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PART I: The 'Christus Odium' Variety of Penal Substitution in Contemporary Perspective

PART II: Open Articles

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PART I

THE ‘CHRISTUS ODIUM’’ VARIETY OF PENAL SUBSTITUTION IN CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

JBTS 6.1 (2021): 1–4

The 'Christus Odium' Variety of Penal Substitution in Contemporary Perspective: A Brief Editorial Introduction

Ryan A. Brandt

Managing Editor; Associate Professor of Christian History and Theology at Grand Canyon University

Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton have recently argued that the "Christus Odium" variety of penal substitution is an inappropriate model of the atonement both according to Scripture and theological reasoning.[1] They define their specific objection: "in some evangelical quarters, it is no longer enough to simply believe that Christ absorbed the wrath of God as a penal substitute. Some have recently gone so far as to claim that, as a penal substitute, Christ became the object of the Father's perfect hatred."[2] Farris and Hamilton, among other things, object to the notion that Jesus, the Son of God, was or ever could be hated by the Father. They term this view the "Christus Odium" view, which is a stronger variation of penal substitution view. As the editor of the journal that published Farris's and Hamilton's original article, I asked Owen Strachan (a member of our editorial board) if he would be interested in responding to their article, believing that this interaction would stir an interesting and productive conversation. Sometime thereafter we decided that this theological issue would make an excellent conversation at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society. The session included papers from Farris/Hamilton and Strachan, along with Thomas McCall, Derek Rishmawy, and Ryan L. Rippee.

As a result of this dialogue and exchange, *JBTS* is now publishing this symposium of papers, with added contributions from Ty Kieser. This symposium includes papers that cautiously push back against some aspects of Farris and Hamilton's argument (Rishmawy and Kieser); others that explore the nature of the Father-Son relationship in the penal substitutionary atonement, both denying that the Father hated the Son at any point (Strachan and Rippee); Farris and Hamilton also provide a follow-up paper articulating more problems with the "Christus Odium" view. These papers and the larger conversation that this session provided make a significant contribution to the recent discussions about the validity of the penal substitution view of the atonement more broadly and the Christus Odium variety of penal substitution more narrowly.

1. Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton, "This is My Beloved Son, Whom I Hate? A Critique of the Christus Odium Variant of Penal Substitution," *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies* 3, no. 2 (2018): 271–86.

2. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 271.

The topic also closely intersects with a myriad of issues related to fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, most prominently the Trinity, Christology, sin, humanity, and (of course) the atonement. The extensive and complex nature of this discussion is one of the reasons that theological reasoning in this area is so tricky.

The specific questions raised in this symposium are ones that need to be addressed for the sake of clarity and—we hope—sufficient unity in Christian doctrine by both students and scholars. Some of the most pressing and controversial questions include the following: What exactly did the Son of God, Jesus Christ, bear on the cross? Was it God's wrath? Was it specifically the Father's wrath? If it was God's wrath, then how can we express this notion without compromising the ecumenical and orthodox understanding of the Trinity and Chalcedonian theology? If it was the Father's wrath, then what becomes of the classical conception of the Trinity and various analogues of the doctrine, such as the inseparable operations of the Triune persons? Was there a "break" or "disruption" at that moment in time between the Father and the Son? If so, how do we express this "break" or "disruption" precisely? If the Son of God did not experience God's wrath on the cross, then how should we understand Jesus's cry of dereliction? And more broadly, how exactly does Jesus atone for our sins?

There are several possible answers and constructive solutions that might be made to the above questions. As a brief introduction, just a few possibilities to two of these questions will be addressed here. Regarding the question of whether or not the Son was the object of the Father's wrath, one might offer three possible answers: perhaps the Son was indeed the object of the Father's wrath; or perhaps instead he was the object of *God's* wrath, which includes his own wrath as the Son. Or alternatively, Jesus, in virtue of being the true and righteous human, having fulfilled the law, satisfied God and so the wrath of God upon him is no longer necessary. Jesus in each of these cases could be said to "satisfy" or "appease" the wrath of God: in the first two options, he satisfies or appeases the wrath of God by experiencing it and absorbing it; in the third option, one could say he satisfies or appeases the wrath of God in the sense that wrath no longer needs to be expressed to Jesus, since he is the true, righteous human. In this third option, this appeasement does not mean the Son actually experiences the wrath of God; rather, it means he satisfied it so it is no longer needed to be expressed towards him (and towards all those in him) as the righteous one.

Moving onto a related second question, if Jesus did indeed experience the wrath of the Father on the cross, did he also experience the Father's hatred or derision? One could respond affirmably or not. In the former case, the Father's wrath and hatred are seen as going hand-in-hand; in other words, because he experienced the wrath of the Father on this account, he also experienced his hatred. A proponent of this view might use Jesus's cry of dereliction as evidence ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Ps 22:1), taking God here to refer specifically to the Father. In the latter case, one could argue that while Jesus was the object of the Father's wrath, he was not the

object of the Father's hatred. Depending upon one's definitions, a distinction could be made. A proponent of this view might use Jesus' affirmation that the Father loves of him in his death ("For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again," John 10:17), also pointing out that his cry of dereliction is not directed at the Father but the Godhead more broadly ("My God, my God"), of which he is the second person. So, again, one could say that Jesus experienced the wrath of the Father (i.e., the punishment; bodily death), but not the Father's hatred. These possible answers are merely a beginning to this conversation, of course. There are other ways to address these questions and construct particular answers.

From this brief introduction, it is clear that these theological questions and potential solutions—like any theological doctrine—require careful definitions of terms (such as "forsakenness," "hatred," and "wrath"), precise attention to what the Bible means, and systematic, consistent thinking across adjacent doctrinal formulations (especially, the Trinity). As such, each article in this symposium approaches the topic in a unique way. There was no required methodology for papers nor a required list of issues to which to respond, since there are countless ways to do so. Each of the following papers, therefore, stands alone as a unique contribution. As far as the ordering of papers, as the moderator of the session, I decided to order this symposium in a similar way that the ETS session was ordered:

1. Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton, "Which Penalty? Whose Atonement? Revisiting Christus Odium"

2. Derek Rishmawy, "A Less Odious Atonement Requires a More Classical God: Engaging Farris and Hamilton on Christus Odium"

3. Owen Strachan, "It Was the Will of the Father to Crush Him: The Day of Atonement and the Cross of Christ"

4. Ryan L. Rippee, "The Father's Love for the Son in Penal Substitutionary Atonement"

5. Ty Kieser, "Performing the Surgery, Saving the Patient: Reduplication, Proper Christological Predication, and Critiques of Christus Odium"

I would like to thank all the contributors for an engaging and thoughtful dialogue on this subject. It was a pleasure to organize and moderate this event and symposium. I hope that our readers find it helpful as they reflect on the meaning of the atonement and its interaction within other theological loci.

JBTS 6.1 (2021): 5–20

Which Penalty? Whose Atonement? Revisiting Christus Odium

Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton

Farris is Professor of Theology of Science at Missional University and Hamilton is Research Associate at JESociety.org

Abstract: So unreasonable is the idea that God the Father hated his Son in order to make atonement for the sin of humanity, it bedevils the mind to imagine anyone attempting reasoning out a theological defense for it. Nevertheless, the so-called Christus Odium variant of Penal Substitution has continued to garner support from when we first discerned its contemporary reappearance and waved the warning flag—initially in the form of a conference paper at ETS (2017) and eventually as an article in *JBTS* (2018) entitled, 'This is My Beloved Son Whom I Hate?' In *this* paper, we offer up a brief survey of some of the problems that Christus Odium presents, buffeting these problems with two historical accounts of Penal Substitution from John Calvin and Herman Witsius that directly warn against the Christus Odium variant. And then taking a cue from these historical sources, we break down the doctrine of Penal Substitution into some more manageable parts, in order to show that on a logically consistent understanding of this atonement theory, humanity is actually ultimately answerable to the moral law, and not God. The problem that this highlights for defenses made for standard accounts of Penal Substitution notwithstanding, we show that God can in nowise hate his Son as a substitute for offenses that are not answerable to himself. The moral law is as inflexible as it is dispassionate in its demands and it is the moral law to which the Penal Substitution theory is accountable. Thus, if it is the moral law that humanity's sin has offended, and if the Christus Odium variant is built upon the infrastructure of a Penal Substitution theory, then it looks like Christus Odium falls short of any coherent attempt to privatize a judicial matter that is clearly a public one.

Key Words: Calvin, Witsius, Penal Substitution, Christus Odium, private justice, broken trinity

Introduction: Whence Christus Odium?

The standard Penal Substitution theory of atonement is like a theological oasis for a majority of contemporary evangelicals. And yet, there are some among this group for whom this oasis is apparently not enough, having opted instead for the doctrinal mirage that we call the *Christus Odium* variant of Penal Substitution.

The Penal substitution theory says, roughly, that Christ dies in order to absorb the penal consequences of God's retributive justice precipitated by human sin, by his being treated by God as if he were those individuals to whom the debt of punishment were due. Historically speaking, this is the predominate, though not the only theory of atonement espoused by those of the Reformed tradition. The *Christus Odium* variant—a development that continues to gain ground among evangelicals—assumes the doctrinal infrastructure of Penal Substitution, but over-burdens explanations of several aspects of both the work Christ accomplishes and the manner in which he accomplishes it. This may explain, at least in part, why *Christus Odium* has hitherto remained largely undetected.[1]

In our previous work, we identified three specific points of departure that the Christus Odium variant makes from the standard Penal Substitution theory. These include:

1. Exercises of divine retribution are equivalent the exercises of divine hatred.
2. Paying a debt of punishment, the Son becomes the object of the Father's hatred.
3. When Christ dies on the cross, the Son of God himself dies.

We first detected and later distilled these three propositions from reading a number of authors who—whether consciously or unconsciously, we do not know—appear to be committed to such a view. Abner Chou, for instance, boldly asserts that "The culmination to Jesus's time on earth was His death on the cross. . . . In that death the wrath of God was poured out on Christ, and the darkness exploded. In that instant God cursed Jesus, *putting Him in a position of absolute, perfect hatred. God hated Him and desired to make Him nothing*."[2] David Allender and Tremper Longman argue similarly that "God chose to *violate* His Son in our place. The Son stared into the mocking eyes of God; He heard the laughter of the Father's derision and felt Him depart in disgust. . . . In a *mysterious instant*, the Father who loved the Son from

1. Christus Odium having gone largely undetected might also be explained by the evangelical (over) emphasis on Penal Substitution as equivalent to the gospel. So common has Penal Substitution language become among evangelicals, it seems probable that the uncommon language of Christus Odium would be introduced without detection.

2. Adam Setser, "Big Picture of God's Mission"(blog), July 25, 2015, https://www.adamsetser.com/blog/2015/7/25/the-big-picture-of-gods-mission-a-concise-overview-of-the-entire-bible-by-dr-abner-chou. See also Chou, "The King, the Curse, and the Cross: OT Intertextuality, Paul's Logic, and Justification," unpublished paper, *Evangelical Theological Society*, 2010.

all eternity turned from Him *in hatred*. The Son became *odious* to the Father."[3] It is from passages such as these that we went on to argue that in some quarters of evangelicalism, Christianity appears to have something of a new message, the simple logic of which goes like this—quoting Allender and Longman—"The Son became sin; the Father cannot look upon sin without hatred; The Son willingly took our place of condemnation—and for an instant the Son bore the *fury* of God."[4] This logic sounds oddly similar to the recent words of David Platt, who appears to be the most recent prominent evangelical to fall into this doctrinal pit. According to Platt,

> The beauty of the cross is that when Jesus went to Calvary, He did not just pay the price for our lusting, our lying, our cheating, or whatever sin that we do—He stood in our place. *He took the holy hatred, holy judgment, and holy wrath of God that was not just due our sin but due us*. Jesus stood in our place and He took it upon Himself. So let us be very careful not to lean on comfortable clichés that sound good to us and rob the cross of its power.[5]

Notice that Platt is arguing that God hates sinners (not just their sin) and that in substituting himself for sinners (and not just their sin), Christ himself is hated by God's "holy hatred." This is apparently what he means when he says that "holy hatred . . . was not just due to our sin *but due to us*." So, when Christ "stood in our place" he experienced God's "holy hatred," which, according to Platt's logic, was a hatred for himself, that is, for his person (or at least his humanity) and not just for sins committed by humanity for which he was the representative. In other words, because Christ died for us (and not just for sin), and substituted himself for us (and not just our sin), according to Platt, he therefore suffers the hatred that God reserved for us.

When we first stumbled onto the *Christus Odium* variant, we thought it was isolated to a few disparate and relatively outlying evangelical voices. Learning that David Platt—again, someone who has a significant public evangelical platform (among Baptists anyway)—has recently joined the chorus of these voices, it may be that contemporary evangelicals have a much bigger problem on their hands than might have been at first thought.

Naturally, the next, most obvious question is to ask whether there is precedence in the tradition—the Reformed tradition, that is—for defending this doctrinal aberration. Was this what our theological forebears believed? For the sake of brevity, let us consider two straightforward examples of theologians who took pains to

3. Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman, *In the Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2015), 184–85 (emphasis added).

4. Allender and Longman, *In the Cry of the Soul*, 185 (emphasis added).

5. David Platt, "Does God Hate Sin but Love the Sinner," Radical, April 8, 2019, https://radical.net/does-god-hate-sin-but-love-the-sinner/ (emphasis added). Southern Baptist theologian Gregg Allison comes very close to affirming something similar concerning the Father pouring his wrath and derision on the Son in, "No Holy Spirit, No Penal Substitutionary Atonement," The Gospel Coalition, June 25, 2019, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/role-holy-spirit-penal-substitutionary-atonement/.

argue against the proposal that atonement was made in any way by God the Father *hating* his Son.

I. Who needs Tradition Anyway?

The Scriptures record unspeakably terrible things about what God has promised to those who at the consummation of all things will have ultimately rejected him. The language that the Scriptural authors use to describe these divine judgements varies in their dreadfulness from the awful thought of God's trodding them in his anger (Isa 63:3, ESV) to the even more frightening thought of Christ's "treading the winepress of the fury and wrath of almighty God" (Rev 19:15).

The illumination of these scriptural horrors appears perhaps in no greater detail and terror than in Jonathan Edwards's infamous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (1742). So abysmal was the scene at Enfield, Connecticut that Edwards was quite literally forced to stop preaching, what with the tears, moans, and apparently outright shrieks of the people—some actually pulling at his clerical robe, begging him to stop—for fear of their eternal condemnation.[6] Here is a sermon that showcases

6. At one point in the sermon Edwards issues the following thought-provoking description of the wrath of God, and here we quote him at length: "Consider here more particularly several things concerning that wrath that you are in such danger of: *First*. [Consider] *Whose* wrath it is: it is the wrath of the infinite God. If it were only the wrath of man, though it were of the most potent prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The wrath of kings is very much dreaded, especially of absolute monarchs, that have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their power, to be disposed of at their mere will. *Proverbs 20:2*, 'The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: whoso provoketh him to anger, sinneth against his own soul.' The subject that very much enrages an arbitrary prince, is liable to suffer the most extreme torments that human art can invent or human power can inflict. But the greatest earthly potentates, in their greatest majesty and strength, and when clothed in their greatest terrors, are but feeble despicable worms of the dust, in comparison of the great and almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth: it is but little that they can do, when most enraged, and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury. All the kings of the earth before God are as grasshoppers, they are nothing and less than nothing: both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the great King of kings is as much more terrible than theirs, as his majesty is greater. *Second*. [Consider that it is] the *fierceness* of his wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of the *fury* of God; as in *Isaiah 59:18*, 'According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries.' So *Isaiah 66:15*, 'For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger *with fury*, and his rebukes with flames of fire.' And so in many other places. So we read of God's *fierceness*. *Revelation 19:15*, there we read of 'the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God.' [These] words are exceeding terrible: if it had only been said, 'the wrath of God,' the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful; but 'tis not only said so, but 'the fierceness and wrath of God': [it is] the fury of God! the fierceness of Jehovah! Oh how dreadful must that be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is not only said so, but 'the fierceness and wrath of *almighty God*.' As though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power, in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted, as men are wont to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath. Oh! then what will be consequence! What will become of the poor worm that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong and whose heart [can] endure? To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk, who shall be the subject of this!" Jonathan Edwards, sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," July 8, 1741, Works of Jonathan Edwards collection 22:404–18.

the anger of God toward humanity. Upon reading it again, and thinking we might find Christus Odium-specific language, we found that those places where Edwards mentions the work of Christ in the sermon (or anywhere elsewhere for that matter, at least that we have found) say nothing about Christ's being *hated* by God with the contempt and derision in which he will send sinners who have rejected him to hell.

Why draw attention to this? Well, we draw attention to it because Edwards serves as an example of one who supposedly subscribes to the Penal Substitution theory, who edges more dangerously close to the possibility of saying something like Christus Odium—in a sermon entitled, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God", mind you—but does not. In other words, not even the fieriest of Puritans would be so bold as to suggest that God hated his Son and that this was a necessary constituent to his making atonement! Perhaps we have not gone to the source of this theory. Maybe we will find something different.

If the doctrine of Penal Substitution had its origin in Calvin, and it is a pretty good bet that it did, the fact that Calvin was already defending against this idea during his own lifetime says something about when a *Christus Odium*-like set of ideas might have first been proposed.[7] The Son, according to Calvin, "always [does] those things that please Him," and "[Christ] could not cease to be the object of the Father's love, and yet he endured his wrath. For how could [Christ] reconcile the Father to us, if he had incurred his hatred and displeasure?"[8] Notice a subtle difference in what

7. Despite several recent and rather awkward attempts to forge a genetic link between contemporary evangelical articulations of this doctrine and the Fathers and Medieval Schoolmen, proponents of the Penal Substitution theory ought to be cautious when looking for the origin of this *theory* not to look much beyond the Reformation, particularly John Calvin. See for example, S. Jeffery, M. Ovey, and A. Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007). Of course, this has been recently and convincingly challenged in Adonis Vidu, *Atonement, Law, and Justice: The Cross in Historical and Cultural Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 1ff. For an excellent treatment of the atonement in the patristic era, see, Ben Myers, "The Patristic Atonement Model," in *Locating Atonement: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 71–88. For more discussion on the history of the development of the penal substitution model of atonement in the Reformed tradition, see William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, ed. Alan W. Gomes, 3rd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed), 451–55; Henrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, trans. G. T. Thomson (London: Collins, 1950), 475–79ff; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006), 455ff.

8. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. by William Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 91–92. Two things are worth some additional note here. First, Calvin's proposal that "he endured his wrath" should not be misunderstood as that he endured divine hatred. Wrath is not equivalent to hatred so much as it is equivalent to the act of retribution. And the moral law merely requires transgressors to be punished, not hated. There is a marked difference between offending a piece of legislation that says transgressors will be punished for this or that and offending the legislator himself. The legislation (i.e. the moral law) is that to which humanity is accountable. Second, later in John 10.15 and 17, John records Jesus as saying, "I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . *For this reason the Father loves me,* because I lay down my life, that I may take it again," and in John 17.4, John records Jesus saying, "Father, I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which you gave me to do."

Calvin says and what the defender of Christus Odium affirms. Calvin does say that Christ endures the Father's wrath, but he distinguishes this from Christ taking on the displeasure and hatred of the Father (subtle though this may be in this one quote the difference, if it can be maintained, is an important one). While Calvin might have been the first to defend against something like what we are calling *Christus Odium*, he was not the last.

Dutch theologian Herman Witsius (1636-1708), for example, also considered "whether Christ was abominable to God on account of the sins which he had taken upon himself."[9] His answer is quite revealing and worth rehearsing. He says,

> [I]t is so far from being true that by the voluntary susception of our sins the love of God to him was any how diminished that on the contrary he never pleased the Father more than when he showed himself obedient unto death even the death of the cross. For this is that excellent, that incomparable and almost incredible obedience which the Father recompensed with a suitable reward of ineffable glory.[10]

Taking our cues from voices in the tradition like Calvin and Witsius,[11] in our previous work we warned that unchecked doctrinal development—better still, doctrinal *devolvement*—can be like a government program; once the people have it—and be assured, some already do—it is hard for them to imagine life without it. Taking another cue from what Tom McCall refers to as "broken trinity theology," we then went on to inventory and exposit a series of Christologically specific problems that advocates of *Christus Odium* ought to seriously consider as they think through just what Christ's work on the cross accomplishes.[12] Here we rehearse six such questions for you to consider which direction your atonement theory is going:

9. Herman Witsius, *Conciliatory or Irenical Animadversions on the Controversies Agitated in Britain Under the Unhappy Names of Antinomians and Neonomians* (Glasgow: W. Lang, 1807), 39.

10. Witsius, *Conciliatory or Irenical Animadversions*, 44.

11. Consider also the Swiss–Italian theologian Francis Turretin (1623–87), for instance, who when he speaks of Christ's endurance of what he calls the "punishment of desertion," says, "But as to a participation of joy and felicity, God suspending for a little while the favorable presence of grace and the influx of consolation and happiness that he might be able to suffer all the punishment due to us (as to the *withdrawal of vision*, *not as a dissolution of union*; as to the want of the sense of *divine love*, intercepted by the sense of the divine wrath and vengeance resting upon him, not as to a real privation or extinction of it.) And, as the Scholastics say, as to the 'affection of advantage' that he might be destitute of the ineffable consolation and joy which arises from a sense of God's paternal love and the beatific vision of his countenance (Ps 16); but not as to the 'affection of righteousness' because he felt nothing inordinate in himself which would tend to desperation, impatience or blasphemy against God." Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology,* ed. James Dennison Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992–1997), 14, Q. II, VI.

12. For more on "broken trinity theology," see: Thomas H. McCall, *Forsaken: The Trinity and the Cross, and Why it Matters* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012).

1. We all believe the Apostle Paul's assertions that "Christ became a curse for us" (Gal 3:13). *But*, do you believe that Christ was himself cursed or do you believe that humanity's curse terminated on Christ?[13] There's a difference.

2. We all believe that "The Word was God" and that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14). *But*, do we believe that God hated the *Word* enfleshed?

3. We all (hopefully) believe with the Chalcedonian tradition that the Son was "truly God and truly man." *But* do we believe that in making atonement, God somehow despised the divine nature of his beloved Son?

4. We all likely conceive of Christ's work in terms of his passive and active obedience, that is, his doing what the law required and his suffering on the cross. *But*, do we believe that there was a point in Christ's life when God went from loving him to hating him? What is more, does the Scripture testify to this change in God? If it does—we would be hard-pressed to identify where—when would that have been, precisely?[14]

5. We all believe that "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom 5:6). *But*, do we believe that it is metaphysically possible for one of the persons of the Godhead to somehow fall into non-being? Did Jesus's divine nature cease to be or change in some way?

6. We all believe "The Lord was pleased to bruise him" (Isa 53:10). *But*, do we believe that God was delighted/pleased to hate his one and only Son?

As *Christus Odium* continues to gain ground, there is one question that we keep coming back to that far out-weights the others, namely, *will anyone notice*?

13. It is not the case, recalling one of the statements at the beginning of this paper, that "God cursed Jesus, *putting Him in a position of absolute, perfect hatred. God hated Him and desired to make Him nothing*," Chou, *Big Picture of God's Mission*. Instead, see John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 91–2. Interestingly, Calvin himself goes on to point to John 8:29, which says that the Son, "always [does] those things that please Him," and argues that, "[Christ] could not cease to be the object of the Father's love, and yet he endured his wrath. For how could [Christ] reconcile the Father to us, if he had incurred his hatred and displeasure." While a subtle difference as we noted earlier, if this distinction can be consistently maintained between God's wrath toward Christ as distinct from the Father's hatred and derision, then that is an important distinction indeed.

14. How far have we come from understanding, like Machen, that "every event of his life was a part of his payment of the penalty of sin, and every event of his life was a part of that glorious keeping of the law of God by which he earned for his people the reward of eternal life," J. Gresham Machen, "The Active Obedience of Christ," *God Transcendent* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1982), 191.

II. Which Penalty, Whose Atonement?

In our previous work we argued that even if the latter is the sub-structure for the former, the *Christus Odium* variant is not synonymous with the Penal Substitution theory. But because the lines between the variant and standard view are being increasingly blurred, there are some distinctions between the two that require some disentanglement. Specifically, we have to answer two questions. First, "which penalty are we talking about?" And second, "who is atonement being made for?" By answering these two questions we will see yet another set of reasons that the *Christus Odium* variant is fatally flawed.

Now, before we get to these questions, we first ought to level-set our discussion. So, if Penal Substitution is your preferred position, here is what you are buying into, minimally speaking:

A. Christ's atonement is necessary to his redemptive work.

B. Christ's death is sufficient to assuage divine retribution for all humanity.

C. Christ dies as a penal substitute for individual persons.

D. Christ dies in order to absorb the retributive (penal) consequences of divine justice precipitated by human sin, being treated by God as if he were those individuals to whom the punishment were due (i.e., the mechanism).

E. Christ's death pays a debt of punishment.

F. Christ's death is a vicarious sacrifice.

Now that we are all (hopefully) on the same page, let's tackle the first question. Which penalty are we talking about when Christ made atonement? First and foremost, it is a penalty that issues from the demands of retributive justice.[15] That is, it is a penalty for punishment's sake. This should be straightforward enough. But, it may come as a surprise to some here that, strictly speaking, this punitive demand has as its source the moral law. In other words, on a coherent picture of Penal Substitution, sin's offense is leveled against the moral law and not God himself.[16] And this is a

15. William Ames offers a helpful distinction when he talks about two issuances (that is, punishment and restitution) of "Corrective Justice" (correcting the injustice of persons). First, he says that "punishment is an act of corrective justice by which penalty is inflicted on a violator of justice. The end should be the amendment or restraint of the offender, peace and admonition to others and the preserving of justice and God's honor" (2.16.307). "Restitution," by contrast "is an accord of corrective justice in which a person is given possession of something of his own which was unjustly taken away. Hence an act which calls for restitution is against justice strictly so-called and not only against love" (2.16.307), Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, ed. John Dykstra Eusden (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1968).

16. It is a curious thing that supposed exponents of Penal Substitution, like Jonathan Edwards, for example, argue that "sin is of such a nature that it wishes ill, and aims at ill, to God and men, but to God especially. *It strikes at God*; it would, if it could, procure his misery and death. It is but

problem facing all persons collectively, not as individuals, as it is so often thought to be the case.

Ironically, exponents of Penal Substitution make much of the fact that divine retribution for offenses against God are *private* legal affairs—that is, they are offenses against God *himself* by individual, morally responsible creatures, in contrast to say, a *public* offense, which is an offense against a society. You might be saying to yourself: "Didn't King David say that it was against God and God alone that he had sinned (Ps 51.4)? Doesn't this therefore fly in the face of the assertion that debts of punishment are paid to the moral law?" It is true that David did indeed reckon his sin to be an offense against God. It is not true what that sin was. So, the question is not whether it transgresses the categories that we have laid out. The question is whether your theory is compatible with the testimony of Scripture. If God is just and the justifier and not the moral law, and if the Penal Substitution theory is answerable to the moral law and not to God, then it looks like we might need to re-think our theory. But, we have just now seen that this is a contradiction in terms. The offense of sin does not take anything intrinsic or essential to God away from God. He himself is not at a loss because of sin. If penal offenses are both criminal and punishable, they are not, strictly speaking, private or individual so much as public or societal affairs that are punishable by the authority of a law, not an individual lawmaker.

Think of the difference between district or civil court trial versus those tried in a criminal court. We've discussed this example before, but because this concept of public versus private offenses and their relation to the Penal Substitution theory continues to trip people up, it is worth rehearsing once again. In a district court, someone might be sued, for example, for a breach of contract. Strictly speaking, this is not a *criminal* offense. This is a personal (and therefore private) offense—one person versus another (even another individual group, as in a class action lawsuit)—that is resolved by the *offending* party restoring or making reparation for the *offended* party. Criminal courts, by contrast, try criminal offenders. If someone is on trial for first degree murder, say, that person's offense is, again, strictly speaking, not against the one they killed but against the laws of the society to which both parties have presumably assented and which demand that murderers pay a debt of punishment to *society* upon the commitment of such a crime; a debt of punishment that is paid

suitable that with what measure it meets, it should be measured to it again. 'Tis but suitable that men should reap what they sow, and that the reward of *every man's hands should be given him*" (Jonathan Edwards, "The Necessity of Satisfaction" 1731, Work of Jonathan Edwards collection, 18:436). We say this is curious because, Edwards also goes on to claim that, "'tis requisite that sin should be punished, as punishment is deserved and just, therefore the *justice of God obliges him to punish sin*: for it belongs to God as the supreme Rector of the universality of things, to maintain order and decorum in his kingdom, and to see to it that decency and right takes place at all times, and in all cases. *That perfection of his nature whereby he is disposed to this, is his justice; and therefore, his justice naturally disposes him to punish sin as it deserves.* The holiness of God, which is the infinite opposition of his nature to sin, naturally and necessarily disposes him to punish sin. Edwards, "Necessity of Satisfaction," 18:437 (emphasis added).

by incarceration or in some states, death. Notice that the intention of this debt of punishment that a murderer faces is not restorative. That is, nothing is truly restored to the family who loses a loved one. The criminal (rather than the civil) court, and the laws that it upholds, determine guilt and execute punishment. In this way, murder, or any such criminal offense, is a public matter between the murderer and the society (and the laws they agree to uphold) at large, not between the murderer and the one that was murdered. Criminal proceedings carry no legal freight in a civil courtroom. If someone is convicted of fraud, they pay damages to the one defrauded, but no one who is convicted of fraud is executed as a penal consequence of civil proceeding.

So, what does all this mean? Well, it means that if you are a Penal Substitution theorist, and you wish to make a coherent case for your theory, you ought to be making a case that people are accountable to the moral law.[17] By limiting the scope of what Christ's atoning work accomplishes to the payment of a debt of punishment, Penal Substitution theorists limit the scope of the demands of the larger economy of divine justice. This explains retributive justice is virtually the only category of justice about which they have anything to say. Accordingly, Christ suffers a penalty, which means there must be a law by which to measure offenses; Christ suffers a loss of some sort instead of humanity suffering a loss; sin's offense is a criminal offense and therefore Christ suffers because he is counted as a criminal; if he is counted as a criminal and suffers loss, and he pays a debt of punishment on behalf of others, then, the debt he is paying is actually not for a private offense against God, requiring that something be restored to God. *Nothing* is *restored* to God (as in the examples given above concerning public versus private debts), in fact, on the Penal Substitution theory.[18] Penal Substitution seems only to make provision for God to restore righteousness to humanity, leaving God dishonored and his Son bruised (as the prophet Isaiah says) and all of this being of no apparent benefit to himself.

If sin's offense is punishable (and thus criminal) it is not, strictly speaking, a private or individual offense against another individual, so much as it is a public or societal offense that is punishable by the authority of a system of laws—in this case, divine laws—and not an individual lawmaker (i.e., God). Murder, for example,

17. This begs some questions about the notion of the "suitable equivalent" argument. Based on the idea of a "status principle," Penal Substitution theorists argue that because God's glory is of infinite worth, and because sin is an offense against God, sin must be an infinite offense. But, if sin's offense is against the moral law, and God is not numerically identical to the moral law, can the moral law be said to be of infinite worth such that Christ's sacrifice must be of infinite worth. Or can what Christ offers to offset the demands of the moral law be a "suitable equivalent," and thus not a sacrifice of infinite worth?

18. No doubt, some will find the assertion that on Penal Substitution nothing is restored to God objectionable. However, the burden of proof is on advocates of this view, who limit Christ's atoning work to solving a purely retributive justice problem to show how Christ's sacrifice does anything *for* God. The mechanism itself does nothing for God, but one might argue that the results of what is effected in Christ's death does something for God.

is not an offense against the one being murdered, strictly speaking.[19] Nor is it an offense, directly or primarily, against the lawmaker who legislated that murder is a punishable offense. Murder is an offense against a law, primarily as discussed above, that says murder is wrong, and murderers are punished because they break the law.[20] This is not an insignificant detail.[21] Indeed, this is the chief distinguishing detail that we most wish to draw attention to. In fact, the distinction that we raised above is an important one for making amends regarding the public nature of justice, which is a common distinction assumed in lawful cases. Hence, it is important that those who are conflating the public and private notions of justice concerning God spell out why they are doing so and how it is that Christ's atoning work satisfies the public aspect of justice and how that immediately and necessarily satisfies private offenses. For, by drawing attention to it, we effectively undercut (yet again) the idea that the Son was hated by God. How do we do this? We do this because the built-in mechanism of this theory of atonement precludes that God's anger is even involved in the payment of a debt of punishment. The moral law is not an agent that can magically become angry.[22] The moral law is the expression of what the tradition calls, God's "relative rectitude." It is that by which God manifests the righteousness of his self-love, makes his moral perfection and holiness comprehensible to humanity, and threatens those who despise his general benevolence toward and authority over his rational creatures.[23] It is the

19. It is important to make some distinctions. Of course, it is true to say that there is an offense against persons when individuals harm others. That said, there is something fundamental to that which needs satisfying. The debt is to the moral law for which God establishes in providentially governing the world. To say that what is primarily satisfied is the payment from individuals to other individuals, that is, as a private affair, presumes modern sensibilities concerning sins, following Immanuel Kant. In other words, a contributing cause in the development of Christus Odium is this modern notion of sin in the hands of neo-Calvinists.

20. We need to say something like: It might be reasoned that murder is an offense against God himself because murder is the destruction of the divine image in which the Scripture says humanity is made. However, the whole idea of murder is predicated upon the issuance of a law that says murdering another human is something for which murderers will be held criminally liable. This is a problem for Penal Substitution, in particular, because while the Scriptures confirm that sin is an offense against God, the theory confirms—however much it goes misunderstood—that sin is an offense against the moral law.

21. For further details, see our work in Farris and Hamilton, "Atonement in the Reformed Tradition: A Plurality of Orthodoxy?" (forthcoming).

22. For a scriptural example of the distinction between laws, legislators, and agency, see S. Mark Hamilton "Jonathan Edwards, Anselmic Satisfaction, and God's Moral Government," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 17.1 (January 2015): 1–22.

23. For example, according to Edwards, "[The moral law] was the grand rule given to Adam; and the command of not eating the forbidden fruit was only given to try whether he would keep God's commands or no, to try whether he would be obedient to the law of nature, or moral law. As the moral law was the grand law given to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and is often called *THE LAW*, and is spoken of as *THE LAW* given to them, and the time of the giving of the Ten Commands is spoken of as the time of the giving the law, as if that had been the whole of the law given—and indeed, it was virtually so—and all those ceremonial laws that were added were only for the trial of their obedience to the great rules of this law, as particularly 'thou shalt have no other gods before me,' etc.: it was to try whether they would keep that moral law, the rules of which

moral law that is the measure of sin's offense, and it is to the moral law that man owes its debt of punishment. The moral law is a set of statutes whose requirements for paying a debt of punishment are not subject to incitements of anger. And this brings us to our second point.

A debt of punishment is quite different than a simple debt. It is astonishing just how many purveyors of this theory mishandle this distinction. Of course, Penal Substitution says that Christ paid a debt, but not just any kind of debt. Christ paid a debt of punishment.[24] Were it a simple debt, the creditor—the one to whom the debt is owed—should not incur a loss in the affair. If you buy a house, say, and you cannot pay your mortgage debt to the bank, the bank will take your house (and your investment with it). The bank will not suffer loss if things go south; they will take your house in order to be made whole. This is pretty straightforward. This is *not* what is going on where debts of punishment are concerned. Where debts of punishment are concerned, the *debtor* incurs the loss irrespective of the creditor being made whole.[25] This would be like saying that the bank has no interest in obtaining your house as of your inability to pay the note, the result of which is foreclosure; they only want you out on your duff (i.e., to suffer loss) whether the bank is made whole by its resale or not.[26]

Bringing this back to the atonement, Penal Substitution theorists should be quite careful to argue that humanity owes a debt of punishment, that is, a debt for an offense that requires humanity (the debtor) suffer loss (i.e., be punished). The loss to be suffered by humanity for not being able to pay this debt is a loss of (spiritual) life. Accordingly, Christ pays this debt of punishment, so it is said, by absorbing the penalty that is charged to individual sinners by acting as their representative—Penal

required that they should love God with all their heart, with all their souls, and with all their mind, and all their strength, and regard his authority and glory, and submit themselves wholly to him, and yield themselves up to him, and obey and serve him as their God" ("Miscellanies" n. 884, *WJE* 20:144; see also "Blank Bible," *WJE* 24:702, 1125).

24. According to Francis Turretin, "The satisfaction here discussed, is not taken widely for a simple and indiscriminate reparation of injury (as when one purges and excuses himself to him who has suffered injury). Rather it is taken strictly for the payment of a debt, with which is paid what another owes and with which he satisfies the creditor or judge who requires the *debt of punishment*. . . . The satisfaction exacted by the justice of God principally demanded two things: 1) that it should be paid by the same nature which had sinned; 2) that nevertheless it should be of an infinite value and worth to take away the infinite demerit of sin" Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology,* ed. James Dennison Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992–1997), 2.14.1, 3, 7, 418, 421 (emphasis added).

25. David Lewis argues that, "In the case of a debt, what is required is that the *creditor* shall not suffer a loss. . . . Whereas in the case of a debt of punishment what is required is that the *debtor* shall suffer a loss" Lewis, "Do We Believe in Penal Substitution?" in *A Reader in Contemporary Philosophical Theology*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp (New York: T & T Clark, 2009), 329 (emphasis added).

26. For the sake of clarity, this is not what is going on when a bank forecloses on someone's property. There is not a punitive, but rather a commutative, angle in mortgage lending. For a more personal analogue than that of a house-deal gone wrong, see our "Capone Analogy" in Farris and Hamilton, "The Logic of Reparation: Contemporary Restitution Models of Atonement, Divine Justice, and Somatic Death," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 83, no 1 (Feb 2018): 62–77.

Substitution does nothing toward restoring anything to God.[27] Again, what might come as a surprise to some is that the Penal Substitution theory is surprisingly anthropocentric in terms of its chief goal, in that the problem facing sinners is *not* a matter of their failed effort to restore anything to God, so much as it is with his law requiring that law-breakers suffer a penalty. What Christ is doing as penal substitute when he dies is, at least on a consistent understanding of the theory, solving a specifically punitive problem that hangs over the heads of humanity. This theory is not doing anything *for* God. The work of Christ on the Penal Substitution theory is to suffer loss by paying humanity's debt of punishment to the retributive justice demanded by the moral law. To owe God a debt of any other sort is to owe God for something that requires that God (the creditor) not suffer loss. So, how do this help us answer the question: "who is atonement being made for?" To put it differently, if humanity's debt of punishment is owed to the moral law and not to God, how can Christus Odium theorists say that Christ is satisfying the debt as if he is assuaging the holy hatred of God? To put it bluntly, they cannot. Again, this is because the moral law is not an agent that can get angry with anyone and the debt of punishment is owed to the moral law.

Concluding Thoughts

After rehearsing some of the reasons that we are even talking about Christus Odium today, we launched into some theological clarification in hopes that Penal Substitution theorists would not only come to terms with what they are actually committed to, but would see just how dangerous a piece of theology Christus Odium is to the evangelical Church. Put into numbered theses, this is what we warned against:

A. Christ suffered a penalty for sins.

B. The penalty for sins is a demand of the moral law.

C. The moral law has no power of agency to become angered.

D. Christ cannot be hated by the law.

E. Christ was not hated by God.

As we have noted, Christus Odium overstresses certain categories within the structure of the Penal Substitution theory of atonement. And, it presses the boundaries of both

27. Restoring anything to God (or his moral law) is the work of a theory of atonement that we have proposed elsewhere, contra Penal Substitution. For more on such a theory, see Farris and Hamilton, "Reparative Substitution and the Efficacy Objection: Toward a Modified Satisfaction theory of Atonement," *Perichoresis* 15, no. 3 (2017): 98–111 and for a more recent and condensed sketch of this theory, see http://blogos.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/2018/09/11/why-so-dissatisfied-with-satisfaction-by-joshua-r-farris-and-mark-hamilton/.

our doctrine of God and our doctrine Christ beyond that of orthodox teaching. Our consistent question to evangelicals is: Is *this* the doctrinal inheritance in the Reformed tradition for which we derive spiritual nourishment? Is believing *this* how you enjoy God? We have shown that there are not insignificant problems with this variant of Penal Substitution ones for which once they are clear cannot be taken seriously. While Christus Odium is a variant of penal substitution atonement, it is unclear to us that it is, in fact, the best or most likely true variant of the doctrine. With that in mind, let us press advocates of Penal Substitution to think more carefully about their own constructions of the doctrine and the doctrinal inheritance they have received.

The worries facing what we think are standard accounts of Penal Substitution notwithstanding, if this is the new evangelistic message, we no longer have good news; not when the Son is praised for being the object of the Father's derision. By our lights, the defender of Penal Substitution must reject this Christus Odium variant or—if odium is what Penal substitution actually is—consider taking up an alternative theory of the atonement altogether.

Christus Odium certainly preaches well when you have a pastor hungry to see sin dealt with appropriately and a congregation that could use a strong dose of holy fear. Maybe you thought before now that Christ's assumption of the full fury of God's wrath was simply Penal Substitution atonement. Maybe you have heard of Penal Substitution in various forms, but thought nothing of it. The nuances of the theory slipped by undetected. But, is this how we wish to see the gospel preached? Is it, in fact, the gospel itself as some would have you believe?

One might think that a way to salvage Christus Odium is to utilize analogical language in how we think about Divine attributes. In theological language, there are three ways to make sense of propositions that apply to God and his creatures, either analogically, equivocally, or univocally. The doctrine of analogy, as challenging as it is to define, is often used as a magic wand to make sense of complicated theology. At times, the doctrine of analogy is used as an odd route of justifying theological propositions that seem incompatible. In this case, this seems like a rather odd route to salvage an already bizarre doctrine. Can we really say that there is something adequate in conveying that God truly poured out his hate on the Son? *Why even go there?*

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A Less Odious Atonement Requires a More Classical God: Engaging Farris and Hamilton on Christus Odium

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Abstract: Joshua Farris and Mark Hamilton have leveled a serious critique of the so-called Christus Odium variant of Penal Substitution in their article "This is My Beloved Son Whom I Hate?" *JBTS* (2018), wherein the Son is said to satisfy not only the justice, but specifically the hate of the Father. Farris and Hamilton raise a series of exegetical, dogmatic, and pastoral problems with it—and by extension raise issues with more modest forms of PSA. In this paper, I examine what form the doctrine might take in the context of a classical doctrine of God. First, I attempt to render an orthodox version by retrieving impassibility and analogy to reframe divine hate. I then deploy the doctrines of simplicity, inseparable operations, appropriations, and a Chalcedonian Christology to coordinate the relationship of Father and Son in the activity of satisfying that hate. If my proposal works—renders the Odium less odious—then it will show the same doctrine of God will preserve more modest versions of penal substitution from Farris and Hamilton's critiques as well.

Key Words: atonement, analogy, impassibility, penal substitution, divine hate, inseparable operations.

Joshua Farris and Mark Hamilton have provoked this symposium by raising important questions around recent developments in Evangelical atonement theology. In their paper, "This is my Beloved Son Whom I Hate?" they single out a deleterious dogmatic development of the penal substitutionary understanding of Christ's atoning work in Evangelical Theology (henceforth "PSA"). They have dubbed it the "Christus Odium" variant.[1] On this view, not only does the Son bear the judgment, punishment, and wrath of God on the cross, he must suffer the "hate" of the Father. On what they take to be the standard core of the doctrine, a PSA advocate affirms these 6 basic propositions:

1. Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton, "This is My Beloved Son, Whom I Hate? A Critique of the Christus Odium Variant of Penal Substitution," *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies* 3, no. 2 (2018): 271–86.

1. Christ's atonement is necessary to his redemptive work.
2. Christ's death is sufficient to assuage divine retribution for all humanity.
3. Christ dies as a penal substitute for individual persons.
4. Christ is punished in our place. (One could revisit the theory and modify it by saying that Christ dies in order to absorb the retributive [penal] consequences of divine justice precipitated by human sin, being treated by God as if he were those individuals to whom the punishment were due) (i.e. the mechanism).
5. Christ's death pays a debt of punishment.
6. Christ's death is a vicarious sacrifice.[2]

They argue the Christus Odium variant goes further, however. Looking to popular theologians and other theological writers, we hear statements like, "God chose to violate His Son in our place. The Son stared into the mocking eyes of God; He heard the laugher of the Father's derision and felt Him depart in disgust. . . . In a mysterious instant, the Father who loved the Son from all eternity turned from Him in hatred. The Son became odious to the Father."[3] Or more tamely, "If you see Jesus losing the infinite love of the Father, out of his infinite love for you, it will melt your hardness."[4] Examining a few such statements, Farris and Hamilton have carefully synthesized and formulated four more propositions that they see Christus Odium advocates adding to the basic 6:

7. The demands of divine retributive justice ≈ the exercise of divine wrath ≈ the divine exhibition and human experience of divine hatred.
8. Paying the debt to retributive justice, the Son is (temporarily) hated by the Father.
9. The Son of God died on the cross, which was motivated by Fatherly hate.
10. The object of the atonement is Divine hatred.[5]

Farris and Hamilton have charged at length that this model suffers from a bevy of exegetical, doctrinal, and pastoral issues.

2. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 275.

3. Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman, *In the Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2015), 184–85 cited also on 272. It is worth registering that as a *theological* development, it should be clear that this is not some conscious program by theologians, but is a tendency being noted and systematized by Farris and Hamilton, culled to some degree from a grab-bag of theological writers, writing mostly in non-dogmatic contexts.

4. Timothy Keller, "If you see Jesus losing the infinite love of the father out of His infinite love for you, it will melt your hardness," Facebook, July 25, 2017, quoted in Mark Jones, "Tim Keller, the Cross, and the Love of God," The Calvinist International, July 27, 2017, https://calvinistinternational.com/2017/07/27/tim-keller-the-cross-and-the-love-of-god/.

5. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 276.

In this article, I will not be responding to Farris and Hamilton's extensive criticisms point by point, nor offering a counter-critique their own positive proposal for atonement theology. Instead, I will be mounting something of an apology of the Christus Odium view, not as my own, but rather in role of a public defender, assigned to a dubious defendant. In that role, I want to briefly explore the way a moderating pressure is exerted on this model when we set it within the context of the classical doctrine of God affirmed by the Western tradition. Consider this the sort of theological "what if" game played by Oliver Crisp in several chapters of his *Deviant Calvinism*, whereby we work through positions we do not hold as an exercise in charitable exposition, hoping to deepen our analysis in the process.[6] To that end, I will first examine the issue of God's odium by reframing it in light of the doctrines of impassibility and analogy, as well as seeking to establish a scriptural pattern of identification of God's hate with God's retributive justice. Second, I will show the way a retrieval of the doctrines of simplicity, inseparable operations, appropriations, and the communication of operations can answer our trinitarian and Christological concerns. My aim is two-fold. First, by rendering the so-called Christus Odium view a bit less odious, I want to shore up the defenses around the more moderate versions of PSA, especially in those places where Farris and Hamilton's challenges might be similarly applied. Take it as an *a fortiori* defense of more moderate defendants, which seems appropriate as Farris and Hamilton's argument is something of a thin end of the wedge, laying the groundwork for a future prosecution. Second, my conviction is that "an account of God's atoning work in Christ will only be as convincing . . . as its operative doctrine of God."[7] In which case, I hope the argument functions as an invitation to those holding to any form of PSA of the need to recover a classical doctrine of God.

What Does It Mean for God to Hate? A Classical Approach

According to the Scriptures, it is clear that the Lord does, indeed, hate some things: the practices of the pagans (Deut 12:31), their idols (Deut 16:22), robbery and wrongdoing, the opposite of justice, which he loves (Isa 61:8), the pride of Jacob and his strongholds (Amos 6:8), even poor Esau is hated, while Jacob is loved (Rom 9). Our initial question, then, is not whether God hates, but what does it mean for God to hate? Having a clear definition of terms seems crucial to understanding the claim that on the cross, God hated the Son, and how that ought to be distinguished from his

6. Oliver D. Crisp, *Deviant Calvinism: Broadening Reformed Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2014). I think especially of his treatment of Eternal justification and Libertarian Calvinism as illuminating theological thought experiments with positions he admittedly does not affirm.

7. Ken Oakes, "The Divine Perfections and the Economy: The Atonement," in *Theological Theology: Essays in Honor of John Webster*, ed. R. David Nelson, Darren Sarrisky, and Justin Stratis (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2015), 243.

wrath and retributive justice. This immediately raises the issue of divine emotions, or rather, with the tradition, divine affections.

On a more classical view developed by the Western tradition and summarized by that most excellent compendium of Christian Doctrine, the Westminster Shorter Catechism, God is "a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."[8] God's unchangeability, or immutability, has typically included his impassibility as a corollary.[9] On this classic understanding, Israel's God is not subject to passions—irrational movements of the mind or will, overwhelming his rational judgment of persons, situations, and so forth. This does not mean he is "emotionless" in the modern sense, but rather that he has no passive passions. He does have active *affections*, which are rational and moral valuations of persons and states of affairs consistent with the perfection of his own unchanging knowledge, being, and character.[10] Of course, our knowledge of such affections is colored by our own finite and fallen faculties. We cannot know God in himself of ourselves and so as Bavinck instructs us, "God has to come down to the level of his creatures and accommodate to their powers of comprehension."[11] In divine revelation in nature and especially Scripture, the Infinite God makes himself known by taking up the finite conceptualities, experiences, and language of creatures in order to address them.[12] From thence, it follows that our knowledge of him is accommodated as well as analogical—possessing a similarity within an even greater dissimilarity, given God's infinity.[13] And this includes our knowledge of

8. "Probably the best definition of God ever penned by man," according to the unbiased opinion of Presbyterian theologian Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1: Theology* (repr. 1979; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1871), 367. On the definitional issue, contemporary philosopher of religion Brian Leftow says most "of classical theism's concept of God unfolds from the claim that is the ultimate reality," which that implies he is a *se*, simple, immaterial, not spatially extended, without accidents, immutable, impassible, eternal, necessary, omnipresent, and in possession of a perfect intellect, will, power, and goodness. Leftow, "God, concepts of," in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Taylor and Francis, 1998), accessed April 1, 2020, https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/god-concepts-of/v-1/sections/classical-theism

9. "It should . . . be noted that divine impassibility is a logical consequence of divine immutability. If God is ontologically unchangeable, then, by definition, he is equally ontologically impassible, for to undergo inner emotional changes of state would render him ontologically mutable." Thomas J. Weinandy, *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 38n22.

10. On the distinction between affections and passions, see Anastasia Scrutton, "Emotion in Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas: A Way Forward for the Impassibility Debate?" *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7, no. 2 (April 2005), 169–177.

11. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics,* vol. 2, *God and Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 110.

12. "For who even of slight intelligence does not understand that, as nurses commonly do with infants, God is wont in a measure to 'lisp' in speaking to us? Thus such forms of speaking do not so much express clearly what God is like as accommodate the knowledge of him to our slight capacity. To do this he must descend far beneath his loftiness." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 1.13.1, page 121.

13. "Because between the Creator and the creature there cannot be a likeness so great that

his affective life. This is all rather intuitive. As Tertullian reminds the Marcionites who object to God's wrath as an irrational passion, we must not "from things human form conjectures about things divine," but instead "[d]istinguish the substances, and assign to each is own sensations, as diverse as the substances demand." Our thoughts about God's wrath, and arguably, his hate, must be disciplined not by their corrupt form found in man's corrupt substance, but rather taken in a mode which is proper to the "incorruptibility of the divine substance."[14] In other words, if we say God is angry, we have to say he "is angry after his own divine fashion" and not import sin or finitude into it. [15] Likewise, with his hate.

The Post-Reformation Reformed Scholastics are a good place to look for reflection on Scriptural depictions of divine hate carried out under such strictures. Taking up the *odio dei*, Benedict Pictet says it is an affection that "denotes 1) the disapprobation of sin, 2) the purpose of punishing the sinner, 3) a withholding of those blessings that flow from his goodness."[16] Edward Leigh says it is "an act of the Divine will, declining, disapproving, and punishing of evil."[17] Importantly, this is similar to James Ussher's understanding of the affection of wrath or anger when attributed to God in Scripture. He says that it is:

> Not any passion, perturbation, or trouble of the mind as it is in us, but this word Anger when it is attributed to God in the Scriptures signifieth three things.
>
> [1] First, a most certain and just decree in God to punish and avenge such injuries as are offered to himself, and to his Church; and so it is understood, John 3. 36. Rom. 1. 18.
>
> [2] Secondly, the threatening these punishments and revenges, as in Psal. 6. 1. Hos. 11. 9. Jonah 2. 9.
>
> [3] Thirdly, the punishments themselves, which God doth execute upon ungodly men, and these are the effects of his anger, or of his decree to punish them; so it is taken in Rom. 2. 5. Mat. 3. 7. Eph. 5. 6.[18]

the unlikeness is not greater." *Lateran Council IV*, Canon 2, last revised January 20, 2021, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/lateran4.asp

14. Tertullian, *The Five Books Against Marcion,* trans. Marc Evans, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), Bk. 2, ch. 16, 131, http://www.tertullian.org/articles/evans_marc/evans_marc_06book2_eng.htm

15. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 403.

16. Benedict Pictet, *Theologie Christienne, II.vii.8,* cited in Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation, Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca, 1520 to ca. 1725,* vol. 3, *The Divine Essence and Attribute* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 586.

17. Edward Leigh, *A Treatise of Divinity* (London, 1646), II.viii; cited in Muller, *Post-Reformation*, 586.

18. James Ussher, *A Body of Divinity: Or, the Sum and Substance of Christian Religion*, 8th ed.

These definitions are typical. For the scholastics, then, to speak of the wrath or hate of God is to speak of God's opposition to sin, his will to execute judgment, and the enactment of punishment itself. Indeed, commenting on Habakkuk 1:13 ("thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity"), John Owen directly equates the two, saying the "prophet here ascribes to God the greatest detestation, and such an immortal hatred of sin that he cannot look upon it, but, with a wrathful aversion of his countenance, abominates and dooms it to punishment."[19] Hate seems to be simply an intensification of wrath, a more vehement form of expressing God's steady, constant, unchanging opposition to sin. Importantly, they are corollary affections to God's justice and holiness and should be in no way taken as passions disturbing the divine blessedness or immutability—God does not "move" from hate to love, in that sense, even in his exercise of wrath.[20] Another way of putting it is that for the Post-Reformation Scholastics, the language of wrath and hate are analogical

(London: 1702), 63.

19. John Owen, *A Dissertation on Divine Justice, Or The Claims of Vindicatory Justice Asserted* (London: L.J. Higham & J. Murgatroyd, 1780), 3.I, page 39. Having written the bulk of the paper, I found this pertinent treatment by Petrus van Mastricht confirming this sort of analysis relating hate and wrath as well as the analogical interpretation given this affection: "Yet there is . . . also in God a hatred or aversion, first to sinners (Rom. 9:13), then to sin (Ps. 5:4–5). Its affection is nothing but an adverse will (Hab. 1:13; Isa. 1:15), and its effective operation, withdrawal (Isa. 59:2), punishment (Ps. 5:5–6), and all that commonly flows from the affection of hatred in men, but without disturbance or change in God. Therefore, it considers the sinner, and him alone, especially the obstinate sinner, inasmuch as in his torment and destruction, God is said to rejoice (Deut. 28:63; Prov. 1:26). It considers him on account of sin alone, because sin is repugnant to God's nature, his law, his honor (Ps. 45:7). And thus, finally, it considers the sinner to this end, to torment him (1) in general, by all his judgments (Deut. 28:15), all the way to the end (Ps. 11:5–6); in specific, (2) by horrors of conscience (Prov. 17:22); (3) by every sort of death (Gen. 3:3; Rom. 5:14); indeed (4) by the cursed death that fell on his own Son (Gal. 3:13; Rom. 8:32); and finally, (5) by the eternal condemnation of the reprobate sinner himself (Heb. 10:26–27). But because hatred in God concerns his avenging justice, in this topic it will suffice to have touched upon it." van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology, Volume 2: Faith in the Triune God,* trans. Todd M Rester and Michael T. Spangler, ed. Joel R. Beeke, (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), 1.2.17.XI, page 352.

20. Owen confirms this in saying, "There is nothing that God hates but sin; and because of sin only other things are liable to his hatred. In what sense passions and affections are ascribed to God, and what he would have us to understand by such a description of his nature and attributes, is known to everybody. But of all the affections of human nature, hatred is the most restless and turbulent, and to the person who is under its influence, and who can neither divest himself of it nor give a satisfactory vent to its motions, the most tormenting and vexatious; for as it takes its rise from a disagreement with and dislike of its object, so that its object is always viewed as repugnant and offensive, no wonder that it should rouse the most vehement commotions and bitterest sensations. But God, who enjoys eternal and infinite happiness and glory, as he is far removed from any such perturbations, and placed far beyond all variableness or shadow of change, would not assume this affection so often, for our instruction, unless he meant clearly to point out to us this supreme, immutable, and constant purpose of punishing sin, — as that monster whose property it is to be the object of God's hatred, that is, of the hatred of infinite goodness, — to be natural and essential to him." Owen, *Dissertation*, IV.III, pages 122–23. For a discussion of the same issues in Calvin, see Steven J. Duby, "The Cross and the Fullness of God: Clarifying the Meaning of Divine Wrath in Penal Substitution," *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 29, no. 2 (2011): 165–76.

ways of speaking of the retributive dimension of God's justice in an affective register, as a matter of his will, inclination, and action connected to his moral character. It is to speak to the personal involvement of God in his justice and to rule out any reification of a divine law or an enactment of divine justice divorced from the will and character God. To satisfy the hatred of God is to satisfy his wrath, which is an affective way of speaking about the satisfaction of his justice—at least for *some* of the post-Reformation scholastics.

Of course, there is question about whether any of this is Scriptural. Farris and Hamilton have called into question the formula "The demands of divine retributive justice ≈ the exercise of divine wrath ≈ the divine exhibition and human experience of divine hatred."[21] Well, it seems there is at least a relationship between the demands of retributive justice and the exercise of divine wrath in Scripture. Consider the LORD's words by the mouth of Ezekiel:

> Therefore thus says the Lord God: Because you are more turbulent than the nations that are all around you, and have not walked in my status or obeyed by my rules, and have not even acted according to the rules of the nations that are all around you, therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, even I, am against you. And I will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations…Thus shall my anger spend itself, and I will vent my fury upon them and satisfy myself. And they shall know that I am the LORD—that I have spoke in my jealousy—when I spend my fury upon them. (5:7-8, 13)
>
> 'The end is now upon you,
> and I will unleash my anger against you.
> I will judge you according to your conduct
> and repay you for all your detestable practices.
> I will not look on you with pity;
> I will not spare you.
> I will surely repay you for your conduct
> and for the detestable practices among you. (7:3-4)
>
> So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign Lord. (22:31)

21. "What all this means is that at some point the idea of Christ's paying a debt of punishment for sin metastasized into the idea that being liable to punishment is equivalent to a payment of a debt owed to violent divine anger for sin" (Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 279). Curiously, as carefully as everything else is outlined, I could not actually find any place where they properly define God's wrath, anger, or retributive justice so as to clearly delineate these realities in such a way as to rule out any close identification.

> I will carry out great vengeance on them and punish them in my wrath. Then they will know that I am the Lord, when I take vengeance on them. (25:17)

In Ezekiel, then, there is a clear conceptual and linguistic collocation of the judgment and punishment of God with the wrath and anger of God. For God to punish and judge sin is for him to execute, expend, and pour out his wrath and anger.[22] The operation of judgment is the operation of wrath.[23] They are two sides of the same coin, speaking of the same reality in a different idiom. Or rather, they are dimensions of the same, simple reality.[24] It is not hard to find this same, rough, equation throughout the prophets and Scripture as a whole. More directly pertinent to our argument, we might turn to Paul, for whom (on a traditional, Reformed reading of Romans 3:23-26) Christ is set forth as a "propitiation" (v. 25), with its relation to the notion of "appeasing" God's wrath (1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5), as a solution to the problem of God's justice.[25] The passage is shot through with legal terminology and a legal logic whereby God can be just and the justifier of the ungodly, having properly (i.e., justly,

22. Commenting on Ezekiel 5:13, Daniel I. Block notes that "[t]here powerful phrases are strung together to portray a deity totally consumed by fury and determined to vent his anger in full measure." There is a clear link between giving vent to his fury and Yahweh having been "appeased." This is no purposeless venting of divine displeasure, however, but one explicitly linked to Israel's idolatrous disobedience. It is a just desert. Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24,* New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 210–11.

