kings of Assyria (37:11-13). He put Hezekiah's God into the same category as the gods of the other nations. To trust in Him would result in being deceived. In short, he boasted: "No god is a match for me!"

King Hezekiah received the written message from the king of Assyria and went to the temple again. He spread it "before Yahweh," whose presence was located there for and among his people. This time King Hezekiah did not ask the prophet to intercede, but he himself prayed directly to Yahweh. It is one of the great prayers recorded in the Scriptures.

> "O Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, who sits enthroned on the cherubim, you are God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you made the heavens and the earth. Incline, O Yahweh, your ear and hear! Open, O Yahweh, your eyes and see and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he sent to scorn/taunt the living God. Truly, O Yahweh, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the lands [=nations] and their land and have put their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of man's hands, wood and stone, and they have made them perish. But now, O Yahweh our God, save us out of his hand so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you are Yahweh, you alone" (37:16-20).

King Hezekiah affirmed that the God of Israel, who dwells with and for Israel in the temple, is the only God who deserves to be called "God" and to be worshiped. For Yahweh, the specific God of Israel, is the almighty Creator who "made the heavens and the earth." He prayed that Yahweh would take note of Sennacherib's blasphemy. Then King Hezekiah admitted the obvious. Yes, the kings of Assyria have destroyed many nations and their gods. But their gods were no gods at all, only lifeless, humanly-constructed statues. The true God is not what we create but the One who created us. King Hezekiah then concluded with the petition that the God of Israel would "save" them. Yet that act of saving would not only benefit Jerusalem. It would have a wider missionary purpose. It would serve to reveal Yahweh to "all the kingdoms of the earth" who would hear of the event.

King Hezekiah Wanted to Live to Give Public Praise to Yahweh

The next portrayal comes in Isaiah 38. It sets forth a picture of a king devoted to Yahweh in contrast to a king disdainful of Yahweh.[5] Chapters 36-37 depict King Sennacherib as trivializing the God of Israel, considering Yahweh as just as weak and impotent as the gods of other nations easily conquered by the kings of Assyria (36:18-20; 37:10-13). Isaiah condemned him for arrogantly mocking and reviling the Holy One of Israel (37:23-29). Chapter 37 then ends with the account of King Sennacherib's assassination. When King Sennacherib "was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god," he was struck down with the sword by his sons (37:38). His own god could not even protect his own life while in his god's temple.

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5. Joseph Blenkinsopp notes the juxtaposition of Hezekiah's deliverance from death with the death of Sennacherib at the end of chapter 37. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39* (Anchor Yale Bible 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000): 484. Michael L. Barré expands on the contrast between King Sennacherib and King Hezekiah. One is an arrogant blasphemer while the other trusts in the God of Israel; one dies in the temple of his own god while the other is rescued from death and will rejoice at the temple of Yahweh (38:20). Michael L. Barré, *The Lord Has Saved Me: A Study of the Psalm of Hezekiah (Isaiah 38:9-20)* (Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 39; Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005): 240-241.

In contrast is set King Hezekiah. Like King Sennacherib he was facing death. He became sick to the point of death. Isaiah announced to him the Lord's word. "Thus spoke Yahweh: Set your house in order, for you shall die, you shall not live" (v 1). His word made no provisional statement, no "if" clause. Nevertheless, King Hezekiah "turned his face to the wall and prayed to Yahweh." He did not ask the prophet to intercede for him, but he prayed directly to Yahweh in faith (cf. 37:14-20). The reader processes this response as a godly response, along the lines of King David in the Psalms. The text gives us his prayer.

> "Please, O Yahweh, remember how I have walked before you in truth
> and with a whole heart, and the good in your sight that I have done."

Then "Hezekiah wept with great weeping" (v. 3). This is to be understood as a prayer of faith. His phraseology shows that King Hezekiah followed in the footsteps of King David. Note the expressions "to walk before Yahweh in truth and with a whole heart" (e.g. 1 Kings 2:4; 3:6; 11:4; 15:3; 1 Chron 28:9; 29:19). His prayer that the Lord would remember his truthful, whole-hearted and good conduct has parallels elsewhere, notably with King David's great prayer recorded in 2 Samuel 22:21-25// Psalm 18:20-24. One also thinks of Davidic Psalms, such as Psalms 15, 21, 101 and Solomon's Psalm 72. King Hezekiah's prayer was in conformity with what King Solomon prayed, "Long may he [the righteous king] live!" (Psalm 72:15).[6]

In response Isaiah spoke to Hezekiah:

> "Thus spoke Yahweh, the God of David your father: 'I have heard your prayer.
> I have seen your tears. I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you
> and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this
> city'" (38:5-6).

Note how this divine promise of deliverance is relied on by King Hezekiah during the subsequent Assyrian crisis (36:14-15, 18; 37:10, 20).

So far we see a picture of a faithful and godly king who prayed to Yahweh. The following poem helps us understand Hezekiah's character. While space prohibits a thorough discussion of this difficult "writing," I will call attention to a few salient features. In my opinion the Masoretic Text should be respected.[7]

The text given in 38:9-20 is presented as "a writing of Hezekiah the King of Judah when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness" (v. 9). The waw-consecutive form in v. 9, "and had recovered" (וַיְחִי, *waychi*), indicates that this was composed after and not during his ordeal. The content bears this out. It makes reference to God's intervention to restore him as happening in past time. In other

words, the composition should be understood as carefully composed after he was healed to serve as a permanent memorial giving Yahweh public thanks and honor for his gracious answer to the king's prayer.[8]

The composition devotes quite a few lines to his lament and petition. This is in keeping with other Psalms of thanksgiving.[9] In order to magnify his thankfulness to Yahweh the pray-er rehearses his helpless condition and the petitions he offered. In addition to those two notes he also gives thanks for God's saving and restoring action.

> "Look! Bitterness became wholeness to me, bitterness.
> And you, you lovingly delivered my life
> out of the pit of destruction.
> For you have cast behind my back
> all my sins" (v 17).

According to this piece, what did King Hezekiah desire from God? What were his petitions and what was driving them? His death would mean this:

> "I said, 'I shall not see Yah, Yah,
> in the land of the living'" (v 11).

At the end of the poem Hezekiah rejoices in God's gift of extended life.

> "For Sheol does not praise you.
> Death does not sing praises to you.
> They that sink into the pit do not hope
> for your truth.
> The living, the living, he praises you,
> as I do today.
> Father to sons makes known your truth.
> Yahweh is ready to give me salvation.
> And my music with stringed instruments we will play
> all the days of our life
> at the house of Yahweh" (vv. 18-20).

Commentators often suppose that what drove his prayer was a desire for an heir to ascend his throne. That is possible given v. 19. But the primary motivation is explicitly stated in the poem. King Hezekiah wanted to live so that he could continue to give public praise to Yahweh. With his music on stringed instruments he wanted to lead the singing at the temple of Yahweh (v. 20). He composed his cry and praise in writing precisely to serve as an ongoing public testimony to his lament, petition and Yahweh's act of salvation. Hezekiah's "writing" (מִכְתָּב, *miktab*) was incorporated into

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6. On the content of the prayer, see Isaiah 3:10; Psalm 58:11[ET]; 112; Proverbs 22:4; Nehemiah 5:19; 13:14, 22, 31. In the New Testament, see Hebrews 6:10.

7. For a helpful study on Hezekiah's psalm in Isaiah 38, see Michael Barré, *The Lord Has Saved Me*. However, he emends the Masoretic Text considerably, and in my opinion, unnecessarily, 30 words of the total 134 words in the Masoretic Text (22%).

8. P. R. Ackroyd argues that King Hezekiah's sickness and recovery function as a type of Israel's exile and subsequent restoration. P. R. Ackroyd, "An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile: A Study of 2 Kings 20, Isaiah 38-39," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 27.3 (1974): 329-53.

9. See, for example, 2 Samuel 22=Psalm 18 and Psalm 30.

Isaiah's book, and now 2700 years later it continues to perform that function. King Hezekiah became just like King David in becoming another "sweet singer of Israel's songs" (2 Samuel 23:3).

King Hezekiah Proudly Wanted to Impress the King of Babylon

Isaiah 36-38 characterize King Hezekiah as a contrast to the earlier depiction of King Ahaz in chapter 7. In his predicament King Ahaz did not want to look to Yahweh, the God of Israel. He did not want to rely on the word of Yahweh spoken through Isaiah. In contrast King Hezekiah did precisely that in his own twofold predicament of the Assyrian threat against Jerusalem and his own illness. But that is not the only portrayal of King Hezekiah. Chapter 39 presents another side to his portrayed character, not explicitly contradictory to the former but an additional dimension.

In order to understand Isaiah 39 we must first review how the preceding chapters present the city of Babylon. The preceding chapters function to set up the reader's outlook and expectations for making sense of chapter 39. Chapter 13 proclaims God's judgment upon the city of Babylon. Verse 17 implies that Babylon is rich with silver and gold:

> "Look! I am stirring up the Medes against them,
> who for silver will have no regard,
> and as for gold, they will take no delight in it."

When the Medes attack, Babylon will not be able to pay them off or bribe their way out of it. Verse 19 characterizes Babylon as "the beauty of kingdoms, the splendor of the pomp of the Chaldeans" (13:19).

Isaiah 14 reinforces the above characterization. Beginning in 14:4 Isaiah presents a "similitude/taunt" to be taken over the king of Babylon after he falls.[10] It offers a very ironic and sarcastic "movie-clip" as it were, depicting the hubris of the king of Babylon.[11] When his shade descends into the underworld, his arrival creates quite a stir.

v. 9   Sheol from below is excited about you,
          to meet your coming.
          (Your coming) has stirred up for you the shades,
          all the he-goats of the earth.
          It has raised from their thrones
          all the kings of the nations.
v. 10   All of them will respond and say to you:

10. Its label *mashal* means "similitude" and designates material that functions as a taunt.

11. See the recent study by Karlo V. Bordjadze, *Darkness Visible: A Study of Isaiah 14:3-23 as Christian Scripture* (Princeton Theological Monograph Series 228; Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017).

          'Also you, you have been made weak like us;
          to us you have been made similar.
v. 11   Your pride has been brought down to Sheol,
          the noise of your stringed instruments.
          Under you will be spread out the maggot,
          and your covering will be the worm.'
v. 12   How you have fallen from the heavens,
          O Day Star, son of Dawn!
          (How) you have been cut down to the earth,
          O decapitator/powerless one over nations!
v. 13   But you, you said in your heart:
          'To the heavens I will ascend—
          Above the stars of El
          I will elevate my throne,
          and I will sit enthroned on the mountain of the assembly,
          on the extremities of Zaphon.
v. 14   —I will ascend upon the backs of a cloud.
          I will liken myself to Elyon.'

The "similitude/taunt" of Isaiah depicts the king of Babylon as basically a megalomaniac, mad with pride and arrogance. He is just a man on earth but he intends to ascend into heaven on the backs of clouds and make himself equal with the Most High (14:14).

Already in the days of King Hezekiah the city of Babylon stood as exhibit A for worldly pomp and glory. Yahweh's response to the arrogant king of Babylon is given in the next verse:

> "But to Sheol you will be brought down,
> to the extremities of the pit" (14:15).

In fact, this is the God of Israel's typical response to human self-exaltation, to put to shame those who are honored and bring down the high and mighty: "I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless" (13:11). Before chapter 39 one reads frequently of the Holy One of Israel debasing human hubris.[12] Isaiah formulates a policy statement: "Desist from regarding man, in whose nostrils is (mere) breath, for at what value is he to be esteemed?" (2:22).

Now we are prepared to understand Isaiah 39. Merodach-baladan, the king of the city of Babylon, sent a delegation with letters and a gift to King Hezekiah after his recovery. The text then states:

> "And King Hezekiah rejoiced over them and showed them his treasure house,
> the silver and the gold and the spices and the fine oil and all his armory and

12. See, for example, 2:11-22; 3:16-4:1; 5:15-16; 16:6; 23:8-9; 28:1-4.

all that was found in his treasures. There was nothing that Hezekiah did not show them in his palace and in all his kingdom" (v. 2).

The text stresses that King Hezekiah "rejoiced" over these visitors from the king of Babylon and immediately showed them all the treasures of his palace and kingdom. The meaning of this action is clear, especially given the characterization of Babylon in the preceding chapters. King Hezekiah was trying to impress the Babylonian delegation and ultimately the king of Babylon with his own wealth. To the rich and glorious kingdoms of the world he wanted to be honored as equally rich and glorious.

King Hezekiah tried to show-off to them with all his accumulated wealth and treasures. But the God of Israel typically responds in just the opposite way:

"Yahweh of hosts has planned it,
to defile the exaltedness of all (human) splendor,
to make little all the honored of the earth" (23:9).

Therefore the divine response is predictable. The word of Yahweh of hosts pronounced to King Hezekiah:

"Look! Days are coming when all which is in your palace and which your forefathers have stored up until this day will be carried away to Babylon. Nothing will be left—spoke Yahweh—and some of your own sons who will proceed from you, whom you will beget, they will take, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon" (vv 6-7).[13]

The response of Yahweh is a classic example of the policy of *lex talionis*, the punishment fits the crime and reverses what the sinner pursued (e.g. Isaiah 3:11). One's carnal wishes will come true and result in a nightmare. King Hezekiah desired to impress the king of Babylon with the wealth of his palace. He will receive what he sought, only beyond his expectation. The future king of Babylon will be impressed all right, so impressed that he will come and take it all away to Babylon. What King Hezekiah—and his predecessor kings—stored up and valued will be gone.[14] Not only that; some of King Hezekiah's future sons will be forced to serve in the palace of Babylon's king. Those whom he sought to impress will become the oppressive masters of his own progeny and palace. It is clear that the divine sentence depicts the event as happening in the near future; some of King Hezekiah's own sons, whom he himself will beget, will be taken. But that reference to King Hezekiah's future "sons" does mean a delay. And it is that delay which King Hezekiah focused on in his response.

13. The preposition at the beginning of v 7 should be taken as a partitive *min*, "some of your own sons."

14. P. R. Ackroyd makes the interesting argument that by King Hezekiah showing everything to the Babylonian delegation, then everything legally belonged to the king of Babylon. P. R. Ackroyd, "An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile: A Study of 2 Kings 20, Isaiah 38-39," 340-341.

King Hezekiah Became Contrite and Thankful before Yahweh

How did King Hezekiah respond to God's announcement of coming judgment? Isaiah 39 gives his initial response when Isaiah asked him questions. King Hezekiah owned up to his actions:

"Everything which is in my palace they saw. There was nothing which I did not show them in my treasuries" (38:4). Then Isaiah announced God's response of judgment.

"Hear the word of Yahweh of hosts. Look! Days are coming and everything which is in your palace and which your forefathers stored up until this day will be carried away to Babylon. A thing will not be left behind—spoke Yahweh—and from your sons who will go forth from you, whom you will beget, they will take, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the King of Babylon" (38:5-7).

After Isaiah's word the king replied. The narrative does not have Isaiah responding back to the king with admonishment or disapproval. Right there the reader is inclined to understand King Hezekiah's response in a positive light. A closer look confirms that initial reaction.

The narrative continues: "Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah: 'The word of Yahweh which you spoke is good'" (39:8). King Hezekiah acknowledged what Isaiah just said as indeed "the word of Yahweh." He called it "good." Thereby he expressed his agreement with it.[15] He accepted it with humility and did not charge Yahweh with wrong (cf. Job 1:22).

The narrative then reads: "And he said, 'There will be peace that is dependable in my days'" (39:8). This sentence is often translated "For he thought…" (e.g. ESV, NRSV, NIV, NASB,), but the Hebrew need not be taken that way. In fact, the more straightforward understanding would take it as King Hezekiah's second sentence spoken to the prophet.[16] In other words, Hezekiah replied with two statements to Isaiah, each introduced with "and he said" (*wayyo'mer*): "And Hezekiah said to Isaiah… and he said… ." The two statements are: "the word of Yahweh is good" and "there will be peace that is dependable in my days."[17]

15. Compare Deuteronomy 1:14; 1 Kings 2:38, 42; 18:24.

16. After the verb "to say" (אמר, *'amar*), the conjunction כִּי (*ky*) should be taken as marking direct discourse, the so-called *hoti recitativum*. See BDB.

17. The parallel in 2 Kings 20:19 records Hezekiah's response with slightly different wording but no substantial change: "'The word of Yahweh which you have spoken is good.' And he said, 'Is it not the case if there will be peace and truth in my days?'" The interrogative is often translated "Why not," but that renders it as a rather cavalier utterance expressing indifference (e.g. ESV). This interrogative simply means "Is it not so," and it functions as equivalent to saying "It is so." In other words, it affirms the assessment of Yahweh's pronouncement as "good." The following "if" conveys almost the same sense as "since." In other words, there is no meaningful difference between the wording in Isaiah 39:8 and in 2 Kings 20:19.

What does this second sentence mean and imply? That the king would desire "peace" (*shalom*) is a righteous desire. The promised ideal king to come, the promised new and greater David is called "the Prince of Peace" (9:6). The age to come is characterized as the age of "peace" (11:6-9; 32:15-18). The second noun in 39:8, the Hebrew word וֶאֱמֶת (*we'ĕmeth*), "and reliability," creates a hendiadys with *shalom*, "peace that is dependable, reliable" (cf. Jeremiah 33:6; Esther 9:30).[18] The expression refers to the peace that can be relied upon because it is based on God's dependability and truthfulness. King Hezekiah had praised this divine characteristic in 38:19 (cf. Ps 85:10-13).

King Hezekiah stated "There will be peace that is dependable *in my days*." What does that chronological marker suggest? One could take it in a cynical way, as if Hezekiah was smugly and proudly looking out only for himself in a self-centered way and not his descendants.[19] But in my view, such an understanding skews his intention with this utterance. Yahweh's judgment declared that Hezekiah's "sons" would be taken captive to Babylon. King Hezekiah was expressing godly thankfulness for the delay in the punishment's execution. That God delays and postpones his justly deserved punishment is seen throughout the Scriptures as a positive blessing, as a praiseworthy characteristic of Yahweh, who is longsuffering and "slow to anger." The way in which Yahweh's judgment is worded meant that there would be "peace that is dependable" in the days of King Hezekiah and under his royal watch. During his remaining days of 15 years as promised in chapter 38, God would ensure this blessing under King Hezekiah's rule. The king agreed with the pronounced judgment as "good" and was thankful that it was deferred so that Yahweh's gracious gifts could be experienced in the remainder of the king's rule.

There are two good parallels that can help us process King Hezekiah's response.[20] One parallel concerns King Ahab in 1 Kings 21:20-29. King Ahab humbled himself, and God responded by delaying the punishment: "I will not bring the disaster in his days; in the days of his son I will bring the disaster upon his house" (v. 29).

Another parallel concerns King Josiah, recorded in 2 Kings 22:18-20//2 Chronicles 34:26-28. Rebellious Jerusalem and Judah provoked Yahweh to anger. But to King Josiah who humbled himself, God announced a delay: "and your eyes will not look upon all the disaster which I am about to bring upon this place and upon its inhabitants" (v. 20).

King Hezekiah's response to Yahweh's pronouncement of judgment should be taken in a positive way as a God-pleasing response. At this stage in the narrative the

18. On שָׁלוֹם וֶאֱמֶת (*shalom we'ĕmeth*), see Alfred Jepsen, "אמן, 'āman," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament I*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. by John T. Willis (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974): 311.

19. For example, J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993): 297.

20. These parallels are noted by H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1968): 597.

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words given in the text lead to a positive assessment of King Hezekiah as responding with contrition and humility. That is also the way the Chronicler understood the king's response.

The Chronicler's Understanding of Isaiah 39//2 Kings 20:12-19

The Chronicler summarizes and comments on the events recorded in Isaiah 38-39 and its parallel in 2 Kings 20:1-19. Here I will briefly walk through 2 Chronicles 32:24-31.

> "In those days Hezekiah became sick to the point of death, and he prayed to Yahweh, and he spoke to him and a sign he gave to him" (v. 24).

So far the Chronicler has summarized the account recorded in 2 Kings 20:1-11 and Isaiah 38.[21]

> "But Hezekiah did not make return according to the benefit done upon him, for his heart became proud" (v. 25a).

King Hezekiah did not follow through on what he vowed. He vowed to "walk carefully all my years" (Isaiah 38:15).[22] Instead, he subsequently exhibited unrestrained pride in how he rejoiced over their visit and tried to impress the Babylonian delegation with his treasures.

> "And wrath came upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem" (v. 25b).

This line assumes that the population of Hezekiah's kingdom agreed with his pride in the kingdom's wealth and glory. The "wrath" refers to the sentence that Yahweh pronounced in 2 Kings 20:16-18 and Isaiah 39:5-7.

> "Then Hezekiwah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the wrath of Yahweh did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah" (v. 26).

The Chronicler understands the king as representing the people so that the king's response also characterized that of Jerusalem. Hezekiah "humbled himself for

21. Verse 24 summarizes the sickness episode and then the subsequent verses deal with the Babylonian visit. In my view, that is how the narrative reads. See, for example, C. F. Keil. *The Books of the Chronicles*, trans. Andrew Harper (Grand Rapids,: MI Eerdmans, 1976, original 1888): 477-479; Jacob M. Myers, *II Chronicles* (Anchor Yale Bible; New York: Doubleday, 1965): 191-194; H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles,* New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans,1982): 386. However, some commentators understand vv. 25-26 as retelling the sickness episode. See, for example, Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles* (Word Bible Commentary; Waco, 1987): 252-261; Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993): 992-994.

22. According to 2 Chronicles 32:32, the Chronicler had access to some kind of written material "in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel." I assume that the Isaianic material included the "Writing" of Hezekiah as recorded in Isaiah 38:9-20.

the pride of his heart." [23] The Chronicler is referring to Hezekiah's twofold response to the divine sentence as recorded in 2 Kings 20:19 and Isaiah 39:8. According to the Chronicler's understanding, by declaring Yahweh's sentence as "good" and by his thankfulness for its delayed execution King Hezekiah was "humbling himself for the pride of his heart."[24] In view of Hezekiah's self-humbling Yahweh deferred the punishment beyond the days of Hezekiah, and this deferral was recognized by Hezekiah in his statement. In fact, Yahweh deferred executing his sentence for a century until the time of Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 36:18).

After his summary of the Babylonian visit the Chronicler gives a further clarification and explanation later in 2 Chronicles 32:27-31. First he clarifies how wealthy, prosperous, and honored Hezekiah had become (vv. 27-30). Then he comments on the visit of the Babylonian delegation.

"And so, in connection with the envoys of the princes of Babylon, whom they had sent to him [Hezekiah] to inquire about the sign that had happened in the land, God left him to himself, in order to test him, to know all that was in his heart" (v. 31).

The Babylonian delegation came to Hezekiah "to inquire about the sign." Their interest in matters of astrology was, at least, one thing that motivated them. When they arrived, God allowed Hezekiah to rely on his own instincts without a word from God spoken through Isaiah. Isaiah came onto the scene later, after the Babylonian visit itself. God's purpose was "to test him, to know all that was in his heart."[25] The earlier description gave the reader the assessment. King Hezekiah did not pass the test. His heart became proud.

In short, the Chronicler understood the episode of the Babylonian visit as King Hezekiah's pride in his own wealth and glory and then his contrition and self-humbling after Yahweh's decreed sentence.

The Complex Portrait of King Hezekiah

Each of the narratives in Isaiah 36-39 presents the interaction between Yahweh through his prophet Isaiah and King Hezekiah. They provide us with a complex portrait of King Hezekiah with different dimensions. The king showed different sides of his character when facing different concerns. When facing the blasphemy and conquering might of the king of Assyria, King Hezekiah prayed and trusted in Yahweh's promise to deliver. When told by Yahweh through Isaiah that he was dying and would not live, King Hezekiah prayed and was granted an extra fifteen years. In his "writing" he revealed that he wanted to live to give Yahweh public praise at

23. Here the *beth* preposition means "in exchange for, in replacement of the pride of his heart."

24. The verb is a Niphal of כנע (*kana'*) with a reflexive sense, "he humbled himself." The word occurs frequently in Chronicles.

25. For parallels, see Genesis 22:1, 12; Exodus 15:25-26; 16:4; 20:20; Deuteronomy 8:2, 16; 13:3; Judges 2:22; Psalm 26:2.

the temple. When visited by a delegation from the king of Babylon, King Hezekiah wanted to impress the king of Babylon with his own wealth and treasures. And upon hearing the sentence from Yahweh, King Hezekiah humbled himself and became thankful for the punishment's delay and the gift of reliable peace in his own days.

Isaiah 39 announces that days are coming after King Hezekiah's time when his treasures will be carried off to Babylon and his sons will serve the king of Babylon. But chapters 13-14 already made clear that the future would not belong to the supremacy of the king of Babylon either. The future would not rest in the hands of the king of Damascus or the king of Samaria or King Ahaz or the king of Assyria or the king of Babylon or even King Hezekiah. The book is filled with kings! But Yahweh of hosts is "the King," the real King (6:5). He is the One who "rules and will rule on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem" (24:23). And Yahweh's righteous and peace-creating rule will take place through the ideal Davidic King to come. This will happen, Isaiah asserted, for "the zeal of Yahweh of hosts will do this" (9:1-7 ET; cf. 11:1-10). All glory be to the Holy One of Israel and to His Christ!

Addendum: The Agenda of Merodach-baladan

Marduk-apla-iddina, biblical Merodach-baladan, of the Chaldean tribe of Bit-Yakin, was king of the city of Babylon in the years 721-710 and 704-703 B.C.[26] What was the motivation behind Merodach-baladan sending envoys to Jerusalem with a gift? It is important to make a distinction between the response of the prophet Isaiah and the historical motivation of Merodach-baladan. We have already seen how the prophet responded to King Hezekiah's behavior in chapter 39. Isaiah was opposed to his desire to impress the visitors from the king of Babylon with his accumulated wealth.

The biblical text tells us that the king of Babylon had heard about King Hezekiah's illness and recovery. The Chronicler suggests an astrological interest in the sign given King Hezekiah associated with his recovery. We know from extra-biblical texts that during the reigns of Sargon II (722-705) and Sennacherib (705-681), Merodach-baladan was their constant foe and united Chaldean and Aramean tribes to oppose Assyrian expansion in southern Babylonia. It is therefore historically plausible to suggest an additional reason for the visit, a possible interest in recruiting King Hezekiah to join his anti-Assyrian efforts.

26. John A. Brinkman, "Merodach-baladan II." Pages 6-53 in *Studies Presented to A. Leo Oppenheim*, edited by R. D. Briggs and J. A. Brinkman (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1964).

The Future David of Psalm 101: Davidic Hope Sustained in Book IV of the Psalter

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Abstract: Since Gerald Wilson published *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, scholars have debated his proposal regarding the structure and message of the Psalter. Central to the debate is the role and status of the Davidic line in Books IV–V (Psalms 90–150). Many follow Wilson, arguing that the Davidic line and Davidic hope virtually disappear in these final two books. Others disagree, but they tend to emphasize royal and Davidic evidence within Book V. This paper explores the message and function of Psalm 101 within Book IV, arguing that its intra-book links, Davidic title, royal voice, lamenting tone, future orientation, inter-psalm allusions, and strategic placement make it a central psalm sustaining Davidic hope in Book IV. Therefore, the יהוה מלך psalms at the core of Book IV (93–100) do not elevate the reign of Yahweh only to castigate the line of David. The reign of Yahweh rather upholds the line of David, answering the suspicions of Psalm 89 where God was questioned because he had bound his visible earthly rule to the fallen Davidic throne.

Key Words: Psalms, Hebrew Psalter, Book IV, Gerald Wilson, canonical, David, royal psalm

Introduction

In the last three decades, concentrated research on the canonical Hebrew Psalter has advanced the view that the Psalter bears an intentional structure.[1] Interpreters have explored the placement of individual psalms, pairs, sets, groups, collections, books, and multi-book sections. Many have attempted to discern organizational structures, theological perspectives, and connected themes across the Psalter.[2]

1. This article is adapted from David Gundersen, "Davidic Hope in Book IV of the Psalter (Psalms 90–106)" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 1–2, 146–85.

2. For the last century, see Thorne Wittstruck, *The Book of Psalms: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland, 1994), 1:1–10. For the last few decades, see Howard's multiple surveys of trends published over the last twenty years: David M. Howard, Jr., "Editorial Activity in the Psalter: A State-of-the-Field Survey," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, ed. J. C. McCann (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 52–70; "Recent Trends in Psalms Study," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, ed. D. W. Baker and B. T. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 329–68; and "The Psalms and Current Study," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and*

Some sense a narrative pulse within the Psalter.[3] Building on Gerald Wilson's groundbreaking work, a company of scholars broadly agree that Books I–III form a Davidic shape.[4] Psalms 1–2 set the royal agenda, Davidic superscriptions fill Books I–II, and Books I–III are bound by royal psalms at their seams (Pss 2, 72, 89).[5] The trajectory moves loosely from the ideal king (Pss 1–2) through the life and sufferings of David (Books I–II) to a Solomonic coronation (Ps 72). The Psalter then darkens with the storm of exile (Book III), culminating in the apparent failure of the Davidic promises (Ps 89:39–52).

Those who sense this narrative trajectory, however, differ over the part Book IV plays. Book IV as a whole has been the subject of many studies,[6] while more focused

Approaches, ed. D. G. Firth and P. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 23–40. Kuntz has provided two surveys: Kenneth Kuntz, "Engaging the Psalms: Gains and Trends in Recent Research," *CR* 2 (1994): 77–106 and Kenneth Kuntz, "Continuing the Engagement: Psalms Research Since the Early 1990s," *CBR* 10 (2012): 321–78. Bruce Waltke and Willem VanGemeren each write autobiographically about their own journeys interpreting the Psalms: Bruce K. Waltke, "Biblical Theology of the Psalms Today: A Personal Perspective," in *The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul*, ed. A. J. Schmutzer and D. M. Howard, Jr. (Chicago: Moody, 2013), 19–28; Willem A. VanGemeren, "Entering the Textual World of the Psalms: Literary Analysis," in *The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul*, ed. A. J. Schmutzer and D. M. Howard, Jr. (Chicago: Moody, 2013), 29–48. Two relevant 2014 publications include William P. Brown, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014) and Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, ed., *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship*, SBLAIL 20 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014). A recent whole-Psalter analysis comes from O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2015).

3. Some actually use the phrase "story line" (e.g., James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 277; Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, in vol. 5 of *EBC*, ed. T. Longman III and D. E. Garland [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008], 38).

4. Gerald H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, SBLDS 76 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985).

5. For Pss 1–2 as an introduction to the Psalter, see Robert L. Cole, *Psalms 1-2: Gateway to the Psalter* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013); see summary in Robert L. Cole, "Psalms 1 and 2: The Psalter's Introduction," in *The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul*, ed. A. J. Schmutzer and D. M. Howard, Jr. (Chicago: Moody, 2013), 183–95.

6. M. D. Goulder, "Fourth Book of the Psalter," *JTS* 26 (1975): 269–89; Klaus Koenen, *Jahwe wird kommen, zu herrschen über die Erde: Ps 90-110 als Komposition*, Bonner biblische Beiträge 101 (Weinheim, Germany: Beltz Athenäum, 1995); Jerome F. D. Creach, "The Shape of Book Four of the Psalter and the Shape of Second Isaiah," *JSOT* 23, no. 80 (1998): 63–76; Hyung Jun Kim, "The Structure and Coherence of Psalms 89–106" (PhD diss., University of Pretoria, 1998); Erich Zenger, "The God of Israel's Reign Over the World (Psalms 90–106)," in *The God of Israel and the Nations: Studies in Isaiah and the Psalms*, trans. E. R. Kalin (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 161–90; Gordon Wenham, "Rejoice the Lord Is King: Psalms 90–106 (Book IV)," in *Praying by the Book: Reading the Psalms*, ed. C. G. Bartholomew and A. West (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), 89–120; James Todd Borger, "Moses in the Fourth Book of the Psalter" (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002); Anthony Gelston, "Editorial Arrangement in Book IV of the Psalter," in *Genesis, Isaiah, and Psalms: A Festschrift to Honour Professor John Emerton for His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. K. J. Dell, G. I. Davies, and Y. V. Koh (Boston: Brill, 2010), 165–76; Nathan Dean Maxwell, "The Psalmist in the Psalm: A Persona-Critical Reading of Book IV of the Psalter" (PhD diss., Baylor University, 2007); Robert E. Wallace, *The Narrative Effect of Book IV of the Hebrew Psalter*, SBL 112 (New York: Peter Lang, 2007); Michael G. McKelvey, *Moses,*

studies have explored specific sections or themes within the book.[7] Yet interpreters continue to discuss whether David, so central early in the Psalter, disappears in Book IV.

The Disappearance of David?

What happens to the Davidic promises in Psalms 90–106? Some see Book IV responding to the failure of the Davidic program (Ps 89) by returning to the Mosaic program and reenthroning Yahweh before an exiled people. David is minimized, Moses is promoted (90:1; 99:6; 103:7; 105:26; 106:16, 23, 32), and Yahweh reigns as king (93–100). For Wilson, Book IV redirects Israel's hope away from the Davidic line and toward Yahweh as her royal refuge.[8] For Zenger, the "'messianic' program" of Books I–III yields to the "'theocratic' program" of Books IV–V.[9] For Wallace, Book IV emphasizes the Mosaic covenant over the Davidic covenant and the reign of Yahweh over the reign of David: "Davidic covenant can be set aside. David agrees that Moses is the authority, and David no longer rules. YHWH reigns!"[10] These scholars broadly agree that Book IV bends the direction of the Psalter from David to Yahweh through Moses.

David in the Shadows?

But does the Davidic king disappear from Book IV as Yahweh takes center stage? Davidic superscriptions reappear in Book IV, beginning with a kingship psalm

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David and the High Kingship of Yahweh: A Canonical Study of Book IV of the Psalter, GDBS 55 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010); Bernard Gosse, "La Réponse des Ps 90–106 aux Ps 88–89 Quant à la Manifestation de l'Amour de Yahvé," *ETR* 87, no. 4 (2012): 481–86; Sampson S. Ndoga, "Revisiting the Theocratic Agenda of Book 4 of the Psalter for Interpretive Premise," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship*, ed. N. L. deClaissé-Walford, SBLAIL 20 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 147–59.

7. David M. Howard, Jr., "A Contextual Reading of Psalms 90–94," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, ed. J. C. McCann, JSOTSup 159 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 108–23; Johannes Schnocks, "Mose im Psalter," in *Moses in Biblical and Extra-Biblical Traditions*, ed. A. Graupner and M. Wolter (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 79–88; Jinkyu Kim, "The Strategic Arrangement of Royal Psalms in Books IV–V," *WTJ* 70, no. 1 (2008): 143–57; EunMee Moon, "The Sapiential Reading of Psalms 107–18 in the Framework of Books IV and V of the Psalter" (PhD diss., Trinity International University, 2008); Lindsay Wilson, "On Psalms 103–106 as a Closure to Book IV of the Psalter," in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms*, ed. E. Zenger (Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2010), 755–66; Krista Mournet, "Moses and the Psalms: The Significance of Psalms 90 and 106 within Book IV of the Masoretic Psalter," *CBW* 31 (2011): 66–79; Andrew Witt, "Hearing Psalm 102 within the Context of the Hebrew Psalter," *VT* 62, no. 4 (2012): 582–606.

8. Wilson, *Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 215. According to Wilson, Book IV responds to the failure of the Davidic monarchy in four ways: "(1) YHWH is king; (2) He has been our 'refuge' in the past, long before the monarchy existed (i.e., in the Mosaic period); (3) He will continue to be our refuge now that the monarchy is gone; (4) Blessed are they that trust in him!"

9. Zenger, "Psalms 90–106," 161.

10. R. Wallace, *Narrative Effect of Book IV*, 94.

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(101) that follows the יהוה מלך psalms (93–100). David appears again heading the celebratory Psalm 103. Sandwiched between is the unattributed Psalm 102, suggesting that 101–103 be viewed as a Davidic triad.[11] Davidic titles then open, punctuate, and close Book V (108–10, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138–45). Psalm 110 is ascribed to David and evokes previous royal psalms (2, 72, 89), while Psalm 132 pronounces the permanence of God's firm covenant with David.

Lindsay Wilson challenges the false dichotomy that David's line and Yahweh's kingship are mutually exclusive (Psalm 2 alone undoes the dichotomy by presenting the messianic king as Yahweh's ruling representative). So rather than discounting the Davidic promises, Book IV shows that "any future Davidic kingship can only be possible if Yahweh's prior claim of kingship is upheld."[12] McKelvey interprets a Davidic voice in Psalms 101–104 as evidence that a Davidic hope remains even in Book IV.[13] Creach and Dempster, foreshadowing the argument in this paper, highlight the importance and position of the royal Psalm 101 as it follows the יהוה מלך psalms.[14]

Psalm 101: Thesis and Overview

Nestled in the foothills of the majestic יהוה מלך series (93–100), Psalm 101 marks a thematic junction as Book IV descends from the high peaks of divine kingship. What is the role of this royal Davidic psalm directly following the יהוה מלך series and leading into the next section of Book IV? In this paper I explore the message and function of Psalm 101 within Book IV and argue that its intra-book links, Davidic title, royal voice, lamenting tone, future orientation, inter-psalm allusions, and strategic placement make it a central psalm sustaining Davidic hope in Book IV. Thus the יהוה מלך psalms do not elevate the reign of Yahweh only to castigate the line of David. The reign of Yahweh rather upholds the line of David, answering the suspicions of Psalm 89 where God was questioned because he had bound his earthly rule with the (now) fallen Davidic throne.

General Placement of Psalm 101

Psalm 101 signals a shift within Book IV. Disjunctive structural elements separate Psalms 93–100 and Psalm 101. But conjunctive thematic elements signal a strong complementary relationship between the cosmic reign of Yahweh and the grounded

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11. Witt, "Psalm 102," 590–96. McKelvey views Pss 101–104 as a "Davidic collection" (McKelvey, *Moses, David and the High Kingship of Yahweh*, 192–93).

12. L. Wilson, "Psalms 103–106," 766.

13. McKelvey, *Moses, David and the High Kingship of Yahweh*, 309–22.

14. Jerome F. D. Creach, *The Destiny of the Righteous in the Psalms* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2008), 107–8; Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 199 (see 199n14).

declaration of David. Thus structural discontinuity meets thematic unity as Yahweh's globalized theocracy meets David's localized monarchy. The discontinuity (treated first) and the continuity (treated next) become evident when moving outward from the core of the יהוה מלך psalms (96–99).

The יהוה מלך Core in Psalms 96–99

Howard calls Psalms 95–100 the "heart" and "core" of a "concentric tripartite arrangement" in Book IV: 90–94, 95–100, and 101–6.[15] Although 93–100 form a slightly broader collection, 95–100 rise to a peak while 96–99 stand at the summit of Book IV heralding the universal reign of God. Psalms 96 and 98 share the same incipit: the doxological summons to "sing to Yahweh a new song" (שירו ליהוה שיר חדש) (96:1; 98:1). Psalms 97 and 99 likewise share their own incipit: the doxological proclamation that "Yahweh reigns!" (יהוה מלך) (97:1; 99:1). Clearly these alternating incipits are purposefully placed, creating a rhythmic effect: "Sing a new song—Yahweh reigns! Sing a new song—Yahweh reigns!"

Inclusio in Psalms 95 and 100

These central יהוה מלך psalms (96–99) are framed by Psalms 95 and 100.[16] The bookends are built of lexical, thematic, and structural connections. Howard notes 15 shared lexemes between Psalms 95 and 100. Eight are "key-word links" shared primarily between 95:6b–7c and 100:3b–c, six are "thematic word links," and one is an "incidental repetition" (see Table 1).[17]

Table 1. Shared lexemes in Psalms 95 and 100

"Key-Word Links"		
95:1, 3, 6; *100:1, 2, 3, 5*	יהוה	Yahweh
95:5, 7; 100:3 (2x)	הוא	he
95:3, 7; *100:3*	אלהים	God
95:5, 6; *100:3*	עשׂה	make
95:7; *100:3*	אנחנו	we
95:7, 10; *100:3*	עם	people
95:7; *100:3*	מרעית	pasture
95:7; *100:3*	צאן	sheep
"Thematic Word Links"		
95:1, 2; *100:1*	רוע	make a joyful noise
95:1; *100:2*	(ה)רנן	shout for joy
95:2; *100:1, 4*	תודה	thanksgiving
95:6, 11; *100:2, 4*	בוא	come/enter
95:10; *100:5 (2x)*	דר/דור	generation
95:4; *100:1*	ארץ	earth
"Incidental Repetitions"		
95:10; 100:3	ידע	know

The inclusio framing Psalms 95–100 is formed primarily with the mirrored sections in 95:6b–7c and 100:3b–c. These sections share a cluster of lexical links (see Table 2).