23. Using a different philosophical framework, Kevin Kinghorn and Stephen Travis have recently argued that wrath should be construed as "a pattern of action" in ways that recall scholastic language about the operation of wrath. See Kinghorn and Travis, *But What About God's Wrath? The Compelling Story of Divine Anger* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019), 20.

24. For a fuller, contemporary account rooting God's wrath in God's righteousness, see Jeremy J. Wynne, *Wrath Among the Perfections of God's Life* (London: T & T Clark, 2010).

25. For instance, Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Philadelphia: William S. Martin, 1851), 74–85.

punitively) dealt with sin in the death of Christ.[26] To suffer the justice of God is to suffer the wrath of God and vice versa.[27]

26. It is worth noting that closer attention to the exegesis of someone like Hodge begins to form a partial answer Farris and Hamilton's rather odd charge that penal substitution (of whatever sort, both odious and otherwise) is "anthropocentric in terms of its chief goal," insofar as it "does nothing toward restoring anything to God." At least, by comparison with their own reparative model which sees Christ satisfying God's rectoral justice, repairing the breach against his own honor through his obedient, supererogatory work of self-offering (Joshua Farris and Mark Hamilton, "Which Penalty? Whose Atonement? Revisiting Christus Odium," Paper presented at the 71st Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA, November 2019). This remark misses the mark in a number of ways. First, it seems to confuse the atonement's chief, immediate beneficiary (humanity receiving pardon), with the atonement's chief goal (God receiving glory). Second, as Hodge notes, while "the death of Christ answers a great number of infinitely important ends in the government of God," such as the manifestation of God's wisdom, reconciliation between Jew and Gentile, and so forth, but "the end here specially mentioned" is a radically theo-centric one, which is "*to declare his righteousness"* (*Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 79). Because in the past, he had "in his divine forbearance passed over former sins" (3:25), Hodge says it "became necessary that there should be this exhibition, because God had overlooked and pardoned sin from the beginning" but now in the present moment we see "the vindication of the character of God in passing by formers sins, and in passing by them now" through their forgiveness (80). Even more recently, N. T. Wright, *The Letter to the Romans*, The New Interpreter Bible Commentary, vol. 10 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 472–73, says, "In particular, God has passed over . . . left unpunished, acts of sin committed in former times. God . . . had been forbearing, patient, unwitting to foreclose on the human race in general or Israel in particular . . . Whatever Paul is saying in the first half of v. 25, it must be such as to lead to the conclusion that now, at last, God has punished sins as they deserved." In just this way, God shows himself just in keeping his word to punish sin even as he redeems sinners. This is another way in which God's honor, his rectoral justice, is upheld: his failure to exercise retributive justice in the past had called his rectoral justice into question. In the execution of God's justice, the debt of punishment flowing from God's laws, lies the vindication of God's own Name, his justice as the King, lawmaker, and judge of the earth to which he has (at least) bound himself by covenant (Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol 2: 222, 227). This is another reason Farris and Hamilton's attempt to press a major distinction between satisfying the moral law over and against God is overblown (n.p). It depends on a bizarre reification of the law that does not sufficiently account for God's role as author and enforcer of the law as the divine Rector over all things, such that an offense against the law is an offense against God which is simultaneously public and personal, not merely private and commercial. This is especially the case if it considered that in his role of the Rector of the whole world, his rule is aimed at the common good and end of the whole universe, which is actually God's own glory (John Owen, *Dissertation,* 17.XVI, page 261). From another angle, one possible way of overcoming the dichotomy between pure reparative and retributive theories is to recognize in Christ's obedience unto retributive death that satisfies God's retributive justice a positive will to honor God, simultaneously satisfying his rectoral justice in the sense Farris and Hamilton suggest. In fact, it is arguable the classic Reformed distinction between Christ's active and passive obedience, his law-keeping and penalty-suffering, answers both dimensions of God's justice.

27. There is also generally a challenge to the idea that the Bible anywhere expresses the thought

In this light, one can see the way a proponent of Christus Odium might retrieve impassibility and analogical predication, as well as this pattern of Scriptural identification between hate, wrath, and retributive punishment to explain their position. On this read, satisfying the "hate" of God is tantamount to satisfying God's moral law, wrath, and justice and need not be seen as a radical development, but rather a less familiar way of talking about what many have been saying all along. Of course, it seems obvious that retrieving these strictures might also (and probably should) begin to chasten an advocate's willingness to use such heavily psychologized descriptions of divine hate in the first place, but we'll put that to the side for now. [28] At this point, we must turn from question of what is the divine hate, to the question of who is suffering the divine hate.

Who Does the Triune God Hate?

Turning to the all-important Trinitarian and Christological matters, Farris and Hamilton raise a series of questions with respect to just how this momentary "hatred" of the Son by the Father is supposed to work.[29] On the one hand, if it is understood as an intra-trinitarian event between divine persons, that seems to split the Trinity, which is repugnant. On the other hand, if the hate is directed at the Son's humanity (body and soul, or soul, or just body), that may threaten Nestorianism. Briefly, let us stipulate at the outset the same sort of classical doctrine of God we have been expounding so far. On that view the immutable, impassible, and *a se* God is also the perfectly simple Triune God, whose being admits of no parts, composition, or division.[30] In which case, we can quickly dispense with some of the more fanciful "broken Trinity" options whereby the Father and the Son are at loggerheads in the cross, yet remain united by means of the Holy Spirit functioning as a divine bungee cord holding them together.[31] Of necessity, that puts us somewhere in the

that Jesus bore the wrath of God or was in any way suffering the punishment of God. Two texts that are often overlooked in this regard, which *prima facie*, can be read to the contrary. First, there are Jesus's words in the Garden, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will" (Matt 26:39). This is arguably the cup of God's wrath, the bowl from God's hand that sets men to stagger (Ps 60:3; 75:8; Isa 51:17, 22, 23; Jer 25; Ezek. 23:33 15; Obadiah 16). Second, Romans 8:3 says he made Christ an offering for sin and "condemned sin in the flesh." Whatever happened in the flesh of Christ, it was a condemnation of sin. This is the legal action of God, performed in and upon Christ, the Son in the flesh he assumed.

28. Skillfully avoiding the Scylla of depersonalizing wrath and the Charybdis of undue "anthropopathization" of wrath, see Thomas McCall, *Forsaken: The Trinity and the Cross, and Why it Matters* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 79–90.

29. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 280–83

30. Steven J. Duby, *Divine Simplicity: A Dogmatic Account* (London: T & T Clark, 2016).

31. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 82: "The Holy Spirit is therefore the link in the separation. He is the link joining the bond between the Father and the Son, with their separation." Or Graham Cole, who more modestly suggests as a theologoumenon that possibly it was the Spirit who "kept the

neighborhood of a "Chalcedonian" solution, with God's "hate" being exercised in or upon the divine Son's human nature. In order to work this out, we must briefly set out several classical trinitarian and Christological desiderata.

First, the doctrine of God we have been assuming so far goes hand-in-hand with affirming the inseparability of trinitarian operations *ad extra.* As Augustine succinctly put it, "just as the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit are inseparable, so they work inseparably," in the economy of creation and redemption.[32] In which case, any work the Father works, the Son and Spirit are working as well, per the unity and simplicity of the divine nature.[33] With this in mind, affirming the inseparability axiom means any exercise of divine wrath or hate will not only be that of the Father, but also of the Son and the Spirit, of necessity.

Second, we should attend to related developments of the doctrine of inseparability via reflection on the triune character of divine agency, trinitarian appropriations, and the *terminus operationis,* present in Augustine and the Cappodocians, but refined especially by Thomas and later Reformed theologians such as John Owen. Essentially, while every economic act of the Trinity is undivided, the action is not flat, or unipersonal. Instead, just as the persons subsist in the one divine essence in modally distinct ways, just so their agency from the one divine essence in the economy reflects a trinitarian taxis—an order whereby the persons are distinguishable, though not divisible—in the one work in a way fitted to their eternal trinitarian taxis.[34] As Gregory of Nyssa says, "there is one motion . . . which proceeds from the Father, through the Son, to the Spirit."[35] Each indivisible work proceeds "from" the Father, "through" the Son, "in" the Spirit", or originates with the Father, is executed through the Son, and perfected by the Spirit.[36]

triune Godhead from imploding—as it were—when the barrier of sin went up between the Father and the Son." Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 167.

32. Augustine, *The Trinity,* trans. Edmund Hill, ed. John E. Rotelle (New York: New York City Press, 1991), 1.7. pages 70–71.

33. Adonis Vidu, "The Place of the Cross Among the Inseparable Operations of the Trinity," in *Locating Atonement: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics*, ed. Oliver Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 21–42.

34. John Webster, "Trinity and Creation," *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2010): 4–19, esp. 16–17; see also, Gilles Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas,* trans. Francesca Alan Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 349, "The three persons act inseparably, in virtue of their common divine nature, and the whole Trinity is the source of their works. But each person acts within the distinct mode of his relationship to the other persons within the common actions."

35. Gregory of Nyssa, "An Answer to Ablabius: That We Should Not Think of Saying There Are Three Gods," in *Christology of the Later Fathers*, ed. Edward R. Hardy (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), 262.

36. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit,* trans. Stephen Hildebrand (New York: St. Vladimir's Press, 2011), 16, 37–40; Calvin, *Institutes.* I.13.20, page 144; Emery, *The Trinitarian Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas,* 349–56.

Third, the tradition has typically spoken of the idea of appropriations—the idea that some names, attributes, or activities of the Trinity *ad extra* can be particularly appropriated or assigned to persons of the Trinity because of the language of Scripture, or because there is a notional affinity fitting to the person and revelatory of their personal property in the eternal taxis.[37] As John Webster clarifies,

> . . . of each divine work we need to say (a) that it is absolutely the work of the undivided godhead; (b) that each person of the godhead performs that work in a distinct way, following the manner and order of that person's hypostatic existence; and (c) that particular works may be assigned eminently to one person, without rescinding absolute attribution to the undivided Trinity and without denying that the other two persons also participate in that work in the distinct modes proper to them.[38]

As *fons,* for instance, creation is fittingly appropriated to Father, though he creates through the Son and the Spirit. Relevant to our purposes, it is worth noting that Post-Reformation scholastics such as Petrus Van Mastricht regularly attributed the activity of judgment to the Father, "insofar as in the economy the Father is the governor, lawgiver, judge, and avenger of laws, and in addition insofar as he is the benevolent caretaker of the whole household," even if it is the one judgment of the Godhead.[39]

Extending the doctrine of appropriations, the tradition also saw that some works *terminate* upon particular persons in ways that are fitting to their trinitarian relations—i.e., the missions of Christ and the Spirit from the Father are fitting extensions *ad extra* of their processions *ad intra*.[40] Thomas explicitly affirms a distinction between the principle of the action, the divine nature itself, and the term of the action in the unique person of the Son in the incarnation.[41] Here the Father, Son, and Spirit are at work, so to speak—there is only one "*opera dei essentialia*"—yet only the Son

37. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725,* vol. 4, *the Triunity of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 267–74.

38. Webster, "Trinity and Creation," 16.

39. Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology,* 1.2.25.II.B.1, page 528. Thanks to Scott Swain for suggesting this reference. Compare also Pictet: "The Father in the work of salvation is considered as the supreme Judge, who directs all things, who requires satisfaction, who receives it from the one he sent to procure it, and who, to sum up all in a word, maintains the majesty of the Godhead, for which reason he is sometimes called God in contradistinction from the other persons," *Theol. Chr.,* II.xiv.1 cited in Muller, *Post-Reformation,* 4:270.

40. In B. Hoon Woo, *The Promise of the Trinity: The Covenant of Redemption in the Theologies of Witsius, Owen, Dickson, Goodwin, and Coccieus* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018), see especially 91–108 for a lucid discussion of the *terminus operationis.* Thanks to Mark Jones for this reference.

41. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* IIIa, q. 3, a. 4, co and r.1. Kyle Claunch has similarly discerned an operative distinction between the "principle" and the "subject" of a divine act in the way Augustine and Owen speak of the matter. Kyle Claunch, "What God Hath Done Together: Defending the Historic Doctrine of the Inseparable Operations of the Trinity," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56, no. 4 (2013):781–800, especially. 797.

becomes incarnate by assuming human nature to himself.[42] Or again, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sanctify believers, but it is the Spirit who indwells them as the *terminus operationis*. In this way, we see another way of distinguishing persons and distinct personal acts, which are nevertheless not violations of the inseparable activity of the one God.

Finally, we come to think in more directly Chalcedonian terms with Reformed teaching on the communication of operations, or "the 'sharing' of the two operations of the two natures of Christ in the Savior's mediatorial work."[43] Looking to Scripture's confession that Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5), the Reformed tradition affirmed that Jesus is our mediator *as* God and man: the atoning efficacy of Christ's death has always been dependent on Christ's having been our mediator according to both natures. As Francis Turretin has it, "each nature contributing what is its own—the human indeed the substance of the work (or passion); the divine, its infinite value and price."[44] This judgment depends on Chalcedon's affirmation that the assumption of human nature by the particular person of the Son happened "*inconfusedly, unchangeably*, *indivisibly, inseparably*" and "the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ."[45] Furthermore, the Son's humanity is enhypostatic and anhypostatic, having no independent existence apart

42. See the classic introduction of Augustine, *The Trinity*, 1.2.7, pages 70–71: "The purpose of all the Catholic commentators I have been able to read on the divine books of both testaments, who have written before me on the trinity which God is, has been to teach that according to the scriptures Father and Son and Holy Spirit in the inseparable equality of one substance present a divine unity; and therefore there are not three gods but one God. . . . It was not, however, this same three (their teaching continues) that was born of the virgin Mary, crucified and buried under Pontius Pilate, rose again on the third day and ascended into heaven, but the Son alone. Nor was it this same three that came down upon Jesus in the form of a dove at his baptism, or came down on the day of Pentecost after the Lord's ascension, with a roaring sound from heaven as though a violent gust were rushing down, and in divided tongues as of fire, but the Holy spirit alone. Nor was it this same three that spoke from heaven, You an my Son, either at his baptism by John 1:11) or on the mountain when the three disciples were with him (Mt. 17:5), nor when the resounding voice was heard, I have both glorified it (my name) and will glorify // again (Jn 12:28), but it was the Father's voice alone addressing the Son; although just as Father and Son and Holy spirit are inseparable, so do they work inseparably."

43. Steve J. Duby, "Atonement, Impassibility, and the *Communicatio Operationem,*" *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, vol. 17, no. 3 (2015): 286.

44. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James Dennison Jr., trans. by George Musgrave Giger (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992–1997), 14, Q. II, V, page 380. Or again, Wilhelmus à Brakel says, "It was an infinite person who suffered according to his human nature, and thus his suffering was of infinite efficacy and value, 'having obtained eternal redemption for us' (Heb. 9:12)." Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, vol, 1, *God, Man, and Christ*, trans. Bartel Elshout, (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 1992), 482.

45. The Definition of Chalcedon, Oct. 22, 451, in *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes,* vol. 2, *The Greek and Latin Creeds, with Translations,* ed. Philip Schaff (Harper & Row, 1877). https://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds2/creeds2.iv.i.iii.html.

from the Word and the Word himself being the only subject of Jesus's activities.[46] This grounds the doctrine of the *communicatio operationem* whereby we might truly confess according to Scripture that in the death of the Son "God purchased the church with his blood" (Acts 20:28).[47] Because of this the Son acting in and through his human nature it is still *the Son* acting. When looking to the cross, then, we must be able to say the divine Son suffered these things because Jesus *is* the divine Son. But we also have to say the Son suffered according to, or by virtue of, his human nature.[48] For according to our prior affirmations, by his divine nature he is impassible. In sum, if we speak of the Son suffering death, the consequences of sin or judgment, or God's abandonment, or even hate, we speak truly of the suffering of the Son, but we inevitably are speaking according to his human nature.

Admittedly, this generates some paradoxical affirmations. Calvin's comments in *The Institutes* are instructive here. On the one hand he clearly affirms, "Yet we do not suggest that God was ever inimical or angry toward him. How could he be angry toward his beloved Son, "in whom his heart reposed" [cf. Matt. 3:17]? How could Christ by his intercession appease the Father towards others, if he were himself hateful to God?" At the same time he goes on to affirm that Christ "bore the weight of divine severity, since he was 'stricken and afflicted' [Isa. 53:5] by God's hand, and experienced all the signs of a wrathful and avenging God."[49] Calvin also clarifies that

46. Duby, "Atonement," 291–92; see also, Stephen Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 316–28.

47. This is standard, Reformed reading since Calvin: "But because the speech which Paul useth seemeth to be somewhat hard, we must see in what sense he saith that God purchased the Church with his blood. For nothing is more absurd than to feign or imagine God to be mortal or to have a body. But in this speech he commendeth the unity of person in Christ; for because there be distinct natures in Christ, the Scripture doth sometimes recite that apart by itself which is proper to either. But when it setteth God before us made manifest in the flesh, it doth not separate the human nature from the Godhead. Notwithstanding, because again two natures are so united in Christ, that they make one person, that is improperly translated sometimes unto the one, which doth truly and in deed belong to the other, as in this place Paul doth attribute blood to God; because the man Jesus Christ, who shed his blood for us, was also God. This manner of speaking is called, of the old writers, *communicatio idiomatum,* because the property of the one nature is applied to the other. And I said that by this means is manifestly expressed one person of Christ, lest we imagine him to be double, which Nestorius did in times past attempt; and yet for all this we must not imagine a confusion of the two natures which Eutychus went about to bring in, or which the Spanish dog, Servetus, hath at this time invented, who maketh the Godhead of Christ nothing else but a form or image of the human nature, which he dreameth to have always shined in God." Calvin, *Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles,*vol. II, ed. H. Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 256–57.

48. For the value of the language of speaking "in virtue of", see Daniel Treier, "Incarnation," in *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic* ed. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 216–42.

49. Calvin, *Institutes*, II.16.11. Tim Keller draws attention to this balance in Calvin himself. Keller, "Calvin on 'He Descended Into Hell'" Reformedish (blog), July 31, 2017, https://derekzrishmawy.com/2017/07/31/calvin-on-he-descended-into-hell-guest-post-by-tim-keller/. See also Paul Dafydd Jones, "The Fury of Love: Calvin on the Atonement," in *T & T Clark Companion to Atonement*, ed. Adam J. Johnson (London: T & T Clark, 2017), 213–35, who speaks to duality of both Christ's inherent worthiness in God's sight and his suffering under the weight of divine

he suffered that severity of judgment in both body, but especially soul: "Christ's body was given as our price of our redemption, but . . . he paid a greater and more excellent price in suffering in his soul the terrible torments of a condemned and forsaken man."[50] This is especially evident in the torment and agony he endures in the Garden (sweating blood) and his words from the cross.[51] Calvin says this would have been shamefully weak if Christ was tortured "by the dread of common death."[52] Indeed, it was precisely in the face of this that Christ honors God most in conquering the fear of the execution of this awful wrath he was enduring, trusting him and obeying him in the middle of its "acute agony."[53] There is a dual affirmation here of the absolute love of God for the Son while at the same time, he suffers the operation, the activity, and experience of God's terrible judgment and wrath in his human body and soul.[54]

severity against sin, especially 220–24.

50. *Institutes*, II.16.10. In the same section he avers, "If Christ had died only a bodily death it would have been ineffectual. No—it was expedient at the same time for him to undergo the severity of God's vengeance, to appease his wrath and satisfy his just judgment."

51. It is worth noting that this need not be taken to indicate that Christ's atoning sufferings were restricted to his time in the garden, or the cross itself. Herman Witsius argues extensively against a contemporary opinion that only the sufferings in the garden and the cross itself were part of Christ's satisfaction. Instead, he argues for the position of Heidelberg Catechism Q. 37, that Christ's satisfactory sufferings occurred "during his whole life on earth, but especially at the end, Christ sustained in body and soul the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race." Importantly, he sees all of those sufferings as an expression of God's wrath, though just as God shows forbearance to sinners in this life, so throughout his life Christ experienced relief from the pains of the burden of sin, a sense of God's favor alongside the judgment, until the time came for him to drink the fullness of the cup of wrath. Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, in 2 vols., trans. William Crookshank (Repr. 1822; Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), Bk. II, Chap. VI. Vol. 1, pages 210–234. The whole section goes a long way towards answering the series of questions posed by Farris and Hamilton about timing and intensity of Christ's endurance of the "hate" or "wrath" of God (Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 281–82).

52. *Institutes*, II.xvi.12. I take this to be particularly perceptive of Calvin. Consider, for example, the death of the Maccabean martyrs who were reported to go to their fate boldly (2 Maccabees 7), or historical examples of physical bravery such as St. Polycarp of Smyrna, or Ridley and Latimer. Christ's anxiety and anguish in the Garden indicate an anticipation of some experience far worse than beatings and physical death, cruel as they were. Incidentally, this seems to confirm all the more that Francis Turretin's scholastic formulation of the "punishment of desertion" Christ experienced (*Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 2:14. Q. 11, XXII, pages 434–35) can be read as consistent with Calvin's own view of what was going on. In which case, "losing the infinite love of the Father" (Keller) can easily be seen as a preacher's colloquial translation of a point going back at least to Calvin.

53. Terretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, II.xvi.12, page 519. Commenting on John 10:17, "for this reason the Father loves me," he further writes, "There is, indeed, another and a higher reason why the Father loveth the Son; for it was not in vain that a voice was heard from heaven, This is my beloved Son, in whom the good-pleasure of God dwells, (Matt. 3:17; 17:5.) But as he was made man on our account, and as the Father delighted in him, in order that he might reconcile us to himself, we need not wonder if he declares it to be the reason why the Father loveth him, that our salvation is dearer to him than his own life." John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John,* trans. W. Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010), 409.

54. One more witness to an approach like this comes from Shedd. Drawing a distinction between the operation and emotion of wrath, he argues that though, "the Father 'smote,' 'wounded',

If Calvin seems to be speaking in paradoxes, it is just because he seeks to honor the mystery of an atonement that would require the mystery of the Incarnation.

With these doctrinal threads briefly laid out, we can begin to weave them together and suggest that a "Christus Odium" defender could defend the orthodoxy of the proposal by saying something along the lines of:

> When we say that on the cross "the Father hated the Son" we confess an operation and execution of judgement and hate that must be conceived along the constrained, analogical lines consistent with divine perfection. We also confess it is the hate of the one, undivided, Triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit, per divine simplicity and the inseparable operations axiom. And yet, again, that triune agency is not flat. The operation of judgment or hate is particularly appropriated to the person of the Father, even though it is also the avenging hate of Son and Spirit, as it is that of the Godhead. Furthermore, while the act of making satisfaction via the work of the Redeemer is the one work of God, per considerations regarding appropriation, the term of operation, and the communication of operations, we can say it is particularly the divine Son who is the subject of this act and so can be said to suffer the judgment/hate of God the Father in the cross in his human suffering in body and soul. In that sense, one might say that on the cross the Son endured the hate of the Father. Even still, while he endured that hate, he was nevertheless beloved and well-pleasing to the Father.

Conclusion

At this point, several questions remain. First, in order to demonstrate this formulation is not merely special pleading, it would be helpful to think through other of what Thomas Weinandy has called Christ's "saving acts." These are "the human acts of the Father's Son, human acts performed in communion with the Holy Spirit", where this sort of fancy trinitarian and Christological footwork is necessary.[55] Second,

and 'bruised' the Son, he felt no emotional anger toward the person of the Son. The emotional wrath of God is revealed only against personal unrighteousness, and Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. The Father smote his 'beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased' (Matt. 3:17). At the very instant when the Father forsook the Son, he loved him emotionally and personally with the same infinite affection with which he had loved him 'before the world was.' When it is said that Christ experienced the 'wrath of God,' the meaning is that he experienced the judicial suffering caused by God. The 'wrath' of God in this instance is not a divine emotion, but a divine act by which God the Father caused pain in Jesus Christ for a particular purpose. This purpose is judicial and penal, and therefore make be called an act of wrath. 'The wrath of God is his will to punish' (Anselm, *Why the God-Man* 1.6). In Rom. 13:4 the infliction of suffering by the magistrate upon the criminal is denominated an act of 'wrath': 'He is the minister of wrath.' But the magistrate has no emotional anger toward the criminal." W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology,* 3rd ed., ed. Alan W. Gomes (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2003), 718–19.

55. Thomas G. Weinandy, *Jesus Becoming Jesus: A Theological Interpretation of the Synoptic Gospels* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018), xvii–xx. I'm thinking

we inevitably need to touch on issues of Christ's vicarious representation and the imputation of humanity's sin to Christ.[56] What account of Christ's role as our mediator enables him to stand in our stead as a Surety?

We might also ask whether the position just articulated is even the Christus Odium view Farris and Hamilton have set their sights on. I concede it modifies it in several important respects. As I noted, my point is not to promote the *Christus Odium* view as it comes across in some of the more aggressive quotes Farris and Hamilton have culled. Pastors and preachers ought to be aware that things can be misconstrued in doctrinally and spiritually harmful ways. Taking care to stick more closely to the formulations of Scripture—that tends to be far more modest—in our preaching and popular contexts is wise. Avoiding an overly-psychologized conception of wrath and recognizing its relationship to satisfying the claims of justice can help avoid painful psychological triggers for church members dealing with trauma.[57] In fact, this is what we have seen retrieving these classical categories allows Christus Odium advocates to do. And if they can have this sort of benefit on the most odious form of the doctrine, it is even more surely the case with the moderate forms of penal substitution more broadly held. In which case, Farris and Hamilton's worries present Evangelicals with little impetus to cast aside our atonement theology for another doctrinal formulation and every reason to recover a classical doctrine of God instead.

Indeed, this is not only a project for the academic in the seminary classroom, but pastor in the parish. It is true, the pulpit is not the lectern. Nevertheless, throughout Christian history pastors have been the public theologians in their local congregations.[58] Gregory's *Theological Orations on God and Christ* come to us from his pulpit ministry. The same is true of Thomas Watson's *Body of Divinity.* Pastors are called to do many things, but teaching and preaching sound doctrine are chief among their duties (1 Tim 4:13-16). They are called to teach the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), not only its full redemptive-historical, but dogmatic sweep. Evangelicals are known of their emphatic focus on preaching the cross of Christ,

specifically of acts such as the Son's being conceived in the womb of Mary, or performing miracles, or casting out demons "by the Holy Spirit," all of which might serve as useful proving grounds for these principles.

56. On which, see the useful survey of options around punishment, imputation, and representation in William Lane Craig, *The Atonement* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 53–83.

57. Incidentally, exploring the cross in relation to justice—especially retributive justice—is a helpful apologetic commendation of the doctrine in the current climate as well. Though, this is an angle that just might tell against any sort of reparative accounts that pits itself against a penal account as an alternative instead of as a complement. It seems those accounts specifically miss the benefit of penal substitution to claim the matter of "sins" as well as "sin" is dealt with. The claim of retribution or "vindicatory" justice is precisely the vindication of God's righteousness, which includes the affirmation of the victims of injustice throughout history (Ps 96; Jer 5:27–29; Mic 2:1–3). For a contemporary example, see Fleming Rutledge, *The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 106–45.

58. Kevin Vanhoozer and Owen Strachan, *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015).

displaying Christ crucified before the spiritual eyes of its congregations (Gal 3:1). And rightly so. But unless it is set against the doctrinal backdrop of the triune God at work in the cross, the picture becomes muddled through myopic distortion.[59]

59. On this sort of "emphatic Evangelicalism," see Fred Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 14–20.

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It Was the Will of the Father to Crush Him: The Day of Atonement and the Cross of Christ

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Abstract: The cross of Christ is a scandal, a mystery, and for Christians, an object of wonder. Even today, after millennia of reflection upon the crucifixion, theologians and pastors still probe the atonement, debating and discussing numerous elements of the cross-work of Christ: how wrath is borne, whether sin is forgiven, and what precisely transpires when the Son cries out that he is "forsaken" of the Father. This article will argue not that the crucifixion involved the "breaking" of the Trinity, for this is metaphysically and ontologically impossible, nor that the Father "hated" the Son at Calvary. This article contends amidst a range of views that there is nonetheless real interruption of communion between the Father and Son during his agonizing cross-work. Because the Father "crushes" the Son under the weight of his wrath against sin, we know divine rescue and forgiveness, learning from the atonement of Christ the distinctive beauty of biblical love, a love foreshadowed in the Day of Atonement in older times. This article is thus an exercise in threefold theological construction: it is a work of exegetical theology unto biblical theology unto the overarching synthetic conclusions of systematic theology.

Key Words: atonement, wrath, cross of Christ, forsaken, justice of God, holiness, righteousness, Day of Atonement

The cross of Christ is a scandal, a mystery, and for Christians, an object of wonder. Even today, after millennia of reflection upon the crucifixion, theologians and pastors still probe the atonement, debating and discussing numerous elements of the cross-work of Christ: how wrath is borne, whether sin is forgiven, and what precisely transpires when the Son cries out that he is "forsaken" of the Father. While this moment is wrapped in the mists of Trinitarian personal relations, it is the argument of this author that the bearing of divine wrath by Christ entails that something unique unfolds at Calvary in the relationship between the Father and the Son.

This article will argue not that the crucifixion involved the "breaking" of the Trinity, for this is metaphysically and ontologically impossible, nor that the Father "hated" the Son at Calvary. These points stated, this article contends amidst a range of views that there is nonetheless real interruption of communion between the Father and Son during his agonizing cross-work. Because the Father "crushes" the Son

under the weight of his wrath against sin, we know divine rescue and forgiveness, learning from the atonement of Christ the distinctive beauty of biblical love, a love foreshadowed in the Day of Atonement in older times. The cross emerges from this study not merely as a means by which God can love sinners, but as the center of a divine grand strategy to overcome perfect justice in order to communicate perfect love.

In order to make this case, this paper will delve into the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament. To understand New Testament atonement, that is, we do well to understand Old Testament atonement. This accords with a broader inerrantist (and sufficientist) evangelical method.[1] Our first reference in any biblical doctrine is not philosophical discussion, cultural backgrounds, or extra-textual sources, nor is it an appeal to human reason and standards of human wisdom. That which *first* frames our understanding of the atonement of the new covenant is the atonement ceremony of the old covenant. Accordingly, in the first section of this paper, we chart this course. We make three points from the Day of Atonement, chronicled in Leviticus 16-17. We then offer three systematic considerations that help us understand the ultimate Day of Atonement, mysterious and wondrous and terrible as the crucifixion of Christ is.

The Day of Atonement as the Background of New Testament Atonement

I. The Context of the Day of Atonement

Leviticus 16:1 shows that the ceremony to unfold is not structured to make abstract atonement. This day is לִפְנֵי־ יְהוָה, "before the Lord" (v. 1).[2] So too will the Lord appear in the cloud above the mercy seat (v. 2). The context of the Day of Atonement removes any doubt from the modern reader's mind that this ceremony is disconnected from divine prerogatives. Instead, God himself is overseeing this day. Nadab and Abihu made the terrible mistake of thinking that their offerings would pass muster, but it would not. This is because every sacrifice was before the Lord. Though a formal ceremony, atonement in biblical terms is inescapably personal, and God is the party who must be propitiated by it, lest just judgment flow from heaven itself.

Unlike the unrighteous "worship" of Nadab and Abihu, the Day must be conducted according to God's decree. Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach note that "God's wrath must be overcome in order to draw near to him . . . only by performing the sacrifices in the correct manner is this possible."[3] Instead of "strange fire" (Lev 10:1), which represents all our efforts to improve on God's appointed worship, the Lord frames

1. If "sufficientist" is not a technical theological term, it ought to be.

2. The ESV is used throughout this article, as it is here.

3. Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 47.

the Day that will display covenant love. Love, we learn here, is no saccharine affair; it is not a mere sentiment, and it is anything but an affirmation of human identity in self-chosen form. Love entails death, this text teaches us. In order for God to draw near to his people, blood must flow.

But God does draw near: "I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat," so it is truly God, not man, who presides over this holy ceremony (v. 2). Aaron, the high priest, is an attendant unto the divine at this righteous event. Clothed in simple garb, he must cleanse himself to the utmost in order to perform his duty (vv. 3-5).[4] This is because of the high stakes of this ceremony; it is also because the Lord is present at this ceremony. As Wenham says,

> On this one day the high priest enters the "other world," into the very presence of God. He must therefore dress as befits the occasion. Among his fellow men his dignity as the great mediator between man and God is unsurpassed, and his splendid clothes draw attention to the glory of his office. But in the presence of God even the high priest is stripped of all honor: he becomes simply the servant of the King of kings, whose true status is portrayed in the simplicity of his dress.[5]

See verses 6-10:

> [6] "Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. [7] Then he shall take the two goats and set them before the LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting. [8] And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for Azazel. [9] And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the LORD and use it as a sin offering, [10] but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the LORD to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel.

These are two uses of the aforementioned construction יְהוָה לִפְנֵי־ "before the Lord," and two of לַיהוָֹה אֶחָד, "for the Lord," language which shows us what we noted above: God is presiding over the Day of Atonement. He is the greater Abraham, and he is instituting the system that will lead to the death of the Greater Isaac.[6] We could extract much from this passage alone, but must simply note the following before hastening along: whatever we make of this cultic event, it is God's idea. God has

4. "Ezekiel (9:2–3, 11; 10:2, 6–7) and Daniel (10:5; 12:6–7) describe angels as dressed in linen, while Rev. 19:8 portrays the saints in heaven as wearing similar clothes." Gordon J. Wenham, *Leviticus*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 230.

5. Wenham, *Leviticus*, 230.

6. Jeremy Treat cites work that allows this connection. See Jeremy Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2014), 61–62. Treat leans on Dempster for this profitable—and necessary—linkage. See Stephen Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 85.

called for it. God structures it. It pleases God. It satisfies God. This is how God wants to deal with sin; it is his idea, not man's. In the discussion that follows, we must remember this—not only in Leviticus 16, but all of Scripture, and all of Christian doctrine, and all of Christian ministry. Atonement flows from this bloody stream.

II. The Effect of the Day of Atonement

After making atonement for himself through the killing of a bull (vv. 11-14), Aaron then cleanses the Holy Place (vv. 15-19). He kills a goat as a sin offering and sprinkles the blood on the mercy seat, enabling entrance into the holy of holies. The significance of this moment in the cultic calendar is great: a holy priest enters the holy place on behalf of the holy people in order to restore fellowship with the holy God.[7] Yet though we learn a great deal from these preparations about the importance of absolute purity and holiness as the precedent for atonement, we have not yet reached the apex of the Day's events. Without the spotlessness (in relative terms) of the priest and the place, propitiation for sin will not occur. The people and the priest himself stand as "unclean" due to their "transgressions" and "sins" (v. 16).[8] Blood cleanses and consecrates the setting of atonement (v. 19).

After this, Aaron brings before the people a live goat, and confesses over it "all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins" (v. 21). He transfers in symbolic terms this body of wickedness to the goat and sends it into the wilderness. The goat bears "all their iniquities on itself to a remote area," signifying the total transfer of unrighteousness to it.[9] This act renders the people cleansed, righteous, holy, and atoned for (v. 22).[10] The goat is sent to a land "cut off," a phrase with tremendous spiritual significance.[11] The place is not merely remote, in

7. Wenham makes clear that holiness is the chief category marker of this entire ceremony: "The uncleanness that affects every man and woman to a greater or lesser degree (see Lev. 11–15) pollutes the sanctuary. These atonement-day rituals make the impossible possible. By cleansing the sanctuary they permit the holy God to dwell among an unholy people (vv. 16-17; compare with Isa. 6:3ff.; Ps. 15; 24:3ff.)." Wenham, *Leviticus,* 236–7.

8. Sklar notes that the covering of sin extends to especially heinous sins: "included sins against the Lord for which sacrificial atonement was not normally an option, namely, sins of *rebellion* (*pēsa')*, a strong word used elsewhere to describe rebelling against a superior (Exod. 23:21) and thus well understood to refer to the 'high-handed' sin of Numbers 15:30-31." Jay Sklar, *Leviticus*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014), 212.

9. As will be obvious, the goat is not guilty; it is the people who are guilty, and so the scapegoat is bearing "their guilt," that is, the guilt of Israel. See J. Alan Groves, "Atonement in Isaiah 53," in Charles Evan Hill and Roger R. Nicole, eds., *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological & Practical Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 78.

10. The goat was sent out before all the people, as Sklar points out: "Unlike the rites within the Most Holy Place, this rite was performed in full view of all the Israelites, who could watch the goat – laden with their sin – disappear into the wilderness, never to return (cf. Ps. 103:12)." Sklar, *Leviticus*, 212. This is a representational atonement; the Day of Atonement is effectual for the community, but only the blood of Christ actually washes sinners clean. It is "impossible" for animal blood to cover the wicked (Heb 10:4).

11. As Sklar shows, "The word for 'cut off' (gezera) is built on a root used elsewhere to

other words; it is a place of cursing, for as Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach show, to be cut off "from the camp of Israel was to experience God's punishment for sin."[12]

Someone could respond to this presentation of old covenant atonement by noting that it seems rather fragmented compared to new covenant atonement. This is actually a crucial truth. In the old covenant, there are numerous bulls, several goats, and different chronological moments that together accomplish a provisional—and only a provisional—covering of Israel's sin.[13] We learn from Leviticus that the Day of Atonement includes numerous elements that is in aggregate one festival of sacrifice. John Stott notes of the sacrifices referenced above, for example, that "the two together are described 'as a sin offering' in the singular (v. 5)."[14] Stott clarifies this typological reality: "The author of the letter to the Hebrews has no inhibitions about seeing Jesus both as 'a merciful and faithful high priest' (2:17) and as the two victims, the sacrificed goat whose blood was taken into the inner sanctuary (9:7, 12) and the scapegoat which carried away the people's sins (9:28)."[15]

These cultic elements honor and satisfy the Lord, but also point ahead to the need for a sacrifice that brings complete and efficacious atonement. In the new covenant, there will not be several beings that spill blood; there will not be different points at which atonement occurs for one group or person but not others. One sacrifice, one act of bloodshed, will cover the guilty and assuage the Father's wrath. We recall that the entire old covenant Day is "before the Lord"; so the new covenant Day will be "before the Lord," and bring to completion the propitiatory worship that was begun in Israel's time. The death of Christ will go up before the Lord as a προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν τῷ Θεῷ εἰς ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας, "a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:2). The new covenant sacrifice will unite all these creatures, all these elements, all these desperate needs, all this provision for distinct sins in just one act of one person, the God-man.

III. The Day of Atonement Points us to the Power of the Blood

Lest we misunderstand the ceremony and think that we may emphasize any one of the accomplishments entailed therein, Leviticus 17:10-12 draws our attention to the overarching agent of atonement: blood.

describe people being cut off from worship at the temple (2 Chr. 26:21, NASV), from life (Lam. 3:54), or from the Lord himself (Ps. 88:5)." Sklar, *Leviticus*, 212.

12. Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 49.

13. This can only be a provisional covering, for after all, a goat bears the people's sin. But here we must point out that we should not trip over the identity of the sin-bearer, but rather see substitution highlighted in this passage. "The natural reading in this case is that the animal bears the sin and guilt of the people *in their place* and they are thereby released from this burden." Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 50.

14. John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 144.

15. Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 144.

> [10] "If any one of the house of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among them eats any blood, I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. [11] For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life. [12] Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, No person among you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood.

What precisely is solved by this moment in Israel's existence on an annual basis? It is this: the "souls" of the covenant people have atonement (v. 11). This is why the ceremony occurs. It is so that the people may live before the Lord and not die.[16] But in order for this to happen, death must take place, blood must be shed, for it is the blood that makes atonement (v. 11).[17] Blood in Israelite religion is holy; blood gives life; blood washes clean.[18] Blood represents the very life of the animal, showing us that the Israelites need a substitute sacrifice for their failure to keep the law. Their failure, like the Day itself, is comprehensively *before the Lord*. Atonement must thus occur, for the law is broken and the people are unholy. One must stand in for the nation.

This tells us the following: 1) God is holy; 2) sin offends God directly; 3) if man is to live before God, sin must receive atonement; 4) atonement of the divinely-desired kind necessitates death; 5) death demands blood, the life of the sacrifice; 6) blood frees the soul as atonement comes to glorious completion.[19]

A Theology of Atonement Driven by the Day of Atonement

Thus far we have traced the workings of the levitical Day of Atonement. Our purpose was to better understand the cross of Christ, and the holy prerogatives behind it, through its thematic type. We may now transition to three observations for a broader

16. Emile Nicole comments helpfully on the connection between "ransoming" and purification: "in *kipper* rites, purification cannot be disconnected from compensation: through compensation given to God, purification and forgiveness were granted." Nicole, *Glory of the Atonement*, 48.

17. "The poured-out life (Hebrew *dam*) of the sacrificial victim is substituted *for* the life of the worshipper." Emile Nicole, "Atonement in the Pentateuch," in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological and Practical Perspectives*, ed. Charles Evan Hill and Roger R. Nicole (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 40.

18. See Sklar on this count: "In short, the animal's lifeblood was accepted as the ransom payment in place of the offeror's: it served as a mitigated penalty on the offeror's behalf, graciously accepted by the Lord (the offended party), in this way rescuing the offeror (the offending party) from due punishment and restoring peace to the relationship between the sinner and the Lord." Sklar, *Leviticus*, 220–21.

19. Wenham draws attention to the "ransom" language used in verse 11: "11c could be paraphrased "the blood ransoms at the price of life." In other words the ransom price for man's life is not a monetary payment (as in Exod. 21:30) but the life of an animal represented by its blood splashed over the altar. Because animal blood atones for human sin in this way, it is sacred and ought not be consumed by man." Wenham, *Leviticus*, 245.

theology of atonement and the God who makes atonement, the third of which constitutes the lengthiest discussion of this article.

I. The Day of Atonement is both a Joyful and Dreadful Day

It is a day on which God signals that he loves his covenant people, but also that the extension of his love requires the satisfaction of his perfect justice. It is thus a day of great rejoicing, but also the soberest possible recognition. Love is real; love is active, reaching down from heaven in terms that please God; but love is costly, very costly, and calls the people to realize just how unloveable they truly are. Stott says it well: "It cannot be emphasized too strongly that God's love is the source, not the consequence, of the atonement." He continues the point, a needed one: "If it is God's wrath which needed to be propitiated, it is God's love which did the propitiating."[20] It is not that God's character changes in the atonement, but rather that his dealings with us change. The atonement thus reveals both the dread nature of divine justice and the exalted character of divine love.

II. The Day of Atonement Satisfies the Wrath of God

We will learn this from other texts more explicitly, but here this truth is displayed implicitly. The very requirements of death in various forms and times on the Day of Atonement make painfully clear that this is not a ceremony in which God hands out favor like Halloween candy, but a day on which he calls his people to account. He holds them responsible, fully and terrifyingly responsible, for their sin. He demands the death of numerous animals; he sends the sin-bearer into the wilderness in order to have fellowship with his people.

We cannot underplay the deeply *personal* nature of the Day of Atonement. Our age will tempt us to do so, for it is an age that has not only lost sight of the rightness of retributive justice, but has lost sight of the God who has created the world and rules all things. In calling for atonement, God is not simply rebalancing the scales of justice; he is not disclosing an interest in arbitrary standards of right and wrong. The Day of Atonement is not upholding a law code in the sky; the Day of Atonement is satisfying God (in provisional but meaningful form). As some atonement theories comprehend, God's honor has been besmirched by sin, yes. But more than this, God himself has been wronged, God himself has been blasphemed, God himself is rightly burning against sin.[21]

20. Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 174.

21. Roger Nicole makes this point in his discussion of expiation versus propitiation: "Yet sooner or later the question must arise: 'Who requires expiation or purification, and why?' If the answer be 'God does, in the exercise of his righteousness,' we are back to the traditional view, entirely consonant with the carefully avoided term 'propitiation.'" Roger Nicole, "C. H. Dodd and the Doctrine of Propitiation," *Westminster Theological Journal* 17, no. 2 (1955): 149. There simply is no way to avoid the uncomfortable biblical reality that it is a holy personal God who judges

My remarks here speak to the idea of "reparative atonement." This model was recently proposed by Joshua Farris and S. Mark Hamilton, who sum their view up as follows:

> Christ bears or absorbs no penalty on this theory, thus it is not to be confused with penal substitution. Rather, the mechanism of atonement is the restoration of divine honor (i.e., a commercial framework, which highlights the King in relation to his kingdom) where the earth is conceived as God's kingdom and wherein the moral law functions, not the assumption of a debt of punishment or chance for God to dole out his wrath on Christ for sin. On reparative substitution it is the love of Christ for his Father that is the primary motive in his making atonement. Through Christ's death the [sic] God's honor is publically restored. What does reparative substitution do then? It restores to God the glory that was taken from him, who, as the apostle says, graciously "passed over former sins," the result of which was his willingness to be dishonored for a time. Then came the fullness of time. What does reparative substitution do for humanity? It defers divine retribution until all moral accounts will be settled. It fixes both the private and public problems that humanity faces for having transgressed God's rectoral justice.[22]

The proponents of this view are surely correct that God's honor is besmirched by sin. We made just such an observation with regard to the Lord destroying Nadab and Abihu for their strange fire. Yet we cannot fail to observe that the Day of Atonement reveals much more than a God whose honor needs balm. As we have observed in several places, blood was required for sin. For the priest even to offer sacrifice, atonement for sin had to be made. Then, the scapegoat representatively received all the sin of the nation and was sent off into the darkness. This entails that God's honor is restored in some form, yes, but much more that the burning anger of the Father against sin is assauged and absorbed in full by the Son. Is divine honor addressed in the cross? It certainly is. But much more is transpiring, namely, in Christ's death the demands of God's holy justice are met by God's holy love through the cursing of a spotless being. Through the cross, the wrath of God is satisfied; the people are shown to be washed and pardoned.

Yes, the Day of Atonement sets the terms for what follows, and shows us the categories of biblical salvation in its objective dimension: a wronged God who

sin, not an abstract standard. My thanks to Jeffery Moore for this citation and broader research assistance.

22. Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton, "This is My Beloved Son, Whom I Hate? A Critique of the Christus Odium Variant of Penal Substitution," *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies* 3 no. 2 (2018), original article copy. This article was to form the basis of a 2019 ETS session with Tom McCall, Farris and Hamilton, Ryan Rippee, Derek Rishmawy, and me. In the actual session, discussion centered more in the dynamics of the Godhead in substitution, hence my more extended interaction with McCall to come (much as the thoughtful case by Farris and Hamilton deserves treatment).

demands perfect righteousness in order to enjoy covenant fellowship with his people. Until righteousness is proferred, until an acceptable sacrifice is presented, the wrath of God burns against the people. God is not only dishonored (as he surely is in extremity). No, the dishonoring of God entails the awakening of the just wrath of God. This is not a general wrath; it is a terrifyingly particular and precise wrath against individual evildoers. So it is that the people, led by the high priest, sacrifice animals because they have personally offended and wronged the personal covenant God of Israel.[23] But here we see the wonder of biblical atonement. The same God who is wrathful against sin is the God who sets up an entire system of atonement in order to mediate love to his covenant people.

These words bear on perpetual discussions about divine justice. Even today, long after being soundly refuted by the church fathers, we hear Marcionite theology promoted as a sound doctrine of God. We cannot fail to observe that a fuller reading of the Day of Atonement refutes Marcionite theology in deeply ironic terms.[24] The very Day that features the expression of divine justice is the Day that reveals the depths of divine love.[25] It is thus an error of the most profound kind to read the Day

23. As I have noted earlier, it is divine wrath that it is the ultimate "problem" in all this—not in an immoral sense, but in a logistical sense. How will wrath be overcome? Reparative atonement recognizes the prerogatives of a divine being, but concentrates them in the concept of honor. It thus shows a skewing toward categories that the human mind and heart can accept. But Scripture teaches us that divine wrath is our foremost problem. Because of sin, "the wrath of God is coming" (Col. 3:5–6). There is a future "day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed" (Rom. 2:5). See Jeffrey, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 296–300.

24. The irony goes deep here. Cutting out the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement may play well with our sanitized, justice-soft, God-distrusting age. But removing this doctrine, grounded in a major way in the old covenant Day of Atonement, from our theology ends up making divine love considerably less consequential. This is precisely the move that is made against PSA and its advocates; the cross, it seems, becomes far too bloody and wrath-involved. But the costly nature of the cross is exactly what shows just how deep divine love is. Factor such considerations in when you read Marcionlike presentations such as that found in Andy Stanley, *Irresistible: Reclaiming the New that Jesus Unleashed for the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 161–63, 223.

25. As I have written previously, Stanley as one very prominent recent example contrasts theology proper—God himself—in the old covenant and new covenant. The Jewish God was "holy" and "separate" and "unapproachable" but the God of John was "love" (Stanley, *Irresistible*, 223). The old covenant God "reserved" his love "for his covenant people" unlike the new covenant God. The critique does not lessen in intensity as the book goes on. The Old Testament God "got so angry" that he drowned the Egyptians (251). He and his prophets demonstrated "righteous anger," which "is a thing," Stanley avows, only "as long as we hover over the Old Testament anyway" (251). Unlike the jealous and angry OT God and his wrathful people, "New covenant folks don't get angry at lost things" (254). This polemic fails to see the point that we are at pains to stress here and throughout this article: it is precisely the holy "Jewish" God who meets the terms of his "righteous anger" by the sacrifice of the Son he loves. The fact that the Father loves the Son he lays on the altar makes the sacrifice infinitely more wondrous (and more mysterious to the natural human mind). For more critique of Stanley's unbiblical framing, see Owen Strachan, "We Have No Divided God: A Review of "Irresistible" by Andy Stanley," Center for Public Theology, October 15, 2018, accessible at https://cpt.mbts.edu/2018/10/15/we-have-no-divided-god-a-review-of-irresistible-by-andy-stanley/.

of Atonement in Marcionite terms as a sign of the vindictive, bloodthirsty deity of the Old Testament.[26]

Leviticus 16-17 show us that this God is perfectly holy, yes, but that this God has gone to great lengths to forgive, cleanse, and draw near to his people. He does not do so once; he does not do so every 500 years. He does so annually, repeatedly, over and over again. The Day of Atonement surely shapes our understanding of God's character, and definitely reveals the awful nature and terrible cost of sin. But to stop at this point, and to focus only on the conditions of theistic holiness, is to miss something very near to the entire point of this ceremony. The Day of Atonement is not ultimately a celebration of retribution. It is ultimately a celebration of salvation. Standing behind this salvation—and what a costly salvation it is—is love, everlasting love, love planned as an outpouring before the foundation of the world.

III. The Older Day of Atonement Informs the Greater Day of Atonement

Though God has been wronged, he makes an abundant way back into his favor. We have seen that on the Day of Atonement, this way comes through the sin offering of a spotless sacrifice and then the transfer of sin to a goat. This goat is set apart and then sent away. It is not received back into fellowship. It is not welcomed with loving affection. It is sent far from the covenant people, made a curse for them.

To make a final extended connection, if we are paying attention to the Day of Atonement, we gain needed perspective on the work of Christ. The Father does not hate his Son any more than he hates Aaron, the bulls, or the climactic goat. But he does hate sin. He hates it to the uttermost. Yet his is not a spasmodic hatred like ours'.[27] He acts to meet the demands of his perfect justice by giving us the purifying grace and total righteousness of his Son.[28] To do so, he does not hate the Son; but he does, in loving us, place him on the altar, and the Son is slain for us. In terms that

26. Nor are we forced into a false choice between reparative atonement featuring the unbroken love of the Father and Son or penal substitutionary atonement. As we shall see, the cross of Christ is like the Day conducted in a grand campaign of love, and the Father does not cease to love the Son even as he does pour out his just wrath on the Son at Calvary, a sentence and punishment that leads to temporary interruption of fellowship or communion between the Father and the Son. False choices are a perennial problem in theology, and this is one we should avoid at all costs.

27. Stott's distinction of divine and human anger helps us understand how God can be angry in such a way that we should want him to be angry: "God's anger is absolutely pure, and uncontaminated by those elements which render human anger sinful. Human anger is usually arbitrary and uninhibited; divine anger is always principled and controlled. Our anger tends to be a spasmodic outburst, aroused by pique and seeking revenge; God's is a continuous, settled antagonism, aroused only by evil, and expressed in its condemnation." Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 105–6.

28. John Murray threads the needle nicely on this count: "The propitiation of the divine wrath, effected in the expiatory work of Christ, is the provision of God's eternal and unchangeable love, so that through the propitiation of his own wrath that love may realize its purpose in a way that is consonant with and to the glory of the dictates of his holiness." John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), 31–32.

challenge human comprehension, this giving of the Son comes from the God—a giving unto death—who loves his obedient, self-sacrificing Son. This is a unique event, one without parallel in the annals of human history. In sending his Son to the cross, a sending that promises death, the Father expresses love of the deepest kind. This is Fatherly love for sinners, yes, but love as well for the submissive Son who dies. In John's Gospel, Jesus explicitly connects the Father's love and his death: *For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again* (John 10:17).

This means that, drawing from the Day of Atonement, the Father does require blood for a sin offering even as he sends the Son into the wilderness of death, a place where the Father does not go. He does pour out all his wrath on his Son, his only Son, until his bruised, broken, and bleeding Son hangs lifeless on a cross. This is not hatred, for hatred would entail the breaking of intratrinitarian love, but it is the accomplishment of a sentence of death.[29] This is, I believe, where we do well to locate the "dereliction" of the Son: the judicial sentence handed down by the Father against his Son on behalf of the covenant people of God. Forsakenness is not found in an aggrieved affection or a ruptured Godhead. Forsakenness is located first in the fact that at Calvary, the Father transfers the guilt of his people to Christ, the ultimate scapegoat, and thus pours out his wrath upon him.[30] Secondarily, from this penal act comes real temporary interruption of fellowship or communion between the Father and Son. Even as he cries out about his forsakenness, the Son actually dies at the cross, the culmination of the sentence upon him.

This view is distinct from some evangelical accounts of the Son's forsakenness.[31] Some, for example, emphasize the intensity of the Father's negative emotion toward Christ. Essentially, the Father hates sin, and since the Son bears sin, the Father hates Jesus at the cross.[32] This argument is less a dogmatic argument than a textual one, for it intends to do justice to the full force of the language that issues from Jesus's lips.

29. As I will note below, Christ tells his disciples that the Father "loves" him expressly because he obediently submits to the Father's will and dies on the cross. The entire enterprise of the cross, then, is anchored in intratrinitarian love: "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again" (John 10:17).

30. The usage of legal language is vital to understanding this forsakenness. Herman Bavinck, for example, contrasts "subjective" and "objective" forsakenness, and notes that Christ redeemed us "from the curse of the law" in accomplishing this objective work. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Sin and Salvation in Christ* 3, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 389, 392.

31. This includes what has been called *Christus Odium*, a curious title.

32. This is essentially where R. C. Sproul—a faithful and insightful exegete throughout his life and ministry—is: "Once Christ had . . . volunteered to be the Lamb of God, laden with our sin, then He became the most grotesque and vile thing on this planet. With the concentrated load of sin He carried, He became utterly repugnant to the Father. God poured out His wrath on this obscene thing. God made Christ accursed for the sin He bore. Herein was God's holy justice perfectly manifest. Yet it was done for us. He took what justice demanded for us." R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1985), 158.

Those who make this argument tend to be strong advocates of penal substitutionary atonement. They generally emphasize that Christ as the sin-bearer is seen exclusively by the Father in those terms; therefore, as the Father's anger burns against sin, the Father's anger burns in a personal sense against Christ.[33]

Other renderings go the opposite way. They portray Christ's cry of forsakenness in primary terms as, interestingly, a cry of affirmation of the Father's love (drawing on the broader context of Psalm 22). The argument here is a dogmatic one, for the Father—so the thinking goes—cannot break fellowship with his Son. Thus, at Calvary, when he cries out about forsakenness, the Son is not actually indicating that he and the Father are in any way cut off as he suffers and dies.[34] Instead, though he does indeed feel his life ebbing away, he voices Psalm 22, a citation that includes the full context of the Psalm (extending to the affirmation that "he has not hidden his face from him" in verse 24). In this way the Son signals that he and the Father are united and communing in his life as in his death.[35]

What exactly this entails for penal substitutionary atonement is not clear; advocates of this view tend to be less clear about how exactly atonement covers sinners, and whether the Father is wrathful against sin at all.[36] The difficulty with what "forsakenness" means is, after all, traditionally connected for PSA advocates to the Son bearing the Father's wrath. But if the Son is not legally bearing the Father's wrath, it is not immediately necessary—so the argument seems to go—that the Father "forsake" the Son in some way, for there is nothing occurring in the life of the

33. See, for example, the comments of Herman Witsius: "Since there is an exchange of persons between Christ and believers, and since the guilt of our iniquities was laid upon him, the Father was offended and angry with him. Not that he was ever moved with any passion against him, which is repugnant in general to the perfection of the Divine nature, under whatever consideration: neither that he was by any means offended at him, much less abhorred him, so far as he was considered in himself, for so he was entirely free from all sin; but as considered in relation to us, seeing he was our surety, carrying our sins in his own body." Witsius, *Conciliatory or Irenical Animadversions on the Controversies Agitated in Britain*, trans. Thomas Bell (Glasgow: W. Lang, 1807), 46–47. My thanks to Joseph Randall for this citation, and for a stimulating discussion on the theme of this article.

34. For Tom McCall, "the cry of dereliction means that the Father abandoned the Son to this death at the hands of these sinful people, for us and our salvation." Thomas H. McCall, *Forsaken: The Trinity and the Cross, and Why It Matters* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 47.

35. This is an argument to weigh carefully. We surely do need to consider the context of biblical quotations and citations in interpreting them. However, if the broader context seems to reverse the point signaled in the actual quotation, we run into obvious difficulty, for we cannot thus read texts in their initial positive (or negative) sense. Carson comments here: "though OT texts are frequently cited with their full contexts in mind, they are never cited in such a way that the OT context effectively annuls what the text itself affirms. . . . It is better to take the words at face value: Jesus is conscious of being abandoned by his Father. For one who knew the intimacy of Matthew 11:27, such abandonment must have been agony." D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew and Mark (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 647.

36. This is where McCall is; he questions the idea of the wrath of the Father and of the wrath of God in several places in his book *Forsaken* (see 45–46, 80, 82–83).

Son at Calvary that requires the Father to turn his face away from the Son bearing sin in fulfillment of the Father's will.[37]

One can hope that we can give an account of the cross based on the Day of Atonement that does justice to both Scripture and dogmatics. We need to handle with great care here, but knitting the typological Day and the anti-typological Day helps us make sense of the intratrinitarian dynamics of the cross. The scapegoat sent into the wilderness clearly bore the punishment of God for sin. The scapegoat thus suffered under a judicial sentence, a sentence that rendered it forensically guilty in place of the Israelite community. At the cross, so too did Christ suffer under a judicial sentence, albeit one inexpressibly worse than the prior one. The first scapegoat bore representative wrath for sin, but could not cleanse the guilty. Christ, however, bore the actual wrath of God and drank the cup for all God's elect. He became sin for us, not in an ontological sense—he remained himself—but in a judicial sense (2 Cor 5:21). He took our place. He carried our curse. He died under our legal sentence, the sentence we deserved but he did not.[38]

This helps us navigate tricky waters. On the one hand, we face the issue of the Father possibly "hating" the Son in an emotional and affective way. On the other, we confront the possibility of only a supposed forsakenness, leaving us with a clouded vision of the cross. Again, we are in the realm of the high and the holy here, peering into things that are very nearly too great for us. Nonetheless I do think that we have a sensible way to frame the intratrinitarian dynamics of the cross. I am not personally convinced that the Father hates the Son at Calvary, nor do I find it optimal to say that the Father and Son are "estranged" (for this word could imply hostility of some kind). Christ cries out ἠλὶ ἠλὶ, "*My* God*, my* God*"* in voicing his dereliction, after all (Matthew 27:46). But we must also note that Jesus did not quote a Psalmic verse affirming his Father's immediate care for him as he died; rather, he cried out that he was σαβαχθάνι, interpreted by Matthew as ἐγκατέλιπες, "forsaken."