Table 2. Inclusio framing Psalms 95–100 in 95:6b–7c and 100:3

Psalm 95:6b–7c	Psalm 100:3
6b let us kneel before <u>Yahweh</u>, our <u>Maker</u>! 7a For <u>he</u> is our <u>God</u>, 7b and <u>we</u> are the <u>people</u> of his <u>pasture</u>, 7c and the <u>sheep</u> of his hand.	3a Know that <u>Yahweh</u>, <u>he</u> is <u>God</u>! 3b It is he who <u>made</u> us, and we are his; 3c <u>we</u> are his <u>people</u>, and the <u>sheep</u> of his <u>pasture</u>.
נברכה לפני־<u>יהוה</u> <u>עשׂנו</u> 6b כי <u>הוא</u> <u>אלהינו</u> 7a <u>ואנחנו</u> <u>עם</u> <u>מרעיתו</u> 7b <u>וצאן</u> ידו 7c	דעו כי־<u>יהוה</u> <u>הוא</u> <u>אלהים</u> 3a <u>הוא־עשׂנו</u> ולא[18] <u>אנחנו</u> 3b <u>עמו</u> <u>וצאן</u> <u>מרעיתו</u> 3c

Hossfeld and Zenger rightly argue that the Israel-specific description in 95:6b–7c is universalized in 100:3. The nations, like Israel, are created by Yahweh, so they too belong to him as "his people" and "the sheep of his pasture."[19] Thus the initial

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15. David M. Howard, Jr., The Structure of Psalms 93–100, BJS 5 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 166.

16. Howard, *Psalms 93–100*, 138–41. See also Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51-100*, trans. L. M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 462; J. Clinton McCann, Jr., *The Book of Psalms: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections*, in vol. 4 of *NIB*, ed. L. E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996), 1061, 1077; Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, WBC (Dallas: Word Books, 1990), 535; Howard N. Wallace, *Psalms*, RNBC (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009), 157.

17. Howard, *Psalms 93–100*, 138–41. Table 1 is adapted from Howard's information.

18. "The *ketiv* of MT reads ולא אנחנו, 'and not we (ourselves),' but the *qere* reads ולו אנחנו, 'and we are his'" (Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 533). Both readings have good external support. Tate concludes that לא is emphatic ("indeed") rather than negative (Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 533–34). Howard more persuasively argues for לו for contextual reasons (Howard, *Psalms 93–100*, 92–94).

19. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 494. McCann agrees: "Psalm 100 wants us to know that God is shepherd both of God's people and of the whole cosmos" (McCann, *Psalms*, 1079).

invitation, "Make a joyful noise to Yahweh, *all the earth*" (כל־הארץ) (100:1), summons the entire earth to worship the God of Israel.[20] These bookends join to declare that the God who reigns over the cosmos and the nations is the maker and shepherd of Israel (95:6b–7c), and the God who covenanted with Israel is maker and shepherd of the nations (100:3). These tender tones (95:6b–7c; 100:3) also complement the towering center (96–99) so that the king who shakes the earth also shepherds the nations.

Psalms 95 and 100 also pair up thematically through their eager invitations to worship. Four worship-words occur in both psalms: רוע ("make a joyful noise" in 95:1, 2; 100:1), רננה/רנן ("shout for joy" in 95:1; 100:2), תודה ("thanksgiving" in 95:2; 100:1, 4), and בוא ("come/enter" in 95:6, 11; 100:2, 4). These festive liturgical orders calling Israel and the nations into the temple courts help Psalms 95 and 100 encase Psalms 96–99.

Davidic Collection in Psalms 101–104

Descending from the soaring peaks and stratospheric praise of Psalms 93–100, Book IV turns to David. Several interpreters sense a Davidic triad in Psalms 101–103 or a Davidic collection in 101–104.[21] The Davidic superscriptions of Psalms 101 and 103 exert a magnetic effect on each other. Together these two Davidic and first-person psalms sandwich the first-person Psalm 102.[22]

The triad structure (101–103) and the collection structure (101–104) are both warranted based on the hinge-role played by Psalm 104. Psalm 104 is positioned differently in different scholarly reconstructions, but it refuses this either-or by masterfully facing both ways: linked verbally with 103, concluding a Davidic collection (101–104), and linked thematically with 105–106, introducing a hymnic conclusion (104–106).[23] Psalms 103 and 104 are bound by their shared incipit and conclusion: "Bless Yahweh, O my soul!" (ברכי נפשי את־יהוה) (103:1; 22; 104:1, 35). But 104 is also bound with 105 and 106 by their shared hymnic features and their shared closing invitation: "Praise Yahweh!" (הי־וללה) (104:35; 105:45; 106:48; cf. 106:1). Thus

20. Kraus agrees that the entire earth is summoned in 100:1, but associates 100:3 with Israel (Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, trans. H. C. Oswald [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989], 274).

21. McKelvey, *Moses, David and the High Kingship of Yahweh*, 169; Zenger, "Psalms 90–106," 183–86; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150*, trans. L. M. Maloney, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 28, 37; Jamie A. Grant, "The Psalms and the King," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. D. Firth and P. S. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 109; Howard N. Wallace, *Psalms*, RNBC (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009), 157–58. Howard does not describe 101–103 or 101–104 as Davidic, but he does identify 101–106 as a collection with 104–106 as its conclusion (Howard, *Psalms 93–100*, 182).

22. Witt concludes, "Psalm 102 should be heard as a meditative response of an afflicted Davidic king to the questions of the apparent failure of the Davidic covenant and YHWH's delay in returning his steadfast love to his people" (Andrew Witt, "Hearing Psalm 102 within the Context of the Hebrew Psalter," *VT* 62, no. 4 [2012]: 604).

23. Allen independently notes this dual role played by Ps 104 (Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, WBC [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2002], 4).

Psalm 104 faces both ways, linking a Davidic collection (101–104) with a hymnic history series (104–106).[24]

Summary: Structural Disjunction Between Psalms 93–100 and 101

The structural and thematic unity woven through Psalms 93–100 and especially 95–100 is tied off before Psalm 101 as a new series begins (101–104). Several threads slip through, but disjunction generally marks the relationship between the יהוה מלך psalms and Psalm 101 (Table 3 illustrates the minimal linkage).

Table 3. Shared lexemes in Pss 100 and 101[25]

Verse	MT	Translation
100:1	מזמור	psalm
101:1	מזמור	psalm
100:5	אמונתו	his faithfulness
101:6	בנאמני	upon the faithful
100:1	הארץ	(all) the earth
101:6	ארץ	(in) the land
101:8	ארץ	(in) the land
100:2	באו	come
100:4	באו	enter
101:2	תבוא	will you come
100:1, 2, 3, 5	יהוה	Yahweh
101:1, 8	יהוה	Yahweh
100:5	חסדו	his steadfast love
101:1	חסד	steadfast love
100:3	דעו	know
101:4	אדע	I will know
100:3	עשׂנו	he made us
101:3	עשׂה	the work
101:7	עשׂה	who practices

First, the bright bookends framing Psalms 95–100 signal closure (95:6b–7c and 100:3b–c). Psalm 101 clearly does not belong to the יהוה מלך series but starts its

24. This intricate linkage between Pss 103, 104, and 105 may help explain why some interpreters see Pss 101–106 as its own collection (see Jean-Luc Vesco, *Le Psautier de David: Traduit et Commenté*, LD [Paris: Cerf, 2006], 2:928; Howard, *Psalms 93–100*, 181–82; Sampson S. Ndoga, "Revisiting the Theocratic Agenda of Book 4 of the Psalter for Interpretive Premise," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Book of Psalms: The Current State of Scholarship*, ed. N. L. deClaissé-Walford, SBLAIL 20 [Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014], 155).

25. The purpose of Table 3 is to demonstrate the paucity of shared lexemes rather than their prevalence. Further, "keyword correspondences to the preceding Psalm 100 occur at distinct points

own. Second, Psalm 101 draws attention by bearing the first Davidic superscription since Psalm 86, the first explicit Davidic mention since Psalm 89, the first Davidic superscription in Book IV, and the first authorial superscription since Psalm 90. Third, the dramatic collapse of the Davidic kingship in Psalm 89 backdrops the sudden reappearance of a new royal Davidide in Psalm 101. Fourth, the hallowing and heralding of Yahweh's kingship throughout Psalms 93–100 heightens the effect of a sudden Davidic entrance. Fifth, Psalm 101 stands out as the only royal psalm—dealing with a human king—in Book IV of the Psalter. Sixth, the first-person singular voice in Psalm 101 marks a noted change from Psalms 93–100. Before Psalm 101, the only first-person utterances (from a psalmist) occur in Psalms 91, 92, and 94. These six disjunctive elements signal a shift between Psalms 93–100 and the psalms that follow.

Caveat: Thematic Conjunction Between Psalms 100 and 101

Despite these disjunctive elements, several thin threads slip through, lightly binding Psalms 100 and 101. (1) Both are titled מזמור ("psalm"; 100:1; 101:1), a musical notation used only 4x in Book IV. (2) Psalm 101 begins as Psalm 100 ends: praising the permanence of Yahweh's חסד ("steadfast love"; 100:5; 101:1). (3) Psalm 100 begins with the command to sing, Psalm 101 with the commitment to sing. Psalm 100 implores the nations to "make a joyful noise" (הריעו, 100:1) and enter God's presence "with singing" (ברננה, 100:2), and David answers the invitation: "I will sing" and "I will make music" (אשירה and אזמרה, 101:1). (4) Psalm 100 summons all the earth to make a joyful noise "to Yahweh" (100:1 ,ליהוה). David then makes music "*to you* (לך יהוה, 101:1), O Yahweh." (5) Both psalms present a comprehensive vision: Psalm 100 begins with "all the earth" (כל־הארץ, 100:1) summoned to praise Yahweh while Psalm 101 ends with "all the wicked" (כל־רשעי) and "all the evildoers" (כל־פעלי און) destroyed from the land and city (101:8). (6) Psalm 101 is a human royal psalm following a series of divine royal songs. This divine-human juxtaposition is not surprising considering this common dynamic in the psalms (Pss 2, 72, 89, 110, 132). (7) Psalm 101 expresses a strong commitment to comprehensive justice which follows (and applies) the coming justice of Yahweh trumpeted throughout 93–100. (8) Psalm 101 uses temple-approach language to describe the ideal person who can enter Yahweh's presence in response to the invitations in 95–100 (95:2; 96:8; 99:5, 9; 100:2, 4; cf. Pss 15:1–5 and 24:3–4 in 101).[26] I will explore some of these conjunctive themes in more detail below.

and have altogether different subjects" (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3*, 16).

26. I owe this final observation to Vesco, *Psautier*, 2:928.

Psalm 101: Superscription, Structure, Content, Themes

This section examines the Davidic superscription, intricate structure, royal voice, and lamenting tone of Psalm 101. Each aspect helps form the distinct message of this psalm which shapes and sustains Davidic hope in Book IV.

Davidic Superscription

Both the MT and LXX entitle Psalm 101 "a psalm of David" (לדוד מזמור, Τῷ Δαυιδ ψαλμός).[27] This Davidic superscription is the first since Psalm 86, the first explicit mention of David since Psalm 89, one of only three authorial titles in Book IV, and one of only two Davidic titles in Book IV. In light of the book-ending doxology closing Book II ("The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended"), the solitary Davidic psalm in Book III (Ps 86), and the dramatic collapse of the Davidic kingship in Psalm 89, the natural question arises: *Who is this "David"?* At this point in the structure of the Psalter, the original David has seemingly exited the stage (Ps 72), and the Davidic line has allegedly suffered an irrecoverable blow (Ps 89). Further, the figure in Psalm 101 is not reigning but appears to be waiting in the wings. I will revisit his identity after examining the psalm's structure, royal voice, content, themes, and inter-psalm connections.

Intricate Structure

Interpreters propose many different structures for Psalm 101.[28] Allen concludes that vv. 1–5 display personal "praise, plea, and testimony," and vv. 6–8 explain the king's expanding "circles of influence."[29] Kselman observes a chiasm in vv. 3–7 (see Table 4). He divides the psalm into an introduction (vv. 1–2), the voice of the king (vv. 3–5), an oracle from God to the king (vv. 6–7), and a conclusion (v. 8).[30] Most interpreters see the main division coming between vv. 4 and 5 or vv. 5 and 6, along with a progression from personal and private concerns to public and political matters.[31]

27. Psalm 101 is numbered 100 in the LXX.

28. See overview in Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 9–10.

29. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 10.

30. Kselman takes an unusual view as he attributes vv. 6–7 to Yahweh and not David (Kselman, "Psalm 101," 45–62; cf. Michael L. Barré, "The Shifting Focus of Psalm 101," in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception*, ed. P. D. Miller, Jr. and P. W. Flint, VTSup 99 [Boston: Brill, 2005], 206–7).

31. See discussion below for these interpreters. The introductory vv. 1–2 will be discussed below, but they are not sharply divided from the rest of the psalm.

Table 4. Chiasm in Ps 101:3–7[32]

MT	Verse	Translation
לנגד עיני	v. 3a	*before my eyes*
דבר	v. 3a	*report*
עשה	v. 3b	*work*
עינים	v. 5b	*eyes*
עיני	v. 6a	*my eyes*
עשה	v. 7a	*does*
דבר	v. 7b	*speaks*
לנגד עיני	v. 7b	*before my eyes*

McCann rightly argues that the lexical repetition cycling through Psalm 101 displays a complexity that defies a simple linear structure. "The complexity suggests that the structure moves on more than one level" because "the frequent repetitions move in several directions."[33] Jacobson agrees: "To emphasize one structure in this psalm, one must emphasize some data while ignoring other data. While there are many repetitions, they do not shake out cleanly into any discernable pattern."[34] I follow the majority of interpreters who see two broad divisions (vv. 1–4 and vv. 5–8), leaving room for intricate overlap due to the lexical repetition throughout the psalm.[35] I further analyze structural and thematic movements in the following section.

Royal Voice

Interpreters taking various approaches are unified in hearing a royal voice in Psalm 101.[36] Hossfeld and Zenger summarize the main form-critical views which all fall into royal categories: a royal vow for a coronation ritual, a declaration of royal innocence in a temple entrance liturgy, or a declaration of royal intentions. The psalm seems tinged by the plaintive question in v. 2, but the song is clearly royal in content and theme. This royal orientation is clear even without the superscription, but "the attribution to David confirms the interpretation of the body of the psalm as

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32. Adapted from John S. Kselman, "Psalm 101: Royal Confession and Divine Oracle," *JSOT*, no. 33 (1985): 47.

33. McCann, *Psalms*, 1082; cf. Phil J. Botha, "Psalm 101: Inaugural Address or Social Code of Conduct?" *HTS* 60, no. 3 (2004): 728ff.

34. Nancy deClaissé-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 741–42.

35. Allen and McKelvey both mention this majority view (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 9; McKelvey, *Moses, David and the High Kingship of Yahweh*, 170n1).

36. The general consensus is mentioned by Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 277; Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 7; Helen A. Kenik, "Code of Conduct for a King: Psalm 101," *JBL* 95, no. 3 (1976): 391; and Walter Brueggemann and William H. Bellinger, Jr., *Psalms*, NCBC (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 431. For examples, see Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, vol. 5 of *EBC*, ed. T. Longman III and D. E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 743–44.

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a royal prayer."[37] Kraus therefore calls it a "royal psalm" expressing "a king's vow of loyalty" with a future orientation.[38]

Early in Psalm 101 (vv. 1–4), David appears to represent a zealous righteous man in Israel. He sings and makes music, worshiping Yahweh for his steadfast love and justice (v. 1). He contemplates a blameless lifestyle and commits to integrity in his most intimate dealings (בקרב ביתי, "in the inner parts of my house," v. 2). He rejects worthless things and moral wanderers (v. 3). He devotes himself to good by distancing himself from evil (v. 4).[39]

But later in Psalm 101 (vv. 5–8), David's royal perspective and prerogative become clear, reframing his earlier statements. His stalwart guarantees display confidence in his settled role as judge in the land, and his impeccable moral calculus show that his intentions are pure as the torah. He silences secret slanderers and does not tolerate the arrogant (v. 5). He approves and positions the faithful and the blameless (v. 6). He drives away deceivers (v. 7) and daily destroys all the "wicked" and "evildoers" from Yahweh's holy city (v. 8).

Personal convictions in vv. 1–4 become judicial actions in vv. 5–8.[40] Repeated terms reveal this relationship. David does not only ponder "the blameless way" (בדרך תמים, v. 2) but also promotes and positions the one who walks "in the blameless way" (בדרך תמים, v. 6) as his companion and minister. His private integrity of "heart" (לבבי, 101:2) and his personal rejection of a perverse "heart" (לבב, 101:4) produce his commitment to punish the arrogant "heart" (לבב, 101:5). With private integrity he walks "within my house" (בקרב ביתי, 101:2), which means that the deceitful are kept from dwelling "in my house" (בקרב ביתי, 101:7).[41] He states personally that no

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37. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3*, 13, 16–17. See thorough discussions of form and genre in Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 7–9 and Karl Möller, "Reading, Singing and Praying the Law: An Exploration of the Performative, Self-Involving, Commissive Language of Psalm 101," in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham*, ed. J. G. McConville and K. Möller, LHB/OTS 461 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 113–25.

38. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 277. I prefer the phrase "royal voice" rather than "royal psalm" because the classification "royal psalm" can overshadow other important features in the psalm such as the lament in v. 2 or the temple-entrance qualities throughout.

39. Verse 1 alone or vv. 1–2a may function as an introduction as David celebrates the character of Yahweh (v. 1) and asks his plaintive question which colors the psalm (v. 2a).

40. Hossfeld and Zenger divide the psalm differently (vv. 1–2; vv. 3–5; vv. 6–8) but see the same private-to-public progression within the two main sections: "The first part is about private behavior and avoiding sin [vv. 3–5]; the second is about forensic activities and avoiding the wrong society [vv. 6–8]." Thus they divide between "private activities" and "forensic activities" (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3*, 13–14). McKelvey sees "the commitment of the king" (vv. 1–4) and "the effects of the commitment on the people" (McKelvey, *Moses, David and the High Kingship of Yahweh*, 170n1). Allen describes this common view without holding it himself: "the king's personal standards" (vv. 1–4) and "those for his people" (vv. 5–8) (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 9). Allen himself senses a positive-to-negative movement: "The king sets forth what he will do and whom he will encourage, and then what he will avoid and whom he will discourage or destroy" (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 10).

41. The clear royal connotations recast the "house" as the king's "palace" (בית, 101:2, 7; cf. 1 Kgs 4:6; 16:9) (Mitchell J. Dahood, *Psalms III: 101–150*, AB [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970], 4).

worthless matter is allowed "before my eyes" (לנגד עיני, 101:3) before stating judicially that no liars are allowed "before my eyes" (לנגד עיני, 101:7). He refuses to entertain any "worthless *matter*" (דבר־בליעל, 101:3), which may refer to a false "word" or malicious "report" (דבר), since he soon promises to cast out the "one who *speaks* lies" (שקרים דבר, 101:7). His personal rejection of "evil" (רע, 101:4) becomes a public cleansing of the "wicked" (רשעי, 101:8), and finally, he sings of justice privately in the presence of "Yahweh" (יהוה, 101:1) before enacting justice publicly in the city of "Yahweh" (יהוה, 101:8).[42] Clearly this Davidide possesses both the moral conviction and the royal position to enact divine ideals throughout the city and the land.[43] Hossfeld and Zenger note that the repeated Hiphil form of the verb צמת ("silence" or "destroy" in 101:5, 8) usually has God as the subject, so that David is taking on a role usually assigned to God. David is not speaking as an average Israelite helping his community toward holiness. He is rather exercising a God-given role under the moral authority of Yahweh.[44] Thus moral character meets royal capacity as a righteous king pledges to enforce a righteous culture.

Divine Judgment and Davidic Enforcement in Psalms 94 and 101

Lexical and thematic interplay between Psalms 94 and 101 amplify and explain the royal voice in Psalm 101. Some canonical interpreters note these lexical and thematic connections, which I will explore below.[45] As noted earlier, Psalms 95 and 100 frame the core יהוה מלך psalms (96–99). Psalms 94 and 101 color this frame by showing how the kingship of Yahweh (93, 95–100) intersects with a wicked world (94, 101): God and his Davidic king judge the wicked and reorder the land.

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42. The name יהוה frames the psalm by occurring only at the beginning and end (101:1, 8). This framing device is independently noted by Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 9–10.

43. Gerstenberger objects to the standard royal interpretation and instead sees in Psalm 101 a portrait of the righteous man—"the ideal believer in Yahweh." But his interpretation forces awkward exegesis, such as his view that the daily, authoritative, citywide moral cleansing in v. 8 expresses how "the righteous also will take any measure available to him in order to cleanse his community from evildoers" (Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2, and Lamentations*, ed. R. P. Knierim, G. M. Tucker, and M. A. Sweeney, FOTL 15 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001], 206–10). This generic "righteous-man" view makes David's moral resolve in v. 8 sound more like vigilante justice than royal authority. Similar to Gerstenberger, McCann notes, "With the disappearance of the monarchy and the eventual realization that it would never be reinstituted, Psalm 101 could at least be understood as an articulation of the values that God wills to be concretely embodied among humans—love, justice, integrity" (McCann, *Psalms*, 1083). This kind of "democratization" is certainly an appropriate implication and application of the psalm, but the interpretation of Psalm 101 within the canonical structure of the Psalter remains decidedly royal. The quote from McCann appears in his final "Reflections" section on Ps 101 rather than the commentary proper, so he may be describing more of an application. But his comment that "the monarchy… would never be reinstituted" is too comprehensive and ignores the eschatological promises to David's house.

44. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3*, 16; cf. McCann, *Psalms*, 1083.

45. Kim, "Structure and Coherence," 331–34; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3*, 16.

Placement of Psalm 94 within Psalms 93–100

Psalms 93 and 95–100 form the central יהוה מלך series. But interpreters often underscore the curious placement of Psalm 94, even though evidence within the psalm clearly maintains the theme of divine governance.[46] In the opening lines God is called "God of vengeance" (94:1) and "judge of the earth" (94:2). He is summoned to "rise up" and "repay" (94:2) those who subvert his moral order. The plight of the widow, sojourner, and orphan is laid before him (94:6), but he is neither blind to their plight nor deaf to their pleas, for he sees and hears all (94:7–9). Since he disciplines the nations (94:10) and teaches the law (94:12), he will enact justice for the righteous (94:15) and reject wicked rulers (94:20), wiping them out for their sin (94:23).

The divine ruler in Psalm 94 suits the יהוה מלך series, but the degenerate culture does not.[47] If Yahweh reigns eternally and invincibly as the inaugural Psalm 93 announces (93:1–4), why does Psalm 94 graphically depict the ongoing suffering of God's people at the hands of "wicked rulers" (94:20)? Why launch the יהוה מלך series only to come crashing back down to the injustice and ignominy faced by the righteous? Does Yahweh reign or not? Eaton offers one explanation:

Hardly has the great series of psalms (93–100) proclaiming the kingship of the Lord got under way, when this psalm intervenes with its picture of a world subjected to a 'throne of destructions', a reign of mindless cruelties. *So the harsh context for faith in God the King is acknowledged.*[48]

Hossfeld and Zenger offer a similar explanation but from the divine perspective. The יהוה מלך psalms praise Yahweh's universal rule, but his rule is complicated by the need to separate the righteous from the wicked, which requires active and violent judgment. Psalm 94 answers this call.[49] Thus Psalm 94 does not interrupt the reign of God but rather acknowledges the disordering of Israel's world while appealing for its reordering through divine justice. I propose that the righteous and waiting Davidide in Psalm 101 deliberately follows the יהוה מלך series, eager to enforce this world-ordering justice (101).

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46. Howard, *Psalms 93–100*, 174–75; David M. Howard, Jr., "Psalm 94 among the Kingship-of-Yʜᴡʜ Psalms," *CBQ* 61, no. 4 (1999): 667–85; McCann, *Psalms*, 1057; Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 488–89.

47. McCann calls the placement of Ps 94 an "apparent intrusion" (McCann, *Psalms*, 1057), Howard calls it "puzzling" (Howard, *Psalms 93–100*, 174), and Tate admits that it appears "anomalous," "out of order," and "random" (Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 488). Each of these interpreters, however, does explain the placement of Ps 94 in terms similar to the view I will explain in this section.

48. John Eaton, *The Psalms: A Historical and Spiritual Commentary with an Introduction and New Translation* (New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 336 (emphasis added). McKelvey joins in emphasizing the sinful setting of earth over which God reigns: "Psalm 94 serves to remind the reader of the setting for faith in the kingship of YHWH. Though the factors of life and the world may be unfavourable to God's people, YHWH still reigns and rules over all things, even if present circumstances might suggest otherwise" (McKelvey, *Moses, David and the High Kingship of Yahweh*, 91).

49. Hossfeld and Zenger call the redactors' placement of Psalm 94 (between 93 and 95) "theological brilliance" (Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 2*, 456).

Lexical and Thematic Links between Psalms 94 and 101

Several clear lexical repetitions between Psalms 94 and 101 suggest a relationship between God's coming justice and David's coming rule. Kim identifies 15 terms shared between Psalms 94 and 101 and concludes:

> The parallels…are so close that it seems difficult to deny that Psalm 101 responds to Psalm 94. A large number of the lexical and thematic correspondences between the psalms are used in contrast, and the presence of the king in Psalm 101 is seen as answering to the questions posed by the lament Psalm, 94.[50]

Psalm 94 is framed by the twofold plea for God's "vengeance" (נקמות, 2x in 94:1) and his twofold promise to "wipe out" the wicked (מתימצי, 2x in 94:23). Then in Psalm 101 David promises to "wipe out" secret slanderers (אצמית, 101:5) and "wipe out" all the wicked (אצמית, 101:8).[51] Several lines of evidence support this meaningful connection between Psalms 94 and 101. First, the repetition of צמת at the end of Psalm 94 creates a memorable crescendo of justice picked up in 101. Second, צמת closes both psalms as the ruler's moral cleansing has the last word (94:23; 101:8). Third, all four occurrences of צמת express promises of coming justice. Fourth, צמת occurs twice in each psalm but nowhere else in Book IV. Fifth, in Psalm 101 צמת occurs near the phrase "all doers of evil" (כל־פעלי און, 101:8), another key word shared between these two psalms (cf. 94:4, 16; see more below). Sixth, each usage of צמת relates to the destruction of the "wicked," though different terms are used (רעה in 94:23; רשע in 101:8). Kim explains, "Psalm 94 asks for their destruction, while Psalm 101 promises their extermination."[52] What Psalm 94 promises of God, this Davidide pledges to perform. This clear lexical and thematic link centers on the core message of both psalms, inviting an interwoven reading.

In Psalm 94 the psalmist mourns over "all doers of evil" (כל־פעלי און, 94:4) and asks who will protect the psalmist against these "doers of evil" (פעלי און, 94:16) before promising that God will bring the "evil" (אונם, 94:23) of the wicked back on their head. In Psalm 101 David then promises to cleanse "all doers of evil" (כל־פעלי און, 101:8) from the city of Yahweh.[53] Once again, David pledges to perform what Psalm 94 promised God would do. In Psalm 94 the suffering psalmist asked, "Who rises up for me against the wicked? Who stands up for me against doers of evil (פעלי און)?" (94:16). The future Davidide answers the call: he will cut off "all doers of evil" (כל־פעלי און, 101:8).

Psalm 94 also appeals to God the "judge" (שפט, 94:2) and promises that "justice" (משפט, 94:15) will come to the righteous. Psalm 101 then depicts David musically pondering "justice" (משפט, 101:1), which he enforces stringently in the remainder of the psalm. This justice must be enacted in real time and space, so Psalm 94 asks Yahweh to arise as judge of "the earth" (הארץ, 94:2), while David approves the faithful "in the land" (ארץ, 101:6) and destroys the wicked "in the land" (ארץ, 101:8).

In Psalm 94, the wicked assume that God is blind to their ways, so the psalmist admonishes them, "When will you *be wise*?" (תשכילו, 94:8). Psalm 101, in contrast, introduces David who "ponders" (אשכילה, 101:2) the blameless way. Both contexts are related to justice. The wicked keep breaking God's law and oppressing God's people because they assume they have escaped God's gaze. But David is wiser than the wicked: he considers God's laws and ways so that he can obey and enforce the moral code.[54]

Psalm 94 asks how long "the wicked" (רשעים, 2x in 94:3) will be allowed to exult but also promises punishment on "the wicked" (לרשע, 94:13). Yet wicked rulers are still found "condemning" ("making wicked") (ירשיעו, 94:21) the innocent. So in Psalm 101, David resolves to cleanse the city of "the wicked" (רשעי, 101:8).[55]

On a positive note, Psalm 94 says that all the upright in "heart" (לב, 94:15) will follow justice. In Psalm 101, the heart matters greatly to David. He walks with integrity of "heart" (לבבי, 101:2), condemns the perverse "heart" (לבב, 101:4), and rejects the arrogant "heart" (לבב, 101:5). Psalm 94 also mentions the cares of the psalmist's "inner parts" (בקרבי, 94:19), which likely relate to a desire for justice. David then uses the same term twice as he keeps pure the "inner parts" (בקרב, 101:2; בקרב, 101:7) of his house.

In Psalm 94, God sees all because he formed the "eye" (עין, 94:9). In Psalm 101, David's eyes are likewise central in his plans to enforce justice. His "eyes" (עיני, 101:3) gaze on nothing worthless, he does not endure haughty "eyes" (עינים, 101:5), he sets his "eyes" (יניע, 101:6) on the faithful in the land, and he rejects all liars from before his "eyes" (יניע, 101:7).

The man whom God teaches his law will get rest from "evil" (ער, 94:13), a rest which David will help create because he will know nothing of "evil" (רע, 101:4). Indeed, Psalm 94 accuses the wicked of arrogant "words" (ידברו, 94:4), but David promises to stay away from all who "speak" (דבר, 101:7) lies.

Thematically, Psalm 94 depicts the "proud" (גאים, 94:2) and "arrogant" (עתק, 94:4) boasting that Yahweh does not see their evil deeds (94:7), but David in Psalm 101 will not endure the "haughty" (גבה, 101:5) and "arrogant" (רחב, 101:5). Psalm 94 condemns unjust rulers who seek to be allied with God but are rejected by him because "they frame injustice by statute" (94:20). It seems that Psalm 94 may bemoan unjust kings that the righteous may encounter in Israel or in the exile; these wicked rulers

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50. Kim, "Structure and Coherence," 334 (see 331–334; the phrases "answering to" and "Psalm 94" are original); cf. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3*, 16.

51. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3*, 16 independently note this lexical repetition.

52. Kim, "Structure and Coherence," 332.

53. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3*, 16 independently note this lexical repetition.

54. The verb שׂכל only occurs once more in Book IV, referring to the sins of the fathers (106:7) (Kim, "Structure and Coherence," 332).

55. The root רשע occurs only once between Pss 94 and 101, declaring that Yahweh delivers the righteous from the wicked: "O you who love Yahweh, hate evil! He preserves the lives of his saints; he delivers them from the hand of the *wicked*" (רשעים, 97:10).

cannot and do not reign as God's representative. If this view is implied, the rejection of unjust kings makes sense of David's declaration of righteousness in Psalm 101.

Finally, Psalm 94 asks "How long?" (עד־מתי, 94:3), and David asks, "When will you come to me?" (101:2). Both psalmists are waiting, and their waiting centers on justice. Thus the linkage between the justice-requesting 94 and the justice-announcing 101 helps explain the plaintive undertone of Psalm 101. The cosmic order heralded throughout 93–100 but questioned in 94 still awaits enactment.

Lamenting Tone

Psalm 101 is a royal psalm with a lamenting tone, marked especially by the plaintive question "Oh when will you come to me?"(מתי תבוא אלי, 101:2b).[56] The temporal interrogative adverb מתי ("when") appears 12 other times in the Psalter: 2x directed toward humans (41:6; 94:8), 3x directed to God in lament (מתי, 42:2; 119:82, 84), and 7x directed toward God in lament using the full phrase עד־מתי ("How long?" or "Until when?" in 6:4; 74:10; 80:5; 82:2; 90:13; 94:3 [2x]). Since the adverb מתי expresses lament in its 10 other occurrences directed to God, David is surely lamenting in 101:2.

Psalm 101 begins with singing as the יהוה מלך tones seep into this new series (101:1). David states three intentions that harmonize in a Hebrew rhyme: "I will sing," "I will make music," and "I will ponder" (אַשְׂכִּילָה + אֲזַמֵּרָה + אָשִׁירָה, 101:1 –2). This general threefold synonymy suggests a musical meditation, which is precisely what David crafts in the main body of the psalm. His topics are "steadfast love" (חסד, 101:1), "justice" (משפט, 101:1), and "the blameless way" (בדרך תמים, 101:2). The "blameless way" likely refers to God's law.[57]

But despite David's singing and study in vv. 1–2a, and despite his grand promises of justice, integrity, order, and city-cleansing in vv. 3–8, a cloud of lament hangs over his royal declaration. He asks, "When will you come to me?" (מתי תבוא אלי, 101:2b). The question clearly expresses an unfulfilled desire, i.e., a lament. But the question's clear tone is clouded by its ambiguous meaning.[58] What is David asking, and why does he ask the question here?

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56. Dahood, *Psalms III*, 2; McKelvey notes both dynamics and identifies Ps 101 as a royal lament/complaint (McKelvey, *Moses, David and the High Kingship of Yahweh*, 170–71n1). Allen sees the "hymnic introduction" as another reason to hear the psalmist lamenting because it functions as an "indirect appeal represented by his praise" (Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 8–9, 11). But Allen provides no solid basis for viewing hymnic features as plaintive.

57. DeClaissé-Walford, Jacobson, Tanner, *Psalms*, 743–44; cf. J. H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, SBT 32 (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1976), 141–42. For example, Ps 19:7 reads, "The *law* of Yahweh is *perfect*" (תמימה תורת יהוה). Further, the opening of Ps 119 equates the "blameless way" with the law of Yahweh: "Blessed are those whose *way* is *blameless*, who walk in the *law* of Yahweh" (אשרי תמימי־דרך ההלכים בתורת יהוה, 119:1). Later the psalmist expresses his desire to be "blameless" related to God's "statutes" (תמים בחקיך, 119:80).

58. Most interpreters note the ambiguity of the question in v. 2 (e.g., Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3*, 14–15; Barré, "Shifting Focus of Psalm 101," 207–8; Booij, "Psalm 101:2," 458–62;

Johnson argues that Psalm 101 depicts a "ritual humiliation" during an autumnal festival where the king undergoes a "lesson in dependence on Yahweh" as he pleads for Yahweh's presence.[59] Booij hears David requesting a revelatory dream or vision like Solomon received in 1 Kings 3 (cf. בוא אל ["came to …"] in the context of night-visions in Gen 20:3; 31:24; Num 22:8–9, 19–20).[60] Hossfeld and Zenger suggest the possibility of a theophany (cf. Deut 33:2; Hab 3:3) since the request calls for "movement by Yʜᴡʜ toward the royal petitioner."[61] Keil and Delitzsch propose that David desires that the ark of Yahweh be installed in Jerusalem, making it the "city of Yahweh" (101:8).[62] Dahood hears David asking, "When am I going to be awarded by God's presence for my perfect conformity to his will in the past?"[63] Botha suggests the question may "draw attention to the divine sanction of the authority of the speaker" and display a "close association between speaker and Yahweh."[64] Kselman does not explain the meaning of the question in v. 2 but does argue that Yahweh responds to the question by coming to David in vv. 6–8 (where Kselman sees Yahweh speaking, not David).[65]

Rather than analyzing each view in detail, I propose an interpretation of David's question that (1) fits the royal voice and ruling concern in the psalm, (2) matches the plaintive tone, (3) suits the message and flow of Book IV, (4) naturally follows the preceding יהוה מלך series, (5) explains the verb "come" (בוא), and (6) identifies a central concern shared by many of the views just described.[66]

The specific meaning of David's question is initially ambiguous, but numerous elements are still clear. First, the question must be related to the clear theme of the song: the righteous rule of an Israelite king on earth. Second, the question should be heard from a Davidic voice due to the superscription. Third, the question implies "spatial distance" between the king and God, a distance that dissatisfies

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Botha, "Psalm 101," 734–35.

59. Aubrey R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*, 2nd ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967), 113–16; cf. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms*, 122–23.

60. Booij, "Psalm CI 2," 460; cf. Dahood, *Psalms III*, 2. Booij does not mention that 1 Kgs 3 records that God "appeared to" (ראה…אל, 1 Kgs 3:5) Solomon rather than "came to" him.

61. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3*, 15.

62. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, trans. F. Bolton (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 3:108. In this view, Ps 101:2 reflects David's question in 2 Sam 6:9 after people died for mishandling the ark on its way to Jerusalem (Keil and Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:109; contra Booij, "Psalm CI 2," 459). "And David was afraid of Yahweh that day, and he said, 'How can the ark of Yahweh come to me?'" (2 Sam 6:9). The prayers are similar: "When will you come to me?" (מתי תבוא אלי) (Ps 101:2) and "How can the ark of God come to me?" (איך יבוא אלי ארון יהוה) (2 Sam 6:9).

63. Dahood, *Psalms III*, 4; cf. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*, 114–16.

64. Botha, "Psalm 101," 734–45.

65. Kselman, "Psalm 101," 57. This interpretation requires Kselman's unlikely view that the king speaks in vv. 3–5 while Yahweh speaks in vv. 6–8.

66. Often in detailed discussions over interpretive debates, atomistic evaluation of the views can create blinders that hinder us from seeing how some or all of the views may overlap by sharing common principles or key concerns.

David.[67] Fourth, the question assumes that such distance is not ideal, i.e., not the ideal relationship between God and his king. Fifth, the question assumes that God must close the gap to draw near to the king. Sixth, the question presupposes some obligation on Yahweh's part to respond, so that "when" and not "whether" is the question. Seventh, the question assumes that the royal righteousness David claims in vv. 3–8 will motivate Yahweh to respond to his question.

Considering the royal voice, plaintive tone, pledges of justice, inter-psalm connections, and the preceding יהוה מלך psalms, the verb "come" (תבוא) appears to echo the announcement of Yahweh's "coming" explicitly promised in the יהוה מלך series. The verb בוא occurs throughout this series. Four times it refers to people "coming" before Yahweh to worship him (95:6; 96:8; 100:2, 4) and once it refers to Israel being prohibited from "entering" his rest (95:11). But three times, in the core songs headed by the incipit יהוה מלך (96, 98), the verb בוא describes Yahweh himself coming as king to judge the earth (96:13 [2x]; 98:9). Both statements conclude their respective psalms, each rising to a crescendo that depicts Yahweh "coming" to reorder the world.

Psalm 96:13
before Yahweh, for he comes (בא),
 for he comes (בא) to judge (לשפט) the earth (הארץ).
He will judge (ישפט) the world in righteousness,
 and the peoples in his faithfulness.

Psalm 98:9
before Yahweh, for he comes (בא)
 to judge (לשפט) the earth (הארץ).
He will judge (ישפט) the world with righteousness,
 and the peoples with equity.

Therefore I propose that in Psalm 101:2 we hear a Davidic king-in-waiting soulfully meditating on the faithfulness of Yahweh (v. 1). He asks Yahweh to come as promised (v. 2) so that the Davidic king might begin ordering the city and land (vv. 3–8), performing locally what Yahweh does globally: order and restore all of creation through his royal judgment. Lexical and thematic relationships between the יהוה מלך psalms and Psalm 101 (in addition to the clear links between 94 and 101) support this interpretation.

God rules as "judge" and comes to "judge" (שפט) throughout Psalms 93–100 (94:2; 96:13 [2x]; 98:9 [2x]). His "justice" and "judgments" (משפט) reign throughout the series (94:15; 97:2, 8; 99:4).[68] Nearest to Psalm 101, Psalm 99 declared, "The King in his might loves *justice* (משפט). You have established equity; you have executed

justice (משפט) and righteousness in Jacob" (99:4). Now David ponders God's "justice" (משפט, 100:1) which he plans to enact. Indeed, after Psalms 93–100, Psalm 101 seems "appended as an echo out of the heart of David."[69] The Davidide in 101 desires to embody God's reign by enforcing God's justice, but he must mournfully await the appointed time (101:2).

The celebration throughout the יהוה מלך series likewise echoes into Psalm 101. Psalms 96–99 summon creation to "sing" (שירו, 96:1a; שירו, 96:1b; שירו, 96:2; 98:1) and "sing praises" (זמרו, 98:4; זמרו, 98:5) because God orders the world with his justice.[70] Psalm 101:1 then presents David who "sings" (אשירה, 101:1) and "sings praises" (אזמרה) as he commits to supply this justice.

The center of Book IV likewise shows concern for the "earth" (ארץ) (94:2; 95:4; 96:1, 9, 11, 13; 97:1, 4, 5, 9; 98:3, 4, 9; 99:1; 100:1). Virtually all 44 appearances of ארץ in Book IV denote the global "earth" rather than a particular land. But in Psalm 101, where ארץ is once again a priority (101:6, 8), the meaning is clearly local rather than global. The "faithful in the land" (בנאמני־ארץ, 101:6) will receive the king's favor, the "wicked in the land" (רשעי־ארץ, 101:8a) his impartial judgment.[71] Book IV moves from the worldwide "earth" (ארץ) in 93–100 to the localized "land" (ארץ) in 101, suggesting that God's universal reign and world-ordering justice will be embodied and enacted first in his holy city (101:8). Here the nations will gather to worship the God who summons them into his courts in Psalms 95–100. After all, the eschatological hope of Israel was not that Jewish and Gentile worshipers would float to heaven but stream to Zion.

In summary, lexical and thematic runoff from the יהוה מלך peaks flows into Psalm 101, helping us interpret David's question, "When will you come to me?" (1) God comes to judge, and David desires to enact his judgment. (2) Creation sings at God's coming, and David sings to anticipate his coming. (3) God's judgment will enact moral order and cosmic justice throughout creation, and David's judgment will enact moral order throughout the land and citywide justice throughout Jerusalem. But (4) God comes in fullness only in the future, so David wants that future to come now: "When will you come to me?" Thus it appears that a Davidide in v. 2 is waiting (and asking) for Yahweh to "come" and judge the earth by installing him as king so that he can do Yahweh's royal bidding, localizing God's galactic rule.[72]

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67. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3*, 15.

68. Many other words and phrases throughout Pss 93–100 emphasize God's judgment, but space limitations require that I focus on the central root שפט.

69. Keil and Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:108.

70. Dozens more worship-words fill Pss 93–100, but here I am simply showing how David picks up several lexically connected themes from Pss 93–100.

71. Psalm 101 has a local feel. David twice speaks of his "house" (101:2, 7) (ביתי), highlights the slanderer's "neighbor" (101:5) (רעהו), and speaks of "the city of Yahweh" (101:8) (מעיר־יהוה). Meanwhile there are no unambiguous global or universal references.

72. Earlier I described many different interpretations of the plaintive question in v. 2. Together they display one overarching concern: the presence, guidance, and power of Yahweh is needed for David to reign in fullness. A proposed "ritual humiliation" would illustrate how the king needs God. A divine vision would serve the cause of godly rulership in Israel (e.g., Solomon's vision). A theophany would reorient the king toward God's power, presence, and principles. The presence of

Future Orientation

Psalmic lament is inherently future-oriented, straining through the dark present toward the bright horizon of God's promise. Therefore the lamenting tone of Psalm 101 immediately suggests a future orientation. Most modern translations and many interpreters construe Psalm 101 as future-oriented.[73] But the time-orientation within Psalm 101 depends primarily on the temporal conception of its verbs. Psalm 101 is filled with imperfect verbs, but the imperfect does not dictate temporal orientation. Rather, imperfective aspect portrays an action as not completed or in process. The LXX translates the fifteen Hebrew imperfect verbs with three different tenses: four futures, four aorists, and seven imperfects (see Table 5).

Table 5. Hebrew imperfective verbs and LXX verb tenses in Ps 101

Verse	MT	ESV	LXX	Greek Tense
101:1	אשׁירה	I will sing	ᾄσομαί	Future
101:1	אזמרה	I will make music	ψαλῶ	Future
101:2	אשׂכילה	I will ponder	συνήσω	Future
101:2	תבוא	will you come?	ἥξεις	Future
101:2	אתהלך	I will walk	διεπορευόμην	Imperfect
101:3	לא־אשׁית	I will not set	προεθέμην	Aorist
101:3	לא ידבק	it shall not cling	ἐμίσησα	Aorist
101:4	יסור	shall be far	ἐκολλήθη	Aorist
101:4	אדע	I will know	ἐγίνωσκον	Imperfect
101:5	אצמית	I will destroy (*silence*)	ἐξεδίωκον	Imperfect
101:5	לא אוכל	I will not endure	συνήσθιον	Imperfect
101:6	ישׁרתני	he shall minister to me	ἐλειτούργει	Imperfect
101:7	לא־ישׁב	(No one) shall dwell	κατῴκει	Imperfect
101:7	לא־יכון	(no one) shall continue	κατεύθυνεν	Aorist
101:8	אצמית	I will destroy	ἀπέκτεννον	Imperfect

Ultimately, neither the MT nor LXX verbal forms prove a specific time-orientation for these verbs.[74] Neither does the plaintive question in v. 2, because David could be

the ark near David in Jerusalem would vividly illustrate how God favors and empowers Davidic rule (and more importantly, how David serves and enacts divine rule). Thus my interpretation honors the central concern inherent in other views.

73. Translations: ESV, HCSB, NAS, NET, NKJV, NRSV, RSV. Interpreters: McCann, *Psalms*, 1081–82; Keil and Delitzsch, *Psalms*, 3:108–10; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 277; John Goldingay, *Psalms 90–150*, BCOT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 138–40; Creach, *Destiny of the Righteous*, 97–98, 107–8; Eaton, *Kingship in the Psalms*, 122. Others hear the psalmist claiming a current or past pattern of faithfulness rather than vowing blameless behavior for the future (Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*, 114–16; Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 12; Dahood, *Psalms III*, 2).

74. For an explanation of the aorist and imperfect verbs in the LXX translation, see Möller, "Psalm 101," 123–24n71.

expressing any of three perspectives, all of which could ground his plea that Yahweh come to him: (1) he has already kept his way blameless and established moral order in the land; (2) he currently keeps his way blameless and maintains moral order in the land; or (3) he will in the future keep his way blameless and establish moral order in the land. David could even be claiming all three: past, present, and future faithfulness. Therefore while David's temporal perspective on *Yahweh's coming* is clearly future-oriented, David's temporal perspective on his own royal actions is debated.

For contextual, theological, and canonical reasons, it is unlikely that David is recounting his past performance. Contextually, if David were recounting his royal faithfulness in the past, the "steadfast love," "justice," and "blameless way" celebrated in v. 1 would seemingly refer to David's own performance rather than Yahweh's character, an unlikely interpretation. Theologically, the grand vision of comprehensive righteousness—personal and political, administrative and judicial, attitudinal and behavioral—strikes an eschatological chord that resonates with the future more than the past.[75] Canonically, since Psalm 89 recounted the fall of David's line, and Psalm 90 confessed that sin was the cause (a confession confirmed by the egregious history of Judean kingship), a Davidide now claiming comprehensive faithfulness would cut against the canonical position of Psalm 101.

It is also unlikely that David is presenting his current performance for Yahweh's consideration. The imperfective verbal aspect could naturally express ongoing royal activity, but (once again) the comprehensive and ideal perspective in the psalm suits eschatology better than history. Further, the canonical context of wilderness exile marking Book IV (including the picture of a crumbled Zion in 102:14–23) suggests that no Davidide is enthroned at this point in the Psalter's progression.

Therefore, the verbs in Psalm 101 are best interpreted as future-oriented—the pre-commitments of a future Davidide. As noted, the holistic and comprehensive pronouncements fit better with a vow than with history. Mitchell notes that these kinds of ideal realities, never seen in Israel's history, strike an eschatological tone. His assessment regarding the eschatological perspective of the entire Psalter is worth repeating:

First, [the Psalter] originated in an eschatologically conscious milieu.

Second, the figures to whom the Psalms are attributed were regarded as future-predictive prophets even in biblical times.

Thirdly, certain psalms seems [*sic*] to be of an intrinsically 'ultimate' character, that is, they describe a person or event in such glowing terms that the language far exceeds the reality of any historical king or battle.

75. The immediately preceding מלך יהוה series paints a similar idealistic picture and strikes the same eschatological chord (see David C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms*, JSOTSup 252 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997], 85–86, 284–85).

Fourthly, the very inclusion of the royal psalms in the Psalter suggests that the redactor understood them to refer to a future *mashiah*-king.[76]

The imperfective verbs thus express the torah-shaped values this future Davidide promises to embody, endorse, enact, and enforce. Indeed, the entire discussion about verbal aspect is contextualized by psalmic arrangement. Even if David's psalm on its own expressed past actions, what does it now insinuate here in Book IV of the Psalter?

Psalm 101 (a) presents the first named Davidide since David's line was severed in Psalm 89, (b) follows the יהוה מלך psalms where God's global reign was promised, (c) resonates with Psalm 94 where God's justice is yet unrealized, (d) begs God to "come" and empower this Davidide to embody divine rule; (e) vows a righteous tenure to motivate Yahweh to respond, and (f) precedes Psalm 102 where an individual mourns his afflictions amidst a fallen Zion. The perspective is clearly future-oriented.

Finally, Allen illustrates a wise canonical reading by taking seriously the placement of Psalm 101 and interpreting its microelements within a macrohermeneutic. Allen interprets the psalm as a king looking back on his actions, but still views the psalm as forward-looking within the structure of the Psalter:

This royal psalm has an important canonical role within Book IV of the Psalter. It became the witness that Book IV provides to the messianic hope of Israel. It serves to appeal for the restoration of the Davidic dynasty by reference to God's self-imposed obligations and attests the perfection of that coming kingdom …[77]

Ascending the Hill of Yahweh: Psalms 15 and 101

Psalm 101 also resonates lexically and thematically with several distant psalms. This resonance helps illuminate the role Psalm 101 plays in Book IV. Interpreters often note similarities with Psalms 15 and 24. Below I explore lexical and thematic repetition among these psalms and seek to interpret their mutually illuminating relationships.

Structure of Psalms 15–24

Many note a chiastic structure binding Psalms 15–24.[78] The temple entrance psalms (15 and 24) provide the frame. The torah-exalting Psalm 19 stands at the center,

76. Mitchell, *Eschatological Programme*, 82–89.

77. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 12.

78. Interpreters credit Auffret for identifying this chiasm, and many have applied and expanded his view. See Pierre Auffret, *La Sagesse a Bâti Sa Maison: Études de Structures Littéraires dans l'Ancien Testament et Spécialement dans les Psaumes*, OBO (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 407–38; Patrick D. Miller, "Kingship, Torah Obedience, and Prayer: The Theology of Psalms 15–24," in *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung*, ed. K. Seybold and E. Zenger, HBS 1 (Freiburg, Germany: Herder, 1994), 127–42; Jamie A. Grant, *The King as Exemplar: The Function of Deuteronomy's Kingship Law in the Shaping of the Book of Psalms* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 72–74, 234–40; Vesco, *Psautier de David*, 1:175; William P. Brown, *Psalms*, IBT (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2010), 97–107; William P. Brown, "'Here Comes the Sun!' The Metaphorical Theology of Psalms 15–24," in *Composition of the Book of Psalms*, ed. E. Zenger (Walpole, MA: Peeters,

surrounded by royal Psalms 18 and 20–21. Complaint and petition (17, 22) alongside songs of trust (16, 23) complete the collection. Miller senses a unified message involving obedience, trust, deliverance, kingship, and torah. "Obedience to torah and trust in Yahweh's guidance and deliverance are the way of Israel and the way of kingship."[79] Grant agrees that "righteousness and relationship with God are to be found in the keeping of his torah."[80] Sumpter sees the ideal "framing psalms" (15, 19, 24) providing theological (and eschatological) context for the "intervening psalms" which reflect the real-time struggle of the faithful. This ten-psalm collection tells "the eschatological narrative of God's consummation of creation by bringing his righteous king… into the reality beyond the threshold of his temple."[81] Brown sees Psalms 15 and 24 sitting at the foothills of a chiastic structure which rises to a torah peak in Psalm 19. "Because both psalms make reference to God's 'holy mountain' or 'hill' (15:1; 24:3), the overall arrangement of this cluster takes on a distinctly metaphorical shape, with Psalm 19 assuming the 'summit' of the arrangement" (see Figure 1). Thus the life-giving, world-ordering, king-qualifying torah governs this series just as the torah governs Israel's king and community.

Figure 1. Chiastic structure of Psalms 15–24[82]

Psalm 19
torah psalm

Psalm 18	Pss 20–21
royal psalm	*royal psalms*
Psalm 17	Psalm 22
complaint-petition	*complaint-petition*
Psalm 16	Psalm 23
song of trust	*song of trust*
Psalm 15	Psalm 24
entrance liturgy	*entrance liturgy*

The bookends in Psalms 15 and 24 paint a picture picked up by Psalm 101. Psalm 15:1 begins, "O Yahweh, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?" Psalm 24:3 likewise asks, "Who shall ascend the hill of Yahweh? And who shall stand in his holy place?" Both psalms then sketch a portrait of the man whose character answers these questions (15:1–5; 24:3–6). Now in Book IV, a waiting

2010), 259–77; Philip Sumpter, "The Coherence of Psalms 15–24," *Biblica* 94, no. 2 (2013): 186–209.

79. Miller, "Psalms 15–24," 140–41.

80. Grant, *King as Exemplar*, 240.

81. Sumpter, "Psalms 15–24," 209.

82. Adapted from Brown, *Psalms*, 97. Brown notes that "YHWH's 'hill' or 'holy place' constitutes a microcosm of the well-established earth. To ascend it is, in effect, to scale the pinnacle of creation" (Brown, *Psalms*, 99).

Davidide promises to embody and enforce these principles (101). The resonance especially between Psalms 15 and 101 is striking (see Table 6).

Lexical and Thematic Repetition in Psalms 15 and 101

Only "he who walks blamelessly" (הולך תמים, 15:2) may ascend Yahweh's holy hill. So David contemplates the "blameless way" (בדרך תמים, 101:2) and vows to promote only servants who "walk in the way that is blameless" (הלך בדרך תמים, 101:6). This torah-saturated lifestyle is the dual qualification for entering Yahweh's presence (15:1) and leading Yahweh's people (101:2, 6).

Ethics create actions, so both psalms emphasize "doing" (עשׂה). The acceptable worshiper "does" (עשׂה, 15:3) no wrong to his neighbor, and the one who "does" (עשׂה, 15:5) the lifestyle of Psalm 15 will be established. David complements this emphasis by hating the "doing" (עשׂה, 101:3) of transgressors and those who "do" (עשׂה, 101:7) deceit. The root עשׂה is also joined by the root פעל ("work," "practice"): the one who "does" (פעל, 15:2) right is qualified, but David will destroy those who "do" (פעלי, 101:8) evil.

This emphasis on "doing" expands beyond individual incidents, occasions, and events. Both psalms emphasize that righteousness is a lifestyle. God desires a blameless "walk" (הולך, 15:2), so David promises to "walk" (אתהלך, 101:2) with integrity while affirming those with a blameless "walk" (הלך, 101:6).

This walk starts in the heart. Only the one who speaks truth "in his heart" (בלבבו, 15:2) and has a pure "heart" (לבב, 24:4) may ascend God's mountain. Therefore David is well qualified: "I will walk with integrity of *heart*" (לבבי, 101:2). David also rejects a perverse "heart" (לבב, 101:4) and an arrogant "heart" (לבב, 101:5). He not only commits to cultivate the right heart himself but drives all corrupt hearts from God's presence. David internalizes, embodies, and enforces the righteous qualities God desires.

Both psalms reflect the principle that the heart overflows in speech. The ascending worshiper must "speak" (דבר, 15:2) truth in his heart. David enforces this truth-speaking requirement, rejecting all who "speak lies" (דבר שׁקרים, 101:7) and practice "deceit" (רמיה, 101:7). Slander is likewise condemned in both psalms, though the terms are synonymous rather than identical. The righteous man "does not slander" (לא־רגל, 15:3), and David promises judicial violence upon "whoever slanders" (מלושׁני, 101:5). Explicit slander with the "tongue" (לשׁנו, 15:3) is then broadened to include "evil" (רעה, 15:3), "reproach" (חרפה, 15:3), and false "swearing" (נשׁבע, 15:4; cf. נשׁבע, 24:4). Malicious attacks and false oaths, including but not limited to false testimony in judicial settings, are the shared targets in both psalms.

Truthful speech is central because righteousness is primarily relational in both psalms. The qualified worshiper does no evil to "his neighbor" (לרעהו, 15:3). David, cultivating this quality by enforcing the requirement, vows to punish the one who

slanders "his neighbor" (רעהו, 101:5). David himself steadfastly avoids this kind of relational "evil" (רעה, 15:3) in all areas of life: "I will know nothing of "evil" (רע, 101:4).

The "eyes" (בעיניו, 15:4) of the righteous despise vile people, and David embodies the principle perfectly. His "eyes" (עיני, 101:3) will entertain nothing worthless; his "eyes" (עיני, 101:6) will favor the faithful; his "eyes" (עיני, 101:7) will reject all liars; and he will rebuff those with proud "eyes" (עינם, 101:5).

Finally, both psalms use synonyms to portray visiting or settling in God's presence. Psalm 15 asks, "Who shall *sojourn* (יגור, 15:1) in your tent? Who shall *dwell* (ישׁכן, 15:1) on your holy hill?" David vows that the faithful rather than the deceitful will "dwell" (לשׁבת, 101:6; ישׁב, 101:7, 101:7) with him, presumably in a restored Jerusalem, the "city of Yahweh" (מעיר־יהוה, 101:8), which rests on his "holy hill" (בהר קדשׁך, 15:1).

Table 6. Lexical and thematic repetition in Pss 15 and 101

Verse	MT	Translation
15:1	מזמור לדוד	a psalm of David
101:1	לדוד מזמור	a psalm of David
15:2	הולך <u>תמים</u>	he who walks *blamelessly*
101:2	אשׂכילה בדרך <u>תמים</u>	I will ponder the *blameless* way
101:6	הלך בדרך <u>תמים</u>	walk in the way that is *blameless*
15:3	עשׂה	*does* no evil to his neighbor
15:5	עשׂה	He who *does* these things
101:3	עשׂה	the *work* of those who fall away
101:7	עשׂה	the one who *does* deceit
15:2	<u>פעל</u>	*does* (what is right)
101:8	כל־<u>פעלי</u> און	all *doers* of evil
15:2	<u>הולך</u> תמים	he who *walks* blamelessly
101:2	א<u>תהלך</u> בתם־לבבי	I will *walk* with integrity of heart
101:6	<u>הלך</u> בדרך תמים	he who *walks* in the way that is blameless
15:2	בלבבו	and speaks truth *in his heart*
101:2	לבבי	I will walk with integrity of *heart*
101:4	לבב	a perverse *heart* shall be far from me
101:5	לבב	an arrogant *heart*
15:2	דבר	*speaks* truth in his heart
101:7	דבר	who *speaks* lies
15:3	לא־רגל *	does not *slander* *[83]
101:5	מלושׁני *	whoever *slanders* *

83. Asterisks mark words or phrases that are not identical but have similar meaning.

Verse	MT	Translation
15:3	לרעהו	does no evil to *his neighbor*
101:5	רעהו	Whoever slanders *his neighbor* secretly
15:3	רעה	does no *evil* to his neighbor
101:4	רע	I will know nothing of *evil*
15:4	בעיניו	in whose *eyes* a vile person is despised
101:3	עיני	I will not set before *my eyes*
101:5	עינים	a haughty *look*
101:6	עיני	*I will look* with favor on the faithful in the land
101:7	עיני	shall not continue before *my eyes*
15:1	בהר קדשך *	on *your holy hill* *
101:8	מעיר־יהוה *	from *the city of Yahweh* *

Psalm 101 Embodies and Enforces Psalm 15

How does Psalm 101 apply the standards in Psalm 15? H. Wallace suggests that Psalm 101 "echoes the entrance liturgies in Psalms 15 and 24.3–6."[84] Kraus notes similarities with the "liturgies of the gate" in Psalms 15 and 24 and suggests that "the king is the guardian of the Torah of the gate."[85] Regardless of the precise setting envisioned, the Davidic king in Psalm 101 both *embodies* and *enforces* the required covenantal qualities of the accepted worshiper in Psalms 15:1–5 and 24:3–6. But why is a psalm that repeats these qualities placed here in the canonical structure of the Psalter? I suggest four overlapping reasons. First, Psalm 101 is positioned to portray David meeting God's requirements to ascend the hill of Yahweh in response to the cosmic invitations to worship filling Psalms 93–100.[86] Second, Psalm 101 is positioned to portray David as the foremost example of a torah-keeping worshiper as Israel and the nations stream to Zion and enter Yahweh's land, city, temple, and presence.[87] Third, Psalm 101 is positioned to portray David announcing that he will enact and enforce the righteous requirements of temple worship as Israel and the nations ascend Zion in response to Yahweh's invitation (Pss 95–100). Fourth and finally, Psalm 101 is positioned to portray David declaring that he meets the requirements to rule with Yahweh and enforce justice in the land, because the Davidic throne is installed on the same "holy hill" that houses God's temple (Pss 2:6; 15:1), and the torah that governs the temple governs both city and land, king and people. Therefore these qualities are

84. H. Wallace, *Psalms*, 157; cf. McCann, *Psalms*, 1083; Botha, "Psalm 101," 730.

85. Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 279.

86. Zenger independently takes this same view (Zenger, "Psalms 90–106," 184).

87. See Grant's helpful and balanced discussion regarding the "democratization" of royal psalms as the king stands as the foremost example for the people (Grant, *King as Exemplar*, 281–89). Grant displays balance by not allowing such democratization (I prefer the term communalization) to diminish the messianic and eschatological hope inherent in these psalms and in the entire Psalter (Grant, *King as Exemplar*, 33–39).

not only temple entrance requirements. After all, Psalm 15 does not conclude with a successful entrance to the temple but with the promise, "He who does these things shall never be moved" (15:5). Likewise Psalm 24:5: "He will receive blessing from Yahweh and righteousness from the God of his salvation." David reformulates and applies themes from Psalms 15:1–5 and 24:3–6 because these two psalms are more than temple entrance requirements. Anyone wanting to visit, sojourn, stand, or settle at the high point of Zion must be torah-saturated and torah-obedient. David desires exactly this dwelling-place that he might enact Yahweh's rule in the land. So David promises to embody, enforce, and extend torah-keeping in Yahweh's city.

Summary, Conclusion, and Psalms 101–102

The יהוה מלך series begins in Psalm 93, but Psalm 94 interrupts the celebration with a desperate plea that God bring moral order to a chaotic and wicked world. Psalms 95 and 100 then bookend Psalms 96–99 by summoning Israel and the nations into his courts (95, 100) where they will join the entire cosmos singing fresh songs (96:1; 98:1) hailing Yahweh's righteous and resplendent reign (97:1; 99:1). But the יהוה מלך collection insinuates that Yahweh does not yet reign in fullness, either among his people or in his world. Psalm 94 mourns the violent arrogance of the wicked, Psalm 95:7–11 warns Israel not to rebel, and Psalms 96:13 and 98:9 announce that Yahweh is *coming.* Thus the blend of idealism and rebellion characterizing Psalms 93–100 casts a strong eschatological hue over the יהוה מלך collection.

In this eschatological context, Psalm 101 then depicts a musing Davidide awaiting Yahweh's world-ordering arrival. This future king pledges to embody and enforce the divine requirements for worship and kingship (101:3–7; cf. Ps 15) as he prepares to ascend the holy hill of Yahweh and rule the holy city of Zion (101:8; cf. Ps 15). Steeped in torah, he promises to personify the cosmic kingship of Yahweh celebrated throughout the יהוה מלך series. As the nations respond to the worldwide summons to gather and worship in God's courts, this Davidide swears to ensure the purity of the city by enacting the world-ordering justice God promised in Psalm 94. Thus the intra-book links (within Book IV), Davidic title, royal voice, lamenting tone, future orientation, inter-psalm connections, and strategic placement make Psalm 101 a central psalm sustaining Davidic hope in Book IV. Ultimately, Psalm 101 reveals that the unbearable tension and covenantal dissonance marking Psalm 89 will be resolved—"a just Davidide will one day rule."[88] Indeed, the reign of Yahweh does not upend the Davidic line but upholds it.

This reestablishment of David and Zion is further clarified as Psalm 101 flows into Psalm 102. Despite sharing few lexemes, Psalms 101–102 resonate with shared

88. Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 199.

themes. These shared themes stand out against the paucity of shared terms. Psalm 102 clearly complements, clarifies, and answers the tone and perspective of Psalm 101.

First, the Davidic figure in Psalm 101 intends to rule the "land" (ארץ, 101:6, 8) and the "city of Yahweh" (מעיר־יהוה, 101:8). But the last explicit mention of a landed Davidide appeared in the rubble-strewn complaint of Psalm 89: walls breached, fortresses fallen, throne overturned, and crown cast down (89:40–41, 45). So where is this "land," this "city of Yahweh" (101:8), and how will it be reconstituted? Psalm 102 answers that the time has come for God to pity (102:14) and rebuild (102:17) "Zion" (ציון, 102:14, 17, 22), synonymous with Jerusalem (102:22). He will have mercy on those mourning their holy city (102:15), and he will favor and rebuild his fallen capital (102:17). Thus in both psalms the city of Yahweh—i.e., Jerusalem or Zion—waits to be restored and reordered.

Second, the afflicted figure in 102 clarifies and amplifies the lamenting tone in 101. The psalmist is not just waiting (101:2) but suffering (102:2–12, 24–25); not just suffering but miserably afflicted (102:2–12); not just miserably afflicted but overturned and broken by the angry hand of God (102:11, 24–25a). Most importantly, he is not alone. The camera slowly zooms out to show this afflicted Davidide surrounded by the mourning servants of God (102:15), the dust and stones of Zion (102:15), and the imprisoned exiles (101:21) groaning for redemption (102:18). Therefore this Davidide is not just waiting for divine presence (101:2) but divine deliverance—for himself, his city, and his people (102:13–23).[89] With this in mind, Psalm 102 clarifies the ambiguous plaintive question, "When will you come to me?" (101:2). Earlier I argued that the Davidide in Psalm 101 desired Yahweh to "come" and fulfill the promises of the יהוה מלך series so that David could enact Yahweh's world-ordering justice. But Yahweh has not yet *come to me* [i.e., David]" (תבוא אלי, 101:2) in power, so David *"comes to you* [i.e., Yahweh]" (אליך תבוא, 102:2) in prayer. David's pained prayer in 102 explains his complaint in 101: He asked "When?" (מתי) in 101:2 because he was awaiting the "time" (עת, 102:14) when God would fulfill his promises. But now, "the appointed time has come" (כי־בא מועד, 102:14). What does this mean? It means that Yahweh himself is coming: he will "arise," "hear," "regard," and "appear" so that he might "pity," "favor," "set free," and "build up" (12:13–23) his humbled people and his holy city. Thus each psalm begins with a prayerful lament (101:2; 102:2–12), but 102 explains and broadens the lament from 101, and then states outright the hope that was only implicit in 101.[90]

Third, despite this hope, Psalm 102 still reiterates the problem of time and waiting. David had asked "When?" (101:2), and the afflicted one has answered that the appointed time has come (102:14), *but he is still afflicted*: his "days" (ימי) still pass away quickly and painfully (102:4, 12, 25). Yet the permanence of God puts this fast-passing life in perspective, bolstering the psalmist's hope for deliverance: God predates, created, and outlasts the universe (102:26–27), and he endures "throughout all generations" (102:25), without changing and with "no end" (102:28). Thus both 101 and 102 are future-oriented, but 102 expresses both the pain and the promise more pointedly.

Fourth, Psalm 102 paves an international path to a rebuilt Zion and shows the multinational response to the global summons ringing through Psalms 95–100. The envisioned restoration draws widespread worshipers to Zion including "peoples" and "kingdoms" (102:23). The rebuilding of Zion (102:14–15, 17, 22), the resettling of the land, and the ingathering of the nations (102:23) necessitate the holy-hill requirements David pledges to embody and enforce throughout 101. God redeems his people "that they may declare in Zion the name of Yahweh, and in Jerusalem his praise, when peoples gather together, and kingdoms, to worship Yahweh" (102:22–23). God's chosen city, the joy of all the earth (Ps 48:2), will be rebuilt, and its people must be pure (101:3–8).

Fifth, these two psalms juxtapose the kingships of David and Yahweh. In 101, David awaits God's coming and declares his readiness to rule righteously, but he can only envision—not inhabit—the restored "land" and "city of Yahweh" (101:8). In 102, a Davidide still waits, but the restoration arrives when the eternally enthroned God (102:13) "looks down from his holy height" (102:20), sees his people's plight and hears their pleas (102:20–21), and rises to rebuild Zion (102:14, 17). When "he appears in his glory" (102:17), he is feared by "all the kings of the earth" (102:16). Thus Psalms 101 and 102 juxtapose (a) the heavenly king who redeems his people and rebuilds Zion and (b) the human king who rules God's rebuilt city with torah and justice. These two psalms harmonize to declare that when and where Yahweh restores, David will rule.

McCann summarizes: "Psalms 101–102 together address the three key elements of the crisis of exile—loss of monarchy, Zion/Temple, and land."[91] Hossfeld and Zenger explain that the psalm pair 101–102 "transplants," "explains," and "concretizes" the (and perhaps causes) the restoration of Zion and the ingathering of the nations.

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89. "Thus, the king who vows innocence and commitment (Ps 101) then furthers his lament in complaining about his enemies and confessing his hope in YHWH (Ps 102)" (McKelvey, *Moses, David and the High Kingship of Yahweh*, 180).

90. Psalm 102 clarifies David's question in 101:2 and answers a possible objection to my interpretation in chap. 5: Why does David ask Yahweh to come "to *me*" (אלי, 101:2) if he is seeking a broader movement from God that matches the promises in the יהוה מלך series? How does his personal prayer in 101:2 express a sweeping eschatological desire like the fulfillment observed in 102:13–23? The Psalter is indicating that the reinstatement of a just future Davidide coincides with

91. J. Clinton McCann, Jr., *The Book of Psalms: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections*, in vol. 4 of *NIB*, ed. L. E. Keck (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996), 1081. Witt argues that Ps 102 is a central hinge within Book IV and the Psalter as a whole: "Psalms 101–102 form a literary hinge upon which the answers to exile are given in Book IV. Without Psalm 102, there would not be [a] decisive turning point in the Psalter between the lamenting questions posed by Book III and the strong affirmations of YHWH's faithfulness and steadfast love for his people in Book IV. Considering the importance of Book IV in the shape and message of the entire book, the declaration of the king in Psalm 102 may even be the hinge upon which the Psalter can finally turn from lament into praise" (Witt, "Psalm 102," 606).

rule of Yahweh. Yahweh will enact his rule through the Davidic king (101:1–8) in "the city of Yahweh" (101:8) which coincides with a "rebuilt Zion" (102:13–23).[92] Thus psalmist and city will be restored together: the razed city (102:14–15) will be raised again (102:17, 22), and the offspring of the afflicted will flourish unafraid (102:29).

92. Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms 3*, 1–2.

Individual versus Collective Retribution in the Chronicler's Ideology of Exile

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Abstract: It has long been argued that exilic and postexilic biblical writers shift from a model of collective accountability to that of individual accountability. The most notable example of this interpretation of Chronicles, exemplified by the Chronicler's ideology of exile, comes from Sara Japhet's work. Did the Chronicler "democratize" identity and responsibility to redefine the justice of God? Did the Chronicler follow some of the prophets before him, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and reframe retribution in terms of individual responsibility? Who is being punished in the Chronicler's version of the exile? This study evaluates the most important evidence for retributive culpability in 2 Chronicles 36. The evidence does not support an individualistic model of retribution but a complex view featuring deferred judgment and cumulative culpability.

Key Words: 2 Chronicles 36, Leviticus 26, Jeremiah's seventy years, exile, retribution

Introduction

The problem of "paying for the sins of others" has been raised with respect to the Babylonian exile since the eve of the disaster. Jeremiah and Ezekiel each responded to a contemporary proverb, "the ancestors have eaten sour grapes, but the children's teeth are set on edge" (Jer 31:29; Ezek 18:2).[1] The exile refers to the entire catastrophe: the fall of the city of God, the destruction of the temple, the imprisonment of kings Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, and the forced migrations of the people of Jerusalem and Judah in 597, 586, and 582 BCE. The exile triggered numerous interpretations within the scriptural writings including the prophets, the stories of Esther, Daniel, the returns in Ezra-Nehemiah, Lamentations and several psalms, as well as the Deuteronomistic Narrative and Chronicles.[2]

1. All translations from *Biblia Hebraica* are mine unless stated otherwise.

2. Deuteronomistic Narrative refers the four-part serial narrative of the rise and fall of the ancient Hebrew kingdoms within the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Deuteronomy

The Chronicler's version of the exile has often been interpreted as the premier embodiment and culmination of his much discussed views of divine retribution upon the First Commonwealth. The present study seeks to offer some adjustments and alternate explanations of the Chronicler's ideology of exile as it is exemplified in the closing chapter of his narrative, especially as it relates to retribution. The term "retribution" denotes the enactment of God's justice in punishment and reward, though it usually is used of the former.[3] Sara Japhet's work on retribution in Chronicles provides a useful point of departure because many recent discussions of both Chronicles and his view of retribution rely on her body of research.[4] Japhet states:

> The Chronicler's well-known theory of "reward and punishment"…[is] his
> way of portraying history as a concrete manifestation of divine justice. It
> is characterized by several features. Reward is mandatory, immediate and
> individual. Every generation is requited for its own deeds, both good and evil,

functions as a covenantal compass for the tetralogy. While neither date nor diachronic matters are important to the present argument, the Deuteronomistic Narrative reflects an exilic perspective. The term Chronicler refers to the author of the book of Chronicles ("author" in the sense of redactor/editor/narrator), the narrative of which may be called Chronistic. The Chronicler is not the same person(s) who authored/redacted/edited Ezra-Nehemiah. See Sara Japhet, "The Supposed Common Authorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Investigated Anew" in *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Highlands of Judah: Collected Studies of the Restoration Period* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 1-37 (originally published in *VT* 18 [1968]: 330-71); H. G. M. Williamson, *Israel in the Books of Chronicles* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 83-86.

3. For a helpful discussion, including a survey of the biblical terms, summarizing major viewpoints, and basic bibliography, see Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., "Retribution," in Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville, eds., *Dictionary of the Old Testament Prophets* (Downers Grove IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 671-76. For thoroughgoing interactions with issues of corporate versus individual responsibility in the Hebrew Bible, with significant critique against many of the standard views, see Joel S. Kaminsky, *Corporate Responsibility in the Hebrew Bible,* JSOTSS 196 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); idem, "The Sins of the Fathers: A Theological Investigation of the Biblical Tension Between Corporate and Individualized Retribution," *Judaism* 46 (2001): 319-32.

4. See Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought,* trans. Anna Barber (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1989; reprint, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009); idem, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993); and selected essays in idem, *From the Rivers of Babylon*. The 1989 and 2009 eds. of *Ideology of Chronicles* are paginated differently, since the latter is re-typeset. Though the 2009 ed. is used here the page references to each have been provided since the 1989 ed. is widely cited (thank you to R. Devine for looking up the page numbers). For selected interaction with Japhet's work on retribution see Brian E. Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicle*, JSOTSS 211 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 37-42, 236, n. 5, 240; idem, "'Retribution' Revisited: Covenant, Grace and Restoration," in M. Patrick Graham, Steven L. McKenzie, and Gary N. Knoppers, eds., *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of Ralph W. Klein* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 209-10, as well as interaction with Japhet more generally throughout, see 206-27. For debate with Japhet's view of the exile, esp. dissenting against her downplaying the exile and the corporate guilt of Israel, see William Johnstone, "The Use of Leviticus in Chronicles," in John F. A. Sawyer, ed., *Reading Leviticus: A Conversation with Mary Douglas*, JSOTSS 227 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 243-55. Japhet's presentation of how Chronicles "minimizes" the exile is affirmed in Adele Berlin, "The Exile: Biblical Ideology and Its Postmodern Ideological Interpretation," in Hanna Liss and Manfred Oeming, eds., *Literary Construction of Identity in the Ancient World* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 349 [341-56].

with no postponement of recompense; there is no accumulated sin and no accumulated merit.[5]

Yet, the Chronicler's version of the exile does not fit with Japhet's reading. This study will suggest that Chronicles presents the exile in terms of deferred justice, cumulative and corporate.

The next section will briefly frame the place of Japhet's argument in the context of other leading interpretations of retribution in Chronicles, namely, the much discussed interpretations of Julius Wellhausen and Gerhard von Rad. In response, the present study claims that the Chronicler's interpretation of the exile turns on the way he uses Leviticus and Jeremiah.

Retribution in Chronicles following Wellhausen

Wellhausen (in)famously offers well-studied, sustained ridicule of Chronicles in a chapter on it.[6] While many of his attacks have been overturned and seem increasingly unlikely, Wellhausen's view of mechanical divine retribution in Chronicles remains convincing to many interpreters, including von Rad and Japhet.[7] At the end of a sarcastic passage Wellhausen says, "Never does sin miss its punishment, and never where misfortune occurs is guilt wanting."[8] He then goes on to list examples of the Chronicler creating justice from Rehoboam to Zedekiah, by attaching consequences to deeds and vice versa.[9] Wellhausen refers to these retributive connections as "inventions," and speaks derisively of how they are born from the Chronicler's plan for writing history, "as it is euphemistically called."[10]

For von Rad, Chronicles is a theodicy wrestling against the problem of retribution.[11] Von Rad condenses Wellhausen's list of retributive examples in Chronicles to demonstrate the Chronicler's consistent effort to show "correspondence

5. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 44. Japhet considers the Chronicler's presentation of the exile a leading example of his view of retribution; see Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology*, 41. For another oft cited summary of immediate retribution in 2 Chron 10-36, cited approvingly by Japhet, see Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles,* WBC 15 (Nashville: Nelson Reference, 1987), 76-81.

6. Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, trans. J. S. Black and A. Menzies (1885; reprint, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 171-227. Wellhausen did not invent a negative view of Chronicles, but often credits de Wette. See Wilhelm Martin Leberecht de Wette, *A Critical and Historical Introduction to the Canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament,* 2d ed.; trans. and ed. Theodore Parker, 2 vols. (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850), 2: 253-316.

7. See Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, 203-10.

8. Ibid., 203.

9. See ibid., 203-7.

10. Ibid., 207.

11. See Gerhard von Rad, *Das Geschichtsbild des Chronistischen Werks,* BWANT 3 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1930), 11 (*The Historical Picture of the Chronistic Work*). Thank you to Samuel Matlack for translating and discussing nuances of passages from von Rad's book.

between guilt and punishment.”[12] Von Rad interprets the retributive connections as part of the Chronicler’s strategy of narrating each generation to stand before the Lord “immediately” and “individually.”[13] “It is characteristic of him [the Chronicler] that before the account of Jerusalem’s destruction in II Chr 36 he speaks only of the sins of the last living generation.”[14] The Chronicler’s commitment to immediate and individual retribution is, for von Rad, part of the developments of “later Jahwism.”[15] Von Rad spells out this late shift to individualism in his treatment of biblical wisdom. He explains individualism replacing collectivism in the context of the fall of the Hebrew monarchy. He uses Ezekiel 18 and Jeremiah 31:29, 30 to illustrate the new emphasis on every individual before God.[16] Von Rad rightly discerns Ezekiel’s sweeping away of excuses, seen especially in the final verses of Ezekiel 18. “If a man cannot rely on his own righteousness, so as to hide himself behind it from Jahweh, how much less can he rely on the righteousness of others.”[17]

12. Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology,* trans. D. M. G. Stalker, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 1: 348-49.

13. See ibid., 1: 349, 350.

14. “Es ist bezeichnend, daß er vor dem Bericht von der Zerstörung Jerusalems II. Chr. 36 allein von den Sünden der letzten lebenden Generation spricht” (von Rad, *Das Geschichtsbild des Chronistischen Werks*, 13).

15. See von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 1: 349.

16. See ibid., 1: 391-94. “Jeremiah and Ezekiel had to address themselves to the question, ‘the fathers have eaten sour grapes, but it is (only) the children’s teeth which are set on edge’ …. The familiar quotation is in rebellion against the falling asunder of cause and effect, offense and punishment” (1: 392). The proverb cited in Jer 31 and Ezek 18 is often compared to a passage in an ancient Hittite prayer: “O Storm-god of Ḫatti, my lord, and gods, my lords — so it happens: People always sin. My father sinned and transgressed the word of the Storm-god of Ḫatti, my lord. But I did not sin in any way. But so it happens: The sin of the father devolves upon his son. The sin of my father has devolved upon me” (“Plague Prayers of Muršili II,” *COS* 1.60: 158). See Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 393-94; A. Malamat, “Doctrines of Causality in Hittite and Biblical Historiography: A Parallel,” *VT* 5 (1955): 1-12; and for critique of Malamat’s article see Jože Krašovec, “Is There a Doctrine of ‘Collective Retribution’ in the Hebrew Bible?” *HUCA* 65 (2001): 38-39, n. 9 [35-89]. Also discussed is an ancient Hittite punishment against the entire household of one who incites divine anger, yet this applies only to the temple. “If, however, someone angers the mind of a god, does the god seek it (revenge) only from him alone? Does he not seek it from his wife, [his children,] his descendants, his family, his male servants, his female servants, his cattle, his sheep and his grain? He utterly destroys him with everything. Be very afraid of a god’s word for your own sake” (“Instructions to Priests and Temple Officials,” *COS* 1.83: 218). See Jacob Milgrom, “The Concept of *Ma‘al* in the Bible and the Ancient Near East,” *JAOS* 96 (1976): 246 [236-47]; Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, AB 22 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983), 338-39.

17. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 1: 394. Daniel I. Block interprets Ezekiel 18 similar to von Rad: “[C]hildren may not hide behind a theology of corporate solidarity and moral extension that absolves them of personal responsibility for their own destiny” (*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 589). While studies of Ezekiel 18 continue to see it as making an argument for individual responsibility, many have discerned the function of his example of individual accountability to indict the entire generation. For Ezekiel 18 as teaching individual responsibility, see Michael Fishbane, “Sin and Judgment in the Prophecies of Ezekiel,” *Interpretation* 38 (1984): 140-43 [121-50]. For examples of studies which challenge the thesis that individual accountability is a development, and also see Ezekiel 18 as judgment against the nation

Japhet also notes Wellhausen’s list connecting sin and punishment and vice versa in Chronicles, but she expands attention to many more details and examples as well as establishing the Chronicler’s interest in justice regarding the cause and effect of merit and success.[18] Japhet defines the Chronicler’s view in contrast to the Deuteronomistic interpretation of sin and guilt, the latter of which she summarizes as “cumulative” and “collective” both of which are evident by “delayed” punishment.[19] Japhet, like von Rad, regards the Chronicler’s theology of retribution as part of an individual-oriented innovation born out of interpreting the fall of Jerusalem especially by Ezekiel.[20] For Japhet, Ezekiel’s and the Chronicler’s views on divine justice are so similar that Chronicles’ “outlook may be defined in Ezekiel’s words: ‘The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.’”[21]

Japhet thinks Chronicles refines the basic principle “that might be termed ‘the imperative of reward and punishment.’…Chronicles does not allow for the theoretical possibility that man may sin and neither he nor his son will be punished: every sin must be punished. For this reason, Chronicles cannot justify the destruction of the Temple as punishment for the sins of previous generations.”[22] Japhet contends, “Only Zedekiah and his generation are responsible for the disaster that occurred in his time.”[23] Regarding the fall of Jerusalem Japhet distinguishes that the Chronicler accepted what others might call “horizontal” societal collective punishment while denying “vertical” generational collective punishment. She maintains that, according to Chronicles, the exile is punishment only of the exiled generation itself.[24]

as a whole, see Herbert May, “Individual Responsibility and Retribution,” *HUCA* 31 (1961): 107-10 [107-20]; Barnabas Lindars, “Ezekiel and Individual Responsibility,” *VT* 15 (1965): 452-67; P. M. Joyce, “Individual Responsibility in Ezekiel 18?,” in E. A. Livingstone, ed., *Studia Biblica 1978: I. Papers on Old Testament and Related Themes*, JSOTSS 11 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1979), 185-96; Kaminsky, *Corporate Responsibility in the Hebrew Bible*, esp. 116-78. Kaminsky summarizes, “Although there is evidence of a growing awareness of the importance of the individual, there is also evidence that texts from the later biblical period continue to highlight the importance of the community” (138). Some of Eichrodt’s explanations of the effects of the exile upon the identity of the Judean expatriates help to explain the increased attention to the individual. He notes that the community became defined by what was not present reality: the kingdom of the past and the restoration to come. Eichrodt also suggests the universalistic attitude which included the nations underlines an identity defined by religious convictions and practices in the absence of the monarchical political structure of the First Commonwealth. See Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J. A. Baker, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961, 1967), 2: 254-59.

18. Japhet refers to Wellhausen’s list (see *Ideology of Chronicles*, 121 [1989 ed., 155]) to set up her own treatment (see 129-38 [1989 ed., 165-76]).

19. See ibid., 124-29 (1989 ed., 159-66).

20. See ibid., esp. 118-29 (1989 ed., 151-65).

21. Ibid., 127 (1989 ed., 162); quotation from Ezek 18:20. Also see Japhet, *From the Rivers of Babylon*, 323.

22. Japhet, *Ideology of Chronicles*, 127; 1989 ed., 163.

23. Ibid., 128 (1989 ed., 163). See Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1069.

24. See Japhet, *Ideology of Chronicles*, 128 (1989 ed., 163). Japhet makes a couple of distinctions

Whether or not Ezekiel 18 is emblematic of a turn from collective to individual identity and accountability in the outlook of biblical Israel falls outside the present study.[25] Japhet asserts that 2 Chronicles 36 shares an identical outlook with Ezekiel 18, but it may be merely that her interpretation of retribution in Chronicles fits.

The present argument is that the Chronicler's interpretation of the basis for the fall of Jerusalem turns on an interpretive blend of Leviticus 26 and Jeremiah's seventy years.[26] This is not to deny the Chronicler's marked interest in illustrating retribution and reward across the First Commonwealth. The Chronicler affirms and/or augments retributive tendencies in his treatment of most Davidic kings even while a few kings are treated in a more complex manner. In spite of usually stressing individual retribution, the allusions to Leviticus 26 and Jeremiah in 2 Chronicles 36 point to a decidedly corporate understanding of judgment by exile. The Chronicler's ideology of exile is, in part, embodied in the description of exile in Leviticus 26:39, "And those of you who survive shall rot because of their iniquities, in the land of your enemies, and even because of the iniquities of their ancestors they will rot with them."[27] The next two sections will discuss the relevant details in the final chapter of Chronicles before drawing conclusions.

Retribution and Prophetic Messages in Chronicles

What is the scope and significance of the Chronistic account of Zedekiah's rejection of Jeremiah's warnings? Is it about Zedekiah and his generation exclusively? Does the Chronicler view Jeremiah as simply another in a long line of prophets dealing with the situations of their own days? Such a reading does not fit the evidence.

The Chronicler makes allusion to Jeremiah in a manner that views the prophet and his work in continuity with an ongoing mission of God to warn his people to turn to him. The function of the prophets in Chronicles runs along the lines of Yahweh's message to Solomon in a theophany sometime after the dedication of the temple, which, in turn, echoes the pivotal language of Leviticus 26.

between the views of justice by Chronicles and Ezekiel (see 128-29). The terms "horizontal" societal collective punishment and "vertical" generational collective punishment come from Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 339.

25. The shift has been noted since late antiquity, "Moses said [Ex. xxxiv. 7]: 'Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.' Ezekiel abolished it by saying [xviii. 4]: 'The soul which sinneth, that alone shall die'" (*b. Mak.* 24a). For brief remarks against the position by Wellhausen, von Rad, and others that Ezekiel's individual focus is a new development during the exile, see Krašovec, "Is There a Doctrine of 'Collective Retribution' in the Hebrew Bible?" 85-86; Block, *Book of Ezekiel, 1-24*, 556.

26. The concept of interpretive blends is broader but built on Fishbane's helpful term "legal blend" to speak of scriptural exegesis based on interpreting one context in light of another. See Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 110-19, 134-136.

27. For more detail on exile and Lev 26 see Gary Edward Schnittjer, "The Bad Ending of Ezra-Nehemiah," *BSac* 173 (2016): 46-49 [32-56].

If then their uncircumcised heart *humble itself* (כנע Nif), and then they **pay** (רצה) for their iniquity…(Lev 26:41b).

And Yahweh **has been sending** to you all of his servants the prophets, **persistently sending** (הַשְׁכֵּם וְשָׁלֹחַ), but you have not listened and you have not inclined your ear to listen (Jer 25:4).

> [Yahweh said to Solomon] And if my people who are called by my name *humble themselves* (כנע Nif) and pray and seek my face and *turn* (שׁוב) from their wicked ways, then I will hear from the heavens and I will forgive their sin and I *will heal* (רפא) their land (2 Chron 7:14).

> [Zedekiah] did not *humble himself* (כנע Nif) before Jeremiah the prophet from the mouth of Yahweh.…And he stiffened his neck and he strengthened his heart from *turning* (שׁוב) to Yahweh the God of Israel.…Moreover, all of the leaders of the priests and the people increased infidelity according to all of the offenses of the nations. And they polluted the house of Yahweh which he had made holy in Jerusalem. And Yahweh the God of their ancestors **sent** to them by the hand of his messengers, **persistently sending** (הַשְׁכֵּם וְשָׁלוֹחַ), because he took pity on his people and on his dwelling place. And they ridiculed the messengers of God, despising his words, mocking his prophets, until the wrath of Yahweh rose up against his people, until there was no *remedy* (רפא) (36:12, 13b, 15, 16).[28]

The Chronicler's use of "persistently sending"—literally "rising up early and sending" (הַשְׁכֵּם וְשָׁלוֹחַ)—seems like an intentional allusion to Jeremiah. The majority of uses of the Hifil infinitive absolute of שׁכם complementing various verbs occur in Jeremiah, along with this one occurrence in 2 Chronicles 36, a couple of occurrences in Samuel, and one in Proverbs.[29] Anyone who has read Jeremiah can remember the frequent use of this phrase and others similar to it. Jeremiah speaks of God as subject, usually in first person and sometimes in third person discourse, "rising early (שׁכם) and sending (שׁלח)" (Jer 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4) as well as "rising early (שׁכם) and speaking (דבר)" (7:13; 25:3; 35:14), "rising early (שׁכם) and warning (עוד)" (11:7), and "rising early (שׁכם) and teaching (למד)" (32:33).

The Hifil infinitive absolute הַשְׁכֵּם takes an intensifying adverbial sense of repetition or continuance in its several combinations with finite verbs in Jeremiah.

28. The use of "infidelity" (מעל) to describe the cause of "polluting" (טמא) the temple is a significant element in the Chronicler's explanation for Judah's downfall (see Milgrom, "Concept of Ma'al," 236, 247). For a treatment of Chron centered on מעל, see William Johnstone, *2 Chronicles 10-36, Guilt and Atonement*, vol. 2 of *1 and 2 Chronicles*, JSOTSS 254 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Johnstone, "Use of Leviticus in Chronicles," 243-55; and for summary and evaluation of Johnstone's work, see Kelly, "'Retribution' Revisited," 210-13. Also note that Zedekiah's broken oath to Nebuchadnezzar in 2 Chron 36:13a relates to Ezek 17:11-21 (see H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, NCB [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], 416).

29. See Even-Shoshan, 1143.

For example, "Rising up early and speaking" (הַשְׁכֵּם וְדַבֵּר) in Jeremiah 7:13 signifies *I have spoken to you already for a long period.*[30] The connotation of the various hendiadyses which all include שכם in Jeremiah is *earnestly, persistently, repeatedly.*[31] The verb "has sent" (*qatal*) at the beginning of Jeremiah 25:4 can refer to acts which have already taken place and are still constantly reoccurring: "And Yahweh has sent to you all his servants the prophets rising early and sending but you have not listened."[32] A casual paraphrase would be "he has been talking about this all day long" roughly equivalent to 24/7/365.

The Chronicler's reference to Jeremiah's refrain about the long line of prophets who warn of judgment makes explicit one of the significant tendencies across his narrative. Von Rad says,

> No, Jahweh's patience is not exhausted until the people (usually in its representative king) reject the salvific relation with obvious intentionality— that is to say, when they freely step out from the divine ordinances. In this aspect in the outline of the Chronicler's narrative, we find something almost like a sermon on Jahweh's searching love. This becomes apparent especially in the tireless *warnings* that, from our author's perspective, time and again go out to man who is about to step out of the present salvific relation.[33]

The description of Zedekiah refusing to "humble himself" (כנע Nif) offers a negative counterpoint to the programmatic statement in 2 Chronicles 7:14.[34] The use of this term describing an "inner quality of the pious man in general, as resignation

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30. See *IBHS*, §35.3.2c.

31. So *HALOT*, 2: 1494.

32. See GKC §106k, as applied in *HALOT*, 2: 1493-94. GKC lists וישלח in Jer 25:4 as *veqatal* with a function of introducing frequently repeated action (see §112dd). The verb שכם in the *qatal* form can also refer to acts which have already taken place and are still constantly reoccurring (as in 7:25; 25:4; 26:5, etc.). For a brief description of the figural sense of שכם as rise early in the morning, see *IBHS*, §27.4b.

33. "Nein, Jahwes Geduld erschöpft sich erst, wenn das Volk (meist in seinem Repräsentanten, dem König) in offenbarer Absicht das angebotene Heilsverhältnis verschmäht, wenn es sich also um ein freies Heraustreten aus den göttlichen Ordnungen handelt. Es liegt in dem Aufriß der chronistischen Geschichte in diesem Punkte geradezu etwas wie eine Predigt von Jahwes suchender Liebe, und das wird vor allem in den unermüdlichen *Warnungen* sichtbar, die nach Anschauung unseres Verfassers immer wieder dem Menschen zugehen, der im Begriff steht, aus dem bestehenden Heilsverhältnis herrauszutreten" (Von Rad, *Das Geschichtsbild des Chronistischen Werks*, 12; emphasis original).

34. 2 Chron 7:14 is part of a plus (material not in 1 Kgs) which embodies the central themes of the narrative. See Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 225-26. For a detailed discussion of the structure, leading terms, and significance of this context, see Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles*, 50-61. Kelly traces out the pattern of retribution in 2 Chron 10-36 in light of the themes in 2 Chron 7 (see 93-110). It should be added, as Knoppers suggests, that David's repentance in 1 Chron 21 may function "paradigmatically" as the appropriate response to "disasters of one's own making." See Gary N. Knoppers, "Democratizing Revelation?: Prophets, Seers and Visionaries in Chronicles," in John Day, ed., *Prophecy and Prophets in Ancient Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* (New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 404 [391-409].

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and repentance before God" stands among the Chronicler's innovative and distinct narrative ways of describing the "spirit of penitence."[35] Japhet suggests the Chronicler may have appropriated the use of self-humbling (כנע Nif) from Leviticus 26:41 and Psalm 107:12, but she does not list the negative use of this term in 2 Chronicles 36 (even though she appears to be listing all occurrences in Chronicles).[36] In light of this it will be worth considering the importance of the ideology of exile as rooted in the absence of self-humbling. The question, for present purpose, is whether the absence of self-humbling in Zedekiah indicates an individual failure or if the Chronicler is using his personal lack of repentance as an embodiment and symbol of a collective apostasy of the First Commonwealth. While the answer turns on the significance of "rising early and sending" noted above, it is necessary to get at the function of the prophets in Chronicles before describing the meaning of Zedekiah's rebellion.

Sharp debate surrounds the identity and function of prophetic figures in Chronicles.[37] William Schniedewind claims vocational prophets interpret history and warn while inspired messengers warn and exhort.[38] Amit pushes back against this as an "artificial" and inconsistent distinction.[39] Gary N. Knoppers illustrates the Chronicler's interest in aligning prophets and prophecy with the criteria of Deuteronomy.[40] The present discussion extends and applies this approach. Knoppers' quip identifies the real issue: "The medium is not the message; the message is the message."[41]

The prophetic messages of Chronicles line up with the criteria of Deuteronomy.[42] Deuteronomy does not deal with prophets in terms of advocacy for those under

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35. Japhet, "Common Authorship," 27.

36. See ibid., 27, n. 145.

37. Discussions often work with or against von Rad's thesis that the Chronicler spoke through prophetic speeches in non-synoptic narrative. See "The Levitical Sermon in 1 and 2 Chronicles," in Gerhard von Rad, *From Genesis to Chronicles: Explorations in Old Testament Theology,* ed. K. C. Hanson; trans. R. Smend (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 232-42.

38. The issues go beyond designations of "prophet" (נביא), "visionary" (חזה), "seer" (ראה), "servant of Yahweh" (יהוה עבד), and "man of God" (איש האלהים) and include recipients and inspiration formulas. See William M. Schniedewind, "Prophets and Prophecy in the Books of Chronicles," in M. Patrick Graham, Kenneth G. Hoglund, and Steven L. McKenzie, eds., *The Chronicler as Historian*, JSOTSS 238 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 216-20 [204-24].

39. Yairah Amit, "The Role of Prophecy and Prophets in the Chronicler's World," in Michael H. Floyd and Robert D. Haak, eds., *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism* (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 95, n. 40 [80-101].

40. See Gary N. Knoppers, review of *From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period* by William M. Schniedewind, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 49.1 (1998): 133-35; idem, "'To Him You Must Listen': The Prophetic Legislation in Deuteronomy and the Reformation of Classical Tradition in Chronicles," in Paul S. Evans and Tyler F. Williams, eds., *Chronicling the Chronicler: The Book of Chronicles and Early Second Temple Historiography* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 172-74 [161-94].

41. Knoppers, "Democratizing Revelation?," 400.

42. Though there are important differences discussion here is broadly indebted to ibid., 392-404; Knoppers, "'To Him You Must Listen,'" 165-74.

judgment but by an evaluation of the prophetic message.[43] Also, Deuteronomy rejects deductive divination related to omens, spiritual mediums, and the like (Deut 18:9-13).[44] The two prophetic criteria of Deuteronomy relate to reality and Torah. First, the message of a prophet must accord with reality (18:22). This relates especially to prophetic claims about divine intervention in history. But prophetic threats and warnings may evoke repentance and adjust the contingent judgment. Such ironies make up a normal sort of difficulty in identifying true prophets—the problem of prophetic success. Stated differently, prophetic warnings seem to always have an implied "unless you repent" contingency clause.[45] Even with the contingency of repentance the prophetic word binds reality by God's own fidelity.[46] Second, the prophet's message needs to accord with Torah (13:2). A prophet who performs signs but speaks against Torah must be rejected as a false prophet (13:1; cf. Matt 7:21-23; 2 Thess 2:9).[47]

For the moment the prophetic criteria of concord with reality and Torah may be aligned with the historical and instructional functions of prophetic messages in Chronicles. The historical and instructional emphases of prophetic messages get at different kinds of interpretation even if they overlap. Interpretation of divine intervention in historical events focuses on God's sovereignty and instructional interpretation of scriptural traditions on human responsibility. The different kinds of prophetic messages in Chronicles often feature literary signals of interpretation like "because," "so that," "by this," and the like. Table A provides broad organization of the overlapping and interrelated interpretive functions of prophetic messages.

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43. On prophets as advocates for the condemned see Gen 20:7; Jer 7:16; 11:14; 14:11; 15:1; Amos 7:1-8; Hab 1.

44. This aligns with general prohibitions elsewhere, see Exod 22:18; Lev 19:26, 31; 20:6, 27.

45. See, e.g., Jer 26:18-19 for Micah not being a false prophet even when Jerusalem was spared, thus, shifting from his initial warning.

46. See discussion related to Isa 55:11 in Gary Edward Schnittjer, "Idolatry in Isaiah," *Credo Magazine* 8.2 (2018).

47. The prophet's conservative role as interpreter of Torah in Deut 13:1-5 remains irrespective of how the possible relationship of Deut 13 and ancient Near Eastern covenantal conventions get sorted out. For competing views see Bernard M. Levinson, *"The Right Chorale": Studies in Biblical Law and Interpretation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008; reprint, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 138-43, 184-90; idem, "Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty as a Source for the Canon Formula in Deuteronomy 13:1," *JAOS* 130.3 (2010): 337-47; idem and Jeffrey Stackert, "Between the Covenant Code and Esarhaddon's Succession Treaty: Deuteronomy 13 and the Composition of Deuteronomy," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 3 (2012): 123-40; Joshua Berman, "CTH 133 and the Hittite Provenance of Deuteronomy 13," *JBL* 130.1 (2011): 25-44; idem, "Historicism and Its Limits: A Response to Bernard M. Levinson and Jeffrey Stackert," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 4.3 (2013): 297-309; Markus Zehnder, "Building on Stone? Deuteronomy and Esarhaddon's Loyalty Oaths (Part 1): Some Preliminary Observations," *BBR* 19.3 (2009): 341-74.

Table A: Exegetical Function of Prophetic Messages in Non-synoptic Contexts of Chronicles

	Historical—exegesis of divine intervention (Deut 18:22 oriented)	Historical and Instructional (Deut 13:2 and 18:22 oriented)	Instructional—exegesis of human responsibility (Deut 13:2 oriented)
direct discourse	**2 Chron 16:7-9**, Hanani[a] **20:14-17**, Jahaziel[b] **20:37**, Eliezer[c] **21:12-15**, Elijah[de] **25:15, 16**, prophet[c] **28:9-11**, Oded[ef]	**2 Chron 12:5, 7**, Shemaiah[f] **15:1-7**, Azariah[hf] **19:2-3**, Jehu[gi] **25:7-9**, man of God[b] **35:21**, Neco[j]	**1 Chron 12:18 [19]**, Amasai[i] **2 Chron 24:20**, Zechariah[i]
summary allusion		**36:21**, Jeremiah[k]	**36:12**, Jeremiah[k] **36:15**, messengers[k]

- Literary signals of historical contingency and/or explanation: [a] "because" (עַל־כֵּן); [b] no literary signals; [c] "because" (כִּ); [d] "because" (תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר); [e] "behold" (הִנֵּה); [f] "because, so that" (כִּי); [g] "on account of this" (בְּזֹאת).
- Literary signals of instructional motivation (parenesis) and/or explanation: [h] "if" (אִם); [i] "because" (כִּי); [j] syntactical jussive; [k] no embedded direct discourse.

The critical issue in Zedekiah's rule stems from the rebellion against the instructional messages of Jeremiah and the divine messengers (2 Chron 36:12, 15). Disobeying the instructional message incites the condemning wrath of Yahweh which triggers the exilic timetable according to Jeremiah (36:21, see Table A).

Prophetic authority, by means of historical and instructional messages, maintains a decisive place in the Chronicler's understanding of divine intervention within historical contingency. A few examples including the present context can illustrate (emphasis mine):[48]

> Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in Yahweh your God and you will be upheld; *have faith in his prophets and you will be successful*" (2 Chron 20:20 NIV).

> They abandoned the temple of Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, and worshiped Asherah poles and idols. Because of their guilt, God's anger came on Judah and Jerusalem. *Although Yahweh sent prophets to the people to bring them back to him, and though they testified against them*, they would not listen (24:18-19 NIV).

> *Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place*. But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of Yahweh was aroused against his people and there was no remedy (36:15-16 NIV).

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48. See Howard Ray Macy, "The Sources of the Book of Chronicles," Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1975, 48.

The Chronicler frequently features prophetic messages with explicit acknowledgments of fulfillment, most of which do not have a synoptic parallel in Kings.[49] The narrative also includes numerous cases of prophetic messages implicitly fulfilled by subsequent events, again, several of which are plusses in Chronicles.[50] The consistent pattern of divine utterance and fulfillment may be considered a function of putting divine retribution on display. All of this directly bears on the explicit use of Jeremiah's seventy years to explain exile.

Prophets in Chronicles address both monarch and people. Knoppers points out that monarchs in Chronicles function according to ancient Near Eastern ideology as both representatives and personal embodiments of the states they lead. This provides a mechanism for the Chronicler to hold people and leaders accountable.[51] If the Chronicler presented horizontal corporate solidarity by the prophetic messages to the kings, his allusion to Jeremiah establishes vertical corporate solidarity.

Zedekiah's rejection of the prophet's message reflects a grasp of the book of Jeremiah (2 Chron 36:12-16; see above). The starting point may be "but neither he [Zedekiah] nor his servants nor the people of the land listened to the words of Yahweh which he spoke by the hand of Jeremiah the prophet" (Jer 37:2). Far from being an isolated warning to this king at this time, the Chronicler uses the prophet's own constant refrain to situate his message within the ongoing context of God's pity-motivated incessant sending of his prophets.[52] Jeremiah did not claim to be innovative, nor a lone voice, nor do anything unusual. The prophet frequently identifies his role and message as part of God's persistent prophetic warning—"rising early and sending/speaking/warning." By adopting Jeremiah's mantra of continuity of constant warning, Zedekiah's rejection functions as the culmination of a transgenerational rebellion against God's covenantal will.

Zedekiah is not alone. Leaders and people rebel and refuse to submit to the persistent messengers of God (2 Chron 36:14, 16). The leaders and people are not alone. They represent full continuity with their forebears. They sustain the persistent addiction of rejecting the warnings of God's messengers (36:15). The Chronicler does not depict the generation of Zedekiah's exile as unto themselves on a clean slate. They continue a long commitment by the people of "Yahweh, the God of their ancestors" of scorning prophetic warnings (36:15-16).

Jeremiah represents the trans-temporal company of prophets, and Zedekiah, in the twilight of the First Commonwealth, personifies by his own impudence the

49. See 2 Chron 10:15//1 Kgs 12:15; 2 Chron 12:5-8, 12; 24:20-25; 25:15-16, 20; 36:22; cf. 1 Chron 11:3, 10; 2 Chron 3:21-24 (ibid., 50-51).

50. See 1 Chron 14:10-12, 14-17//2 Sam 5:19-21, 23-25; 1 Chron 21:9-16//2 Sam 24:11-15; 2 Chron 15:1-9; 18//1 Kgs 22; 2 Chron 20:14-17, 20, 37; 21:12-19; 24:20; 25:7-13; 34:22-25 (ibid., 51-52; Knoppers, "Democratizing Revelation?," 403).

51. See Knoppers, "Democratizing Revelation?," 400.

52. The term in Jeremiah is "servants" and in Chronicles "messengers" (see Jer 25:3; 2 Chron 36:15, 16).

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rebellion of his people across the generations. Jeremiah and Zedekiah are both individuals—prophet and king—and all that means. They also represent and speak for two horizontal and vertical collectives. The Chronicler appropriates Jeremiah's language of continuity of warning to signify the prophetic and Davidic institutions by these two men.

Exilic Culpability in Chronicles

Biblical prophets and storymakers see the exile as more than a political and social event. The exile is explained as just punishment from Israel's God. Is the exile, according to the Chronicler, a judgment of the First Commonwealth as trans-temporal collective? Is it a punishment only of Zedekiah's generation? The difficulty with this latter view, promoted by Japhet, is the way the Chronicler uses Jeremiah and Leviticus to explain the event.[53] The Chronicler connects the duration of the exile and its rationale from Leviticus 26 with Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years (shared language marked by emphasis).

> Then the land **shall pay** (רצה) **its sabbaths** all the days of **its desolation** (שמם), and you are in the land of your enemies, then the land **will rest** (שבת) and **shall pay** (רצה) **its sabbaths**…If then their uncircumcised heart humbles itself, and then they **pay** (רצה) for their iniquity…And the land will be abandoned by them and it **shall pay** (רצה) **its sabbaths** while it lies **desolate** (שמם) without them, and they **pay** (רצה) for their iniquity, because they rejected my rules and their soul spurned my statutes (Lev 26:34, 41b, 43; cf. 25:2).[54]

> All of this land will become a ruin and a waste, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon *seventy years*. And it will be when *seventy years are fulfilled* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, declares Yahweh, and the land of the Chaldeans, and I will make it an everlasting waste (Jer 25:11, 12).

> For thus says Yahweh, "When *seventy years are fulfilled* for Babylon I will visit you and I will establish my good word to you to return you to this place" (29:10).

53. Japhet discusses the use of Lev 26 and Jeremiah's seventy years, but does not take up the question of vertical versus horizontal collective judgment in that context. See Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1075-76.

54. On רצה (Q) as *pay* for iniquity (ע ו ן) in Lev 26:41, 43 see *HALOT*, 2: 1282. See JPS 1917 for translation of רצה as *pay/repay*; this is followed to a large degree by NJPS. Also see Schnittjer, "Bad Ending," 47.

And he took into exile the remnant from the sword to Babylon, and they were for him and for his descendants slaves until the reign of the kings of Persia, to fulfill the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah until the land **paid back** (רצה) **its sabbaths**, all the days of **its desolation** (שמם) it **rested** (שבת), *to fulfill seventy years*. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia to accomplish the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah, Yahweh instigated the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, and he announced in all his kingdom and even in writing, saying, "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'All the kingdoms of the earth Yahweh the God of the heavens has given to me, and he has appointed me to build for him a house in Jerusalem which is in Judah. Whoever among you from all his people, may Yahweh his God be with him, and let him go up'" (2 Chron 36:20-23).

The Chronicler's intentional allusion is demonstrated by using several of these terms from Leviticus: "pay back" (26:41), "desolation" (26:43), "rested" (25:2; 26:34), and "sabbaths" (26:34, 35, 43). The Chronicler innovates by making explicit connection between the land's sabbaths and Jeremiah's oracle concerning seventy years (see Jer 25:11; 29:10).[55]

The use of seventy years to signify judgment occurs in Isaiah 23:15-17 regarding Tyre and regarding Babylon in the Esarhaddon inscription (c. 679 BCE).[56] Zechariah twice refers to the seventy years of Jerusalem's suffering without directly referring to Jeremiah's oracle (see Zech 1:12; 7:5). The seventy years of Jeremiah are referred to directly in Daniel and Chronicles, and connected to Leviticus 26 in both cases. When Daniel observes Jeremiah's seventy years he offers a "Leviticus 26 style confession," only to learn that these are seventy weeks of years (see Dan 9).[57]

Jeremiah explains the seventy years in terms of slavery "among the nations" (Jer 25:11 LXX) or slavery to "the king of Babylon" (25:11 MT).[58] Jeremiah reinforces the seventy years to the Jehoiachin exiles of 597 in a letter rejecting the optimistic message of the false prophets (29:10). The Septuagint mildly adjusts this with

55. For other connotations see Magnar Kartveit, "2 Chronicles 36.20-23 as Literary and Theological 'Interface,'" in M. Patrick Graham and Steven L. McKenzie, eds., *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture,* JSOTSS 263 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 395-403. Also see Amber K. Warhurst, "The Chronicler's Use of the Prophets," in Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana Edelman, eds., *What Was Authoritative for Chronicles?* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 175-81 [165-81]; Mark Leuchter, "Rethinking the 'Jeremiah' Doublet in Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles," *What Was Authoritative for Chronicles?,* 183-200.

56. See "Esarhaddon," *COS,* 2.120: 306. For discussion of the possible implications of the seventy years of Jeremiah see Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 143-64; Mark Leuchter, "Jeremiah's 70-Year Prophecy and the לב קמי/ששך *Atbash* Codes," *Biblica* 85 (2004): 509-11 [503-22].

57. Fishbane suggests that the "seventy sabbatical cycles" (or ten Jubilees) of Dan 9 plays off 2 Chron 36:21, which reads the seventy years of Jeremiah in relation to Lev 26:34-42, see *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel,* 482-91.

58. See Steven M. Bryan, "The End of Exile: The Reception of Jeremiah's Prediction of a Seventy-Year Exile," *JBL* 137.1 (2018): 116-17 [107-26].

"When Babylon's seventy years are *about to be* completed" (36:10 NETS=29:10 MT, emphasis mine).[59] Jeremiah elsewhere used three generations to denote the duration of Babylon's rule: "And all the nations will serve him [Nebuchadnezzar] and his son, and his son's son, until the time of his own land comes, then many nations and great kings will make him their slave" (27:7).[60] Whether Jeremiah means the seventy years as an exact period or round number or symbolic number akin to three generations is not important for the present purposes.

The Chronicler's innovative interpretation aligns with, broadly speaking, the references to the seventy years in Zechariah and Daniel. The messenger of Yahweh asks, "How long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which you have been angry for these seventy years?" (Zech 1:12). Zechariah seems to think of the seventy years as literal rather than symbolic, and to associate the beginning and pending conclusion with the destruction (586 BCE) and rebuilding of the temple (within a few years of 520 BCE when the oracle is dated).[61] In a later exchange, Zechariah receives an oracle from Yahweh that implies his skepticism as to the purpose of the people's fasts over the seventy years—"Did you really fast for me, indeed for me?" (7:5).[62] In spite of these allusions to the twilight of the seventy years Zechariah looks forward to the restoration of Jerusalem and the return of the

59. Bryan suggests the phrase of the *Vorlage* of the LXX matched the MT, "When the seventy years are fulfilled for Babylon," but that a Septuagintal scribe or translator inserted "about to" (μέλλη). The reason for this adjustment may have been to soften the chronological challenges of an exact seventy-year period (see ibid., 117-18).

60. See Leslie C. Allen, *Jeremiah, A Commentary,* OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 307. Also see Japhet, *I & II Chronicles,* 1074. Jer 27:7 is a MT plus (not in the LXX). The reference to seventy years in 25:11, 12 as three generations in 27:7 could be seen as a general figural reference however the difference between the MT and LXX is explained. For a summary of the debate surrounding 27:7 see William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah,* ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 2: 689-90. Lious Jonker argues that it cannot be determined if the Chronicler used the proto-MT or the *Vorlage* of the LXX, see "The Chronicler and the Prophets: Who Were His Authoritative Sources?" in *What Was Authoritative for Chronicles?,* 161 [145-64]. Jonker goes on to affirm that the Chronicler's use of seventy years has most affinity with Jer 29:10 (not 25:11, 12) since both Jer 29:10 and 2 Chron 36:21 focus on the restoration of the exiles (see 162). Strangely, Bryan's somewhat strenuous case for a completed literal seventy-year exile does not interact with Jer 27:7 MT (see "The End of Exile," 107-26).

61. The actual time between the destruction and rebuilding of the temple is a little more than seventy years, based on the reference in Ezra 6:15 (sixth year of Darius I = 515 BCE). See discussion in Michael R. Stead, *The Intertextuality of Zechariah 1-8,* LHB/OTS 506 (New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 93-95; Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8,* AB 25B (Garden City: Doubleday, 1987), 117-18.

62. Four fasts are listed in Zech 8:19 "The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months"; those in the fifth and seventh months are referred to in 7:5, 6. The fasts: "fourth," lamented the breaking into Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 25:3-4; Jer 39:2; 52:6-7); "fifth" mourned the burning of temple (2 Kgs 25:8-10; Jer 52:12-14); "seventh," marked the assassination of Gedaliah (2 Kgs 25:22-25; Jer. 41:1-3); "tenth," commemorated the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 25:1; Jer 39:1; Ezek 24:1-2). For a discussion of the force of the rhetorical questions in Zech 7:5 as an indictment against the people who remained hardened against God's word in exile, see Stead, *Intertextuality of Zechariah 1-8,* 221-26.

remnant as an event of the future (8:3-7). Working out the already and not-yet of return and restoration of Jerusalem in Zechariah cannot be pursued here.[63] Whatever the timing, these passages infer that the destruction of Jerusalem should invoke true repentance. Confession would signal humility and turning to God for mercy. Daniel has the turning point of Leviticus 26 in view: "I prayed to Yahweh my God and I made confession (ידה)…we have sinned and committed iniquity (עוה)" (Dan 9:4, 5). The pivot from judgment to restoration reads "they shall confess (ידה) their iniquity (עון) and the iniquity (עון) of their ancestors…and I will remember my covenant" (Lev 26:40, 42).[64]

The Chronicler makes more concrete the predicted doom for breaking the covenant according to Leviticus 26. He explains the seventy years of exile as directly associated with the destruction of the temple in order to give the land its sabbaths. The personification of the land of promise runs across several contexts in Leviticus: the contamination of the land by the Canaanites, and later the Israelites, will cause the land to vomit out its inhabitants (18:24-28; 20:22), the trees bear foreskinned fruit that needs to be circumcised upon Israel's initial entry into the land (19:23-25), and the land needs to observe sabbath years (25:2).[65] The personification of the land offers a powerful figure to denote accumulated iniquity of the First Commonwealth. The Chronicler equates the seventy years of exile with the land's sabbaths. This follows the description that the judgment had been deferred while God persistently sent his prophets. Deferred judgment and cumulative guilt do not mean that there are no immediate retributive acts, nor are these mutually exclusive of the responsibility of individual persons or individual generations.

The Deuteronomistic and Chronistic narratives each present immediate judgments upon individuals and particular generations even while interpreting the continuation of the kingdom according to the patience and mercy of God. The Chronicler does not view the removal of the Davidic monarch, the destruction of Jerusalem and temple, and the exile of the people in 586 BCE, as the immediate judgment of Zedekiah's generation alone. Rather, the seventy sabbath years infer a penalty for rejecting God's will for nearly five centuries—"seventy sabbatical

cycles."[66] The Chronicler often seems exacting, and he may mean seventy sabbaths for 490 years of rebellion. Or the seventy sabbath years might be seen as a round number inferring judgment for the comprehensive rebellion of the First Commonwealth.[67]

David Kimchi infers that the completion of the seventy years is the edict of Cyrus (c. 539 BCE) and thus began with the rise of Nebuchadnezzar and includes the fifty-two years of exile.[68] However, the period from the destruction of the temple to its rebuilding comes close to seventy years.[69] The seventy years without the temple in Jerusalem and Cyrus' edict directed toward the temple fits well with the centrality of the temple in Chronicles.

The contexts of two references to the seventy years in Jeremiah thematically correspond with the Chronicler's narrative interpretation in the last chapter of his story. The Chronicler emphasizes the reason for God's persistent sending of messengers to preach against the sins of the people as including the pity he had for his people and his dwelling place (2 Chron 36:15). This emphasis accords with the persistent warnings by the prophets across the years and including Jeremiah himself (Jer 25:4; cf. seventy years in 25:11). While Jeremiah associates the seventy years with Babylonian rule (27:7), in his letter he connects the completion of these years with renewal of his people. "For thus says Yahweh, 'When the seventy years are fulfilled for Babylon, I will visit you and I will establish upon you my good word to return you to this place'" (29:10). The Chronicler may make allusion to this connection when speaks of Cyrus' edict after referring to the seventy years of exile.

Conclusion

The exile in Chronicles functions as collective retribution for the rebellion of the First Commonwealth. The Chronicler's version of the exile explains divine judgment as deferrable and cumulative. The Chronicler establishes vertical accountability by tapping into Jeremiah's claim to continuity of prophetic warning. The rejection of Jeremiah's message—the latest of a long line—by Zedekiah and the city continues the long tradition of deriding the messengers of God, finally provoking God to

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63. The eschatological expectations for the return of the remnant and restoration of Jerusalem in Zech 8:1-7 do not fit easily with Fishbane's claim that for Zechariah (and the Chronicler) "seventy years meant seventy years" (*Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 481). Likewise, it is difficult to accept the cut and dry assessment that for Zechariah "the exile had ended" (Bryan, "The End of Exile," 112). Bryan's reading is based on Zech 1:11-17, and he mentions Zech 7:1-7 but does not interact with Zech 8 (112-13).

64. Baruch Levine invites comparison of this confession with the confession for the "guilt offering" (Lev 5:5) and the day of atonement (16:21), see *Leviticus*, JPS Torah Commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 28, 106, 190. Von Rad considers the biblical notion of retribution as integral to the evil actions themselves. Rather than a separate word for punishment, "sin" and "iniquity" (חטא, עון) denote both the acts and their results (see *Old Testament Theology*, 1: 385, 266).

65. On the function of the personification of the land in Leviticus, see Gary Edward Schnittjer, *The Torah Story* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 344-47.

66. Since sabbath years are due once every seven years, seventy sabbaths are due for 490 years of rebellion. Even a strong proponent of the Chronicler's theology of immediate retribution like Dillard concedes the Chronicler has cumulative guilt in mind when he narrates the indictment against Zedekiah and the seventy years of exile (see *2 Chronicles*, 300-1). Also see Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 480-85; Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles*, 108-9.

67. Williamson says that the dates the Chronicler gives from the beginning of David's reign to the destruction of the temple come to a total of 474 years, plus the uncertain length of the reign of Saul (see 1 Sam 13:1 MT) meaning 490 years is "more or less co-extensive" with the period of the monarchy (see *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 418).

68. See Yitzhak Berger, *The Commentary of Rabbi David Kimḥi to Chronicles: A Translation with Introduction and Supercommentary,* BJS 345 (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2007), 281-82.

69. See Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 418.

wrath against his people. The Chronicler goes so far as to calculate the length of accumulated judgment by identifying Jeremiah's seventy years as the land's sabbath years *via* exile. By "doing the math" the Chronicler clears away mystery regarding the rationale of the exile, at least in one respect. If the secret things belong to God, they do not include the mathematical equation of the exile's duration in Chronicles.

The Chronicler's interpretation of the exile as collective retribution of the First Commonwealth may have come from Leviticus 26:39 as noted above. The Chronicler, in part, built his case for the judgment on allusion to Yahweh's word to Solomon including the need for the people to humble themselves (2 Chron 36:12 with 7:14) which, in turn, tracks with the needed response of the exiles (Lev 26:41). The Chronicler contextualized the exile into an opportunity for response to God's will by equating it with the sabbaths granted to the land by means of the exile of the covenantal community (26:34, 35, 43). The Chronicler does not quote, "And those of you who survive shall rot because of their iniquities, in the land of your enemies, and even because of the iniquities of their ancestors they will rot with them" (26:39). Yet, by emphasizing both the responsibility of the final generation of the First Commonwealth and establishing their continuity with the vertical collective identity of their ancestors, 2 Chronicles 36 shares this aspect of the ideology of exile with Leviticus 26.[70] The Chronicler, it seems, built his interpretation of exile from the larger context of Leviticus 26, beyond those passages to which he alludes directly.[71] In both Leviticus 26 and 2 Chronicles 36 the judgment of God against the iniquities of the exiles and their ancestors situates the expatriates in a context where they need to humble themselves and respond to God's plan for restoration.

Individual and collective retribution are not mutually exclusive.[72] There is merit in the recognition by Wellhausen, von Rad, Japhet, and many others, that the Chronicler makes explicit retributive justice in the lifetimes of many kings and many generations of the First Commonwealth. Greater attention to individually oriented accountability in no way precludes collective responsibility. The problem appears to be a mindset that says the Chronicler can only emphasize individual justice if he

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70. Jeffrey H. Tigay explains that the punishment explained in Lev 26:39 "occupies the middle ground between cross-generational retribution and the principle that individuals should be rewarded and punished only for their own deeds. It recognizes the reality of the former but holds that cross-generational rewards and punishments only come to those who merit similar retribution on their own" (*Deuteronomy*, JPS Torah Commentary [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996], 437). See the qualifications to Tigay's point in Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, AB 3B (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 2327-28. Also see Milgrom, *Numbers*, 392-96.