Keeping each of these two sides in mind, I suggest we do best to locate Christ's "dereliction" primarily in the sentence under which he dies, a sentence that leads to his actual physical death; secondarily in the interruption of earthly communion

37. McCall, as one example, affirms propitiation but—citing T. F. Torrance—denies that God can be "acted upon" by any priestly human sacrifice (*Forsaken*, 110). In my reckoning, this confuses the very nature of propitiation, and removes the "before the Lord" context of the typical Day of Atonement and the anti-typical Day of Atonement.

38. John Gill directly connects the cry of forsakenness to this legal verdict: "Wherefore he made not this expostulation out of ignorance: he knew the reason of it, and that it was not out of personal disrespect to him, or for any sin of his own; or because he was not a righteous, but a wicked man, as the Jew blasphemously objects to him from hence; but because he stood in the legal place, and stead of sinners: nor was it out of impatience, that he so expressed himself; for he was entirely resigned to the will of God, and content to drink the whole of the bitter cup: nor out of despair; for he at the same time strongly claims and asserts his interest in God, and repeats it; but to show, that he bore all the griefs of his people, and this among the rest, divine desertion." John Gill, "Matthew 27:46," Exposition of the Bible, accessible at https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/matthew-27-46.html.

(or fellowship) as Jesus hangs on Roman wood, interruption that culminates in the death of the man Christ Jesus.[39] If death is not an interruption of communion, after all, what is?[40] In this framing, the Father does not hate the Son, as we are at pains to say. The divine bond of the Trinity is not broken at Calvary. But the Father does genuinely judge the Son, and the Son's experience of his judgment is real, terrible, and unique. This is because the Son undergoes the fate of the guilty at the cross. For the first and only time in the life of the Godhead, the Son is unrighteous in forensic terms at the bar of God's justice, and the Son loses his life at Calvary. Not permitting this threefold recognition of forsakenness (judicial guilt leading into interruption of communion which culminates in physical death) in the doctrine of Christ means that we fail to do justice to the warp and woof of Scripture. Indeed, if we do not watch ourselves, the incarnation itself could seem to trouble a certain pristine metaphysics, one that is more analytic than biblical.

The "forsakenness" of the cross proceeds from the fact that the Son of God is judged guilty at Calvary. Like Abraham loading his son onto the altar, the Father sends his Son to the cross in place of the sinner. This corollary passage can inform our understanding of the sacrifice of the greater Isaac. Jesus takes on our judicial sentence; in the cosmic courtroom of God's justice, he is rendered condemned in our place. He has thus become the true and greater scapegoat. He is sent into the wilderness, sentenced to banishment, for us.

It seems clear in this instance that, even as the Son is upholding the universe per his unbroken and unbreakable divine nature, he is also taking on the full wrath of God, and is thus experiencing the interruption of the communion with the Father that he has enjoyed throughout his incarnation. This interruption, in fact, culminates in the tragedy of his death.[41] While there is admittedly some mist that shrouds our finite human conception of this holy moment, we are not without resources. In my reckoning, we can make greater sense of the intratrinitarian dynamics of the cross by understanding Gethsemane better. Luke's Gospel tells us that before the cross, an angel strengthens Jesus after he prays to the Father in Gethsemane (Luke 22:43). This angel, we cannot help but infer, ministers to Christ due to the express command

39. On this point, McCall and I agree: "His Father did indeed leave him to die, and could have rescued him; Jesus could have been spared the terrible humiliation, agony and death. The Father could have done so, but he did not. Jesus was abandoned—the Father abandoned him to this death, at the hands of these sinful people, for us and our salvation." McCall, *Forsaken*, 44.

40. There is a lively and needful debate over what exactly "forsakenness" means, as is already clear. Leon Morris speaks without qualification of the interruption of communion as I have here: "When we put such passages of Scripture together, it seems that in the working out of salvation for sinners the hitherto unbroken communion between the Father and the Son was mysteriously broken." Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 721–22. Morris also uses the language of "abandonment."

41. John Owen suggests such an interpretation when he writes that the Son was "destitute of comfort so far as to cry, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Ps. xxii.1" Owen*, The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1999), 56–57

of the Father. So, it seems, that the Father aids Christ throughout the entirety of his earthly life—even in nightmarish Gethsemane—but does not extend such help to Jesus in his crucifixion. We know from the direct witness of the four Gospels that the Father does not explicitly answer Jesus's cries with either speech or an angel at Calvary. On the cross, Jesus is dying as a curse; he is bearing the Father's wrath; he is, spiritually speaking, walking in the shadowlands, cut off from the camp, and unto death he receives no known help from heaven (unlike his prior experience).[42]

We are studying things that are nearly too great for us. To be quite honest, there is no precise analogy we may draw from our context to Christ's cry of dereliction. This is a unique event, uniquely terrible in experience and uniquely wonderful in effect. The love of the Father for the Son, and the Son for the Father, is not beyond logic (as if it is illogical or insensible) but it is surely supralogical. It is beyond our facts and theorems. In this particular moment in the life of the Father and the Son, we witness a Father who sends his Son to the cross to die in our place, just as we witness a Son who cries out to his Father in agony. The Son trusts his Father and prays several times to his Father on the cross, showing that the Godhead is not severed. Yet the Son also hangs as a sin offering to the Father, his travail unrelieved and his cries not explicitly answered.[43] The lack of a response from the Father matters, because our first burden in building doctrine is to take the actual biblical data and work with it, not to conform it to any greater extrabiblical standard.[44] The speech we hear from Christ, and the lack of speech from the Father, thus must have first priority in shaping our conception of the "forsakenness" Jesus experiences at Calvary.

At this point we must observe that the Father not only *lets* his Son die; he *commissions* him to die, and orchestrates this death according to his sovereign "hand and plan" (Acts 2:23-24). This death is in direct fulfillment of Isaiah 53, at text that

42. Stephen Wellum affirms that the Godhead is fully intact at Calvary, but also that Christ's bearing of sin causes a temporal change in personal relations: "As Jesus pays the ransom price needed to redeem us, he commits his spirit into the hands of his Father, as he deliberately dies, and with normal personal relations restored between the Father and Son—'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit' (Luke 23:46)." Wellum, *Christ Alone: The Uniqueness of Jesus as Savior*, 5 Solas Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 208–9. Wellum's nod to "normal personal relations" matches what I am articulating in this article. The "forsaking" of Christ entails not just his actual expiration, but comprehends the fullness of his agonized dying at Calvary.

43. While not embracing a "broken Trinity" perspective (like the mainstream of Reformed and evangelical commentators), Stott puts it as strongly as any: "So then an actual and dreadful separation took place between the Father and the Son; it was voluntarily accepted by both the Father and the Son; it was due to our sins and their just reward; and Jesus expressed this horror of great darkness, this God-forsakenness, by quoting the only verse of Scripture which accurately described it, and which he had perfectly fulfilled, namely, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 81.

44. We must first do business with the actual text before us. In this and all our theology, our method must be firstly exegetical. For systematic theology to have any weight, it must first be exegetical theology. This entails that the actual words and citations of a given text shape our theology, even as we necessarily read all Scripture as a whole. There is surely a cyclical reality in play here, but it must always be one that does business with the actual grammar and syntax of a given passage first.

tells us several vital truths about the Father and the suffering servant. The atonement sacrifice was "stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted" (v. 4); "the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (v. 6); notably, "it was the will of the LORD to crush (דַּכְּאוֹ) him; he has put him to grief" (v. 10). None of these formulations explicitly indicate that the Father despises the Son at the cross. But neither do these texts suggest that the Father held back his wrath from the Son. At the grammatical level, Motyer offers both "willed" and "delighted" as capturing the Father's mindset in "crushing" the sacrifice: "Just as Cyrus 'fulfilled all the Lord's will and pleasure' in the restoration of Jerusalem (44:28), so the heart of God is revealed in his delight, even at such cost, in finding and providing a guilt offering."[45]

The witness of Isaiah 53, a witness that syncs elegantly with Leviticus 16-17, is that God himself puts the suffering servant "to grief." He not only grudgingly does so; he gladly sends the servant to die. Because God acts, laying all the sin of his people on the Son, the Son is crushed, left in grief, and smitten by God. These words come to fruition, painful fruition, at Calvary. The Son prays to the Father, but as one example, the "listen to my beloved Son" of the transfiguration does not occur in the crucifixion accounts of the Gospels. Instead, the Son is lifted up to die, and no intervention or strengthening word comes from the heavens. All this is because the Son has become a guilt offering and a scapegoat for us. His ontology is not changed; he dies as the Son. But he is reckoned unrighteous so that his church would be reckoned righteous.

This moment does not break intratrinitarian dogmatics, but it does definitely inform and stretch and shape them. Logic alone, reason alone, cannot guide us here. At Calvary, the greater Abraham does not attack the greater Isaac. He is not a deity enraged by his Son who demands his Son's blood to placate his uncontrollable anger. The Son is loved by the Father expressly because he lays down his life in obedient submission. But in this episode the Father does something he has never done: he pours out all his just wrath against sin on Christ. He binds the greater Isaac, and he plucks no ram from the thicket. The greater Isaac suffers, and bleeds, and dies by the Father's perfect will. This is because there is a greater plan at work, a plan orchestrated by the Father to make a people for himself by the blood of his Son and the agency of the Spirit. This sacrifice is called by Paul "a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God," revealing that the death of Christ pleased the Father (Eph 5:2).[46]

45. J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 438.

46. The words of John Piper are helpful on this count: "This explains the paradox of the New Testament. On the one hand, the suffering of Christ is an outpouring of God's wrath because of sin. But on the other hand, Christ's suffering is a beautiful act of submission and obedience to the will of the Father. So Christ cried from the cross, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Matthew 27:46). And yet the Bible says that the suffering of Christ was a fragrance to God. 'Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God' (Ephesians 5:2)." John Piper, *The Passion of Jesus Christ: Fifty Reasons Why He Came to Die* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 23.

The redemptive plan covered here will mean that the Father can justly give "every spiritual blessing" to his church (Eph 1:3).[47] This is how he will grant us an inheritance in the heavenly places (1:3-14).[48] Ephesians 1 is thus greatly important for our broader comprehension of the intratrinitarian love and redemptive love displayed at Calvary. Love, we learn, is not occasional or isolated; the greatest love there is flows from a grand campaign, a plot from before the ages, a rescue mission enacted before any human will or intuition existed.

But this love is not the love that we might expect of God. The love of God given to us is dependent upon the clearing of the Father's wrath. It is not as if the Father is merely an aggrieved bystander here, and the Son shoulders the load of salvation in order to woo back the Father. No, three times in Ephesians 1 Paul zeroes in on the Father's will as the impetus of our salvation, our blessing, our iron-clad eschatological hope (Eph 1:5, 9, 11).[49] Per verse 10, the Father's "plan" proceeds according to his will, a will that Son and Spirit assent to, wholly affirm, and obey in the perfect pre-temporal expression of joyful submission. You could say it this way: before time itself, the Father game-plans to overcome his own perfectly just anger against sin. This, and no other, is the fullest expression of divine love for sinners, a love that takes shape in the Father's will and plan before the foundation of the earth, a love that drive the Son to die for sinners in perfect obedience to the Father, a love that sends the Spirit into our hearts as the inrushing manifestation of divine possession.

Here we recall our earlier response to those who would argue that divine justice cancels divine love, and who would suggest that the existence of divine wrath in our theological categories crowds out room for genuine love. Love, we hear from many cultural angles today, has no contact at all with anger. One who is loving effectively cannot be angy. But in Scripture and scriptural theology (and any sound systematic theology built upon exegetical theology firstly and biblical theology secondly), the love of God solves the problem of the wrath of God. Love emerges in cosmically beautiful yet alien fashion, for the Father who loves his Son crushes his Son in order to love the elect chosen as a people unto himself. There is elegant symmetry between Testaments on this count; Scripture speaks with one voice here. Just as we observed

47. Thielman notes that the Father's agency is in view in the early portions of this section of Ephesians. Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010), 37–39.

48. See Matthew Barrett here: "The incarnate Son voluntarily submits Himself to the preordained purpose of the Father, as evident in Jesus's Gethsemane prayer, and the Father in turn approves the work of the propitiation that His Son accomplishes, most visibly manifested when He raises Him from the dead, thereby vindicating His Son and justifying His work of atonement (Rom. 4:25)." Barrett, "In Our Place: The Atonement," in *High King of Heaven: Theological and Practical Perspectives on the Person and Work of Jesus*, ed. John A. MacArthur (Chicago: Moody, 2018), 134.

49. For more on this section in Ephesians and the Father's saving will, see Ryan L. Rippee, *That God May Be All in All: A Paterology Demonstrating That the Father Is the Initiator of All Divine Activity* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2018), 68, 129.

earlier that the Day of Atonement should best be understood as a work of love (that perfectly meets the terms of God's holiness), so we should understand the cross in still greater terms of a broader plan of divine kindness, affection of the strongest kind. Divine love meets the terms of divine justice. The cross is the greater Day of Atonement, the Day when this love is truly secured, for redemption of the elect is once and for all time accomplished.

How distinct such love is from worldly love, which is essentially uninhibited emotional affirmation of the other without any conditions.[50] Per the terms of the Creator-creature distinction, God's love is not our love (the natural man's love, that is).[51] Just as God is altogether distinct from man, separated by an infinite ontological gap, so God's love is altogether distinct from man's love. It is not as if the Father's love shown in Christ's death and secured by the Spirit is just like human love, but with a redemptive twist. The Father's love *is* love, and though humanity assumes we love in the same way, we do not.[52]

This discussion of the finer points of the cross thus has direct bearing on our evangelism, apologetics, and discipleship. If those outside the church (or even those inside it) protest that love by definition should not include such realities as Fatherly crushing of the Son, wrath, and intratrinitarian forsaking of any kind, we must respectfully counter that love has no ultimate definition outside of biblical categories. Love is what God says it is; love is what the Godhead gives us, the three persons working jointly to fulfill the Father's perfect plan. Love that is weak is man-defined love, often emotionally grounded; love that is strong, infinitely strong, does not dissipate under even the worst circumstances, judicial sentencing of the Son that leaves the Son guilty on behalf of sinners. Intratrinitarian love does not barely endure during the atonement; the expansive love of the Godhead is *defined* by the holding together of divine love even through the worst possible event, an event in which one member of the Trinity puts another to grief as the three members work together to fulfill the Father's will (see Eph 1:5, 9, 11 once more).[53]

50. Love per the older film *Love Story* means "never having to say you're sorry" (so you're good just the way you are); love in modern pop music form means "I'd never ask you to change" per Bruno Mars and "I can't change" (and am loved for it) per Macklemore. These citations—no doubt unanticipated by some scholars—give us a passing sense of our culture's definition of love as affirmation, positively, and the absence of any change agenda, negatively. Biblical love, suffice it to say, is altogether different.

51. On this essential doctrine, taught from the Bible's first chapter by the fact of divine creation, see Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, ١٥٦ ,(١٩٧٤–57.

52. This is true even as an unsaved father's love for his child is nonetheless, per God's common grace, actual love. It is not, however, ultimate love; it is not the love we desperately, the love that forgives and cleanses the guilty.

53. On the matter of inseparable operations, see Augustine: "just as Father and Son and Holy Spirit are inseparable, so they work inseparably" (*De Trinitate*, 1991, 1.7). This does not in any way indicate or necessitate a blurring of personal relations and roles, whether before the earth's foundation or after it, but it does mean that the three persons of the Godhead—our theological

This is high and holy territory. There is no human corollary here; this is a unique moment that must define human understanding of God, not vice versa. The Father who wishes to exalt his Son is the Father who designs a plan that features exaltation by crucifixion. This is how the Father ultimately shows his Son to be the only being worthy of his exaltation: he sends him as a sacrifice and a scapegoat for the elect. The Son obediently washing the church clean renders him the indisputable Alpha and Omega, the one who not only creates the heavens but creates a new humanity. The Father loves the Son in exalting him, an end obtained by his holy immolation under Fatherly condemnation of a judicial kind. The Son loves the Father in obeying him, an end obtained in peak form by the willingness to bleed to the last drop. Thus we may say that the Father's exaltational love for his Son means that he sends his Son into the darkest darkness, a darkness unrelieved by immediate Fatherly help, and that the Son's love for the Father means that he willingly goes there.

To bring all the threads of this lengthy discussion together, the Father loves the Son but crushes him, loves the Son but makes him a sin offering, loves the Son but finds him judicially guilty on behalf of the church. The stakes are high on all counts here. To lose sight of the Father's love for the Son at Calvary means that we lose sight of the essential nature of the Father-Son relationship, a love that predates all time and history and never blinks out. But to lose sight of the Father's judging and crushing of the Son at Calvary per explicit biblical witness (Isa 52:10) means that we lose sight of the awful uniqueness of Jesus's death. At Calvary, under divine sentencing, he prayed to the Father, confessed his forsakenness, committed himself into the Father's hands, and expired.[54]

Conclusion

At Calvary, Jesus cries out that he is forsaken by the Father. We have made the case for understanding this forsakenness in a threefold sense. Firstly, his forsakenness is located in the Father's transfer of his people's guilt to Christ, the ultimate scapegoat. [55] Secondarily, from this penal act comes real temporary interruption of fellowship

term for the three divine persons is after all *Trinity*, signaling unified threeness—shares perfect unity, a unity that manifests in the perfect execution of the will of God.

54. B. B. Warfield focuses in his commentary on this scene on the Son's "desolation" almost unto "despair" (and calls Christ's cry one of "desertion"), but notes this above all: "If he cried out in his agony for deliverance, it was always the cry of a child to a Father whom he trusts with all and always, and with the explicit condition, Howbeit, not what I will but what Thou wilt. If the sense of desolation invades his soul, he yet confidingly commends his departing spirit into his Father's hands (Lk. xxiii. 46)." Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Person and Work of Christ* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, ۱۳۲ ,(۱۹۵۰–33.

55. The usage of legal language is vital to understanding this forsakenness. Herman Bavinck, for example, contrasts "subjective" and "objective" forsakenness, and notes that Christ redeemed us "from the curse of the law" in accomplishing this objective work. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* 3:389, 392.

or communion between the Father and Son, for the Father cannot look upon evil (Hab 1:13). Thirdly, the man Christ Jesus dies at the cross, the culmination of the sentence upon him. At no point in the making and execution of this redemptive plan, though, were the Father and Son hatefully opposed to one another. The work that accomplished redemption was one work, and it was driven by the otherworldly wisdom and insight of the first person of the Godhead, and it was secured by the obedient sacrifice of the second person, who offered his life in the power of the third person (Heb 9:14).

We have heard it said that in the atonement, mercy and justice kiss. This is true, and it is similarly true that at the atonement, uninterrupted Fatherly love and judicial Fatherly condemnation meet. Indeed, this is love of a most transcendently unique character, love of the most costly kind—love that means that the Father does not rush to the aid of his beloved, but that he crushes him, lays all our iniquities on him, and allows his blood to flow without interruption. The Father loves the Son even in sending him to the cross, but in this instance and this instance alone in history, the well-loved Son must bear the terrible weight of the Father's justice. Never before and never since has this occurred; truly, the Son was given as a substitutionary sacrifice for us, placed as in the ancient Day "on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life."

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The Father's Love for the Son in Penal Substitutionary Atonement

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Abstract: In what Joshua Farris and S. Mark Hamilton label the *Christus Odium* variant of penal substitutionary atonement, the Son becomes the object of the Father's perfect hatred on the cross. However, within a penal substitutionary model of the atonement, when propitiation was made, did it necessitate that the Father hates the Son? No, on the contrary, a biblical model of penal substitutionary atonement is the most glorious display of the Father's love for his Son in the Spirit. The Father's eternal plan of the atonement is rooted in his love for the Son and brings him great pleasure in accomplishing his purpose at the cross. The Father sent the Son, empowered by the Spirit to be a penal substitutionary sacrifice so that those worshippers would not only see the glory of the Father in the face of Christ, but would experience the Father's love in the Son by the indwelling Spirit. Further, the Father hates sin but cannot hate his Son, and so was greatly pleased that the Son laid down his life and took it up again, accomplishing redemption and propitiation and reconciliation as the perfect sacrifice for sin. For only as a substitute can he actually pay for sins, bring real forgiveness and make peace.

Key Words: penal substitution, Father's wrath, atonement, work of Christ, Father's love, forgiveness

In his first epistle, the Apostle John employs a contrast between light and dark to demonstrate that all that is good and true and righteous comes from and is defined by God: "This is the message we have heard from him [the Son] and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). In contrast, the fallen sinner is said to be "walking in darkness" (1 John 1:6), and yet a way is made for any of us in the darkness to come to the light: "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). John then anticipates a further scenario. What happens when we who are in the "light" commit an act of sin? Do we return to the darkness? No, John argues for "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1–2).

John is getting at the heart of the atonement, when he explains that the Father, who is "light," who is holy and righteous, enables a way for those in the "dark" to be

with him; namely, through the "advocacy" of the Son, who is also "righteous" (2:1). Furthermore, the Son's advocacy is more than that of mere lawyer arguing our case. He is the one who "propitiates" the righteous requirement of the Father's character (his wrath towards sin, e.g., Rom 1:18) through his own blood (1:7), thus forgiving sinners and cleansing them from all sin.[1]

Later in the letter, John returns to the idea of "propitiation" (1 John 4:10), distinguishing it from the pagan understanding of his own day, which meant placating or appeasing an angry Deity. It is not, then, that the Father is unwilling, and the Son wins him over (and somehow, along the way, the Spirit is uninvolved or forgotten). Rather, John considers it as a fundamental description of the Father when he says, "love is from God" (1 John 4:7) and "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16).[2] This loving Father defines the meaning of love at the cross ("In this is love") by sending his the Son of his love in the Spirit to be the "propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).[3] Thus, according to John, the Father's love flows from the divine nature and motivates his plan for those in the "dark" to come to the "light." The Father conceives a way to "propitiate" this righteous requirement of his own nature, exhibited in wrath toward sinners who transgress his law.

The question under discussion is, "At the cross, when propitiation was made, did it mean that the Father hated the Son?" Dubbed *Christus Odium*, the affirmative argues that yes, the Father hated the Son since he was "forsaken of God" (Matt 27:46), identified with the cursed (Gal 3:13), with the lawless (Isa 53:12), and with sin itself (2 Cor 5:21). Nevertheless, the implication that the Father hated the Son at the cross is problematic for a number of reasons: it undermines divine simplicity, misunderstands the unity of the divine will residing in the nature, denies the reality of inseparable operations, and most importantly, has no basis in Scripture.

One further question, if acceptance of penal substitutionary atonement may lead to the teaching that the Father hated the Son at the cross, does this mean we need to rethink the nature of substitution or take up another alternative? No. The excesses or homiletical emphases of some does not undermine the validity of the biblical teaching on penal substitutionary atonement.

The goal of my paper, then, is not to simply answer the question, "How can the Father love the Son in penal substitutionary atonement?" Rather, it is to argue that penal substitutionary atonement is the most glorious display of the Father's love for

1. See Colin Kruse's discussion of ἱλασμός (*hilasmos* "propitiation") and its cognates where he concludes: "What this suggests is that the notion of atonement in the OT is best understood comprehensively to include both the cleansing and forgiveness of the sinner, and the turning away of God's anger." Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 76.

2. The context makes clear that θεὸς (*theos* "God") is not in the generic or a reference to the Trinity because this same God "sent his Son into the world" (v. 9) "to be the propitiation for our sins" (v. 10). Furthermore, he has given "his Spirit" (v. 13).

3. The Spirit is the "Spirit of truth" (1 John 4:6) who testifies of the work of Christ (1 John 4:2) and confirms its reality to our hearts (1 John 4:13).

his Son in the Spirit. For the Son's sake, then—that is, in order to place his Son's glory on display and make his pleasure for the Son public—he sent the Son to be a substitutionary sacrifice, satisfying the righteous requirement of his holy character (the wrath of God, arising from his outraged holiness), forgiving an infinite debt, and reconciling a people to be his glorious inheritance in Christ by the Spirit.

The Father's Plan is Rooted in His Love

The plan of salvation played out on the stage of creation is an overflow of the *Father's* eternal love for the Son in the Spirit. From all eternity, this love has been eternally and perfectly poured out on the Son (John 3:35; 5:20; 10:17; 15:9-10; 17:24). Reciprocally, the Son loves the Father (John 14:31), and though no mention is made of the Father or Son's love for the Spirit or the Spirit's love for Father and Son, the fruit of the Spirit is love (Gal 5:22), and the Spirit is the one who makes known the Triune God's love (Rom 5:5; 15:30). Furthermore, a fundamental part of the Christ's atoning work is so that all those who believe in Christ might participate in the intra-trinitarian fellowship of love that existed "before the foundation of the world" (John 17:22-24).

In the Incarnation

In the incarnation, the eternal love of the Father for the Son has gone public (1 John 4:9) by the Spirit. The angel explains to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High [the Father] will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Then, in the life and ministry of Jesus, the Father pours out his Spirit on the Son (Matt 3:16-17; 12:18; Luke 3:22; 4:18-19; Acts 10:38), so that the Son can perform the Father's works (John 5:19; 10:32-33) and speak the Father's words (John 12:49-50).[4]

The Father makes his love public at both the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus. He told the witnesses, "You are/This is my beloved Son, with you/whom I am well-pleased" (Mark 1:11; 9:7; cf. Matt 3:17; 17:5; Luke 9:35; 2 Pet 1:17-18). Further, John

4. In John's Gospel, the works of the Father through the Son circle around seven specific signs. They are: (1) water changed to wine (John 2:1–11), (2) healing of the nobleman's son (John 4:46–54), (3) the healing of the man at the pool (John 5:1–18), (4) the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:1–14), (5) walking on the water (John 6:16–21), (6) healing of the blind man (John 9:1–41), and (7) raising of Lazarus (John 11:1–44). Regarding these signs, Nicodemus tells Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him" (John 3:2). Morris affirms that the signs not only point to the Father but originate with him as well. "Perhaps it would be true to say that where John sees miracles from one point of view as σημεῖα (semeia "signs"), activities pointing people to God, from another he sees them as ἔργα (erga "works"), activities that take their origin in God. Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 612. These signs were worked out in the sovereign, providential timing of the Father (John 9:3), and in response to Jesus's prayer (John 11:21–22, 41–42). Therefore, the works testify that the Father has sent the Son (John 5:36–38; 10:25) and that the Father and Son are one (John 10:37–38).

teaches that the Father gave to the Son the "Spirit without measure" (John 3:34),[5] and so too, the Father is always with him (John 8:29; 16:32). Thus, the Son laid aside his own will to do the will of the Father (John 6:38), to accomplish his work (John 4:34; cf. Heb 3:1-6), and to "always do the things that are pleasing to him" (John 8:29). In short, Jesus said, "but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father" (John 14:31; cf. John 15:10).

Jesus even rebukes his enemies for not understanding the purpose of the incarnation: The Father, Son, and Spirit, working their plan of salvation, giving life and exercising judgment so that "all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him" (John 5:23). Therefore, in Jesus's glorification of the Father, the Father glorified the Son (John 8:49-50, 54-55). Furthermore, and most important for our discussion, the mutual glorification and honor of Father and Son arising from their mutual love culminates in the work of the cross (John 12:28; 17:1).

In the Crucifixion

In the crucifixion of Jesus, the Father gives the Son to be the Savior of the world by making him to be a penal substitutionary sacrifice for his elect. To be sure, what we are not saying is that Jesus, who is full of love, offered himself in such a way to placate the Father, who is full of wrath. On the contrary, both Father and Son in the Spirit are united in divine love and holiness to satisfy the righteous requirement of their divine nature.

Therefore, the suffering and shame was not purposeless, a mere accident of history (Matt 26:53-54); it happened for a reason. In sending the Son, the Father fulfills his "plan and foreknowledge" (Acts 2:23; cf. Acts 4:28), delivering him up to death to be a sin offering (Mark 10:45; 2 Cor 5:21; Rom 8:32).[6] Furthermore, the Son also offered himself up (John 10:17-18) through the anointing ministry of the Holy Spirit (Heb 9:14), which he received from the Father.[7]

As a result of the cross, the Father condemned sin (Rom 8:3), and as the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29, 36), he is the gift provided by the Father in order to "take away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).[8] This the Father does by putting his Son forward

5. Grammatically, the one who gives the Spirit could be understood as the Son; however, verse 35 makes it clear that the Father, who gives all things to the Son, is the one who gives the Spirit. See D. A Carson, The Gospel According to John (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 212.

6. The use of ὑπέρ (*huper* "on behalf of") is used often to speak of substitutionary atonement (e.g., John 11:50; 15:13; Rom 5:6, 1 Cor 11:24; 15:3; 2 Cor 5:14; Gal 1:4; 2:20; 3:13; Eph 5:2, 25; 1 Thess 5:10).

7. Consistent with inseparable operations and divine simplicity.

8. Substitutionary atonement is often criticized in Johannine studies; nevertheless, it is the teaching of Scripture. For a defense of substitutionary atonement in the Gospel of John, see Charles A. Gieschen, "The Death of Jesus in the Gospel of John: Atonement for Sin?" Concordia Theological Quarterly 72, no. 3 (July 1, 2008): 243–61; and George Leonard Carey, "The Lamb of God and Atonement Theories," Tyndale Bulletin 32 (January 1, 1981): 97–122.

(as I argued in the introduction) as a means of propitiation (Rom 3:25).[9] Thus, as the Son is "lifted up" (John 8:28), he fully satisfied the Father's righteous requirement through drinking the "cup that the Father has given [him]" (John 18:11; cf. Mark 10:38). [10] Peter Bolt, in *The Cross from a Distance*, connects the imagery of the cup of wrath with Isaiah's servant of the Lord. He writes,

> Just before the final servant song, in which the servant dies a sacrificial death, we read that Israel has drunk the cup of God's wrath to the dregs, and this cup will be handed to Israel's tormentors (51:17, 22). Isaiah's next chapter shows that it is the servant's death that has exhausted the cup of God's wrath on behalf of Israel. Jesus now [Mark 10:38] predicts that, as the servant of the Lord, he will drink the cup of God's wrath.[11]

At the cross, the Son was suffering the wrath and judgment of the Father as an offering for sin. How then can the Son experience the Father's wrath but not his hatred? Are wrath and hatred synonymous? No. Because Christ "became a curse" (Gal 3:13), because the Father made him to "be sin" (2 Cor 5:21) and sent him "for sin, [the Father] condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom 8:3). His wrath and judgment towards sin was satisfied in the substitutionary work of Christ on the cross. Nevertheless, in those same passages, the Father cannot hate his Son because the Son is the perfect one who "knew no sin" (2 Cor 5:21) and who came in the "*likeness* of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3). Thus, the Father's motivation to send the son to the cross as a penal substitutionary sacrifice bearing the Father's wrath was love, not hate.

And though Christ experienced "forsakenness" on the cross (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34), it was not an absolute abandonment to outer darkness but rather the feeling of Christ in his humanity after nine hours on the cross that his Father had abandoned him. Even the Son's expression cannot be understood to be an absolute statement for he calls the Father, "My God" and was confident of the Father's loving care: "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again" (John 10:17). He was able to pray as he breathed his last words, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46). The Son's entrusting of his spirit to the Father reveals the fact that the outpouring of the Father's wrath is not an act of love ontologically, but rather an act of perfect just wrath in the context of a loving plan to reconcile sinners to himself.

9. Again, the Father himself here takes the initiative to send the Son to be the means of satisfaction. See Thomas R. Schreiner, Romans, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 6 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 191–92. For a thorough lexical and theological treatment of ἱλασμός (hilasmos "propitiation"), see Leon Morris, The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), 155–74.

10. The Old Testament allusions associate the cup with suffering and with the wrath of God the Father (Ps 75:8; Isa 51:17; Jer 25:15; Ezek 23:31–33). The book of Revelation has similar connections (Rev 14:10; 16:19), which fit well with the doctrine of propitiation.

11. Peter G. Bolt, The Cross from a Distance: Atonement in Mark's Gospel (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 67.

The Father's Plan Brings Him Pleasure

Because the Father's plan of salvation is motivated by his love, it brings him good pleasure to design his plan for the ages (Eph 1:5).[12] Paul writes to the Ephesians that the mystery of the Father's will is "according to *his* purpose, which *he* set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him [the Son], things in heaven and things on earth [emphasis mine]" (Eph 1:9-10). In other words, the great pleasure of the Father is to sum up all things in his Son. Later, Paul writes that the Father achieves his plan in Christ (Eph 3:11), and to the Colossians, Paul reiterates that the Father's mystery is Christ (Col 2:2) and the glorious riches of this mystery is Christ in the saints, the hope of glory (Col 1:26-27). Thus, there will be no corner of the world or feature of heaven where Christ's honor and glory will not reach. This is why the crucifixion cannot be discussed apart from the resurrection and exaltation of the Son.

In the Resurrection and Exaltation

It brought the Father great pleasure to raise the Son up from the dead, exalting the Son to his throne as king and high priest. That the Father accepted the Son's substitutionary sacrifice is demonstrated in the resurrection (Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33-35; 17:31; Gal 1:1; 1 Thess 1:10; 1 Cor 15:15; 2 Cor 4:14; 2 Cor 13:4; Rom 6:4; 10:9; Col 2:12; Heb 5:7; 13:20; 1 Pet 1:21). Further, Peter writes that the Father not only raised him from the dead but also "gave him glory" (1 Pet 1:21). Therefore, as a part of the resurrection, the Father publicly revealed Christ to be his Son (Rom 1:4),[13] and Jesus, as the Christ, lives by the power of the Father (2 Cor 13:4), and lives to honor and glorify him (Rom 6:10).[14]

Thus, the Father desires to placard his Son in the Spirit before the world as a demonstration of his lavish love and faithfulness to his promises. It is no surprise that in the throne room of heaven the continuous response of the heavenly court is unceasing worship of the Father and the "Lamb" (Rev 5:13-14).[15] The "Lamb" language rings throughout the pages of Scripture. From the lamb slain at Passover

12. The Father's plan is rooted in his love, which brings him εὐδοκία (eudokia "purpose") (1:5). Translated as "purpose" in the ESV, it is used in connection with the Father's will and as Clinton Arnold says, it "refers to the pleasure and delight in one's heart that forms the basis for decision making and action," and is therefore better translated "good pleasure." See Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary Series on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 83.

13. ὁρίζω (horizo) can mean "appointed," but better to mean "marked out" or "designated." I have translated it above as publicly revealed.

14. See Douglas J. Moo, The Epistle to the Romans, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 379.

15. The Spirit is, of course, included since he is represented by the "seven spirits" (Rev 3:1; 4:6) bringing the Son's message to the churches: "let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

(Exod 12:1–14) as a redemption (e.g., Exod 6:6; 13:13, 15; 15:13; Deut 7:8), to the Levitical sacrifices of sin and burnt offerings and the ritual of the Day of Atonement (Lev 16). From the prophetic promise of a Messiah who will be "like a lamb that is led to the slaughter" (Isa 53:7), redeeming his people (Isa 35:9; 41:14; 43:1, 14; 44:22, 23, 24; 45:13; 51:11; 52:3; 62:12; 63:9) by the substitution of himself (Isa 53:4–5), to the cry of John the Baptist, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Jesus is the one who by his blood ransomed a people from "every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9).

This reality answers the question, "Why was it the will or good pleasure of the Father to crush him" (Isa 53:10)? Did the Father take some sadistic pleasure in pouring out his wrath upon the Son? No. The Father and Son knew that the "offering for guilt" that "[bore] their iniquities" would result in "offspring" who would be "accounted righteous" and he would "see and be satisfied" (Isa 53:10-11). To use the language of John's Gospel: The Father has a people he gives to his Son (John 6:37; 10:29; 17:2, 6, 9, 24; 18:9). Furthermore: (1) All that the Father gives the Son will come (John 6:37), (2) the Son knows them (John 10:27), (3) they will never be snatched out of the Father or Son's hands (John 10:28-29), (4) it is for the purpose of seeing the Father's character (John 17:6),[16] (5) they will be with the Son and see the Father's love and generosity toward the Son (John 17:24),[17] (6) none will be lost (John 18:9), nor will they be left as orphans since they will be indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18).

The will of the Father who sent the Son, then, is that he would lose "nothing" of all that he has given to the Son (John 6:38-40). Because of the Father's love for the Son in the Spirit, Jesus can tell Nicodemus that the Father in this way "loved the world, that he gave his only son" (John 3:16). John, later reflecting on this love in 1 John 3:1 calls his readers to consider the greatness of the "kind of love" the Father has bestowed, which is exhibited in their adoption as his children through Christ by the Spirit. It is why for all eternity, all "blessing and honor and glory and might" are forever due the one "who sits on the throne" and "the Lamb" (Rev 5:13), and why it brings great pleasure to the Father to see all things summed up in his Son, the one "who did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

D. A. Carson captures it well in his *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God*:

> Thus, when we use the language of propitiation, we are not to think that the Son, full of love, offered himself and thereby placated (i.e., rendered propitious) the Father, full of wrath. The picture is more complex. It is that the Father, full of righteous wrath against us, nevertheless loved us so much that he sent his Son. Perfectly mirroring his Father's words and deeds, the

16. To manifest the Father's name is to reveal his character. Carson, *John,* 558.
17. Köstenberger, *John*, 501.

> Son stood over against us in wrath—it is not for nothing that the Scriptures portray sinners wanting to hide from the face of him who sits on the throne *and from the wrath of the Lamb*—yet, obedient to his Father's commission, offered himself on the cross. He did this out of love both for his Father, whom he obeys, and for us, whom he redeems. Thus God is necessarily both the subject and the object of propitiation. He provides the propitiating sacrifice (he is the subject), and he himself is propitiated (he is the object). That is the glory of the cross.[18]

Here then is the heart of the argument. The eternal love of the Father for the Son in the Spirit produced a plan for redemptive history that would bring all honor and glory to the Father and Son by the Spirit. In order to redeem a multitude of worshippers, the Father sent the Son, empowered by the Spirit to be a penal substitutionary sacrifice, enduring the wrath of God so that those worshippers would not only see the glory of the Father in the face of Christ, but would experience the Father's love in the Son by the indwelling Spirit. Further, the Father hates sin but cannot hate his Son, and so was greatly pleased that the Son laid down his life and took it up again, accomplishing redemption and propitiation and reconciliation as the perfect sacrifice for sin. For only as a substitute can he actually pay for sins, bring real forgiveness and make peace.

18. D. A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000), 72.

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Performing the Surgery, Saving the Patient: Reduplication, Proper Christological Predication, and Critiques of Christus Odium

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Abstract: In response to the christological objections to *Christus Odium* raised by Farris and Hamilton, this article argues that *Christus Odium* cannot be ruled out on christological grounds. Further it shows that if these christological objections stand, then there would be adverse implications for other views of the atonement, including more historic and classical theories. So instead of objecting to *Christus Odium* on christological grounds, this article suggests that the discussion be relocated into the dogmatic sphere of the doctrine of God and seek to clarify the definition and nature of divine "hatred."

Key Words: Christology, Hypostatic Union, Atonement, Reduplication, Divine Justice

In two recent articles, Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton weave a strong "cautionary tale"[1] against a view of the atonement, which they consider a sub-set of penal substitution, called "*Christus Odium*." We might analogically imagine their theological argumentation like those of surgeons excising a tumorous theory that has attached itself to the body of Christ. In most places I materially agree with Farris and Hamilton about the diagnosis of *Christus Odium*. However, I worry that their critiques not only cut out the tumor (*Christus Odium*), but may also damage a vital organ of the body (Christological predication), an organ that is necessary for the health of other actions of the body (other atonement models).[2]

Here I will argue from the foundation of conciliar Christology in order suggest that Farris and Hamilton's attempt to critique *Christus Odium* on christological grounds (i.e., denying the *possibility* of the position on the basis of the hypostatic union) "cuts" too far and has adverse consequences on more minimalistic accounts of the atonement.[3] This argument will first narrate their christological concerns,

1. Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton, "This is My Beloved Son, Whom I Hate? A Critique of the Christus Odium Variant of Penal Substitution," *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies* 3 (2018): 286.

2. In order to demonstrate this last point, I will draw from Patristic, Reformation, and modern atonement models.

3. Conciliar Christology designates the christological affirmations of the first seven ecumenical

then defend (in contrast to Farris and Hamilton) the christological possibility of *Christus Odium*, and finally conclude by suggesting a relocation of the discussion away from the locus of Christology into the spheres of the doctrine of God and terminological clarity.

The "Christological Problems"

This section will briefly present the Christological problems that Farris and Hamilton perceive to be inherent in *Christus Odium*. Their presentation and definition of *Christus Odium* is, indeed, dependent upon these christological problems. They define *Christus Odium* as a position that is constituted by the following claims (quoted as they appear in both pieces):

"This is My Beloved Son, Whom I Hate?"[4]	"Which Penalty, Whose Atonement?"[5]
The demands of divine retributive justice ≈ the exercise of divine wrath ≈ the divine exhibition and human experience of divine hatred.	Exercises of divine retribution are equivalent to the exercises of divine hatred.
Paying the debt to retributive justice, the Son is (temporarily) hated by the Father.	Paying a debt of punishment, the Son becomes the object of the Father's hatred.
The Son of God died on the cross, which was motivated by Fatherly hate.	When Christ dies on the cross, the Son of God himself dies.
The object of the atonement is Divine hatred.	

Farris and Hamilton say that these claims raise "a set of Christological concerns,"[6] which they narrate in their longest section in the 2018 article and name in the 2020 article. The ones which we will focus on here are their concerns about (1) Christ as the "object of the Father's hate" and (2) the possibility of the Son dying on the cross.

creeds and their appropriation by the patristic, medieval, and Reformation theologians. For a historical narration of this development see Brian E. Daley, *God Visible: Patristic Christology Reconsidered*, Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

4. This column is drawn from Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 276.

5. This column is drawn from the beginning portion of Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton, "Which Penalty, Whose Atonement? Revisiting Christus Odium" (paper presented at the 2019 National Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA, November, 2019).

6. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 280.

They introduce the first of their christological questions by asking "who is hated"?[7] They then offer two options: Christ's human nature or his divine nature.[8] They rightly dismiss the possibility of the Father hating the divine nature without delay. They then move on to question whether it would be possible for the Father to hate the human nature of Christ. On the basis of the doctrine of the *anhypostatic* humanity of Christ (which states that Christ's humanity is not self-subsistent but rather subsists "in the person [hypostasis]" of the Son) they claim that the possibility of the Father hating the humanity of Christ without hating his divinity divides the person of Christ. Specifically, they say, "The problem for '*Christus Odium*' is that Christ's Divine and human natures are divided in a way that is not only unnatural, violating the Scriptural account of his representational work, but also violates traditional catholic Christology—something we think all should be loath to do."[9] The logic behind this concern seems to be: the Father cannot act toward Christ's human nature in a way distinct from the Father's actions toward Christ's divine nature, at pains of Nestorianism.[10]

The second question that we will note here is the claim that "The Son of God died on the cross."[11] They aver that such a claim "suggests a more fundamental belief that God himself can die, that is, cease to exist" and that "to make such a claim is to make a dangerous metaphysical misstep."[12]

Farris and Hamilton suggest that the first question yields a "fractured picture" of Christology and the second constitutes "a significant problem for the *Christus Odium* variant."[13] Contrary to these two "christological concerns," my contention is that these acts are *christological possibilities* and can only be ruled out if we relocate the discussion by clarifying the definition of "hate."

Christological Possibilities

Rather than christological *problems*, I suggest that the two key claims of *Christus Odium* above are (minimally) *possible* for orthodox christological. This is not to defend the veracity of *Christus Odium*, but the *plausibility* of the *claims* of *Christus Odium*—claims that Farris and Hamilton reject on christological grounds. Specifically, my argument is that excluding the *possibility* of the Father acting in

7. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 280.

8. Interestingly their 2020 paper seems to reject this dual possibility and assume that *Christus Odium* necessitates the belief that "God somehow despised the divine nature of his beloved Son" (Farris and Hamilton, "Which Penalty, Whose Atonement?).

9. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 281.

10. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 281.

11. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 281; "Which Penalty, Whose Atonement."

12. Farris and Hamilton, "This is My Beloved Son," 281.

13. Farris and Hamilton, "This is My Beloved Son," 281–82.

diverse (seemingly incompatible) ways toward the incarnate Son[14] and the possibility of the Son dying on the basis of Christology not only excludes *Christus Odium* but excludes other important soteriological claims from within the tradition.

My argument (for christological plausibility of the claims that God the Son can be the object of diverse predicates in his human and divine natures, and that God the Son dies) is based on a christological strategy of "reduplication,"[15] that is, claiming that a predicate or operation belongs to Christ according to either nature but not the other.[16] For example, Christ is immortal "as God" and mortal "as man." Francis Turretin illustrates this mechanism by stating that for Christ "to be dependent and independent, finite and infinite belong to Christ in different respects; the former with respect to the human nature; the latter with respect to the divine."[17] While versions of this strategy have been critiqued in modern christological thought for its apparent contradiction (i.e., one subject who holds contradictory properties),[18] another version of it has been successfully defended by Timothy Pawl. Pawl suggests that incompatible predicates of a single subject (like immutable and mutable) are non-contradictory if we understand Christ to be a single subject who (unlike all other subjects) exists in two distinct natures. So passibility and impassibity can cohere because Christ has a nature that is passible and Christ has a nature that is impassible. This is the same subject (Christ) who bears distinct predicates in each of his two natures.[19] With this logical possibility the Reformed scholastics drew a distinction between "proper" and "improper" christological predication.[20] "Proper predication"

14. There are important qualifications of trinitarian actions upon the Son (e.g., appropriations, indivisible operations, and proper actions), but they go beyond the scope of my work in this article. See Gilles Emery, "The Personal Mode of Trinitarian Action in Saint Thomas Aquinas," *The Thomist* 69 (2005): 31–77.

15. For an extended discussion and clarification on the function of reduplication, see Michael Gorman, *Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 126–57; Paul Helm, *John Calvin's Ideas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 69–83. Historically, see this operative in Thomas Aquinas (ST III, Q. 16, A. 10) and John Owen, *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ*, The Works of John Owen, ed. William H. Goold, 24 vols. (Edinburgh: Johnston & Hunter 1850–1855), 12:66. Hereafter, WJO followed by volume name, number, and page number.

16. From my perspective this could apply to Christ in three ways: (1) as the grammatical subject of ontological predicates, (2) as the object of the acts of other persons/agents upon Christ, (3) as the agent of discrete acts. This article will focus on the first two.

17. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, trans. George Musgrave Giger, 3 vols. (Phillipsburg: P&R, 1992), II:13.vi.23.

18. Robin Le Poidevin, "Identity and the Composite Christ: An Incarnational Dilemma," *Religious Studies* 45:2 (2009): 167–86; Richard Cross, *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation: Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 177–78; Thomas Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Cornell University Press, 1986), 48–9.

19. See especially Timothy Pawl, *In Defense of Conciliar Christology: A Philosophical Essay*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 157–62

20. See Stephen R. Holmes, "Reformed Varieties of the Communicatio Idiomatum," in *The Person of Christ*, ed. Stephen R. Holmes, and Murray A. Rae (New York: T & T Clark, 2005), 81; Thomas Joseph White, *The Incarnate Lord: A Thomistic Study in Christology* (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2015), 249.

occurs when a predicate or action of Christ according to either nature is ascribed to him according to that same nature.[21] For example, "the Word was God" (John 1:1) ascribes a divine predicate to Christ (i.e., "was God") and designates him through a title of his divine nature ("the Word"). "Improper predication" occurs when a predicate or action is ascribed to Christ, yet it is only true according to a designation of the opposite nature.[22] For example, Romans 9:5 states that Christ is descended from the patriarchs (i.e., a predicate of Christ according to human nature alone) and yet designates him as "God over all" (a title that is true of him according to his divinity). On the basis of proper and improper predication, the *christological* claims of *Christus Odium* are a possibility for orthodox Christology, and to deny these claims has adverse soteriological consequences.

Proper Predication: Christ as the Object of Distinct Divine Operations

The first putative problem that we will address is that the Son is the object of diverse actions according to either nature. Farris and Hamilton argue that Christ cannot be "hated" according to his human nature because it would introduce a fissure between it and his divine nature (which is "beloved"). However, conciliar Christology holds that the mere predication of diverse predicates or actions (even seemingly contradictory ones) need not constitute such a fissure and, indeed, this mode of predication is essential to the Christology of the ecumenical creeds and Scripture itself.

It is important that we affirm, from the beginning, that Christ is one "who" (person) subsisting in two natures (two "whats"). As Gregory of Naziansus says, "the constituents of our savior are different 'whats' (ἄλλο καὶ ἄλλο) . . . but not different 'whos' (ἄλλος καὶ ἄλλος)."[23] Accordingly, whatever is true of either nature is true of the one person subsisting in both natures.[24] This allows the church, as in the Athanasian creed, to describe Christ as the object of distinct actions according to either nature:

21. Henk van den Belt et al., eds., *Synopsis Puioris Theologiae; Synopsis of a Purer Theology: Latin Text and English Translation*, vol. 2, *Disputations 24–42*, trans. Riemer A. Faber, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, Texts, and Sources 8 (Boston: Brill, 2016), 85; see also John of Damascus, "Orthodox Faith," in *Saint John of Damascus: Writings*, trans. by Frederic H. Chase Jr., FC 37 (Washington D.C.: CUA Press, 1958), III.15, 311; Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, II:13.vii.14–15.

22. van den Belt, *Synopsis of Purer Theology*, 2:87–89.

23. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, *On God and Christ: The Five Theological Orations and Two Letters to Cledonius*, trans. Lionel Wickham, Popular Patristics Series 23 (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimirs, 2002), 157; revised according to *PG* 37:180A.

24. This is most frequently seen in discussions of the communication of attributes. For a recent treatment of the communicatio in Reformation discussions, see Richard Cross, *Communicatio Idiomatum: Reformation Christological Debates*, Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

He is God from the essence of the Father,

begotten before time;

and he is human from the essence of his mother,

born in time;

completely God, completely human,

with a rational soul and human flesh;

equal to the Father as regards divinity,

less than the Father as regards humanity.[25]

Here we see diverse predicates (equal and less than) of the one subject and that same person is the object of diverse actions (i.e., "begotten before time" and "born in time").

This is true of human actions toward Christ—Christ is "seen with [human] eyes" and "touched" with human hands (1 John 1) according to his human nature (since his divine nature is invisible and incorporeal)—yet, this is also true of divine actions toward Christ. For example, Christ has "life in himself" (John 5:26) and is the "author of life" (according to his divine nature) yet is "raised from the dead" (Acts 3:15) according to his human nature. Christ is inherently the "radiance of God's glory" (Heb 1:3) in his divine nature, yet is glorified by the Father (John 17:5) in his human nature.

In order to illustrate the diverse predicates of Christ, we can turn to a historic christological analogy. While all analogies are merely partial, imperfect representations of the *sui generis* hypostatic union, several analogies have been offered throughout the tradition.[26] One historically prominent illustration of reduplication and

25. Likewise, Constantinople II affirms the double nativity of Christ (begotten from eternity, born in time). Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 114.

26. On the very imperfect nature of christological analogies, see Donald Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology in the Early Church*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 118. One of the most prominent is the body/soul analogy (Thomas G. Weinandy, "The Soul/Body Analogy and the Incarnation: Cyril of Alexandria," *Coptic Church Review* 17 [1996]: 59–66). While many thinkers historically used it to indicate the unity of action, it seems that the Reformed tradition often used it to distinguish between the immediate effects of the operations of the soul (for example, thinking) and the operations of the body (for example, digesting); see Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 2:394–95; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), II.14.1; Turretin, *Institutes*, II:13.viii.1; WJO, *Pneumatologia*, 3:101, 420.

diverse predication is the image of a single fire-sword—i.e., a burning iron sword.[27] A fire-sword subsists first, and primarily, in an iron nature that then assumes a fire nature into subsistence with itself without giving up any of its iron-ness. Upon this composition of the fire-sword, it has two distinct natures with distinct capacities, to burn and to cut; to be extinguished and to be sharpened. If the blacksmith douses the sword with water, we can say that the single sword was "extinguished" because the fire nature of the sword was put out (even though iron is in-extinguishable).

This mode of predicating discrete actions and attributes of Christ according to either nature is not only christologically plausible, but soteriologically essential. For example, Jonathan Edwards says,

> If Christ had remained only in the divine nature, he would not have been in a capacity to have purchased our salvation. . . . For Christ merely as God was not capable either of that obedience or suffering that was needful. The divine nature is not capable of suffering, . . . neither is it capable of obedience to that law that was given to man. . . . Man's law could not be answered but by being obeyed by man.[28]

Edwards's claim on the necessity of obedience (which is only possible for Christ *as a human*) for salvation is shared not only across the Reformed tradition,[29] but also among those who reject the imputation language of Edwards and instead suggest that Christ fulfills the plan for human Israel by retracing the failures "of Adam, a recapitulation or rerunning of the divine program for" humanity.[30] The theme of recapitulation has historic precedent in Irenaeus's soteriology as well, whereby the Son of God take upon everyone essential to humanity in order to restore humanity back to God.[31]

To put it simply: if it is not possible for the One who is beloved in his divine nature to be "hated" (whatever that means) in his human nature *for christological*

27. John of Damascus, "Orthodox Faith," III.15, 308; Maximus, "Disputatio," (*PG* 91:337D–340A). WJO, *Christologia*, 1:230.

28. Jonathan Edwards, *A History of the Work of Redemption*, ed. John Frederick Wilson; The Works of Jonathan Edwards (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 9:295–96. See also, Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xi.9. Meritorious obedience as a soteriological category certainly precedes the Reformed tradition (Marilyn McCord Adams, *What Sort of Human Nature? Medieval Philosophy and the Systematics of Christology*, The Aquinas Lectures [Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1999], 96; Adonis Vidu, *Atonement, Law, and Justice: The Cross in Historical and Cultural Contexts* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014], 83–85), but it is particularly meaningful for the Reformed tradition.

29. D. Glenn Butner, *The Son Who Learned Obedience: A Theological Case Against the Eternal Submission of the Son* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2018), 104: calls this claim "widespread" in the Reformed tradition.

30. James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, Word Biblical Commentary 38A (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1988), 297; likewise, N. T. Wright, "The Letter to the Romans: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," in *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, ed. Leander E. Keck, vol. 10 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2002), 10:529.

31. See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, ANF 1:448–56; Thomas F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Faith*, 2nd ed. (New York: T & T Clark, 2016), 162

reasons, then it is not possible for the one who has life in himself to be raised to life and it is not possible for the one who eternally breathes the Spirit be anointed by the Spirit. The problem with Christus Odium then is not the christological introduction of a fissure between Christ's two natures.

Improper Predication: "God the Son Dies"

The above argues for the possibility of diverse predicates to be attributable to Christ according to either nature. Farris and Hamilton's next objection goes beyond diverse predication of Christ, and focuses on a capacity or attribute in one nature being true of Christ when he is designated by a title of the other. Rather than suggesting that such a claim is metaphysically dubious,[32] I suggest that this claim is part and parcel of affirming the atoning act of God in Christ on our behalf.

Farris and Hamilton first (rightly) claim that it is not possible for God the Son to die (according to his divine nature) when operating within the bounds of "catholic Christianity"[33] and biblical Christology (1 Tim 6:16). Yet they follow this claim up with two curious theological moves: (1) they define "death" as the cessation of existence and (2) they deny the union of God the Son with the body of Christ in the tomb. Both of these moves do not follow "catholic Christianity." However, if we do follow the tradition, then we will see that it is both christologically possible for "God the Son to die" (with appropriate specifications/qualifications) and soteriologically significant that this he did indeed do so.

Death for the vast majority of the Christian tradition has simply been the separation of the soul from the body.[34] For example, Gregory of Nyssa defines death as the "severance of the union of the soul and body" and then states that resurrection necessarily includes the "return, after they have been dissolved, of those elements [i.e., soul and body] that had been before linked."[35] Regardless of how one defines "soul" here, so long as there is some sort of an affirmation of the intermediate state, then this definition of death suffices.[36] Even if they intend "somatic death" to mean the cessation of bodily/neurological activity,[37] we are not discussing the "cessation of existence."[38]

32. Farris and Hamilton, "Which Penalty, Whose Atonement," 7.

33. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 281.

34. Augustine, *The City of God XI–XXII*, trans. William Babcock (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 2013), XIII.2, XIII.6.

35. St. Gregory of Nyssa, "Great Catechism," *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers,* trans. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, series 2, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1980) 5:489.

36. The affirmation of an intermediate state seems likely for these authors, see Joshua R. Farris, *The Soul of Theological Anthropology: A Cartesian Exploration* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

37. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 282.

38. There is debate in the tradition, however, on the *nature* of the soul's existence after death. Melissa Eitenmiller, "On the Separated Soul according to St. Thomas Aquinas," *Nova et Vetera* 17, no. 1 (Winter 2019): 57–91.

Upon this definition of death, the breadth of the Catholic and Protestant traditions affirm that God the Son remains united to his human body. For example, John of Damascus says,

> And so, even though as man He did die and His sacred soul was separated from His immaculate body, the divinity remained unseparated from both—the soul . . . and the body. Thus, the one Person was not divided into two persons. For from the beginning both had existence in the same way in the Person of the Word, and when they were separated from each other in death, each one of them remained in the possession of the one Person of the Word.[39]

Likewise, Owen says that "in his death the union of his natures in his person was not in the least impeached"[40] because the Father promised not to abandon his Holy One in death (Ps 16:10; Acts 2:31).

If God the Son remains united to his body, then there is certainly a sense in which we can strongly affirm that "God the Son died." We can do this by means of improper predication. That is, God the Son is a title of Christ that is true of him according to his divine nature and the ability to "die" is a property of Christ according to his human nature. Because God the Son remains united to the soul *and the body* of his human nature, then we can rightly say "the soul of God the Son (i.e., the soul that is hypostatically united to him) is separated from the body of God the Son (i.e., the body that is hypostatically united to him)"—which is just longhand for "God the Son died."

Indeed, this mode of predication seems to be the same kind of understanding present in 1 Corinthians 2:8 where the "Lord of Glory" is "crucified." This does not entail that the omnipresent divine nature is spatially located on a piece of wood.[41] Instead, it evidences the way we can name the person according to one nature and predicate a property or action of his according to another is valid but "improper."

With the above clarifications, we can certainly (albeit improperly) affirm that "God the Son dies." There is precedent for this claim even in the creeds: the Son was "crucified, and *died*, and was *buried*." Here, God the Son is the subject of the predicates "died" and "was buried"—predicates that are true of Christ when his soul and body are separated and that body is laid to rest in Joseph's tomb. Likewise, this claim permeates our worship. Isaac Watts sung, "When I survey the wondrous cross; on which *the Prince of glory died*." Likewise, Charles Wesley extolled the church to behold the "Amazing love" of God and wondered "how can it be that Thou, *my God, shouldst die for me*?"

39. John of Damascus, "Orthodox Faith," III.27, 332; Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, Q. 50, A. 2. s.c.

40. WJO, *Pneumatologia*, 3:180

41. Chalcedon encourages the Christian to "consider what nature it was that hung, pierced with nails, on the wood of the cross." Tanner, *Decrees*, 81.

The claim that "God dies" is not only biblically and creedally significant but also soteriologically significant. It is because God the Son "tastes death for everyone" (Heb 2:9) that through him God might give us victory "over sin and death" (1 Cor 15:57). Cyril of Alexandria summarizes the importance of God the Son dying:

> For God was in humanity. He who was above all creation was in our human condition. . . . The immaterial one could be touched; he who is free in his own nature came in the form of a slave; he who blesses all creation became accused. . . . Life itself came in the appearance of death. All this followed because the body which tasted death belongs to no other but him who is the Son by nature.[42]

Likewise, Anselm (upon whom Farris and Hamilton depend) affirms the logic of this position, that "dying" is God's activity and is therefore predicatable of God: "If, therefore, . . . the heavenly city should have its full complement made up by members of the human race, and this cannot be the case if the recompense of which we have spoken is not paid, which no one can pay except God, and no one ought to pay except man: it is necessary that a God-Man should pay it."[43]

This subsection has argued that the second constitute claim of *Christus Odium* (i.e., that God the Son died) is not a christological problem. When added to the previous subsection, we can see that these "christological problems" are not all that problematic. What is more, if we define these claims as problematic, then we not only cut off the possibility of *Christus Odium* but also the soteriological significance built upon these christological claims.

Conclusion: Relocating the Discussion

This paper has argued that Farris and Hamilton's rejection of *Christus Odium* on christological grounds neglects the plausibility of these claims within conciliar Christology and is too severe if we are to retain multiple soteriological conventions. So if the above claims are *christologically* plausible and that formal plausibility is soteriologically significant (i.e., to cut off that possibility through Christology would be to cut off several traditional soteriological claims), are we resigned to affirm *Christus Odium*? I suggest that the best way to remove the tumor without wounding the vital christological organs nearby would be to relocating the discussion into the locus of the doctrine of God—specifically by gaining terminological clarity on the meaning of divine "hate." Such a relocation could deal with many of the concerns that Farris and Hamilton (and I) have with certain versions of *Christus Odium*, while

42. Cyril of Alexandria, *On the Unity of Christ*, ed. John Anthony McGuckin (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimirs Seminary Press, 2015), 61.

43. Anselm, "Why God Became Man," in *The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 320.

still affirming the christological claims above. If the discussion is relocated to the sphere of divine hatred we might ask the following questions:

(A) What would it mean for God to "hate" in regards to divine impassible/passibility? Does hatred require a passible God? Might it be possible to use divine "hatred" in a way that is similar to divine "regret" or "grief" on a classical view of God?

(B) How do divine hatred and "pleasure in punishment" relate? Farris and Hamilton seem to think that a denial of the latter constitutes a denial of the former. However, (by way of objection) I can candidly admit that I *hate*(!) mice and yet, each time I hear a mouse trap snap and the demise of those infuriating creatures, I feel absolutely zero pleasure.

(C) If *Christus Odium* can answer A and B in a way that constellates divine affections and "hatred" under a classical doctrine of God, how would that relate to Farris and Hamilton's affirmation that "the effects of the Father's seeking restitution or pouring out his wrath [are] transferred from one class of people to a person"?[44] Could "hatred" be another way of speaking about this reality?

Finally, (D) might a more nuanced version *Christus Odium* define "hatred" and apply it to Christ in a way similar to John Owen's concession below? He wonders:

> "But it will be said that if our sins, as to the guilt of them, were imputed unto Christ, then God must hate Christ; for he hateth the guilty. I know not well how I come to mention these things, which indeed I look upon as cavils, ... But seeing it is mentioned, it may be spoken unto; and,—First, It is certain that the Lord Christ's taking on him the guilt of our sins was a high act of obedience unto God, Heb. 10:5, 6; and for which the "Father loved him," John 10:17, 18. There was, therefore, no reason why God should hate Christ for his taking on him our debt, and the payment of it, in an act of the highest obedience unto his will. Secondly, God in this matter is considered as a rector, ruler, and judge. Now, it is not required of the severest judge, that, as a judge, he should hate the guilty person . . . . As such, he hath no more to do but consider the guilt, and pronounce the sentence of punishment. But, Thirdly, Suppose a person, out of an heroic generosity of mind, should become an Αντίψυχος for another, for his friend, for a good man, so as to answer for him with his life, as Judah undertook to be for Benjamin as to his liberty,—which, when a man hath lost, he is civilly dead, and "capite diminutus,"—would the most cruel tyrant under heaven, that should take away his life, in that case hate him? would he not rather admire his worth and virtue? As such a one it was that Christ suffered, and no otherwise. Fourthly, All the force of this exception depends on the ambiguity of the word hate; for it may signify either an aversation or detestation of mind, or only a will of punishing, as in God mostly it doth. In the first sense, there was no ground why God should hate

44. Farris and Hamilton, "My Beloved Son," 278.

> Christ on this imputation of guilt unto him, ... But for a will of punishing in God, where sin is imputed, none can deny it."[45]

Owen's response to those who ask if the Father hated the Son strikes me as a helpful one. Even before answering the question he calls it "cavil" (i.e., a frivolous objection)—"why would one ever want to make such a claim" might be a valid translation of the subtext. When he does address the concern, he covers his christological bases and clarifies the nature of judgment. The difficulty he sees is in the ambiguity of the definition of "hate"—saying, in one sense it is utterly inappropriate, yet in another sense (i.e., when it is synonymous with the will to judge/punish justly) then it is plausible.[46] What Owen illustrates here is the possibility of relocating the discussion of *Christus Odium* into the realm of definitional clarity (rather than Christology). Upon this relocation, we can then discuss whether such a claim and such a definition are theological valuable.

The goal of this response has been to provide a counter-"cautionary tale." That is, it warns that if Farris and Hamilton "cut out" the christological possibilities above along with *Christus Odium*, then the body may lose important organ function in surgery. While I commend their desire to defend the love of God in Christ, I worry that their exclusion of Christus Odium on christological grounds cuts away valuable theological goods. Consequently, I suggest that a reengagement of *Christus Odium* on terminological grounds has much more precision and avoids risk to the major christological muscles of atonement models.

45. WJO, *Justification*, 5:203–04.

46. God's "hatred" of Esau may be illustrative here. God hated him (Rom 9:13) but blesses him.

PART II

OPEN ARTICLES

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Understanding and Applying Exodus 19:4–6: A Case Study in Exegesis and Theology

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Perhaps more than any other single text, Exodus 19:4–6 provides the Bible's clearest and simplest snapshot of God's revealed purpose for the old covenant. This essay seeks to interpret this passage within its immediate and broader biblical context, understanding and applying it as the Christian Scripture God intended (Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11; 2 Tim 3:16–17; 1 Pet 1:12). The study also supplies a case study in exegetical and theological inquiry following the twelve steps outlined in my book, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament.*[1] Recognizably, the nine steps of exegesis and three steps of theology are all interrelated, and distinguishing them is somewhat artificial to the process of interpreting the Bible. Nevertheless, using a single passage to walk through the twelve steps should help students understand better the various aspects of exegesis and theology that are necessary for rightly handling God's word of truth (2 Tim 2:15).

A. Text
"What is the makeup of the passage?"

1. The Genre of Exodus 19:4–6[2]

In genre analysis we seek to (1) determine the literary form, subject matter, and function of the passage, (2) compare it to similar genres, and (3) consider the

1. Jason S. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2017). I adapt the various exegetical and theological discussions of Exodus 19:4–6 from the following pages in the book: 32, 123–25, 148–50, 170–72, 226–32, 253–56, 265–67, 282–85, 314–17, 329–33, 370–74, 400–407, 422–27. Used with permission.

2. For more on genre, see Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III, eds., *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993); D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese, eds., *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting Literary Genres of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995); Robert L. Plummer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible*, 40 Questions, ed. Benjamin L. Merkle (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010); Robert H. Stein, *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011); Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 4th

implications for interpretation. When we consider the genre of Exodus 19:4–6, we immediately recognize two things. First, it is a speech of God recorded by his prophet, and therefore we can rightfully call it a *prophetic speech*. More specifically, it is a messenger speech from God through Moses to the people, and it includes instruction mixed with implied exhortation. Second, the address itself falls within a grand narrative that begins in Genesis and continues unbroken through the end of 2 Kings, only to be picked up again in Daniel and carried on to the end of 2 Chronicles (following the order of Jesus's Bible as represented in Talmudic Baraita *Baba Bathra* 14b).[3] The Old Testament (OT) story relayed in the narrative books overviews the history of salvation that ultimately climaxes in Christ and the New Testament (NT).

Thus, we can tag the genre of Exodus 19:4–6 as a prophetic messenger speech made up of instruction and implied exhortation. It is part of the historical narrative of Exodus, the Pentateuch, and the greater OT.

2. The Literary Units and Text Hierarchy of Exodus 19:4–6[4]

Next, we seek to determine the limits and basic structure of the passage, even establishing a hierarchy of the author's flow of thought (for more on this, see below). Sometimes establishing the beginning and end of literary units can be a complicated endeavor. Helpfully, however, this is not the case in Exodus 19:4–6. The basic building block of all text analysis is a clause, which is made up of a subject and its predicate, along with all connectors and modifiers. The following figure separates the various Hebrew clauses and includes the ESV translation of the passage. The three colors signal different levels of perspective, as speeches are embedded within speeches. The narrator's voice begins and ends the unit (highlighted in white, vv. 1–3b, 7); he cites YHWH's speech to Moses (highlighted in light gray, vv. 3cd, 6b), which includes the words Moses is to relay to the people (highlighted in darker gray, vv. 4–6a).

ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014); DeRouchie, *How to Understand*, 21–97.

3. See Jason S. DeRouchie, "Is the Order of the Canon Significant for Doing Biblical Theology?" in *40 Questions about Biblical Theology*, ed. Jason S. DeRouchie, Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli, 40 Questions (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020), 157–70; Jason S. DeRouchie, "The Hermeneutical Significance of the Shape of the Christian Canon," in *The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings: Studies in Evangelical Old Testament Hermeneutics in Honor of Duane A. Garrett*, ed. Andrew M. King, Joshua M. Philpot, and William R. Osborne (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2021), 29–45.

4. For more on literary units and text hierarchy, see Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1981), 87–104, 165–81; David Allan Dawson, *Text-Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 177 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994); David A. Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis–Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), 21–35; Robert E. Longacre, *Joseph––A Story of Divine Providence: A Text Theoretical and Textlinguistic Analysis of Genesis 37 and 39–48*, 2nd ed. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003); Roy L. Heller, *Narrative Structure and Discourse Constellations: An Analysis of Clause Function in Biblical Hebrew Prose*, Harvard Semitic Studies 55 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004); DeRouchie, *How to Understand*, 98–127.

Fig. 1. Literary Units in Exodus 19:1–7 in the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT) and ESV		
בַּחֹ֙דֶשׁ֙ הַשְּׁלִישִׁ֔י לְצֵ֥את בְּנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל מֵאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרָ֑יִם	1	1 On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone
בַּיּ֣וֹם הַזֶּ֔ה בָּ֖אוּ מִדְבַּ֥ר סִינָֽי׃		out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the
וַיִּסְע֣וּ מֵרְפִידִ֗ים	2	wilderness of Sinai. 2 They set out from Rephidim and came
וַיָּבֹ֙אוּ֙ מִדְבַּ֣ר סִינַ֔י	b	into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the
וַֽיַּחֲנ֖וּ בַּמִּדְבָּ֑ר	c	wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, 3
וַיִּֽחַן־שָׁ֥ם יִשְׂרָאֵ֖ל נֶ֥גֶד הָהָֽר׃	d	while Moses went up to God.
וּמֹשֶׁ֥ה עָלָ֖ה אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִ֑ים	3	
וַיִּקְרָ֨א אֵלָ֤יו יְהוָה֙ מִן־הָהָ֣ר לֵאמֹ֔ר	b	The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying,
כֹּ֤ה תֹאמַר֙ לְבֵ֣ית יַעֲקֹ֔ב	c	“Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people
וְתַגֵּ֖יד לִבְנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃	d	of Israel:
אַתֶּ֣ם רְאִיתֶ֔ם	4	4 You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and
אֲשֶׁ֥ר עָשִׂ֖יתִי לְמִצְרָ֑יִם	b	how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. 5
וָאֶשָּׂ֤א אֶתְכֶם֙ עַל־כַּנְפֵ֣י נְשָׁרִ֔ים	c	Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my
וָאָבִ֥א אֶתְכֶ֖ם אֵלָֽי׃	d	covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all
וְעַתָּ֗ה אִם־שָׁמ֤וֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ֙ בְּקֹלִ֔י	5	peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a
וּשְׁמַרְתֶּ֖ם אֶת־בְּרִיתִ֑י	b	kingdom of priests and a holy nation.
וִהְיִ֨יתֶם לִ֤י סְגֻלָּה֙ מִכָּל־הָ֣עַמִּ֔ים	c	
כִּי־לִ֖י כָּל־הָאָֽרֶץ׃	d	
וְאַתֶּ֧ם תִּהְיוּ־לִ֛י מַמְלֶ֥כֶת כֹּהֲנִ֖ים וְג֣וֹי קָד֑וֹשׁ	6	
אֵ֚לֶּה הַדְּבָרִ֔ים אֲשֶׁ֥ר תְּדַבֵּ֖ר אֶל־בְּנֵ֥י יִשְׂרָאֵֽל׃	b	These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”
וַיָּבֹ֣א מֹשֶׁ֔ה	7	7 So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set
וַיִּקְרָ֖א לְזִקְנֵ֣י הָעָ֑ם	b	before them all these words that the LORD had commanded
וַיָּ֣שֶׂם לִפְנֵיהֶ֗ם אֵ֚ת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִ֣ים הָאֵ֔לֶּה אֲשֶׁ֥ר צִוָּ֖הוּ יְהוָֽה׃	c	him.

Exodus 19 opens with an asyndetic clause (i.e., a clause without any connector) that signals a major fresh beginning within the book. Since 3:12 Moses has anticipated the day when Israel would arrive at the mountain of God to worship him, and in chapter 19 they reach this destination. Following the initial asyndetic clause we get a chain of four *wayyiqtol* clauses in 19:2, and the initial paragraph concludes with non-*wayyiqtol* clause in 3a (i.e., וְ + subject + *qatal*). Paragraph one includes only the voice of the narrator.

Paragraph two opens in 19:3b with a new subject: YHWH speaks from the mountain to Moses. The speech uses a לֵאמֹר frame, which marks the quotation as secondary.[5] It could mean that we have only a synthesis of what God told Moses.

5. Secondary or “non-prototypical” speech frames may (1) summarize several similar speeches or one long speech, (2) present the statements of many people as one statement, (3) have one character in the story quote a prior statement by another character in the story, (4) come through an agent or prop rather than a full character or come from someone who is not actually present and participating in the current conversation, or (5) function as the official record of the principal points made by speakers. See DeRouchie, “Marked Primary and Secondary Citation Formulas,” in chapter 2 of *How to Understand*, 120–23; compare Cynthia L. Miller, “Discourse Functions in Quotative Frames in Biblical Hebrew Narrative,” in *Discourse Analysis of Biblical Literature: What It Is and What It Offers*, ed. Walter R. Bodine, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), 155–82; Miller, *The Representation of Speech in Biblical Hebrew Narrative: A Linguistic Analysis*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 55 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999).

But that the Lord speaks "from the mountain" could also imply some level of mediation, which would also require a secondary speech frame. Regardless, 19:3c opens YHWH's speech, and in two clauses he tells us that what follows are the words Moses himself is to speak to the people. In 19:4–6, therefore, we have a speech within a speech (dark gray within the light gray), as highlighted in the figure. 19:6a concludes the embedded speech, and in 19:6b God reaffirms that these are the words Moses is to proclaim. 19:7 then again records the narrator's voice outside any direct reported speech.

3. Text Criticism in Exodus 19:4–6[6]

Text criticism is the discipline of restoring the biblical authors' original words by comparing and contrasting the various copies and translations of the Bible. Here, *criticism* means not "finding fault with" but "evaluating" the existing copies. The *BHS* apparatus lists three text-problems associated with Exodus 19:4–6. None of them are substantial.

Fig. 2. Text Critical Issues in *BHS* of Exodus 19:4–6 (with ESV)

4 אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְמִצְרָיִם[a] וָאֶשָּׂא אֶתְכֶם עַל־[b]כַּנְפֵי נְשָׁרִים וָאָבִא אֶתְכֶם אֵלָי׃ 5 וְעַתָּה אִם־שָׁמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ בְּקֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וִהְיִיתֶם לִי[a] סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ׃ 6 וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תְּדַבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל׃	4 You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.
4 [a] mlt Mss 𝕿[Ms] בְּמִ׳ ‖ [b] 𝕲(𝕾𝕿𝕿[JP]) ὡσεὶ ἐπί	
5 [a] 𝕲(𝕿[P]) + λαός	

In Exodus 19:4 problem "a" we read that multiple medieval Hebrew manuscripts (mlt Mss) and a single Targum manuscript (𝕿[Ms]) read בְּמִצְרָיִם ("in Egypt") rather than לְמִצְרָיִם ("to Egypt"). The ESV translates מִצְרָיִם as "Egyptians," but the plural gentilic "Egyptians" is actually מִצְרִים (e.g., Gen 12:12, 14; 43:32; Deut 26:6).[7] מִצְרָיִם is the proper name "Egypt," which can refer to a place (thus "in Egypt," בְּמִצְרָיִם, see Exod 12:40) or can stand collectively for the nation (cf. 18:8–10). Because ב (*beth*) and ל (*lamed*) are not easily confused letters in either the square script or the archaic

6. For more on Old Testament text criticism, see Paul D. Wegner, *A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its Methods and Results* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006); Peter J. Gentry, "The Text of the Old Testament," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society,* 52, no. 1 (2009): 19–45; Emanuel Tov, "Textual Criticism (OT)," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:393–412; Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011); Ellis R. Brotzman and Eric J. Tully, *Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016); DeRouchie, *How to Understand*, 128–56.

7. The term "gentilic" (or "demonym") is a substantival adjective that in grammar relates to words that refer to residents or natives of a particular place, whose title is derived from the name of that particular place (e.g., "Egyptians" is the gentilic from "Egypt").

script (𐤁 and 𐤋), it seems most likely that the translators of the multiple Hebrew manuscripts and the single Targum read "Egypt" as the place instead of as the people and therefore felt compelled to switch the preposition from לְ ("to") to בְּ ("in").

In problem "b" of 19:4 we read that the Greek Septuagint ($\mathfrak{G}$), the Syriac Peshitta ($\mathfrak{S}$), and the entire Targum tradition ($\mathfrak{T}$) including Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to the Pentateuch ($\mathfrak{T}^{J}$) and the Palestinian Targum ($\mathfrak{T}^{P}$) read the compound preposition כְּעַל ("as on") rather than the single preposition עַל ("on"). This variant likely grew not out of an actual Hebrew text but more simply from a translator making explicit the implied simile in order to ensure readers recognized the metaphorical language and didn't imagine something like Tolkien's great eagles from *Lord of the Rings* rescuing the Israelites from the clutches of the Egyptians!

Problem "a" in 19:5 simply notes that the Septuagint ($\mathfrak{G}$) and Palestinian Targum ($\mathfrak{T}^{P}$) add עַם ("people") into the text before סְגֻלָּה ("treasured possession"). Because the Greek term consistently used to translate סְגֻלָּה is the adjective περιούσιος ("special") and not a noun, the inclusion of λαός was necessary to make sense of the clause. Hebrew and Greek are not equivalent languages, so two words were required to unpack what in Hebrew was represented by a single word. As with the previous text problems, there is no evidence here that a different Hebrew text including עַם stands behind what is found in the LXX. The Greek is just making a dynamic equivalent of the Hebrew.

4. The Translation of Exodus 19:4–6[8]

The final step in establishing the "Text" is to translate your passage and compare your work to other English translations. It's important to note that very often a first draft of a translation will be very different than the final draft after all exegesis is complete. As we make fresh observations and new discoveries, they will challenge our initial decisions. Everything done at this stage is provisional. In figure 3, I compare several contemporary English translations with my initial translation of the reported speech in Exodus 19:4–6. After this, I offer some beginning observations and questions.

8. For more on translation, see Gordon D. Fee and Mark L. Strauss, *How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding and Using Bible Versions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007); Andreas J. Köstenberger and David A. Croteau, eds., *Which Bible Translation Should I Use? A Comparison of 4 Major Recent Versions* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2012); Dave Brunn, *One Bible, Many Versions: Are All Translations Created Equal?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013); DeRouchie, *How to Understand*, 157–77.

Fig. 3. Translations of Exodus 19:4–6a	DeRouchie's initial translation
4 אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְמִצְרָיִם וָאֶשָּׂא אֶתְכֶם עַל־כַּנְפֵי נְשָׁרִים וָאָבִא אֶתְכֶם אֵלָי׃ 5 וְעַתָּה אִם־שָׁמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ בְּקֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וִהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ׃ 6 וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ	4 You have seen what I did to Egypt, and (how) I lifted you on wings of eagles, and (how) I brought you to myself. 5 And now, if you will indeed listen unto my voice and (then[?]) keep my covenant and (then[?]) be my (for me a[?]) treasured possession from (more than[?]) all the peoples, for (though[?]) all the earth is mine (for me[?]), 6 and (then[?]) you will be for me a (my[?]) royal priesthood and a holy nation.
Young's Literal Translation (YLT)	**NASB**
4 Ye—ye have seen that which I have done to the Egyptians, and I bear you on eagles' wings, and bring you in unto Myself. 5 'And now, if ye really hearken to My voice, then ye have kept My covenant, and been to Me a peculiar treasure more than all the peoples, for all the earth [is] Mine; 6 and ye—ye are to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.	4 You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. 5 Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.
ESV	**NIV**
4 You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.	4 You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Key Observations on Exodus 19:4–6

a. The explicit second masculine plural pronoun אַתֶּם ("you") at the head of 19:4 is unnecessary syntactically but is likely present in order to mark the paragraph's initiation, using a marked, non-default verb-pattern ([x] + *qatal*).[9] It may also give added stress that it was the *Israelites* ("you!") who saw God's works.

b. In 19:4, the first common singular *wayyiqtol* (*waw*-consecutive imperfect) verbs וָאֶשָּׂא ("and I lifted") and וָאָבִא ("and I brought") appear to be building off the *qatal* (perfect) first common singular relative clause אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי ("what I did"). That is, Israel not only saw *what* God did but *how* he lifted them and *how* he brought them to himself.

c. וְעַתָּה ("And now") in 19:5 is an inference-marker,[10] and the inference itself has both a marked protasis (אִם־ "if") and unmarked apodosis ("then").

9. For marked versus default clause patterns, see DeRouchie, "Discerning Sub-Units in Text-Blocks: Paragraph-Breaks," in chapter 2 and "More on Marked and Unmarked Clauses" in chapter 5 of *How to Understand*, 109–16, 222–26. The marker [x] stands for any subject, object, or modifier in a clause; [x] cannot stand for either a finite verb or a conjunction.

10. See DeRouchie, "The Inference-Markers לָכֵן and וְעַתָּה," in chapter 5 of *How to Understand*, 206–209.

Key Questions on Exodus 19:4–6

a. As noted, אִם־ (“if”) at the beginning of 19:5 signals a conditional protasis. Where does the apodosis begin? YLT begins it with the first *weqatal* (*waw*-consecutive perfect) (וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם “and you shall keep”), but most other English translations place it at the second *weqatal* (וִהְיִיתֶם “and you shall be”) (cf. KJV, NKJV, NRSV, NASB, NET Bible, ESV, NIV, CSB). It’s noteworthy that the majority view stretches way back to the 16th century, which could suggest a firmly fixed tradition rather than careful exegetical assessment.

b. What is a סְגֻלָּה, rendered in the ESV of 19:5 as “treasured possession”?

c. Does the fronted preposition מִן (“from”) in the phrase מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים in 19:5 express separation (i.e., “from all the peoples”) or comparison (i.e., “more than all the peoples”)?

d. Does the כִּי clause in 19:5 function as a ground for what precedes (= “for/because,” so ESV) or as a concessive for what precedes or follows (= “though/although,” so NIV)?

e. As at the front of 19:4, the וְאַתֶּם (“and you”) in 19:6 is intrusive and unnecessary grammatically. Why is it part of the speech at this point?

f. What is the significance of “a royal priesthood [*or* kingdom of priests] and a holy nation”?

g. Do the various לִי prepositional phrases in 19:5–6 express divine possession (i.e., “mine”) or divine advantage (i.e., “to/for me”)? Most English translations treat the two occurrences in 19:5 as expressing possession and the single occurrence in 19:6 as expressing advantage.

As we proceed through our exegesis to theology, we will keep these observations and questions in mind. We have an initial translation and a good list of observations and questions from which to build. We are now ready to move from the “Text” stage into “Observation.”

B. Observation: “How is this passage communicated?”

5. Clause and Text Grammar in Exodus 19:4–6[11]

The first step in “Observation” and the fifth step in the entire exegetical process is assessing the makeup and relationship of words, phrases, clauses, and larger text

11. For more on clause and text grammar, see Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An*

units. In Exodus 19:4–6 we have four areas to assess: (1) the demarcation of the protasis and apodosis; (2) the text hierarchy of the passage; (3) the specific function of the prepositions מִן and לְ in verses 5–6; and (4) the function of כִּי in verse 5.

Determining the Protasis and Apodosis in Exodus 19:5–6

In this section we want to consider where the apodosis (or "then" section) begins in Exodus 19:5–6. The protasis or "if" section of this two-part syntactic construction clearly starts with the אִם־ ("if") in 19:5a ("If you will indeed listen unto my voice ..."). But where do we start the "then"? Our translation revealed three possibilities: vv. 5b, 5c, or 6a.

At times there is difficulty discerning the beginning of an apodosis because Hebrew usually doesn't use an explicit conjunction like "then" or "therefore" to mark it. Instead, Hebrew relies on a mixture of content and grammatical signals. What we are looking for is a clear formal (i.e., grammatical) cue to identify the shift from protasis to apodosis––perhaps a new verb-pattern, a change in subject, or the use of an unnecessary explicit pronoun. So, let's consider our three possibilities for the apodosis in Exodus 19:5–6. Figure 4 identifies where we left off our text-hierarchy, only having finalized the thought-flow through 19:4.

Fig. 4. Text-Hierarchy in Exodus 19:4–6

Hebrew		English
אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם	4	You have seen
אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְמִצְרָיִם	b	what I did to Egypt,
וָאֶשָּׂא אֶתְכֶם עַל־כַּנְפֵי נְשָׁרִים	c	and how I lifted you on eagles' wings,
וָאָבִא אֶתְכֶם אֵלָי׃	d	and how I brought you to myself.
וְעַתָּה	5	And now,
אִם־שָׁמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ בְּקֹלִי		if you will indeed listen at my voice
וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי	b	and (then[?]) keep my covenant
וִהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים	c	and (then[?]) be my (for me a[?]) treasured possession from (more than[?]) all the peoples,
כִּי־לִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ׃	d	for (although[?]) all the earth is mine (for me[?]),
וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ	6	and (then[?]) you will be for me a (my[?]) royal priesthood and a holy nation.

Option 1: Placing the Apodosis at 19:5b

The 1862 Young's Literal Translation (YLT) placed the apodosis in 19:5b, directly following the אִם־ ("if") protasis of 19:5a: "And now, if ye really hearken to My voice, then ye have kept My covenant, and been to me a peculiar treasure...." Positively, this

Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990); Ronald Williams and John C. Beckman, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007); Lee M. Fields, *Hebrew for the Rest of Us: Using Hebrew Tools without Mastering Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008); Christo H. J. van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017); DeRouchie, *How to Understand*, 181–236.

view includes a marked shift from the *yiqtol* תִּשְׁמְעוּ ("you will listen") in the protasis of 19:5a to the *weqatal* וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם ("and you will keep") in 19:5b. But the challenge is that, were 19:5b a continuation of the protasis, it would have looked exactly the same way. *Weqatal* usually follows *yiqtol* when a protasis extends over multiple clauses, so we ought to expect a greater marked shift than a simple change from *yiqtol* to *weqatal* in order to signal the start of the apodosis. With this, Davies adds that the language of keeping God's covenant is "so closely parallel in meaning" to listening to his voice "that it must continue the protasis."[12]

Option 2: Placing the Apodosis at 19:5c

Since the 1611 KJV, most English translations have placed the apodosis at 19:5c. For example, the NASB reads, "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine." Indeed, according to Davies, from a semantic perspective, this is the only "real option."[13] However, note that 19:5c simply begins with the *weqatal* verb וִהְיִיתֶם ("and you will be"), which is the same conjugation represented in וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם ("and you will keep") in 19:5b. There is no grammatical shift at all between 19:5b and 19:5c, and there are no other markers that would tell us that the apodosis should begin in 19:5c. This lack of signal calls into question the majority view. Indeed, this may be an instance where tradition rather than careful reading has guided most of the translations.

Option 3: Placing the Apodosis at 19:6a

What is noteworthy in 19:6a is the explicit presence of the unnecessary pronoun וְאַתֶּם ("and you [masculine plural]") before the verb תִּהְיוּ ("you [masculine plural] will be"): "And *you* will be to me a royal priesthood and a holy nation." The inclusion of a lexicalized, unnecessary pronoun is exactly what we would expect to mark an apodosis where the main subject does not change. Davies claims that making Israel's being or becoming God's special treasure part of their responsibility makes little sense.[14] However, I believe this is exactly what YHWH is calling for,[15] as the parallel in Deuteronomy 26:17–19 makes clear.

Deuteronomy 26:17–19 stands as the climax to the Moab covenant, where God renews his relationship with the post-Sinai generation. Figure 5 shows my translation and basic outline of the passage. You'll notice a number of allusions to Exodus 19:4–6.

12. John A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19.6*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 395 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 42.

13. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 42.

14. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 42.

15. In §7 below I will discuss the meaning of the phrase "treasured possession" and what exactly YHWH is calling for.

Fig. 5. DeRouchie's Translation and Outline of Deuteronomy 26:17–19[16]
Today you have caused YHWH to declare to be your God and (for you) to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, his commandments, and his judgments, and to heed his voice. 18 And today YHWH has caused you to declare to be a people of treasured possession, just as he declared to you, and to keep all his commandments, 19 and (for him) to place you high over all nations for praise and for fame and for beauty and to make you a people holy to YHWH your God, just as he declared.
1. You have today caused YHWH to declare (v. 17): a. YHWH's *commitment*: to be God to you b. YHWH's *expectations*: i. To walk in his ways ii. To keep his statutes, commands, and judgments iii. To heed his voice **2. YHWH has today caused you to declare (vv. 18–19):** a. Israel's *commitment* (v. 18): i. To be a treasured possession for YHWH ii. To keep all his commands b. Israel's *expectations* (v. 19) i. To set Israel high above the nations ii. To be a holy people to YHWH

There are two parties in the covenant (YHWH and Israel), and here each party's readiness to enter into covenant moves the other to formalize both his covenantal commitments (obligations) and expectations (stipulations). The commitments of one party are equivalent to the expectations of the other. Focusing on the terms that are parallel with Exodus 19:5–6, in Deuteronomy 26 we see God *expecting* Israel to "keep" covenantal statutes, commands, and judgments and to "heed [ESV = obey] his voice" (26:17). We also see Israel *committing* to "be a treasured possession" and "to keep" the covenantal commands (26:18). YHWH calls Israel *to do* these things; they are not what Israel is hoping they will become. These divine expectations and human commitments suggest that all three main clauses in Exodus 19:5 serve as the protasis and that only in 19:6a do we arrive at the apodosis: "If Israel will surely heed his voice and keep his covenant and be a treasured possession––living as if

16. Deuteronomy 26:17–18 contain the only instances of the Hiphil of אמר ("to say") in the Hebrew OT. The default meaning behind the Hiphil is causative, but most translators render the form as a simple declarative (see Walter T. Claassen, "The Declarative-Estimative Hiph'il," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 2 [1972]: 5–16). In contrast, my rendering retains the causative force, reading it within the covenantal ratification context. As such, Israel first *causes* YHWH to declare both obligation and stipulation, and then YHWH *causes* Israel to declare both obligation and stipulation. A more periphrastic rendering would be, "Today you have ratified YHWH's declaration. . . . Today, YHWH has ratified your declaration. . . ." My proposal is adapted from Steven Ward Guest, *Deuteronomy 26:16–19 as the Central Focus of the Covenantal Framework of Deuteronomy* (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 72–129, esp. 77–88; however, I disagree with Guest's treatment of "treasured possession" in verse 18 (pages. 118–19). My rendering is somewhat comparable to the NRSV: "Today you have obtained the LORD's agreement.... Today the LORD has obtained your agreement" (Deut 26:17–18). It also similar to Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 185–86; and Daniel I. Block, "The Privilege of Calling: The Mosaic Paradigm for Missions (Deut 26:16–19)," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 162, no. 648 (2005): 387–405.

they are valued by God, *then* they will fulfill their calling as a royal priesthood and holy nation" (author's paraphrase). Notice how Deuteronomy 26:19 includes Israel's becoming "a holy" people in their expectation. This too indicates that Exodus 19:6 is indeed the apodosis. We can thus display a basic outline of Exodus 19:5–6 like this:

1. **Protasis:** "If you will ..." (v. 5)
    a. Heed God's voice
    b. Keep his covenant
    c. Be his treasured possession
2. **Apodosis:** "Then you shall be ..." (v. 6)
    a. Royal priesthood
    b. Holy nation

The Text-Hierarchy of Exodus 19:4–6

If we are on track with the placement of the protasis and apodosis in Exodus 19:5–6, we can expand our text-hierarchy of the passage. Laying out the hierarchy of clauses helps us visualize the relationship of all the parts. It helps us differentiate subordination, embedding, and the various text-blocks.

What you must remember as you visually represent your structural analysis through a text-hierarchy is that you mark subordination by indenting and that in given text-blocks you should always be able to follow the chain of וְ ("and")-fronted clauses to their source, whether it is an asyndetic clause or a subordinate clause marked by a subordinate conjunction. Our exegetical decisions to date lead us to the breakdown shown in figure 6:

Fig. 6. Text-Hierarchy of Exodus 19:4–6

אַתֶּ֣ם רְאִיתֶ֔ם	4	You have seen
אֲשֶׁ֥ר עָשִׂ֖יתִי לְמִצְרָ֑יִם	b	what I did to Egypt,
וָאֶשָּׂ֤א אֶתְכֶם֙ עַל־כַּנְפֵ֣י נְשָׁרִ֔ים	c	and how I lifted you on eagle's wings,
וָאָבִ֥א אֶתְכֶ֖ם אֵלָֽי׃	d	and how I brought you to myself.
וְעַתָּ֗ה	5	And now,
אִם־שָׁמ֤וֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ֙ בְּקֹלִ֔י		if you will indeed listen unto my voice
וּשְׁמַרְתֶּ֖ם אֶת־בְּרִיתִ֑י	b	and keep my covenant
וִהְיִ֨יתֶם לִ֤י סְגֻלָּה֙ מִכָּל־הָ֣עַמִּ֔ים	c	and be my (for me a?) treasured possession from (more than?) all the peoples,
↑↓ כִּי־לִ֖י כָּל־הָאָֽרֶץ׃	d	↑↓ for (though?) all the earth is mine (for me?),
וְאַתֶּ֧ם תִּהְיוּ־לִ֛י מַמְלֶ֥כֶת כֹּהֲנִ֖ים וְג֣וֹי קָד֑וֹשׁ	6	then you will be to me a (my?) royal priesthood and a holy nation.

One feature of my text-hierarchy worth mentioning is that, with both וְעַתָּה ("and now") in 19:5a and וְאַתֶּם ("and you [masculine plural]") in 19:6a, the conjunction וְ ("and") is not linked to anything before it. Scholars call this the "*waw* of apodosis,"

which usually stands as an optional marker of the main consequence clause following the subordinate protasis: "if-*then*, when-*then*, because-*therefore*." When וְ signals an apodosis, this coordinator does not join elements of equal syntactic value. The protasis is always subordinate to the apodosis, and I have identified this subordination through indenting both the unmarked protasis of 19:4 and the embedded אִם-protasis in 19:5.[17]

The Function of מִן and לְ in Exodus 19:5–6

We are now ready to clarify the function of the single מִן preposition and three לְ prepositions in Exodus 19:5–6. Was Israel to be a treasured possession to God in distinction "from" all the peoples of the earth (separative מִן) or "more than" all the peoples of the earth (comparative מִן)? Two arguments stand against the comparative reading and therefore support the view that the preposition expresses a relationship of separation between Israel and the rest of the peoples. First, elsewhere Scripture only designates Israel and the church as a "treasured possession" in relation to God (Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Mal 3:17; Ps 135:4; Tit 2:14; 1 Pet 1:14). Indeed, as we will see in §7, the very meaning of סְגֻלָּה ("treasured possession") implies a unique and distinctive status. The translation "more than" requires that the peoples of the earth were still, in some lower sense, God's special treasure, but this is *not* what the rest of the Bible teaches. Second, rendering מִן as comparative sets us up to read the כִּי as a concessive statement (i.e., "though, although"). The result would be something like, "You shall be to me a treasured possession *more than* all the peoples, *though* all the earth is mine." However, as the next unit highlights, a concessive translation of כִּי as "though, although" is highly unlikely, and without the contrary-to-fact statement, a translation of מִן as "more than" makes little sense. We should translate מִן as "from," highlighting YHWH's call for Israel to stand distinct *from* the nations.

The prepositional phrase לִי occurs in 19:5cd and 19:6a, and each instance most likely expresses either divine possession ("mine") or divine advantage ("to/for me"). Is Israel to be *YHWH's* treasured possession or a treasured possession *to YHWH*? Is all the earth *God's*, or is all the earth *for God*? Will Israel's obedience result in their being *YHWH's* royal priesthood and holy nation, or are God's people to become a royal priesthood and a holy nation *for God's sake*? The exegetical decisions here are not easy, but thankfully we can say that all these options are true teachings in

17. Richard C. Steiner has proposed that even in conditional sentences the "*waw* of apodosis" may actually still be a coordinator through an abbreviated form of logic. He proposes that the pattern "If A, then B" is equivalent to "If A, then A *and* B," which both English and Hebrew can express as "If A, then *also* B" (cf. Lev 6:21 with Jer 31:37; 33:20–21; Zech 3:7; Steiner, "Does the Biblical Hebrew Conjunction -ו Have Many Meanings, One Meaning, or No Meaning at All?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119 [2000]: 264). While Steiner's proposal provides a likely explanation for the origin of the *waw* of apodosis, one struggles to see explicit patterns in biblical Hebrew for the use or non-use of the *waw* of apodosis. Its presence or absence seems optional in most two-part syntactic constructions.

Scripture. Nevertheless, the question is, "What exactly is the Lord calling for or declaring *in this passage*?"

As suggested in the major translations, the two instances of לִי in 19:5 are probably possessive, stressing that Israel was to exist as *God's* special treasure and that the whole earth was the *Lord's*.[18] Only this interpretation counters the unnecessary redundancy of, "You shall be a treasured possession *to YHWH* because all the earth exists *for me*." The use of לִי in 19:6a, however, may be different. Israel's priesthood was always *for YHWH's* sake (Exod 28:1; 1 Chr 23:13), designed to promote his holiness and display his beauty. Most translations render 19:6a as, "And you shall be *to me* a royal priesthood and a holy nation," and this pattern seems sound.

The Function of כִּי in Exodus 19:5

The final major grammatical question in Exodus 19:5 relates to whether the particle כִּי marks 19:5d as supplying a logical ground for what precedes (i.e., "for, because") or signals a concessive relationship with what precedes or follows (i.e., "though, although").[19] Compare the ESV and NIV translations.

Fig. 7. The Function of כִּי in Exodus 19:4–6

MT		ESV	NIV
וְעַתָּה אִם־שָׁמוֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ בְּקֹלִי	5	5 Now therefore, if you will indeed	5 Now if you obey me fully and keep
וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי	b	obey my voice and keep my	my covenant, then out of all nations
וִהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים	c	covenant, you shall be my treasured	you will be my treasured possession.
כִּי־לִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ׃	d	possession among all peoples, *for all*	*Although the whole earth is mine*, 6
		the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be	
וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ	6	to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.	you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

The NIV renders the clause in 19:5d (כִּי־לִי כָּל־הָאָרֶץ) concessively with what follows: "*Although the whole earth is mine*, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." While גַּם כִּי ("even though") is the more natural way in Hebrew to express concession (e.g., Isa 1:15; Ps 23:4), scholars recognize that a כִּי clause can bear concessive force when it precedes the main clause (e.g., Jer 51:53; Ezek 11:16).[20] A strength of the NIV's rendering is that it explains the explicit subject וְאַתֶּם ("and you") in 19:6a by seeing it as emphasizing contrast with what precedes—– as if God were saying, "Although I own all the world, *you alone* are my kingdom of priests." Furthermore, the NIV translation of 19:5d–6a reads smoothly, treating

18. So, too, Ernst Jenni, *Die hebräischen Präpositionen*, vol. 3, *Die Präposition Lamed* (Stuttgart: Kohlhamer, 2000), 23–25, 54–57, 77.

19. For a more thorough assessment of the syntax and meaning with different conclusions, especially due to his alternative placement of the apodosis, see Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 55–60.

20. Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd ed., Subsidia Biblica 27 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2006), 602 (§171.b).

the last sentence of the speech as an inner paragraph restatement of 19:5c. In this interpretation, being God's "treasured possession" (19:5c) is parallel to Israel's being a "royal priesthood and a holy nation" (19:6a) whereas "out of all nations" (19:5c) is parallel to "the whole earth is mine" (19:5d).

In spite of these strengths, the NIV reading fully depends on viewing the statement about the "treasured possession" in 19:5c as the start of the apodosis. And I already showed the unlikelihood of this reading, seeing as there are no grammatical signals that suggest any major change happens in 19:5c. The explicit subject וְאַתֶּם ("and you") in 19:6a marks the start of the apodosis, and, therefore, we should read the כִּי as supplying support to what precedes. Scholars believe that the concessive force is unlikely whenever כִּי follows its main clause,[21] so we are on most stable ground to treat the כִּי as causal (i.e., "because, for"), supplying a reason why Israel needed to live as a treasured possession.

The offspring of Abraham were to exist with a conscious sense that they were God's special treasure from all peoples *because* all the earth is the Lord's. How does God's ownership of all the earth supply a reason for Israel's being a treasured possession? It could mean two different realities, each of which may be true in this case. *First*, for YHWH to own all things and yet to place special affection on Israel should move them to a distinct awareness that they are valued. In paraphrase, "Because I own all things and yet treasure you uniquely, live as if you are treasured." Much later, the Lord would highlight through Amos, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2). And again, Moses elsewhere stressed, "Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn" (Deut 10:14–16; cf. 4:8–10, 33–35; 28:1). Israel's unique position among all the peoples of the earth placed certain demands upon them. *Second*, because God had laid claim to all the earth and was calling Israel as an agent through whom he would make himself known, the people's living with a recognition of their special status before God would have served as a means for God's global sovereignty to be re-realized. From this perspective, we could paraphrase the whole: "Because I deserve allegiance from all the earth, I am giving you a sacred task, part of which is for you to exist as a treasured possession among all peoples. As you revel in my closeness and take pleasure in your sonship, you will in turn point the rest of the world back to the only sovereign, savior, and satisfier. And they will see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (cf. Deut 26:18–19; Jer 33:9; Zeph 3:19–20; Zech 9:16–17; Matt 5:16; 1 Pet 2:11–12). Either of these interpretations fit the grammar and calling in these verses.

21. Joüon and Muraoka, *Grammar of Biblical Hebrew,* 602n1; Anneli Aejmelaeus, "Function and Interpretation of כי in Biblical Hebrew," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105, no. 2 (1986): 198–9, 205–7.

We have concluded that כִּי in 19:5 is best read causally ("because, for"). When the conclusions from the last three sections are joined, the result is the following text-hierarchy and translation for Exodus 19:5–6:

Fig. 8. Text-Hierarchy of Exodus 19:5–6		
וְעַתָּ֗ה	5	And now,
אִם־שָׁמ֤וֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ֙ בְּקֹלִ֔י		if you will indeed listen unto my voice
וּשְׁמַרְתֶּ֖ם אֶת־בְּרִיתִ֑י	b	and keep my covenant
וִהְיִ֨יתֶם לִ֤י סְגֻלָּה֙ מִכָּל־הָ֣עַמִּ֔ים	c	and be my treasured possession from all the peoples,
↑ כִּי־לִ֖י כָּל־הָאָֽרֶץ׃	d	↑ *for* all the earth is mine,
וְאַתֶּ֧ם תִּֽהְיוּ־לִ֛י מַמְלֶ֥כֶת כֹּהֲנִ֖ים וְג֣וֹי קָד֑וֹשׁ	6	then you will be to me a royal priesthood and a holy nation.

6. Argument-Tracing in Exodus 19:4–6[22]

Through observing further, the interpreter must now finish tracing the literary argument and create a message-driven outline that is tied to the passage's main point. In creating an argument diagram, I will trace the various coordinate and subordinate relationships in Exodus 19:4–6 using the semantic categories and symbols from Biblearc.com (see fig. 9).

Fig. 9. Types of Propositional Relationships		
Coordinate	**Subordinate**	
	Restatement	***Distinct Statement***
Series (S)	Action-Manner (Ac/Mn)	Ground (G)
Progression (P)	Comparison (Cf)	Inference (∴)
Alternate (A)	Negative-Positive (–/+)	Bilateral (BL)
Both-And (B&)	Question-Answer (Q/A)	Action-Result (Ac/Res)
	Idea-Explanation (Id/Exp)	Action-Purpose (Ac/Pur)
	General-Specific (Gn/Sp)	Conditional (If/Th)
	Fact-Interpretation (Ft/In)	Temporal (T)
	Contrary Statement	Locative (L)
	Concessive (Csv)	Anticipation-Fulfillment (Ant/F)
	Situation-Response (Sit/R)	

Analyze literary features and arrangement and create an argument diagram

Before completing our tracing of the argument in Exodus 19:4–6, it is helpful to recall our text-hierarchy in order to visualize the passage's main sections.

22. For more on argument-tracing, see http://www.Biblearc.com; Kaiser, *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, 87–104, 149–81; Ryken and Longman, *Complete Literary Guide*; DeRouchie, *How to Understand*, 237–68.

Fig. 10. Text-Hierarchy of Exodus 19:4–6

אַתֶּ֣ם רְאִיתֶ֔ם	4	You have seen
אֲשֶׁ֥ר עָשִׂ֖יתִי לְמִצְרָ֑יִם	b	what I did to Egypt,
וָאֶשָּׂ֤א אֶתְכֶם֙ עַל־כַּנְפֵ֣י נְשָׁרִ֔ים	c	and how I lifted you on eagle’s wings,
וָאָבִ֥א אֶתְכֶ֖ם אֵלָֽי׃	d	and how I brought you to myself.
וְעַתָּ֗ה	5	And now,
אִם־שָׁמ֤וֹעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ֙ בְּקֹלִ֔י		if you will indeed listen unto my voice
וּשְׁמַרְתֶּ֖ם אֶת־בְּרִיתִ֑י	b	and keep my covenant
וִהְיִ֨יתֶם לִ֤י סְגֻלָּה֙ מִכָּל־הָ֣עַמִּ֔ים	c	and be my treasured possession from all the peoples,
↑ כִּי־לִ֖י כָּל־הָאָֽרֶץ׃	d	↑ for all the earth is mine,
וְאַתֶּ֧ם תִּהְיוּ־לִ֛י מַמְלֶ֥כֶת כֹּהֲנִ֖ים וְג֣וֹי קָד֑וֹשׁ	6	then you will be to me a royal priesthood and a holy nation.

Note that 19:4 recalls YHWH’s great deliverance of Israel from Egypt. And then, with the inference-marker וְעַתָּה ("and now") in 19:5a, 19:5–6 draw a conclusion from the great salvation related to Israel’s sacred task. The inference section itself has two units: the conditional protasis in 19:5 ("if") and the apodosis in 19:6 ("then"). Because God saved Israel, if they will heed his voice, keep his covenant, and be his treasured possession from all the earth, then they will serve for him as a royal priesthood and holy nation. We can now display these various relationships through an arc (fig. 11).

Fig. 11. Arc of Exodus 19:4–6

Our first step is to distinguish the understood *Ground* [G] in 19:4 from the *Inference* (∴) in 19:5–6. There is no כִּי ("because, for") in 19:4, but we do find וְעַתָּה ("and now") in 19:5, which identifies the inference.

Within 19:4a we have the initial statement that Moses’s audience had seen something. This is the *Idea* (Id), which is then unpacked through the *Explanation*

(Exp) given in the compound relative clauses in 19:4b–d. A *Progression* (P) is evident: They saw or experienced (1) what God did to Egypt, and (2) how he carried them, and then (3) brought them to himself. Now they were with God at his mountain, and he identifies the implications of this reality in 19:5–6.

The inference section has a conditional protasis in 19:5 and an apodosis in 19:6, which I identify with *If-Then* (If-Th). The "if" section contains a progression of three actions that appear to serve as the means by which Israel will reach God's goal of them serving as a royal priesthood and a holy nation. Later we will consider more what this task actually means, but here I want to note the type of condition that is evident. I could say, "If I fly on the airplane, I will arrive in Chicago." Here the arrival in Chicago is an ultimate goal not enjoyed until *after* the flight is complete. In contrast, I could also say, "If I fly on the airplane, I will get some extended time to read." Here the apodosis is fulfilled while the condition is being met, not after. While I am flying, I am getting to read. This latter example clarifies the type of conditional relationship evident in Exodus 19:5–6. At the very time while Israel is pursuing God by heeding his voice, keeping his covenant, and existing as his treasured possession, the people will be serving as a royal priesthood and a holy nation on behalf of God for the sake of the world. The apodosis identifies the God-honoring calling, and the protasis the means for fulfilling the calling.[23]

The final arc is between 19:5cd, with 19:5d providing the *Ground* (G) or reason for 19:5c. Israel must serve as God's treasured possession amid the earth, *because* all the earth is God's. As I already noted, the logic here appears to be that Israel bears a God-exalting calling and that their role of serving as God's treasured people is part of YHWH's means for reclaiming his rightful place as the recognized and praised Lord of the earth. Because all the world is indeed his, Israel must complete their purpose of reflecting and representing YHWH's supremacy over the world.

Draft an exegetical outline

Unlike many outlines, an exegetical outline highlights the passage's main message along with drawing attention to the relationship of all the parts. I begin by crafting a basic logical outline of the passage, the identify the main purpose and main idea, and then use these elements to draft the exegetical outline.
Draft a basic logical outline of the passage.

23. In Gentry's words, "The conditional sentence is proclaiming the privileged status of Israel inherent in the covenant relationship." Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 351–52.

Fig. 12. Basic Logical Outline of Exodus 19:4–6
I. God Redeems Israel from Egypt (v. 4) **II. Implication ("And now"): Israel bears a calling to make much of God (vv. 5–6)** A. The condition ("if") (v. 5) 1. Heed God's voice 2. Keep God's covenant 3. Be God's treasured possession in the context of the world B. The result ("then") (v. 6) 1. Be a royal priesthood 2. Be a holy nation

Clarify the main purpose of the passage.

Fig. 13. Main Purpose of Exodus 19:4–6
To motivate Israel to mediate and display God's greatness and worth in response to God's gracious redemption and by means of a lifestyle of radical God-centeredness.

State the main idea of the passage in a single sentence.

Fig. 14. Main Idea of Exodus 19:4–6
In response to God's gracious redemption, the Lord calls his people to a God-exalting task of mediating and displaying his greatness and worth to the world through radical God-centered living.

Reword the basic outline into an exegetically grounded, message-driven outline.

Fig. 15. Exegetical Outline of Exodus 19:4–6	
You have seen what I did to Egypt and how I lifted you on eagle's wings, and how I brought you to myself. 5 And now, if you will indeed listen unto my voice and keep my covenant and be my treasured possession from all the peoples, for all the earth is mine, 6 **then you will be to me a royal priesthood and a holy nation.**	**I. The Basis of God's Calling for His People: God's Deliverance (v. 4)** **II. The Nature of God's Calling for His People: To Exalt God in the World (vv. 5–6)** A. The means for fulfilling the calling to exalt God in the world: radical God-centered living (v. 5) 1. Heed God's voice 2. Keep God's covenant 3. Exist as God's treasured possession in the context of the world B. The essence of the calling to exalt God in the world (v. 6) 1. Serving as a royal priesthood: mediate God's greatness and worth 2. Serving as a holy nation: display God's greatness and worth

While I will comment more about this later, there is an analogy between the structure of grace in the old covenant and the structure of grace in the new. In the old covenant, God graciously redeemed Israel from Egypt and, only in light of this, called them to a life of radical obedience and witness in the world. Following God in obedience was not the means for getting saved from slavery but the proper response to being saved. This is the structure of grace we see in the new covenant as well. God graciously redeems us in Christ and only then calls us to radical Christ-centered living. We bring nothing to our initial salvation. Only after a disciple is reborn does he become an obedient follower of all Jesus commanded.

7. A Word and Concept Study from Exodus 19:5[24]

The next step in the exegetical process and the last step in "Observation" is to clarify the meaning of key words, phrases, and concepts. After choosing a word to study, one must discover the range of meaning for the particular Hebrew word in the rest of the OT (external data) and then determine the meaning of the Hebrew word within the specific target text (internal data).

One of the words upon which the meaning of Exodus 19:5 hangs is סְגֻלָּה (S 5459; G/K 6035), which the ESV renders "treasured possession." In previous sections, we finalized our translation of 19:5 as follows: "If you will indeed listen unto my voice and keep my covenant and be my treasured possession from all the peoples...." The term סְגֻלָּה shows up eight times in the OT (Exod 19:5; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; 1 Chr 29:3; Ps 135:4; Eccl 2:8; Mal 3:17). Its first use in Scripture is in our text, which, as we will see, appears to have impacted the majority of other occurrences, thus showing the foundational role Exodus 19:4–6 played in shaping Israel's self-understanding.

External data

I have classified the eight passages containing סְגֻלָּה into two groups: (1) non-theological uses and (2) theological uses. This distinction is important, for God's theological use of the term in our text is most probably applying in a spiritual or religious context how the greater society was using the term in everyday life––its more common or secular use.

Common, non-theological uses (2x)

Our first example comes from Ecclesiastes 2:8, where the Preacher, reflecting on his kingship in Jerusalem, declares, "I also gathered for myself silver and gold *and the treasure of kings* [וּסְגֻלַּת מְלָכִים] and provinces. I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, the delight of the sons of man." Similarly, in 1 Chronicles 29:3, King David asserts of the temple, "Moreover, in addition to all that I have provided

24. For more on word and concept studies, see John H. Walton, "Principles for Productive Word Study," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* 1:161–70; Fields, "What Do You Mean?––Hebrew Word Studies," in *Hebrew for the Rest of Us*, 221–33; DeRouchie, *How to Understand*, 269–96. For key tools for word and concept studies, see http://www.accordancebible.com; https://www.logos.com; Willem A. VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997); John R. Kohlenberger III and James A. Swanson, *The Hebrew-English Concordance to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998); Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann Jakob Stamm, eds., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Study Edition*, trans. M. E. J. Richardson, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2001); R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, rev. one-volume ed. (Chicago: Moody, 2003); William D. Mounce, ed., *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

for the holy house, I have *a treasure* [סְגֻלָּה] of my own of gold and silver, and because of my devotion to the house of my God I give it to the house of my God."

In both of these texts, the סְגֻלָּה appears to be costly, valued, private property of the king that is normally reserved for his sole use and special purposes. Not only this, both instances show that the property is movable––not palaces but treasures associated with silver and gold that could be gathered from others or given for the building of the temple on the king's own prerogative. Ecclesiastes 2:8 may also add that the treasury is something personally gained.

In contrast to the narrow focus of סְגֻלָּה, we find in 1 Chronicles 27:25–31 a list of all the stewards who were over King David's "property" (רְכוּשׁ), which is the broadest term for one's possessions or goods. For David this meant his entire royal estate reaching over the entire kingdom, including all treasuries, workers of the fields for tilling the soil, vineyards, produce from the vineyards for the wine cellars, olive and sycamore trees in the Shephelah, stores of oil, herds that pastured in Sharon and in the valleys, camels, donkeys, and flocks. Because the text distinguishes "the king's treasuries" (אֹצְרוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ) from those "treasuries" in the country, the cities, the villages, and towers, it seems likely that the סְגֻלָּה was restricted to the private physical but non-living wealth he retained in his personal "treasury of the king."

Synthesis: Based on these texts, the common, every-day use of סְגֻלָּה appears to have been "a king's costly, valued, private, movable, non-living, personally gained property normally reserved for his sole use and special purposes."

Theological uses (5x + Exodus 19:5)

We first assess the *Law*, which is the canonical section in which our passage falls, the bulk of which Moses authored. Outside Exodus 19:5, the initial few references are all from Deuteronomy. The first two are worded almost identically and both are tied to a reaffirmation of Israel's identity as a holy people, which, with סְגֻלָּה, alludes to Exodus 19:5–6. Deuteronomy 7:6 gives the reason why Israel must utterly destroy all Canaanite worship implements: "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his *treasured possession* [סְגֻלָּה], out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth." Similarly, Deuteronomy 14:2 stresses why God's people must not engage in pagan worship practices: "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for his *treasured possession* [סְגֻלָּה], out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth." As in Exodus 19:5, YHWH's intent for Israel to be his סְגֻלָּה is something not true of all other peoples on the planet. God is calling Israel to live out a distinct status. The text stresses that YHWH *chose* Israel to be a סְגֻלָּה, which highlights the value he places on his people.

We already encountered the next text in our earlier grammatical discussion of the protasis and apodosis in Exodus 19:5–6. Deuteronomy 26:18 reads, "And the

LORD has today confirmed your declaration to be a people of treasured possession [סְגֻלָּה], just as he declared to you, and to keep all his commandments" (author's translation). Here, once again, living as YHWH's סְגֻלָּה is God's expectation for Israel.

We next assess the Prophets and Writings. While YHWH called Israel to holiness and to serve as his royal priesthood by pursuing him wholly, the history of Israel showed that their hearts were far from God, just as Moses said they would be.

> The LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet … but they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God. They despised his statutes and his covenant that he made with their fathers and the warnings that he gave them. They went after false idols and became false, and they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them that they should not do like them…. Therefore the LORD was very angry. (2 Kgs 17:13–15, 18; cf. Deut 31:27, 29)

Nevertheless, YHWH's fury was not his final expression. Indeed, out of his great compassion (Deut 4:30–31), the Lord would one day empower a remnant from Israel to be who they could not be on their own. *First*, we read in Malachi 3:17, "They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up my *treasured possession* [סְגֻלָּה], and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him." No harm will come to those who are God's. He will protect them, but he will punish the wicked. Malachi goes on to distinguish the righteous from the wicked as "one who serves God and one who does not serve him" (v. 18). To be God's סְגֻלָּה––his "treasured possession"––means that you will be his servant. When, therefore, YHWH charges Israel in Exodus 19:5 to "be my treasured possession" (וִהְיִיתֶם לִי סְגֻלָּה), it seems likely that he is calling them to live in his service.

Second, Psalm 135:3–4 declares, "Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing to his name, for it is pleasant! For the LORD has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel *as his own possession* [לִסְגֻלָּתוֹ]." The final book of the Psalter celebrates the God who restores and renews in anticipation of his full Davidic kingdom fulfillment.[25] Psalm 132 has just reaffirmed the Davidic covenant, and Psalms 133 and 134 celebrate the unity of the righteous and the hope for God's blessing. Into this context Psalm 135 reaffirms YHWH's claim on his own: "The LORD has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel *as his own possession*." The wording is more specific and personal than in earlier texts, using the third masculine singular suffix to emphasize that Israel is *his*.

25. For this reading, see Michael K. Snearly, "The Return of the King: Book V as a Witness to Messianic Hope in the Psalter," in *The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul*, ed. Andrew J. Schmutzer and David M. Howard (Chicago: Moody Press, 2014), 209–17.

Internal assessment: The meaning of סְגֻלָּה in Exodus 19:5

The non-theological uses of סְגֻלָּה in Ecclesiastes 2:8 and 1 Chronicles 29:3 pointed to the word meaning "a king's costly, valued, private, movable, non-living, personally-gained property normally reserved for his sole use and special purposes." סְגֻלָּה was indeed the king's "treasured possession."

The theological uses of סְגֻלָּה suggest that this is exactly how Israel was to think of themselves in their relationship with God. They were his costly, valued, private, personally gained property reserved for his special purpose. They stood distinct from the world as his special treasure (Exod 19:5; Deut 7:6; 14:2). Their responsibility was to live like it, which meant fleeing wickedness and serving YHWH (Mal 3:17). In the context of celebrating God's greatness and the hope of complete Davidic kingdom restoration, the psalmist affirms YHWH's claim on Israel, his treasure (Ps 135:4). The Lord also promises that one day he would bring about by his power what the people could not accomplish on their own (Mal 3:17). They would live as his servants and by this mediate and magnify his greatness to the world.

The LXX translates סְגֻלָּה in Exodus 19:5 as λαὸς περιούσιος, which is the same phrase Paul employs in Titus 2:14, where he highlights that Jesus Christ "gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession [λαὸν περιούσιον] who are zealous for good works." Thus, the church is now fulfilling the God-honoring calling of Israel by the power supplied through Christ. Jesus mediated and magnified the majesty of God perfectly in his life, death, resurrection, and exaltation, and now in him we are enabled to do the same.

Similarly, in a context of calling the church to holiness (1 Pet 1:14–16) and stressing that those who come to Christ "are being built up ... to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (2:5), Peter alludes to Exodus 19:5, using περιποίησις, which means the same thing––a "treasured possession" of God: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, *a people for his own possession* [λαός εἰς περιποίησις], that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." In Exodus 19 Israel's call to be a "treasured possession" was only potential, but in the church of Christ it is already being realized. In Jesus we are enabled to live as God's "treasured possession," serving him in the strength he supplies (1 Pet 4:11), and by this we are functioning as a royal priesthood and a holy nation under our king, to the praise of his glorious grace.