71. The idea that cited texts point to whole contexts is one part of Dodd's hypothesis which remains viable even after his more speculative explanations on the use of scripture in scripture have been rightly challenged. See C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures: The Sub-structure of New Testament Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), 126; and see Luke Timothy Johnson, *Septuagintal Midrash in the Speeches of Acts* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2002), 37.

72. See Kaminsky, "Sins of the Fathers," 328. Also see J. Gordon McConville, "Retribution in Deuteronomy: Theology and Ethics," *Interpretation* 69.3 (2015): 288-98.

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rejects the possibility of collective culpability. Reality does not work that way, and neither do the Deuteronomistic and Chronistic narratives.

Human persons simultaneously sustain multiple intersecting and overlapping social functions as a part of ordinary identity. An ancient person may be husband/father, and in a larger familial context brother/son/uncle/grandfather, while in society being temple-goer/city elder/employee/taxpayer, and so on. All of these social roles naturally carry their own sorts of responsibilities whether or not rules are followed and whether or not injustice prevails. Normal social collectives and their associated responsibilities in no way excuse personal accountability, and vice versa. Individual responsibility and collective identity do not cancel each other out even with respect to deferred judgment for the same responsibilities. There are all sorts of contingencies, exceptions, and the like, but ancient people naturally exist in multiple collectives, all of which is the normal stuff of identity and social function.[73]

People typically do not object to collective identity when it means they benefit. But, talk of fairness and justice materialize quickly and persistently in the wake of corporate accountability, especially punishment.[74] Collective responsibility for citizens of a kingdom is not exceptional. Framing the issue between individual and collective poles diverts attention from the more basic concerns of retribution and responsibility. When God holds an individual generation to account as an individual generation, he in no way abdicates his prerogative to bring judgment against the larger social collectives of which the individual generation is a part. The Chronicler's explanation of the exile juxtaposes the persistent patience of God toward the First Commonwealth against the callous rebels who ridicule his messengers sent to warn the people of impending peril. The Chronicler does not conclude that the failure of the people eliminates their responsibility or the mercy of God. In Chronicles the exile is not the end, but fulfillment which opens new possibility and new responsibility. The edict of Cyrus simultaneously embodies fulfillment and new beginning for individual citizens who will participate in the assembly of God's people.

These findings regarding the final chapter of Chronicles need to be measured against the book as a whole, at least broadly. First, the corporate perspective is not confined to the final episode of the book. The ideals of deferred judgment and collective responsibility are made explicit beginning with Hezekiah (2 Chron 32:25) and Josiah (34:26-28).[75] Second, Mark Boda argues that 2 Chronicles 36 needs to be

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73. Similarly Knoppers says "Collective identities may be multiple and overlapping" which he applies to ethnic identity, see "Nehemiah and Sanballat: The Enemy Without or Within?" in Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Rainer Albertz, eds., *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 307 [305-31]. Also see Gary N. Knoppers, "Ethnicity, Genealogy, Geography, and Change: the Judean Communities of Babylon and Jerusalem in the Story of Ezra," in Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau, eds., *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 147-71.

74. For a similar comment see Kaminsky, "Sins of the Fathers," 327.

75. See Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles*, 102-8. For other examples of deferred

interpreted in light of its intertextual connections with previous parts of the story. He suggests Hezekiah's revival of worship that had been shut down by Ahaz, along with Manasseh's repentance and restoration, need to be collated with the book's ending.[76] To this can be added David's renewal of honor to God by means of bringing the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, which had been neglected in Saul's day. Days of declension and judgment provide opportunity for God's people to respond in the fashion of David, Hezekiah, and even Manasseh. Together these narratives provide models for the Chronicler's target readers. These connections suggest some of the responsibilities and directions for the shared identity of those who accept the implications of Cyrus' call to go up.

judgment in Chronicles, see Ehud Ben Zvi, "Are There Any Bridges Out There?: How Wide Was the Conceptual Gap between the Deuteronomistic History and Chronicles?," in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography*, 64-70 [59-86].

76. See Mark J. Boda, "Identity and Empire, Reality and Hope in the Chronicler's Perspective," in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography*, 249-72.

Book Reviews

Israelite Monarchy

Block, Daniel I. *Beyond the River Chebar: Studies in Kingship and Eschatology in the Book of Ezekiel.* **Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013, pp. 238, $30, paperback.**

Daniel Block is a familiar name in Ezekiel scholarship, having written the substantial two-volume NICOT commentary on Ezekiel (1997–1998). Block also collaborated in editing Jacob Milgrom's posthumous publication *Ezekiel's Hope: A Commentary on Ezekiel 38–48* (2012). In addition to his studies on Ezekiel, Block has produced commentaries on Ruth (ZECOT, 2015), Obadiah (HMS, 2013), and Deuteronomy (NIVAC, 2012) and served as a senior translator for the revised edition of the *New Living Translation* of the Bible. Currently, Block serves as Gunther H. Knoedler Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College in Illinois.

Beyond the River Chebar, with its predecessor *By the River Chebar*, is a collection of articles and papers Block has presented over the years. The first volume focuses on historical, literary, and theological aspects of Ezekiel, while the current volume gives attention to issues of kingship and eschatology. Block is forthright that his ideological stance is Christian and his hermeneutical perspective is primarily grammatical-historical. Thus, he gives significant attention to the historical and cultural context from which the book of Ezekiel arose.

The first essay in the compilation provides an overview of Zion theology. Block explains that paradigmatic elements—land, covenant, Zion, and David—are suppressed in Ezekiel but not because the prophet is opposed to Zion theology. Rather, Ezekiel seeks to prevent the misadministration of the past by transforming "his audience's perception of their relationship with YHWH" (p. 7).

In the following three essays Block discusses kingship and messiah. He explains that although Ezekiel was not fundamentally opposed to the monarchy, the prophet held a negative view of the kings of Judah. In fact, Block contends that Ezekiel utilizes Gen 49:10, typically seen as a prediction of Judah's power, to instead predict doom.

Block spends a substantial amount of time deciphering Ezekiel's prophecies in the light of contemporaneous Judean monarchs. Zedekiah is described as "the antithesis of the future David," and Josiah as the "model for the messianic king" (pp. 27, 15). Additionally, Block identifies Jehoiachin as the subject of the riddle in Ezek 17:3–24 and the dirge in Ezek 19:10–14. Block concludes that in contrast to Ezekiel's disposition toward Zedekiah, the prophet is more ambivalent toward

Jehoiachin. The manner in which Ezekiel portrays the king's exile to Babylon provides a glimmer of hope for the future of the Davidic line.

Ezekiel's usage of the terms king (מֶלֶךְ, *melek*) and prince (נָשִׂיא, *nāśî'*) is a perennial point of debate among scholars of Ezekiel. Block adds his expertise to the discussion by suggesting that Ezekiel largely avoids *melek* because of the term's association with independence and arrogance, while *nāśî'* more appropriately conveys "the king's status as a vassal of YHWH" (p. 14). Additionally, the function of the *nāśî'* is facilitative rather than political. The prince is a religious figure and cult patron who ensures harmonious relations between the nation and YHWH. In short, Ezekiel does not seek to eliminate hierarchies, but to redefine existing institutions.

The following three chapters examine the Gog oracle. In chapter 5, Block proposes that the battle of Ezek 38–39 occurs after the restoration of Israel. Gog is thus "the agent through whom YHWH declares concretely that the tragedy of 586 BCE will never be repeated" as well as the means by which the person of YHWH is made known to all nations (p. 125). Chapter 6 deals with the significance of 38:17 within the larger oracle, and chapter 7 deals with the unit's epilogue.

Finally, chapters 8 and 9 discuss Ezekiel's concluding vision. Block advocates an "ideational" interpretation, in which physical geographies communicate spiritual realities (p. 172). In chapter 8 Block outlines ten factors for interpreters to consider when investigating Ezek 40–48, and in chapter 9 Block provides his own analysis of the vision.

Block is to be commended for his interaction with Ezekiel's difficult prophecies and visions, which have puzzled both Jewish and Christian interpreters for centuries. Block's work continues to press research on Ezekiel forward, especially with regard to the terms *nāśî'* and *melek*, as well as his ideational interpretation of Ezekiel's temple vision. Nonetheless, readers may wish for a more robust explanation for the hermeneutical shift from literal to ideational. Block locates actual, historical kings and events in the earlier prophecies of Ezekiel, but sees spiritual realities in the temple vision of Ezekiel 40–48. Although continued discussion and debate over Block's conclusions will certainly occur, the quality of his scholarship cannot be questioned.

The essays in the compilation cohere well with one another, but unfortunately, a significant degree of overlap occurs. Because each essay was originally intended to stand alone, foundational information is repeated often. For example, Block's structuring of the Gog oracle is repeated verbatim in chs. 5 and 6, and his evaluation of Jehoiachin is repeated in chs. 2 and 3. Thus, the volume is better suited for researching specific topics than for reading from cover to cover.

Readers who are already familiar with the critical and theological issues surrounding Ezekiel will most readily follow the flow of Block's argumentation. The scholar provides foundational historical information, but he does not always summarize the scholarly discussions with which he interacts. Copious footnotes are provided so that readers can engage with other critical perspectives as needed. Therefore, this compilation was produced for academic readers and not for a novice in Ezekiel scholarship.

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Wright, Jacob L. *David, King of Israel*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 271, $29.99, paperback.

Jacob L. Wright teaches Hebrew Bible and Jewish studies at Emory University. He has also conducted research on war commemoration.

Wright proposes a fascinating thesis, namely that a major influence on the evolution of the Hebrew Bible was what he terms 'war commemoration'. He argues that this phenomenon can be found in many cultures, both ancient and modern, and is used to serve a number of distinct purposes. In particular, the way in which key protagonists in a battle are remembered will shape both the cultural attitude towards those individuals, and the extent to which their descendants are viewed as worthy members of the community. David and Caleb are identified as prime examples of these warriors. Wright subscribes to a form of the supplementary hypothesis (the current form of the biblical text stems from an original base text which was then supplemented by subsequent texts in successive stages), and suggests that at different stages in the development of the Hebrew Bible the authors/editors had differing agendas and used 'war commemoration' to serve the contemporary need. This accounts for apparent unevenness, especially in the characterization of David.

After introducing his thesis, Wright argues that the earliest stories about David (History of David's Rise) depict him as 'a cunning warlord who wields his private army' to establish the kingdom of Judah (p. 50). He was forced into such a career because, as the eighth son, he stood no chance of inheriting land, and so needed an alternative way to secure his own future (p.38-9). The HDR was later combined with a separate narrative of Saul's rule over the neighboring kingdom of Israel and a new body of material was composed to create a unified narrative explaining how David came to be rightful ruler over both Israel and Judah. Different war stories were introduced at this stage, presenting various communities as loyal to either Saul or David (chs. 4&5). This material would speak into issues of belonging for those communities in the subsequent history of Judah. At a later stage in the composition of the text, the authors were concerned with the interplay between the nation (the people) and the state (the monarchy). This concern was likely post-exilic as the nation wrestled with the question of how it could survive without the monarchy. War commemoration was employed once again, as stories were introduced into the text,

often using individual warriors to exhibit and critique different approaches to this matter (chs. 6&7).

The book concludes with a consideration of the complexities around Caleb. Wright argues that the Calebites were an elite clan within Judah (p. 174) who needed to fight for their survival as a distinct grouping in the context of various social-demographic forces. They came under pressure first from the Judahite state, as the Davidic kings moved into their territory, most notably Hebron (p. 209). Much later, in the Persian period, they again needed to assert themselves as the Edomites laid claim to their territory (p. 216). The Calebites maintained their identity by creating memories of their ancestor as a Judahite warrior of the finest character.

Wright is to be commended for offering a novel and creative solution to the complexity of the David narratives. His thesis, that through the evolution of the text, different editors used war commemoration to serve their different contemporary agendas, offers a plausible explanation for the variety of attitudes towards David found in the Hebrew Bible. He writes with an engaging style which draws comfortably on a wide range of different disciplines (history, art, literature, archaeology). However, there are a number of weaknesses in the argument. First, and foremost, his hypothesis is that war commemoration was used in the composition of the Hebrew Scriptures to serve a variety of sociological agendas. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the examples of known war commemoration which he identifies to support this claim are not directly equivalent to the writings of the Hebrew Bible. This kind of war commemoration is not an obvious phenomenon in the Ancient Near East (p. 26), and its use in other cultures tends to employ a different medium (a monument, rather than historiography). Furthermore, Wright does not appear to provide examples of an author *creating* memories long after the event, so as to serve a contemporary need. Moreover, the Hebrew narrator is known for providing only minimal information about the nation's skirmishes. He seems far less interested in detailed military accounts than might be expected if he was engaged in 'war commemoration', and far more concerned to interpret the military history through a theological lens. This fact need not be devastating for Wright's thesis, but it requires more attention than he gives it. These multiple gaps in Wright's argument make his hypothesis significantly less compelling than he acknowledges.

A second weakness in Wright's argument concerns his diachronic approach. Wright claims to have identified different stages in the composition of the text, through observing awkwardnesses, disharmonies and contradictions. These different stages are characterized by different priorities and concerns on the part of the author/editor. This is typical fare for a source-critical approach. This approach, however, is always vulnerable to the criticism of being more subjective than is perhaps acknowledged. When Wright identifies different contemporary pressures which led to the creation of new 'war memories' he would do well to acknowledge that these contexts are generally hypothetical and the product of his assumptions about the evolution of the

text. Even when he tries to establish, for example, that Keilah, as a border town, was 'pulled to and fro' in its loyalties to different kingdoms (pp.54-56), the archaeological evidence he cites is from a different time period, and possibly a different settlement, than the one in question. Moreover, recent literary approaches have demonstrated that supposed tensions in the text, so often the justification for source-critical theories, may actually be intentional poetic devices which would not concern an ancient hearer. It would be appropriate, therefore, for Wright to express his assertions about the growth of the text with more circumspection. This is especially the case when Wright writes in a style which would be accessible to the non-expert who may not have the wider knowledge to test his argument.

Despite the weaknesses identified above, the student of biblical and theological studies will be able to benefit from this book, especially if they have some familiarity with source-critical approaches to the Deuteronomistic History. The argument is stimulating in helping the reader consider the various social-demographic pressures affecting the first readers of the text. The reader will engage with some of the more obscure characters in the David narrative, and, whilst they may not accept all the conclusions Wright offers, they will have a richer grasp of the role these individuals and communities would have had in the nation of Israel. That said, it is significant that Wright's approach is almost entirely sociological rather than theological. This may affect the relevance of the book to some students.

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McKelvey, Michael G. *Moses, David and the High Kingship of Yahweh: A Canonical Study of Book IV of the Psalter*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2014, pp. 358, $50, paperback.

Michael G. McKelvey is an assistant professor of Old Testament at the Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) in Jackson, Mississippi. He received his M.Div from RTS (2005) while receiving his Ph.D from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland (2008). McKelvey is also an ordained Presbyterian minister and has served as a pastor for numerous years in various locations. As such, almost all of McKelvey's publications are written in a style that bridges the academic with the ecclesiastical [see, for example, "Ecclesiastes" in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised* (2016) and "The Table of the Showbread" in *Table Talk* (2017)].

Moses, David, and the High Kingship of Yahweh is the publication of McKelvey's doctoral dissertation. Within this work, McKelvey seeks to evaluate the nature of three literary figures—Moses, David, and King Yahweh—within the context of Book IV of the Psalter (Pss 90–106). This analysis follows a canonical approach to reading the Psalter. In McKelvey's utilization of this approach, he has been primarily influenced

by the work of Gerald Wilson (*The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 1985). In agreement with Wilson, McKelvey argues that there is an "apparent narrative" within the Psalter that displays a poetic reflection upon the Davidic monarchy within Books I-III (Pss 2–89; pp. 12-14). The goal of this narrative climaxes in Psalm 89. As McKelvey states, "Books I-III of the Psalter have apparently been thematically grouped around the Davidic covenant and its apparent failure, a theme which undoubtedly occupies a major part of Psalm 89. The fall of the kingship is ultimately seen in the exile of God's people, and as a post-exilic psalm, Psalm 89 displays the woes of Israel and its confusion over exile" (p. 38). Thus, McKelvey also agrees with Wilson that Books IV-V (Pss 90–105) "being post-exilic/post-monarchic compilations, seem to respond to what has gone before, especially Book III and Psalm 89" (pp. 15-16).

Even so, McKelvey disagrees with Wilson over the role of the Davidic covenant and monarchy within Book IV. While Wilson argues that the "Davidic kingship is no longer curial in Psalms 90–106," McKelvey, in agreement with David M. Howard (*The Structure of Psalms 93–100*, 1997), argues that "the occurrence of Davidic superscriptions, royal psalms and Royal/Zion theology in Books IV-V imply that [the] Davidic kingship still factors into the overall perspective of the Psalter" (pp. 15; 309-11).

In second to Wilson, McKelvey's methodology is also influenced by the work of Jamie A. Grant (*The King as Exemplar*, 2004), who is the author of the book's forward (pp. xv-xvi). Grant notes that most evaluations of the Psalter's structure tend to focus on concatenation or the conjunctive features that link the individual Psalms together. In addition to concatenation, Grant contends that the Psalter also contains disjunctive features that help to separate the smaller sub-groups found within the Psalter. While Grant only applies such an analysis to Psalms 1–2, McKelvey expands upon Grant's work by applying this method to the entirety of Book IV (pp. 253-77).

The chosen arrangement of McKelvey's chapters seems for the sake of responding, both positively and negatively, to the works of Wilson and Grant. After explaining his methodology in chapter 1, chapters 2 through 5 provide the reader with an exegetical analysis of every Psalm within Book IV. Four main elements are found within this exegetical analysis (pp. 17-18). First, each Psalm is translated. Second, the individual themes and theology of each Psalm are discussed in light of how the Psalm relates to God (theocentric themes) and man (anthropocentric themes). Third, other important elements found within each Psalm are discussed focusing on the figures of McKelvey's emphasis—Moses, David, and King Yahweh. Fourth, the canonical relationships between each Psalm and its surrounding context are demonstrated by means of intertextual links and thematic connections. Chapter 6, then, seeks to synthesis chapters 2-5 while also defending McKelvey's argument that Book IV consist of a four-fold structural division of sub-groups: 90–92, 93–100, 101–104 and 105–106. This chapter is also the place were McKelvey applies Grant's conjunctive and disjunctive methodology to Book IV. Lastly, chapter 7, another synthesis of chapters

2-5, seeks to explain how the literary figures of Moses, David, and King Yahweh function within Book IV and "what they say to Israel's post-exilic audience" (p. 282). McKelvey then concludes the work with affirming the basic arguments of both Wilson and Grant; McKelvey supports Wilson in stating that Book IV is the "editorial heart of the Psalter" (p. 326) and concludes similarly to Grant that "the messianic theme of Psalms 90–106 is of great significance in light of the New Testament" (p. 327).

Overall, the book offers two main positive features. First, the work is a well-written consolidation of all relevant research on Book IV of the Psalter. As such, the work is very extensive and provides anyone interested in studying the canonical nature of Book IV with one resource from which to begin. Second, the work contains both heavily academic topics (pp. 69-72) as well as devotional insights into the editorial design of the Psalter (p. 97). Thus, while much of the contents of the work might be too scholastic for the average Bible reader, many of McKelvey's theological insights would be very beneficial for preaching and teaching through Book IV.

Despite these benefits, the book has a few shortcomings. In order for McKelvey to divide Book IV into a fourfold structure, he must rely heavily on the editorial placement of each superscription or lack thereof. McKelvey notes that there is an uneven distribution of superscriptions within Book IV and concludes that this sort of distribution is a sign of editorial design. For example, McKelvey argues that Psalms 90–92 are a sub-group because "the employment of psalm titles [superscriptions] in Book IV separates Psalms 90–92 from their untitled neighbors" (p. 260). McKelvey cites Grant in support of viewing the superscriptions as an intentionally disjunctive feature within of the Psalter (p. 259). While this may be true and had been argued for in the work of M. D. Goulder (see, for example, *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah*, 1982), McKelvey does not argue for the importance of viewing the superscriptions as an interpretive part of the Psalms redactional history. Instead, this is simply assumed throughout the work.

Also, McKelvey disagrees with Wilson's argument for viewing Book IV as framed by an "overlap/interlocking" editorial technique because McKelvey views the technique to be "quite complicated for the pre-critical period of editors of the Psalter" (p. 275). While McKelvey is correct in affirming that Wilson's approach neglects to analyze the disjunctive features of Book IV, numerous works have been written on the complicated process behind the formation of the Old Testament texts, which would confirm Wilson's proposed editorial technique as a historical possibility (see, for example, Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible,* 2009 and David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction*, 2011). While these points of contention are somewhat significant, they do not negate the work's overall contribution to reading the Psalter canonically. In all, McKelvey's work is highly recommended.

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Jipp, Joshua W. *Christ is King: Paul's Royal Ideology.* **Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015, pp. viii + 380, $44, paperback.**

Joshua W. Jipp received his PhD in New Testament from Emory University in 2012. He is currently an associate professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Early in Jipp's post-graduate studies he became intrigued by "the incredible amount of attention devoted to reflections upon the good king in Greek and Roman writings" (p. vii). In 2013, Jipp began to formally explore the relevance of this *ancient kingship discourse* (hereafter "AKD") to NT interpretation. Jipp's paper (a pre-publication of Chapter 2) won him the SBL Paul J. Achtemeier Award for New Testament Scholarship (p. viii).

Jipp's thesis is that Paul's teachings about Christ are best understood within the framework of AKD (p. 42). Jipp relies upon abductive reasoning (finding the simplest and most likely explanation), evaluating his claims on the basis of their historical plausibility (pp. 135–137). With his focus squarely on the historical Paul, Jipp is not interested in drawing distinctions between the "Messiah" and the "king" in the LXX (pp. 29–30), or between "biblical" and "extra-biblical" language (p. 79n11), or between "Jewish" and "Greco-Roman" concepts (p. 17); all of these can be considered collectively as *Paul's conceptual resources*. Paul *reworked* these resources in light of the Christ event (particularly the resurrection), creating a new and innovative Christ-discourse (pp. 7, 135).

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction; the next four chapters provide evidence in support of the thesis. Chapter 2 shows that the ideal king embodied the law in both AKD and Paul's Christ-discourse. (Jipp uses this insight to explain "the law of Christ" in Gal 6:2 and 1 Cor 9:21.) Chapter 3 argues that just as kings were praised through royal encomia in AKD, Christ was praised through a royal hymn in Col 1:15–20. Chapter 4 suggests that the king had a unique relationship with the gods and the people in both AKD and Paul's Christ-discourse. (Jipp also suggests here that AKD is the key to understanding Paul's participatory language.) Chapter 5 establishes that the king was discussed using righteousness/justice language in both AKD and Romans. Chapter 6 is the conclusion.

Jipp's book has two major strengths. First, Jipp's research is outstanding. His interaction with Greco-Roman sources is particularly impressive. His 48-page bibliography (accessed throughout 1,000+ footnotes) includes sources ranging from ancient poetry to LXX commentaries to specialized studies in biblical theology. Second, Jipp has successfully and convincingly demonstrated that AKD had a significant influence upon Pauline theology.

While the strengths of Jipp's book far outweigh the weaknesses, a few points of critique also need to be made. First, Jipp ties Paul too tightly to Second Temple Judaism rather than to Scripture. For example, Jipp repeatedly describes Paul as an innovator who creatively reworked the cultural scripts of his day (including

Scripture) to generate a *new* perspective on the Christ, all because Jesus surprisingly rose from the dead (e.g. pp. 13–15, 42, 273–275). Jipp seems to be suggesting that none of the prior biblical tradition anticipated a resurrected Christ, contrary to the claims of Jesus (Luke 24:25–26), *Paul himself* (1 Cor 15:4), and John (John 20:9)—not to mention the OT authors. Paul's contemporaries may not have anticipated a resurrected Messiah but Scripture did. Given Paul's familiarity with Scripture and his skill in biblical interpretation, can he really be called an "innovator" for speaking of a resurrected Christ?

Another example is seen in Jipp's uncritical assumption that Paul was always working from the LXX, a culturally-biased translation of the Hebrew Bible. (Yes, Paul did frequently reference the LXX, as a modern-day scholar might reference an English translation, but that does not mean Paul got his theology from the LXX.) Paul was not ignorant of the Hebrew Bible, yet Jipp completely ignores the MT when discussing the relationship between Paul and the OT (e.g. p. 101). Yet another example is Jipp's suggestion that Paul disagreed with the Psalmists about righteousness and depravity (pp. 240–242). To connect Paul so closely to first-century Jewish thought, rather than to sound OT interpretation, is a great disservice to a thoroughly biblical teacher.

A second point of critique is that Jipp sometimes overreaches in his quest to find links between Pauline Christology and AKD. Jipp is able to connect Paul's words to royal LXX passages using only a single word (pp. 101, 108, 117–118)—a procedure that those versed in biblical intertextuality will find suspect. In addition, Jipp sees kingship in the language of *firstborn* (p. 107), *beginning* (pp. 116–117), *fullness*, *pleased* (pp. 120–122), *peace, access, suffering* (p. 173), *reconciliation* (p. 181), and *coming* (p. 205). He suggests kingship is even implied by the language of *priesthood, temple, gift, wisdom,* and *body & spirit* (pp. 275–276)! The reader is left with the impression that Jipp is wearing kingship-tinted lenses when he reads the Bible.

Third, Jipp casts OT kings as *intermediaries* between God and man (pp. 149, 209), but this may be a mischaracterization of the biblical picture. The OT presented the king as being in *solidarity* with the people. For example, the only positive law in the OT concerning kingship (Deut 17:18–20) simply stated that the king must devote himself to the Law (like every other Israelite) and not exalt himself above the other members of the community (p. 55). The Psalms likewise portrayed the king as being in solidarity with the people (pp. 163–165, 227). Where, then, is the biblical evidence that OT kings stood in a unique, intermediary position between God and man? Jipp suggests divine sonship was a special, royal trait (pp. 106–107), but all of Israel was referred to as God's son (Exod 4:22). Jipp says AKD rulers were "spoken of as images of the gods" (p. 103), but so was all of mankind (Gen 1:27; 9:6). Jipp identifies "anointed" as a distinctly royal trait (pp. 33, 152), but the Spirit was not reserved for kings—and Paul himself used the same language to describe his readers (2 Cor 1:21).

The evidence provided in *Christ is King* does not support the notion that OT kings had a special intermediary role.

In spite of the few points of critique provided above, *Christ is King* is an impressive, important, thought-provoking contribution to the field. Jipp tackles some of the biggest issues in Pauline theology (Law, hymns, participation, righteousness) and explains all of them within a single framework. The book will be most helpful to seminary students and biblical scholars who are doing research in the areas of Pauline theology, Christology, or biblical kingship. Individual chapters will appeal to those researching a specific topic addressed by the book: the relationship between Christ (or Christians) and the Law (Ch 2); the Christ-hymns (Ch 3); Union with Christ (Ch 4); Paul's righteousness and justification language (Ch 5). In addition, Chapter 2 is one of the finest examples of social-scientific interpretation available today and is therefore highly recommended to all upper-level students as an example of what NT scholarship should look like.

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Knapp, Andrew. *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East*. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015, pp. 419, $59.95, paperback.

Andrew Knapp's work *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East*, grew out of his 2012 Johns Hopkins dissertation. Knapp currently serves as development editor at William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Knapp's primary goal is to determine how apologetic functioned in the ancient Near Eastern (ANE) royal literature, then to analyze texts he understands as exhibiting traits of "royal apologies." The work is organized into 10 chapters. Chapters 1–2 define royal apologetic in the ANE and presents a methodology for analyzing these texts. Chapters 3–9 analyze various ANE royal texts in light of the work in chapters 1–2. Chapter 10 serves as a conclusion summarizing the information gleaned from the seven texts analyzed in the work.

Knapp begins his work by defining apologetic literature based on rhetorical studies of apologetic material. He demonstrates that the field of ANE studies tends to define apologetic literature as a literary genre based on a definition of apology borrowed from Greek classical studies. Knapp argues that ANE apologetic is a literary mode rather than a literary genre (pp. 31–42). Based on his evaluation of apologetic as a literary mode rather than genre, apology in ANE royal material must be evaluated based on the propagandist claims inherent to each document; no overarching literary rules are can be expected for ANE royal apology.

After defining ANE apologetic as a mode, Knapp examines the way ANE royal literature uses apologetic motifs. He identifies ten motifs found in ANE apologetic material but focuses on the motifs of divine election, royal prerogative/affiliation, and popular acclamation. Knapp refers to these three motifs as the "triad of legitimacy"

for ANE kings (p. 46). With the motifs common to ANE apologetic in mind, Knapp demonstrates that there are apologetic elements to multiple ANE royal texts spanning several genres.

From the texts he identifies as examples of royal apologetic Knapp selects seven for analysis in his study: The Proclamation of Telipinu, The Autobiography of Hattusili III, The Tradition of David's Rise and Reign, The Succession Narrative of Solomon, The Tel Dan Inscription of Hazael, The Accession of Esarhaddon, and The Rise of Nabonidus. In each of these documents, Knapp explores the circumstances of ascension for the king in question, discusses the text and provides a translation of each non-biblical document, and examines the *Sitz im Leben* of each document. The telos of his approach is to offer a "the first systematic treatment of apologetic in the ancient Near East" (p. 73).

Among the ANE documents Knapp analyzes, The Traditions of David's Rise and Reign and The Succession Narrative of Solomon are unique. Both the biblical texts included in the study are reconstructed from sources within the biblical text. All of the other texts in the work are royal inscriptions with the exception of The Proclamation of Telipinu, of which Knapp claims "there is no reason to question whether Telipinu himself commissioned the text" (p. 110).

In his discussion of David's Rise and Reign and The Succession Narrative of Solomon, Knapp uses source criticism to determine the "authentic" material "within the disparate biblical record" (pp. 167–68). Knapp departs from works of previous source critics who sought to isolate each individual source within the biblical narrative. Instead, Knapp attempts to isolate the early Davidic narratives from those added to the biblical text after David's reign (pp. 168–69). The source-critical analysis of David's Rise and Reign results in a set of forty-seven individual narratives that contain sources contemporary to the reign of David. Knapp's analysis of The Succession Narrative of Solomon follows a similar pattern. In both cases, the result of Knapp's source-critical analysis yields more "authentic" narratives than usually proposed by source critics.

Knapp's study of ANE royal literature offers a new way of understanding apologetic within those texts. Against the common notion in the field of ANE studies that royal apologetic is a culturally bound genre, Knapp demonstrates that "defense against accusation is not culturally bound, but common to all human society" (p. 360). Apologetic features of ANE royal literature, therefore, is not a genre but is instead a mode of writing necessitated by the social/political issues facing the king.

Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East should shift how biblical and ANE scholars understand royal apologetic literature. Knapp offers readers a way to understand apologetic texts based on the concerns of ANE royal life and literature. By encouraging readers to understand apologetic based on rhetorical concerns rather than on conformity to a literary genre, Knapp offers readers of ANE royal texts a better way to identify and interact with apologetic material.

The greatest value of *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East* for biblical scholars is the fresh approach to understanding apologetic concerns in the narratives recounting the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah. Knapp's work focuses only on the reigns of David and Solomon, but he also identifies narratives from the reigns of Jehu and Joash as apologetic in mode (pp. 58–59). The motifs he identifies as central to the apologetic mode of writing are likely present in other biblical narratives as well. Other scholars may find value in exploring other royal narratives in the biblical text, as well as passages infused with royal language such as the Enthronement Psalms, to see if these texts use any of the apologetic motifs Knapp identifies.

Knapp's use of source-criticism in the current work illustrates a difference in the way many scholars treat the biblical text versus other ANE sources. Knapp considers The Proclamation of Telipinu, as an authentic representation of Telipinu's proclamation to justify his ascension to the Hittite throne (pp. 116–17). He offers no source-critical analysis of the text, even though the extant manuscripts date hundreds of years after the reign of Telipinu. Knapp's decision to accept The Proclamation of Telipinu as a unified source but to parse the biblical texts for "authentic" historical material is not one that he explains within the work. Though his source-critical analysis of the biblical text represents a more inclusive model of "authentic" material than the analyses of many other source critics, the work would benefit from an explanation of why a source-critical analysis is necessary for the biblical documents, yet not from other ANE texts.

Overall, Knapp's work is of tremendous value to students of the biblical text. His methodology encourages scholars in the field to revise their understanding of the function of royal apology in the ANE. Knapp also demonstrates that relying on definitions genre from other fields of study is not always helpful in understanding individual texts. *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East* presents a challenge to biblical scholars to apply Knapp's insight into the apologetic concerns of the ANE into their interpretation of biblical texts containing apologetic motifs.

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Rydelnik, Michael. *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic?* Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2010, pp. 206, $19.99, hardcover.

Born in a traditional Jewish home, Michael Rydelnik became a believer in Jesus after listening to the witness of his mother. Her faith in Christ led Rydelnik's father to divorce her and as a consequence Rydelnik decided to study "the messianic prophecies of the Hebrew Bible" in order to prove his mother "wrong in attributing their fulfillment to Jesus of Nazareth" (12). As time went on, Rydelnik also put his "trust in Jesus as Messiah and Lord" and became convinced that it is "essential to

understand the Hebrew Bible as messianic." (12). As such, Rydelnik's life experiences makes *The Messianic Hope* all the more compelling for evangelical circles. Given the modern consensus to "reject the idea that the Hebrew Bible has specific predictions of the Messiah" (1), Rydelnik's purpose in writing *The Messianic Hope* is to call evangelical scholars to "rethink this trend" since direct messianic prophecy "is the foundational element for identifying Jesus as the true Messiah" (p. 190).

Rydelnik begins his first chapter with tracing the trend away from viewing the Hebrew Bible as messianic. Rydelnik quotes the shocking words of various scholars—Tremper Longman III, Klyne Snodgrass, Larry W. Hurtado, and Daniel I. Block—who "recognize that there is something messianic about the Hebrew Bible" but not that it contains "predictions that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled" (pp. 3–5). Instead, Rydelnik argues that they have "abandoned messianic predictions for the sake of respectability in the academy or acceptance among critical scholarship" (190).

From here, Rydelnik explains three important reasons for acknowledging messianic prophecy within the Old Testament. First, the Scriptures themselves affirm their messianic nature. Second, the messianic Hebrew prophecies provide a biblical apologetic for identifying Jesus as the Messiah. Third, the Bible's messianic nature "enables followers of Jesus to have confidence in the Bible as God's inspired Word" (p. 8). The rest of the book simply seeks to provide evidence for these reasons.

Chapter two describes the different approaches to messianic prophecy that have developed since the work of Anthony Collins (*Discourse of Grounds*, 1724). Collins argues that all Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled during each prophets' own lifetimes. A second view is known as *sensus plenior* or dual fulfillment. Three variations of this view are that of typical, progressive, and relecture fulfillment—all of which view the historical personages who fulfilled the prophetic prophecies as pointing towards the Messiah. Next, there are some who argue that the New Testament authors utilized midrash or pesher—a creative exegetical technique of early Judaism that modern interpreters should not utilize (pp. 21–22). Lastly, Rydelnik explains that a compositional approach to the Hebrew Bible provides evangelicals with a sound methodology for affirming Jesus's direct fulfillment of these prophecies.

The next five chapters explain how one should analyze the messianic texts of the Bible from light of a compositional analysis. Chapter three—relying mostly on the work of John Sailhamer (*Introduction to Old Testament Theology*, 1995)—affirms that the version of the Hebrew Bible found in the Masoretic tradition does not reflect the "original" manuscript in various places. Thus, Rydelnik demonstrates how certain texts (such as 2 Samuel 23:1 and Psalm 72:3) in the Masoretic tradition have diluted a messianic reading still preserved in other versions. This section would be even more helpful if it included an analysis of the different versions of Jeremiah, where the Masoretic tradition is obviously less messianic than the Septuagint. Chapter four highlights the numerous occasions of inner-biblical exegesis that read early biblical texts as messianic (see, for example, the reading of Genesis 49:10 in

Ezekiel 21:27). Chapter five summarizes the canonical approach of Sailhamer and explains its usefulness in interpreting messianic prophecies. Chapters six and seven demonstrate that the New Testament writers did not create the messianic reading of the Old Testament but continued the tradition already found within it.

In light of Rydelnik's exegetical analysis, he returns to a fuller demonstration of the presuppositions behind modern scholars who affirm that any valid exegesis of messianic prophecies should affirm a historical fulfillment before the time of Jesus. Rydelnik argues that the work of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki (1040–1105), commonly known as Rashi, has been very influential to numerous scholars in the area of Old Testament exegesis. Rashi changed exegesis from being concerned with the literary aspects of the text to a concern for the historical circumstances surrounding the text. In Rydelnik's words, "Rashi no longer understood the peshat [meaning exegesis or simple meaning] as the *plain* sense of the text but the *historical* sense" (italic original, 116). In a very persuasive manner, Rydelnik provides the reader with evidence of how the reading of certain texts changed after the time of Rashi (see pp. 123–128).

The book ends with three chapters that each provide a three-part analysis of three messianic texts—Gen 3:14–15, Isa 7:13–25, and Ps 110. Each of these texts is taken from one of the three sections of the Old Testament—the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. In each analysis, Rydelnik's exegesis looks at the text from its immediate context (called intextual exegesis), its broader context (called innertextual exegesis), and its canonical context (called intertextual exegesis). While one may not agree with all of Rydelnik's observations, his analysis does lead one to affirm that each of these texts is intentionally messianic and were read that way by authors in both the Old and New Testaments. A welcomed addition to this section would be an analysis of Exod 12:46 since it appears to be the referent for Jesus's words in John 19:36.

In all, *The Messianic Hope* is a wonderfully crafted argument for the importance of affirming Jesus's direct fulfillment of the messianic prophecies found within the Hebrew Bible. Though the work suffers from a few moments of repetitiveness, these are easily overlooked in light of the work's entirety. Still, there are places where Rydelnik has oversimplified the views of some scholars. For example, though Block does not view Deut 18:15 as messianic, as Rydelnik states (p. 5), Block does affirm that Isa 52:13–53:12 is directly messiah (see *For the Glory*, 2014). Thus, Block does not view the Hebrew Bible as broadly messianic, as Rydelnik states (p. 3), but as directly messianic given his view of the progression of biblical revelation. Rydelnik's response would probably be that Isaiah is "expanding and clarifying the message of the Torah" (p. 72), but *The Messianic Hope* is far too concise to deal with the issues of interpretation that divide Rydelnik and Block. Thus, Rydelnik's work may not be very useful beyond its basic argument for the traditional view of messianic prophecies.

In conclusion, while many evangelical church members and pastors may already be convinced of the messianic nature of the Hebrew Bible, that evangelical scholarship has deemed such convictions as unnecessary implies that it will only be a matter of time before this is no longer the case. As Rydelnik states in his analysis of Isaiah 7:13–25, "their approach says that faith in Jesus is still the truth even if the virgin birth is questioned or if Isaiah's prediction of it is explained away as exegetically untenable. But truth is foundational to faith" (p. 162). In other words, Rydelnik argues that numerous fundamental facts of the faith, such as the virgin birth, will become invalid if the messianic texts of the Hebrew Bible do not directly speak of Jesus—as affirmed by the New Testament authors. Though this suggestion might be dismissed as a logical fallacy—a slippery slope—Rydelnik demonstrates these repercussions in the work of Rob Bell (*Velvet Jesus*, 2005). If Bell is considered to be an extremist, then it is questionable as to why many evangelical scholars appear to affirm many of Bell's hermeneutical premises (see pp. 146–147, 162). Instead, as Rydelnik argues, evangelical should join the "growing movement among some biblical scholars" who approach the text of scripture in light of its "final canonical form," which will allow one to see the "Old Testament as an eschatological, messianic text" (p. xv).

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Auld, A. Graeme. *Life in Kings: Reshaping the Royal Story in the Hebrew Bible*. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017, viii + 321, $39.95, paperback.

A. Graeme Auld is Professor Emeritus of Hebrew Bible at Edinburgh University. He is the author of numerous books and articles, including *I and II Samuel: A Commentary* in the Old Testament Library series (WJK, 2011) and *Kings without Privilege: David and Moses in the Story of the Bible's Kings* (T & T Clark, 1994).

Life in Kings opens with a statement about the focus of the book, a history of interpretation, and two brief case studies that start the argument of the book. Auld opens by stating *Life in Kings* "is about writing and rewriting the biblical book of Kings—it is a book about words and their use and their reuse, about meanings and changes in meaning… our principal concern is with the words themselves" (p. 1). After this thesis Auld summarizes the works of "the Fathers" who have explored the compositional history of Kings (as well as Samuel and Chronicles). These include de Wette, Wellhausen, and Noth from previous generations and also some more recent scholars. After tracing his own progression in scholarship and thought over a series of papers Auld ends the chapter with two case studies. One of the presentation of Hezekiah in Kings and Isaiah and the other a comparison of the material in Samuel and Chronicles of David in Moab.