C. Context
"Where does this passage fit?"

8. The Historical Context of Exodus 19:4–6[26]

With step 8 we move from "Observation" to "Context." As we turn our eye to the broader frame in which our passage rests, we first need to understand the historical situation from which the author composed the text and identify any historical details that the author mentions or assumes. Here we ask questions of Who? When? Where? Why? How? and especially What?

In historical narrative texts, it is often difficult to discern the difference between historical and literary context, seeing as the history is bound up in the narrative itself. Such is the case as we approach Exodus 19:4–6. In light of this challenge, I have decided to only deal with the most general historical data, and I will leave a more thorough analysis of the Exodus narrative for the Literary Context discussion. As we approach Historical Context, I have chosen to focus on two areas: (1) The event of the exodus, which 19:4 tells us grounds Israel's God-honoring calling; and (2) the nature and significance of the "covenant" mentioned in 19:5.

The Exodus

After the Israelites dwelt in Egypt's east Delta for an extended time (Exod 12:40–41),[27] God commissioned Moses to lead a deliverance before the eyes of both Israel and the

26. For more on historical context, see James A. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969); William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger Jr., eds., *The Context of Scripture*, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997–2016); K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); Eugen H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); John H. Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Old Testament*, 5 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009); James K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary, eds., *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith? A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); Walter C. Kaiser and Paul D. Wegner, *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age through the Jewish Wars*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016); Ian W. Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015); DeRouchie, *How to Understand*, 299–322.

27. Exodus 12:40–41 tells us that Israel sojourned in Egypt 430 years, and then "at the end of the 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt." While many scholars believe this means 430 years from the time Jacob entered Egypt to the time of the exodus, I believe there is a strong case for viewing the 430 years as a reference from when Abram first entered Egypt (Gen 12:10–20). Jewish tradition, John Calvin, and some contemporary scholars like John Bimson and David Rohl propose the time from Jacob's entry until the exodus was only 210 years, based on genealogical data and other specific statements from the biblical texts. In my own assessment, at least five observations support this view: (1) Kohath was born before the entry into Egypt (Gen 46:12, 26), and his son Amram (Exod 6:18) was the father of Moses and Aaron (6:20). Kohath lived 133 years (6:18), Amram lived 137 years (6:20), and Moses was 80 years old at the Exodus (7:7). This means that *at the very most* Israel was in Egypt for 350 years (133 + 137 + 80), and that assumes the unlikely possibility that each man had his son in the

world. This fulfilled his earlier promise to Abram in Genesis 15:13–14: "Then the LORD said to him, 'Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions'" (NIV).

Scholars are not united on the dating of the exodus, partly because Scripture does not name the Pharaoh of the exodus. A straightforward reading of the biblical text, especially 1 Kings 6:1, would put the exodus in 1446 BC, probably during Egypt's 18th Dynasty during the reign of Amenhotep II (ca. 1450–1425 BC). While there is much corroborative evidence for the Israelite exodus in 1446 BC,[28] there is no explicit evidence in Egypt's materials that they, as the greatest empire on earth, were drastically humbled by the God of a massive band of foreign slaves. But this should not even be expected, for we know of no kings in the ancient world who were quick to retain for posterity stories of their own humiliation. What we do know is that the biblical details associated with Egyptian culture line up perfectly and that nothing in Egyptian history counteracts the Bible's claims.[29] Finally, as for Amenhotep II, we know that he began his kingship during Egypt's zenith of global power and influence. He was a successful military warrior and made several campaigns into Canaan. But then, for whatever reason, he abruptly stopped his military activity. While not

year of his death. More likely is the fact that the nation's time in Egypt was much shorter. (2) The 400 years promised in Genesis 15:13 most likely refers *not* to the length of Egyptian oppression but to the time until the oppression will cease––about 400 years from the Abrahamic covenant. Indeed, we know the oppression was not 430 years, for Israel lived in solace under Joseph for many years. (3) Paul's statement that the Law came 430 years after "the promises were made to Abraham" (Gal 3:16–17) implies a shorter Egyptian sojourn, for his point of departure is the promises to *Abraham* and not the patriarchs in general or the entrance of Jacob and his sons into Egypt. (4) In Acts 13:17–20 Paul states that "all this" from the choosing of the patriarchs through the period of the judges took "about 450" years. If the time reference indeed refers to everything mentioned in verses 17–20, the actual period from Jacob's entrance into Egypt to the exodus was *not* 430 years but much, much shorter. (5) While less specific, Acts 7:17–19 states that already after Joseph's death but before Egypt actually enslaved the Israelites "the time of the [Gen 15:13] promise [fulfillment] drew near." This would be strange to say if there was still many centuries of enslavement ahead, but if the enslavement happened only toward the end of the Egyptian sojourn, Stephen's stress on the "nearness" of the fulfillment makes more sense. How then do we reconcile the 430 year period in Exodus 12:40–41? I propose that Moses's "430 years" could be counting from the time when the father of their nation (Abraham) first sojourned in Egypt, which happens as early as Genesis 12:10–20 around Abram's seventy-fifth year, soon after his initial entrance into Canaan. The promise of 400 years in Genesis 15:13 is not associated with a specific age of Abram but came somewhere between his seventy-fifth and eighty-sixth years (Gen 12:4; 16:16).

28. See Charles F. Aling, *Egypt and Bible History: From Earliest Times to 1000 B.C.*, Baker Studies in Biblical Archaeology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981); John Bimson, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest*, 2nd ed. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 5 (Sheffield, UK: Almond Press, 1981); David Rohl, *Exodus: Myth or History?* (St. Louis Park, MN: Thinking Man Media, 2015); Timothy P. Mahoney with Steven Law, *Patterns of Evidence: Exodus* (St. Louis Park, MN: Thinking Man Media, 2015).

29. See especially Aling, *Egypt and Bible History*; James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 241–312.

conclusive, the Dream Stele of Thutmose IV, son and successor of Amenhotep II, notes that Thutmose IV was not the firstborn son of Amenhotep II, which could be an allusion to the tenth plague on the firstborn of Egypt.

What is most significant with respect to this piece of historical context is that Exodus 19:4–6 assumes with much of the rest of Scripture that the exodus actually occurred in space and time. Israel's God YHWH miraculously and with great power delivered them personally and visibly, making certain that all future deliverance was sure to come.

The Covenant

In his excellent co-authored work *Kingdom Through Covenant*, Peter Gentry has noted that Scripture applies the term בְּרִית ("covenant") to numerous oath-bound commitments: international treaties (Josh 9:6; 1 Kgs 15:19), clan alliances (Gen 14:13), personal agreements (Gen 31:44), national agreements (Jer 34:8–10), and loyalty agreements (1 Sam 20:14–17), including marriage.[30] In another exceptional study titled *Marriage as a Covenant*, Gordon Hugenberger helpfully defines "covenant" as "an elected, as opposed to natural, relationship of obligation under oath."[31] Or, as Thomas Schreiner notes, covenant the Bible's term for "a chosen relationship in which two parties make binding promises to each other," often with God as the witness.[32] These definitions fit well the nature of covenantal relationships that we see throughout both the Bible and the ancient world. At the heart of a covenant is a relationship––one established by choice and not by birth, though it is modeled on family relationships. Thus suzerains tagged themselves "fathers," vassals "sons," and fellow vassals "brothers." This covenant relationship bore obligations for both parties, who established this relationship in the context of promise, or oath, usually with the gods as witnesses for curse or blessing.

In Exodus 19:5, YHWH calls Israel to "keep my covenant." Since his dealing with Noah, YHWH has tagged his various relationships with humans "covenants" (Gen 6:8; 9:9–17; 15:18; 17:2–22; Exod 2:24; 6:4–5). This implies both his fatherly and sovereign authority and his intention to relate with the people of his creation. When we arrive at Exodus 19:5, the only two divine-human relationships tagged "covenants" are the Noahic and Abrahamic covenants. Now in Exodus 19–20, God is establishing what he later calls a "covenant" (Exod 24:8; 34:10, 27–28) specifically associated with Horeb, or Mount Sinai (Deut 5:2; 29:1[28:69]). The question becomes, what historical covenant is God pointing to in Exodus 19:5? "If you keep *my covenant*...."

30. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through* Covenant, 162–63.

31. Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 11.

32. Thomas R. Schreiner, *Covenant and God's Purpose for the World*, Short Studies in Biblical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 13.

In Exodus, the narrator opens the story of deliverance by saying, "God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob" (Exod 2:24). Then in Exodus 6:4–5, YHWH himself asserts, "I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant." YHWH had promised Abram in Genesis 12:2 that he would make him into a renowned nation, and then in 17:7–8 he promised, "And I will establish *my covenant* between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." These promises find their fulfillment in the Mosaic covenant established at Sinai.

William Dumbrell has argued that, because Exodus has only mentioned the Abrahamic covenant to this point, God is calling Israel in 19:5 to keep the Abrahamic covenant.[33] Other scholars struggle with this because Exodus 19–20 are the very context in which God makes the Sinai covenant.[34] Indeed, the call to "listen unto his voice" in 19:5 appears to anticipate the introduction to the Ten Words in 20:1, where we read, "And God spoke all these words, saying...."

I suggest that we do not have to choose between the two, for Genesis anticipates that God's relationship with Israel established at Sinai is actually the fulfillment of stage-one of his promises to Abraham––those promises directly related to Israel's nationhood and tenure in the land. While the Mosaic covenant includes some typological anticipations of blessing overcoming curse, it is the new covenant in Christ that ultimately fulfills stage-two of the Abrahamic covenant, for through it alone does blessing reach the nations through a male deliver (Gen 12:3; 22:17b–18) and Abraham become the father of a multitude of nations (17:4–6) (see esp. Acts 3:25–26; Rom 4:13–18; Gal 3:7–29). In Exodus 19:5 God is calling Israel to fulfill stage-one of the Abrahamic covenant, which will mean the need to abide by the Ten Words and the other regulations, all in order to enjoy sustained access to God's presence and to mediate and display his holiness to the world.

9. The Literary Context of Exodus 19:4–6[35]

The last of the nine exegetical steps is to comprehend the role that the passage plays in the whole biblical book within which it is found. Three areas in particular

33. William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: An Old Testament Covenant Theology*, 2nd ed. (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2013), 110–11.

34. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 50.

35. For more on literary context, see part 2 of T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, eds., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity and Diversity of Scripture* IVP

are necessary to assess: (1) the text's literary placement or location, (2) the text's literary function or purpose, and (3) literary details that help identify the text's overall contribution.

Perhaps more than any other book in Scripture, Exodus is an extended narrative treatise on the nature of YHWH as God. The whole book is designed to highlight his rightful, necessary, and loving passion for his own glory above all things. It does this by focusing on two main areas: (1) his redemption of his people (chs. 1–18) and (2) his relationship with his people (chs. 19–40). Figure 16 contains my exegetical outline for Exodus. Note where 19:4–6 falls:

Fig. 16. Exegetical Outline of Exodus
I. YHWH's Self-Exalting, Gracious Redemption of His People (1:1–18:27)
A. Historical Background to Redemption (1:1–4:31)
1. Setting the stage for redemption (1:1–2:25)
2. Calling of God's messenger of redemption (3:1–4:31)
B. The Call for and Experience of Redemption (5:1–15:21)
1. Moses' challenge to Pharaoh and Israel (5:1–6:27)
2. 10 Plagues: proclaiming the power and presence of YHWH (6:28–11:10)
3. The memorialization of redemption: the Passover (12:1–36)
4. The experience of redemption (12:37–14:31)
5. The celebration of redemption (15:1–21)
C. The Ramifications of Redemption (15:22–18:27)
1. For Israel: the life of faith as trust for provision (15:22–17:16)
2. For Moses: the life of faith as trust for guidance (18:1–27)
II. YHWH's Self-Exalting, Gracious Relationship with His People (19:1–40:38)
A. The Covenant Embodying YHWH's Relationship with Israel (19:1–24:11)
1. The manifestation of and response to YHWH's presence and word (19:1–20:21)
2. The nature of the relationship expounded (20:22–23:33)
3. The ratification of the covenant (24:1–11)
B. Sacred Space as the Emanating Center of YHWH's Relationship with Israel (24:12–40:38)
1. The manifestation of God's glory and the description of sacred space (24:12–31:18)
2. YHWH's response to Israel's failure to reckon with his presence (32:1–34:5)
3. YHWH's gracious manifestation of his presence among his people (35:1–40:38)

Literary Placement and Function

Redemption and relationship through covenant and divine presence are the hallmarks of the way YHWH discloses himself in Exodus. Since each of these elements are present in Exodus 19:4–6, this passage has a foundational place in the book. Redemption and divine presence are manifest in 19:4, whereas the covenant and its purpose of mediating and magnifying God's presence is the focus of 19:5–6.

Chapters 19–40 address two things: (1) how the Mosaic covenant (19:1–24:11) set the boundaries and purpose of Israel's relationship with YHWH and (2) how

Reference Collection (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000); Jason S. DeRouchie, ed., *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About: A Survey of Jesus' Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013); Miles V. VanPelt, ed., *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016); DeRouchie, *How to Understand*, 323–43.

the tabernacle (25:1–40:38) provided the context for this relationship. Within this framework, Exodus 19:4–6 introduces the section on covenant, describing its core. Exodus 19:4–6 is YHWH's first speech in the main part of the book, which itself gives the text priority.

Chapters 19–40 stand as the heart of the book for at least three reasons: First, these chapters carry the most literary weight, standing twice as long as what comes before. Second, Exodus 19:4–6 is explicit that the redemption detailed in chapters 1–18 grounds and gives rise to the relationship and the calling that flows from it. Third, the narrative itself has been anticipating Israel's arrival at Mount Sinai since 3:12, where God declared to Moses at the burning bush, "I will be with you, and this will be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve/worship God on this mountain." Exodus 19:2 then tells us, "They ... came into the wilderness of Sinai.... There they encamped before *the* mountain."

Literary Details

Background: Destruction and Deliverance

Using the translation I gave in §4, Exodus 19:4 reads, "You have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I lifted you on wings of eagles, and how I brought you to myself." The task to which YHWH calls Israel in these verses is grounded in what he had just accomplished on their behalf. With their own eyes, they had witnessed the ten devastating plagues YHWH brought on Egypt, and they had experienced a remarkable salvation.

Pharaoh had asked, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go?" (Exod 5:1). The plagues provided YHWH's systematic response to this query. It is intriguing that the text never names the Pharaoh of the exodus. Oh, how historians wish that he was! But there is a theological point being made. Pharaoh was god on earth for the Egyptians, yet he remains nameless. In contrast, the God over both heaven and earth and from whom everything derives bears the name YHWH (3:14–15). He is jealous to be known (34:14), and the whole book of Exodus works to unpack the significance of his name.

The battle in Egypt took place first in the heavenlies––it was a battle of the gods, wherein YHWH as the only uncaused one defeated Egypt's powers. Nearly every one of the ten plagues is known to have confronted an Egyptian deity.[36] Furthermore, we have texts like this: "For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on *all the gods* of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD" (12:12). "On the day after the Passover, the people of Israel went out triumphantly in the sight of all the

36. See John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 85.

Egyptians, while the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom the LORD had struck down among them. On *their gods* also the LORD executed judgments" (Num 33:3–4). "And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people for yourself from Egypt, a nation and *its gods*?" (2 Sam 7:23).

YHWH declares in Exodus 19:4, "You have seen!" The destruction of Egypt and the people's own deliverance happened before their very eyes. Faced with the amazing majesty and mercy of God, they had sung, "Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?" (Exod 15:11). The answer: No one! Thus, they declared, "The LORD will reign forever and ever!" (15:18). Others outside Israel also expressed similar awe. Thus Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, declared, "Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods" (18:10).

This amazing display of majesty and mercy sets the literary backdrop to our passage. Just before the seventh plague, YHWH told Pharaoh through Moses, "For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed *in all the earth*" (9:15–16). God is intent to exalt his power in the sight of all––with every people, every power knowing that he alone is God. He had raised up Pharaoh for this ultimate end. He destroyed Egypt and delivered Israel for the fame of his name, and this God-exalting motivation is what grounds the God-honoring calling detailed in Exodus 19:5–6.

Foreground: Covenant and Calling

Exodus 19:5–6 reads, "And now, if you will indeed listen unto my voice and keep my covenant and be to me a treasured possession from all the peoples, for all the earth is mine, then you will be to me a royal priesthood and holy nation" (author's translation). When YHWH asserted that Israel should indeed "listen unto his voice," this implied his authority over his people. YHWH speaks as a sovereign, and therefore, his words are by nature authoritative and, when written, canonical.[37] The call to "listen unto his voice" in 19:5 appears to anticipate the introduction to the Ten Words in 20:1, which reads, "And God spoke all these words, saying...." The voice that the people are to obey is, at the very least, disclosed in the words that YHWH is about to proclaim.

God calls Israel specifically to keep his "covenant," which I noted in my discussion of Historical Context refers to the Sinai covenant as the fulfillment of the

37. On this link, see Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, 2nd ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997), 21–44.

first stage of the Abrahamic covenant. YHWH had promised Abraham that he would become a nation in the land, and the Mosaic covenant revealed initially in Exodus 19–24 is the working out of this promise.

Exodus 20 highlights the way in which the encounter with God's presence mentioned in Exodus 19:4 grounds and gives rise to the calling of 19:5–6. At the mountain YHWH had disclosed both his person and word in power through the giving of the Ten Words. The crashing and piercing sounds and the visible display of fire and smoke had caused the people to tremble and to back away from the mountain (Exod 20:18). YHWH is not safe, but he is good. At this Moses came to them and declared in Exodus 20:20: "Do not fear, for God has come in order to test you and in order that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin" (author's translation). The logic of this text is important. God came to test Israel and to generate holy fear in them in order that they might not rebel. Sin implies a lack of godward fear, and a lack of godward fear implies that we are not encountering God.

In Exodus 19:5–6, the means for fulfilling the calling to mediate his greatness as a royal priesthood and to magnify this greatness as a holy people was through their heeding his voice, keeping his covenant, and being a treasured possession. Israel needed to obey God's law to show the world the value of God, but they would not do so apart from his merciful disclosure of himself. This is Moses's point at the end of the book when, after the golden calf episode, he pleads for the Lord's presence to remain in their midst. "For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?" (33:16). In Exodus 19:5–6 what will make Israel a light in the world will be their radical surrender to God and his ways. In Exodus 33:16 what will make Israel a light to the world will be the presence of God. Exodus 20:20 clarifies that God's presence generates fear that in turn leads to obedience.

As I conclude this section, I offer a challenge. Examine your life. Where are your biggest struggles with sin? We only rebel against God when we don't fear him enough, and fear is generated with a personal encounter with his presence. Plead to God to make his presence known to you. I love the promise in Jeremiah 32:40 regarding the new covenant: "I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me." Pray that God will work within you the fear that leads to holiness, for the glory of his name.

D. Meaning
"What does the passage mean?"

10. Biblical Theology in Exodus 19:4–6[38]

As we move into biblical theology, we shift from the formal category of exegesis into the area of theology and now truly begin to synthesize the lasting message of the passage. We also move from "Context" to "Meaning." At this step we consider how our passage connects to the Bible's overall story line or message and points to Christ. Biblical theology is a way of analyzing and synthesizing what the Bible reveals about God and his relations with the world that makes organic salvation-historical and literary-canonical connections with the whole of Scripture on its own terms, especially with respect to how the Old and New Testaments progress, integrate, and climax in Christ.

We will now look more intently at God's call that Israel be a "royal priesthood" in Exodus 19:6. This instruction builds upon revelation already disclosed in Genesis and sets a theological trajectory for what will come in the rest of Scripture.

The meaning of "a royal priesthood"

Before engaging in a scriptural journey, we must consider the proper meaning of the construct phrase מַמְלֶ֫כֶת כֹּהֲנִים, which most translations render "kingdom of priests." The noun מַמְלָכָה derives from the verb מלך ("to rule, reign"). Because nouns with preformative *mem* are usually (1) abstract nouns, (2) nouns of place, or (3) nouns of instrument, and because nouns of instrument usually bear an *a-e* vowel pattern whereas the others regularly follow either *a-a* or *i-a*, מַמְלָכָה (*a-a*) is likely either an abstract noun expressing the sphere/state/act of ruling (i.e., sovereignty) (e.g., 1 Sam 28:17; Isa 17:3; Jer 27:1) or a noun of place pointing to a realm of ruling (i.e., a kingdom––e.g., Gen 10:10; 1 Kgs 18:10; Isa 19:2).[39] In this light, the best possible meanings of the noun-relationship within the construct phrase מַמְלֶ֫כֶת כֹּהֲנִים are (1) a subjective genitive meaning priests who exercise sovereignty (i.e., royal priests) or (2) a genitive of specification meaning a royal realm embodying priests (i.e., kingdom

38. For more on biblical theology, see part 1 of Alexander and Rosner, eds., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*; G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007); T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008); G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011); Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012); James M. Hamilton Jr., *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013); DeRouchie, *How to Understand*, 347–93; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*; Jason S. DeRouchie, Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli, *40 Questions about Biblical Theology*, 40 Questions (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020).

39. Joüon and Muraoka, *Joüon*, 236 (§88.L.d); compare with Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 357n37.

of priests).[40] The LXX interprets with the first option, rendering the parallel phrases with two nouns, each modified by adjectives: βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα καὶ ἔθνος ἅγιον ("a royal priesthood and a holy nation").

In the immediate context of Exod 19:6, YHWH is the sovereign who speaks, covenants, and possesses (Exod 19:5), which means that he is either calling the Israelites as his covenant partner to display his ultimate sovereignty through their priesthood (option 1: "royal priesthood") or to operate as priests within his sovereign realm (option 2: "kingdom of priests"). The conjoined parallel phrase "holy nation" (וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ) simply includes a noun with modifying adjective, so it is difficult to know whether "nation" (גּוֹי) stands parallel to מַמְלֶכֶת ("kingdom") (thus supporting option 2) or כֹּהֲנִים ("priests") (thus supporting option 1).

YHWH's claim that "all the earth is mine" in 19:5d works well in relation to a focus on a particular "kingdom," as does the possibility that the preposition in God's assertion in 19:6a that the people will be "for me" (לִי) is in fact a לְ of possession. However, if, as I have argued, the 19:6 לְa is one of advantage (i.e., "for my benefit"; see §5 above), and if the charge that Israel is to be a treasured possession among all the peoples" is indeed identifying a missional calling (see §5), then the assertion that Israel as a nation were to be "royal priests" would point to a calling to mediate and display YHWH's greatness among the nations.

Davies rightly notes how the immediate literary context identifies how Israel's own priests were those consecrated to God in order to draw near his presence (e.g., 19:22; 28:35). As such, Davies downplays any thought that the nation as a priesthood relates in any way to a functional/missional calling.[41] However, along approaching the Lord, Israel's priests were also to represent YHWH's beauty and glory before the people (Exod 28:2), to clarify for the people his definition of what is holy and common, unclean and clean (Lev 10:10), and to instruct the people in God's ways (10:11). Could these elements not also be a part of what it would mean for the whole nation of Israel to serve as a priesthood for God in the sight of the nations? This seems all the more likely in a book that has already declared that the Lord intends to work through Israel in a way that will proclaim his name "in all the earth" (Exod 9:14–15; cf. Isa 63:11–14; Ps 106:8), thus providing initial though incomplete fulfillment of God's promise to the patriarchs that through Abraham the earth's families/nations would be blessed (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14).[42] With this, Moses will later

40. See Christo H. J. van der Merwe, Jacobus A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 227 (§25.4.2.3 and §25.4.3.3). Gentry similarly sees the options either as a domain of priests that God rules (that is, "kingdom of priests") or the exercise of a royal office by those who are priests (that is, "royal priesthood"). Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 357.

41. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 98. He writes, "We ought not to be looking then for a *functional* definition of priesthood, but for *ontological* one" (97–98).

42. See William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: An Old Testament Covenant Theology*, 2nd ed. (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2013), 119–21.

identify how only with YHWH's help will Israel actually be distinct from the nations (Exod 33:16), which shows that this was part of their responsibility.

Elsewhere, Moses highlights how Israel's keeping the law would impact the nations in a way that would bring glory to God (Deut 4:5–8), and this is at least one way to interpret what it means that they were to be a "treasured possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine" (Exod 19:5). Furthermore, numerous texts that allude to Exodus 19:5–6 appear to interpret the responsibility to be a treasured possession in order to be priests as pointing to Israel's calling to mediate in some way YHWH's greatness to their neighbors––in a "come and see" rather than "go and tell" sense.[43] We already noted how Deuteronomy 26:18–19 identified that when Israel operated as the Lord's treasured possession, he would set them "in praise and in fame and in honor high above all nations" and they would be "a people holy to the LORD." Similarly, with an apparent allusion to Exodus 19:6 but without conjoining the phrases, 1 Peter 2:9 reads, "But you are a chosen race, *a royal priesthood* [βασίλειον ἱεράτευμα], *a holy nation* [ἔθνος ἅγιον], a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." And with minor differences, Revelation 5:10 retains two nominal forms, followed by a verbal: "And you have made them *a kingdom and priests* [βασιλείαν καὶ ἱερεῖς] to our God, and *they shall reign* [βασιλεύσουσιν] on the earth" (cf. 20:6). While we will return to the NT texts at the end of this unit, what is apparent is that the biblical authors saw Exodus 19:6 relating both to state and function––a kingdom embodying priests and a royal priesthood called to proclaim God's excellencies and to reign on the earth. As we will now see, this aligns them with the Lord's original intention for humanity.

Adam as God's son, a royal priest

Exodus 19:5–6 builds upon the messianic and missiological plan set forth in Genesis, recalling the commission of Adam to image his heavenly father for the global display of God's glory. In Genesis 2:15 the Lord places the first man in the garden to "work" and "guard" the land (cf. 3:23–24), terms used together outside Genesis 2–3 only in relation to the function of the Levites as servants and guardians of sacred space (Num 3:4, 7–8; 8:26; 18:5–6). Adam was a *priest* of YHWH.

But God also charged the first man and woman to "subdue" the earth and to "have dominion" over its creatures (Gen 1:28), royal language directly associated with Adam and Eve's role as imagers of God (1:26). Adam was also, then, a *king* under YHWH, commissioned to reflect, resemble, and represent his father-creator (cf. Ps 8:5–8[6–9]).

Genesis 5:1–3 identifies the close association of imageness/likeness and sonship when it writes: "When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male

43. For more on this distinction, see §11 below.

and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth." In a way comparable to how human sons image their fathers, Adam imaged his God, and as God's son he was to operate as a royal priest, warding off evil and working to see God's sanctuary and presence extended through the world.

Israel as a new Adam, God's son, a royal priest

In contrast to God's purposes for him, Adam sinned, failing to reflect, resemble, and represent his Father rightly. So, the sovereign of all things initiated his kingdom plan of salvation that would include a corporate royal priest-son who would in turn both give birth to and typologically anticipate an individual royal priest-son. The Lord anticipated the individual son first when he announced in Genesis 3:15 that a male seed of the woman would ultimately render a deathblow to the serpent and his God-hostile ways. Following the flood, we learn that he would be a descendant of Shem (Gen 9:26–27). Then, after having announced in Genesis 12:3 that Abraham would be the agent through whom the world would be blessed, 22:17b–18 detailed that the promised male deliverer would be in Abraham's line and that he would ultimately control enemy gates and bring worldwide blessing (cf. 24:60; 26:3–4). We also learn in 49:8–10 that he would be a king in the line of Judah.

Into this context, YHWH announced in Exodus 4:22 that Israel is his "firstborn son," and then in 19:6 he called this son to be "royal priesthood" in the midst of the whole world. 19:22, 24 tell us that, at the time Israel had arrived at the mountain, the congregation already had priests who served as mediators between God and the people. These priests would serve as the primary teachers of God's word (Lev 10:10–11) and the primary ones to offer sacrifices, by which right order would be reestablished and God's wrath against the people appeased (Lev 4:1–6:7; 16:1–19; 1 Chr 23:13). What is most amazing here is that Exodus 19:6 says not that Israel would have priests but that the entire nation was to be a royal priesthood, not only engaging YHWH's presence but also mediating God's word to the world through radical lives of surrender that would display the value and worth of the Lord. As Moses declares in Deuteronomy 4:6, "Keep and do [the statutes and the rules], for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" Just as Moses would consecrate the Israelite priests by placing the blood of a sacrifice on them (Lev 8:24), so also "Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words'" (Exod 24:8). Thus, God set the nation apart as his royal priest-son, called to magnify his majesty in the world.

Israel's failure as God's priest and God's promise of future fulfillment

Like Adam, God's corporate son Israel rebelled, going his own way. Rather than praising and proclaiming God's name, the people profaned it. Moses had anticipated this in his prophetic prediction when he announced in Deuteronomy 32:5, "They have dealt corruptly with him; they are no longer his children, because they are blemished; they are a crooked and twisted generation" (cf. 31:16–17, 27, 29).

But in the midst of a sea of debauchery in the days of the Judges, God announced through Hannah, "The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the power of his anointed" (1 Sam 2:10). God still intended to raise up his king, whom he here called his "anointed." Then, later in the chapter a man of God announced, "I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build a sure house, and it shall go in and out before my anointed forever" (2:35, author's translation; cf. 2:30).[44] Now the anointed royal deliverer from Hannah's prediction is identified to also be a priest (cf. Zech 6:13). At this point we expect that this royal priest will also be God's son, and this is exactly what we are told when God asserts that the throne of David will never end: "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.... And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever" (2 Sam 7:14, 16). In Hebrews 1:5, the author explicitly identifies God's royal son from this text to be Jesus.

In alignment with these promises, Psalm 110 reasserts that the royal, anointed, divine Son of Psalm 2 is also YHWH's priest. God declares to him, "Rule in the midst of your enemies" (Ps 110:2), and then he announces, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (110:4). This is the one whom Psalm 72 declares will "have dominion from sea to sea" (72:8; cf. Zech 9:9–10), whose name will "endure forever," and through whom the peoples of the nations will be blessed (Ps 72:17; cf. 2:8). Building off Isaiah's vision of the suffering royal servant, Zechariah 3:8–9 treats the high-priest Joshua as a type for the royal priest to come through whom God "will remove the iniquity of the land in a single day." Then, in fulfillment of the hopes of 1 Samuel 2:35, the prophet also envisioned that this same messianic figure would bear "*royal* honor," be a "priest," and "sit and rule" on God's throne, with "the counsel of peace" being between them (Zech 6:13). He would "build the [new] temple of the LORD" (6:13), and he would be aided by "those who are far off" (6:15). Thus, "many nations will join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people" (2:11).

Significantly, other prophets announced that the restored, new covenant people of God would effectively serve as YHWH's royal priest-sons, imaging YHWH's greatness to the world. For example, through Isaiah God declared,

44. For this reading, see Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 76. For an alternative possible reading, see Karl Deenick, "Priest and King or Priest-King in 1 Samuel 2:35," *Westminster Theological Journal* 73, no. 2 (2011): 325–39.

> And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. (Isa 56:6–7).

And then again, "And they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as an offering to the LORD ... to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the LORD, just as the Israelites bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the LORD" (66:20–21; cf. 61:5–7). Then, later, Zephaniah predicted, "For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Cush my worshipers, the daughter of my dispersed ones, shall bring my offering" (Zeph 3:9–10). In each of these passages, an international community engages in priestly service before the Lord.

Jesus the royal priest and all in him as royal priest-sons and daughters forever

The angel Gabriel announced to Mary regarding Jesus, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:32–33). The wise men sought the "king of the Jews" (Matt 2:2) and found Jesus (2:11), who later affirmed this as his identity (27:11). Through his ministry he proclaimed the nearness and good news of God's kingdom (4:17, 23; Mark 1:14–15), and the crowds recognized him to the be the royal deliverer that the OT promised (Matt 21:5). He establishes and upholds the throne of David with justice and with righteousness (Isa 9:7). He lived in perfect accord with the Deuteronomic ideal for kingship (Deut 17:14–20) both in his teaching and actions (John 8:28; 15:10), and he brought justice to the broken and outcast (Matt 12:18–21; Luke 4:18–19).

Along with being the king, he is the high priest in the line of Melchizedek who mediates the new covenant (Heb 9:15; 12:24; 1 Tim 2:5), leading us into the very presence of the Lord (Heb 5:6, 10; 6:20; 10:19–22). Christ "had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb 2:17). He offered himself as a sacrifice in order to cleanse us from our sins and to secure us eternal salvation (Eph 5:2; Heb 9:11–12, 26; 10:12; 1 John 1:7). Now we can "with confidence draw near the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16).

Jesus is "Israel," YHWH's servant-person (Isa 49:3), who God sets apart to save some from both Israel the people and other nations (49:6). Significantly, we who are in Christ have become royal priest-sons and daughters of the living God, empowered to offer up sacrifices of praise (Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15–16; 1 Pet 2:5). As "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession," we now "proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet 2:9). The task of being a royal priesthood and a holy nation is no longer just a hope, for it is already being fulfilled in the church. The individual royal priest-son Christ has gone before us, doing what Adam and the nation of Israel were called to do. He represents us, and through him we are enabled to fulfill the calling of magnifying God's greatness among the nations.

Revelation 5 provides an apt stopping point for this biblical-theological survey. There, before the one called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" (Rev 5:5), and "the Lamb" (5:8), this song is sung: "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth" (5:9–10). Old covenant Israel's calling is being fully realized through the new covenant church.

11. Systematic Theology in Exodus 19:4–6[45]

The second step in theology is to discern how our passage theologically coheres with the whole Bible by assessing key doctrines especially in relation to the gospel. Systematic theology is the study of Bible doctrine designed to help us shape a proper worldview, and it traditionally divides into at least ten categories: (1) *theology proper* (God), (2) *bibliology* (Scripture), (3) *angelology* (angels and demons), (4) *anthropology* (humanity), (5) *hamartiology* (sin), (6) *Christology* (Christ), (7) *soteriology* (salvation), (8) *pneumatology* (the Holy Spirit), (9) *ecclesiology* (the church), (10) *eschatology* (the end times or last things).

We have already seen how a lot of later Scriptures build on Exodus 19:4–6 and how this passage supplies a helpful synthesis of the revealed purpose of the old covenant. Now I want to consider how this passage contributes to our understanding of soteriology and missiology, the latter of which is a subset of ecclesiology.

45. For more on systematic theology, see Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011); John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013); DeRouchie, *How to Understand*, 394–411; Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000).

Soteriology

None can miss that Exodus 19:4 addresses the most foundational redemptive act of the old covenant period. Advocates of the new perspective on Paul have ever been quick to note that YHWH saved Israel *before* he ever gave them the law at Sinai. Thus, the law was never about getting into relationship; it was about staying in. God ransomed before he required; he freed before he called them to follow. The indicative of redemption-accomplished precedes the imperative of redemption-enjoyed, and this is the same pattern in the new covenant. God converts and then calls us to follow. From the new covenant perspective, justification gives rise to sanctification. Faith is the root; obedience is the fruit. To put works first makes us legalists that trust in our own merits rather than in the merits of Christ. There is, therefore, a similar *structure of grace* in both the old and new covenants: gracious redemption precedes gracious law giving. Christ's saving work secures pardon and purchases power so that we can respond with his help in obedience.

While this is true, we must not miss what most advocates of the new perspective on Paul seem to miss. Namely, while the structure of grace between the old and new covenants may be the same, the nature *of grace* is entirely different. Old covenant grace was external; new covenant grace is internal. In the old covenant, YHWH delivers Israel from physical slavery in Egypt, but for the majority their bondage to sin remained. As Moses asserted forty years after the exodus: "Know, therefore, that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stubborn people. Remember and do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD" (Deut 9:6–7). The rest of Deuteronomy and redemptive history note how this rebellion would persist until the prophet greater than Moses would arise and establish a new covenant based on better promises and God-wrought inward transformation. There was *nothing* in the old covenant itself that secured eternal life for all its members.

Along with saving only externally, YHWH revealed his will at Sinai in a way that did not reach the hearts of the majority. They saw but didn't really see; they heard but didn't really hear. As Moses would later assert, "You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, the great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders. But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear" (Deut 29:2–4[1–3]). Rather than having God's law written on their hearts, Jeremiah tells us that "the sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart" (Jer 17:1).

In contrast, whereas most of those in the old covenant were rebels, all in the new covenant would be remnant. With circumcised hearts, those in the transformed

community would, in Moses's words, "turn and listen unto the voice of the LORD and do all his commandments that I am commanding you today" (Deut 30:8, author's translation). The prophet also asserted that in that day, "the word will be very near you; it will be in your mouth and in your heart so that you can do it" (30:14, author's translation).[46] Paul says in Romans 10:8 that this is fulfilled in Christ. Through Jeremiah YHWH also predicted "I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.... And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more'" (Jer 31:33–34).

Even though external salvation preceded external law-giving in the old covenant, because Israel's sin remained undealt with, all their outward alignment with the law was unacceptable to God and equivalent to seeking salvation by works. Because the nation lost sight of their inability and need for repentance and a substitute, their outward pursuits of righteousness did not allow them to attain the life that the law promised. "What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone" (Rom 9:30–32).[47]

In Exodus 19:4–6 we read that the revealed purpose of the old covenant was that the nation would, through a surrendered pursuit of God and his ways, stand as a royal priesthood and a holy nation amidst the world. But the revealed purposes of God for the old covenant was not his sovereign purposes. "Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom 5:20). Paul says that the old covenant bore "a ministry of condemnation"; only the new covenant would bear "a ministry of righteousness" (2 Cor 3:9). In the old covenant, God commanded but did not enable. He changed Israel's outward status but did not alter their souls. He disclosed to them his law but did not give them the desire to keep it. And he did so in order to highlight the beauty and centrality of Christ. "What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared

46. For more on reading Deuteronomy 30:11–14 as *future*, see Steven R. Coxhead, "Deuteronomy 30:11–14 as a Prophecy of the New Covenant in Christ," *Westminster Theological Journal* 68 (2006): 305–20; Colin James Smothers, "In Your Mouth and in Your Heart: A Study of Deuteronomy 30:12–14 in Paul's Letter to the Romans in Canonical Context" (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018).

47. For more on this understanding, see Jason S. DeRouchie, "From Condemnation to Righteousness: A Christian Reading of Deuteronomy," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 18, no. 3 (2014): 87–118; Jason S. DeRouchie, "The Use of Leviticus 18:5 in Galatians 3:12: A Redemptive-Historical Reassessment," *Themelios* 45, no. 2 (2020): 240–59.

beforehand for glory—even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?" (Rom 9:22–24).

To Israel God gave the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, the promises, the patriarchs, and the Messiah (9:4–5). But if, after receiving so much, the nation was unable to live for God, how much more would the rest of humanity stand culpable before God and in need of a savior, having never received the law.

> Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. (3:19–22)

When we read that salvation grounded Israel's calling, we must not automatically equate it with the salvation we enjoy today. The first exodus was an external deliverance that typified the second exodus, internalized salvation that Christ accomplished. The first exodus was but a picture, a predictive pointer, to the more ultimate deliverance that Jesus secures on behalf of his elect. Some who experienced the first exodus were truly hoping in this by faith, whereas the majority who left Egypt neither knew God's pleasure (1 Cor 10:5) nor were allowed to enter his rest (Heb 3:18–19).

Missiology––a subset of Ecclesiology

Back in §6, I summarized the main idea of Exodus 19:4–6: "In response to God's gracious redemption, the Lord calls his people to a God-exalting task of mediating and displaying his greatness and worth to the world through radical God-centered living." Israel's God-honoring calling is the central thrust of the passage. We must ask, however, how this task relates to the church's great commission that Jesus gave after his resurrection (Matt 28:18–20). Did old covenant Israel bear a mission to cross-culturally evangelize the lost like Christians do in the new covenant?

There is very little potential support from the OT that within the old covenant period Israel bore a normative responsibility to be a "go and tell" people, seeking the conversion of the nations. Certainly Exodus 12 clarified how a resident alien or "sojourner" (גֵּר) could become like a native-born Israelite and thus be freed to partake in the nation's various holy days (Exod 12:43–49). This "mixed multitude" (12:38), however, was still counted as the single nation of Israel. Similarly, within the framework of Israel's history, people like Rahab the Canaanite, Ruth the Moabite, and Uriah the Hittite could, by their own choosing, become Israelites. Yet in doing so, Abraham was still considered the father of a single nation. The shift to his being "the father of a multitude of nations" (Gen 17:4–5) would only come when the single, male

deliverer would rise, overcoming enemy powers and reversing the Adamic curse: "And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (22:17b–18; cf. 3:15; 24:60). It was in Jesus's day alone "that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 25:47; cf. Acts 3:25–26; Gal 3:8, 14, 16, 29).

Not even in the book of Jonah do we find evidence of a normative mandate for global missions in the old covenant period. Jonah's prophetic role was first not to covert the Ninevites but to "call out against" them, declaring to them that they had sinned against YHWH and warning them of punishment (Jon 1:2). Many prophets wrote oracles against the nations (e.g., Isa 13–23; Jer 46–51; Ezek 25–32; Obadiah; Zeph 2:5–3:7), but we know of very few prophets beyond Jonah who actually engaged foreign powers directly (e.g., 2 Kgs 8:7–15; Jer 27:3; 51:61–64; cf. Zeph 2:5, 12). YHWH would later declare through Jeremiah, "If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it" (Jer 18:7–8). Jonah says that the reason he fled to Tarshish was because "I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster" (Jon 4:2). The prophet of YHWH did not like the character of YHWH. Certainly the book of Jonah reminds the reader that Israel's long-range mission through its Messiah would be to see the curse against all the families of the earth overcome by divine blessing (Gen 22:18; cf. 12:3 with 10:39, where the ESV's "clans" is the same word for "families"). However, the book focuses not on the need to evangelize our neighbors but on the proper disposition that God's people were to maintain toward YHWH and his world. Jonah delighted in God's mercy so long as he was its recipient, but he did not celebrate seeing this mercy extended to those outside Israel.

YHWH is both right and committed to bestow mercy on whomever he wills, and he calls his people to celebrate that he is this kind of God. He also promised that his anointed king would proclaim his glories to the nations. As Paul notes, citing Psalm 18:49, "Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order ... that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, 'Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name'" (Rom 15:8–9). Nevertheless, within the old covenant itself, I am not aware of texts that called Israel to urge the nations to respond to the news of global salvation.

Instead, the Israelites were to live in their land as mediators of God's tabernacling greatness. By encountering his presence at the temple/tabernacle (Exod 33:16), reverent fear would be generated that would lead to holiness (20:20). And by heeding his voice, keeping his covenant, and existing as his treasured possession, Israel would serve as a God-exalting witness in the midst of the world (19:5–6). Their righteous lives would attract the nations to YHWH's uniqueness, as those

outside would see their righteous deeds and be directed to YHWH's wonders. Thus Deuteronomy 4:6–8 asserted,

> Keep and do [the statutes and rules], for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

There was expectation within the old covenant that foreigners from faraway lands would hear of YHWH's fame, come to the temple and pray toward to the God of heaven, and receive their requests "in order that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you" (1 Kgs 8:41–43). Evidence that this pattern actually happened is minimal, but we do see it when the Queen of Sheba journeys to Jerusalem and YHWH's temple because she "heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD" (1 Kgs 10:1).

What is important to see is that YHWH's call for Israel to be a God-honoring witness was *not* a direct call to evangelize their neighbors. Indeed, the gospel of the kingdom was still only a *future* hope and not a present reality in the days of the OT (see Rom 1:1–3). Isaiah 40–66 highlights the salvation-historical shift from a hope for good news to the intrusion of good news through the messianic servant. YHWH gives comfort to his despondent Jerusalem (Isa 40:1–2) through the news of the herald who proclaims, "Behold your God!" (40:9). Only in this future day, now realized in Christ, does the messenger "publish peace" and "salvation," declaring the "good news" that "your God reigns" (52:7). And the one leading the global testimony is the royal deliverer himself, who declares, "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God" (61:1–2; cf. 11:2–5; Luke 4:18–19).

Within the old covenant, YHWH called his servant-people Israel to live in a way that pointed to the Lord's greatness in the midst of the world. By God-dependent obedience they would serve as a royal priesthood and a holy nation (Exod 19:5–6), attracting other nations to "come and see" the display of YHWH's glory in and through his people. But the old covenant law could only clarify what Israel *ought* to do; it could not empower them to do it (Rom 8:3; Gal 3:21). As such, Israel failed miserably at representing YHWH's worth, and this sin ultimately resulted in their misrepresenting God's name among the nations (Ezek 16:20). But stage one of the Abrahamic covenant (i.e., the Mosaic covenant) was never portrayed as the end of God's kingdom-building purposes. Indeed, YHWH predicted that an obedient son

would rise who would "be a blessing" perfectly, and through this open the door for "all the families of the ground" to be blessed (Gen 12:2–3; cf. 22:17b–18).

The old covenant remnant longed for the day when God's individual servant––the royal representative king––would succeed through his priestly obedience unto death (Isa 52:13–53:12; 55:3). Not only this, he would go beyond what Israel themselves were ever called to but to which they and the world hoped––through him the nations would enjoy God's blessing (cf. Ps 72:17). The servant's atoning work would open the door for the salvation of all who believe from both Jews and Gentiles, and he would establish a new covenant that would include light, law, and justice for the nations (Isa 42:1, 6; 49:6, 8; 51:4–5). The individual servant's work would birth multiple servants who would carry out his redemptive purposes. Ultimately, fulfilling the promise of Isaiah 49:6, the individual royal servant "[Christ] would proclaim light" and salvation to both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 26:23) *through* his commissioned servants (13:47), as the gospel message of the beautiful one (Isa 42:7) would become the gospel message of the beautiful ones (Rom 10:15).

In summary, the nation of Israel's old covenant call to be a royal priesthood addressed only the immediate witness of their lives and not an intentional outward evangelistic proclamation of the gospel. The old covenant community was simply to urge others to "come and see" by the testimony of their surrendered lives, as they enjoyed the sustained presence of God at the temple.

Christ's coming marks a salvation-historical shift from a "come and see" to a "come and see *and* go and tell" community.[48] As for the "come and see" element, the church is now empowered to stand as a royal priesthood and a holy nation, faithfully (though imperfectly) proclaiming "the excellencies of him who called [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet 2:9). With God's help, we heed the call, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt 5:16; cf. 1 Pet 2:11–12). Furthermore, enjoying Christ's tabernacling presence (John 1:14; cf. 2:21) by his Spirit (Acts 1:8), the church as God's temple (1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16) has now expanded to fill the whole earth (Acts 13:47; Col 1:23), and much of this is happening because we can now reach out and proclaim the good news that the reigning God eternally saves and satisfies believing sinners by Christ Jesus's life, death and resurrection. This *gospel* is of first importance (1 Cor 15:3–5), and its proclamation marks the "go and tell" element that is new to the new covenant. The divine presence of the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal 4:26; Heb 12:22) is more accessible to the world than ever before, for it is not localized in a building but embodied in the lives of a new covenant community that has spread out to every corner of the globe (Isa 2:1–4; Jer 3:16–18). As the gospel

48. For more on this distinction, see especially Eckhard J. Schnabel, "Israel, the People of God, and the Nations," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society,* 45 (2002): 35–57; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 2 vols. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004); Kevin Paul Oberlin, "The Ministry of Israel to the Nations: A Biblical Theology of Missions in the Era of the Old Testament Canon" (PhD diss., Bob Jones University, 2006).

advances, the church grows, with peoples from every tribe and language and people and nation being gathered into the one people of God, who together have become "a kingdom and priests to our God" and who together "shall reign on the earth" (Rev 5:9–10; cf. 22:5). Because Christ now enjoys all authority in heaven and on earth, we are commissioned to make new covenant disciples not only within our own families and neighborhoods but also across cultures among the nations. Others will not know unless they are told (Rom 10:13–15), so we live and we evangelize to see realized the obedience that grows from faith for the sake of Christ's name among the nations (1:5).

E. Application
"Why does the passage matter?"

12. Practical Theology in Exodus 19:4–6[49]

The last step in interpreting the OT is to apply the text to ourselves, the church, and the world while stressing the centrality of Christ and the hope of the gospel. It is at this step that we most clearly identify that the seers, sovereigns, sages, and song writers of old "were serving not themselves but you" (1 Pet 1:12) and that "whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction" (Rom 15:4). It is here we recognize that the OT is indeed Christian Scripture.

In his book *Old Testament Exegesis*, Douglas Stuart offers some helpful guidelines for applying biblical texts.[50] I am going to summarize and somewhat adapt them here, using Exodus 19:4–6 to illustrate the process. I will cite my translation of the text to begin, but you may want to have your Bible open to help you track the discussion.

Establish the original revealed application.

Identify the audience of the application.

Fig. 17. DeRouchie's Translation of Exodus 19:4–6
4 You [mp] have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I lifted you [mp] on eagles' wings and brought you [mp] to myself. 5 And now, if you [mp] will indeed listen unto my voice and keep my covenant and be to me a treasured possession from all the peoples, for all the earth is mine, 6 then you [mp] will be to me a royal priesthood and a holy nation.
*mp = masculine plural

The second masculine plural "you" throughout Exodus 19:4–6 suggests that the target is every individual within the entire community. It was the nation as a whole

49. For more on practical theology, see Daniel M. Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001); Thomas R. Schreiner, *40 Questions about Biblical Law*, 40 Questions (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010); Dennis E. Johnson, *Walking with Jesus through His Word: Discovering Christ in All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2015); DeRouchie, *How to Understand*, 415–95; DeRouchie, Martin, Naselli, Chapters 3, 21, 25, 37 in *40 Questions about Biblical Theology*.

50. Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 4th ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 25–29.

that was considered God's "son" (Exod 4:22–23), and it was the nation as a whole that he redeemed. The plural requires individuals to act, but it also highlights that the task will only be accomplished in the context of corporate solidarity.

List the external life issues of application.

In Exodus 19:4–6, we see the personal experience of communal deliverance in 19:4, the daily pursuit of God in community in 19:5, a political context where Israel is distinct from surrounding nations in 19:5, and a sense of life's purpose in 19:6. The church too has experienced a communal deliverance, but ours is from bondage to sin and salvation from God's wrath. Unlike Israel, the church has no geo-political affiliation; the church is not a theocracy but is rather omni-ethnic, trans-national people united in Christ with a similar call to daily pursue God in community for the display of his glory.

Furthermore, Exodus 19:4–6 is calling for daily witness of YHWH's greatness by every member of the community. This text covers the foundation, makeup, and ultimate goal of Israel's relationship with God. Sadly, for most, Israel's redemption was only external and their law keeping only skin deep, so the people never had the impact on the nations that God promised would come through whole-life surrender. Nevertheless, a lasting point of the texts is that the Lord's gracious redemption requires living exclusively for him in every area, whether in our social engagements, our work, our personal and corporate worship, our family life, or our finances. The freedom we experience must lead to radical following, which will overflow in lives testifying to God's majesty.

Clarify the nature of the application.

On the surface, Exodus 19:4–6 recalls God's gracious past redemption and informs Israel of their future responsibility and calling. Implicitly, the text says more, for it calls the people to godward allegiance for the sake of mediating and displaying God's glory to the nations. That Israel recognizes the necessity for response is clear from their elders' reply to Moses: "All that the LORD has spoken we will *do*" (19:8). Nevertheless, the rest of the narrative also reveals that Israel's commitment meant little, as their stubborn hearts resulted in lack of faith and rebellion (Deut 9:6–7; 29:4[3]).

Exodus 19:4–6 also most explicitly addresses action and state of being, calling Israel to "hear" and "keep" and "be" (v. 5). Nevertheless, because these charges are couched as the means for seeing their God-exalting, world-influencing calling accomplished, faith in God's promises is the generator for the nation's obedience. Only to the level at which the people *desire* the promise of being a royal priesthood and a holy nation and *believe* the promise-maker can act will they be motivated to heed his voice, keep his covenant, and intentionally seek to live as his treasured possession.

Determine the time focus of the application.

We can see that Exodus 19:4–6 called Israel to make an immediate response. And for every future generation in the old covenant, God's revelation would remain the same. He had set Israel apart to express his worth in the world. Through this single nation the world would be blessed, and Israel's lives of surrender would parade God's upright character until the time when the promised deliverer would overcome the world's curse with blessing.

Fix the limits of the application.

Exodus 19:4–6 is perhaps the most foundational synthesis of the revealed purpose of the old covenant that we have in Scripture. It looks back to the Abrahamic covenant promises and anticipates directly God's revelation of his person and word at Sinai. It expresses God's revealed will for Israel, but it does not address the implications of failure.

Synthesis

In summary, when it comes to establishing the original revealed application of Exodus 19:4–6, we can say that the text supplies a synthesis of the old covenant by addressing the nation of Israel's redemption and life-calling in relation to the world. It explicitly informs but also implicitly directs, calling for action and motivating this call by the promise of global impact. The words target the entire community and address a surrender to YHWH that impacts every facet of life in every present and future generation.

Determine the theological significance of the passage.[51]

Clarify what the passage tells us about God and his ways.

Exodus 19:4–6 portrays YHWH as one who delivers in order to create people who can in turn display his excellencies. With respect to his character and actions, he is an able warrior God who redeemed Israel from the grip of an imperial power (v. 4). He is also a God who commands, establishes covenants, and treasures some more than others (v. 5). Finally, he is a God who motivates through promises and who desires his people to mediate and display his greatness to the world (v. 6). All of these are features from which solid application could be made, for his work in the new covenant is very analogous.

51. Douglas Stuart, whose general process of application I am following here, does not explicitly stress the need to recall what we have learned about the theological significance of the passage when making application. However, I believe that considering both what the passage tells us about God and his ways and how Christ's fulfillment of the Old Testament impacts our passage are both vital for accurately establishing the lasting significance of an OT text.

As for his desires, he intends that his people hear his voice, heed his covenant, and be his treasured possession (v. 5). All these activities will supply the means for them serving as a royal priesthood and a holy nation (v. 6).

Assess how Christ's fulfillment of the OT impacts our application of this passage.[52]

Christ's work fulfills Exodus 19:4–6 in at least three ways: First, the initial exodus typologically anticipated a greater, more universal second exodus that Jesus himself embodies. In Exodus 19:4, YHWH highlights his defeat of Egypt and his deliverance of Israel from the bonds of slavery. Moving ahead in redemptive history, Christ's death and resurrection initiates for all believers the antitypical exodus, the ultimate redemption to which Israel's liberation from Egypt's clutches only pointed. The OT prophets foresaw this second exodus (e.g., Isa 11:16–12:6; Jer 16:14–15; 23:7–8; Hos 11:10–11), which Jesus accomplished in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31).[53]

Second, Christ fulfilled the charge of this text as the perfect royal priest, bringing us to God and empowering us to serve him. Israel's fleshly, rebellious hearts were hostile to God, making it impossible for them to submit to God's law or to please him (Deut 29:4[3]; Rom 8:7–8; 11:7–8). They, therefore, never operated as the royal priesthood and the holy nation for which Exodus 19:4–6 called. But where God's corporate "son" failed, his individual Son Jesus, as Israel's royal and priestly representative, succeeded. Christ's perfect life embodied the ideals of righteousness the law requires (Rom 5:18–19; 8:4), and by this he was able to serve as the perfect royal priest (Heb 4:15), satisfying the Lord's wrath against sinners through his substitutionary death and proving through his resurrection that every believer incorporated into him can enjoy right standing with God. The Lord imputes our sins to Christ and Christ's righteousness to us, thus securing both our pardon (Rom 5:18–19; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9) and amazing promises (2 Cor 1:20), which together become power for our salvation––past (Eph 2:8), present (1 Cor 1:18), and future (Rom 5:9). Thus by Christ fulfilling the law, we as the new covenant community of

52. For a more developed discussion of how Christ fulfills the Mosaic law, see "The Christian and Old Testament Law," in chapter 12 of *How to Understand*, 427–59; Jason S. DeRouchie, "What Is a Biblical Theology of the Law?" in *40 Questions about Biblical Theology*, by Jason S. DeRouchie, Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli, 40 Questions (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020), 243–54. For a more developed discussion of how Christ fulfills OT promises, see Jason S. DeRouchie, "Is Every Promise 'Yes'? Old Testament Promises and the Christian," *Themelios* 42 (2017): 16–45; Jason S. DeRouchie, "How Should a Christian Relate to Old Testament Promises?" in *40 Questions about Biblical Theology*, 355–64.

53. See Rikki E. Watts, "Exodus," *NDBT*, 478–87; Stephen G. Dempster, "Exodus and Biblical Theology: On Moving into the Neighborhood with a New Name," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 12, no. 3 (2008): 4–23; Rikki E. Watts, "Exodus Imagery," *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, 205–14; Jason S. DeRouchie, "How Does Isaiah 12:2 Use Exodus 15:2?," in *40 Questions about Biblical Theology*, by Jason S. DeRouchie, Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli, 40 Questions (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020), 301–10.

faith are not only charged but also empowered to fulfill the law of Christ (Rom 2:26, 29; 13:8–10; 1 Cor 9:21; Gal 6:2), which includes applying the OT laws in light of Christ's fulfillment (Matt 5:17–19).

Third, Christ represented the nation of Israel, succeeding where they failed and by this magnifying God (see esp. Isa 49:1–6). Jesus said, "Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father" (John 14:9). As the holy king-priest, Jesus perfectly represented Israel and reflected God's holiness. As Hebrews 1:3 says, "[God's Son] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature." And now, for those of us in him, "we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor 3:18). That is, in Christ God has, as Peter asserts, made us "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that [we] may proclaim the excellencies of him who called [us] out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet 2:9).

Summarize the lasting significance of the passage for today.

The simplest synthesis of what Exodus 19:4–6 calls for through Jesus is that the church is to live as a royal priesthood and holy people, proclaiming through our life-witness the worth and majesty of God (1 Pet 2:9). In §6, I summarized the main idea of Exodus 19:4–6 as this: "In response to God's gracious redemption, the Lord calls his people to a God-exalting task of mediating and displaying his greatness and worth to the world through radical God-centered living." Our unchanging Lord is consistent in what he requires, in what he intends, and in the way he uses promises to motivate obedience. Like the nation of Israel, the church is called to follow the instruction of our chief, new covenant mediator: "Make disciples of all nations, ... teaching them to obey all that I have commanded" (Matt 28:20). Also, God uses promises to motivate holiness and to keep us from evil: "He has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire" (2 Pet 1:4). Finally, God's purpose ever remains that others "may see [our] good works and give glory to [our] Father who is in heaven" (Matt 5:16; cf. 1 Pet 2:11–12).

Conclusion

By attempting to understand and apply Exodus 19:4–6, I have sought in this case study to illustrate for the student of Scripture the journey from exegesis to theology. In this passage, in response to God's gracious redemption, the Lord calls his people to a God-exalting task of mediating and displaying his greatness and worth to the world through radical God-centered living. And what YHWH called Israel to in the old covenant is now being realized through Christ's new covenant church: "You are

a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet 2:9). My book *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament* develops each of the twelve steps that together contribute to a biblically faithful, Christ-treasuring interpretation of Jesus's Bible––the Old Testament. May the Lord increasingly enable Christians from all the nations to magnify his supremacy and worth through lives of surrender and devotion, all for the glory of Christ.

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The Trouble with Inferring Divine Punishment: A Response to James S. Spiegel

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In a recent JBTS article, "'It's the Wrath of God': Reflections on Inferring Divine Punishment," James S. Spiegel considers whether we can be justified in believing that events in our lives and the lives of others are instances of divine punishment.[1] His stated aim is to answer the skeptical thesis – "the view that all assertions of divine wrath since biblical times are speculative at best and perhaps even irresponsible."[2] In other words, he argues that an event's being in the Bible is not a necessary condition for concluding that it is an instance of divine punishment. He proposes three sufficient conditions that justify ascriptions of divine wrath. The conditions are as follows:

A. the occurrence of a miracle;

B. extraordinary coincidence; or

C. fulfilled bold prediction.[3]

He admits that applying these conditions will not produce the same level of confidence we have in identifying cases of divine punishment in Scripture, and he stresses that we must be cautious lest we slander God by ascribing to him intentions he does not have. I interpret Spiegel's emphasis on caution here not as tentativeness with regards to the strength of his conditions but only as a reminder that we should not rush to conclusions when it comes to assertions about God.