Chapters 2-5 is where Auld amasses material from Samuel and Kings that is different in nature, particularly in the use of words (and their meanings). Chapter 2

begins after a discussion of the presentation of David in Moab where the ideas/words of life and death were important within the narratives. Auld starts with a discussion of the "word cluster" life/live/living (הי/היה/היים). Auld notes where this cluster is present and absent in Kings, Chronicles and Isaiah and then looks at a variety of expressions and other uses of this word cluster (swearing by the living Yahweh, the life of the king, and discussion of such things as animal life). The content of chapter 2 forms the basis for the title of the book. Chapter 3 surveys other words within Samuel-Kings and Chronicles where he differentiates between word usage in synoptic Samuel-Kings and nonsynoptic Samuel-Kings. In chapter 4 he continues by looking at communication between God and the king. Chapter 5 focuses on the cult within the synoptic material surveying such things as the building of altars, the high places, etc. In chapter 6 Auld ends this section of the work by beginning of proposal of a synoptic narrative. He notes that this "reconstruction can only be provisional and incomplete" (p. 89). Here he seeks to answer three questions related to distinctiveness, coherence, and meaning (see the full questions on p. 90).

Chapters 7-9 develop Auld's theory of the Book of Two Houses, which he has espoused in other writings. Chapter 7 focuses on the shared text(s) as presented in 1-2 Samuel. Chapter 8 focuses on the examination of prophets and prophetic material in Kings. Chapter 9 looks at the kings as they are presented in the synoptic and nonsynoptic material with a particular focus on the writing and rewriting of Judah's kings.

Chapter 10 brings in further information from the book of Isaiah on Hezekiah, though this material had been mentioned in passing elsewhere in the work. Chapter 11 answers questions that the earlier "probings" of parallel material anticipated. This includes a discussion of "serial anticipations" where he believes that the authors "retrojected themes back into earlier times" (p. 194) and a discussion of the book of Deuteronomy as "the big anticipation" (p. 195). The book ends with a detailed presentation of samples of the shared Hebrew text.

I have found the great value to this book to be Auld's exhaustive combing through the text to find the very nuanced differences in presentation between Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Isaiah. It is clear that Auld has spent a lifetime of study contemplating the material, with which he is expertly familiar. His reconstruction and presentation of the synoptic material in chapter 12 is thorough. His identification of both similarities and differences between texts is very helpful for literary considerations on why each author chose specific material, and what this could mean for the overall narrative. This, however, is not ultimately what Auld intends to do with his data. Instead of a synchronic reading of the text, Auld's diachronic analysis is focused more on understanding concerns of textual strata and authorship, which is a literary criticism of a different type. This book will be helpful to the very advanced student, and Old Testament scholar, familiar with higher critical theory.

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Old Testament

Longman, Tremper, III and John H. Walton. *The Lost World of the Flood: Mythology, Theology, and the Deluge Debate*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2018, pp. 192, $18.00, paperback.

Tremper Longman and John Walton have served as professors of Old Testament and separately published books on Old Testament topics as well as commentaries on several biblical books. *The Lost World of the Flood* is the second book they have published together, having co-authored *How to Read Job* in 2015 (IVP Academic). This book is the fifth of IVP Academic's "The Lost World" series, all of which are either authored or co-authored by Walton.

The chapters of this work are a series of seventeen propositions, a format which has been consistent throughout the Lost World series. The main benefit of the chapter titles being full-sentence proposition statements is that the reader can gain an understanding of the whole book simply by reading the table of contents. The risk involved in such an approach is that some readers may react to a proposition that they find to be provocative by dismissing the book without letting the authors explain their position.

The propositions step through a logical progression, and each chapter builds on the ground gained by the preceding chapters. First, Longman and Walton introduce to the reader that Genesis is an ancient document which should be understood the way the ancient readers would have understood it. Then they assure the reader that the events portrayed in the biblical text are based on actual events from time-space history. But they contend that communicating empirical facts is not the primary goal of the biblical author. Rather the goal of the biblical author was to make a theological point, and therefore the information contained in the text of Scripture may not be the kind of information that can be used to reconstruct what actually happened in time-space history.

For those who deny the flood was worldwide, the most common approach is to try to explain that the text does not actually say the flood was worldwide. Supports of a local flood will often translate the Hebrew word for Earth to mean 'land' in an attempt to make the story fit with a localized flood. Longman and Walton deny that the text of Genesis 6–9 supports such a possibility. They correctly assess that the story in the Bible is the story of a worldwide flood, and that one cannot force the text to say that the flood was local. Thus, tension exists in the fact that the text says the flood was worldwide and there is a lack of geological evidence for a worldwide flood. Longman and Walton's plan is to explain that the text does not mean what it says. Rather the text used the story of a worldwide flood to communicate a theological truth.

They list numerous impossibilities in the flood story, which Walton has previously discussed in his Genesis commentary in the NIV Application Commentary series.

No wooden boat of the size described in the text has ever been built, much less in ancient times. Noah and his family could not possibly have built such a boat. The waters could not possibly have risen at the rate required for the timeline given in the text, etc. The catalog of impossibilities leads them to believe that the biblical author and the original audience would not have believed that the words mean what they say. They would add to the list the proposed impossibility that the flood was worldwide.

According to Longman and Walton, the biblical author intended the flood story in Genesis 6–9 to be understood as hyperbole, and the ancient readers would have recognized the story as hyperbole. In other words, the biblical author and the original audience never believed that the flood was worldwide, and therefore the modern reader should not. The biblical author chose to represent the event as worldwide in order to make a theological point. A refrain of the book is that the interpretation of the events is the inspired Word of God, not the events themselves. But the student of the Bible should note that God sovereignly presides over the events of history, and one could argue that God has in fact inspired the events themselves as well as the recording of those events by biblical authors.

Foundational to their claim that the flood story was hyperbole is the establishment of other biblical texts as analogies of hyperbole. In this way they are consistent in their disbelief that the Bible means what it says. But the student of the Bible should be careful to consider whether their analogy texts are definitely hyperbolic. One analogy text they include is Joshua 1–12 (comprehensive conquering of the land) contrasted with Joshua 13, which begins to reveal how much of the land was yet unconquered. They argue that the earlier statements were hyperbole aimed at a theological point while the latter statements were the honest picture of the historical situation. But hyperbole is not the only way to understand Joshua's presentation of the conquest. It could also be the case, which is common in Hebrew narrative, that the earlier chapters were an overview of the story, while the latter information explained more detail. Hebrew narrative follows this circular form of storytelling in several places.

In order to establish that hyperbole also exists in the immediate context of the flood story, Longman and Walton point to Genesis 6:5 as a verse which would be understood as hyperbole by all except for the most literally-minded reader. But to claim, as Longman and Walton do, that the thoughts and intentions of man's heart could not possibly have been only evil in every action represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the depths of depravity brought on by man's sinfulness. Isaiah 64:6 provides helpful detail concerning the filthiness even of man's righteous acts apart from the redemptive work of God. Additionally, if Genesis 6:5 is an exaggeration of the sinfulness of man meaning only that sin had reached unprecedented levels and that a worldwide flood would be deserved in such a situation, then why would God restate the same fact about the total sinfulness man's heart after the flood (Genesis 9:21)?

If the point of the text is to make a theological rather than historical claim, then why would one even claim that there is a historical event as its referent? What keeps a person from arguing that the theological meaning is the only meaning, and that it doesn't matter if there is any historical veracity to the story? Could the biblical stories not be understood as parables? Contrary to Longman and Walton, it does matter that biblical events actually happened in time-space history the way they are recorded in the text. To definitively disprove that a biblical event happened as recorded in the text would strike a severe blow against any theological point made by the text. If the reader cannot believe the words on the pages of Scripture, then why would the reader believe the theological point being made by the same Scripture? Longman and Walton have found a way to disbelieve the text of the Bible while claiming to uphold the inerrancy, infallibility, and inspiration of the same text.

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Jacobson, Joshua R. *Chanting the Hebrew Bible: The Art of Cantillation*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2017, pp. xxx + 844, $90.00, hardback.

"Don't be attracted to any interpretation that conflicts with the punctuation of the *te'amim*; don't even listen to it!" (Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra, p. 23). Whether or not you agree with Ibn Ezra's claim, the sad reality must be faced: most students of biblical Hebrew cannot even read the *te'amim* [accents] so as to discern their meaning. Joshua Jacobson presents a monumental work to remedy this situation. Now expanded into a second edition, *Chanting the Hebrew Bible* introduces readers to the Masoretic accent system and guides them all the way up to "the art of cantillation." Jacobson (D.M.), professor of music and director of choral activities at Northeastern University, teaches and conducts around the world. He had published hundreds of compositions, arrangements, and articles. His background in Jewish literature, musical performance, and experience as a cantor instructor allows him to produce such an encyclopedic guide. *Chanting the Hebrew Bible* provides readers with a tool to learn interpreting, reading, and singing the Hebrew Bible according to the Masoretic tradition.

Jacobson divides this massive volume into seven distinct chapters that move progressively toward the skill of cantillation: (1) introduction to the *te'amim* [24 pp.], (2) understanding (Masoretic) syntactic levels [203 pp.], (3) pronunciation guidance [83 pp.], (4) text and history [31 pp.], (5) issues in reading the *te'amim* [79 pp.], (6) how to chant the *te'amim* [341 pp.], (7) appendices, charts, and guides [49 pp.]. Two chapters carry the freight of the book. Chapter two presents biblical Hebrew syntax according to the Masoretic accent system. With the current dearth of accessible published material on this subject, these 200 pages offer broad appeal to those seeking to understand biblical Hebrew at an intermediate level. Chapter six lends the

book its title and teaches the reader the "art of cantillation." By this point in the book, assuming it has been used sequentially, the reader will know how to properly parse and pronounce the text. These 300 plus pages teach the reader, step by step, how to properly express the reading through traditional melodies and phrases. Jacobson uses an Ashkenazi tradition for the melodies in this book. He also presents the melodies in Western music notation providing audio files for most examples on his website (chantingthehebrewbible.com). This progression of chapters prepares readers to read aloud and chant the text with proper expression according to the Masoretic tradition.

The second edition makes some significant improvements to the first edition. First, the availability of an eBook (PDF) edition makes it possible to search this encyclopedic reference. Second, the companion website now hosts the audio files (previously on CD) along with instructional videos and articles. Third, the text includes numerous new examples to promote more practice. Lastly, the use of SBL Hebrew font improves the readability of the text.

It would be a shame if the only ones to benefit from this volume were cantors in training. Jacobson's well-researched presentation of the Masoretic tradition, his system of syntactical analysis, and the emphasis on auditory reading commend this volume to a wide audience. First, very few biblical studies students have the time to read all the rabbinic sources Jacobson quotes throughout the book. He generally presents these quotes in their Hebrew original and in English translation. These quotes not only provide for historical interest but also expose readers to historic appraisals of the Masoretic system (pp. 8–9). Jacobson also includes numerous visual aids presenting historical scripts and scrolls which enhances understanding (pp. 315, 325). These features add a unique flavor to the background chapters (chs. 3–5) that most Western students have not tasted before.

Second, as far as syntactical analysis, Jacobson employs Michael Perlman's system of diagraming sentence structure. Figure 1 provides an example of how he displays the text.

Figure 1. Stepping phrases (Judges 1:1a)
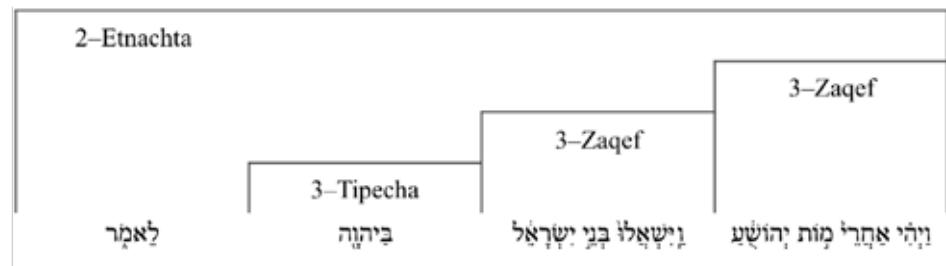
Chapter two drills this system into readers so that they begin to visualize the syntactical groupings signified by the *te'amim*. Such groupings not only express the proper way to read the text aloud, but they provide insight into the meaning. Jacobson provides the light-hearted example: "WOMAN WITHOUT HER MAN IS NOTHING" (p. 21). At least two options arise for reading this in English: (1) "Woman without her man—is nothing," or (2) "Woman! Without her, man is nothing." The Masoretes have included accents to guide readers in the tradition that long predated them (p. 324). With the growing popularity of historical commentary on Scripture (e.g., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*), learning the reading tradition encoded in the Masoretic text seems to be a natural step. Readers should be aware that Jacobson provides very little discussion of the "three poetic books" since these are not typically chanted. For more extensive discussion of both systems, see Fuller and Choi, *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 2016; Wickes, *Two Treatises on the Accentuation of the Old Testament*, 1970. Nevertheless, the principles Jacobson develops here would make learning the "poetic" system much easier. All students of biblical Hebrew have much to gain from learning the Masoretic accents, whether or not they intend to chant.

The audio materials and emphasis on phrasing and pronunciation offer a third benefit to the general student of biblical Hebrew. While the end goal of *Chanting the Hebrew Bible* is to train readers in cantillation, along the way they will pick up proper pronunciation and inflection for reading. Jacobson uses contemporary Israeli Sephardic pronunciation due to its broad usage in the Jewish community. Nevertheless, since he is training cantors, he demands an "elevated style" that would be appropriate for public reading (p. 232). This represents the perfect blend for beginning biblical Hebrew students: precise pronunciation in a broadly accepted diction. Perhaps even more helpful is Jacobson's presentation of the *te'amim* as "accents." One of the three functions of the *te'amim* is to indicate the stressed or accented syllable (p. 1). Jacobson provides numerous exercises and examples written in emphatic transliteration (p. 235).

| וַתִּירֶאןָ | (vat-ti-RE-na) | ("they saw") | (Exod 1:17) |
| וַתִּרֶאנָה | (vat-tir-'E-na) | ("they feared") | (Josh 24:7) |

Additionally, learning the rudiments of chant will help cement the Masoretic system. The melodies and sequences aid memory and promote proper phrasing. This whole course of study helps to lift the silent text from the page and make it a living word again. Thus, this book offers assistance in addressing multiple weaknesses common to beginning biblical Hebrew students.

The massive scope of this single volume faces one major challenge—information management. It's difficult to blame the ocean when a swimmer is forced to work hard to return to shore, but such is the nature of encyclopedic guides. The detailed table of contents and index provide some assistance, but no substitute exists for familiarity with the book's contents. Chapters 1–5.4 focus on the details of the Masoretic system; chapters 5.5–7.3 take that knowledge and instruct readers in cantillation. The searchable PDF format will also aid in finding specific nuggets of information. But, sadly, eBook formats in general further distance the reader from

the scope and sequence of a text. For the sake of in-depth study I would recommend the hardback format.

Chanting the Hebrew Bible deserves recognition by a wider community of Hebrew scholars, instructors, and students. Second year biblical Hebrew instructors would benefit greatly from Jacobson's tutelage. Many principles and materials (e.g., chapter 2) would carry-over directly to a course on Hebrew syntax, while other materials may even benefit first year students (e.g., chapter 3). It can be hoped that an updated student edition will come out making this more accessible in the classroom (Jacobson, 2005). For interpreters who still pass over the *te'amim* while reading, exposure to the reading tradition of the Masoretes may provide many fresh insights. For students who only ever "see" the text, it is time to begin hearing it, speaking it, and, indeed, singing it.

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Childs, Brevard S. *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*. Studies in Biblical Theology, no. 27. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2009. 112 pp. $13.00.

What is the nature and meaning of "myth" in the Old Testament? In Child's work, *Myth and Reality*, it is this very question, which remained unanswered by Gunkel and others, that he sought to address. Childs' thesis is simply, "that myth and the Old Testament have as their ultimate concern an understanding of reality" (p. 7). He notes the tension between the understandings of myth and reality and how reconciliation is found in the "redemptive activity of God." What qualifies Childs to answer such a phenomenological question? Beyond the fact that he served as the Sterling Professor of Yale Divinity School, he was also the author of numerous works that dealt with the problems of historical-critical methodology. Some of his more prevalent works *Biblical Theology in Crisis*, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*, and his *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* displayed his rigor and expertise to engage the issue of myth with a careful eye.

In five chapters this little monograph works to frame and engage with the problem of defining myth and delimiting the theological implications of myth in Old Testament exegesis. Chapter one deals with the descriptive approaches to defining myth and their problems: (1) too broad (p. 15), and (2) it does not deal with the witness of faith (p. 16). Childs seeks to frame a phenomenological definition of myth (p. 16). Chapter two surveys this structural and philosophical development of myth in the witness of Old Testament and ancient Near Eastern reality. The formation of myth is the continual pull to bring the past into the present (p. 23) through tradition and memory. In Chapter three, Childs deals with the tension of the Old Testament text to reconcile its worldview with the surrounding cultures (p. 31ff). Childs demonstrates this tension by examining select text in Genesis (pp. 31-58), Exodus (pp. 59-64), and

Isaiah (pp. 65-72) and the etiological motifs that function within the texts (p. 60). That is to say, much of the Old Testament text has an issue with the historicity of myth as it relates to the biblical concept of reality (p. 73).

Chapter four picks up the discussion of myth with an analysis of the Old Testament's categorical understanding of reality. Childs notes that the problem here is not chronology (linear) but rather one of quality (p. 76). He gives three stages to the developments of the biblical understanding of this category: (1) non-being/chaos, (2) creation by God, and (3) man's disobedience (p. 83). Another category that is distinct is, space, which is to be understood in terms of an eschatological new creation, "God's new space entering into the world of 'old space'" (p. 94). The final chapter examines the theological problem of myth. While scholars, like Gunkel, provided insights into the formal analysis of myth in the Old Testament, little is said of the theological problem (p. 97). Looking from within the canonical-text, Childs' conclusion is that the theological problem deals with the experiences of Israel in the process of being made new (p. 98). All theological approaches must be grounded in the objective reality of Israel's experience and history (p. 103). In the New Testament, this can be examined through the encounter with Jesus as he sought to make them new through faith (p. 106).

This work surveys a wide range of thought within a small apparatus. The low page count is not indicative of its theological weight, for it deals with some prolegomena that encapsulate both methodology and historiography. The structure and flow of the text are helpful to the reader as it frames the problems surrounding this issue and moves into formal and functional analysis of some selected text. Any reader familiar with Childs will excuse his ponderous writing pattern in light of the insight that is gleaned from the work.

Child's examination of Gn 1:1-2, 3:1-5, 6:1-4; Ex 4:24-26; Is 11:6-9; and 14:12-21 proffers to the reader the biblical function and nature of myth as the authors of the Bible altered these patterns from the Near Eastern context. He notes how these passages are contrasted to the mystical understandings of time and space. More to this, Childs notes that these patterns are altered to posit a new reality (p. 77) and how there is no room for myth in the New Israel founded by Jesus Christ. While Childs' methodology is warranted and consistent in the examination of the biblical text, some further comments on their function, guised as etiologies, are needed. The mention of etiology, while examining Ex4:24-26, is warranted within the discussion of this issue. However, some further substance would further solidify his argument. Etiological motifs, during the time of this monograph, were not without their broad definitions. This is not to chide Childs' remarks about etiological motifs, but it seems odd that he does not clarify what this means and the methodology behind in it in a study concerned with phenomenological and historical issues.

Another area of concern in this work is Child's treatment of biblical time. He criticizes Cullmann's view of "spatial" time and notes how others scholars (mostly

Pedersen and Orelli) remark on the distinctiveness of the Hebraic concepts of time (pp. 75-76). Because Hebrew, according to Childs, emphasizes qualities of action over tenses the conceptualize of a linear time is a "modern abstraction" (p. 77). Beyond vocabulary, what other criteria might help the reader understand his thought process here? His biblical analysis relies heavily on the prophets and the eschatological focus of time, but does mean their view is normative of all biblical genres? The use of the term "reality" seems to impose a modern notion of historiography onto the biblical text.

Childs concludes his monograph by stating that Israel "succeeded in overcoming myth" (p. 97). The Old Testament is void of meaning without an understanding of the New Testament—where the Jew receives a proper understanding of the OT through Christ (p. 98). This is a strong statement; perhaps he means incomplete instead of meaningless? In essence, it seems that Childs' desire is to base the categories of time in space in the historicity of their reflection recorded in Scripture. Despite some minor ambiguity in the work, Childs' buttress for a historical Israel and New Israel contributes heavily to the work of biblical theology, especially in an evangelical framework. This puts him at odds with his contemporaries and even mainline scholarship in postmodernity. This work serves as a memorial for modern evangelical scholarship. It both proffers rigorous engagement with central issues concern Old Testament methodology and how to faithfully, responsibility, and constructively navigate issues of the biblical text as they arise in culture.

In summation, Childs provides a significant monograph dealing with the central issue of a phenomenological understanding of the biblical witness of myth and reality. In time that is historically negative towards the historicity of Israel, Childs defends a fundamental component for doing biblical theology–belief in the inspiration of the text. Although this examination does not give an exhaustive account of myth and reality, it does provide a remarkable critique of relevant literature and methods.

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Jarick, John, ed. *Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016, pp 520, $128, hardback.

Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar focuses on 'Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom,' and covers broad issues in the wisdom tradition and corpus. The volume has no overarching thesis, hermeneutic, or methodology, but provides essays from diverse theological perspectives. After an introduction by John Jarick, the book divides into three sections. The first section covers 'Issues in the Study of Israelite Wisdom.' Stuart Weeks evaluates the watershed article by W. Zimmerli 'The Place and Limits of Wisdom' and finds his conclusions wanting. John Barton writes on four different issues on ethics in

the Old Testament but unfortunately covers each briefly with no conclusion or synthesis. Jenni Williams employs Samuel and Proverbs to illustrate women's relationship to wisdom. Aulikki Nahkola offers a paremiological study of Proverbs to understand the worldview of Israel. Will Kynes ends the first section with a fundamental critique of wisdom literature.

The second section covers 'The Wisdom Corpus of the Hebrew Bible' with two essays on Proverbs, two on Job, and three on Ecclesiastes. In the first essay on Proverbs, Gary A. Rendsburg connects literary and linguistic issues in the book of Proverbs. The next essay on Proverbs, James E. Patrick defends a connection between Proverbs and Deuteronomy through 'the fear of the Lord.' David J. A. Clines pulls imagery from Job to draw a picture of the universe from Job 38 in light of the Ancient Near East cosmology. Terje Stordalen argues a conservative redactor tamed the rebellious Job by inserting material. John Jarick shows Hellenistic influence in the structure of Ecclesiastes. Jennie Grillo examines Jerome and Gregory of Nyssa interpretation and their value for modern study (p. 248). Mette Bundvad concludes with applying a psychoanalytic spatial theory to Qohelet.

The final section covers contributions on 'Other Texts in Relation to Wisdom.' Susan Gillingham probes the Psalms to see what they tell us about the wisdom tradition. Edmee Kingsmill SLG compares the Song of Songs with wisdom literature to demonstrate its affinity to the wisdom corpus. John Day digs into the Garden of Eden to determine if there is a relationship from the 'the knowledge of good and evil' and the 'tree of life' to wisdom themes. Phillip Y. Yoo highlights the lack wisdom in the wilderness tradition demonstrates the rebellion of Israel. Katherine J. Dell positions Jeremiah as a renegade sage who uses tropes to oppose the wise (p. 381). The final three essays focus on non-biblical material in Ben Sira and Handel's *Nabal*. Deborah W. Rooke compares the biblical account in 1 Samuel 25 against Handel's *Nabal*. The next two essays cover Ben Sira, which is a deuterocanonical wisdom book. James K. Aitken and James E. Harding use Ben Sira to argue for Hellenistic influence on the text of Ben Sira.

The Oxford Seminar proceedings provide a significant collection of essays to the study of Old Testament wisdom. The essays cover a broad range of issues which enable students the ability to familiarize themselves with wisdom issues. A few essays stand out above the rest. First up, Weeks essay on Zimmerli's creation theology provides an updated critique to his creation theology. Creation theology proposes justification through the created order (p. 10), which provides an alternative for justification apart from the covenant. Weeks demonstrates Zimmerli's lack of biblical support, and his root in Lutheran and scholarly context (pp. 10-11). Wisdom literature revolves around the resemblance and difference of wisdom and historical literature. Weeks provides a way forward by stating "the more that we stress the resemblance, the greater that tension becomes." (p. 7) Tensions must exist within scripture and handled on their own terms.

Next on the list, Kynes' essay criticizes the foundation of wisdom literature and shakes the very foundation. He deconstructs the dilapidated categories and suggest

scholars form categories natural to the text. Wisdom literature as a technical term came from higher criticism and its desire to construct a category outside the text. Kynes proposes the next step in wisdom literature begins with examining the text on its own account. Readers will easily agree that categories should arise from the text, but Kynes fails to provide them within this essay. Kynes will hopefully provide it within his new book *An Obituary for "Wisdom Literature."*

In the third essay, Patrick unites Proverbs with the Deuteronomic revelation at Horeb through the fear of the Lord. His essay readjusts current scholarship from a late deuteronomic date, which disallows contemporaneous usage by Proverbs. He suggests that pre-exilic Israel shows a clear interest in the stories of Israel's History (p. 166), for the fear of Lord begins at Mount Horeb with the giving of the ten commandments (p. 164). This foundational story lays the structure for Proverbs 1-24. His essay provides a welcome readjustment to Proverbs dependence upon Deuteronomy. He perhaps stretches the imagination at times with calendar dates but provides a thoughtful examination of the material.

The fourth essay, Phillip Y. Yoo argues that the wilderness generation perished because a lack of the fear of the Lord (p. 370). Wisdom remains absent from the wilderness generation because they challenge Yahweh's authority rather than submitting to him in fear (p. 363). Yoo hinders his argument by referring to JEDP but provides overarching implications for interpreting wisdom literature. His solution provides possible answers to the presence and absence of wisdom in other scriptures.

These essays weigh in on multiple topics, but some stretch the categories for the 'Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom.' Rooke's essays fails to fit within the category because she provides no insight to the Israelite perspective, but sets her essay in 1700 A.D. The essays on Ben Sira focus on friendship and table manners which are at best sub-themes in the wisdom tradition. These issues mentioned above agree with Kynes' essay that wisdom literature is an artificial category that often expands to the needs of the community and fails to distinguish unrelated materials. The diversity provides a broad range of essays, but a definition of wisdom literature remains allusive.

The Oxford Seminar has compiled a great resource for scholars and students to wade through the issues. The brevity on each topic provides a launching point in each topic so that students and scholars will benefit in their studies. A student new to the study of Old Testament should begin with Kynes' essay to consider the validity of the genre. Next, one should consider Patrick's essay for hermeneutical methodology in interpreting Scripture. Scholars will benefit from Dell's essay on Jeremiah's use of wisdom as a trope against his opponents. She argues that Jeremiah's use of wisdom sets the stage for the next transition in Old Testament scholarship (pp. 377-79).

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New Testament

Wright, N.T. *Paul: A Biography.* San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2018, pp 464, $29.99, Hardcover.

N.T. Wright is widely known as one of the most prominent Pauline scholars of today and a retired Anglican bishop. He has gained much attention in the academic field for his view on the new perspective on Paul, which has stirred up much debate among Pauline scholars. One of his most recent works that addresses this issue is *Paul and the Faithfulness of God,* which was published by Fortress Press in 2013. Currently, the author holds the position of Chair of New Testament and Early Christianity at the School of Divinity of the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

In this book, Wright takes a biographical approach in dealing with Paul's life and theology. He begins with Paul's upbringing as a young Jew living in Tarsus, and takes the readers through Paul's entire life until the final years before his death. In order to help the reader better understand the shaping and substance of Paul's theology, Wright traces through known aspects of Paul's missionary journeys while filling in gaps of knowledge with his thoughtful speculations. The author divides his work into three parts: the beginning of Paul's life, Paul's missionary journeys, and final years of Paul's life.

In part one, Wright chronologically takes his readers through the early stages of Paul's life, including Paul's conversion experience. He surmises portions of what Paul's early childhood may have been like by comparing it with what would have been the typical lifestyle of an elite Jewish boy of that time. Though these thoughts are largely Wright's personal conjectures, Wright does an excellent job in carefully looking at the tradition of the Jews of Paul's days in order to offer perspective into what might have shaped Paul's - or then, Saul's - vicious zeal to persecute followers of the Way. In the telling of Paul's conversion experience that took place from the road to Damascus, Wright expands on the importance of Paul's personal experience during his trip to Arabia after encountering the risen Lord - something that is not explicitly explained in the book of Acts. By considering Paul's potential thoughts on being confronted by Christ and his own conversion, Wright walks the reader through the formation of Paul's reshaped worldview.

In part two, which makes up the majority of this work, the author deals with Paul's missionary journeys throughout the ancient Mediterranean world. In this section, Wright meticulously traces through Paul's visits to each city and town to understand Paul's new life as an apostle for Jesus Christ. And as he traces through Paul's visits to these cities, Wright does not fail to give the readers detailed information about religious, socio-economical, and political stances of these cities and towns, thereby helping the reader better understand the situations Paul was dealing with. Wright highlights the mistreatment and suffering that Paul experienced in various cities such

as Thessalonica, Ephesus, and Caesarea in order to provide insight into the shaping of Paul's theology and the reasons behind why and what he wrote in his letters to the early churches. As he did in the previous section, Wright includes several of his personal reflections, and thus, Wright's own theological view seeps into these chapters. This is especially evident as Wright advocates for the new perspective on Paul, and particularly when he uses *dikaiosune* with reference to covenant membership (p.147).

In part three, Wright focuses on the last few years of apostle Paul's life. He mainly explores Paul's journey to Rome as a prisoner under guard. He also ventures into what might have happened after Paul's trip to Rome. Did Paul make it to Spain? If so, where did he go after? Although the answers to these questions are pure speculation, Wright does an excellent job in providing plausible explanations of what might have happened after Paul's trip to Rome. Finally, Wright ends this chapter with an intimate view on Paul by shifting the focus away from Paul being the incredible apostle who triumphantly led this Jesus movement in the 1st century Greco-Roman world, and instead, honing in on the vulnerable man who was in need of mercy and faithfully lived his days in obedience to and for the purposes of God.

Wright's work is commendable as it allows readers to easily understand where Paul comes from, what shaped his theology, and the apostle's own thought processes behind each of his letters. But the most praiseworthy and valuable aspect of this book is how Wright offers fresh perspective as he masterfully portrays Paul as a person who struggles with the brokenness of this world and the instability of the human condition. The vulnerability of Paul shown in this book allows the reader to capture a realistic view of Paul, adding depth and enrichment when reading Paul's writings. As with many biographies, this book includes the author's own theological biases and speculations. But nonetheless, this book is highly recommended for readers interested in the field of Pauline theology. Wright's work reads easily, and readers will surely benefit from his thorough understanding of Paul's life journey.

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Longenecker, Bruce W. *The Crosses of Pompeii: Jesus-Devotion in a Vesuvian Town.* **Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016, pp. 366, $39,00, paperback.**

Bruce Longenecker undertakes a historical study in this book that inquires into the evidence for Jesus-devotion in the Roman city of Pompeii prior to its destruction when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 CE. He finds the answer by looking at cross-shaped symbols in the city's archeological record. Having previously taught in the UK, Longenecker is the W. W. Melton Chair of Religion at Baylor University. Among his previous publications, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman*

World (Eerdmans, 2010) and *The Cross before Constantine* (Fortress, 2015) are particularly pertinent to the volume currently under review.

The book begins with an account of its origins. Longenecker began to study the Vesuvian region in order to understand better the concrete realities of first-century life in which early Christianity developed. After noting that certain traditional elements in Vesuvian scholarship are being reevaluated in fresh ways, he locates his book as part of this scholarly movement. The book "will demonstrate that first-century Jesus-devotion did, in fact, have a Vesuvian foothold in the town of Pompeii" (p. 8). For readers accustomed to studying early Christian literature, Longenecker's study provides fresh perspectives because it focuses primarily on artifacts. The item with which Longenecker begins is a cross-shaped imprint on a ground floor wall in a bakery on the western side of Pompeii. The object that left this imprint has often been discussed by scholars in conjunction with a similarly shaped imprint in nearby Herculaneum. Although some argue that the Herculaneum cross was left by a wall-bracket and has no devotional significance, it does not follow that all cross-shaped items are therefore devoid of ceremonial meaning. Before the argument can proceed further, however, Longenecker sketches the use of the cross prior to Constantine. Relying on his previous work, Longenecker argues that the cross became an important symbol prior to the reign of Constantine (pp. 67–74). Further, he proposes that the equilateral cross was employed in the imagery of Rev 7:2–3 as an interpretation of the mark mentioned in Ezek 9:4–6 (p. 92).

Having laid this extensive background, Longenecker focuses his attention on Pompeii. After more fully stating the reasons for separating the Herculaneum cross-shaped imprint from the one in Vesuvius, Longenecker argues that the cross had symbolic overtones of Jesus-devotion and was styled after the Egyptian Ankh. Longenecker further states that the cross is not out of place alongside the religious pictures of a snake and a phallus found in the same bakery. It is conceivable that some may have looked to Jesus for protection without immediately being able to give up on all other forms of devotion (pp. 134–140). This cross anchors Longenecker's argument that some Pompeiian residents were devoted to Jesus. Three other objects serve as primary pieces of evidence. These include a graffito of the Latin verb *vivit* (he lives) in which the final *-it* are combined into a cross-shaped ligature, another graffito in which Christians are discussed, and a cross found on a stamp ring that appears to have belonged to a certain Meges. Longenecker also mounts a secondary case for Jesus-devotion in the city by presenting what are likely the freshest pieces of evidence in the book. In his travels to Pompeii, Longenecker has found nineteen crosses faintly inscribed in paving stones around the city. While clarifying that the case for Pompeiian Jesus-devotion can stand or fall without this supplemental evidence, Longenecker proposes that the crosses served an apotropaic function "so that the forces of evil would not prevail against them in the places where they resided and worked" (p. 237). The book closes with two chapters that consider the significance

of Longenecker's findings along with an appendix that contains photographs and descriptions of the nineteen street crosses.

Longenecker makes a strong case for the devotional use of the cross and for the corresponding presence of Jesus-devotion in Pompeii that follows from this identification. In so doing, Longenecker stands against the majority position of Pompeiian scholarship. While his minority arguments should give readers who are uninitiated to archeological studies pause before accepting the arguments too quickly, Longenecker's rigorous method and challenge of scholarly presuppositions are exemplary. He notes that historical work requires not only deduction but also disciplined inference (pp. 60–61). After showing how the pieces of the puzzle can be put together in Pompeii, Longenecker fittingly cites Sherlock Holmes's maxim: "When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however, improbable must be the truth" (p. 253). Fitting the historical study contained in this book, the arguments are inferential rather than deductive, but the discipline utilized to constrain the inferences keeps the conclusions on track. In addition, Longenecker challenges the presuppositions that govern scholarship on Pompeii. While there is no grand conspiracy theory that has kept other scholars from evaluating the evidence in the same way that he has, he proposes that the accepted scholarly paradigm needs to be shaken up (pp. 259–260).

Three additional elements can be noted more briefly. First, the book is filled with pictures and maps to orient those unfamiliar with Pompeii. Second, Longenecker does not assume that all Jesus devotees practiced their devotion in exactly the same way as Paul or the author of Acts. Finally, Longenecker rightly notes that early Christian persecution ebbed and flowed prior to Constantine. Because Vespasian's reign (69–79 CE) seems to have been a time when persecution was at a low-point, this increases the likelihood that Jesus-devotion in Pompeii could be undertaken publically.

At this point, though, one can observe a tendency in the book to overstate conclusions. For example, Longenecker jumps from the correct observation that persecution ebbed during Vespasian's time to a comparison with the time of Constantine. Pompeii is described as "a pseudo-Constantinian island in the pre-Constantinian stream" (p. 77). Even if state-sponsored persecution was low, it is difficult to imagine that popular skepticism of Christianity alleviated social pressures to the same degree that Constantine's conversion would in the fourth century. Longenecker similarly appears overconfident when he declares that Jesus-devotion is better attested in Pompeii than Jewish presence (p. 257).

Yet perhaps the best way in which to consider Longenecker's contribution is by thinking further with the book. If students of the New Testament accept Longenecker's depiction of Jesus-devotion alongside other apotropaic devotional practices, this may shed light on certain passages in first-century Christian literature, such as Acts 8:4–24; 13:6–12; 1 Cor 8:1–13; Gal 1:6–9. Although care would be required to avoid anachronism, *The Crosses of Pompeii* may also have ramifications for interpreting early second-century texts due to the preservation of Pompeii. For example, the Shepherd of Hermas is often thought to have an Italian provenance and regularly warns against double-mindedness. Although double-mindedness has something to do with economic practices in the Shepherd, one might consider whether there are devotional connotations in how the word is used.

Because of the book's readability and high-quality research, *The Crosses of Pompeii* will be of particular interest to students interested in Christianity within the first-century Roman world. However, the book will also benefit researchers and the libraries that enable their research on account of the well-argued presentation and because many early Christian researchers focus on literature rather than artifacts. Longenecker's case for Jesus-devotion in Pompeii is worthy of full consideration, and the book is highly recommended.

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Emerson, Matthew Y. *The Story of Scripture: An Introduction to Biblical Theology*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017, $19.99, hardcover.

Matthew Emerson (Ph.D. Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary) is associate professor of religion and holds the Dickinson Chair of Religion at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Emerson's work in this volume is a part of the Hobbs College Library Collection at Oklahoma Baptist University which promises to offer additional volumes in the areas of Bible, theology, and Christian ministry. In under one hundred pages, Emerson captures the essence of biblical theology for those training for Christian ministry.

Consisting of six succinct chapters, the book begins with a helpful introduction to the discipline of biblical theology in its historical and academic background. Anyone new to this field will appreciate Emerson's overview and clarity. Following an evaluation of Johannes Gabler's contribution to the discipline, Emerson explains three primary schools or approaches: the Dallas School which focuses attention on the Israel/Church relationship; the Chicago School which seeks to understand how any given text fits within the overall biblical narrative; the Philadelphia School which asks similar questions of the previous approaches, but also investigates aspects of literary context.

Emerson then moves beyond these helpful categories to summarize key points of theological importance (the Trinitarian shape of Scripture, for example), to the critical issues of biblical unity. In the end, he adopts helpful metaphors to explain how "the whole Bible is one book inspired by one author with one story that culminates in one person, the God-Man Jesus Christ. Biblical theology is the attempt to read the Bible in this structurally and conceptually unified fashion" (pp. 16-17).

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the broader story of a cosmic redemption, which is aimed at redeeming both humanity and creation. According to the authors, the New Testament universalizes Yahweh's promises to Israel to include the whole earth (p. 138). Creation's inclusion in the redemptive storyline is significant: creation will endure and is a central part of God's redemptive plans. Because of this, humanity is duty-bound to care for the earth.

The concluding section begins with a restatement of the thesis: "Creation is not just the stage on which the story of redemption takes place; creation is a key actor in that story" (p. 171). As the authors pursue implications of their creation theology, they helpfully connect a concern for the flourishing of creation with a concern for the flourishing of one's neighbors: "it is impossible truly to love others without caring for the environment in which they live" (p. 186). Chapter 13 presents data on five major crises in creation: loss of biodiversity, increase in the earth's population, deforestation, ocean pollution, soil degradation, and climate change. The book ends with a call to preach about creation, spend time in creation, exercise moderation in the use of resources, and to pursue biblically-guided activism on behalf of creation and its inhabitants.

This volume exhibits an exemplary biblical and evangelical methodology that begins with the text and then moves to application. The authors' ability to carefully elucidate the interconnectedness between mankind, creation, and God within Scripture provides strong warrant to their case that humanity cannot neglect creation. Humanity's duty to creation is necessitated by several biblical factors: our joint purpose with it—to glorify the Creator; our mandate to love our neighbors and steward resources well for future generations; and its enduring goodness.

The enduring goodness of creation is demonstrated through careful exegesis of multiple passages. They zoom the argument in close to the text when needed while generally keeping the zoom at a broader level. The overall thesis is well-grounded and imbued with strong biblical warrant: God's purposes for creation are present today and continue into eternity as God is seeking to establish "a new heavens a new earth" (cf. Isa 65:17). Creation's eternal purpose necessitates humanity's care of it.

Moo and Moo's argument that creation will be transformed rather than replaced is compelling. They argue from 2 Peter 3:10 and Romans 8:21 that the earth will be "exposed" and "delivered" but not, as is commonly understood, destroyed by fire (pp. 147-161). Yet, they gladly defer to those who may hold to a more traditional replacement view. Throughout, they present a balanced argument that will hold universal, Christian appeal.

This universal appeal continues into the application. They cite multiple sources on the present state of creation—secular, scientific, philosophical, evangelical, and liberal—that substantiate their case and remains free of emotive rhetoric. The heartbeat of the book is chapter 13, where the authors' present data on six major ecological crises. There is no doubt that the authors' share the general concern about the earth's welfare with the scientific community. The data presented appears verifiable and credible, thus justifying the authors' concern. For example, they share the following about global warming: "There has not been, for example, a single year in the last forty years that was below normal [temperatures]" (p. 212). Paired with the other four crises, the authors make a credible case that the integrity of the earth's natural systems are under serious threat (pp. 217-218). The last chapter makes concise and practical suggestions for how Christians can stop contributing to the downward spiral of the compounding ecological crises and how Christians can aid in both preventing and remedying the current crises.