Does Spiegel successfully argue against the skeptical thesis? To answer this question, I examine the case of Job, a case of non-punitive, divinely-ordained suffering. In the failure of Job's friends to interpret Job's suffering correctly, we learn that ascribing meaning to the suffering of others is fraught with difficulty. I argue that Spiegel's conditions would not have helped Job's friends and hence also fail to undermine the skeptical thesis. This is not to surrender to skepticism, for Scripture does teach that one of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to convict us of sin, which might be in conjunction with pain and suffering. Nevertheless, the Bible contains no

1. James S. Spiegel, "'It's the Wrath of God': Reflections on Inferring Divine Punishment," *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies*, 4, no. 2 (2019): 301-16.

2. Spiegel, "It's the Wrath of God," 311.

3. Spiegel, "It's the Wrath of God," 312.

promises that God will always disclose his reasons, especially when it comes to the suffering of others.

The Case of Job

Consider the case of Job. Job experiences tremendous suffering, having lost nearly everything in his life. He is unable, at first, to understand why he suffers, but he trusts that God has a good reason. His so-called "friends" think they know the reason: God is punishing Job for his sins. Stephen Kepnes recounts:

> The friends [of Job], according to Buber, follow "the assertion of an all-embracing empirical connection between sin and punishment"…In Bildad's words: "Will God pervert the right? Will the Almighty pervert justice? If your sons sinned against Him, He dispatched them for their transgression" (8:3-5). Suffering is punishment; and since Job suffers, he must have sinned as well. Thus Eliphaz [another friend of Job] turns on Job: "You know that your wickedness is great. And that your iniquities have no limit" (22:5).[4]

Job's friends say it is God's wrath, but as the book of Job makes clear, they are mistaken. God is not punishing Job; rather, his sufferings are due to a wager that the devil makes with God, which God uses to show just how great a man Job is. God is proud of Job, not angry with him.

Job's case shows just how difficult it is to ascribe meaning to the suffering of others. Kepnes says,

> The friends' justifications protect their wish to believe that the world follows the order of retributive justice. God is just and in control; and thus those who suffer deserve their plight and those who thrive and succeed deserve their success. That the response of the friends to suffering is weak is made crystal clear at the end of the text when God declares that they "have not spoken the truth about me" (42:7).[5]

Job's friends fail to interpret Job's suffering correctly because their mistaken theology describes God's sole *modus operandi* as retributive punishment.

What happens when we apply Spiegel's conditions to Job's situation and the judgments of his friends? Consider the first condition – the occurrence of a miracle – which states that one might be justified in the ascription of divine wrath if the event is miraculous. In Job 1:16, the author describes a miraculous event: fire drops from heaven and consumes Job's sheep and servants. This form of destruction is similar to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which is, as Spiegel describes, "special" or miraculous, as opposed to an occurrence in accord with natural law. So,

4. Steven Kepnes, "Rereading Job as Textual Theodicy," in *Suffering Religion*, ed. Robert Gibbs and Elliot R. Wolfson (New York: Routledge, 2002), 44.

5. Kepnes, "Rereading Job," 44-45 (emphasis added).

this condition supports Job's friends in their mistaken conclusion that the cause of Job's misfortune is divine wrath.

Spiegel's other conditions also fail when applied to Job. It is quite an extraordinary coincidence that the events of the first chapter of Job happen simultaneously. First, his flocks are stolen and his servant killed by the Sabeans.[6] Second, fire burns up a flock of sheep and more of Job's servants.[7] Third, his camels are stolen by the Chaldeans, and more of Job's servants are killed.[8] Fourth, his children are killed when their house is knocked down by a strong wind.[9] Nevertheless, as we learn in the narrative of the first chapter, God's intention is not to punish Job, so Spiegel's second condition is not sufficient either.

Spiegel's third condition is the occurrence of a bold prediction, such as in the New Testament case of the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira,[10] especially with Sapphira's death.[11] Although there are no predictions in Job's story, we can imagine Job's narrative including one without changing the outcome. For example, imagine if one of Job's friends had mysteriously predicted Job's suffering. Such a prediction would be compatible with the rest of the story playing out as it does, but Job's friends would still be wrong about God's intentions. So, it turns out that Spiegel's conditions are not sufficient for justifying belief in the occurrence of divine punishment.

Spiegel's conditions do, on the other hand, justify an inference to a supernatural explanation, for who could reasonably deny that a miraculous event, like fire from heaven that is also predicted and extraordinarily coincidental, has for its explanation a supernatural cause? However, correctly inferring a supernatural cause is not the same as identifying the intention, for there are many reasons God might have for allowing a particular event to occur. When someone experiences suffering, it is not always because of divine wrath.[12] Consider the following possible reasons:

1. to allow us to share in Christ's sufferings;[13]
2. to make us more complete in character, i.e. more Christ-like;[14]
3. to provide us opportunities in life;[15]

6. Job 1:15.
7. Job 1:16.
8. Job 1:17.
9. Job 1:18-19.
10. Acts 5:1-11.
11. Acts 5:9.
12. Spiegel defines punishment as a "severe divine response to human sin" (Spiegel, "It's the Wrath of God," 307). While he admits that divine punishment can be understood as redemptive and not just retributive, it seems that several of the reasons that follow have nothing to do with sin.
13. 2 Corinthians 1:5; Philippians 3:10; 1 Peter 4:12-13.
14. James 1:2-3; 1 Peter 1:6-7.
15. Genesis 50:20; 2 Corinthians 1:4.

4. to grow the community of believers;[16]

5. to show the works of God;[17]

6. and to test his followers or boast about them (as with Job).

The Bible describes many reasons God might use suffering for his glory and our good, and a set of conditions for identifying instances of divine wrath ought to be sensitive to the various possibilities.

The Empathy Condition

Perhaps Job's friends fail simply because they lack empathy – they do not know him well enough. Kepnes says,

> The severity of [Job's] punishment is incommensurate with his crimes. *The friends miss this*; they are blind to the extent of Job's suffering. They are 'mischievous comforters' (16:2) who make it more and not less difficult for Job to endure his pain…Like passive bystanders to the suffering of the innocent, the friends are mainly concerned with providing quick rationalizations for Job's plight that will allow them to dismiss their own responsibility to help him.[18]

If they had been familiar with his character, they might have avoided their epistemic mistake and been more compassionate, as well. Let us call this the empathy condition: *before ascribing divine wrath to explain the suffering of others, one ought to have a comprehensive understanding of their circumstances*. Maybe Spiegel has such a condition in mind when he briefly refers to additional "stringent standards."[19] As a necessary condition, an empathy requirement would remind us that epistemic caution is a virtue and that the act of judging others is prone to error.[20] Job calls out his friends' lack of empathy when he defends himself. He says, "Far be it from me to say that you are right; till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. I hold fast to my righteousness and will not let it go; my heart does not reproach me for any of my days."[21] Job understands himself and his circumstances better than his friends do.

However, satisfying the empathy condition, even if possible, is not sufficient for inferring divine wrath, for it is not enough to know that others deserve punishment to know that God is punishing them. First, as any Christian knows that has followed

16. 2 Timothy 9-10.

17. John 9:2-3.

18. Kepnes, 44-45. Italics mine. Romans 3:23 says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." This would include Job, too, but aside from God rebuking Job for speaking presumptuously (Job 40), nowhere in the book of Job does the author speak of Job's sins. The point is that Job does not deserve this suffering.

19. Spiegel, 314.

20. Romans 14:4.

21. Job 27:5-6.

Jesus for a modest amount of time, God does not convict us of some sins until much later, even sins that we continue to commit. Perhaps God knows that we would be overwhelmed and crushed if the depth of our sin were revealed to us. For whatever reason, simply knowing that others continue to sin and are deserving of punishment does not justify one in believing that God is punishing them. Second, there are no guarantees that God punishes every sin in this life. Some sins may not be punished until the afterlife,[22] which may explain why it appears evil and unrighteous people sometimes do not get what they deserve. Third, according to the penal substitutionary view of the atonement, Jesus atoned for sin on the cross; therefore, those who are found in Christ are not punished for their sins. At most, they experience discipline.[23]

The Work of the Holy Spirit

According to the Gospel of John, one of the Holy Spirit's functions is the conviction of sin: "And when [the Spirit] comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment."[24] This is related to the doctrine of divine illumination, which says that the Holy Spirit works in believers as they read the pages of Scripture to understand and apply it;[25] this teaching is summarized in Article V of the Chicago Statement of Biblical Hermeneutics: "We affirm that the Holy Spirit enables believers to appropriate and apply Scripture to their lives."[26]

The conviction of sin is not the conclusion of a deductive argument or the satisfying of a set of sufficient conditions; rather it is an awareness of one's spiritual condition communicated by God through the Holy Spirit. It is person-to-person communication. God is a person, and as such, he chooses to communicate when he so desires, as Job's narrative shows. The Spirit dwells within believers. In 2 Corinthians 2:10-16, Paul writes, "These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God…'For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ."[27] According to one interpretation, "[This passage describes] the Spirit searching the depths of God (v. 10), not because he does not know the mind of God – for the Holy

22. Matthew 25:31-46.

23. Romans 3:21-26. While Christians are not punished for their sins, they are still disciplined (Hebrews 12:6), but it is doubtful whether discipline can be inferred, using a formula or necessary and sufficient conditions.

24. John 16:8.

25. 1 Corinthians 3:16; John 16:7, 8,13; John 14:26.

26. International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, "Chicago Statement of Biblical Hermeneutics," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 25, no. 4 (December 1982): 397-401.

27. 2 Corinthians 2:11, 16.

Spirit is God – but in order to grant to us the understanding that the Lord wants us to have."[28] The doctrines of divine illumination and the indwelling Spirit establish that God has provided a way to hear him, a way that makes knowing his intentions possible, at least in principle.[29]

Spiegel appears to address this possibility under the category of "personal divine revelation," although he speaks here of understanding events in both one's own life and the lives of others.[30] He says,

> Unlike the additional corroborating factors I posed above, personal religious experiences have an irreducibly subjective dimension which properly invites public scrutiny. Passing such scrutiny, it seems reasonable to suppose that such experiences might provide similarly corroborating grounds for inferring divine wrath in a given case. But, alas, establishing the veridicality of such extraordinary personal religious experiences is a very difficult thing to do. So grounding a claim of special divine wrath in this way only pushes a significant justificatory burden back one step.[31]

Spiegel is right to stress the "irreducibly subjective dimension" of religious experiences, and he is right in saying that these experiences are not necessarily unjustified just because they are subjective. In fact, a personal revelation of this sort is just what we should expect given the theology of the Holy Spirit. It is this direct communication from God himself that justifies the beliefs it produces in a basic way, not entirely different from the way that warrant is acquired by beliefs produced by the *sensus divinitatis* in Reformed Epistemology.[32]

A distinction that Spiegel should stress then is between the justificatory demands of ascribing meaning to one's own suffering, on the one hand, and the demands of ascribing meaning to the suffering of others, on the other hand. It is one thing to interpret events in one's own life as instances of divine wrath; this fits well with a biblically-based understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit and requires no further "justificatory burden." It is quite another thing to interpret such events in the lives of others for their sake. First, the examples of this kind in Scripture are limited to a special class of God's people: prophets and apostles.[33] Second, such ascriptions are so prone to abuse given the human inclination to assert power over others that we ought to be very skeptical of any person who suggests he speaks for God about such

28. "Divine Illumination," Ligonier Ministries, accessed February 2, 2020, https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/divine-illumination/.

29. Sometimes even individuals who are close to God endure suffering or the dark night of the soul without knowing why. Job is the best example of this.

30. Spiegel, "It's the Wrath of God," 313. I understand divine illumination to be a type of special revelation.

31. Spiegel, "It's the Wrath of God," 313.

32. For more on this, see Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

33. 2 Samuel 12, 1 Corinthians 11:30.

matters. This is not to rule out the possibility of the spiritual gift of prophecy.[34] It just means that we ought to be cautious in the use of such gifts lest we harm others and, as Spiegel warns, slander God.[35]

While God does communicate via the Holy Spirit about his intentions, there is no guarantee that he will actually do so. For his own reasons and for our sake, he may keep his intentions hidden from us, and though the Holy Spirit is the one who convicts us of sin, it does not follow that he will make us aware of every sin in our lives, as mentioned above. In short, being close to God is not a sufficient condition for knowing the reason for our suffering. As Job's case shows, God does not always reveal his intentions even to the greatest of saints; moreover, there is no rational formula for doing this. Spiegel is right to critique the skeptical thesis, but his conditions for identifying divine wrath are not sufficient.

34. 1 Corinthians 12:10. I just want to emphasize here that I do not mean to dismiss the gift of prophecy altogether. I just want to stress that we ought to exercise extreme caution when it comes to the contemporary use of such gifts, comparing prophetic claims to the witness of Scripture.

35. One test for authentic prophecy is found in 1 John 4:1-3.

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A Reply to Gregory Bock

James S. Spiegel

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I want to thank Gregory Bock for his critical response to my *JBTS* article "'It's the Wrath of God': Reflections on Inferring Divine Punishment."[1] In my article I pose the question whether it is ever reasonable to infer that a particular contemporary state of affairs is a case of divine wrath. In addressing this question I review several cases of divine wrath reported by the biblical writers, including the worldwide flood (Gen. 6), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19), the Egyptian plagues (Exod. 12), the Korah rebellion (Num. 16), and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts. 5). In light of such cases, I discuss potential criteria for inferring the occurrence of divine wrath. The conditions I propose include: (1) the occurrence of a miracle in conjunction with the event in question, (2) extraordinary coincidences associated with the event, and (3) the association of the event with a fulfilled bold prediction.

Bock's Helpful Critique

To test these criteria, Bock applies them to the case of Job—a man who suffered severely but, despite the claims of some of his friends, was actually righteous and thus not a victim of divine wrath. Yet, as Bock explains, my proposed criteria would seemingly invite a very different conclusion. After all, in this case: (1) Job's suffering is a consequence of a miraculous event (i.e., the spontaneous fire falling from the sky, destroying Job's sheep and servants), (2) there is an extraordinary coincidence of events in the form of simultaneous destruction of Job's house, the stealing of his flocks, the burning of his sheep, and the killing of his servants and children, and (3) although these tragedies do not fulfill an actual bold prediction, as Bock puts it, "we can imagine Job's narrative including one without changing the outcome."[2] Such, he says, "would be compatible with the rest of the story playing out as it does, but Job's friends would still be wrong about God's intentions." Therefore, Bock concludes that my proposed conditions "are not sufficient for justifying belief in the occurrence of divine punishment."[3]

1. James S. Spiegel, "'It's the Wrath of God': Reflections on Inferring Divine Punishment," *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies* 4:2 (2019): 301-16.

2. Gregory Bock, "The Trouble with Inferring Divine Punishment," *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies* 5:1 (2021): 137.

3. Bock, "The Trouble with Inferring Divine Punishment," 137.

Bock's application of my criteria to the Job narrative is interesting and instructive. It reveals that I should have been explicit about a key assumption in my proposal, specifically that *only persons demonstratively guilty of some significant sin are proper candidates for divine wrath*. Let us call this the *known sin* condition. The case of Job clearly fails this criterion, since God himself declares Job to be "blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil" (Job 1:8, NIV). Moreover, Job's friends, though not privy to this divine assessment of Job, had no independent evidential grounds on which to base their judgment that Job had sinned in some significant way so as to warrant such harsh treatment by God. Given these facts and the additional "known sin" condition, the application of the other criteria I propose becomes moot. Thus, my proposed conditions don't fail as much as they must be supplemented with the "known sin" requirement. This is something that I took for granted but I certainly should have made explicit, as Bock's critique makes evidently clear.

Bock's Misguided Critiques

While I am indebted to Bock for this corrective, I would like to push back on his other critiques. Bock proceeds to note that the failure of Job's friends in assessing him is rooted in a lack of empathy. He therefore proposes a condition of his own which he dubs the "empathy condition." He articulates this as follows: "before ascribing divine wrath to explain the suffering of others, one ought to have a comprehensive understanding of their circumstances."[4] He adds that such a requirement "would remind us that epistemic caution is a virtue and that the act of judging others is prone to error."[5] I strongly agree with both of these points and there is nothing in my argument which would suggest otherwise. In fact, I emphasize and elaborate in some detail on Bock's point about epistemic caution, noting that "it is probably prudent to maintain an especially stringent standard for making such assertions. After all, it is always possible to err in one's interpretations regarding each of the potential corroborating factors" that I discuss.[6]

Bock proceeds to focus on the personal dimension of making sense of suffering and emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting individual believers regarding sin in their lives. He says, "the conviction of sin is not the conclusion of a deductive argument or the satisfying of a set of sufficient conditions; rather it is an awareness of one's spiritual condition communicated by God through the Holy Spirit."[7] I couldn't agree more. But the principal concern of my article and the criteria I propose is not personal divine guidance but the matter of inferring divine wrath

4. Bock, "The Trouble with Inferring Divine Punishment," 138.
5. Bock, "The Trouble with Inferring Divine Punishment," 138.
6. Spiegel, "It's the Wrath of God," 314.
7. Bock, "The Trouble with Inferring Divine Punishment," 139.

in the lives of *other people*. Since we are naturally interested in God's purposes in allowing or inflicting suffering in other's lives, not just our own, this is what motivates my interest in the question when, if at all, one may justifiably infer the occurrence of divine wrath in such cases. Furthermore, the public nature of much suffering is what demands the sorts of objective criteria (or "rational formulae") that I propose for making assessments in such cases.

Bock sums up his critique when he says that "a distinction that Spiegel should stress . . . is between the justificatory demands of ascribing meaning to one's own suffering, on the one hand, and the demands of ascribing meaning to the suffering of others, on the other hand."[8] While this is no doubt an important distinction, for various reasons, I am not convinced that it is always useful, much less decisive, in the context of striving to understand *God's* purposes in allowing or inflicting suffering in one's life. While each individual has privileged access to many dimensions of their own life, it doesn't follow from this that their subjective judgments are incorrigible or even more reliable than that of some other persons. In fact, as psychological research has repeatedly demonstrated, it is often the case that the subjective point of view distorts one's judgments on events. Given the reality of personal bias and self-deception, whether due to the warping effect of emotions on one's use of reason or other factors, we might actually have more reason to be *skeptical* of a person's ascriptions of meaning to their own suffering.[9] For this reason, perhaps the justificatory demands are *greater*, not lesser for the person who makes such meaning assessments regarding her own suffering. In any case, we need not assume, as Bock does, that justificatory standards should be less demanding when ascribing meaning to one's own suffering as opposed to the suffering of others.[10]

Conclusion

I do appreciate Gregory Bock's critical response to my treatment of the matter of inferring divine punishment. I have conceded a major point of his critique, namely

8. Bock, "The Trouble with Inferring Divine Punishment," 140.

9. See, for example, James R. Larson, Jr., "Evidence for a Self-Serving Bias in the Attribution of Causality," *Journal of Personality* 45 (1977): 430-441 and Emily Pronin, "Perception and Misperception of Bias in Human Judgment," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 11 (2007): 37-43. And this is to say nothing of the problem of self-deception, the deleterious epistemic effects of which have been well-documented. For a definitive study on self-deception, see Alfred R. Mele, *Self-Deception Unmasked* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

10. Bock even goes so far as to assert the following: "it is one thing to interpret the events in one's own life as instances of divine wrath; this fits well with a biblically-based understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit and requires no further 'justificatory burden.' It is quite another thing to interpret such events in the lives of others for their sake" (Bock, "The Trouble with Inferring Divine Punishment," 140.). Why should we believe that one's assessment of whether God is acting wrathfully in one's own life incurs *no* rational justification? We most certainly have some degree of justificatory burden as we strive to interpret divine purpose in our own lives, as is evident for the reasons just noted regarding the psychological specters of self-serving bias and self-deception.

that my three criteria were not sufficient for inferring divine wrath. I have also showed that Bock's other critiques are problematic. Specifically, I pointed out that Bock seems to have overlooked the fact that I emphasized exercising epistemic caution when making inferences regarding divine wrath. And I also showed that Bock mistakenly grants certain epistemic privileges—specifically in the form of relaxed justificatory demands—to those making meaning assessments of their own suffering. I argued that because of the self-serving bias and the risk of self-deception, the justificatory demands in a context of self-concerned meaning assessments should be at least as rigorous as those pertaining to other people.

As for Bock's critical point that I concede, this concerns the fact that the three conditions I propose as potential criteria for inferring the occurrence of divine wrath should be supplemented with a "known sin" condition, which stipulates that *only persons demonstratively guilty of some significant sin are proper candidates for divine wrath*. Thus, my revised proposal would constitute a two-phase analysis, such that *only* in cases where the "known sin" condition is satisfied should one proceed to the next phase of application of conditions, which include: (1) the occurrence of a miracle in conjunction with the event in question, (2) extraordinary coincidences associated with the event, and (3) the association of the event with a fulfilled bold prediction.

While I am at it, let me make two further clarifications. First, the application of my proposed conditions ought to be construed *disjunctively* in the sense that in the second phase of analysis (that is, given the satisfaction of the "known sin" criterion) condition 1 *or* 2 *or* 3 might be sufficient to warrant the inference to divine punishment. That is, the demand that all three or even two of these further conditions be satisfied in phase two would be too strict—so strict, in fact, that it would rule out even many biblical reports of divine wrath as unwarranted. Secondly, I regard all inferences to divine punishment on the basis of these criteria to be inductive or abductive in nature, as opposed to deductive. This means that no such inferences are warranted to the point of rational certainty. Instead, they should be construed as probabilistic claims (if inductive) or inferences to the best explanation (if abductive). For this reason, inferences to divine wrath will always be epistemically fallible and subject to falsification given the acquisition of further data about a given case. Consequently, such claims should always be guarded, cautious, and, depending on the particular case, even tentative or provisional in nature.

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Papal Bull: A Response to Contemporary Papal Scholarship

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Peter Lampe, in his work, *From Paul to Valentinus*, argues that until the second part of the second century, the church in Rome favored a fractured collegial Presbyterian ecclesiology.[1] The Catholic historian, Robert Eno, agrees with Lampe when he states the following:

> But the evidence available seems to point predominantly if not decisively in the direction of a collective leadership. Dogmatic a priori theses should not force us into presuming or requiring something that the evidence leans against....This evidence (Clement, Hermas, Ignatius) points us in the direction of assuming that in the first century and into the second, there was no bishop of Rome in the usual sense given to that title.[2]

And Eno is not the only Catholic historian who agrees with Lampe. Eamon Duffy, who served on the Pontifical Historical Commission, agrees that 'all the indications are that there was no single bishop of Rome for almost a century after the deaths of the Apostles.'[3] Using Bayesian reasoning, Jerry Walls, an analytic philosopher of religion, has recently argued that if there was a bishop in Rome in the first century, we should expect a mention of it in the Patristic writings. Walls puts the probability of Clement of Rome mentioning a bishop in Rome at .44, the probability of Shepherd of Hermas at .53, Ignatius at .33, and Justin Martyr at .27. Walls then goes on to calculate that the probability of there being at least one mention of a bishop in Rome in one of these writings, assuming there was in fact a bishop in Rome in the first century, would be about .87.[4] And yet, since none of these documents mention a

1. Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the first two centuries* (London: T & T Clark International, 2006), 397.

2. Robert B. Eno, *The Rise of the Papacy* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 26, 29. Cf. Jerry Walls, "If Christ be not Raised'; If Peter was not the First Pope: Parallel Cases of Indispensable Doctrinal Foundations, *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies* 4/2 (2019); 252.

3. Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners* (New Haven: Yale Press, 2014), 2.

4. Walls does the following to get the aforementioned calculation:

1 - P(~CR & ~HR & ~IR & ~JR) = 1 – [P(~CR) * P(~HR) *P(~IR) * P(~JR)]

Since P(CR) = 0.44, and P(CR or ~CR) = P(CR) + P (~CR) = 1

we know that

P(~CR) = 1 - P(CR) = 1 – 0.44 = 0.56

bishop in Rome, we have strong evidence to suggest that there was no bishop in first century Rome. Lampe, Eno, Duffy, and Walls are not in the minority with their opinions; in fact, they espouse the paradigm view within papal historical studies. In this paper, however, I will argue that it is reasonable to hold a skeptical attitude toward the paradigm view that there was no bishop in Rome in the first century. I will do this by examining the evidence for the paradigm view in each of the aforementioned Patristic authors. I will conclude with a brief argument for there being a monarchial bishop in first century Rome.

Clement of Rome

Traditionally, Clement of Rome is dated to have been written in 95 AD. This in part can be explained by Eusebius linking Clement's reign as Peter's successor with the Roman Emperor, Domitian.[5] If Clement did not come into power until Domitian was already reigning, then Clement's letter to the Corinthians would have to be dated toward the end of the first century. Most scholars then, go on to read Clement 1:1's discussion of 'calamities which have befallen us' as addressing the famous Domitian persecution. Again, if the letter refers to Domitian's persecution, then only a later dating of 1 Clement is acceptable. [6]

Recently, the traditional dating of 1 Clement has been challenged. For example, Thomas Herron has argued that we should date 1 Clement to 70 AD. One reason one should prefer the earlier dating relates to Clement's discussion of the temple. When Clement discusses the temple in 40-41, Clement speaks of the temple in the present tense.[7] It is as if the temple is still around. Moreover, he gives great detail about the procedures that take place when it comes to temple sacrifices. Clement is not speaking of the temple as if temple life is far removed from Jewish worship.[8]

There have been some who have suggested that perhaps religious Jews continued to sacrifice at the temple even though the temple was in ruins; thus, the details that Clement gives us are to be expected with a later dating. But, as Herron points out, Kathleen Kenyon's archeology work makes this view implausible.[9] Kenyon found

and we can conclude that

P(CR or HR or IR or JR) = 1 – [(0.56) * (0.47) * (0.67) * (0.73)] = 1 - 0.1287 = 0.87.

See Kenneth J. Collins and Jerry L. Walls, *Roman but Not Catholic: What Remains at Stake 500 Years After the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 249.

5. Thomas J. Herron, *Clement and the Early Church of Rome: On the Dating of Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2008), 6.

6. Herron, *Clement and the Early Church of Rome*, 21.

7. Herron, *Clement and the Early Church of Rome*, 13-21.

8. Herron, *Clement and the Early Church of Rome*, 13.

9. Herron, *Clement and the Early Church of Rome*, 18-19.

remains of various worshippers around the temple. Surely, if observant Jews were still sacrificing in the ruins, they would have at least buried their neighbors.

Clement's discussion of the temple, however, is not the only reason for Herron's early dating of 1 Clement. At the end of 1 Clement, we read that three emissaries are being sent to the Corinthians, along with Clement's letter. The first two emissaries mentioned are Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Vito. It is likely that these were slaves who obtained their first names from the Emperor Claudius and his wife, Valerius.[10] Given that according to Roman law, one must be at least thirty years of age to be released from slavery, and, assuming that Ephebus and Vito were freed before their masters died (Valeria died in 48 AD and Claudius died in 54 AD), Ephebus and Vito would be much too old to be emissaries and make the journey to Corinth at the end of the first century.[11] An earlier dating of 1 Clement however, could account for how Ephebus and Vito were able to make such a journey.

The third emissary mentioned is Fortunatus. This was a very common name for the time, so it is unexpectant that there is no additional information about him, unless of course, they were already familiar with Fortunatus. There is a mention of a Fortunatus in 1 Cor 16:11. It seems plausible that Clement assumes that the Corinthians would simply recognize who he was referencing if the Fortunatus mentioned is the same Fortunatus that Paul references. But again, if this was the Fortunatus that Paul referenced, would he not be too old to be an emissary if 1 Clement was not written until 95 AD?[12] It seems like we would expect the names of the emissaries on the hypothesis that 1 Clement was written closer to 70 AD than the hypothesis that it was written in 95 AD.

If 1 Clement should be dated to around 70 AD, it is not a surprise that Clement does not appeal to his status as a bishop. For starters, he would not have been a bishop at the time. Moreover, it is not surprising that he would not mention the authority of some other bishop, given that Peter and Paul would have just died; the Petrine Office might not have had sufficient time to develop.

Shepherd of Hermas

But what about the Shepherd of Hermas? Should we expect a mention of a bishop in this Patristic writing? It is important to note that most scholars think that the Shepard of Hermas has multiple authors.[13] The first 24 chapters was likely written much earlier than the rest of the book. With respect to 1-24, it lacks reference to a bishop or successor to Peter. While it does reference Clement as an elder, (likely,

10. Herron, *Clement and the Early Church of Rome*, 10.

11. Herron, *Clement and the Early Church of Rome*, 10.

12. Herron, *Clement and the Early Church of Rome*, 10.

13. Clayton N. Jefford, *Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament* (Grand Rapid, MI: Baker, 2006).

Clement of Rome) it does seem to downplay his role significantly.[14] He doesn't come across as a monarchial bishop.

It is typically understood that Shepherd of Hermas is difficult to date. While 1-24 has been dated to the 70s by some, [15] others have dated it to the 90s.[16] As Holmes suggests, the reference to Clement 'point[s] to the end of the first century.'[17] Of course, the reference to Clement would only point to the end of the first century if we assume that Clement was only in leadership during this time. However, as Herron has argued, we have good reason to think that Clement was in leadership long before then. If one assumes that 1 Clement should be dated to around 70, the reference to Clement does not provide any evidence for a later dating of Shepherd of Hermas. If 1-24 should be dated to around 70, we again have little reason to expect a mention of Clement being a bishop or there being a successor to Peter.

Ignatius

Does Ignatius' letters act as evidence for the paradigm view? As Walls points out, Ignatius spends a lot of time talking in his letters about the importance of the bishop, and yet, his only letter that is missing a reference to a bishop is in Ignatius' letter to the Romans.[18] If the Romans had a designated bishop, would we really expect Ignatius to be silent on the matter?

The content (or the lack thereof) of Ignatius' letter to the Romans has led some to believe that Ignatius did not believe there was a bishop in Rome. But this reasoning does not take seriously into account other statements made by Ignatius about the necessity of a bishop. For example, Ignatius does not seem to think that one can even be called a church unless one has a bishop:

> In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, and the presbyters as the Sanhedrim of God, and assembly of the apostles. Apart from these, there is no Church.[19]

14. *Shepherd of Hermas* 4[8]:3.

15. Michael Holmes, The Apostolic Fathers in English (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Press, 2006), 37-38.

16. See Jefford, *Apostolic Fathers and the New Testament*.

17. Michael Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers in English* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Press, 2006), 37-38

18. Kenneth J. Collins and Jerry L. Walls, *Roman but Not Catholic: What Remains at Stake 500 Years After the Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 245.

19. Ignatius, *Trallians*, trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. From Ante-Nicene Fathers, eds. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0106.htm>.

And yet, in his letter to the Romans, Ignatius seems to treat the Romans as if they have a church. In chapter four, he seems to indirectly include Rome as one of the churches that he is sending a letter to when he says that he is 'writing to all the churches' and only the Romans can hinder him. Moreover, in chapter three, Ignatius seems to indicate that the Romans are teaching other churches as they have 'taught others'. It is hard to imagine that Ignatius both thinks a bishop is necessary to be a church, and yet, while the Romans lacked a bishop and therefore were not a church, they are still first in charity and are responsible for teaching various churches.

Because of this, if anything, Ignatius letters give us evidence that there was a bishop of Rome in the early part of the second century, not that there was not. Having stated this, I move on to discuss whether Justin Martyr's lack of mentioning a bishop in Rome should cause us to endorse the paradigm view in historical studies.

Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr addresses the Roman Emperor to give a defense of the Christian faith. However, as it has been pointed out, Justin makes no mention of a bishop in Rome. This should not cause us to be skeptical that there was not a bishop in Rome however. For starters, it might have seemed wise to not let the Emperor know that there is another person reigning in Rome. This could have been a death sentence for the current bishop.

Moreover, it simply might not have been relevant to mention that there is a bishop in Rome. As a Catholic philosopher, I have written various defenses of the Christian faith, and yet, rarely do I mention the papacy. Perhaps, it simply seemed irrelevant to Justin at the time.

Finally, it is important to point out that Justin's Apologies were written around sixty years into the second century AD. We know that just a couple of decades or so after the Apologies were written, there were references to there being bishops in Rome. The least controversial example can be found in Irenaeus. Irenaeus famously articulates a list of the successors to Peter.[20] Given this is the case, it seems that we can conclude one of four things:

1. Irenaeus was clueless about the shape of Roman ecclesiology two decades prior to his writing.

2. Irenaeus was lying.

3. Irenaeus was delusional.

4. Irenaeus was telling the truth.

20. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.

(2) seems implausible given Irenaeus' deeply rooted Christian character. (3) seems unlikely given the coherence of Irenaeus' writings. So, that leaves (1) and (4). In order to be committed to (1) it seems like one would have to come up with a plausible explanation as to why someone as brilliant as Irenaeus got his short-term history so wrong. Of course, you might think that he was lied to but the person postulating as much seems like they would have the burden of proof to demonstrate this as a likelihood. (4) then, seems like the best option.

Perhaps one objects to these options and argues for a fifth option, namely that Irenaeus was merely reading his present situation into very recent history. Since there is a bishop of Rome during Irenaeus' time, Irenaeus makes the unjustified assumption that previous important elders in Rome (e.g. Clement) were also bishops. This, however, seems to just affirm that Irenaeus did not really know what he was talking about. And thus, option (5) would really be a variation of (1). And this being the case, it seems reasonable to hold a skeptical attitude toward the paradigm view that there was no bishop in Rome in the first century.

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The Beginning of Days: A Response to Jeremy Lyon's "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One"

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Abstract: Jeremy D. Lyon, in his essay "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," claimed that Genesis 1:1-2 is meant to be read as part of day one and that this interpretation "reflects the grammar and syntax in the most straightforward manner" and is supported by "inner-textual commentary" (that is, other parts of the Bible). He helpfully focuses on the most crucial issue for young earth creationists: whether Genesis 1 allows for long periods of time between the creation *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), in Genesis 1:1, and the beginning of the days, in 1:3. Following the work of Weston Fields, Lyon offers a grammatically impressive defense of a crucial issue for defending Young Earth Creationism (YEC), that Genesis 1:1-2 is "circumstantial;" that is, that it describes the circumstances at the dawn of day one. However, his conclusion about the circumstantial clauses of Genesis 1:2 is overly narrow. Further, Lyon scarcely touches on the literary device demarcating the onset of each day (the "and God said" refrain) and doesn't deal with the scene-setting grammar and vocabulary of the first two verses, or the *waw* consecutive beginning 1:3, or the different terms (create, *bā·rā* [ברא] vs make,*ʿā·śāh* , [עָשָׂה]) between Genesis 1:1 and Exodus 20:11 and 31:17. These crucial omissions means that Lyon fails to prove his claims.

Introduction

Jeremy D. Lyon, in a 2019 essay in *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, proffered an interpretation of Genesis 1 that begins day one at the first verse.[1] He called this "the traditional interpretation" and claimed it "reflects the grammar in

1. Jeremy D. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," *JETS* 62.2 (2019): 269–85. I prefer to call the first day "day one" rather than "the first day" because that is the literal translation of the term in Genesis 1:5 and to show that in Hebrew the first five days are described without the definite article ("the") while the sixth and seventh have the definite article (e.g. "the sixth day", "the seventh day").

the most straightforward manner" and is supported by "inner-textual commentary."[2] It is the standard interpretation for Young Earth Creationists (YECists), like Ken Ham and John MacArthur. The key question: Would an unindoctrinated reader, in the original audience Genesis was intended for, read Genesis 1 as beginning day one in verse 1? By "unindoctrinated," I don't mean presuppositionless as no such reader exists. I mean the average reader (or hearer) for which Genesis was intended. Does the author intend us to see the first two verses of Genesis as describing day one? Does Genesis, in that way, create an unbroken, dateable, chronological sequence back to creation? Lyon and other YECists insist that it does. Does their interpretation stand up to scrutiny?

The place to begin is at the beginning. Many readers assume that the key to the debate is the meaning of "day." But this begs the question as to whether Genesis 1:1-2 is part of day one. Until that issue is settled, debating the meaning of "day" is premature. The first crucial question: when does day one begin? Thankfully, this is the question that Lyon grapples with. Like Luther wrote to Erasmus, Lyon is to be praised and commended highly for attacking the real issue, the essence of the matter in dispute, and not wearying us with trifles.[3] In this debate, the definition of "*yom*" (day) would be a trifle between young and old earth creationism until we settle whether the first two verses preface day one or are part of it.

Begin at the beginning. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). That's the first sentence our imaginary unindoctrinated reader would see. Lyon claims that the traditional and "straightforward" reading of this verse is that it begins day one.[4] Lyon's interpretation achieves for Young Earth Creationism (YEC) an unbroken, chronological sequence all the way back to the original creation of Genesis 1:1 which is essential to it. Lyon concludes:

> Gen 1:1 is an independent clause depicting God's initial creative act (*creatio ex nihilo*) on day one. Genesis 1:2 is a description of the state or condition of the earth as it was initially created. Genesis 1:3 then moves the narration forward. Thus, the first five verses (1:1–5) constitute the creative acts of day one. The text does not allow for the possibility of preexistent matter or an undisclosed period of time prior to day one.[5]

2. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 285.

3. *The Annotated Luther*, Volume 2: Word and Faith, Kirsi I. Stjerna, editor , (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015) 256.

4. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 285.

5. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 285.

The Refrain

There is a major literary marker that we can assume our unindoctrinated reader would immediately notice: the refrain that introduces each day occurs in verse 3. Genesis 1:3 doesn't simply move "the narration forward."[6] It opens with a refrain – a literary device – that marks it off: "and he said" (*way-yō-mer*, וַיֹּאמֶר).[7] Each of the days is demarcated by a refrain with "And God said" (*way-yō-mer)* beginning each day and "it was evening and morning the nth day" concluding it (except for the seventh).[8] Because we're looking for "the literary boundary" of day one, we cannot dismiss such an obvious boundary marker. Since every day is begun with that refrain, consistency suggests that the writer intends to show us that day one begins with "And God said" (*way-yō-mer, וַיֹּאמֶר)* in verse 3. There is no literary reason why verse one could not have begun with "God said" if the intention was to communicate that verses one and two are part of day one.[9]

In a detailed essay on this issue, it is notable that Lyon does not substantially deal with the introductory portion of the refrain. He fills three pages demonstrating the paragraph divisions of the Qumran texts compared to the Masoretic and an entire section on the commentary of ancient Jewish literature but confines his exegesis of the refrain that opens each day to two sentences in the footnotes. He notes that John Collins bases his conclusions on the fact that "the first *wayyiqtol* verb וַיֹּאמֶר ("then he said") occurs in 1:3" and that the "the following workdays of creation week (days 2–6) begins with the same *wayyiqtol* verb."[10] He notes that the ending of every day is demarcated by "and there was evening and morning the *n*th day" but dismisses the idea that the phrase that consistently marks the beginning of every other day also marks the beginning of day one.[11] He states, "the fact that each of the subsequent workdays of creation week begin with the *wayyiqtol* verb וַיֹּאמֶר ([*way-yō-mer*] "then he said") does not necessarily mean that day one must also begin with the *wayyiqtol* verb וַיֹּאמֶר ("then he said") in 1:3." He reasons that this is the case because, "within the narrative, וַיֹּאמֶר [*way-yō-mer*] occurs in several places *other than* the beginning

6. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 270.

7. "The days are marked off by a refrain" (John Collins, *Genesis 1-4, A Linguistic, Literary and Theological Commentary* (P & R Publishing: Phillipsburg, NJ, 2006) 55.

8. "There is a clear pattern to the days: they each begin with the phrase "And God said" and end with the statement "and there was evening and there was morning, the nth day." This means that, according to the text, day 1 begins in verse 3 and not in verse 1." (Lennox, *Seven Days that Divide the Word* (Zondervan: Grand Rapid, MI, 2011), 52).

9. For example, it could read, "In the beginning, God said, "Let there be light," when he created the heavens and the earth and the earth was without form and void" etc. This is, essentially, the interpretation that Lyon wants us to believe was intended for Genesis.

10. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 279.

11. Lyon on the concluding half of the refrain: "Each of the six days of creation week are clearly marked off by the formula, "Then it was evening, then it was morning, day one/second day/third day/fourth day/fifth day/the sixth day." (Lyon, 269.)

of a day (e.g. 1:11, 26, 29)."[12] This is dubious reasoning. Just because the "and God said" (*way-yō-mer)* refrain is used at other places – each significant creative acts – than just the beginning of the days, doesn't mean that the refrain still doesn't mark the beginning of each creation day. Because *way-yō-mer* (וַיֹּאמֶר) is also used to mark the immensely important creative events of vegetation (1:11), humanity (1:26), and food for humanity (1:29), does not alter the fact that it is also the literary boundary marker for the beginning of each of the other days. Shouldn't we conclude that it is also serving that purpose for the first day? That is, every other day in the creation week is begun with the literary marker "and God said" (*way-yō-mer).* In order to show that 1:1-2 is part of day one, Lyon must show why day one is an exception to this rule. He doesn't.

Waws: Disjunctive and Consecutive

A major part of Lyon's case is his exegesis of the Hebrew conjunction beginning verse 2, the *waw*: "The construction of the *waw* plus a noun (in this case, + הָאָרֶץ ו, [*wə-hā-'ā-reṣ*]) is known as a *waw* disjunctive, which does not convey sequence, but a condition. In other words, the opening clause of verse two is functioning as a parenthetical description or background information concerning the earth as initially created in verse one."[13] Hence, he concludes, on the basis of this *waw* disjunctive, that "Hebrew grammar does not allow for the insertion of vast periods of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2."[14] Lyon here appears to be carrying on the work, from a generation earlier, of Weston Fields. Fields also strove to provide the academic foundation for YECists to show that Genesis 1:1-2 is part of day one. In his *Unformed and Unfilled*, he sought to close any possibilities for long intervals between the initial creation and the beginning of day one. That is, like Lyon, he tried to exclude the gap theory as a viable interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2.

The gap theory posits that there is a lengthy, undefined interval of time between the initial creation in Genesis 1:1 and the dawn of day one in 1:3. It was popularized by *Thomas Chalmers* (1780 – 1847), a professor at the University of Edinburgh and founder of the Free Church of Scotland. The Gap Theory was part of the original Scofield Reference Bible (1909). It was more recently propagated by Arthur C. Custance (1910–1985), a Canadian anthropologist, Biblical archaeologist and Hebrew scholar who wrote *Without Form and Void* in 1970. Custance's gap theory claims there is an epoch between 1:1 and 1:2. Fields responded by describing the

12. Original emphasis, Lyon, 279, fn. 45. I have here reproduced the entirety of Lyon's engagement with the opening refrain *way-yō-mer.*

13. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 278.

14. Ken Ham, *Six Days* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2013), 105. This explanation is repeated by Answers in Genesis spokesman Troy Lacey in reply to the question about how much time transpires in Genesis 1:2.

conjunction beginning Genesis 1:2 as a *waw* attached to a noun (e.g. "and the earth"), usually interpreted as a "*waw* disjunctive," which may indicate the back-ground or circumstances of the main verb.[15] John Goldingay, referring to verse 2, notes that this is "a normal view that those are disjunctive *waws*."[16] It may indicate that the action is simultaneous or parenthetical material to the main verb. For example: "and the earth was" without form, etc., while God said the first fiat ("let there be light") that begins day one. It is in contrast to the *waw* consecutive which is attached to a verb (e.g. "and God said") and, as we'll see, is usually translated simply as "and." Fields sought to show that the *waw* disjunctive opening 1:2 prohibits any length of time between 1:1 and 1:2 and, by implication, attaches 1:1-2 to 1:3 and thus day one.

However, there are several problems with Lyon's narrow interpretation of "*waw*" (ו) in Genesis 1:1-2. First, as Leslie Allen has noted, "*waw*" is so flexible in its meaning that it's not possible to interpret it so technically and specifically.[17] Brown, Driver, Briggs notes that the *waw* "is used freely and widely in Hebrew but also with much delicacy, to express relations and shades of meaning which Western languages would usually indicate by distinct particles."[18] How we determine what shade of meaning the *waw* might carry is a matter of context and interpretation. It should be interpreted contextually rather than implying that a "*waw"* not connected to a verb is necessarily a "*waw* copulative used disjunctively" and necessarily exclude the possibility of gaps, as Fields and Lyon claim.[19] In this case, common sense demands some kind of sequence as the earth must be "void and desolate" after having been created in 1:1, if, as Lyon rightly argues, 1:1 is describing creation *ex nihilo*. So, while it's technically accurate to observe that the "*waw*" beginning 1:2 is a disjunctive, as Goldingay remarked, "I don't really see how this proves anything about creationism!"[20]

Waw (ו) is an extremely common Hebrew word, really a prefix to other words which may carry the meaning of "and," "but," "now," "then," etc, or even be untranslated, as it was by the NKJV of Genesis 1:2a, effectively treating it as a punctuation.[21] Other than in the very first sentence of Genesis 1:1-3, *Waw* begins

15. In my educational experience the conjunction *waw* is usually pronounced "*vuv*" and the letter *waw* is pronounced like a "v."

16. John Goldingay, e-mail interview, February 16, 2016. Goldingay (BA University of Oxford, PhD University of Nottingham) is senior professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary.

17. Leslie Allen notes that the *waw* disjunctive is "a slippery term." (Leslie Allen, e-mail interview, Feb 19, 2016.)

18. Brown, Driver, Briggs, *The New Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (Hendrickson Publishing, Inc.: Peabody, MA, 1979), 252.

19. *Unformed and Unfilled*, (Master Books: Green Forest, AR, 1976), 82. Different scholars use the terms copulative, *explicativum* and disjunctive apparently synonymously.

20. John Goldingay, e-mail interview, February 16, 2016.

21. "Occasionally the English equivalent [of the *waw* consecutive] is "but," "now," "then," "so," "and so," or "moreover," and in a few instances merely a semicolon (typically with paired sentences)." (Samuel L. Bray and John F. Robbins, *Genesis 1-11, A New Old Translation for Readers,*

every sentence there. Further, while most scholars agree with Lyon that the *waw* beginning Genesis 1:2 is a disjunctive and so does not necessarily convey the meaning of a sequence of events, most would also say that the *waw* beginning 1:3 is a *waw* consecutive which likely does convey a sequence. But is it an immediate sequence, with no possibility of other events, no gaps, so immediate that the attached events must have occurred on the same day?

Answers in Genesis (AiG) official spokesman Troy Lacey insists that it is. According to AiG the *waw* consecutive beginning 1:3, "really means something akin to "and then next"."

> So it is revealed that all of these events from 1:1 through 1:5 equal one day (verse 5) constrained by evening and morning. . . . Therefore at most the time between the Creative events of each day, cannot be longer than 12 hours, for in verse 3 God created light. Had God wanted to convey a time period (some type of gap) between each (or any) Day He could have surely done so by not having Moses connect everything with a *waw* consecutive.[22]

To his credit, Lyon does not try to make this case of an immediate sequence of events based on the *waw* consecutive. AiG is right in the basic data they report -- the *waw* consecutive means generally "and then next"-- but wrong in the way they interpret that data. They imply that the *waw* consecutive allows for no intervening events, as though it means "and then immediately next." This is a rendering of "*waw*" not borne out by Hebrew usage or lexicons.[23] For example, in Genesis 5, the genealogical entry of each name, beginning with Adam (in verse 3, and following in verses 6, 9, 12, etc.), begins with וַ (translated as "when" in the ESV), a "*waw* consecutive." Surely we are not expected to believe that Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, etc, did nothing other than father a son at the specified time; that there were no intervening events; indeed, we are told each of them "had other sons and daughters" in the intervening time. The truth is that the *waw* consecutive only signifies the next event that the author wishes to narrate.

Fields and now Lyon aren't so careless, as AiG, as to make inaccurate, sweeping claims about the *waw* consecutive. Rather, they ignore it. Despite relying on the disjunctive of 1:2 for his argument, Lyon doesn't deal with the *waw* consecutive opening verse 3, (the first word in the refrain "And God said" [*way-yō-mer*, וַיֹּאמֶר].) He doesn't mention the *waw* consecutive at all. This is a crucial omission because the *waw* consecutive beginning the crucial "and God said" (1:3), can, indeed, allow for a gap. Fields strove to prove that the opening *waw* of 1:2 cannot be a consecutive; that consecutives, not disjunctives allow the possibility of a time interval.[24] Hence Fields

Scholars and Translators (Wilmore, KY: GlossaHouse: 2017), 48.

22. Troy Lacey, Answers in Genesis, e-mail interview, March 16, 2015.

23. Brown, Driver, Briggs' entry on the "*waw*" contains no such sweeping, absolute statement (251-55).

24. Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled*, 81-83.

and Lyon have implicitly admitted that the *waw* consecutive beginning 1:3 may separate 1:1-2 from day one, just as the *waw* consecutive separates each day from the one before. That is, the opening *waw* of 1:3 communicates a subsequent act in the same way as the *waws* that begin every other day. Fields and Lyon strove to close any possible gap between 1:1 and 1:2 based on their interpretation of the *waw* disjunctive. But in so doing they appear to have proved the consecutive opening verse three, with the refrain, allows for a break in the sequence of events between 1:2 and 1:3.

The *sin a-qua-non* for YECism is demonstrating an unbroken, datable chronology back to the original creation. So tying 1:2 to 1:3 is crucial. YEC seeks to link the original creation (1:1) to the first fiat of day one (1:3) through the events of 1:2. But that attempt founders on exactly the grammatical point Fields and Lyon worked so hard to prove to close the gap between 1:1 and 1:2: a *waw* consecutive, not a disjunctive, begins 1:3. They argue – unpersuasively – that the *waw* disjunctive opening 1:2 forbids any gap between "In the beginning" (1:1) and "and God said" (1:3) but fail to note that the *waw* consecutive opening 1:3 allows that gap.

Grammar

This then brings the third major issue (after the refrain and the *waw*) regarding time in Genesis 1:1-2: the grammar. Lyon claims that the "straightforward" interpretation of the verbs, suggests that verses one and two are part of day one. C. John Collins disagrees. He noted, "The likely function of Gen. 1:2 is to describe the conditions of the earth just as the first day was beginning (v. 3) — so it says nothing about whether there was any time gap between the initial creation event (v. 1) and the first day. I argue this on the basis of discourse grammar."[25] By "discourse grammar" Collins means that the perfect tense in the opening of a narrative describes an event that occurred prior to the main narrative. "The normal use of the perfect at the very beginning of a pericope is to denote an event that took place before the storyline gets under way."[26] It's a stage-setting grammatical device. Lyon calls them "*qatal* verbs" (apparently referring to the same thing), a past tense. The main storyline uses what Hebrew grammarians call "*wayyiqtol* verbs."[27] (*Wayyiqtol* means "and + *yiqtol*." For example, *way-yō-mer* is "and he would say.")[28] To put it simplistically, it's a story-

25. Collins, e-mail interview, August 7, 2015.

26. Collins, *Genesis 1-4,* 51.

27. Collins, *Genesis 1-4,* 51. "These verbs are used primarily to describe a sequence of consecutive actions (*Waw* Consecutive) in which the verb prefixed with the conjunction *Waw* is related to a previous verb (*Waw* Relative). These forms are often referred to by the English transliterations *wayyiqtol* and *weqatal*. The *wayyiqtol* form is one of the most common verbal forms in the Hebrew bible and denotes a simple action in the past, also called "Preterite."" (Gary Practico and Miles Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew: Grammar* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001], 194.)

28. http://vadimcherny.org/hebrew/grammatical_function_hebrew_yiqtol.htm

telling tense. In Genesis 1, there are no *wayyiqtol* (story telling) verbs in the first two verses. The first two verses use *qatal* verbs which Collins explains are for "stage setting." The first use of a *wayyiqtol* verb, and thus the marker that the main narrative has begun, is at the onset of verse 3, "and he said" (*way-yō-mer*, וַיֹּאמֶר). The remainder of the Genesis 1 contains these type of verbs.[29] Hence, "created" (*bā·rā'*, בָּרָא) in 1:1 "denotes an action prior to the main storyline – that is, prior to the beginning of the first day."[30] Collins concludes, based on this "discourse grammar," that day one begins in 1:3 at an "unspecified time" after the creation of the universe in 1:1.[31]

Lyon's response is to claim that it is more "natural" to read the first two verses as part of day one and that it "would seem to be a bit out of place" to begin the narrative with a *wayyiqtol* verb.[32] He explains that his reading is more natural "considering one of the primary (though not exclusive) functions of the *wayyiqtol* is to move the narration forward sequentially…". That the *wayyiqtol* verbs beginning in verse 3 move the narration forward isn't the question. The question is why doesn't verse 1 begin with such a verb if, as he argues, day one begins in verse 1? Why is the stage set for "and God said," if there is no stage prior to "and God said"? He further explains, "and given there would have been no creative acts prior to the beginning." That is, he's saying, verses 1-2 must be part of day one because there cannot be any acts before "the absolute beginning," apparently assuming that day one is "the absolute beginning." Lyon is begging the question of whether Gen 1:1-2 is part of day one. He says it is because that is the "natural reading." [33]

In reality, it is quite natural to preface a narrative by setting the stage; in this case, setting the stage for the six days by briefly describing the events prior to the beginning of days. There are four "stage-setting" statements, one in verse 1 (about the "absolute beginning") and three in 1:2 focusing on condition of the earth:

And the earth was "void and desolate",[34] (1:2a)

וְהָאָרֶץ, הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ

and darkness was over the face of the deep (1:2b)

וְהָאָרֶץ, הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ, וְחֹשֶׁךְ , וְחֹשֶׁ

and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (1:2c)

.וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים, מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם

Genesis 1:2b is closely connected to 1:2a because it borrows its verb (*hā·yə·ṯāh,* הָיְתָה, discussed below) from it. Genesis 1:2c may be interpreted as separable and so as an independent sentence. Or 1:2c may be interpreted as having a participle

29. Collins, *Genesis 1-4,* 42.

30. Collins, *Genesis 1-4,* 55.

31. Collins, *Genesis 1-4,* 57.

32. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 280.

33. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 280..

34. Bray and Hobbins, *Genesis 1-11, A New Old Translation for Readers, Scholars and Translators*, 68.

("hovering", מְרַחֶפֶת, *mə-ra-ḥe-pēṯ*) that assumes the verb of 1:2a ("was" or "became") alongside it. Either way, the verb in 1:2c describes ongoing action, "was hovering" (מְרַחֶפֶת, *mə-ra-ḥe-pēṯ*).[35] To hover is dynamic, an action over some time. This word evokes the image of a hen brooding over her chicks. It suggests nurturing, care, supervision.[36] The same word (מְרַחֶפֶת, *mə-ra-ḥe-pēṯ*) is used in Deuteronomy 32:11, "Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that *flutters* over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions"; and in Jeremiah 23:9 where the ESV (and other translations) renders it as "shakes." It also suggests a process over a period of time. How long a period of time? The passage doesn't say.

This brings us to two independent though interwoven issues: first, whether the phrases of Genesis 1:1-2 are sequential or circumstantial and, second, whether the verb in 1:2a (*hā·yə·ṯāh,* הָיְתָה) is properly translated as "was" or "became." If they are sequential, they communicate a chain of events over time, a problem if the time is less than 24 hours. It they are circumstantial, they describe the environment of the action. ("A circumstantial clause describes the manner, circumstances or conditions under which the main clause occurs."[37]) They can theoretically be interpreted in four different ways: as sequential with *hā·yə·ṯāh* as "was", or sequential with *hā·yə·ṯāh* as "became," or circumstantial with *hā·yə·ṯāh* as "was," or even circumstantial with *hā·yə·ṯāh* as "became," describing the events prior to day one which brought about the circumstances on the dawn of that day. None of these possible interpretations establish Lyon's YEC case. Some trouble it.

A sequential interpretation of 1:1-2 could render the *waws* as "then" and *hā·yə·ṯāh* (הָֽתְיָה) in 1:2a as "became," with the interpretation that it relates a series of events: the earth became void and desolate and then darkness became over the waters and then the Spirit of God nurtured the earth. This approach suggests that the earth was first created by the fiat of 1:1, then it became void. It implies a cosmic catastrophe befell the earth. (Some gap theorists have filled this gap with speculation that tends to discredit the gap theory, speculation that Lyon understandably pounces on.[38]) Lyon claims that this is impossible, because of the *waw* disjunctive (discussed above) and the grammar. "The form of the verb הָיְתָה [*hā·yə·ṯāh*] which is not connected to the *waw* conjunction, cannot be construed as "became" in this context."[39] Lyon asserts this conclusion on the basis of *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (1910) but doesn't note that many other Hebrew grammarians don't concur.[40] Barry Bandstra notes that *hā·yə·ṯāh* (1:2a) could, indeed, be rendered "as a material process and be translated

35. Collins, *Genesis 1-4,* 42.

36. John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning* (W Publishing Group: Nashville, TN, ٢٠٠١), 77.

37. Ronald J. Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, (University of Toronto Press, 2014) 176.

38. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 279.

39. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 278.

40. E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, eds., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2006), 454.

as *became*," hence sequential contrary to Lyon. This suggests, "that the earth went through a transformation."[41] Lyon is eager to discredit this as an exegetical possibility because if the earth "became" void as a result of events after creation but prior to day one, the datable sequence of events on which YECism relies is undone.

In an e-mail interview, Leslie Allen, my former Old Testament professor, noted the possibility of interpreting the three statements of 1:2 as "circumstantial" and whether they are dependent or independent clauses.[42] (Independent clauses are separate sentences, as in the current, major English translations of 1:1-2.) Lyon wants us, as is traditional, to read the first two verses as circumstantial and as independent clauses. He concludes that 1:2 is "a parenthetical description of the condition of the earth in its initial created state."[43] Allen says this is a definite possibility, Genesis 1:2 "is generally interpreted as a nominal circumstantial clause with the verb [*hā·yə·ṯāh*] . . . just functioning as a copula ("was") and with the usual order of subject-predicate in a circumstantial clause."[44] Wilhelm Gesenius concurs. He believed that Genesis 1:2 is an example of *haya* (הָיָה), the root word, being used as a "connecting word," what Allen calls a "copula."[45] The condition reported by *haya* (הָיָה) is either "contemporaneous with the principal events or continuing as a result of them."[46] The relevant question for us is, then, what are the "principal events:" the creation of Gen. 1:1 or the "and God said" of 1:3?

Paul Joüon with Takamitsu Muraoka likewise interpreted *haya* (הָיָה) as a copula ("was" connecting "the earth" with "void and desolate"), describing the circumstances that developed out of 1:1.[47] But in 1892 S. R. Driver insisted that Hebrew wasn't so rigid in its rules, especially about what is or is not a circumstantial clauses; "emphasis or the love of variety" is a factor.[48] One must have a sense of the literary nature of the text. It's literature, not mathematics. Further, even if 1:2 is circumstantial, the circumstantial, with *haya* (הָיָה) may represent "an act completed long before."[49] Allen concludes, "There is no 100% proof rule as to whether Gen 1:2 is sequential or circumstantial." In other words, Hebrew lacks an absolute rule on this

41. Bandstra, 43, 46. Bandstra notes that *bā·rā'* "is a finite verb and not an infinitive; normally both components of a construct phrase must be nominal forms." (Barry Bandstra, *Genesis 1-11, A Handbook on the Hebrew Text* (Waco, Tx: Baylor University Press, 2008), 43.)

42. Leslie C. Allen (BA and MA, Cambridge University; DD and PhD, University of London) is Senior Professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary. Richard Muller, when also teaching at Fuller, said that Professor Allen was one of a handful of people in all of North America who could read the unpointed Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls with fluency.

43. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 279.

44. Leslie Allen, e-mail interview, February 19, 2016.

45. Gesenius, 452, fn. 2, 454.

46. Gesenius, 455.

47. Paul Jouon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2003) 542.

48. *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses*, 200.