The one lingering concern is the authors' understanding of the curse in Genesis 3:15-17. They argue that the curse does not "seem to represent…some sort of mysterious ontological change in the very makeup of creation itself" (p. 103). Instead, the creation's curse is the cursed humans who care for it: "Yet, if we ask *how* God subjected creation to futility, we find that the only answer can be that God subjected creation to futility by subjecting creation to Adam and to all of humankind." Despite the utmost respect for the authors, this argument degrades into special pleading that has at its heart a fine argument: that creation has enduring goodness despite the curse. The very point of Romans 8:19-22 is that creation's experience of the curse is parallel to and like humanity's experience of the curse. Humanity shares much blame for the current ecological crisis, but creation remains cursed, ontologically, as humankind is.

In the end, this "bump in the road" does not impede the overall and most excellent argument that Moo and Moo present. I heartily recommend this book to all scholars and believers. Moo and Moo have made a compelling case that care for creation is regularly neglected in Christian ethics and urgently needs to be resurrected.

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Tidball, Derek. *The Voices of the New Testament: Invitation to a Biblical Roundtable*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2016, pp. 277, $24.00, paperback.

Derek Tidball is a British evangelical scholar. He previously served as the principal of the London School of Theology and is currently visiting scholar at Spurgeon's College in London.

The Voices of the New Testament is a New Testament [NT] theology aimed at "those who will never pick up the heavier" NT theologies (p. viii). Hence, it is quite brief (as NT theologies go) and intentionally light on footnotes and secondary sources. It seeks to draw together the major theological foci of the NT authors in a way that both distinguishes their unique emphases and preserves the unity between them. In a word, the book attempts to discern the unity and diversity of the message of the NT, such that at the end of his study, Tidball's conclusion is that "[t]he New

Testament writers are like instruments in an orchestra playing one glorious and harmonious melody. Each instrument contributes to that one tune" (p. 257).

As an attempt to defend the need for another NT theology amidst a growing number today, Tidball contends that his approach or method is unique. Whereas many NT theologies focus on more traditional approaches—authorial, developmental, thematic, or systematic—Tidball utilizes a schema he claims was suggested by George Caird in his NT theology wherein he imagines the nine authors of the NT having a roundtable discussion, along with a chairperson and observer. The function of the chair is not to speak for the biblical authors but to moderate the discussion, and the function of the observer is to bring to light the ways in which major questions of NT theology have been dealt with throughout the history of the church. The result is a NT theology with a very different feel; far from arid, it is engaging and conversational in style and tone.

The structure or flow of the conversation, though, is more traditional. The book contains ten chapters: Chapter 1 introduces the discussion; Chapter 2 describes the gospel as the unifying theme; Chapter 3 discusses the God of the gospel; Chapter 4 the need for the gospel; Chapters 5 and 6 the accomplishment of the gospel; Chapter 7 the metaphors of the gospel of salvation as applied to individuals; Chapter 8 the necessary response to the gospel; Chapter 9 the life called for by the gospel; and Chapter 10 the gospel and the future. As each chapter unfolds, Tidball deftly brings together the NT authors' perspectives on each of these topics.

The book's strength lies in its accessibility and engaging style. The book is especially valuable for those interested in an introduction to the major questions of NT theology, but who are wary of spending money or time reading other, more massive NT theologies. Thus, the book would be a useful resource for undergraduate theology students or even for a pastor to read and recommend to congregants. Further, the conversational style—first- and second-person pronouns are ubiquitous—provides a readability often missing in other NT theologies. Finally, for those wishing to use this book as an entrée into the larger, more traditional NT theologies, Tidball provides a selective bibliography of NT theologies in the indices.

Another strength of the book is its ability to bring together diverse voices on various topics. This was the book's stated goal, and it succeeded. As an evangelical scholar, Tidball (rightly, in my opinion) sees fundamental theological agreement among the NT authors, even where theological diversity appears. For instance, he argues that there is no substantive disagreement between the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel on John on the question of Jesus as the Son of Man (pp. 60-61), between Paul and James on the question of justification by faith (pp. 188-89), or between the NT authors on the question of the delay of the Parousia (pp. 232-33). More liberal NT scholars would contend that this approach doesn't do justice to what they perceive as divergent and even contradictory theologies of the NT authors. But, without blunting or diminishing the diversity, Tidball convincingly contends that the NT authors shared complementary but not contradictory beliefs.

While the disadvantage of a brief NT theology is that the author is not able to interact with scholarship on a number of issues, this disadvantage is offset in part by the imaginary observer in the conversation. The observer's speeches function essentially as brief excurses on points of scholarly disagreement, such as the rise of Trinitarian monotheism from Jewish monotheists (pp. 81-82), the relationship between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith (p. 101), the nature of early Christian belief in resurrection (pp. 121-22), models of the atonement (pp. 132-34), the *pistis Christou* question in Pauline scholarship (pp. 140-41), the identity of Israel in Romans 9-11 (pp. 198-99), the mission of the church (pp. 210-11), the meaning of Jesus' Olivet Discourse (pp. 227-29), and various views on the millennium (pp. 244-45). These excurses do not exhaust the number or depth of the issues, but they give the reader a sense for where the key debates lie.

With this said, the brevity of the book, which is one of the book's strengths, is also a weakness. This isn't a detraction from the value or the success of the book, especially since Tidball is aware of this weakness (p. vii). Nevertheless, for the sake of clarity regarding the nature of this work as a NT theology, it should be said that there are many debates in NT scholarship left untouched due to its brevity. More than this, the aim of the book is in some sense to lessen any interpretive bias so as to let the biblical authors speak for themselves as much as possible (p. 5). While this is a salient aim, it can be somewhat misleading, for actually Tidball (necessarily) interprets all along the way! For instance, one paragraph is allotted Paul at the roundtable to summarize his understanding of the "flesh" and its association with sin (pp. 31-32). In this brief context, the flesh is given "earthly nature" as a gloss, but because of the brevity of the section, the reader is left wondering what Tidball means by "earthly nature." Is this the same as a "sin nature"? Is the flesh an ontological or salvation-historical reality? Again, when Tidball begins to unpack Paul's doctrine of justification—it receives two pages (pp. 139-40)—precious little is mentioned regarding different understandings of justification, and nothing is said about the righteousness of God, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, or judgment according to works. Further, when Tidball explains the meaning of Paul's phrase "works of the law," he claims that Paul was concerned about those works that marked the Jews out as the people of God. However, given the brevity of the section and the lack of interaction with scholarship, no clue is given the reader that the answer placed in Paul's mouth at the roundtable is actually debated, especially given the rise of the New Perspective on Paul over the last 40 years. Hence, despite the book's stated aim of "minimal" interpretation, interpretations are (necessarily) advanced, but because of the book's intent to achieve brevity and limited interaction with scholarship, the reader may not be aware of the breadth or depth of the debates at hand.

In conclusion, *The Voices of the New Testament* succeeds as a NT theology aimed at those who may not otherwise read one. Tidball's approach is refreshing and engaging, and his excellent grasp of the NT authors' emphases allows the reader to gain a speedy yet summative sense of the basic questions and answers within NT theology. It is hoped that this book will be used in the church and classroom as a tool to appreciate the unity and diversity of the NT.

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Theology

Levering, Matthew. *Engaging the Doctrine of Creation: Cosmos, Creatures, and the Wise and Good Creator*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017, 372, $44.99, hardcover.

Matthew Levering is one of the most prominent contemporary Roman Catholic systematic theologians, the author or editor of many books on topics ranging from Mary to predestination. Readers of this journal will appreciate his ecumenical posture with evangelicals: he is a member of Evangelicals and Catholics Together and is noted for his constructive engagement with evangelical thought. He currently holds an endowed chair at Mundelein Seminary.

This book is the third in Levering's series on topics in systematic theology (following books on revelation and the Holy Spirit). Levering starts by considering God as the creator with chapters on the divine ideas and on divine simplicity; more on those later. Levering then considers creation itself, arguing that the unnecessary diversity of creation—such as vast numbers of extinct species and regions of empty space—are not evidence against God's goodness. These are followed by chapters defending a substantivist view of the *imago dei*, the command to be fruitful and multiply in light of contemporary environmental concerns, a historic Fall, and a broadly retributive atonement theory. In each chapter Levering draws heavily on Aquinas while engaging with a wide variety of contemporary theological, philosophical, and scientific interlocutors.

Levering's chapters on God are refreshing to this philosopher in that they tackle two subjects that are too rarely discussed, particularly by evangelical theologians: divine ideas and divine simplicity. Given this rarity, some introduction may be in order; I will introduce divine simplicity and Levering's work on it first.

Everyone agrees that God lacks physical parts, since God lacks a body. But traditionally Abrahamic theists have gone further: they hold that God lacks parts of any kind, including putative metaphysical parts such as properties, aspects, powers, or actions. Traditionally, this doctrine has been considered vital to theology. Levering

quotes David Hart as saying that "[n]o claim… has traditionally been seen as more crucial to a logically coherent concept of God than the denial that God is in any way composed of separable parts, aspects, properties or functions" (p. 90). The main reason for this is that anything composite is thought to be dependent in some way on its parts, or on something else to put the parts together; so without divine simplicity God is just another dependent being like the rest of us rather than the Originator of all. This idea has many philosophical and theological critics, however. Levering's chapter is devoted to defending Aquinas' version of the doctrine from Orthodox-inspired opposition. The main objection he responds to claims that a simple God (at least as Aquinas conceives of a simple God—a qualification I'll leave out hereafter) could not possibly be free to create. For God's act of creation is identical to God, since a simple God has no distinct actions. Since God exists necessarily, so must creation as well. The result is what philosophers call "modal collapse": this world, down to its tiniest detail, is necessary, with no possibility that anything could have gone otherwise than it did.

Levering's first response to this argument is that creation is not necessary, since creatures are "contingent by nature" (p. 103) upon God. By "contingent by nature" Levering seems to mean that creatures are dependent upon God. This is surely true, yet it does nothing to solve the problem. As Levering himself seems to note, the claim that creatures are dependent upon God means only that creatures do not determine God; it does not mean that there is any possibility of God making a different world. Levering's second response is that we cannot know *how* God's act of creation could possibly be free, since our minds are incapable of understanding a simple God; yet we must acknowledge both God's simplicity and freedom even though we cannot comprehend how they could both be true. This raises difficult questions of theological method. I will here just register my concern that apparent incoherence is a high price to pay, and that Levering's retreat into apophaticism looks uncomfortably *ad hoc*. (Better ways of addressing the problem of divine freedom and simplicity include Timothy O'Connor's *Theism and Ultimate Explanation* and Chistopher Tomaszewski's "Collapsing the modal collapse argument", forthcoming in the journal *Analysis*.)

The doctrine of divine ideas states that God has an eternal idea of each creature (or each type of creature); these ideas are often taken to be key to God's relationship to creation, and to perform philosophical work of the sort done by Platonic forms. In Levering's chapter on the divine ideas his main burden is to defend Aquinas from two accusations made by Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky. First, Lossky argues that Aquinas' theory of the divine ideas leaves God unfree; instead of freely coming up with what to create, God must check his data-bank of ideas. Second, Lossky argues that Aquinas makes creation importantly less valuable than divine ideas, making creation something of a disappointing knock-off of the more perfect ideas in God. (In other words, Lossky worries that divine ideas are better than creation in the same way that Plato thought the forms are better than material beings.)

In reply, Levering claims that God's ideas are (given Levering's strong doctrine of divine simplicity) absolutely identical to God (though there is a kind of "logical" difference between God's different ideas (p. 62). This, combined with the view that God creates outside of time, means that God's freedom is not hindered. Why not? Because God does not create by *first* checking the divine ideas to see what is possible and *then* selecting some of those ideas to actualize (p. 63). Levering's response here is not convincing. It is true that an eternal God's act of creation is not temporally ordered. But philosophers often distinguish between temporal order and logical order, where the latter is something like an order of reasons for God's action, and is quite consistent with the claim that God is outside of time. For example, supralapsarians and infralapsarians disagree about whether God ordained salvation because of God's permission of the fall, or the other way around; and Molinists believe that God possesses a "middle knowledge" that structures God's decisions about how to create. So barring an argument that there is no logical ordering within God (an argument Levering does not give, and which might be difficult for him given that he wants logically distinct ideas within God), Lossky could simply put his argument in a logical key: God's ideas are (presumably) logically prior to God's decision about what to create, and so they constrain God's decision even if they are not temporally prior to it. Rather than focus on God's eternality, Levering would have done better simply to make the case that anything identical to God cannot be a problematic restriction on God's freedom.

Levering replies to Lossky's second criticism by saying that, since creatures possess a different sort of reality than divine ideas, they are not "poor cop[ies], ontologically speaking, of the divine ideas" (p. 63). It is not clear to me how Levering can say this. If the divine ideas are identical to God, then the claim that God is "ontologically" greater than creatures (a claim Levering certainly would endorse) implies that God's ideas are greater as well (since they are just God under a different name).

More generally, Levering's work, while possessing many scholarly virtues (such as an acquaintance with a wide variety of material from disparate disciplines and time periods), is weighed down by a lack of clarity and precision. In other respects, however, the first two chapters are fine examples of "old school" medieval-style theology; there is a lot to be learned in them about the important western and eastern figures Aquinas and Palamas, as well as about recent theologians and philosophers working in their traditions. However, those new to the metaphysical issues involved should start elsewhere (I recommend Edward Feser's accessible book *Aquinas*). The remaining chapters are not unduly technical and will be accessible to most students; each should be an excellent introduction to a relatively conservative Roman Catholic position on its subject.

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Jeffrey A. Brauch, *Flawed Perfection: What it Means To Be Human; Why it Matters for Culture, Politics, and Law* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2017). 344 pages. $15.99.

Theological anthropology is a thriving area of study. Part of the reason for this growth is due to the growing studies from the brain sciences and psychology, which have and continue to raise interesting and thought-provoking implications for what it means to be human. Another reason for the growing interest in theological anthropology has to do with the growing tensions within the broader cultural conversation on what it means to be human. Jeffrey Brauch enters these discussions as a fresh voice. He argues that, at the heart of this conversation, to be human means that we are created with dignity, value, personal responsibility, but we are also marked the Fall—in other words, *Flawed Perfection*.

Flawed Perfection is not your typical book on theological anthropology, however. It is unusual, but I mean that *positively.* Brauch is not integrating classical theological anthropology with one of the sciences or re-branding it with a particular philosophy. Brauch, also, is not writing, primarily, with the academic in mind. He writes with a broad audience in view. As a legal expert himself, he brings his legal expertise to the question of what it means to be human. Yet, his reflections are shaped and formed by his meta-perspective that we are created in the image and likeness of God, and we bear dignity, value, and personal responsibility. Yet he balances all of his reflections with the reality that humans are creatures who have fallen into corruption.

What makes *Flawed Perfection* unique is Brauch's facility with concrete legal cases, which are always brought back to a larger theological frame. After drawing our minds to the theological principles that guide and inform our thinking about these legal scenarios, Brauch rarely comes to hard and fast conclusions, but rather he raises questions to ponder and guiding principles to think more clearly about humans in light of culture, politics, and law. You might think of his objective in the book as a guide for thinking Christianly about the human in our present dialectic rather than offering an authoritarian answer book sent down from heaven. In this way, his approach is deeply earthy and practical.

Along these lines, Brauch avoids human portraits that are unrealistic. Brauch avoids a fatalistic and undignified view of humanity by upholding the traditional and biblical characteristic that humans are personally responsible for their actions. Take the specific legal examples he offers in chapter 9 on "Environmental Influence Defenses". In this chapter, Brauch explores the deeply complicated issues surrounding personal responsibility in legal discourse expressed in concrete legal cases. Several questions still deserving our reflection are raised: 1) Is there a principled way to maintain personal responsibility yet recognize differing levels of culpability for specific moral actions? 2) Should the penal consequences for specific actions vary according to one's upbringing, chemical imbalance, and lack of awareness regarding

the severity of the act? These questions are raised in the context of legal discussions surrounding Bazelon's 'Durham rule for insanity' and 'The M'Naghten Rule'. The first rule states that a person is found not guilty for action committed by reason of insanity, i.e., if the unlawful act is a product of mental disease, then one should not be found guilty. The latter rule was an earlier rule applied in western legal history, and it states that persons are held accountable for their actions based on a cognitive test of what they knew and what they did not. On the M'Naghten Rule, individual humans are punished for their actions based not only on the act itself but on their intentions in the act. One of these rules is helpful and, arguably, upholds personal responsibility (M'Naghten Rule), but the other is consistent with a physicalist determinist view of the world that eliminates personal responsibility (Durham rule of insanity). Brauch recognizes the biblically guided principle that environment (e.g., social, biological, familial) *influences* our behavior, but it does not *cause* our behavior. He concludes rather judiciously that in order to maintain personal responsibility and the dignity of humans, legal decisions should be made not on the basis of excusing criminal responsibility or changing legal standards, but on the basis of one's intentionality in the act and judging the penal consequences for the actions on environmental influences. Giving credence to environmental influences signifies his considered effort to understand humans in our legal situation as humans marked by the Fall. Chapter 9 gives the reader one example of the rich and sophisticated reflections exemplified throughout *Flawed Perfection.*

There are many other insightfully informed pieces of wisdom worth considering regarding the relationship between law, natural law, and human nature along with the implications our laws have for how we understand human nature. In my estimation, *Flawed Perfection,* while unusual, is readable and worthwhile for a wide readership. While it is not technically an academic work, it is deeply considered, based on careful research, and immensely practical. It would serve as a helpful supplementary text in a variety of courses including courses on theological anthropology and courses that cover topics at the intersection of law, philosophy, and theology. Finally, it would serve as a useful resource for a book study for advanced laymen or simply for the purposes of one's own intellectual development.

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Kotsko, Adam. *The Prince of This World*. Stanford: California, Stanford University Press, 2017, pp. 240, $22.95, paperback.

In this engaging study of the Devil, Adam Kotsko, assistant professor of humanities at Shimer College, offers a rigorous piece of political theology. Whilst making a trenchant contribution to critiques of contemporary modernity, this book will appeal

to both specialists and a general audience alike. The introduction recalls the testimony of police officer Darren Wilson, who claimed to be frightened of Michael Brown, the young, unarmed black man he shot and killed. Brown was "no angel"—Wilson euphemistically positioned his victim as not just criminal, but as actively demonic. Yet, if anyone is the demon in this situation it *must* be the personification of racist structural violence. From somewhere has sprung "a profound theological reversal," (p. 4) where the demonic, once the theological tool of the oppressed seeking to explain their sufferings, becomes a weapon of those who oppress. With this context, Kotsko argues that this theological discourse on the devil, the demonic and of evil emerges from a long and under-acknowledged heritage and sets himself the task of tracing the story of how this reversal has taken hold.

Chapter one explores the confrontation between the people of Israel and Pharaoh, a figure that Kotsko sees as the "most relevant biblical antecedent for the devil" (p. 22) because within the paradigm of political theology unfolded at *this* point, what Kotsko calls "the minority monotheism of the Hebrew biblical tradition, God's wicked rival could only be a rival king" (p. 23). By the time of Christ and the New Testament (chapter two) the relationship between the God's implacable foe and God becomes complicated by the figure of the Messiah. The older apocalyptic paradigm must be rethought—by the time of eschatological visions of Revelation, the enemy of God is not just a King, but it is now the greatest Empire on Earth, Rome itself. There is a "play of mirrors" (p. 54) as Christ and anti-Christ, city of God and Whore of Babylon confront one another forming an apocalyptic image of contemporary politics. In Revelation, "the sufferings of the wicked serve to enhance the joy of the saints" (p. 55) and given the extravagance of their torture in the lake of fire, the "stark opposition of good and evil [is] beginning to break down" (p. 56). God becomes dangerously close to his mirrored foe of the Devil and the New Jerusalem forms the counterpoint to Babylon and Rome.

This apocalyptic confrontation between Babylon (the Roman empire) and the New Jerusalem (the emerging Christian community) is complicated by much of Paul's New Testament writing. Kotsko quotes Romans 13, and analyses how whilst Paul insists that all authority is "instituted by God", in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, these political authorities have "forfeited any legitimacy" (p. 62) and moral authority is, instead, handed over to the Christian community.

These questions of authority and the relationship between the political present and the more intangible realm of faith is what begins the shaping of another paradigm—the patristic paradigm. After a discussion of Irenaeus and Tertullian, Kotsko argues that there is a downplaying of the political because the devil's agents are no longer the "the kings of this world but the antibishops of the antichurch of heresy" (p. 70). The apocalyptic paradigm, irrevocably set in motion by the death and resurrection of Christ, is dangerous and these early Christian writers have *de-*politicized it, shifting the polemic onto the realm of belief and displacing the political

into the theological. As a result, "purely symbolic or theological explanations of the cross followed naturally" (p. 74).

Here, there is a moment of opportunity—a gap between paradigms—as the relationship between Rome and Christianity shifts between persecution and adoption. In this space of possibility emerges Gregory of Nyssa's *Address on Religious Instruction,* which positions Christ's salvific work on the cross as not only saving humanity "but the devil as well" (p. 80). Yet, the optimism of Nyssa's approach is later repudiated by theologians from both East and West. Kotsko provides a reading of Anselm, who puts forward a God "jealous of his honour—which is to say, proud—and he is absolutely unforgiving of any debt or obligation." In short, "it makes sense that God would not be merciful to the devil, because he is not even merciful to humans" (p. 100-1). As Kotsko puts it, "the entire life of the devil… is overshadowed by divine vengeance" (p. 105).

Following on from this Kotsko traces the "debates surrounding the devil's fall from grace" (p. 110). Building on the problem of freedom and the will in Augustine's account of his own conversion, Kotsko notes that Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas "all arrive at a broadly similar account of the devil's fall: he fell at the earliest possible moment, due to an act of will that was inexplicably insubordinate to God" (p. 130). The Devil is portrayed as evil as possible, for as long as possible, dividing off the Devil's rebellion "into a conceptual space excluded from God's realm of direct responsibility" (p. 131). The problem (and here the connections to the current political moment seem clearer) is freedom. Freedom is, in many ways, the founding myth of Western liberal modernity, emerging into this "empty space discovered by medieval theology" (p. 133).

By chapter five, Kotsko points out that secular modernity still has its own demons "and for those demonized populations" (women, Jewish people, the victims of racialised slavery) "the modern earthly city is surely a living hell" (p. 167). It is then from hell that we might launch a critique on secular modernity, and so at the close of the book Kotsko turns to Dante's *Inferno.* In Dante, Satan is presented as the (semi-literal) foundation of all of God's creation. In his journey through hell Dante never questions those he finds there and ultimately joins in with the devil's henchmen in torturing the damned. As Kotsko notes, "the God who has become the devil turns his followers into demons" (p. 183). From Dante, Kotsko turns to consider both the prison and the concentration camp, sites of disciplinary punishment which, like hell, serve as gruesome spectacle and ultimately a distraction (see p. 188, 191). In a final twist, there remains something that God cannot control. The damned who refuse to submit to the will of judgement cannot be redeemed—the production "of bare life as pure victimization is never the last word" (p. 192).

For Kotsko, those unruly wills, wallowing in their obscene *jouissance,* become the foundation of God's rule. In contrast to the stasis of God and his saints, in hell we see the truth of Milton's Satan, "Here at least we shall be free… Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven." At the close of *Paradise Lost,* Adam and Eve weave their way from the Garden. Earlier, the Prince of this World promises them that "league with you I seek/And mutual amity so strait, so close/That I with you must dwell or you with me." For Kotsko, this serves as "a kind of fable of the transition from Christianity to secular modernity" (p. 197). We are, it seems, still dwelling with Satan. This is not cultural baggage to be discarded, as this legacy is bound up within "the core value of Western modernity… freedom" (p. 198). Yet this kind of freedom is not freedom at all it seems but it "results in a claustrophobia… more extreme than that of the medieval paradigm" (p. 200). Kotsko's critique of freedom is far ranging but the question remains: how to break the "apparatus for generating blameworthiness?" (p. 200)

What hope there is can be found in liberation theologies that represent bold attempts to create "a new and unprecedented Christianity in the wreckage of Christianity's modern afterlife" (p. 205). As we rethink, rework, and repurpose might all—even the devil(s) themselves – finally be saved? As a work that seeks to re-politicize political theology, explicitly connecting theological discourse to contemporary material reality, the book is a welcome corrective to dry scholasticism about evil and contemporary politics, accessible, engaging and consistently challenging to political theologians of all levels.

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Feinberg, John S. *Light in a Dark Place: The Doctrine of Scripture.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018, pp. 799, $50, hardback.

In *Light in a Dark Place,* John S. Feinberg (professor of biblical and systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) offers a comprehensive, evangelical treatment of the doctrine of Scripture. Feinberg was one of the original signatories of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy in 1978. He is the general editor of Crossway's Foundations of Evangelical Theology series, to which the present volume is the most recent contribution.

The book consists of four parts and twenty chapters. The title of each chapter (apart from the introduction) refers to Feinberg's chosen metaphor of "light". This recurring motif reflects the author's conviction that the Bible is inscripturated divine "revelation light" for the sake of a dark world (p. 24).

Part One on "Creating Scripture" treats the doctrines of revelation (general and special) and inspiration. Part Two on "Characteristics of Scripture" covers inerrancy and authority. Part Three ("Setting the Boundaries") is about canon. Part Four on "The Usefulness of Scripture" has chapters on illumination, perspicuity, animation, sufficiency and preservation. A concluding chapter takes the form of the author's testimony.

Feinberg's aim is that his work should reflect, and express, an evangelical consensus. This aim is achieved partly by confining his arguably more debatable views (e.g. his pre-millennialism and belief in a pre-tribulational rapture) to footnotes, and partly by explicit statements that certain of his commitments (e.g. to a broadly Reformed soteriology and account of human freedom) do not materially affect his doctrine of Scripture.

Feinberg writes as a conservative evangelical, and most of his references are to fellow (American) evangelical writers, although he does interact with non-evangelical scholarship, particularly as he considers challenges to his views on revelation, inspiration, canon, and inerrancy. The book also contains extended critical reviews of works by evangelicals who have in different ways challenged Scripture's inerrancy. Feinberg writes of the latter as those "who call themselves evangelical" (p. 115, 231). As this suggests, any "evangelical" consensus on Scripture may not be forthcoming!

In a review of this length, it is of course impossible even to lay out the broad contours of Feinberg's systematics. Instead, I will briefly introduce his methodology, comment on some notable (on occasion idiosyncratic) points, and then offer a summary evaluation.

Feinberg's method, in respect of any theological question, is first to ask what Scripture says. His book is therefore full of detailed exegesis of relevant biblical passages. In formulating doctrine, Feinberg favours Scripture's didactic statements over Scripture's "phenomena". This is particularly significant when it comes to his defence of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture because Feinberg argues (against what is commonly asserted) that whether one starts with didactic statements or with phenomena, "proper theological method involves a combination of both inductive and deductive investigation" (p. 114). Feinberg's conclusion is that Scripture teaches its own plenary, verbal inspiration, which is not accomplished by mechanical dictation.

Feinberg's defence of inerrancy (he adopts his brother Paul Feinberg's definition of the term, and works from the correspondence theory of propositional truth) is extremely thorough. He prefers not to use the term "infallibility", although to the mind of this reviewer his criticism of Vanhoozer's use of the latter term (pp. 269-73) is not wholly convincing, partly because Feinberg seems to think that a given (divine) illocutionary act can only have one intended perlocution in view, a claim that I do not think can be sustained.

In *Light in a Dark Place*, Feinberg mostly presents views that would probably be accepted as mainstream by most conservative evangelicals, but occasionally he offers a minority report. Interesting examples include his reservations about the doctrine of accommodation (p. 205, 325), his distinct lack of enthusiasm for an incarnational analogy to explicate the divine and human aspects of Scripture (p. 224), and his application of the concept of illumination to unbelievers as well as believers (p. 617). Chapters on animation and preservation are welcome additions to this book which do not often feature in systematic theologies of Scripture.

In his discussion of the doctrine of revelation, Feinberg is critical of models of revelation that introduce the *appropriation* of revelation into the concept itself. This point seems to be particularly important in a context when certain evangelical writers have followed Barth by, in effect, equating revelation with reconciliation. In Feinberg's idiom, "[t]hough humans repeatedly sin in the face of the truth, God has never turned off the light" (p. 53). However, Feinberg insists, a commitment to the *objectivity* of revelation must be balanced by an avoidance of "an overly *static* view" by which theologians may "lock God out of the world" (p. 41). Feinberg's balance at this point goes some way towards addressing the concern of those who insist that Scripture's ontology must be understood in terms of the ongoing acts of God.

Some of Feinberg's exegetical conclusions are striking: in respect to Romans 1, for example, he thinks that Paul *might* not mean that natural revelation leads to monotheism (p. 70). This is actually a fine example of Feinberg's exegetical (and theological) restraint, in evidence throughout. He repeatedly insists that we may not press a text or a doctrine to say or do more than is warranted, even if (perhaps *especially* if) the result would suit our own purposes.

The book is attractively presented, although the footnotes are in very small type, and at times the distinction between levels of headings is not clear, which can make following the argument more difficult. There are some curious claims made in the book. Feinberg writes that "[m]any of Jesus's contemporaries saw the risen Christ and still refused to believe" (p. 81) but this claim is not substantiated. His inclusion of "incandescent" as an example of a negative term like "inerrancy" (p. 236) is baffling.

This book would be a hefty-but-helpful introduction to the doctrine of Scripture for evangelical students. It may not convince many who do not agree with its conclusions, especially on inerrancy, but the cumulative force of its arguments certainly demands attention, and Feinberg sweeps away many a straw man to lay down a cogent and precise case for would-be opponents. Feinberg has not interacted with some of the best recent Reformed evangelical scholarship on the doctrine of Scripture (John Frame and Meredith Kline are conspicuous by their absence and their work would surely have helped Feinberg to make his case on authority and canon, respectively). Nor does Feinberg offer any discussion of the work of John Webster, without doubt one of the most significant and provocative contributions on the doctrine of Scripture in this century from a professing evangelical (with Barthian leanings). No doubt Feinberg would part company from Webster at many points, but the lack of any discussion of Webster's Trinitarian paradigm and actualistic ontology of Scripture is regrettable, and may mean Feinberg will fail to gain a hearing among one constituency he might just be able to convince.

At times *Light in a Dark Place* feels a little dated (for example, the assertion that Pete Enns continues to hold to inerrancy, when a visit to Enns's personal website confirms that he has denied inerrancy for some time) but this feeling (it is no more than that) may merely reflect the fast-changing landscape in respect of the doctrine

of Scripture today in "broader" evangelicalism and beyond. On the flipside of this, Feinberg's "elder statesman" status lends his work the *gravitas* of one who has "seen it all" when weighing his more recent conversation-partners.

Feinberg writes as one who loves Scripture, and who believes his convictions about it *matter*. At times, he is excited (six consecutive exclamations on p. 660!) and this book is full of pastoral counsel and application, clearly derived as much from the author's own experiences (detailed in the conclusion) as from his dogmatics. *Light in a Dark Place* will likely become a standard evangelical textbook on a doctrine (and above all, on a Book) which has defined its author's life story.

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Church History

Hamilton, S. Mark. *A Treatise on Jonathan Edwards, Continuous Creation and Christology*, **A Series of Treatises on Jonathan Edwards, vol. 1. N.P.: JESociety Press, 2017, pp. 101, $17.99, paperback.**

The work under consideration is the first in a series devoted entirely to the publication of "assessable and in-depth treatments of Edwards-specific subject matter" (unpaginated series introduction). As the title suggests, this volume is a philosophical and theological examination of a nexus of metaphysical positions found across Jonathan Edwards's oeuvre. In engaging Edwards's philosophical theology, the author—S. Mark Hamilton—follows a trajectory set by his previous essays (e.g., S. Mark Hamilton, "Jonathan Edwards, Hypostasis, Impeccability, and Immaterialism," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 58:2 [June 2016]: 1-23). The main agenda of this brief treatise, therefore, is to philosophically clarify Edwards's overarching commitments to idealism, continuous creation, and occasional causation (chs. 1-3), and then apply these clarifications to Edwards's Christology (chs. 4-5). Along the way, Hamilton dissents from and revises several prominent interpretations of Edwards's philosophical theology, most notably from the individual writing the foreword to the book—Oliver Crisp.

The first half of the treatise charts out Hamilton's revisionary account of Edwards's philosophical theology; for Hamilton, these revisions are not only the best explanation of Edwards's philosophical musings, but are also necessary in order to insulate Edwards's doctrine of continuous creation from internal incoherence. These revisions are as follows: (1) Edwards is an immaterial realist (or *relative realist*, to use Hamilton's terminology), which means, in the least, that created minds have a real and independent spiritual substance, even if ultimately dependent upon the divine mind; (2) Edwards holds that these created *minds* endure across temporal

stages as independent entities from those stages, and that created minds only have phenomenal interaction with simple or complex *ideas* across those same stages; and (3) ideas perceived by created minds across various temporal stages are actually "divine mental projections" (p. 36) created continuously *ex nihilo*. This last revision does not include, importantly, the intentions of created minds interacting with divinely projected ideas (i.e., their volition). Taken altogether, these revisions render Edwards's doctrine of continuous creation and commitment to occasional causation consistent with moral responsibility.

The second half of the treatise applies the various revisions from the opening chapters to Edwards's Christology, which yields, in Hamilton's neologism, a doctrine of continuous Christology. In particular, the uncreated and immaterial mind (i.e., the divine mind) of the Son assumes—as consistent with Chalcedonian logic—a created and immaterial mind. The human nature of Jesus Christ, on this interpretation, consists of a created and immaterial mind—which endures across temporal stages—and an *ideal* body—which, "like all perceptible objects, is continuously created (by the Spirit) and re-presented *ex nihilo* to the mind of Jesus" (p. 92). Furthermore, the Spirit (of the Son) operates as the sole causal and communicative agent throughout the life of the God-man. The Spirit, quite literally, continuously creates the *percepts*—not the human mind—that Jesus Christ perceives moment by moment. This, according to Hamilton, is the gist of Edwards's continuous Christology.

Two important gains are worth highlighting from this treatise as it applies to Edwards studies in particular and Christian theology in general. Foremost, Hamilton's interpretation cogently weds Edwards's "Spirit Christology" with the thornier aspects of his metaphysics, such as occasionalism. This is no small feat. Fusing together Edwards's philosophical musings, Christology, and trinitarianism has been a difficult exercise, often leading to larger questions regarding his theological propriety (e.g., Oliver Crisp, "On the Orthodoxy of Jonathan Edwards," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 67:3 [2014]: 304-22). Secondarily, Hamilton sets the stage for further investigative work into Edwards's Christology. For example, Hamilton's thesis regarding the ideal union of the uncreated mind of the Son to the human mind of Jesus of Nazareth could be utilized to explore Edwards's relationship to the so-called *extra Calvinisticum*. Furthermore, Hamilton's thesis opens the door for a more thorough understanding of how, on Edwards's understanding, Christ's human nature can be the "pattern of all" elect humanity (*WJE* 18:418). The created mind of Jesus Christ, in this sense, contains all ideas regarding creation and election. This includes both stable and substantialized minds distinct from the human mind of Jesus, as well as percepts that are continuously created and made present to created minds across temporal stages. Such philosophical commitments are certainly quirky, though they might prove metaphysically coherent with and a necessary corollary of Edwards's other theological commitments (e.g., his supralapsarian Christology). In a larger

sense then, Hamilton has shown that Edwards's philosophical theology is not only salvageable, but also potentially serviceable.

Overall, Hamilton's work exemplifies well the purpose of the series: "assessable and in-depth treatments of Edwards-specific subject matter." The argument is both lucid and brief without being pretentious and vapid. For the neophyte, Hamilton's treatise can stand alone, offering a succinct analysis of Edwards's metaphysics and theology with helpful illustrations to explain trickier philosophical positions (e.g., "stage theory"). For the seasoned Edwards's interpreter, Hamilton's short treatise yields much to cut their teeth on; in particular, Hamilton's thesis provides both a metaphysical tempering and correction of prior interpretations of Edwards's philosophical theology. One prominent example pertains to Edwards's occasionalism. Hamilton argues, contrary to Oliver Crisp, that Edwards's adherence to occasional causation is not as toxic to Edwards's overall theological program as it might seem, particularly in terms of moral agency. I find Hamilton to be altogether convincing not only on this score, but also with regard to his overarching thesis. Hamilton has shown, through persuasive argument and charitable reading, that Edwards's various philosophical commitments are indeed coherent, even if certain portions are "nothing short of bizarre" (p. 70).

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Meyer, Jason. *Lloyd-Jones on the Christian Life: Doctrine and Life as Fuel and Fire*. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2018, pp.265, $19.99, paperback.

Dr. Jason Meyer is the Pastor for Preaching and Vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He also serves as Associate Professor of New Testament at Bethlehem College and Seminary. He has made contributions to the *ESV Expository Commentary* series and is the author of *Preaching: A Biblical Theology*. The work being considered in this review is his theological biography on Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones entitled, *Lloyd-Jones on the Christian Life: Doctrine and Life as Fuel and Fire*.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was a massively influential preacher in the eighteenth century, and it will be shown that some contend that Lloyd-Jones' influence is greater today than it was in his own day. Remarkably, the ministry of Lloyd-Jones was a preaching and teaching ministry that did not include writing. The works that are in print are transcribed lectures and sermons. To write this theological biography of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Jason Meyer was challenged with the task of reviewing the sermons and lectures of Lloyd-Jones in order to succinctly and accurately present the Doctor's theology.

Lloyd-Jones' conviction is made clear: there must not be a divorce between doctrine and life. He said, "There is nothing which I know of which is more unscriptural, and which is more dangerous to the soul, than to divide doctrine from life" (p. 25). He believed that, "right doctrine is the prerequisite for right living" and that, "our conduct heralds the content of our doctrine" (p. 25). The preaching of Lloyd-Jones remained faithful to herald biblical doctrines even in the midst of an increasingly secularized church that was falling prey to ecumenicalism and liberalism.

In Part 2, "The Doctor's Doctrine", Meyer's work of summarizing and concisely defining Lloyd-Jones' doctrinal positions is highly commendable. There are at least three grand takeaways for the reader. First, the Doctor viewed Scripture as the ultimate authority. Second, he was unabashed in his reverence for the glory of the Sovereign God. Third, Lloyd-Jones was surgically precise in his theological positions.

The surgical precision of the Doctor in his theology is manifest in each doctrinal section. The reader will find that they are challenged constantly to reread the paragraphs, not because the language is confusing, but because Lloyd-Jones' theological distinctions are uniquely refined. If the reader gives this work a thorough examination, they will not only learn about Martyn Lloyd-Jones, they will be taught, challenged, and very likely deepened in understanding.

Lloyd-Jones had an unapologetically high view of Scripture as authoritative and absolute. He was also unmistakably reverent and worshipful in his view of God. In each chapter, Meyer puts forward a presentation of the Doctor's doctrine followed by specific practical results that must follow true belief in those doctrines. This formatting is helpful to see the relation between doctrine and the Christian life. Again, for Lloyd-Jones right thinking always precedes right living, and right living is the necessary, expected, and right outcome of true belief.

It is clearly seen that Meyer made a tremendous effort to understand and present the doctrinal positions of Lloyd-Jones. In fact, this book in large part serves as a synopsis of the content of the lecture and preaching ministry of the Doctor. This does not detract from the book, as it serves to reinforce the premise that one cannot understand Lloyd-Jones without understanding that the doctrine he taught was the doctrine he believed and lived by.

Lloyd-Jones' teaching was always doctrine before application. Meyer organized this book to mirror Lloyd-Jones' methodology. Having presented the Doctor's theology in Parts 1 and 2, Meyer moves on in Part 3 to the presentation of Lloyd-Jones' counsel on practical matters such as the Christian disciplines of Scripture reading, prayer, and the application of doctrine through love, the home, and work. He also deals with issues such as depression and death.

In Part 3, Meyer showed that Lloyd-Jones affirmed that Scripture was inspired by the Holy Spirit and written by the hands of men. Also, he affirmed that the Holy Spirit superintended the writing in such a way as to keep the human authors from error while at the same time maintaining the conveyance of their humanity and personality in the writing (p. 127). In helpful manner, Meyer points out three causes of difficulty the believer faces in reading the Bible. He discusses at length the Doctor's diagnosis

of 1) The Devil's attacks, 2) Personal challenges, and 3) Interpretive Challenges. To remedy these challenges, Lloyd-Jones counsels the believer to read the Bible prayerfully, seeking the illumination of the Holy Spirit and a submissive heart for the reader. Secondly, the believer must read the Bible with care, seriousness, and systematically. Thirdly, the believer must spend time receiving the Bible in the context of the Church through preaching.

Just as submission to the Word of God is recognition of God's glory and authority over all, so prayer is submission to the greatness of God. Meyer was careful to maintain brevity in his presentation of Lloyd-Jones' teaching on prayer. He writes, "Unpacking all the various ways that doctrine impacts prayer would fill up many books. We have space here for only five brief examples" (p. 140). This approach demonstrates one of the strengths of Meyer's account, as it serves as a primer for the reader to move on to thorough and deep study of Lloyd-Jones' recordings and teachings. Meyer did not seek to record all of the Doctor's teaching in this single volume, but rather to present a concise summary of the major tenets and approach to doctrine and living.

Finally, in Part 4, Meyer provides an ample amount of quotes from contemporaries of Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones as well as those who encountered his works at a later time. He compiled these quotations and comments in order to demonstrate the tremendous impact Lloyd-Jones made in this world through his preaching and teaching. It is notable that the evidence reveals that Lloyd-Jones' impact is greater in modern times than it was in his own day.

Lloyd-Jones' life in ministry was not without controversy. Regarding the Doctor's legacy, Meyer honestly evaluates Lloyd-Jones' views on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which he concludes that it appears Lloyd-Jones was in fact reading his experience into certain texts of Scripture rather than deriving his doctrine from the text. He also provides a succinct description of the involvement of Lloyd-Jones in the Secession Controversy. Meyer's evenhanded approach is helpful and should be appreciated.

In conclusion, this book is a useful primer to the theology of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Jason Meyer is succinct in his writing and yet altogether thorough at the same time. His commitment to honestly represent the teaching of Lloyd-Jones can be seen in vast amount block and short quotations of the Doctor himself. As Lloyd-Jones is such a towering figure in evangelicalism, and a spearhead of sorts for expository preaching, this book will serve Christians well.

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Eglinton, James P., editor and translator. *Herman Bavinck on Preaching & Preachers*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2017, pp. 150, $16.95, paperback.

Often considered a standard text among theologians and preachers, Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* reveal a careful dogmatician whose theological reflections brim with scrupulous insight and practical application. Though mainly known for the academic theology he championed at Kampen and the Free University of Amsterdam, James Eglinton (Ph.D., University of Edinburgh), the Meldrum Lecturer in Reformed Theology at New College, University of Edinburgh, offers readers insights into Bavinck the preacher. Eglinton, himself an accomplished Bavinck scholar, fills a glaring hole in the Bavinck corpus, for English readers know little of Bavinck's pastoral theology or his approach to homiletics. As Eglinton notes, Bavinck preached for forty-two of his sixty-seven years, so it is surprising on many levels a study of this scope only now became available.

Readers will note quickly the uniqueness of Eglinton's book, for Eglinton serves as both its translator and editor. In sum, this book consists of a biographical introduction followed by five translated sections. In the biographical introduction, Eglinton assists readers in discovering Bavinck the preacher, having preached his first sermon at twenty-four years of age in 1878, and he continued preaching across the world and in many settings until his 1921 death in Amsterdam. Critical to understanding Bavinck's approach to preaching is his family upbringing, for he was the son of a Reformed pastor, as well as Bavinck's ecclesial roots. Bavinck lived through tumultuous times of separation among the Dutch Reformed churches. And finally, Bavinck's first pastorate, which he took shortly after completing his doctoral work at Leiden, formed his theological moorings, which grounded him to labor for a theology deeply tied to the church.

Much of what Eglinton translates in these sections comes from notes within Bavinck's diary where he candidly expressed his ministerial anxieties. In this section, readers learn of Bavinck's commitment to preach with little or no notes, which "explains why, despite decades of his preaching, only one of his sermons became available in print" (p. 11). Of all the highlights one encounters in this introduction, perhaps the gem is how Eglinton carefully shows a soft side to this great theologian who, readers learn, struggled with his singleness in his early ministry, even admitting that his pastoral duties would be easier if he had a wife with whom he could confide. Further, readers will note how Bavinck, as a young pastor, lamented that when one is a minister, one is "always a minister, and can never more speak in a properly familiar way" (p. 11). While this introductory biography is brief, because Eglinton wrote it as an angle into Bavinck the preacher, seasoned Bavinck readers will appreciate the new insights into his personality and early pastoral ministry.

Following the introductory essay, Eglinton provides five translated sections that begin with Bavinck's forward to *Eloquence*. Bavinck wrote this brief forward in May 1901, and it is his attempt to explain the reasons behind his publication of *Eloquence*. "Dutch pulpits," writes Bavinck, "are not presently overflowing with good, powerful speakers, never mind preachers" (p. 17). This reality is regrettable to Bavinck, who longs for a revival of a certain sort of preaching. The following chapter is Eglinton's translation of Bavinck's *Eloquence*, which was a lecture originally given to the students of Theological School in Kampen on November 28, 1889, and put in booklet form. There are several takeaways for seminary students or local church pastors in this carefully reasoned plea from Bavinck. Indeed, one can make present day applications with each of Bavinck's concerns.

Bavinck believed all eloquence, "whether in the pulpit or in the council chamber, is actually threefold: argument, description, and persuasion. The eloquent person must know what he has to say, possess a solid knowledge thereof, and convincingly persuade the understanding of his hearers" (p. 32). Throughout each section of this treaty, Bavinck urges preachers to consider how the calling to preach requires even more of a commitment to the proper delivery mechanics and subject matter comprehension over and against all other subjects because of its Trinitarian hope and promise (see p. 37). Preachers proclaim a sacred message, and this solemn reality requires the attention and care Bavinck espouses.

In the next section, Eglinton translates "The Sermon and the Service," which Bavinck first wrote in 1883. Readers will note quickly how Bavinck laments the powerless preaching in an age where there was tension and upheaval regarding orthodoxy among churches and the larger culture. Readers will perhaps relate to Bavinck's brazen diagnosis of churchgoers' motivation, their passivity in the church services, and their lack of sacrificial giving of themselves in service to the Lord Jesus Christ. A key remedy to the spiritual illness inflicting the church, for Bavinck, is a return to Holy Spirit anointed and Word-saturated preaching. He pointedly admits how "there is a lack of earnest preparation, simplicity and truth, pace and thought, faith and inspiration, and above all, solemnity and unction" (p. 63). He summons pastors to return to the Scriptures, and he calls upon them to seek the power of the Spirit to proclaim faithfully, boldly, and with simplicity of language.

The following section is the translation of Bavinck's sermon, "The World-Conquering Power of Faith," based on 1 John 5:4b and preached on June 30, 1901. Although this sermon is the only Bavinck sermon in print, readers will quickly appreciate his homiletical skills. Bavinck speaks with pastoral sensitivities and theological precision, and he acknowledges current events and challenges of his day all while using examples and illustrations from political elections in the Netherlands to war in South Africa. His sermon structure proves exegetically and theologically clear, and he ends with both an evangelistic appeal as well as a call for the church to be strengthened in its faith. For readers, this sermon provides an example of the preaching Bavinck called for in *Eloquence*.

In the final section, Eglinton translates "On Preaching in America," which is Bavinck's summary of his 1908 trip to America where he preached eighteen times. Bavinck gives a scathing summary of American Christianity. This section is brief, comprising just over three pages, and as such, Bavinck's direct tone remains consistent. In his analysis of American churches, "the preaching mostly deals with morals," and "preaching is not the unfolding and ministering of the word of God; rather it is a speech, and the text is simply a hook… Religion does not master the people; the people master the religion, just as they also master art and science. Religion is a matter of amusement, or relaxation" (p. 85). Further, Bavinck laments how, in his estimation, "the English-speaking world lives for the heathen and sympathizes with its missionaries" (p. 87). But Bavinck is equally critical of Dutch churches, finally offering hope for the Lord Jesus to be praised. This section ends with Bavinck's hope that America will strive for its "own great and high calling" from God (p. 88). Finally, Eglinton includes as an appendix a translation of "On Language," which is offered as a supplement to the reading of *Eloquence*.

Why should scholars, preachers, and seminary students indulge this helpful volume? First, scholars should read this volume because it gives evidence to how Bavinck believed robust dogmatic theology belongs in the pulpit as well as the classroom. His instruction on how best to deliver this content is still applicable. Further, Bavinck serves as a great example to modern scholars of how the academy is to serve the church, and reminders of this sort are too infrequent. Second, pastors should read this volume because Bavinck offers a goldmine of practical wisdom for the preached word. Sure, Bavinck is mainly known for his academic theology contained with the *Reformed Dogmatics* and other publications, but he began his ministerial career in the pulpit, not the ivory tower. Third, students should read this volume because every seminary student needs theological heroes from previous generations. Students desperately need the spiritual friendship that can only come by wrestling with the theological and practical works of the giants who have now been received into the joy of our master. Bavinck can be a lifelong friend to this next generation of God called men and women laboring in the seminary classroom. Regardless of one's faith tradition, this book belongs on the pastor's shelf.

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Philosophy

Thiselton, Anthony C. *Approaching Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction to Key Thinkers, Concepts, Methods & Debates.* **Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018, pp. 224, $23.99, paperback.**

Anthony Thiselton is emeritus professor of Christian theology at the University of Nottingham, as well as the University of Chester. Thiselton has authored numerous books in theology, spanning topics such as systematic theology, hermeneutics, and postmodernism, as well as exegetical works on various New Testament books. Thiselton's work in theology necessarily overlaps with topics found in philosophy of religion, which occasioned his recent book in the philosophy of religion, *Faith, Doubt and Certainty* (2017). Thiselton's latest work is the result of a fruitful ministry of writing and research, providing newcomers and seasoned students of philosophy a helpful resource for the key thinkers, approaches, and terms of the philosophy of religion.

While readers can certainly read *Approaching Philosophy of Religion* from cover to cover, one does not necessarily have to do so, for it serves as a resource to be visited as research or interest dictates. Thiselton divides the book into three primary parts, though the Introduction can serve as a standalone section as well, thus giving the book four parts. In the Introduction, Thiselton provides a brief overview of the history of Western philosophy. By addressing key thinkers and themes in philosophy's history, Thiselton provides readers with a jumping point from which they can do further study. Though a bird's-eye view of the history of philosophy, the Introduction gives readers a sufficient grasp of the general trend over the course of Western philosophy's existence.

Part I addresses the various approaches found in the Western philosophy. In addition to addressing the traditional rivals of Analytic and Continental philosophy, Thiselton focuses on the following as philosophical approaches in their own right: empiricism and rationalism (Chapter 3), existentialism (Chapter 4), feminist philosophy (Chapter 5), personalism (Chapter 6), phenomenology (Chapter 7), and pragmatism (Chapter 8). In each chapter, Thiselton summarizes the ideas of the philosophers known for the respective approach.

Thiselton shifts in Part II to the perennial issues and arguments found in Western philosophy of religion. Set up like encyclopedic entries, Thiselton provides a succinct summary of the idea (or argument) as well as incorporating important thinkers and works that have shaped discussion on the respective topic. While Thiselton includes traditional philosophy of religion topics such as the various arguments for God's existence (cosmological argument, design argument, and ontological argument), free will, and miracles (to name a few), Part II also contains more current issues found within philosophy of religion, such as animals, evolution, and gender.

Approaching Philosophy of Religion continues with Part III in which Thiselton provides a concise dictionary of philosophical terms relevant to philosophy of religion. As he does in Part II (though in a shorter manner), Thiselton includes with each term mention of important thinkers or works related to the particular term. The book concludes with a thorough (14 pages) bibliography of selected texts for those interested in pursuing further the study of philosophy of religion.

Thiselton's *Approaching Philosophy of Religion* stands out among other resource books for various reasons. First, Thiselton's writing style is unencumbered by dry, technical prose. Instead, Thiselton writes in an engaging, clear manner that helps to garner and keep the reader's attention. This is true for even Parts II and III of the book where one would expect dry and technical writing for encyclopedic and dictionary entries. Considering the fact that the audiences best suited for Thiselton's book are beginners and novices, the writing style is just as important as the presentation and content.

Another feature that stands out is Thiselton's ability to cover two millennia of Western philosophy in a succinct, but thorough, manner. The reader is given enough information about a topic to have a sufficient starting point for further study. The reader can also come back to the book in the future if they need to refresh themselves on an issue, thinker, or term found in philosophy of religion. While this observation may seem trivial, it is quite a feat to whittle down over 2000 years of philosophy into a book of 224 pages, much less to present the information in a way that is substantive while succinct.

Perhaps the greatest strength of this book is Thiselton's inclusion of topics that are not typically included in works of philosophy of religion by Christians. For instance, Thiselton's chapter on feminism as a philosophical approach addresses an approach that all Christians must (at least) be familiar with, yet unless one's work directly intersects with feminist thought, many Christians (particularly conservative Christians) have little to no interaction with feminist philosophy. Other areas that are not always included in Christian reference works on philosophy of religion are phenomenology (which tends to fall under psychology today) and personalism (a philosophical school of thought that was prevalent in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries). A related point is Thiselton's refusal to categorize all philosophical methods under the labels of either analytic or continental philosophy. Though he does devote attention to these philosophical approaches, he treats other approaches as methods in their own right.

Little negative can be said of Thiselton's work. Because it serves more as a reference book than an extended argument, there is little to disagree with other than matters of categorization or inclusion (i.e. of particular thinkers or works). If any critique can be made, it consists of the following: first, Scripture (or more generally, divine revelation) is a vital aspect of philosophy of religion, yet there is no explicit discussion found. It is possible that Thiselton includes divine revelation

under "religious language" or "religious knowledge," but because of the central nature divine revelation plays in religion, it ought to stand as its own topic worth addressing. Second, Thiselton does not address Van Till's presuppositionalism in any way. Granted, he does touch on reformed epistemology (via Alvin Plantinga); however, presuppositionalism has made enough inroads to warrant some mention – at least as an approach to philosophy of religion, or as a term worth knowing in the study of philosophy of religion.

Approaching Philosophy of Religion is a succinct yet substantive resource for students of theology and of philosophy—students of all levels. The book can be used as a resource for a variety of courses in theology and philosophy, paying itself over and over. Because philosophical topics are not as quick to change (like those in technology, for instance), Thiselton's book has staying power. Another helpful philosophy of religion resource similar to *Approaching Philosophy of Religion* is Thiselton's *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion* (2014). Here readers are given a more extended version of *Approaching Philosophy of Religion*'s Part II, written in the same style and format with more terms, idea, works, and thinkers included. Other than that, most introductory-level books on the philosophy of religion come in the forms of anthologies or textbooks, introducing students to topic via excerpts from well-known philosophers or through addressing the subject by its various topics.

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Ward, Keith. *The Christian Idea of God: A Philosophical Foundation for Faith*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 229, $32.99, paperback.

Keith Ward, Regius Professor of Divinity (Oxford University) and Professor of Philosophy of Religion (University of London), launches in this book a thorough case for what he calls *personal idealism*. While this book builds successively on previous publications (particularly *More than Matter?* and *Christ and the Cosmos*), it explores in further depth the fruitfulness of framing the Christian faith within an idealist framework. Ward is a stern critic of materialism and in *The Christian Idea of God* he gives further reasons for maintaining that mind is prior to matter.

The first part, "The Nature of Mind", explores the distinctiveness of personal idealism, the epistemic priority of experience, and the objectivity of value (chapters 1-7). On this version of idealism, there is no strict separation between the universe and God; rather they form a unity, "though one in which the mental or spiritual aspect has ontological and causal priority" (p. 11). Indeed, the universe should be understood as a developing and progressing self-expression of God.

But, why should we take idealism to be true and what can be said in favour of this position? A case for idealism begins with the particularity of human experiencing. Drawing on an empiricist epistemology, Ward argues that all knowledge begins with experience and that the phenomenon of experiencing goes beyond purely material categories. Perceptions, for example, do not seem to be the kind of things that belong to the categories of space-time (p. 28). We place our perceptions in public space, yet perceptions themselves belong to a "private two-dimensional space" which is not shared by other people. Hence, given that experiencing transcends material categories, and that experience is our inevitable starting point in our interaction with the world, we have positive reasons for believing in the primacy of the mental. Without a mind-like reality there would be no physical reality. Indeed, this is why Ward says that almost "all believers in God are idealists in some sense" (p. 49).

A key argument in Ward's book is that God is the most plausible *interpretive hypothesis* of the totality of human experiencing. The intelligibility, elegance, and beauty of the physical world seems to call for "some underlying wisdom or intelligence" (p. 57). This should not be understood as a proof of God. Rather the idealist hypothesis invites us to consider "the cosmos as "an expression of immense power and wisdom" (p. 57).

The second part of the book focuses on the nature of the "Ultimate Mind" and the relationship between God and Creation (chapters 8-14). In chapter 8 Ward explains more his idealist stance and contrasts his own idealism with the "immaterialist idealism" of Bishop Berkley. Ward stresses that he does not deny the reality of matter and he argues that human minds emerged, in some way, from complex physical structures (p. 99).

In contrast to a pessimistic materialism, a personal idealist view of nature invites purpose and teleology within nature. That is, "If the universe is a product of mind, then it obviously exists for a purpose. It has a goal, and the goal will be realised" (p. 101). This particular universe has been chosen to realise certain valuable states, including the emergence of human minds. This is not to say that the universe was created as a perfect and deterministic system. Rather, it is a "growing organic system" which progressively realises its potentialities (p. 124).

In part three, Ward addresses more explicitly the theological dimension to personal idealism, including the eschatological culmination of creation and the revelatory importance of Jesus Christ (chapters 17 and 22). While Ward admits that one can embrace personal idealism without being a Christian, he still thinks that there is a "natural affinity between Christianity and personal idealism" (p. 221). As suggested, Ward argues that personal idealism entails a teleological view of creation, whereby purpose is a real feature of the natural order. From this idea follows that divine action is not something to be figured out, but its role should be acknowledged as a basic aspect of the "unfolding of the processes of the cosmos" (p. 204). If the universe, as it is claimed on an idealist perspective, originates in mind, then there is

a final cause for the emergence of the cosmos as a whole. Ward is careful to distance his own approach from the interventionist understanding of divine presence as interruption of the causal nexus, suggesting instead that we should recognise God's ongoing involvement in the world in participatory terms.

Ward articulates successfully the relevance of personal idealism for Christian theology and the intimate connection between theism and an idealist outlook on reality. He shows in a clear manner why idealism should be taken seriously by those who believe in a personal God that is involved in the destiny of the world. Ward's argument for the priority of mind and its implications for our understanding of the universe is highly interesting. However, as I see it, Ward needs to clarify two parts of his argument in order to strengthen this offered idealist position.

My first concern is with regard to Ward's argumentative step from the *irreducibility* of experience (or mind) to the *priority* of experience. This book outlines several positive reasons for thinking that experience goes beyond reductionism and physical explanations. Yet, there seems to be no necessary relationship between the irreducibility of experience and the idealist thesis that mind is more fundamental than and prior to the physical. One can hold that mentality or human experiencing is irreducible with regard to physical stuff—both property dualists and substance dualists do—without committing oneself to an idealist ontology. This remains a significant gap in Ward's argument that needs to be closed.

A second issue concerns Ward's definition of idealism. As I said above, Ward takes issue with and rejects a Berkley idealist denial of the reality of the physical. Physical phenomena are real but depend on God—an ultimate mind—for their existence. Moreover, human minds seem to emerge from material phenomena. This, to me, sounds like theism coupled with an emergentist view of the mind, but not necessarily a form of idealism. It seems difficult differentiate Ward's idealism from a generic theistic claim that the physical is dependent on God. Indeed, Ward's articulation of idealism becomes even more confusing when he sides with the emergentist view of human minds as derivate from the physical. Ward attempts to carve a path between Berkeleyan idealism and materialism, but the idealist component of this philosophical articulation of the Christian faith remains unclear.

Having said that, Ward provides a robust challenge to materialism and a sophisticated defence of the irreducibility of mind. This book is written in an accessible way and is suitable for students, scholars, and lay people interested in the relationship between theology and philosophy.

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Benton, Matthew, John Hawthorne, and Dani Dabinowitz, eds. *Knowledge, Belief, and God: New Insights in Religious Epistemology.* **Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 345, $70.00.**

Reformed epistemology is roughly the thesis that religious belief can be justified or warranted apart from argumentation. As the editors of *Knowledge, Belief, and God* note, Reformed epistemology is the dominant position in the epistemology of religion (p. 3). While there has been a lot of work done in the 90s and 00s, discussing how belief in God can be properly basic, the editors aim to produce a new volume discussing recent developments within the field.

The volume is broken up into the following four sections: Historical, Formal, Social, and Rational. The historical section addresses traditional problems in the field of epistemology of religion with recent developments in analytic epistemology. For example, Charity Anderson's interesting essay applies Maria Lasonen-Aarino's work on knowledge and defeat to Hume's arguments against miracles. Anderson argues that a subject can possess knowledge that a miracle occurred, while her belief at the same time fails to meet the standard of reasonability. Other interesting essays in this section include Richard Cross' essay on Scotus and Aquinas. Here, Cross discusses Scotus' and Aquinas' epistemology in light of contemporary labels to help elucidate their views on how Christian belief can be considered rational.

The formal section is, for the most part, a section on formal probability and fine-tuning. I imagine that Hans Halvorson's "A Theological Critique of the Fine-Tuning Argument" will be considered one of the more controversial articles. Halvorson argues that the fine-tuning argument undermines itself. Roughly, the idea is that, if we believe that we are warranted in believing that it is likely that God would create a life permitting universe, "then we are just as warranted in believing that God would create laws according to which nice universes are likely" (p. 133). But since the laws are not such that we should expect nice universes, either God does not exist, or we are not warranted in believing that God would create a nice universe (p. 133). Those who are sympathetic to skeptical theism, will want to pay special attention to this chapter.

The social section of the book is excellent. Max Baker-Hytch's essay, "Testimony amidst Diversity" is especially stimulating. Baker-Hytch argues that religious belief that is primarily based on testimony is deficient as it merely amounts to animal knowledge. What a subject really should be concerned with is reflective knowledge. A subject is said to possess reflective knowledge when she has a knowledgeable perspective on her reliability (p. 197). Baker-Hytch gives two reasons as to why we should think animal knowledge is deficient. I have the space here to go over one such reason.

Baker-Hytch argues that animal knowledge violates the norms of assertion. By 'norm of assertion', I mean to say that, S only can assert some proposition P, if S knows that P. While it could be said that S knows that God exists if her belief is

produced by the right sort of external conditions, S would not know that she actually meets the qualifications for being able to assert that God exists, unless she possessed reflective knowledge. For Baker-Hytch, there's a further "knowledge norm": in order for S to assert P, S needs to know that she knows; or, as Baker-Hytch puts it, there would be a "sense in which she is criticizable" (p. 200). Baker-Hytch realizes that the knowledge norm view could hinder what philosophers could actually say given the controversial nature of the philosophical domain. As Baker-Hytch puts it, it is "hard to know whether one has knowledge and hence hard to know whether one is entitled to assert the contents of one's belief" (p. 200). However, he thinks that philosophers have room to hedge assertions in such a way as to exempt a speaker from violating the knowledge norm (p. 200). Religious believers, on the other hand, are committed to outright asserting that God exists.

While this argument is interesting, I am skeptical of its success. The knowledge norm view is controversial in epistemology. It is not clear to me that the knowledge norm advocate meets the knowledge norm requirement with respect to her assertion that the knowledge norm view is true. And, if the advocate of the knowledge norm view cannot say that the knowledge norm view is true, I am not sure why one should think that the knowledge norm views gives us good reason to think that animal knowledge is significantly deficient.

As for the last section, while all of the articles deserve a read, Matthew Benton's article, "Pragmatic Encroachment and Theistic Knowledge," is especially worthy. Benton starts the article off by discussing how some contemporary philosophers believe that non-epistemic factors should play a role in a belief's epistemic evaluation, (p. 267). There are some who argue that pragmatic or practical considerations should also be a part of the evaluative process. Benton moves on briefly to address Pascal's wager. Benton puts the wager as follows: "if traditional theism (including certain assumptions about a heavenly afterlife) is true and one believes it, then one stands to gain much; and if one does not believe it, then one stands to lose out on much (and, one may even be punished much!) But if atheism is true and one believes it, one does not, by comparison, gain much at all" (Ibid.). For Pascal, these truths provide pragmatic motivation to believe in theism. Benton, however, takes Pascal in a different direction. Benton argues that atheistic belief, by Pascal's reasoning, fails to be pragmatically relevant. In fact, Benton argues that because of this, atheism is epistemically irrational (p. 284). This of course rests on the assumption that pragmatism plays a role in evaluating a belief's epistemic status.

In evaluating the book overall, the book accomplishes the goal of the editors. It gives a survey of the different views and new ideas that exist in the epistemology of religion. The book contains extremely valuable essays and it should be recommended to anyone with an interest in religious epistemology. With this stated, it is odd that this book did not contain essays addressing the contemporary state of Reformed epistemology. There have been fascinating developments in the literature. For example, Kelly James Clark and Justin Barrett have done interesting work on how cognitive science relates to Reformed epistemology (Kelly James Clark and Justin L. Barrett, 'Reidian Religious Epistemology and the Cognitive Science of Religion,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion.* 79 3 [2011]: 639-75). Erik Baldwin and I have published several papers on the topic of Plantinga's epistemology and the world religions (For a comprehensive take, see Erik Baldwin and Tyler McNabb, *Plantigian Religious Epistemology and the World Religions: Problems and Prospect*s [Lanham: Lexington Press, forthcoming]). And Andrew Moon recently proposed a new way to gloss Plantinga's Reformed epistemology (Andrew Moon, 'Plantinga's Religious Epistemology, Skeptical Theism, and Debunking Arguments,' *Faith and Philosophy* 34 4 [2017]: 449-70). Of course, not having a chapter that engages Plantinga's Reformed epistemology should not take away from what I have stated about the book. It is not often that you can say of a philosophy book that the book is worth its price. *Knowledge, Belief, and God* is one of those books.

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Cosgrove Mark. *The Brain, The Mind, and the Person Within: The Enduring Mystery of the Soul*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2018. 180 pp. $18.00. 978-0825445262.

Is there a nexus to be found between the fields of neuroscience and theology? According to Cosgrove's short work *The Brain, the Mind, and the Person Within*, there is ample evidence that suggests the two fields belong together. While many introductory works on neuroscience and neurobiology are filled with technical jargon and philosophical esoterica, Cosgrove has an eye towards pedagogy without falling into the temptation of oversimplification or over-extrapolation.

Over ten short chapters, Cosgrove carefully introduces and discusses the state of the question concerning the anatomy, functionality, and theology of the mind. Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the reader to the mysteries found within the studies of the brain. Glial cells and neurons make the person, but the mind is no mere combination of chemicals (p. 27ff). According to Cosgrove, it is problematic to accept the mind as a "machine" view of the human brain. For consciousness exist in four realms: (1) Frontal Lobes (time), Parietal Lobes (meaning), Temporal Lobes (symbols), and Corpus Callosum (imagination) (p. 30–34). Chapter 3 further explores the transmitter chemicals (NE, 5HT, DA, ACh) that come together like a river to shape one's personality (p. 47ff). In chapter 4, the reader is introduced to the "hard problem," that is the brain neural pixie dust or the work of God's spirit? He notes the complexity of the brain's formulation of what becomes the conscious experience—it is too simplistic to say it merely functions like a machine. For Cosgrove, humility is essential here

and knowing that personhood is critical for understanding the hard question (p. 69) and how a holistic approach is a better avenue for the study of neuroscience.

Chapter 5 delves into the murky waters of free will and what Cosgrove calls "free won't" (p. 75ff). Here his background in psychology is critical, for he notes the importance of habits in a discussion of free will. Because human nature is linked to the physical world, it is not enough to look to one side (i.e., do we have free will), but how does the inseparable relationship between body and spirit flesh out amongst impulse and choice (p. 84ff). For tracking habitual movements via brain waves does not, as Libert's experiments claimed, to prove determinism. Chapter 6–7 delves deeper into the relations of religion and spirituality upon the brain. Here Cosgrove proffers the complexity of proper research on neuroscience, theology, and the recreation of the mind with ample evidence to support his claim. Chapter 8–10 provide somewhat of an ethical treatise (p. 14ff), positing the churches necessity of engaging with the tools of technology by holding a high view of personhood. Meaning humans are no mere machine; they desire meaning, purpose, relationships, and creativity; therefore, discussion of neuroscience and future brain technology must understand the human mind cannot be replaced or likely replicated (cf. pp. 153–54).

Cosgrove's work in the Brain, the Mind, and the Person within is laudable for attempting an intersection of the Christian faith with current research in the field of neuroscience. More to this, the writing seeks clarity over complexity without sacrificing valuable content. For example, the discussion in chapter 5 broadens the readers thinking of free will and determinism. Cosgrove explains that this dichotomized way of viewing this issue does not consider "the whole of behavior," what Cosgrove calls "Top-down" thinking (p. 80). Cosgrove further shows that in the realm of sexuality and criminal behavior that outside influences (media, abuse, pressure, drug abuse), environment, genetics, and temptations all work into this issue that modern culture has deemed the result "deterministic and materialistic preferences" (p. 81).

Perhaps the most significant chapters for recent discussion are chapters 6 and 8. In chapter 6 Cosgrove dispels the claim that religious thought and experience is a mere result of electric stimulation of the parietal lobes or temporal lobe alone (cf. epileptic's seizure experience) (p. 96–97). He writes, "our brains seem built to easily have religious experiences and pursue questions of meaning and existence, which often ends up looking for spiritual truth" (p.100). Indeed, but how does all of this research bring to bear on the life of faith for the local church? In chapter 8, Cosgrove proffers it is in the realm of ethics; he writes, "Christians cannot abandon the field simply because suddenly it sounds like a frightening immoral failure" (p.142), but engage in these fields with moral and ethical fidelity. The truth of personhood, a holistic approach to the mind, is the key to understanding the issues of neuroscience and the dilemmas that await technological advancement (p.165). Both those in

the fields neuroscience and theology must realize that assumptions and subjective experience matters.

This work serves as a fantastic primer to the issues surrounding current discussions of neuroscience and how theology should intersect this field.

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Ministry/Pastoral Theology

Anderson, Kenton C. *Integrative Preaching: A Comprehensive Model for Transformational Proclamation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017, pp. 208 pages, $22.99, paperback.

Kent Anderson's contribution to the field of homiletics is multifaceted. In addition to authoring several books in the field, he has provided an online preaching resource, www.preaching.org, for more than two decades. Anderson describes his recent contribution to homiletics, *Integrative Preaching*, as his "most comprehensive [book]" and "the best that [he has] to offer" (p. vii).

In the final chapter of his previous work, *Choosing to Preach* (Zondervan, 2006), Anderson introduced his idea of the integrated sermon. Thus, *Integrative Preaching* is the full expression of this homiletical model, and it is presented in the following four parts.

In Part One, Anderson suggests that the imagery of a cross as the best way to understand his integrative model. Among various points, the cross shows the intersection of vertical and horizontal axes, and it pictures the addition of diverse elements without compromising the nature of each element. In this way, integrative preaching is "not a choice between options but the addition of one to the other – head plus heart and heaven added to the human" (p. 9). In Anderson's view, "The cross aspires to a new and heightened form of unity, expecting something greater, beyond the possibility offered by less holistic [homiletical] options" (p. 6).

In Part Two, the author describes four functional elements of his preaching model. Anderson writes that "the first move of a sermon is to *engage* the audience" (p. 45), and he contends, "The best was to engage listeners is to tell a *story*" (p. 46). Next, "the second move is to *instruct*" (p. 57). At this juncture, biblical teaching intersects contemporary life. For its third move, Anderson asserts that "the sermon must also convict" (p. 67). The declaration of the gospel takes center stage here along with an anticipation of God's transforming work in the lives of people. Lastly, inspiration comes into view for the fourth move. Anderson writes, "A great sermon will result in something…until the sermon inspires its listeners, it will be incomplete" (p. 77).

In Part Three, the author discusses the homiletical materials and various postures preachers assume in communicating an integrated sermon. First, preachers present a problem with a pastoral tone. Thus, integrative preaching begins inductively. Second, the points of the sermon help listeners see how the biblical text addresses this problem. Here the preacher assumes the posture of a theologian. Anderson urges, "[Preachers] are not offering opinions…Our challenge is to read the text and discern its meaning by careful exegesis" (p. 99). Third, prayers are the main thrust at this stage of the integrative sermon. In this movement, the preacher functions "in the mode of the worshiper or worship leader" (p. 105). Anderson writes, "Preachers need to hear from God themselves" (p. 107), and with humility, "the preacher speaks in the voice of the fellow traveler, though as one a little further on the journey" (p. 108). For the final move, the preacher paints a picture in the mode of a prophet. A vision of the future is cast for listeners to see what God can accomplish for all who embrace His truth.

In Part Four, Anderson presents practical points for integrative preaching. He begins with guidance on identifying the biblical text and topic as well as pulling together ideas for the movements of the sermon. The preacher also distills the major theme for the sermon. All of this is developed with an eye towards the audience, since Anderson urges preachers "to read the text and to read the people" (p. 127). The author then addresses the assembly of the sermon which needs to be precise and intentional so that there is a strong unity and finish to the message. Anderson next challenges preachers to prepare for delivering the sermon in ways which move beyond mere rehearsal and memory techniques. Rather, preachers should strive for the message to become a part of them. The author explains, "If our sermons are not true to us in the deepest way, they will not be powerful for those who listen" (p. 148). Finally, preachers need to deliver the sermon. Practical matters here relate to the tone of verbal delivery, the physical posture of delivery, and the use of a pulpit and notes in delivery. In all these facets of delivery, preachers should seek to maximize the opportunities of specific preaching events.

Anderson's effort to present a holistic homiletical model in a single volume of less than 200 pages is an ambitious one. A strength of his model is the mixture of diverse elements. He constantly challenges readers to resist the urge to retreat to false dichotomies such as heaven or earth, head or heart, objective or subjective, etc. Yet, it is precisely at this point where a weakness in the book emerges. Its contents may overwhelm preachers with a deluge of details. For instance, when Anderson populates a pictorial representation of his integrative model at the end of Part One, twenty ideas flood the image. Yet, readers are only a quarter of a way through his book at this stage.

At this juncture, Paul Scott Wilson's counsel in *Preaching and Homiletical Theory* (Chalice, 2004) comes to mind. Near the beginning of Wilson's survey of homiletical theories, he poses an important question about their utility: "Can a typical preacher readily understand a proposed method and implement it effectively?" (p. 21). Doubtlessly, Anderson has given thorough reflection in his book-length version of his initial thoughts concerning the integrative sermon. However, perhaps a more streamlined dispensing of its main thrusts might help preachers to implement it. Currently, readers will have to wade through the significant number of the moving parts in the integrative model as they cull from it some key ideas to use in their preaching.

Consequently, *Integrative Preaching* will probably be most useful to seasoned preachers, since they will likely discern where their preaching is less than holistic in nature. They will also be aware of some of the basic homiletical building blocks for sermon development. For novice preachers, they would be better served by learning to first develop messages from the instruction offered in Bryan Chapell's *Christ-Centered Preaching* (third edition, Zondervan, 2018). Towards the end of his work, Chapell offers the following wise homiletical counsel in relation to sermonic structures: "Just as a musician practices scales to develop the skills for more nuanced compositions, preachers who have knowledge and mastery of these basic components of sermon structure are best prepared to alter, adapt, mix, or reject them in order to take the approach most appropriate for their particular text, congregation, and circumstance" (p. 389). Interestingly, Anderson first illustrated the idea of the integrative sermon with musical compositions in *Choosing to Preach*. So, it would be helpful for beginning preachers to learn the homiletical scales of biblical exposition before trying to compose a complex sermonic score like the model presented in *Integrative Preaching*.

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Academia

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing.* Fourth ed. New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2018. 328pp., $29.98 paperback

Two highly qualified academic practitioners produced this work. First, Gerald Graff (Ph.D., English and American Literature, Stanford University, 1963), is Emeritus Professor of English and Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago and former president of the Modern Language Association of America. Graff's co-author, Cathy Birkenstein (Ph.D., American Literature, Loyola University Chicago, 2003), is lecturer at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and teaches freshman-level writing and English courses using the book as her central recourse. Both Graff and Birkenstein, who are husband and wife, have lectured at numerous institutions over

the years promoting the concepts and templates which make up their best-seller, *They Say / I Say*, now in its fourth edition and sixth printing.

The book's overarching theme is simple, yet vital: *all academic writing occurs within a larger conversation.* It is to this idea the book expands and offers templates for students to employ, helping remind them that they are entering paths traversed by others. Because of the ongoing dialogue in which the academic writer participates, the book provides a memorable paradigm throughout its pages which also serves as its title, "they say / I say." That is, the authors exert their energy by drilling into their target audience (the academic student) not to write papers with the assumption that their ideas are isolated from others on a topic. Rather, an academic writer is almost exclusively writing in *response* to others' ideas that have been proffered before them; hence the paradigm: "they say this, but I say that."

The book aims to assist the budding writer in developing a critical mind that truly listens to the various sides of an argument before putting pen to paper in order to crystallize their own position on the matter. Indeed, the art of active listening before arguing has an ethical dimension, something the authors point out in their preface. As such the "they say / I say" approach to writing offered by the authors, "Asks writers not simply to keep proving and reasserting what they already believe, but to stretch what they believe by putting it up against beliefs that differ, sometimes radically, from their own" (p. xxiii). The entire book aims to help in achieving this goal and "To demystify academic writing by returning it to its social and conversational roots" (Ibid.).

 A unique contribution the book makes, that others devoted to academic writing do not, are the offering of actual templates for the student to use covering just about any writing project they may encounter. These templates, spread out over the book's four parts, are intended to assist the writer in various situations germane to academics such as how to summarize (pp. 30–42), how to quote others (pp. 43–52), how to respond to objections and naysayers (pp. 77–90), and how to provide one's added commentary—something the author's call, 'metacommentary' (pp. 131–140). Moreover, the authors do not offer templates solely dealing with how to *disagree* with others properly. Because there is certainly an ongoing conversation in which the writer engages, he or she will find opinions that do at times concur with their own. As such, the book also provides templates on how to *agree* with others while still maintaining their own voice (pp. 59–65). The final part of the book (pp. 162–242) zeros in on specific academic contexts such as in-class discussions, online dialogue, as well academic writing in specific genres such as literature and the sciences—with brief templates provided for all of them. Finally, sample readings are given at the end of the book that exemplify the principles suggested throughout the work, followed by an index of all the templates suggested (pp. 243–294; 309–327).

There is no mistaking exactly *what* the thesis of the book is, since the authors are relentless in presenting it. That the academic writer is to write their arguments

cognizant of entering an ongoing discussion is scattered throughout just about every chapter, along with how to do it critically, fairly, and respectfully. This latter aspect is especially important as the authors themselves maintain, "The central piece of advice in this book—that we listen carefully to others, including those who disagree with us, and then engage with them thoughtfully and respectfully—can help us see beyond out pet beliefs, which may not be shared by everyone" (p. 16). Each template and surrounding narrative in *They Say / I Say* helpfully assists in fleshing out this central thesis, and because of that, it can be safely concluded that the authors undoubtedly achieved their own purpose—and do so in an engaging style.

What one is left wondering, however, is just how useful their templates are for the busy academician actively engaged in critical scholarship. In other words, while the book certainly achieves *its own end*, does that equate with the professional academic writer achieving *their end* by using the book's advice? To this potential critique, it can be answered that the primary target of the book's audience is the student-writer, not the professional scholar or critic. Throughout the book's preface, for example, the authors use various terms that are germane only to high school, college, and graduate learners—for example, "student," "class discussion boards," and "course packs"—making clear for whom the book was written. Further, Graff and Birkenstein, who are both college professors, repeatedly point out that it was their classroom experiences with *students* that helped inspire most of the content. Thus, while the active, professional scholarly-writer can certainly pick up some new gems from the book's templates, the book is still, nevertheless, targeted at those writing at the non-professional, student-academic level.

Another possible critique may center on the seemingly repetitive, mechanical templates that some might view as not actually inspiring critical thinking or originality, but rather providing a mere formality for the student to incorporate without serious reflection. The templates' "repetitiveness" notwithstanding, the authors do hit this potential objection head-on in both the book's preface and introduction. Rather than the templates taking away from a writer's own voice or critical thinking, the authors present these them as tools for budding student-writers to be aware of the key rhetorical moves that seasoned writers pick up on subconsciously. Further, the authors do encourage students to "modify and adapt" the book's templates into their own particular contexts thereby guarding the writer's individuality. "Ultimately," contend the authors, "creativity and originality lie not in the avoidance of established forms but in the imaginative use of them" (p. 14).

If anything, these potential critiques underscore the book's overwhelmingly positive aspects. Perhaps the biggest take-away of the book is the need to represent an opposing view fairly, while being sure to imbed the writer's own position into the ongoing conversation. Chapter two's "The Art of Summarizing" is particularly helpful here as the authors caution newer academic writers to put themselves in their detractors' shoes as objectively as possibly for the sake of entering the

conversation (or as they borrow the term, "the believing game"). Yet, they are to do so while simultaneously "knowing where [they] are going" (pp. 31–38), thus always maintaining their own end and contribution to the matter in sight. Indeed, keeping both goals in view is vital in presenting a robust, well-balanced critique, making *They Say / I Say* a valuable recourse for students and academic writers at all levels.

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