49. Gesenius, 455.

grammatical issue. This opens the door to legitimately interpreting the verb in 1:2a, *hā·yə·ṯāh* (הָיְתָה), as "became," in a temporal sequence.[50]

Some scholars want to read the first two verses as circumstantial but as dependent clauses, hence like "When God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning, it was without form," etc. This is reading it as a dependent clause, following Abraham Ibn Ezra (d. 1167) and Solomon ben Isaac, d. 1105). F. F. Bruce wrote that he was "almost persuaded" that the best translation of Genesis 1:1-3 was, "In the beginning of God's creating the heaven and the earth (now the earth was waste and emptiness, and darkness on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God hovering on the face of the water), God said 'Let there be light,' and there was light." Other mid-twentieth century scholars were more fully persuaded.[51] While this would seem to bolster the conclusion Lyon arrives at, nevertheless Lyon helpfully commits several pages in his essay countering this dependent-clause interpretation.[52]

Francis Andersen both interprets *hā·yə·tāh* (הָיְתָה) as "became" and concludes 1:2 is circumstantial but describing the circumstances arising out of 1:1, the aftermath of the original creation, not necessarily the circumstances of day one (as Collins suggested). Further, – and to complicate matters – it is a circumstantial that describes a sequence of events, effectively both circumstantial and sequential. Genesis 1:2 "is a circumstantial sentence comprised of three conjoined circumstantial clauses, the whole circumstantial to the opening time" (Gen. 1:1).[53] As circumstantial clauses with the perfect verb *haya* (הָיָה), Andersen compared the use in 1:2 with Genesis 7:6 ("when the flood came [הָיָה]"); 7:10 ("the flood came [הָיוּ]" [ESV]); and Exodus 1:5b ("and Joseph *was* [הָיָה] already in Egypt" [ESV]). In these cases, *haya* (הָיָה) represents a circumstance that was the result of a series of prior events, over an extended time. So Andersen considers it more likely that the meaning is "the earth had become (or had come to be) ..." as a circumstance to the preceding verse, the creation of 1:1.[54] Hence Andersen concludes that while 1:2 is circumstantial, it describes circumstances that are the product of a sequence of events issuing from the original creation of 1:1, "prior to the first fiat" in 1:3.[55]

This issue of sequential vs. circumstantial is directly relevant to whether Genesis 1:1 is interpreted as a title to the rest of the creation account or as the initial statement of it. Bruce Waltke defended the proposition that 1:1 is a title – hence a framing phrase summarizing the entire passage -- in a three part series of articles

50. Leslie Allen, e-mail interview, February 19, 2016.

51. F. F. Bruce, "'And the Earth was Without Form and Void,' An Enquiry into the Exact Meaning of Genesis 1, 2," *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 78 (1946): 21-37, p. 22.) William S. LaSor joined the chorus for this rendering. (according to Fields, pp. 154-155.)

52. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 273-75.

53. Francis Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, (The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton: 1974), 86.

54. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew,* 85, 79, 87.

55. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, 85.

in *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1975).[56] John MacArthur follows him, "Verse 1 is a general statement."[57] MacArthur's position seems to be that Genesis 1:1 is a summary in advance, like a title, and the events themselves are described beginning in 1:2, with day one. The most obvious problem with this interpretation is that there is then no statement of the creation of the earth. Where did the earth that is "void and desolate," the "deep" and the "waters" come from? Even if 1:1 is a title, it is still not proven that day one dawns in 1:2 because of the three statements there, before the "and God said" demarcating each day.

John Sailhamer argues, in *Genesis Unbound*, that "beginning" (רֵאשִׁית) in 1:1 is not a title to the following account but God's original creating act. Lyon concurs, comparing 1:1-3 to 2:4-7 and mustering an impressive grammatical case to the conclusion that "the arguments in favor of the summary statement view of verse one are unpersuasive and appear to be forced onto the text."[58] Further, he notes that the crucial issue is whether 1:2 describes conditions or events prior to day one. The "point of contention," he says, is whether the earth was created "void" or whether it became that way after some process.[59] Again, Lyon helpfully frames the discussion around the critical issues.

Hence, there are two interwoven, over-lapping issues: whether 1:1-2 is sequential or circumstantial and whether *hā·yə·ṯāh* (הָיְתָה) should be translated as "was" or "became." "Became" suggests a sequential interpretation and would make the YEC position difficult as it would require the text to say the earth "became" "void" within day one before God said "let there be light." But translating it as "was" and interpreting it as circumstantial doesn't necessarily help YECism or bolster Lyon's case. Andersen interprets it as circumstantial, like Lyon, but writes that 1:2 describes the state of the universe after creation, like Collins, setting the scene for the days. Hence, "The first event is reported in Gen. 1:3," day one.[60]

Vocabulary

Sailhamer essentially concludes the same with Allen and Collins, against Lyon, coming at it from another perspective, that of vocabulary, especially "*rê-šîṯ*" (רֵאשִׁית, beginning). Sailhamer writes, *rê-šîṯ* "always refers to an extended, yet indeterminate duration of time – *not* a specific moment. He notes Job 8:7, Genesis 10:10 and Jeremiah 28:1 using *rê-šîṯ* in just this way. It is a 'time before time,' not referring "to a point

56. Bruce Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3", Part 1, "Introduction to Biblical Cosmogony" (25-36); Part 2, "The Restitution Theory" (136-44); "The Initial Chaos Theory and the Precreation Chaos Theory" (216-28); Part 4, "The Theology of Genesis 1", (327-42), *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1975.

57. MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning*, 73.

58. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 278.

59. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 276.

60. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew*, 86.

in time but to a *period* or *duration* of time which falls before a series of events. . . . [I]t says that God created the universe during an indeterminate period of time before the actual reckoning of a sequence of time began."[61] It is, then, in Collin's terms, "stage setting."

Similarly, Genesius, noting the preposition "in" (בְּ) prefixed to "*rê-šîṯ"* (רֵאשִׁית) that normally such nouns with prepositions (i.e. "specifications compounded with a presupposition") stand after the verb, except, among other exceptions, "prepositional specifications of time," citing Genesis 1:1.[62] If, then, *bə·rê·šîṯ* (רֵאשִׁית, "in the beginning") is the specification of time, then why would the same event, according to YECists, have another specification of time, namely "day one"? That is, according to Lyon, 1:1-5 is one event all occurring on day one. If so, why does it have two separate specifications of time?

Also, Sailhamer believes that *bā·rā'* ("created") in Genesis 1:1 "refers to an indefinite period of time" which "could have spanned as much as several billion years or it could have been much less; the text simply does not tell us how long. It tells us only that God did it during the "beginning" of our universe's history."[63] YECist Ken Ham calls this a "modified gap theory" and concludes that "accepting billions of years" is "the real motive" of Sailhamer's exegesis, noting, "Sailhamer proposes his idea in order to squeeze long ages into the text." Ham doesn't explain how he is able to discern Sailhamer's "real motive." Ham exclaims "No one in his right mind would believe this – it's not even in the Bible!"[64] Neither Ham nor Lyon, who cites Sailhamer's work and his conclusion, meaningfully engages Sailhamer's claims on vocabulary.

Inner-Textual Commentary

Lyon turns to Exodus 20:11 and 31:17 as "inner-textual commentary" – that is, other passages of scripture elaborating on creation – "indicating that the initial creation of "the heavens and the earth" in Gen 1:1 is part of day one of creation week."[65] However, Exodus 20:11 and 31:17, in the context of giving the theological basis for the fourth commandment, do not say God "created" (*bā·rā'* , ארב) the earth in six days. They say He "made" (*'ā·śāh* ,עָשָׂה) it. Admittedly, there is a great deal of overlap in the semantic range of the two words, just as with the English words they are rendered as. They can sometimes be synonyms as they are both sometimes translated

61. Emphasis original. John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1996], 38, 44.

62. Gesenius, 457.

63. Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound*, 13.

64. *Six Days* [Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2013], 114-115). Ham truncates Sailhamer's quotation cited here, ending it immediately after the "several billion years."

65. Lyon, "Genesis 1:1–3 and the Literary Boundary of Day One," 280.

by the Greek word ποιεω (*poieo*) in the Septuagint (LXX).[66] In the LXX *bā·rā'* (ברא) is rendered by *poieo* in 1:1 but by ἐγένετο (*egeneto*, aorist middle indicative of γίγνομαι, "were made") in 2:4. In 2:4, the LXX translators had the opportunity to translate both words into the same Greek word if they believed that the two terms were interchangeable. They did not. So it's unclear whether the LXX translators regarded the two terms as always synonymous.

In order to show that Exodus 20:11 sums up all of Genesis 1, including 1:1-2, and not just the days starting in verse 3, Lyon must show that "make" (*'ā·śāh ,* עָשָׂה) is exactly, always synonymous with "create" (*bā·rā',* ברא).[67] He does not deal at all with this issue. Although Lyon frequently compares 1:1 with 2:4 (which summarizes the creation with both verbs "created" and "made,") he doesn't comment on whether there is a difference in the semantic range between the two terms. This is another crucial omission.

While often synonymous, the key question for Lyon's use of "inter-textual commentary" to make Genesis 1:1-2 part of the days (Gen. 1:3-2:3) is whether create (*bā·rā'*, ברא) has a meaning outside the range of "make" (*'ā·śāh*, עָשָׂה). C. F. Kiel believes that it does. "In Kal [*bā·rā'* (ארב)] always means *to create* and is only applied to a divine creation, the production of that which had no existence before."[68] That is, "create" (*bā·rā'*) refers to God's creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). Brown, Driver, Briggs defines *bā·rā'* (ברא) as "shape, create," noting it is "always of divine activity."[69] Besides Genesis 1:1, it is used of the creation of the heaven and earth (i.e. the universe) (Is. 45:18); of humanity (Gn. 1:27, 5:1f, 6:7, Dt. 4:32, Ps. 89:48, Is. 45:12: Ml. 2:10); of "the great sea creatures and every living creature" (Gn. 1:21); of a clean heart (Ps. 51:12); of the north and south (Ps. 89:13); of a cloud and fire over Zion (Is. 4:5); of the host (Is. 40:26); of the ends of the earth (Is. 40:28); of transformed nature (Is. 41:20); of the heavens (Is. 42:5); of Israel (Is. 43:1, 7, 15); of salvation and righteousness (Is. 45:8); of the smith and the ravager (Is. 54:16); of the "fruit of lips" (Is. 57:19); of a new heaven and earth and new Jerusalem (Is. 65:17f); of "new things" like the ground swallowing up the Korahites (Num. 16:30) or a woman encircling a man (Jer. 31:22); of wind (Amos 4:13); etc. That's *bā·rā'* (ארב).

Meanwhile, the verb in Exodus 20:11, *'ā·śāh* (עָשָׂה), is defined with two primary meanings "do, make."[70] Besides Gen. 2:4, both terms are used in Isaiah 45:7b, "making (*'ā·śāh,* עָשָׂה) peace and creating (*bā·rā',* ברא) evil." The question, though, is whether

66. ποιεω (poieó) means to make, do.

67. Fields, cites numerous instances of *'ā·śāh* in which he seeks to show it is interchangeable with *bā·rā'* (60-74). I don't believe he successfully demonstrates any instance in which *'ā·śāh* is clearly used for creation *ex nihilo.*

68. Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, Volume 1 (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1866), 47.

69. Brown, Driver, Briggs, 135.

70. Brown, Driver, Briggs, 793b.

"create" can have a meaning outside the range of "make." It can. "Create" (*bā·rā'*) is only used in the OT with God as its subject whereas "make" (*'ā·śāh*) is not so specific.

If 1:1 is describing a creation *ex nihilo* then "create" (ברא) is the proper term. If 1:3-2:3 is describing God working on the earth already created in 1:1, then "make" (*'ā·śāh,* עָשָׂה) is the proper term. So 2:4 summarizes both the creation *ex nihilo* of 1:1 and the making of a habitable earth in the seven days in a synthetic parallelism.[71] If Exodus 20:11 was meant to be interpreted to encompass the entire creation, from the beginning in 1:1, then *bā·rā'* (ארב) would have been the proper term. But it uses *'ā·śāh* (עָשָׂה), the making of something out of pre-existing material. Therefore, Exodus 20:11 can be legitimately interpreted as to only summarize Genesis 1:3-2:3, the "main storyline," not necessarily the four scene-setting statements of 1:1-2. Given the context of Exodus 20:11, the fourth commandment, the specific reference of "make" (*'ā·śāh*) is to the seven days (1:3-2:3).[72] To assume that those seven days includes the creating of Genesis 1:1-2 is to beg the question this essay is written to answer.[73]

Conclusion

Beginning at the beginning, Lyon and other YECists have not shown a sound exegetical basis to claim that Genesis 1:1-2 is part of day one. The literary marker of the beginning of day one, as with each of the other days, is the refrain "And God said." Day one is thus marked as beginning in verse 3. That the same phrase is also used of three other significant creation events besides the dawning of new days, doesn't detract from its function as a literary signal, like a rooster crow, that a new day has begun. Hence, "absolute creation" occurred at an unspecified time before day one. Whether the earth "was" or "became" "void and desolate" is debatable but 1:2c tells us that for an undefined span of time the Spirit of God "hovered" over the water on earth. All of this occurred prior to the first "and God said," the green

71. Alternatively, Bray and Hobbins (p. 90) interpret the second creation account (Gen. 2:4-25), in which God is called "Yahweh Elohim," as beginning at 2:3b, thus breaking apart the *bā·rā'* (ברא) of 2:4a from the *'ā·śāh* (עָשָׂה) of 2:4b, displayed by a the paragraph break. The NIV does the same. In this case, the two terms are in no parallel relationship. Bandstra (p. 116) and the ESV, however, more traditionally keep them together in some kind of parallelism.

72. Sailhamer concurs, noting that the use of *'ā·śāh* (make) in Exodus 20:11 instead of *bā·rā* (create), indicates that this verse doesn't refer to the original creation of the universe (*Genesis Unbound*, 107). The same could be said of Nehemiah 9:6.

73. Lyon also seeks to put weight on the fact that some Qumran texts and some medieval Masoretic texts demarcated Genesis 1 by means of spacing around the days, setting off each day with a blank line. However, Genesis 1:1-2 was grouped with Genesis 1:3-5, suggesting, Lyons writes, that the scribes saw Genesis 1:1-2 as part of day one. Two full pages of the essay are occupied with reproducing Qumran texts to illustrate this paragraphing (Lyon, 282-283). While interesting for lovers of antiquity, even Lyon admits that the lack of a break may only be "due to the small amount of text involved prior to the first major section break after 1:5" (Lyon, 284). The scribes may have read 1:1-2, like our unindoctrinated reader, as "stage setting." Further, even if the lay-out is an expression of their interpretation, it only amounts to the opinion of copyists which is no more authoritative than the opinions of the author of the pseudepigraphal book of Jubilees.

light that starts each day. At this point, as far as dating the earth from the Bible, the meaning of the "days" is moot. Whether the days are literal 24 hour days, or long eras, or a literary framework is quite beside the point for dating the creation from scripture. Genesis simply doesn't provide the unbroken, chronological chain back to creation *ex nihilo.* So, as John Lennox, observed, "the beginning" of Genesis 1:1 is not dated to day one as many assume. The initial creation happened before day one. How long before? Genesis does not tell us. So, quite apart from the input of science, without the pressure of the modern academic consensus, based purely on exegesis of the text of Genesis 1:1-3, we conclude that by separating the absolute beginning (1:1) from day one (1:3), the Bible leaves the age of the universe undisclosed.[74]

Jeremy Lyon has contributed scholarly work seeking to tie the first two verses to day one in a way that closes the door on the possibility of any time before day one and thus bolstering the exegetical case of Young Earth Creationism (YEC). He's helpfully focused on the most crucial matter in the debate: whether the first two verses are prior to day one. His work is substantially better than that of much of popular Young Earth Creationism, which often concentrates on strained interpretations of the conjunction *waw* and skips to a literalistic interpretation of "day" as though that was the crucial issue. In so doing, he's made some helpful contributions, such as defending the traditional interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2 as independent clauses rather than the dependent clause interpretation that was in vogue among some 20th century scholars. However, despite his subjective claims that his "traditional interpretation" is "natural" and "straightforward," his failure to deal substantially with the "and God said" refrain demarcating the beginning of each day, the scene setting grammar and vocabulary of the first two verses, the *waw* consecutive beginning 1:3, and the differing semantic ranges of "create" and "make" means that Lyon fails to prove his case. So our unindoctrinated reader would not find Lyon's interpretation "natural" or "straightforward." Such a reader likely would not assume that the first two verses are part of day one. The Bible doesn't begin with day one. It begins with an absolute creation, *ex nihilo,* that sets the stage for the seven days. So, until YEC can show that the creation occurred on day one, YEC dogmatism is, also, *ex nihilo.*

74. Lennox, 53. John Sailhamer says this very thing, that after a creation over an "an indeterminate period" "the period of which follows "the beginning" is a single seven-day week…." (*Genesis Unbound*, 44.)

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The Growing Tree of the Global Church: Review Article of Robert F. Rea and Steven D. Cone, *A Global Church History: The Great Tradition Through Cultures, Continents, and Centuries* (London: T. & T Clark Bloomsbury, 2019), pp. xxviii + 847.

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When I attended a Protestant seminary in the 1980s, our assigned text for general church history was the venerable work by Williston Walker, D.D., L.H.D., Ph.D. (1860–1922), who had graduated from Amherst College in 1883, from the Hartford Theological Seminary in 1886, from Leipzig University (PhD) in 1888, and then taught and Hartford Seminary, before proceeding to Yale University, where he taught after 1901. By the time I first encountered it, Walker's book had already been revised and updated by a team of three scholars from Union Theological Seminary in New York City, first in 1956 (2nd ed.), and then again in 1970 (3rd ed.).

A side-by-side comparison between the 1918 and third (1970) editions shows that the essential framework of the original 1918 book—published as soldiers battled in the trenches of World War I—had not appreciably altered, except within the final section of the six-hundred-page book. "English Unitarianism" was expanded to include both English and American developments, and there were new sub-sections on the "Great Awakening," "The Revolutionary Epoch in the United States," "The Eastern Churches in Modern Times," and "The Ecumenical Movement." The earlier sub-section on "Roman Catholicism" was now renamed as "Roman Catholicism in the Modern World," and a new conclusion was added on "The Church in the World."

In glancing through the 1970 version of the text, one is struck by what is not included in the story. The book omits discussion of Eastern Christian churches since the Great Schism of the eleventh century, except for a seven-page summary on *modern developments*. "Byzantium" is not in the index. "China" and "India" are mentioned only in detached references on four or five pages, and there only in connection with Euro-American missionary endeavors. Most remarkably, *one finds not a single section anywhere in the book devoted to African, Asian, Latin American, Australian, or Oceanian churches.* The words "Africa," "Latin America," and "Pentecostalism" do not appear in the index. The 1970 edition ends by depicting a church that is somehow newly engaged with "the world," and reunifying by means

of the ecumenical movement. A detailed chart of church reunions across Europe and North America conveys a sense that ecumenism was largely succeeding in its aims.

It should go without saying that the half-century prior to 2020 has drastically altered the prevailing mindset regarding church history among even the most Eurocentric or Western-oriented scholars. First, there has been an *expansion* of the earlier Euro-American narrative that one finds in Walker's book; second, a new focus on the *agency* of, and the contributions by, non-Western, female, indigenous Christians; and, third, a modified concern for an interest in *ecumenism*, no longer focused on the World Council of Churches or on formal ecumenical dialogues, but rather with understanding the unity-in-diversity or diversity-in-unity that characterizes World Christianity today.

Recent scholarship exemplifies these three aspects of the newer church histories. As one example of the *expansion* of the church-historical narrative, one might point to Philip Jenkins's *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and How It Died* (HarperOne, 2009), which recounts the labors of Nestorian Christians in establishing churches across central Asia from the 6th to the 14th centuries, until the destruction of the these churches by Chinese and Islamic Mongol rulers. A focus on indigenous *agency* is apparent in the online *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (https://dacb.org/), with its wonderfully detailed accounts of previously little-known African Christians and their contributions to the growth and development of African churches. Regarding the *ecumenical* theme of diversity-in-unity, one truly essential text is Todd Johnson's and Gina Zurlo's *World Christianity Encyclopedia*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh University Press, 2019). No one has worked harder than the team of researchers and scholars associated with the *World Christian Encyclopedia* in crafting categories, typologies, and boundaries for understanding the contemporary global church. Over the last couple of decades, the rising interest in global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity partakes of all three aspects—an *expansion* of interest to African, Asian, Latin American, and Oceanian churches, a focus on the *agency* of female and male non-Westerners, including laypersons, in the development of the churches, and debates over how to interpret newly emerging religious groups within the *ecumenism* of a global church that is one and yet many.

Rea's and Cone's new text may be appraised in light of the three aspects just discussed. Speaking generally, *A Global Church History* succeeds on all three of these levels, in presenting an *expanded* narrative, in highlighting the *agency* of non-Westerners, laypersons, and women in the story, and in affirming an *ecumenism* that incorporates far-flung diversity as well as overarching unity in the Christian world. Below, I offer a few comments regarding the third theme of Christian unity and Christian diversity, especially in connecting with the authors' "tree" metaphor, involving a shared trunk of Christendom, with its attached and yet disparate branches. The "tree" serves as a powerful image, and yet it needs to be explained more fully, to

account for the historical emergence of purported forms of Christianity (e.g., ancient gnosis, medieval sectarians, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, etc.) that the authors would most likely not regard as part of the "tree."

The Daunting Enterprise of Writing a Church History Today

Rea's and Cone's new textbook does a phenomenal job at a formidable task, viz., narrating the entire history of global Christianity in only around five hundred pages of text. As a thought experiment, imagine being confronted with the current, gold-standard, academic treatment of the topic—the nine-volume *Cambridge History of Christianity* (2006-9), each volume of which contains around thirty or so essays by specialist scholars—and then being asked to summarize this content of almost seven thousand pages in the narrow confines of a textbook, written so as to be comprehensible to a beginning student of church history. How would one go about this?

The first issue to confront is the organization of material. There are at least four different options—chronological, geographical-cultural, traditional-denominational, or thematic. Since the *Cambridge History* was subdivided into more than two hundred and fifty essays, each contributor was able narrowly to delimit the scope of the essay in terms of all four parameters—i.e., the time period, the geography or cultural context, the Christian tradition or denomination in question, and the particular theme or issue under consideration. If one were interested in the impact of the French Revolution on Orthodox Christianity, for example, then one can turn to Paschalis Kitromilides's essay (*Cambridge History*, Vol. 5, Ch. 10) to delve into this question. This sort of laser-focused essay can be very helpful to a specialist scholar, but is not so helpful to less advanced readers, and will be disorienting to beginning students. *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to World Christianity* (2016)—edited by Lamin Sanneh and Michael McClymond—employed a combination of all four organizational options mentioned above, making it a hybrid between a chronological narrative, and a set of specialized essays, like the *Cambridge History.*

From my own classroom experience in teaching church history, beginning students prefer textbooks that present a chronological narrative, rather than thematic treatment or some other approach to new and unfamiliar material. For first-time students in the history of Christianity, a *chronological approach* is almost certain to be the most *pedagogically effective* presentation of material. It is fitting then that *A Global Church History* has organized its material chronologically (xxvi), and departs from this only in cases in which contemporaneous developments are so disparate as to justify separate treatment. Thus one finds a helpful account of Christianity in Asia and Africa during the pre-modern era (pp. 104-38, including Persia, India, China, Ethiopia, etc.) bracketed off from the discussion of European Christianity. In this volume, the historical narrative runs through pp. 1-503, while pp. 507-764 contain a carefully curated collection of historical documents to which the main text is keyed.

Comments on Some Particulars in *A Global Church History*

A Global Church History embodies an unabashedly theological approach to Christian history, as is apparent in book's dedication "to the glory of God seen in the Church across cultures, continents, and centuries" (vii) and in the later reference to "a theological program of education" (xxv). The authors seek to uncover what is commendable and worthwhile in the varied strands of Christian experience, teaching, and practice, based on their conviction that "the Church is one community of believers, though diverse" (xxv), and that "believers from across cultures…and centuries can together see important teachings…that individuals can never see alone" (xxvi). The book breathes an ecumenical atmosphere, avoiding harsh language and sweeping judgments. Even in discussing the medieval Inquisition, for example, the language is matter-of-fact and non-condemnatory (p. 184). In this and other such passages, the authors do not presume to pass judgment—which I take to be one of the book's strengths, though I add a modest proviso to that below.

Because the book tilts toward theology, the authors often invoke intellectual history for explanatory background. Thus they pair a discussion of ancient gnosis with Irenaeus's theology (pp. 13-17), the recovery of Aristotle with the emergence of medieval scholasticism (pp. 191-203), and Newtonian physics with the rise of Deism (pp. 327-31). Less frequently, Cone and Rea incorporate political history—as in the growing prestige of the papacy in connection with the decline of the Western emperors during the fifth century (p. 64), the complicated dynastic history of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English monarchs in relation to the English Reformation (pp. 268-85), and the political history of Latin American independence in relation to church history (pp. 400-4). Rea expounds nineteenth-century Protestant Christianity in reference to the high German intellectual tradition of Kant, Herder, Schleiermacher, Hegel, Baur, Strauss, Harnack, and Troeltsch—with Kuyper and Kierkegaard added for good measure (pp. 385-94). English-language thinkers surveyed include Coleridge, Newman, Irving, and Chalmers, and the narrative suddenly turns populist in reference to Salvation Army founders William and Catherine Booth (pp. 394-99).

Space here will not allow for in-depth discussion of the authors' interpretations of particular developments in church history. In this paragraph and the following two are a few points that might be worthy of note. Cone writes that Theodore of Mopsuestia was "unfairly accused of heresy" (p. 39), while at death of Cyril of Alexandria "many rejoiced" (p. 61). Perhaps there is here a tilt toward the School of Antioch rather than Alexandria? Cone says that Maximus Confessor "worked to overcome the misinterpretations of Origen" (p. 81), intimating that Origen was perhaps not theologically mistaken—as most earlier Christian scholars presumed—but misunderstood by his contemporaries and successors. The word "Byzantine" for Cone obscures the continuity between the earlier Western Roman Empire and the

later Eastern Roman Empire up to the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 CE (pp. 74, 76-77). Barlaam of Calabria's opposition to the Hesychasts was based on his reading of Pseudo-Dionysius rather than his Aristotelianism (pp. 94-95). The doctrine of purgatory was "introduced" by Pope Gregory the Great, rather being a product of the high Middle Ages (pp. 148-49).

The *Filioque* clause is said to be anti-Arian in inspiration (p. 155), which might be true, but represents a Western opinion and not the Eastern view that the creeds simply cannot be rewritten. For a book concerned with theological orthodoxy, the approach to John Scotus Eriugena is remarkably gentle (pp. 158-59), given that Eriugena took a docetic view of the resurrection (Jesus merely appeared to have a human body), asserted universal salvation, and wrote a major work later condemned by Pope Honorius III as "swarming with worms of heretical perversity." On the vexatious issue of the Crusades, Cone seeks a middle way between the conflicting and perhaps irreconcilable Muslim and Christian narratives (p. 169). Regarding Scotus's doctrine of the "univocity of being," Cone judges that this theory caused a "conforming [of] our own understandings of God to our existence" (p. 214)—though medieval specialists debate this. Cone rightly notes that Meister Eckhart was "tried for heresy," while some "modern theologians have defended his work as orthodox" (p. 223).

Rea passes in the blink of an eye over the violent aspects of the Radical Reformation, such as the Peasants' War of 1525, and the Münster Rebellion of 1534 (p. 264), thus illustrating the general tendency in this volume to highlight positive aspects in each tradition and to downplay the negative. There is a Protestant tone in Rea's claim that "although the clergy in England [in the early 1500s] maintained the appearance of influence, they actually contributed little" (p. 268). Numerous Catholics of the past and present would not concur with Rea's assertion that "Martin Luther…has been described by Roman Catholics as the Roman Catholic Church's greatest Reformer" (p. 286). Even the ecumenically minded Catholic scholar Yves Congar, in *True and False Reform* (1950), did not go that far.

In recounting modern missionary history, Rea is to be commended for naming indigenous persons who labored alongside of—and sometimes apart from—Western missionaries. Xu Guangqi is cited as the Chinese Christian leader after Matteo Ricci's death (pp. 321-22; cf. 412-15, 426). It is heartening to see that Rea does not skip over Orthodox Church developments from the 1600s to the 1800s (pp. 341-45). Nor does his Catholic narrative leapfrog (as often happens) from the Council of Trent to Vatican I, but Rea includes substantial material on Catholic developments during this period (pp. 345-54). Likewise, there are later sections on twentieth-century Orthodoxy (pp. 435-40), and Catholicism (pp. 440-45), with Orthodoxy mentioned in the sequence of presentation prior to Catholicism once again.

Though both Cone and Rea teach in an institution affiliated with the Stone-Campbell tradition (and specifically the denomination called the Christian Church), I

could not discern a Stone-Campbell bias in this volume, including the brief paragraph mentioning both Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone (pp. 367-69).

The treatment of early Pentecostal history seems to be unduly centered on the USA (pp. 450-54), and does not reflect the more recent scholarship that challenges the long-prevailing notion that the USA was a privileged place of global diffusion. Allan Anderson's work on global Pentecostalism suggests not an American "Big Bang" in 1901 but something more like an interactive "string of firecrackers" from 1901 to 1910 (and perhaps earlier) at different places around the world, including Wales, India, Korea, Scandinavia, Britain, and Chile. More might have been said about the *massive global expansion* of Pentecostal-Charismatic forms of Christianity since the 1970s. Rea speaks of Pentecostalism's "shocking numbers of adherents" (pp. 470), which sounds pejorative.

Novelist Alice Walker is named and pictured in the text and treated as a Christian womanist theologian (pp. 463-64), although she has elsewhere called herself not a Christian but a "free spirit." "Womanist" for Walker seems not to be a self-designation as Christian. Rea's account of Japan's role in World War II seems unduly negative (pp. 477-79). The Pacific war witnessed horrors on both sides.

Critical Reflections on *A Global Church History*

By way of critique, *A Global Church History* might be said to have the defects of its merits. Its ecumenical and affirmative ethos—in seeking out what is best in each strand of the Christian tradition, and attempting to link this to what is best in all the other strands—succeeds in creating the sort of unitary narrative that will be helpful for students approaching the history of Christianity for the first time. Yet, by the same token, such a unitary narrative will tend to soften or eliminate some the sharp antitheses that are inescapable in interpreting church history.

For example we might ask: Was Constantine the best thing that happened to the ancient church? Orthodox Christians sometimes refer to him as *isoapostolos* or "equal to an apostle." Or was Constantine, as Anabaptists suggest, a disastrous lurch toward the later inquisitions, colonizations, and forced conversions? Opinions diverge. On church leadership, one wonders: Is a church under papal governance—or episcopal governance—comparable to one that is locally gathered and governed? Is there a both/and on this issue, or an either/or? The legacies of the Protestant Reformation continue to be contested, and one might compare Brad Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Harvard University Press, 2012), with Diarmaid MacCulloch's *All Things Made New: The Reformation and Its Legacy* (Oxford University Press, 2016), to see how differently two eminent historians approach the very same question.

A Global Church History begins its first chapter with the analogy of a "giant tree" (p. 3)—representing the normative or orthodox expressions of ancient

Christianity—from which Rea says that the later medieval and modern forms developed. In *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (1934, German; 1971, English trans., Fortress Press), Walter Bauer suggested that ancient "orthodoxy" was not always chronologically prior to "heresy," and that, in many regions, versions of the faith later judged as "heretical" were the original and most ancient manifestations of Christianity. To illustrate Bauer's idea visually, one might picture not a single tree, but multiple saplings, some of which perished (whether by natural death or by being cut down) to leave behind one "giant tree" of orthodox Christianity. Rea's and Cone's volume rests on an anti-Bauer premise, viz., that the earliest manifestations of Christianity can and should be interpreted through the lens of the "great tradition" embodied in the seven ecumenical councils from 325 to 787 CE—each of which councils is discussed in this volume.

"Gnosticism" of the second century, writes Cone, "competed with Christianity" (p. 13), suggesting that the former was not itself part of Christianity, and so that there existed some boundary between gnostic heresy and Christian orthodoxy even at an early stage. If a new edition of this book should appear, it might be helpful for the authors to expand their cursory four-page introduction (xxiv-xxvii) to say something about their underlying assumptions regarding the unity and diversity—and the cohesiveness or fragmentariness—of historical Christianity. If I were to adopt this textbook for instruction (as well I might), I would pair it with some shorter readings of an interpretive and opinionated character to raise critical questions—like those mentioned in the two paragraphs above. In classroom instruction, the neutral-to-positive stance that Rea and Cone adopt should be spiced up with some hard questioning and critical interrogation directed toward individual Christian traditions—and toward all of these traditions taken collectively.

The value of this volume for instructional purposes is enhanced by the concluding chapter summaries, discussion questions, and chapter bibliographies. Another engaging feature is the profusion of illustrations, maps, and charts—coming to more than 400 in total, or almost one image per page over the five narrative chapters. Information at a glance appears in numerous charts--of the Apostolic Fathers (p. 9), of the early Apologists (p. 12), of the phases of Roman persecution (p. 24), of Anabaptist leaders (p. 266), of the succession of English monarchs (p. 282), of the political context of the Council of Trent (p. 301), of nineteenth-century Christian expansion (p. 406), and of the assemblies of the World Council of Churches (p. 467).

The volume is almost entirely free of typographical errors. One date during the reign of King Henry VIII reads "1847" but should be "1547" (p. 274). An image of John Stuart Mill bears a caption that lacks the family name and reads simply "John Stuart" (p. 384). A map of Christianity in Asia has place names printed in Polish (p. 105). A Nestorian image of Jesus is so fragmentary that no figure is visible on the page (p. 121), and the Edict of Nantes is barely legible as shown (p. 307). In a few cases, the typeface used on maps, charts, or reproduced book pages is so

miniscule that even eyes that are much younger than my own might have difficulty in deciphering what is written (pp. 140, 236, 406). The captioned images of Clement of Alexandria and Origen (p. 36) are imaginative renderings by an artist rather than actual likenesses of these ancient figures, and so might be labeled as such for uninformed readers.

Something should be said regarding the illustrations in chapters three through five (Rea's section), in distinction from those in chapters one and two (Cone's section). Illustrations are more engaging for readers if they are *dynamic* in some fashion, i.e., if they show *something happening*—e.g., the image with the caption, "Harold Godwinson swears fealty to William the Conqueror" (p. 162). The images in the first two chapters are often dynamic in this sense, but throughout the last three chapters one finds an inordinate number of posed portraits or headshots of various historical personages. Over time this becomes numbing to the viewer. There is room for improvement in the images in the later chapters, if a second edition should appear.

Rea's and Cone's book will serve superbly as the backbone for a course on the global history of Christianity. Generally, I would regard *A Global Church History* as a seminary or graduate-level textbook, though it could be used for selected advanced undergraduate students. Despite my quibbles over this or that detail, as noted above, the fact is that no one could write a text that covers the entire history of global Christianity without encountering any number of interpretive ambiguities. It is to Cone's and Rea's credit that they have succeeded so notably in capturing both the large picture and the fine detail in the bi-millennial and globe-encompassing story that they tell. May their tribe of readers increase!

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BOOK REVIEWS

Keefer, Arthur Jan. *Proverbs 1-9 As an Introduction to the Book of Proverbs*. Library of Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament Studies 701. New York, NY: T & T Clark, 2020, pp. 224, $115, hardback.

Arthur Jan Keefer is Master of Divinity and Chaplain at Eton College. He earned his PhD at the University of Cambridge. Keefer is scheduled to release *The Book of Proverbs and Virtue Ethics* (Cambridge University Press) in Oct. 2020.

Proverbs 1—9 as an Introduction seeks to articulate the function of Proverbs 1—9, particularly how it functions with Prov 10:1-22:16 (1). The study was inspired by professor J.J. Collins (vii). Keefer divides the book into four chapters: Introduction, Character Types, Educational Goals, and Theological Context. This review will begin with a summary, followed by a critique, with recommendations at the end.

Keefer claims that Prov 1-9 functions as a key or interpretive guide for Prov 10-31 (3). Two elements motivate Keefer's research: (1) the interpretive challenges found in Proverbs 10-29, and (2) the promise made in Prov 1:1-7 that the reader will be able to understand the proverbs and sayings within the remainder of the book (1-2). Keefer finds the proverbs of chapter 10-29 as the interpretive challenge because they are pithy and base themselves off of assumptions (1). His study treats Prov 1-29 as a whole, not as an editorial work with the addition of Prov 1-9 added later (30). Also, he does not want the reader to view the study as diachronic, i.e., Prov 1-9 was written after Prov 10-29, but Keefer doesn't want the reader to view his work strictly synchronically (33). Rather, Keefer wants to show that the interpretation of the book is unidirectional, where Prov 1-9 serves as an introduction to Prov 10-29 (33). Yet, Keefer also chooses to examine the interpretive reciprocity between Prov 1-9 and Prov 10-29 (33). Keefer seeks to demonstrate the predominantly unidirectional interpretation by comparing and contrasting how the two divisions discuss characters, educational goals, and theological contexts.

Keefer uses the characters of Proverbs to establish a connection between two sections of Proverbs. Keefer finds that Prov 1-9 provides an interpretive lens to examine Prov 10-29 (92). With the education goals, Keefer discusses how each section contributes to the main objective of Proverbs, which is to teach (93-94). He concludes that Prov 1-9 operates pedagogically by providing a framework of educational goals and a moral vision of creation for Prov 10-31 (141). Within the chapter on theological context, Keefer shows the didactic function of Prov 1-9 as it concerns the *Lord* and *God* as the Lord's attributes portrayed in Prov 1-9 serve as an interpretive key for proverbs like Prov 22:19 (167). Also, within the chapter, Keefer finds that Prov 1-9 does not serve pedagogically for some of God's attributes, but rather, the book of Proverbs is unified in theological conclusions (182). Keefer finds that the theological

unification further supports his thesis by establishing a baseline continuity within the book (182).

Keefer provides a plausible argument that Prov 1-9 functions as an interpretive guide for Proverbs 10-29. He chooses well thought out representative examples from Proverbs. Each proverb typifies interpretive challenges found elsewhere in Proverbs. So, with only a few examples, Keefer can show that his argument works for multiple proverbs. His choice of text also led to conclusions that at times were surprising. One such surprising conclusion came from his analysis of Prov 16:9. Proverbs 16:9 mentions that man plans his ways, and the Lord directs them. The reader may expect Keefer to conclude that the Lord's will domineers a man's plan, portraying man's plans as worthless. But Keefer finds that through the interpretive lens of Prov 1-9, that man can plan his ways through receiving and using the wisdom of the Lord (159).

Keefer's study of the characters is one of his most convincing arguments. He argues that Prov 1-9 provides a "framework of rhetorical categories" that elaborates upon or provides additional information to interpret Prov 10-29 (90-91). Keefer proposes that Prov 1-9 establishes the core teaching and functions of the characters that elaborate upon or supplement the reader's understanding about the characters of Prov 10-29 (91-92). Also, he suggests that the two sections of Proverbs may function in a coreferential manner that encourages the reader to reflect upon the persona's moral fiber (91). Keefer ties his conclusion on characters well within the remainder of his book, which positively adds to the argument of the book.

Some points of his argument are not as strong as he presents them to be. For example, two points fall short of being definitive in arguing for the importance of the prologue as an interpretive guide. First, Keefer references the prologue of Ben Sira to serve as explanatory prose for Prov 1-9 (11). However, Keefer himself acknowledges a weakness that Ben Sira is "more reminiscent of Greek historical works" (11). Second, Keefer cites a scribal technique known as 'revision by introduction,' which is the process when a scribe supplements a pre-existing text with an explanatory introduction, and it is evident in text through hard (ex. "extant textual witness to attest to variations in the material" or soft evidence (inconsistencies within the final form of a text") (12). Keefer states initially that the scribal technique is plausible, but the phenomenon is only observable, if an actuality, as soft evidence in the OT, yet Keefer states this is enough evidence to create a precedent for considering Prov 1-9 as an introduction (13). He uses Mesopotamian literature to make this point (12). Using these scribal practices along with Ben Sira produces a tension created from unanswered questions of dating and scribal practices that weaken the arguments. In addition, presenting this evidence appears to be in tension with his objective of not viewing Proverbs as an editorial work and requesting the reader to not view the study as diachronic or synchronic (30, 33). However, the entirety of Keefer's argument does not rely on either of these arguments.

Keefer's book will serve both the church and the academy well. Pastors, seminary students, and scholars will find this book helpful in the study of Proverbs, yet, like most books in the Library of Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament Studies series by T & T Clark, the scholar will benefit most. The book can function well in two ways: (1) a study of the unity of Proverbs, (2) a preliminary hermeneutical model for Prov 10-29. Additionally, scholars will find that Keefer's work provides a new foundation for future study. With Keefer only able to study a few representative proverbs, Scholars will need to further advance Keefer's studies in order to determine if the representative examples apply to those proverbs being represented, and they will need to determine if Keefer's model works with proverbs not represented in his study. Yet, Keefer's work advances studies in Proverbs with its plausible arguments for Prov 1-9 as an interpretive guide for Prov 10-29

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Vol I. Alpha-Gamma: Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint. Edited by Eberhard Bons. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020. pp. 990, $405.00

The Historical Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint (HTLS) is a landmark work by Mohr Seibeck. The editors were Eberhard Bons and, until June 2020, by Jan Joosten.[1] The work began as a research project funded by the *Agence Nationale de la Recherche* in 2010. This present volume represents the first fruits of their labor. The present volume is the first of a four-volume series that will cover over 600 words and word groups.

The articles all cover six-sections moving from general Greek usage to Christian writings.

1. Greek literature (from Homer and Hesiod to the Second Sophistic)
2. Papyri and inscriptions (epigraphic evidence, with a focus on documentary texts)
3. Septuagint (as delimited in Rahlf's edition)
4. Jewish literature in Greek (OT Pseudepigrapha, Philo and Josephus)
5. New Testament
6. Early Christian literature (up to the end of the second century C.E.)

1. For an extended introduction to the HTLS, see the editor's article "The 'Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint' (HTLS)", in: E. Bons, R. Hunziker-Rodewald, J. Joosten, Biblical Lexicology: Hebrew and Greek. Semantics – Exegesis – Translation (BZAW 443), New York: De Gruyter, 2015, pp. 357–367.

The aim of the HTLS: studying Septuagint words in their broader ancient context. The purpose of the six sections is to address whether a given word is attested in either one of the six sections. If so, an entry will have a maximum of six sections. However, the HTLS is structured in principle in three parts:

1. Words use in Greek literature
2. Word use in papyri and inscriptions
3. Word use in the Septuagint

The methodology of the HTLS is historical and theological. The lexicon is historical because it follows Greek words and usages in their itinerary through time and to relate diachronic developments in the language to the wider political and cultural issues (XXII). The lexicon is a theological lexicon because many of its head-words participate in theological discourse (XXII). However, the HTLS differs from the previous dictionaries of Muraoka and Lust/ Eynikel/Hauspie by focusing on words that exhibit a specific usage and in setting Septuagint usage in a broad language-historical context. The HTLS differs from theological dictionaries in its restrictions to words that are attested in the Septuagint and bracketing out theological judgements in the lexical analysis.

The prolegomena provides a brief history of Septuagint studies by covering four key areas: Greek background, the workshop of the translator, Reception of the Septuagint's Vocabulary in biblical and para-biblical writing, and the need for a new research tool, and Methodological Issues in studying the Septuagint. The method of the HTLS is the center piece of this review for its method will determine the success of the remaining three volumes. The criteria by which HTLS selects words or word groups does not exist, but they suggest six methodological suggestions.

1. Which Septuagint words are given a new, specific meaning that they did not have in Classical or Hellenistic Greek?
2. Which words that attested for the first time in the Septuagint, regardless of whether they are neologisms?
3. Does the Septuagint introduce technical terms into administrate, legal, or religious contexts which become common in later Jewish or Christina texts, whereas they do not have this specific meaning in so-called pagan texts?
4. Can the specific Septuagint meaning of a word be better explained in an Egyptian Hellenistic context?
5. Does the LXX employ words in new or specific contexts in such a manner that the word is connected to a particular event or reality?

6. Does the Septuagint employ philosophical and anthropological terms that have no direct equivalent in the Hebrew Bible but occur in the translated books?

The HTLS is a resource that advances the field of Septuagint studies as it builds upon the previous advances in the field. Previously, scholars were bound to isolated studies in each book since the vocabulary is a great obstacle in ascertaining the special religious vocabulary of the Greek Bible. The interpretation of the Greek Bible still depends on a correct understanding of the words it uses. The HTLS does not remove all barriers to the vocabulary to the Septuagint, but it removes a large portion of that barrier. The lexicon serves as a great reference for the Septuagint for future generations, and its list of ancient sources and frequently cited works serves as a launching point for any scholar who wishes to further their Septuagint studies. The layout of the individual entries is clean and organized. In addition, the publisher made the binding and cover with a high quality. My only critique is that I have not heard whether Mohr Siebeck will release a digital version with Logos or Accordance.

The HTLS is a great resource for biblical scholars for both the Old Testament and New Testament. Also, the resource will serve anyone who wishes to study Judaism in antiquity. Moreover, scholars of Greek literature who are willing to look beyond the limits of classical literary canons will find that the HTLS opens up new perspectives in linguistic and philological. Ferdinand Hitzig famously urged, "Sell all you have and buy a Septuagint!" If you desire to study the Septuagint, then I encourage you to do what you must to acquire the Historical Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint.

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Futato, Sr., Mark D. *Basics of Hebrew Accents*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2020, pp. 112, $17, paperback.

Mark D. Futato, Sr. earned a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary and a Master of Arts and the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Semitic Languages and Literature from The Catholic University of America. He serves as the Robert L. Maclellan Professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida, and the founding host and teacher for the Daily Dose of Hebrew website. He has authored numerous journal articles and books, including *Beginning Biblical Hebrew* and the Psalms volume in the Cornerstone Biblical Commentary series.

Modern editions of the Hebrew Bible reproduce a system of vocalization and accentuation developed and preserved in Tiberias by medieval Jewish scribes known as the Masoretes. While many pupils study the vowels when learning Hebrew, fewer grasp the mechanics and benefits of the Hebrew accents. Mark Futato's *Basics of Hebrew Accents* aims to correct this deficiency. In five chapters, *Basics of Hebrew*

Accents introduces the Tiberian Hebrew accent system's symbols, functions, and practicality.

Chapter one introduces the symbols and names of the Masoretic accents. Futato surveys three roles for the accents. The accents indicate syllable stress, suggest the sense of the text, and guide the chanting of the text. Indicating syllable stress aids with proper pronunciation. Accents separate and join words to create phrases and clauses and form syntactical constructions. For the chanting of the text, the accents serve as cantillation marks. This function relates to the practice of the public singing of the Hebrew Bible, usually in Jewish synagogues. Before turning to a detailed study of the accents, Futato isolates the *soph pasuq*, *maqqeph*, and *paseq* symbols. Though these symbols relate to the accents, they do not perform all three roles of stress, sense, and singing. *Soph pasuq* ends a verse, *maqqeph* joins words, and *paseq* always appears with a conjunctive accent and "indicates the need for a slight pause" (pp. 28-29).

Although the accents guide readers in pronunciation, interpretation, and cantillation, Futato's book primarily investigates the second role of suggesting the sense of the text. In chapters two through five, Futato demonstrates how the accents help one understand the meaning of the Hebrew Bible. Chapters two through four cover the accents of the "twenty-one" books. This system pertains to every book except Job, Proverbs, and Psalms. Chapter two explains the four groups of disjunctive accents. These accents separate words and constitute a four-level hierarchical system where the strongest accents, *silluq* and *atnakh*, govern portions of a verse with weaker disjunctives. Chapter three treats the conjunctive accents, which join or group words together. The discussion of exegesis in chapter four demonstrates the practicality of accents for interpretation with examples from Genesis and Deuteronomy. Futato highlights Isaiah 40:3a, Numbers 13:33a, and Proverbs 31:1 as examples of apparently incorrect accentuation by the Masoretes.

Chapter five briefly tours Psalm 29 to demonstrate the modified system of "the three books" of Job, Proverbs, and Psalms. These "poetic accents" present a three-level hierarchy and encompass fewer symbols than the "twenty-one" books but also includes unique accents. *Ole weyored*, unique to "the three," provides the strongest separation for longer verses, while *atnakh* continues to divide shorter ones. These major breaks tend to correspond with poetic lines and Hebrew parallelism (p. 94).

Appendix one overviews Israel Yeivin's system for explaining the Masoretic division of simple phrases and short verses. Appendix two discusses helps for further study. Futato's bibliography lists twenty-two resources, including grammars and specialized treatments of the accents. The book ends with a Scripture index of passages cited.

Basics of Hebrew Accents has several strengths. First, the author presents his material clearly. Unfamiliarity with the accents hinders a student from more advanced studies (p. 13). To overcome this obstacle, Futato previews, explains, and

recaps his teaching. He writes simply and directly. Charts, symbols, and examples from the biblical text fortify the author's clarity.

Second, Futato builds on and recommends prior Masoretic scholarship from the late 19th century to the present. He frequently references Yeivin's standard, comprehensive introduction to the accents (1980) as well as Price's syntax of the accents (1990) and five-volume concordance (1996). Futato also shares insights from classic works by Wickes (1881) and Davis (1900). He recommends the chapter on the accents in Fuller and Choi, *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (2017). He links to recent online articles by Barrick (2007) and Robinson and Levy (2002). *Basics of Hebrew Accents* simplifies and summarizes the work of earlier authors while also laying the groundwork for digging deeper.

Third, Futato equips readers with practical tools for analyzing the accents. *Basics of Hebrew Accents* suggests manually structuring the biblical text with a word-processing computer program by indicating breaks after disjunctive accents, printing the results, and then labeling them by hand (pp. 53-55). The book demonstrates the value of sister tools in Logos Bible Software, showing how cantillation analysis graph and documentation tools in Logos can represent the relationship between the accents (p. 53). The Logos version of *Basics of Hebrew Accents* enhances the practicality of the book for students and scholars. Hyperlinks will open online PDFs in a web browser. Relevant results from the book appear in searches across one's Logos library. Right clicking a word opens other treatments from one's Logos resources. Hovering the cursor over a Scripture reference yields an instant preview of the passage.

Fourth, Futato highlights the difference the accents make in English translations. For example, the NIV's translation of Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth" effectively portrays the conjunctive accent joining פְּר֥וּ (p^{e}rû) to וּרְב֛וּ (ûr^{e}ḇû) with "Be fruitful and multiply," while the semicolon represents the disjunction between וּרְב֛וּ (ûr^{e}ḇû) and the final clause of the verse, וּמִלְא֥וּ אֶת־הָאָ֖רֶץ (ûmilʾû ʾeṯ-hā̄āreṣ), "fill the earth" (p. 48).

If the book has a weakness, it is a lack of practice exercises. However, the second appendix points the way to such work, and the clear examples throughout the book suffice to demonstrate the author's points. Provided that students continue interacting with the accents, I concur with his own assessment: "Some readers of this book will not go beyond the knowledge they have attained from this study. If they do not, I contend that they will be better interpreters of their Hebrew Bible through the modicum of knowledge they have gained" (p. 105).

Basics of Hebrew Accents is an excellent book for beginning or reviewing the Hebrew accents. Older works by Wickes and recent works by Yeivin and Price may be daunting to students with little knowledge of the accents. *The Fundamentals of Hebrew Accents* by Sung Jin Park is a new textbook with exercises but written for intermediate students. Futato's book fills the need for a simple on-ramp to the accents. It can equip students with a practical level of competency or serve as the gateway for

more detailed study. The book would be useful alongside a grammar for any level of biblical Hebrew. The professor or student may wish to create additional exercises to apply Futato's toolkit to verses and sections of the Hebrew Bible, marking major accents and noting disjunction, conjunction, and exegetical significance. I hope Futato's *Basics of Hebrew Accents* is adopted widely by professors and read and studied by those who have not yet experienced the help and joy of reading with the Masoretic accents.

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McConville, J. Gordon. *Being Human in God's World: An Old Testament Theology of Humanity.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016, pp. 228, $10.00, paperback.

J. Gordon McConville is a veteran Old Testament scholar who works as a professor of Old Testament theology at the University of Gloucestershire. His numerous books, articles, and commentaries in Old Testament exegesis and theology make him an ideal candidate for writing an Old Testament theology of humanity.

Being Human in God's World is not a systematic theological investigation of anthropology but rather a biblical theology and spirituality (p. 5). That is, in considering the Old Testament's perspective on humanity, the reader is challenged to be transformed by it. McConville writes as a Christian and believes the Old Testament's perspective on humanity can help Christians better understand Christ's humanity (p. 3).

Chapter one discusses humanity's creation in the *imago Dei*. McConville states that the *imago Dei* "tends to open up questions about God and the human being rather than close them down at the outset (p. 29). He argues the *imago Dei* refers primarily to the interaction between humans and fellow humans (e.g., relationality), humanity, and creation (e.g., representing God's presence), and humanity and God (e.g., subservient rule). The driving question of the book is Psalm 8:4 [5], "What is the human being, that you should pay attention to them?"

Chapter two analyzes the relationship of the *imago Dei* in Genesis 1 to the narrative of Genesis 2-3. Here McConville sees both the tragedy of humanity's grasping at a false godlikeness but also the continued possibility of human potential as *imago Dei* in a fallen world. Chapter three discusses Old Testament terms (e.g., heart, mind, soul, etc.) commonly used to describe humanity. Chapter four discusses various modern cultural conceptions of the self and their relation to the biblical depiction.

Chapter five examines the Old Testament's use of types and metaphors (e.g., marriage, sonship) to describe humanity's relationship with God. Chapter six analyzes the importance of place and memory as an inseparable part of human

identity, especially for Israel. Chapter seven discusses the political realities inevitably created by human interactions. Chapter eight examines humanity as male and female, including the possibility of sinful exploitation. Chapter nine examines work and creativity as a natural outflow of being made in God's image. Chapter ten concludes the book with an examination of the Psalms and worship as an essential part of the *imago Dei*.

Readers of McConville's work will appreciate his textual focus. McConville masterfully integrates the perspective of the Torah, Prophets, Historical Books, and Wisdom literature, with perhaps a weighted focus on Deuteronomy. In addition to many helpful exegetical insights, McConville gives careful attention to the rhetorical or transformative aims of the text. For instance, the aim of Deuteronomy is not simply to recapitulate the law, but to shape the identity of God's people for generations. The Old Testament, especially Deuteronomy, challenges Israel to remember the gifts of covenant and land, and to cultivate a culture where the blessings of both can be appreciated, shared, and perpetuated (pp. 105-117).

The underlying argument of the book is that the embodied, situated, and lived reality of the *imago Dei* in a fallen world leads to incredible possibility but also tragic limitation. In the area of politics, male and female relationships, and work and creativity, there is ample Old Testament evidence of both flourishing and suffering. David is both a man after God's own heart yet an abuser of power (pp. 137-146). Men and women can commit to one another in joyful faithfulness, yet they can also live in fear of exploitation or abandonment (pp. 152-159). Work and creativity reflect God's beauty, but the Wisdom literature in particular tempers unhealthy optimism in human potential (pp. 174-175). McConville's treatment of the Wisdom perspective is very helpful as Wisdom is often overlooked in discussions of biblical anthropology.

McConville's chapter on place and memory is a gem of the book. Human experience, McConville argues, is necessarily rooted in a physical location and a particular moment. Human flourishing requires an awareness and appreciation of God's gift of place. McConville describes aspects of "placedness" (p. 101) as worship, food, and memory. Israel, including the poor and aliens, partake of the food of the land in the act of worship to God. Israel's feasts, assemblies, and institutions are all part of its "performative memory" (p. 116), whereby the identity of Israel as God's people is reinforced and reaffirmed. In this chapter, McConville convincingly demonstrates how Old Testament anthropology cannot be separated from the world God created humans to inhabit.

In addition to the book's textual focus, McConville brings the Old Testament in conversation with a variety of voices including ancient Greeks, Shakespeare, and modern literary and artistic trends. In citing broadly, McConville demonstrates the kind of lively human engagement he believes the Old Testament propounds.

A few weaknesses and oddities are also present. For instance, the final chapter on the Psalms presents a powerful argument for the centrality of worship in human

life, but it is noticeably shorter than the other chapters. Its length gives it the feel of a late add-on to the work rather than a conclusion. Curiously, McConville at the outset, mentions the potential of Old Testament anthropology in helping Christians better understand the humanity of Christ but does not return to this subject later in the book. A subsequent revision might find a discussion of Christ's humanity a more fitting conclusion.

Overall, the book is a helpful entry point to Old Testament anthropology from a biblical-theological perspective. Its length makes it very accessible, and the topics McConville chooses to explore are relevant to discussions beyond the realm of Old Testament theology. This work finds its highest value in that it challenges the reader to consider the theology of humanity as a lived reality. Indeed, McConville shows how the Old Testament continues to transform readers as they consider life's possibilities as image bearers in a broken, yet beautiful world.

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Imes, Carmen Joy. *Bearing God's Name: Why Sinai Still Matters*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2019, xiii+225, $14.95, paperback.

Carmen Imes is Associate Professor of Old Testament at Prairie College in Three Hills, Alberta, Canada. She completed her PhD in Biblical Theology (Old Testament concentration) under the direction of Daniel I. Block. Imes has authored *Illustrated Exodus in Hebrew* (GlossaHouse, 2018), *Bearing YHWH's Name at Sinai* (Penn State University Press, 2019) and has contributed essays for *Discovering the Septuagint* (Kregel, 2016), *Dress and Clothing in the Hebrew Bible* (T & T Clark, 2019), and *Write that They may Read* (Wipf & Stock, 2020).

Contrary to what many readers might imply from the subtitle of the book, Imes' primary concern is not to enter into the fray by offering an opinion on the role of Mosaic Law in the life of the believer today, but rather her focus is on providing a reinterpretation of and then practical implications for the "Name Command": "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain…" (Exod. 20:7 ESV). She claims that reinterpretation is necessary due to the fact that the rendering of the original negative command (lö´ tiSSä´) does not do justice to the primary meaning of the verb, that is, "to lift, bear or carry." Once this is explained and defended (pp. ٥٢-٤٨), the rest of the book deals with the practical implications of this command for Israel and for any saint who is called by YHWH's Name. She also demonstrates how Jesus modeled perfect compliance with this command during his earthly ministry (pp. ٤٩-١٣٦). So, while Imes does not endorse a strict adherence to the Mosaic Law or to a reinterpretation/reapplication of the Law (in its entirety or in part), she convincingly argues that Sinai still matters.

In the brief introduction Imes addresses the skeptic who may not accept her assertion that the "differences [between ancient Israel and the contemporary believer] cannot erase the fundamental connection between their ancient story and [our] own" (p. 2). Advocating a re-engagement with the metanarrative of the Old Testament, she directs her attention specifically to an investigation of the Sinai narrative (Exodus 19 – Numbers 10). Acknowledging that many in the Church today are ambivalent towards or have rejected the relevance of the Old Testament, in the remainder of the introduction Imes addresses the misperception of the dichotomy between Law and Grace and invites the contemporary church to follow the example of the early church (pp. 2-5).

The book is divided into two equal parts: Becoming the People who Bear God's Name (chapters 1-5) and Living as the People who Bear God's Name (chapters 6-10). The first chapter offers insightful literary analysis of the Sinai narrative that draws out YHWH's gracious purposes for renewing the Abrahamic Covenant with Israel and prepares the Israelites for a relationship built on trust by replacing their Egyptian slavery identity with an identity as the people of YHWH. Chapters 2-5 analyze the preparation for entering into the covenant, the structure of the covenant, the ratification and maintenance of the covenant, and the resources/accoutrements of the covenant, respectively. Given the title of part 2, chapter 6 ironically traces the history of Israel from Numbers 11 through the Exile which is largely the testimony of people who failed to bear God's name in a worthy manner. However, Imes does point to events and people that offered glimpses into what it meant to bear the name of God rightly. Chapter 7 highlights the prophetic hope of a righteous remnant that would enter into a renewed covenant. In chapter 8 Imes appeals in large measure to Matthew's witness to Jesus as the embodiment of the True Israel who in actuality bore the name of YHWH, viz., YHWH Saves (Jesus being the Hellenized rendering of the Hebrew Joshua). Chapters 9 and 10 speak of the missional impact of bearing the name of YHWH for the early church, including the Gentiles who are now included in the covenant community of YHWH.

Bearing God's Name is an eminently readable distillation of her doctoral thesis in which her reinterpretation of the "Name Command" is justified by her careful exegesis and observations from the context of the ancient Near East. While evidence of that scholarship is still perceptible (specifically in well-placed insets that help the contemporary reader overcome the "foreignness" of the Old Testament setting), her primary concern is to help the church in general understand the ongoing relevance of the second of the Ten Words/Ten Commandments. The prohibition against *bearing* the name of YHWH in vain is much more significant than the traditional understanding of the prohibition to avoid speaking/swearing/cursing while *using* the Name. Moreover, as this book makes manifest, the consequences of keeping or violating this command becomes an integral part of the narrative that runs from Sinai through the End of the Age. Imes' line of reasoning is interspersed throughout

with practical implications as to why Sinai still matters for the church. Chief among her concerns in this vein are the ethical and missional ramifications of bearing God's name rightly, as she asserts, "The fact that God has revealed to us what pleases him is one of the most gracious gifts–it's an invitation to know him, to become like him, and therefore to be part of his mission" (183).

Integral to her insistence that Sinai still matters is the claim that the New Covenant stands in continuity with the Old Covenant which was initiated with Abram (Genesis 15) and ratified by Israel at Sinai (Exodus 24) and renewed on the Plains of Moab (Deuteronomy, with the ratification ceremony expressed in 26:17-19) (61-64). Imes notes that Deuteronomy has elements that correspond to Hittite suzerain-vassal treaties that were employed during approximately the same time period as Moses preached Deuteronomy (following the identifications used by Kenneth Kitchen and Meredith Kline). While I agree with the basic sentiment that Deuteronomy's *constituents* have parallels to those in the Hittite treaties, I have argued that not only Deuteronomy's constituents but also its *structure* actually follow the basic organizational structure of those treaties (cf. Steven W. Guest, "Deuteronomy 26:16-19 as the Central Focus of the Covenantal Framework of Deuteronomy," PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009).

Imes correctly maintains that the "Renewed Covenant" stands in continuity with the Old Covenant, that is, the New Covenant is not God's "Plan B" (pp. 127-31). She states that New Testament church sees itself "in continuity with the Old Testament people of God" (5). And near the end of the book she observes, "The New Testament does not detach itself from this story [that began at Sinai]" (187). Rather, she affirms, "Future generations may be included in the covenant simply by embracing it with faith and responding to it with obedience" (108).

There is just one more nuance that I would like to discuss in relation to this last excerpt, which ties back in to my initial paragraph of this review. That is, with respect to the book's subtitle, one might expect some discussion as to how the Mosaic Law should inform the believer's practice. As noted, this is largely absent, and the general tenor of this book would lead one to understand that Sinai is more concerned with *becoming* a people who bear God's name well rather than *keeping* a list of rules and regulations meticulously. But there are occasional "mixed messages" that one might detect. For instance, on the final page of the book Imes writes, "Jesus shows up to model for us how to bear Yahweh's name by obeying perfectly the law given at Sinai" (187). This statement, along with the final excerpt in the previous paragraph, seems to place a premium on obedience. The question remains: "Obedience to *what*?"

Imes' book has much to commend for its intended audience of lay people, students and church leaders. This is especially true for those who might be struggling with the question of how the Old Testament should inform the ethics and mission of the church. This book offers a corrective to those who hold that there is a discontinuity between the Old Testament people of God and the Church Universal. It also addresses the

mistaken perspective that there was a fatal breach in the Old Covenant that required a radical break (that is, a different kind of covenant). Moreover, Imes echoes her doctoral mentor's favorite theme that Law is infused with and is an expression of the Law-giver's abounding grace which is a welcome contrast to the disposition towards the Law that is promulgated by many in the contemporary church.

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Long, Gary A., *Grammatical Concepts 101 for Biblical Hebrew* (2nd Edition). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013, pp. 213, Available in paperback.

Gary A. Long (PhD) is professor of biblical and theological studies at Bethel University and the author of *Grammatical Concepts 101 for Biblical Greek*.

Long provides an explanation of the strategy of the book by writing: "Designed to complement standard teaching grammars, this book assists the entry-level Biblical Hebrew student in learning basic grammatical concepts no single *teaching* grammar treats adequately and no *reference* grammar explains plainly enough for many beginning students (p. xvii). The book is not designed to be read through at one time but rather fills the need for a simple reference to Hebrew grammar with many cross-references to major works on Biblical Hebrew.

He divides the book into three parts. Part 1: Foundations reviews the basics of language with an emphasis on building a bridge between English grammar and Hebrew grammar. The chapter may be overwhelming to the beginner as the explanation of linguistic hierarchies is complicated due to the complexities of the discussion. Part 2: Building Blocks develops grammatical concepts that are common to most all languages. Some of the building blocks are gender, number, article, conjunctions, nouns, adjectives, adverbs, participles, infinitives, and mood. Part 3: The Clause and Beyond cannot be comprehended without a thorough knowledge of chapter 2. The semantics of clauses, sentences and paragraphs are dependent on the understanding of the basic building blocks of language. A significant advantage of these discussions is the relating of English grammar to Hebrew. It is widely known that most English students do not understand English grammar so as to have a foundation for further language study. Long does an excellent work of simplifying, as much as possible, a solid understanding of grammatical concepts. Throughout the book, he provides valuable cross-references to standard works on Biblical Hebrew. The many examples that are provided are invaluable to the beginning student.

Although the book includes "Concepts 101" in the title, the book covers information that is useful to any student of Hebrew. It goes far beyond introductory matters. This second edition is expanded and updated with accessible information. Long states: "I have written the book for a learner (I suggest life-long learner)

who has had little or no formal study of grammar. The language, therefore, strives for simplicity wherever possible. Some will find the language at times overly simplistic." (p. xvii)

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Moon, Joshua N. *Hosea. Apollos Old Testament Commentary, 21.* London, England: IVP Academic. 2018, pp. 253.

Joshua N. Moon (PhD) is Fellows Tutor at Anselm House, on the campus of the University of Minnesota, St Paul.

Joshua Moon's commentary on Hosea is another excellent addition to the Apollos Old Testament Commentary Series. He "sets the prophecies of Hosea in the context of the eighth century BC. The concern of his commentary is the importance of reading Hosea as Christian Scripture, in which we are meant to hear God's own voice as he calls his people to himself. Moon demonstrates the continuing importance of hearing God's words through Hosea, situating the reading of each section within the larger biblical and theological concerns." (Cover statement)

The commentary is divided into two major sections: 1. Introduction and 2. Text and Commentary. The Introduction deals with the historical backdrop; Hosea among the prophets; and development, text, and structure of Hosea. There is one excursus on Hosea 6:2 and the resurrection of Jesus. The indices of bibliography, scripture references, authors and subjects are extensive and beneficial.

The Text and Commentary chapters are divided into five sections: 1. Translation, 2. Notes of the Text, 3. Form and Structure, 4. Comment and 5. Explanation. Moon's translation is clear, fluid and primarily based on the Masoretic tradition. The Translation incorporates his detailed analysis of many manuscripts and translations. The Notes of the text are practical and persuasive. This section of the commentary will be challenging to those who do not fully understand the intricacies of textual criticism. Form and structure are interesting but seem forced at times when there does not seem to be an obvious structure. I found it challenging at times to distinguish differences between the two sections of Comment and Explanation. The comment section seems to be more exegetical or expository, while the explanation section is more homiletical and applicational. The comment section references many biblical, theological or New Testament themes that I would prefer to be left in another section like "Biblical and Theological Tangents." The explanation section provides more information about historical and cultural customs or norms. An excellent example is Moon's discussion on the identity Gomer, the wife of Hosea (pp. 36-44).

All students of the Bible will find value in this commentary, but not necessarily equally in all five sections. The most noteworthy sections to most readers will probably be Comment and Explanation.

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Schnabel, Eckhard J. *Jesus in Jerusalem: The Last Days*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018, pp. xxiv + 680, $60.00, hardcover.

In *Jesus in Jerusalem*, Eckhard Schnabel, Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, analyzes the historical events of the last week of Jesus' life leading up to his death, burial, and resurrection. In five total chapters, he analyzes these events by exhaustively surveying what we know about the seventy-two people in the Gospel accounts (Chapter 1), the sixteen places mentioned in or around Jerusalem in those accounts (Chapter 2), the timeline for each of the events (Chapter 3), and, beginning with the anointing at Bethany, the twenty-four events that appear in one or more Gospel account (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 summarizes five theological conclusions from the study: Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus and the temple, Jesus' death, Jesus' resurrection, and Jesus' mission and that of his followers. Of the five chapters, it is natural that Chapter 4 is by far the longest (over two hundred pages).

It may prove helpful to provide a sample of Schnabel's decisions on the major issues in Gospels scholarship. Schnabel contends that the Last Supper was a Passover meal, and that the chronological discrepancy between the Synoptic Gospels and John is most plausibly explained by suggesting that the Passover "was celebrated on two subsequent days, with both days deemed to be Nisan 14 by the celebrants" (p. 147). Also, on the evidence from the beginning of Tiberius' reign (AD 13; cf. Luke 3:1), the forty-six-year-long reconstruction effort of Herod's temple (beginning in 20/19 BC; cf. John 2:20), and the likelihood that Jesus' public ministry lasted three years, Schnabel suggests Jesus died in AD 30 (p. 140). Finally, Schnabel suggests that Jesus' prophetic action in the temple did not critique the temple or the sacrifices per se but symbolically predicted its destruction due to the salvation-historical reality of the messianic age dawning (pp. 159–65).

The strengths of the book lie in its format and historical method. The format is encyclopedic; the reader can easily find the person, place, or event of interest, for each is presented either chronologically or in the order of their appearance in the narratives. For instance, if the reader wants to know more about the high priest's servant Malchus, they could easily locate the relevant information; Malchus is listed as Person #54 at the outset of Chapter 1, and the full description appears in the proper place later in the chapter (pp. 82–83). The format can be minorly repetitive; for instance, we are told four times (corresponding to the number of named disciples in the conversation) which of the disciples wanted to know when the temple would be destroyed (pp. 19–22).

The format of the book also includes tables, figures, and excurses. Included in the tables is a suggested chronology of the events of Jesus' last week in Jerusalem (pp. 150–51). Schnabel's reconstruction of the events on Easter Sunday morning is outstanding. He lists the events by chronological groupings and portrays three scenarios via three tables—one of which is mapped out—for the possible geographical movements of Jesus' disciples that morning (pp. 354–59). Also helpful is the drawing of Jerusalem in AD 30, replete with the names of specific places and structures in and around the city (p. 106). Finally, readers will find helpful the thirteen excurses throughout the book that explore in more detail relevant historical information, such as the historicity of Annas' interrogation of Jesus, what constituted a crime against the emperor, and Pilate's custom of freeing a prisoner at Passover in light of Roman legal precedent.

Schnabel's historical method is exemplary. He contends at the outset that "historical Jesus" scholarship should take seriously the Gospel narratives, for they are "the only accounts that provide us with sustained information about Jesus" (p. 7). Following the lead of Richard Bauckham and others, Schnabel treats the Gospel accounts as based on eyewitness testimony. He thus assumes that the accounts are historically reliable and, despite apparent discrepancies, should be harmonized if possible.

Schnabel also rigorously analyzes the events of Jesus' last week in Jerusalem in light of Jewish and Greco-Roman history and culture. As evidenced by the book's copious endnotes—they comprise almost two hundred pages, with Chapter 4 alone including 1,182 endnotes(!)—Schnabel leaves no historical stone unturned. For instance, he concludes that, apart from violations of the temple, the Sanhedrin did not have jurisdiction in capital cases in Roman Judea, that Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin was not illegal on account of its "consultative function," and that Jesus was plausibly tried and condemned by the Sanhedrin as a *mesit* and *maddiakh*—someone who teaches heresy and turns Israel away from God (pp. 242–49).

The book's rigorous historical focus is its strength and, potentially, its weakness. Gospels scholarship can tend to produce literary "readings" of Gospel narratives that are historically implausible. Schnabel counteracts this trend by reminding us that the Gospel narratives are rooted in history. At the same time, the book can potentially mute the literary-theological aims of the Evangelists. Two examples will suffice. In John 19:14, Jesus is said to be crucified at the twelfth hour (12pm), whereas Mark 15:25 says he was crucified at the ninth hour (9am). The traditional explanation of this discrepancy, which Schnabel supports, is that both are round numbers in the Jewish reckoning of time and therefore are both accurate—Jesus was crucified mid- to late-morning. Historically, this is a compelling explanation, but might there also be a literary-theological explanation? Here various interpretations could and have been proffered (e.g., Jesus was crucified when the Passover lambs were sacrificed), but the point is that the Evangelists can recount the narrative in a historically accurate

way while at the same time making theological claims. To use another example, when Jesus says "I thirst" on the cross (John 19:28), Schnabel makes the point that by this time Jesus would have been severely dehydrated, which explains his request. This is surely correct historically. But then Schnabel warns that "Jesus' thirst should not be trivialized by symbolic interpretations" (559n985), such as connecting Jesus' request to his earlier Johannine teachings about his being the source of living water and eternal life. While Schnabel is surely right to be cautious against historically implausible readings, it should be noted that historical and literary-theological analysis of the Gospel narratives are not at odds; both are necessary for interpreting rightly their significance.

Jesus in Jerusalem will be especially helpful for church leaders. Given the prominence of the passion narratives for the Christian faith and in the Christian tradition, Schnabel's work will help church leaders and their congregants grasp the historical features of the narratives in order to discern more fully the significance of the death and resurrection of Christ.

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Stuhlmacher, Peter. *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*. Translated and edited by Daniel P. Bailey. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018, pp. xxxiv + 935, $95.00, hardcover.

The magnum opus of Peter Stuhlmacher, professor emeritus of New Testament studies at the University of Tübingen, has at long last been made available to the English-speaking world through the translation efforts of Daniel Bailey in collaboration with Jostein Ådna. A two-volume work initially published in German and passing through multiple editions (*Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*), *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* [*BTNT*]—now appearing in one volume—introduces the English-speaking world to the state of biblical and New Testament theology in German scholarship. The introductory bibliography and survey of New Testament theologies in Chapter 1 go a long way to this effect.

BTNT is divided in two "books": Book 1, spanning some 750 pages, examines the message of the New Testament in six parts according to the chronology of its "proclamation"; and Book 2, less than 100 pages, examines questions regarding the formation of the biblical canon and how a text should be interpreted in light of its inclusion within the canon ("canonical exegesis"). In honor of Stuhlmacher's seminal essay on the subject, Daniel Bailey concludes the book with a lengthy appendix on why *hilastērion* in Romans 3:25 should be translated as "mercy seat" or "place of atonement" instead of "atoning sacrifice" or "propitiation."

According to Stuhlmacher, the best approach to biblical theology considers the tradition-historical character of its message, and therefore Book 1 unfolds according

to the chronological proclamation of the New Testament message. Parts 1 and 2 thus do not focus on the message of the Evangelists per se but on the kerygma of the historical Jesus, the oral tradition, and the earliest confessions of the church. Following the lead of Birger Gerhardsson, Rainer Riesner, and others, Stuhlmacher finds in the Gospels historically reliable eyewitness testimony such that "*[t]he earthly Jesus was none other than the Christ of faith*" (180, italics original). He considers the kerygma in Acts 10:36–43 to have pre-Easter origins and contains one of the earliest summaries of the Christian confession

In Part 3, Stuhlmacher examines the "proclamation" of Paul. The origin for Paul's gospel was his experience on the Damascus road, which gave rise to an emphasis on Jesus' atonement for sinners and the justification of the ungodly. Stuhlmacher contends that for Paul justification, which is understood to be both forensic and transformative, was not a subsidiary or polemical doctrine but was the center of his theology.

In Part 4, Stuhlmacher examines "the proclamation in the period after Paul." Stuhlmacher considers five of the Pauline letters to be pseudonymous (Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastorals), although he claims the ecclesiology and eschatology in these later letters are remarkably similar to what appears in the genuine Pauline letters. The other texts included here are Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude. Stuhlmacher claims James "massively contradicts the Pauline doctrine of justification" (506) and thus cannot be placed "on equal footing in the canon next to the Pauline doctrinal letters" (504). Stuhlmacher portrays early Christianity as comprised of various schools (e.g., Pauline, "Jewish Christianity," Johannine, etc.), and 1 Peter appears as the theological "golden mean" between them (519). Building on Jude, 2 Peter reflects a later period of the church (end of the first / beginning of the second century AD), in which it was necessary to combat heresy by a right reading of Scripture.

Because Part 1 already examined Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God, Part 5's examination of the Synoptic Gospels is relatively brief, focusing on their distinctive contributions to themes such as Christology, ecclesiology, and ethics. The Johannine corpus is examined in Part 6, a corpus Stuhlmacher ascribes to the school associated with the so-called John the Elder. Even though Johannine theology is "pathbreaking," "esoteric," and "elitist" (703), it shares a common theological foundation with the rest of the New Testament.

Because of the length of the book and the limited space in this review, only a few theological strengths of the book can be mentioned. Time and again Stuhlmacher raises good questions from the text and offers keen insights into its meaning. His emphasis on the justification of the ungodly as the soteriological center of the New Testament is salutary, especially in light of attempts to view justification as a subsidiary or polemical doctrine. The attempt to locate the center of Scripture in

God's reconciliation of humanity to himself through the atoning work of Christ fits the biblical data (1 Corinthians 15:3).

One of the strengths of *BTNT*, which is also its distinctive contribution to New Testament theology, is its tradition-historical approach combined with a focus on canonical exegesis. While there is not one "right way" to write a biblical theology, a focus on the historical process by which the early Christian message took shape allows the individual voices to be heard and brings into clearer focus the contours of that message. To the extent that theology is grounded in history, a focus on history aptly prepares the way for theology. The corresponding weakness of the tradition-historical approach for biblical theology is that an overemphasis on tradition history in an attempt to "get behind the text" can actually underemphasize the text itself and can lead to unwarranted and speculative historical judgments (e.g, regarding the substitutionary view of Jesus' death for sin, Stuhlmacher idiosyncratically claims, "No one had dared to think this before Paul" [333]). Except for the occasional lapse (see 216–18, 680–82), *BTNT* admirably utilizes tradition history to elucidate the biblical text.

From a methodological standpoint, Stuhlmacher's approach to Scripture raises the question as to how one's doctrine of Scripture impacts the task of biblical theology. Stuhlmacher holds to the inspiration of Scripture, but not its *verbal* inspiration (797). He thus questions the accuracy of historical details (e.g., Luke's numbers in Acts [228]) and claims to authorship (e.g., 2 Peter is a "classic pseudepigraphon" [544]). He disputes various theological claims: Paul disagreed with the apostolic decree of Acts 15 (421); the author of 1 Timothy made "obviously mistaken developments" regarding women in ministry (472); James misunderstands and contradicts Paul's teaching on justification (504); the impossibility of repentance for the lapsed in the exhortations of Hebrews should be rejected because it contradicts other biblical teaching (540); John's Gospel presents "an actual opposing view of the Synoptics," such that the testimonies in John "are selected, composed, and infused with theology in such a way that new facts and realities are thereby postulated" (692; cf. 735–36). Despite his aversions to the contrary (784–85), Stuhlmacher's rejection of Scripture's verbal inspiration leads him to a "canon within a canon" hermeneutic. For if the voices of Scripture are in direct opposition to one another—if they are mutually contradictory—then the interpreter is forced to choose one instead of the other or to privilege one more than the other. This inevitably leads to a "canon within a canon" hermeneutic in which some voices matter more than others—in Stuhlmacher's case, Paul's doctrinal letters appear the weightiest in the New Testament (786–88).

The rejection of verbal inspiration thus appears to undermine the task of biblical theology, which by nature aims for theological unity. Stuhlmacher repeatedly emphasizes the reality and unity of the canon, but is not unity undermined by the presence and necessary suppression of opposing voices within the canon? To be sure, biblical theology needs to consider all the voices of Scripture in order to grasp the

whole, but this is a far cry from privileging some voices over others (e.g., Paul over James). The verbal inspiration of Scripture, which coheres with the claims of the biblical authors themselves (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21), better upholds the task of biblical theology, for in removing the possibility of truly contradictory theological statements, it undergirds the unity and internal consistency of Scripture while at the same time allowing each biblical voice to be heard and appreciated. As a result, verbal inspiration removes from the interpreter the burden of creating a necessarily arbitrary "canon within a canon."

Despite this weakness, *BTNT* is an excellent biblical theology of the New Testament. Within the discipline of biblical theology, *BTNT* will especially make the reader aware of the state of German biblical-theological scholarship, and the volume's tradition-historical approach combined with canonical exegesis affords it a distinct place in the discipline. The English-speaking world can be grateful to Daniel Bailey that this magnum opus is now available in eminently readable English.

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Bond, Helen. *The First Biography of Jesus: Genre and Meaning in Mark's Gospel*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020, 336 pp., $42.99, hardcover.

Helen Bond is the head of the divinity school at the University of Edinburgh and has served as professor of New Testament since 2000. She has published extensively on topics related to Jesus, the Gospels, and their first-century environment, and her work in these areas is evident in this thought-provoking and well-researched volume. Bond operates on the assumption that establishing a text's genre is key to interpretation, and since Mark is the earliest Gospel written, this is especially important in understanding Jesus and the particular ways in which the evangelists portrayed him.

Along with much of recent scholarship, Bond argues that Mark's work belongs to the category of ancient *bioi*, exhibiting many of the literary conventions of this genre. From the introduction she labors to show that genre is far more than a stylistic device, but profoundly influences how the author depicts his subject as well as how the author understands the world. Seeing Mark as a biographer, she contends, is essential for understanding what he wanted to communicate about Jesus, and how he shaped, reappropriated and reconfigured his material for his audience as they sought to articulate a sense of Christian identity within the Roman world. Each chapter further develops the ways Mark does this, noting where he conforms (and occasionally does not conform) to other examples of ancient *bios* such as Xenophon's *Memorabilia* or Lucian's *Demonax*.

In chapter one Bond sets the stage for understanding Mark's Gospel as ancient biography, noting how he uniquely expanded and reformed the Roman idea of "Gospel"

to include the life, ministry and teaching of Jesus. She argues convincingly that Matthew and Luke view Mark as a *bios* in light of their additions, including elements like genealogies and birth accounts in line with conventions displayed in other *bioi*. Much of the chapter is taken up with a survey of scholarly views and developments related to genre in the Gospels, how this influences composition and purpose, and the ways others have understood Mark in light of literature from the same era.

Chapter two surveys the features of *bioi*, how the genre developed and how biographers viewed aspects of their subjects, such as character development, virtues, and teaching. In terms of how Mark describes Jesus, she contends that his work "has most in common with the Greek lives of philosophers, especially those…that hold up their subject as a model to be imitated" (76). Here and throughout, Bond notes that *bioi* are distinct from history writing, and thus there is a tension between the historical figure of the subject and the literary act of making them a paradigm for others. One of her focuses is that Mark highlighted certain aspects of Jesus as part of the *exempla* tradition, meaning that he intended for his audience to compare themselves with and identify with Jesus.

In chapter three Bond examines Mark as a biographer and what can be said of him based on his writing. Namely, she points to Mark's rhetorical skill and creativity in his use of ancient literary devices like *chreiai* (terse narratives without extraneous detail). She notes also how Mark's portrait of Jesus is consistent with values prized in Greco-Roman culture (like speaking with authority, silencing opponents and dying for his cause), but also subverts that same culture (as with Jesus calling for followers to deny themselves). Chapter four examines the different sections of the Gospel and how Mark draws attention to particular qualities in Jesus, focusing on the issue of his identity and characterization.

Chapter five focuses on supporting characters, and Bond suggests that Mark is not ultimately concerned with these for their own sake but uses them to make a point about Jesus as the subject. For example, she argues that Mark intends for the disciples' desertion of Jesus not to highlight their failure but to illustrate the horror of Jesus' lonely death. In other cases, Bond writes that characters such as Bartimaeus or the anointing woman serve as *exemplum* to the audience. In chapter six, Bond casts Mark's account of Jesus death in light of biographical convention, claiming that Jesus' death is in line with accounts of philosophers who die in accordance with their teaching. That is, she sees Mark following convention by shaping the narrative of Jesus' life to show that his shameful death was fitting. However, she notes that even in his similarity to other biographers, Mark is unique and "turn(s) conventional ideas of a death that is good and even noble upside down" (230). In the final pages, she notes how Mark's work, seen through the lens of *bioi*, served to immortalize the memory of Jesus for his readers as a literary monument to his life and teaching.

Bond's work has much to commend it. Her consultation of ancient and modern sources is meticulous, her prose flowing and the structure of her chapters easy to

follow. Her work is unique as a full-length apologetic for Mark's classification as a *bios*, and that this classification has myriad implications for interpreting his work. Part of the book's contribution is as an answer to form-critical assumptions surrounding Mark, namely the idea that he was just a compiler of tradition. She makes a strong case for clearly seeing Mark as an individual standing behind the text, and that this truth was important for his original readers and should be today.

In her evaluation of different perspectives than her own, Bond is respectful and fair. This is refreshing, since not all readers may share her conclusions. For example, some may be disappointed by her skepticism about the historicity of some elements in Mark's Gospel. Because she argues that Mark's characters have a literary purpose, she expresses agnosticism at whether these are more than his literary creations. That is, since Mark followed ancient *bioi*, she proposes that historical accuracy was not necessarily important to him, and he thus employed various fictions, distortions and idealizations in shaping his narrative. She is clearest about this in her discussion of secondary characters like the disciples, writing that "just because the disciples have counterparts in the real world does not mean that they are any less Markan creations" (199). In this way, she departs from scholars like Craig Keener who presume Mark to be generally historically reliable. She does not say that there is no history in Mark, or that his anecdotes do not communicate truths about Jesus, but readers may be left wondering exactly how historical she understands Mark to be.

Regardless of one's answer to the historicity question, the book will undoubtedly serve as a starting point and reference from which student and scholar alike will examine Mark's work and its background, and it deserves to be widely read. While useful to the serious scholar, the original languages are transliterated and esoteric concepts explained in a way that make it accessible to laypeople as well. Her work provides fresh insights into the author of the earliest Gospel and how his environment influenced his work and would be a helpful addition to library of anyone seeking to interpret Mark more carefully.

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Ritchie, Sarah Lane. *Divine Action and the Human Mind.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. $120.00. 384 pages.

Like most works in the Cambridge theology series, the present volume serves two purposes. First, each monograph offers the student a survey of the issues on the subject at hand. In other words, it is a kind of state of the art treatment on the subject. Second, each monograph advances the discussion in some way. In Sarah Lane Ritchie's well-written and well-researched monograph, she accomplishes both. As with all good works of philosophy, theology, and science, Ritchie's *Divine Action and the Human Mind* works from a set of intuitions. Ritchie's work is no different in this respect.

What is different is her courageous attempt not to water down her commitment to what appears to be a form of methodological naturalism (although she would not cast it in quite those terms, as she expands the notion of "naturalism" quite considerably beyond the boundaries of most definitions in the literature) as the starting point to understanding the mind. While a virtue in the sense that she is unwilling to take a muddy middle way to discovering the nature of agency, my concern is that the intuitions she has chosen cast doubt on the predominant philosophical and theological literature's assumption that minds are ontologically distinct from physical events and by doing this Ritchie is unable to give us an adequate explanation of minds.

Ritchie's overarching subject is the nature of divine agency through the lens of human agency, hence the title. Her primary objective is to do a bit of ground clearing, so as to naturalize the Divine mind. She has a set of desiderata, insofar as I can surmise they include the following (see specifically pp. 29-31): (1) A scientifically adequate theory of Divine action, which Ritchie takes to entail naturalism (broadly construed or reinterpreted to mean "theological naturalism"). (2) A theologically adequate theory that includes the immanence of Divine action in the world. (3) A theory that excises ontological binaries.

Ritchie proceeds by criticizing interventionist and non-interventionist causal joint accounts in part 1. Interventionist accounts are those in which Divine action must suspend natural regular laws of succession that explain most of the world's events (championed recently by Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies*). Interventionist accounts have fallen on hard times, are often dismissed in most of the "Science and Theology" literature, and for this reason along with the purposes of this review I will set aside further discussion of interventionism. After prefacing the discussion on Divine agency through the lens of human mental agency (chapter 1), Ritchie devotes much of her attention to causal joint theories of Divine mental action for the purposes of moving toward a naturalized account of the Divine mind. She perceives causal joint accounts as having some merit because they are non-interventionist, hence they do not require God to mess about in the natural order he has created (see chapter 2). Further, these theories have received significant attention in the recent "science and theology" literature. Committed to the causal closure of the natural world, advocates of causal joint accounts perceive Divine action at physical events that are "ontologically underdetermined by physical causes" (p. 42). The most commonly championed proposals include quantum theory, emergence, chaos theory, and complexity (p. 43).

Ritchie devotes significant attention to one causal joint theory developed by Philip Clayton (see chapter 3). Clayton's proposal takes human consciousness as the underdetermined moment in physical evolution whereby God may act without intervening in the natural process. For those interested in science and religion discussions, Clayton's proposal has received significant attention in the literature as a promising account of Divine action in the natural world. Like other causal joint

accounts, Ritchie argues that such an account suffers from a potentially inconsistent use of the scientific method in theological construction and depends on the questionable binary of the mind and brain, and it may even yield substance dualism. The problems with this binary are reflected in consciousness debate.

She discusses the problem of consciousness and other possible physicalist positions in chapter 4 and 5. Here she advances a useful, albeit brief, survey of reductive and non-reductive physicalisms, which presumes the hard problem of consciousness. Less enamored with naturalist inclined theologies of Divine action that are committed to physicalism, Ritchie does hold out some possibility that these might in the end advance satisfactory explanations of minds (pp. 183-5). However, these views suffer from the besetting assumption, but potentially explicable assumption, of what is commonly called the hard problem of consciousness (i.e., the problem characteristic of phenomenal, intrinsic, and, arguably, private experience that is non-reducible to the language of neuro-biology, even if on the "easy problem" some aspects are quantifiable through the use of cognitive science, pp. 137-44).

In part 2, Ritchie in her move away from the binary, takes a theological turn. Her primary objective is to move beyond the binary by creating conceptual space for theological naturalism (i.e., an expanded naturalism). She explores Thomism, panentheism, and pneumatological naturalism. The goal is to lay the groundwork for additional constructive theological work from a broadly naturalistic perspective.

Back to the heart of my concern with Ritchie's argument over the nature of intuition as a source of knowledge concerning mind and action. For the sake of the argument, let us grant that there is not a hard problem of consciousness. Although I remain unconvinced, I will set that aside for the sake of space by attending to a different set of related concerns. I have two concerns. First, her intuitions replace what is most ostensible in any philosophical or scientific discussion about agency. Second, her intuitions lead the way to an account that provides us with no explanation of agency, let alone Divine agency. On the second concern, while Ritchie does not commit to one theory (she's not satisfied with an updated Thomist model, see her critique in pp. 227-60) of Divine agency, she leans in a direction that eschews the binaries to such an extent that holds out hope for a kind of neutral monism that will make mental and physical properties features of one unified ontology. Assuming that she is not committed to the variations of neutral monism on offer in the philosophical literature, her non-commitment to an explanation is equivalent to neutral monism in that both provide no explanation of mental properties. And, instead of privileging first-person consciousness as the starting point for knowledge, she privileges third-person public properties of physical events. (The reader would benefit from her nuanced discussion on the nature of first-person intuitions. On differing epistemological accounts, Ritchie is right to press the reliability of mere perspectival knowledge, private intuitions and the like.)

There is hope, and one for which can satisfy all or nearly all of Ritchie's desiderata. If we desire a compatibilist view, then we can look elsewhere. Following Berkeley for one example, God constitutes phenomenal perceptions, and God does not intervene (in that God never intervenes because his actions set up natural causes as bundles or stuffs or his thoughts are constitutive of natural events; i.e., on some variations this would simply amount to Divine occasionalism, which is Berkeley's view). On this account of Divine action in the world, we have a robust picture of Divine immanence, which likely requires giving up methodological naturalism in favor of methodological supernaturalism. If this is the case, then we can find a satisfying paradigm not in neutral monism, but in idealist immaterialism. If I may suggest one alternative to theistic naturalism, a Berkeleyan idealism satisfies what appears to be Ritchie's desiderata. Berkeleyan idealism affirms the following propositions: (1) immaterialism; (2) mentalism about immaterial substances; (3) the phenomenological nature of physical laws and bodies; (4) that all phenomena are dependent on one mind, namely the Divine mind. On this global ontology, we retain the phenomenal distinction between mental substances and phenomena (hence retaining the fundamental intuitions of common sense) without sacrificing a unified view of the natural world, hence a robust scientific method is sustainable. Further, idealism, of this sort or some similar theory, is theologically adequate in so far as God is immanent in the world, excluding a gappy relation or a deistic picture (hence non-interventionism and compatibilism of divine action with natural causes). The cost, if there is one, is that one must grant that mental content primitively functions in the natural world and is necessary to a scientific method.

There remain other general, and debatable, concerns about the intuitions chosen. For one example, Ritchie grants no role to catholic determinations on theism (i.e., the collective confessional stance on the nature of theism), but, instead, she places methodological naturalism (or something near it) at the heart of her theological method. Again, the bigger problem with the proposal is that the intuitions chosen grant us no explanation of mental data. And it is for this reason, that I suggest to Ritchie that she consider an alternative monist theory that is compatibilist and non-interventionist, namely some version of Theistic Idealism (Berkeley gives us one thoughtful example). But, this would require her to reconsider her intuitions by inverting the ontological priority of the mind in place of natural regular laws.

For an interesting symposium on Ritchie's *Divine Action and the Human Mind,* see the following symposium over at *Sapientia*: https://henrycenter.tiu.edu/2020/07/divine-action-and-the-human-mind-a-rejoinder/ [accessed on July 19, 2020].

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Wittman, Tyler R. *God and Creation in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth.* Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 315, $105, hardcover.

Tyler R. Wittman is an Assistant Professor of Theology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in New Orleans, LA. Before his appointment at NOBTS, Dr. Wittman was an Assistant Professor of Christian Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Dr. Wittman completed his dissertation, entitled *Confessing God as God: Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth on Theology and Economy,* at the University of St Andrews in 2016 under the supervision of the late John Webster. His published work generally focuses on various aspects of trinitarian theology throughout the medieval scholastic and Reformed traditions.

Dr. Wittman's *God and Creation in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth,* an updated version of his doctoral dissertation, examines how best to understand and correlate God's nature and works, or theology and economy, respectively, so as to uphold the distinction between the Creator and creation (p. 11). Through a comparative and constructive retrieval of the theologies of Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth, Wittman seeks to elucidate this distinction in two complementary ways, which he introduces in the first chapter: "first, that theology exhibit how God's perfection does not require his relation to creation; second, that theology depict the intelligibility of God's perfection in himself in such a way that licenses the claim that God would be God in undiminished perfection and goodness without creation" (p. 12). Beginning his retrieval of Aquinas in Chapter 2, Wittman describes Aquinas's conception of God's life as his eternal blessedness, "which grounds a circular construal of divine movement and activity that is primarily ordered to God in himself and secondarily to creatures" (p. 28). Chapter 3 correlates the circular divine movement of God's life *in se* to God's works in creation by describing the mixed relation that obtains between God and creation.

The following three chapters establish how Barth arrives at a revised "real" relation between God and creation through his theology of God's self-determination in Christ. Chapter 4 describes Barth's understanding of theological actuality, drawing together the nature of God's love, freedom, and "faithfulness" (p. 171). Chapter 5 explores how Barth reorients doctrines such as divine simplicity and uniqueness because of his underlying concern for the mode of theological predication. In Chapter 6, the final chapter on Barth's own theology, Wittman roots Barth's correlation of theology and economy in his Christological doctrine of election.

Chapter 7 brings these two historical accounts together, comparing Wittman's findings in the previous chapters to generate constructive suggestions concerning the relationship between theology and economy. This concluding chapter argues that an account that grounds the distinction between God and creation in an account

of God's perfect life in himself rather than in a self-determining decision is more capable of undergirding the church's confession of God as God in all his works.

Wittman's book is an erudite discussion of several consistently difficult concepts in contemporary systematic theology, including theological actuality, the nature of divine action, and the role of metaphysics in theological methodology. The main strength of the book is how Wittman keeps these concepts in view throughout the course of the study and carefully develops them from different angles. The prime example of this is the development of the concept of actuality through Wittman's discussions of Aquinas and Barth. Wittman argues that Aquinas views God's actuality as his plenitude of life in himself that allows for his activity in creation, whereas Barth construes actuality as a result or totality of God's nature and works. This difference illustrates the need to specify the logical relationship between God's acts and his inner perfection. For Wittman, this relationship must allow God's acts to be logically reducible to his perfection (pp. 283–84). On this understanding, then, Barth's understanding of actuality undermines his ability to maintain that God's perfection is intelligible apart from any reference to creatures. On the other hand, an account similar to Aquinas's, wherein actuality is understood as an "originating fullness" that also functions as the principle of all of God's economic acts, provides the basis upon which to confess God as God both in himself and in his acts in creation. This culminates in Wittman's most incisive suggestion, which is a critique of modern theologies that fail to "specify God's perfection as something logically antecedent to and intelligible without God's outgoing immanent operations," namely, that "it becomes difficult, if not impossible" to demonstrate that creatures do not in some way contribute to God's perfection (p. 284).

Actuality is only one example of the many nuanced discussions that are intertwined throughout the historical retrieval and brought to fruition in the final chapter. Others include the relation between being and activity, the nature of God's self-determination, and the role of nominalism and theological predication. In addition to this, Wittman shows a rare attunement to the connection between Christian ethics and the theological method of the two theologians, discussing at length the effect their understanding of pride had on their methodology (see, for example, page p. 62).

While the project's limited scope allows for sustained depth on the topics mentioned above, it also leads to a handful of instances where more context or argumentation might have been helpful to the overall argument. For instance, there are places where a reader might wish that Wittman engages more directly with the scholarship surrounding the topics that he addresses. This is especially true in the last chapter, where many of Wittman's suggestions implicitly challenge large portions of contemporary Barthian scholarship. While this is likely due to limitations both of space and focus, it does make it difficult for anyone except topic experts to place Wittman's reading of both Aquinas and Barth among the existing literature.

Another omission concerns the historical contexts of each theologian. For example, while demonstrating the logical similarities in how Hegel and Barth conceptualize actuality, Wittman makes it clear that he is not attempting to draw genetic similarities but is only heuristically comparing them. While this is certainly a more conservative and economical approach, it leaves unspecified the generally modern commitments that lead a theologian to understand actuality as 'resultant' and why these commitments differ so significantly from those of Aquinas. Though this is likely due to the scope of Wittman's work, this omission represents a lacuna of historical explanation that might have been somewhat filled in various sections by a handful of footnotes.

Wittman's book, while highly technical and at points quite dense, provides an excellent example of how historical retrieval, attention to the biblical text, and contemporary theological concerns might continue to intersect in theological literature. When working through this volume, the reader should remain attentive to the themes of divine actuality, the relationship between being and act, and the effects of the methodological commitments of each theologian. While this book is not well-suited undergraduates in their first few years, advanced students and scholars interested in the current research around the relation between the Creator and creation will benefit from Wittman's careful analysis and suggestions.

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Ortlund, Gavin. *Theological Retrieval for Evangelicals: Why We Need Our Past to Have a Future*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019, pp. 218, $21.99, paperback.

Gavin Ortlund is the senior pastor at First Baptist Church of Ojai in Ojai, California. In addition to the book being reviewed here, he is the author of a number of books, including *Anselm's Pursuit of Joy: A Commentary on the* Proslogion (Catholic University Press of America, 2020), *Finding the Right Hills to Die On: The Case for Theological Triage* (Crossway, 2020), and *Retrieving Augustine's Doctrine of Creation: Ancient Wisdom for the Current Controversy* (IVP Academic, 2020).

Theological Retrieval for Evangelicals is neatly divided into two complementary parts. Chapters 1–3 comprise the first part and function as a sort of apologetic (or, as Ortlund terms it, a manifesto) for theological retrieval as a needed practice in evangelical spheres. In these chapters, Ortlund argues that retrieval of patristic and medieval theology is not a betrayal of protestantism, that such retrieval can provide the historical rootedness many evangelicals desire, and that the benefits of engaging in this work far outweigh the potential dangers. Indeed, these benefits launch Ortlund into the second part of the book, where he seeks to highlight and enact—in a distinctively evangelical mode—the manner in which theology before the reformation

can strengthen modern weaknesses and offer fresh ways for approaching ancient questions in contemporary context.

Chapters 4–7, then, are where the rubber hits the road and Ortlund moves into full-fledged retrieval mode. Interacting with the likes of Boethius, John of Damascus, Anslem, Irenaeus, Gregory the Great, Ortlund invites the reader to consider how their insights might prompt creative theological thinking with respect to fraught or neglected conversations surrounding the creator/creature distinction, divine simplicity, the atonement, and pastoral theology.

Ortlund's central argument is difficult to disagree with: namely, that protestant theology, specifically of the evangelical stripe, needs to begin playing will a full historical-theological deck. His apologetic for retrieval is well argued and addresses most, if not all, of the major objections one might imagine hearing from those who are uncomfortable engaging pope-sanctioned theology. Indeed, this charitable desire to extend the evangelical theological purview is palpable throughout the book and is one of its central virtues. Thus, when it comes to providing a lucid and persuasive case that evangelicals should engage in theological retrieval, the book is both successful and winsome.

When it comes to modeling theological retrieval in the second part, the results are a bit more varied. Chapter 6 is where the process of retrieval feels most thoroughly and fully fleshed out. Here, Ortlund draws Irenaeus and Anslem together in an effort to show how recapitulation and satisfaction need not be at odds when giving an account of the atonement. Not only does he paint a clear picture of why this would be a helpful intervention in contemporary atonement debates, he also effectively appeals to the Transfiguration narrative in support of such a rapprochement. Thus, he demonstrates both *that* patristic and medieval theology offer fresh solutions to modern problems and *how* one might go about retrieving and applying those solutions. Chapter 7 is similarly successful in both respects when engaging Gregory the Great's pastoral theology. However, while chapters 4 and 5—on the Creator/creature distinction and divine simplicity respectively—clearly and persuasively make the case that the tradition has something to offer, they provide a somewhat less clear vision for what it means to appropriate and apply these novel solutions to contemporary debates. Given that these topics are both deeply complex and less likely to be at the forefront of the average evangelical's imagination than the atonement or pastoral theology, more elaboration on this front would have been helpful.

While it does not undermine the substance of Ortlund's argument, it is worth noting that there is something of a tonal shift between the two parts. Whereas his apologetic for theological retrieval seems to be pitched at evangelicals broadly construed, his case studies in retrieval are distinctly more academic in nature and as such seem aimed at a, if not different, then more restricted audience. A good example of this is his brief description of how divine simplicity both featured in and bolstered the worship of ancient theologians (pp. 123–26). While how this might be the case

may be apparent to the trained theologian, it will be considerably more opaque to the wider evangelical audience at which the first part seems aimed.

Ultimately, though, Ortlund hits his mark. Indeed, insofar as the target audience is restless evangelicals with some prior theological acumen, he not only leads them to the edge of retrieval, he also helpfully unearths the insights of ancient theologians in a manner that may just make them want to dive in. Furthermore, the student of Christian theology who engages this text will come away with a certain sense of awe when it comes to the breadth and depth of the tradition in which they stand. Such awe and the impetus it provides are surely indispensable for the theological task.

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Cole, Graham A. *Faithful Theology: An Introduction*. Short Studies in Systematic Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020, pp. 118, $14.99, paperback.

Graham A. Cole, dean and professor of systematic and biblical theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity school, opens Crossway's *Short Studies in Systematic Theology* with his inaugural volume, *Faithful Theology: An Introduction*. Along with Oren R. Martin, Cole serves as an editor for the series. In the preface, they note the purpose of this new line of books: "This series … aims to present short studies in theology that are attuned to both the Christian tradition and contemporary theology in order to equip the church to faithfully understand, love, teach, and apply what God has revealed in Scripture" (p. 11).

Cole's introduction opens with a question: "How are we to get better at talking and thinking about God?" (p. 13). Here he concerns himself with a piece of prolegomena: *method*—but not just any method. The title of the book reveals his cards here: Cole is interested in *faithful theology*; after all, why would anyone content himself with anything less? He clarifies, "This book is about the method to use in doing faithful theology: faithful to God, faithful to God's words" (p. 14). The subsequent chapters discuss five elements of faithful theology.

Chapter 1 argues that "Doing theology needs a secure epistemological base. God's word written is that base" (p. 37). Following Reformed teaching, he says, "Scripture is vital to doing theology in an evangelical way. Why?'" he asks, "Because God has spoken an unveiled his mind, his will and his ways … Scripture is the Spirit-inspired, inerrant, and infallible crystallization of the divine discourse" (p. 20). Scripture holds ultimacy for formulating doctrine and serves as distributive guideline for faithful theology's elements in Cole's account. Yet, this does not lead to a sort of "just me and my Bible" hermeneutic.

In chapters 2–3, Cole demonstrates that "Theological thinking is contextual thinking" (p. 66). He acknowledges "no one reads Scripture in a vacuum" (p.

40). And while "Scripture constitutes the final court of appeal in an evangelical methodology" (p. 41), "Doing theology wisely means learning from the past" (p. 41). Nonetheless, "whatever tradition we stand in needs to be open to reform by the word of God. This is because Scripture … is the ruling norm (*norma normans*), while tradition is a ruled norm (*norma normata*)" (p. 52). Scripture's ultimacy established in chapter 1 determines the "authority" and usefulness of tradition. Cole then situates theology in space and time in our fallen context—what he, harking on Romans 8:22—calls a context of "a 'groaning' creation awaiting its liberation" (p. 56). Cole is not entertained by hypotheticals, and in his view, neither is theology. Theological reasoning attends to reality because that is the only domain in which it exists, and this economy includes creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. With reference to the fall, *faithful* theology requires its practitioner to possess a proper attitude wherein "Virtues play a role in doing theology, and humility is key … The unteachable theologian is an oxymoron" (p. 60).

Chapter 4 posits that wisdom is integral for relating Scripture, tradition, and the context of the fallen world. Part of wisdom's value is its confession of the Creator-creature-distinction—"God is God and … we are not" (p. 69)—which stems from the "the fear of the Lord" (p. 69; cf. Prov 1:7). What is theological wisdom? Cole answers, "In theology, wisdom is reasoning employed as the servant of Scripture and not as the master of Scripture" (p. 70). Nonetheless, theology employs redeemed reason. Part of reason's importance for *theological* inquiry as *sapientia* or "wisdom" is its utility "to make connections that aren't foolish" (p. 85).

Chapter 5 discusses "the way of worship" (p. 87). Cole intertwines worship with the elements of faithful theology previously considered. Just like all of life, theology is meant to be an act of worship with "the requisite attitude toward God, which is reverence" (p. 101). Such a posture of theology's practitioner precedes and impels worship. Theology practiced for the intellect's sake is not worshipful; theology done for God's sake is. To conclude his volume, Cole informs his readers that his method outlined in this book is not definitive, but illustrative. A key emphasis of his conclusion, however, teaches "life is lived *coram Deo* (before God). Our doing theology needs to be offered daily to God which is our reasonable worship … Doing theology then is a way of loving God with our minds … We do theology as disciples of Christ" (p. 105).

Cole's work instructs the lay to talk about God faithfully, yet it also reminds the most astute theologians of their primary goal in theology. To faithfully "do" theology, one must follow Scripture, be guided by the Christian tradition, recognize our fallen state, use wisdom, and worship God with our everything. Pastors and lay interested in theology will benefit from Cole's work. The volume enjoys brevity and offers generous accessibility. However, its simplicity does not detract from academic accuracy. Formal students of theology would do well to read this book to be reminded of (1) the content of theology and (2) the goal of theology—God's glory

enjoyed by his saints. Cole's book was a joyful surprise, covering both the material, methodological, and moral dimensions of theology. Nonetheless, the book leaves one question open for consideration.

Readers may ask: "What role does natural theology play, if it does have a place in 'faithful' theology?" There is little doubt to say that in Cole's program of faithful theology, the claims of natural theology must align with Scripture (p. 92), but a sufficient account of the content and manner of natural theology, as well as examples of natural theology, seem to be wanting (p. 92, n. 16). However, this question or critique is one of omission and bears little to no significant import on the book's usefulness.

I eagerly recommend this book for at least three reasons. First, though this volume is simple, its historical bearings bring forth riches from the Christian tradition while utilizing trustworthy contemporary voices as guides through the halls of the Christian faith. Those who desire to incorporate church history into Scripture-based theology find an instructive work here.

Second, Cole's account serves as a great corrective for what some might consider systematic theology's *modus operandi* as merely collating Bible verses to form principles and teachings. While there is a place for proof-texting (p. 81), theology is not *merely* collecting verses and data to form a point or teaching, for theology includes wisdom and "wisdom is not reducible to the accumulation of data" (p. 69). Cole's treatment of systematic theology bears more fruit, as it captures reason's place in forming a coherent account of all that must be true

Third, Cole's work provides a constant and convicting heart check. One who reads this little work is constantly reminded that faithful theology requires its practitioner to be a certain sort of person who exemplifies intellectual and moral virtues, preeminently, humility.

Cole's short volume contributes well in the recovery of systematic theology. While today's culture and academic circles often are cold to Christianity and theological studies, Cole's little book warms and kindles our hearts to worship the triune God who has made himself known in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

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Van der Kooi, Cornelis and Gijsbert van den Brink. *Christian Dogmatics: An Introduction.* Translated by Reinder Bruinsma with James D. Bratt. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017, pp. xiv + 806, $45, hardback.

In this wonderfully rich one-volume introduction to Christian theology, two seasoned full professors who work in a wide-array of traditional and interdisciplinary specialties at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam have come together to offer an up-to-date entry-level textbook to the field that is, for the most part, both appropriately thorough

and lucidly accessible. I say "for the most part" because there are several places in which, with regard to content, more should have been said or covered, and there are a few instances in which the syntax could have been more clear (e.g., when referents like "the latter" and "the former" have been used in a somewhat confusing manner). While the English edition at hand (2017) is at times more current than the critically-acclaimed Dutch original (2012) with regard to certain discussions and especially their associated bibliographic materials, the authors' editorial decision to rely less upon "sources that are available only in Dutch" for the present translated version is somewhat unfortunate as there are certainly some who would have benefited from such quotations and citations perhaps being included in footnotes (cf. pp. vii-viii). This very minor scruple aside, the volume as a whole more than handsomely succeeds in its aim of providing, in broad brush stroke, "a contemporary account of the faith" (p. xii) through its critical description and constructive weighing of historic and contemporary theological options. Along such lines, the book serves, in both intention and effect, as a very good starting point for further deliberation and discussion.

That said, Kooi and Brink's coverage of prolegomena (chs. 1-2), theology proper (chs. 3-4), and revelation (ch. 5) is followed by that of creation and providence (ch. 6), theological anthropology (ch. 7), sin and evil (in which is found the topic of theodicy) (ch. 8), covenant (in which the standing of Israel within Christian thought is the main focus) (ch. 9), Christology (chs. 10-11), pneumatology (ch. 12), scripture (ch. 13), ecclesiology (ch. 14), justification and "transformation" (instead of "sanctification") (ch. 15), and finally, eschatology (ch. 16).

Such a thematic ordering suggests the heavy influence of twentieth-century impulses within Protestant theology. This can be most clearly discerned from the authors' prioritizing of the doctrine of the Trinity (ch. 3), not only as being placed before other aspects and attributes of the doctrine of God (ch. 4; cf. p. 113), but also as being discussed prior to the doctrines of revelation (ch. 5) and scripture (ch. 13)—two loci which, different from more traditionally conservative systematic theologies, have here been separated from each other (by eight whole chapters) as well as from the overall discussion surrounding prolegomena (chs. 1-2). In this regard, the relocation of the doctrine of scripture so that it directly follows and thus explicitly flows from pneumatology (ch. 12) is a move reminiscent of Stanley J. Grenz's *Theology for the Community of God* (1994; reprint, 2000). Insofar as Grenz's late placement of scripture was a source of controversy amongst those of conservative evangelical persuasion who adamantly maintain biblical inerrancy and its methodological importance for theology overall, Kooi and Brink's thematic separation of scripture from revelation and from prolegomena, along with their viewing of the "diversity" of scriptural interpretation "as a virtue" (p. 568), will likely raise similar eyebrows. Their endorsement of the recent push for a "theological interpretation of scripture" (pp. 554-61), as has been formatively influenced by Karl Barth's doctrine of scripture

and its trinitarian contours (cf. p. 558; pp. 561-64), might also be critically received with suspicion by the same constituency—even if, ironically, this relatively new movement is mostly being proposed and advanced from within evangelicalism itself. Nevertheless, these moves concerning the place and appropriation of scripture are indirectly reflective of Kooi and Brink's opinion—shared by many today—that "it is impossible (as Frame proposed) to go back to a pre-Barthian nonchristological understanding of the doctrine of God" (p. 147).

On a somewhat different note, the contemporary currency and relevance of Kooi and Brink's work is underscored by their chapter on revelation (ch. 5), which highlights revelation's indirect nature (pp. 167-71) as well as seven proposed models for revelation that have mostly arisen within the twentieth century (pp. 171-81). Also included in this chapter is a survey of approaches generally taken regarding Christianity's relationship to other religions—another sign that the work is up to speed with the times (pp. 190-97). This theme will appear again in Kooi and Brink's refocusing of the notion of covenant through a dedicated discussion of Israel, which they rightly describe as being "the raw nerve in Christian theology" (ch. 9). In this regard, the authors helpfully reframe Christianity's mode of engagement with contemporary Judaism as being in the realm of "dialogue" instead of "mission" (cf. 344-45), en route to a rejection of supersessionism in favor of a reframed "theology of incorporation," in which it is the gentiles that, in Christ, "*have been incorporated in the already existing covenant* with Israel" rather than the other way around (p. 359, *emphasis in original*).

Kooi and Brink's chapter on the Trinity (ch. 3) also shows its contemporary relevance regarding other religions through its attempt to "provide a handle for talking with Muslims about the doctrine of the Trinity against the background of monotheism and Islam" (p. 75; cf. pp. 104-6). This is followed by a section seeking to grasp the "practical significance of the doctrine of the Trinity" (pp. 107-10), in which is featured some introductory comment on the social trinity and its socio-political significance (pp. 109-10). Notably missing here, however, is explicit mention of how the notion of "participation in the Trinity" ought to carry significance for one's everyday life as a believer and for one's ministry and service in the church and in the world. Inclusion of this missing piece would only strengthen the authors' desire to situate the doctrine of participation as being "a bridge between justification and sanctification" (cf. ch. 15, esp. pp. 680-86). Their noble attempt at asserting the importance of participation along such lines fails, however, to give the theme of adoption both sufficient attention and necessary prominence. I believe this glaring oversight is mainly due to Kooi and Brink's understanding of participation as being "a bridge between" rather than as being "the source of" justification and sanctification (not to mention adoption). In this regard, their overemphasis upon justification (as the solution to the perceived problem of guilt rather than, for example, shame or fear as being the primary consequence for sin) reveals the work's theologically western

orientation (cf. pp. 651, 653-63)—a point acknowledged but not rectified by the authors (pp. 659-60).

On a more positive note, Kooi and Brink's chapter on "justification and transformation" (ch. 15)—which is noticeably placed *after* rather than *before* their chapter on ecclesiology (ch. 14)—is up-to-date in that it seeks to engage not only with the Finnish interpretation of Luther, but also with the New Perspective on Paul (pp. 676-80). The discussion of eschatology (cf. chs. 7 and 16) is also profound for its locating of heaven and hell as being outside of time and space—a move that raises interesting questions about the intermediate state (cf. p. 272; pp. 746-47). Not enough is said, however, about important proposals concerning "second-chance theology" (p. 747) and "annihilationism" (p. 749).

Altogether though, students, pastors, academics working in areas other than theology, journalists, and really, "all those who are interested in theology" (p. xi) will find Kooi and Brink's book to be of great value. Each chapter opens with a helpful outline of the chapter's aims, as well as several thought-provoking questions which serve to help readers make meaningful connections to the forthcoming material. These also will be especially useful for beginners in theology.

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Gibson, Scott M. and Matthew D. Kim, editors. *Homiletics and Hermeneutics: Four Views on Preaching Today.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019, 192 pages, $21.99, paperback.

What is the influence of hermeneutics to the task of preaching? Scott M. Gibson, the David E. Garland Chair of Preaching and director of the PhD program in preaching at George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University, and Matthew D. Kim, the associate professor of preaching and ministry at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, have collected four leaders in the field of preaching to weigh in on this important discussion: Bryan Chapell, former president and chancellor of Covenant Theological Seminary; Abraham Kuruvilla, senior researcher professor of preaching and pastoral ministries at Dallas Theological Seminary; Kenneth Langley, adjunct professor of preaching at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; and Paul Scott Wilson, professor of homiletics at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto. As established authors in the field of homiletics and former presidents of the Evangelical Homiletical Society, editors Gibson and Kim were excellent choices to facilitate a discussion about the interplay between hermeneutics and homiletics among these able evangelical scholars of preaching, and voice their own perspectives at the conclusion.

Gibson and Kim set the table for the conversation among the scholars in the introduction. After identifying the inescapability of preaching from one's own stated or unstated perspective, the editors note their purpose, "This book is about

teasing out the theological presuppositions of approaches to preaching. That is, we want to explore the hermeneutic that lies behind one's theology of preaching" (p. xii). Four hermeneutical approaches are discussed in the subsequent chapters: *redemptive-historical* (Chapell), *christiconic* (Kuruvilla), *theocentric* (Langley), and *law-gospel* (Wilson). Though other perspectives could have been discussed, these were highlighted because "these reflect the current streams of thought in evangelical hermeneutics and homiletics" (p. xii). The editors are to be commended for their efforts to facilitate this conversation. Incorporating different viewpoints can encourage homiliticians to learn from theological traditions that are different from their own. With the rise of social media and the ability to create echo chambers with ease––though sometimes unintentionally––books like this help preachers locate potential blind-spots, assist preachers in sharpening weak areas of argumentation, and can deepen convictions already embedded in how one views the Bible and the task of communicating its truth to others.

Chappell first promotes a *redemptive-historical* view, which utilizes biblical theology to "show how each text manifests God's grace in order to prepare and enable his people to embrace the hope provided by Christ" (p. 8). In order to preach in a Christ-centered way, Chappell utilizes his Fallen Condition Focus, found in his book, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, to ask: "What does this text reflect of human nature that requires redemption?" (p. 16). Next, Kuruvilla puts forward a *christiconic* view where he is concerned to determine, "what the author is *doing* with what he is saying in that particular text in order to elicit valid application for the readers" (p. 51). Building upon his book, *Privilege the Text!*, he says the Bible "projects *a world in front of the text*––God's ideal world, individual segments of which are portrayed by individual pericopes" (p. 55). Therefore, the task of preaching is to invite people into this ideal world. Since Jesus is the only one to perfectly live this world in front of the text, each pericope highlights a different characteristic of Christ, the perfect man. The written word of God functions christologically because it "depicts the incarnate Word of God" (p. 59). As a preacher expounds pericope by pericope, God's people gradually embody characteristics of Christ and are shaped into his image. Next, Kenneth Langley describes a *theocentric* view, which in essence means that "preaching is manifestly God centered" (p. 82). He sees a danger in only making Christological and soteriological connections in preaching, which limits other important topics and connections necessary for shaping a biblical worldview. Finally, Paul Scott Wilson puts forward the *law-gospel* view, preferring to use the words trouble and grace in articulating a traditional Lutheran view of preaching. The dual purpose of the scriptures is to use the language of Isaiah 19:22, to strike and heal. Drawing heavily on his previous book, *The Four Pages of Sermon Preparation*, Wilson says the purpose of preaching is to preach the gospel, and he articulates his methodology of how to accomplish this task.

Similar to the other multiple views books, *Homiletics and Hermeneutics* was easy to follow due to the structure. Each of the contributing authors had a chapter articulating their position, with the other three providing a gracious response in areas of agreement and disagreement. For each view, the authors advocated their proposed view by discussing the biblical, theological, homiletical, and applicational rationale. Doing so allows the reader to step into the laboratory with each homiletician in order to see not only the *how*, but the reasons *why* they do what they do. This is an invaluable experience for one wanting to think deeper about the theory of preaching or who has a desire to apply these ideas practically to their weekly sermon preparation.

There are a number of issues and concerns repeated throughout the book, which are necessary for preachers to think carefully about. First, there is a concern from the writers about if and how one should preach Jesus in every sermon. The second concern in question form, closely relates to this: How is one to preach a sermon from the Old Testament? In more provocative words––Would a sermon from an Old Testament passage be preached differently in a synagogue on a Saturday than at a church on the Lord's Day? A third issue preachers must think through is how much attention should be given to the immediate and canonical contexts and the relationship between the two contexts. Finally, the related issues of application and sanctification were discussed. How does a preacher move from meaning to application? Furthermore, how should sermons be developed that promote growth in Christ and the shaping of biblical worldviews?

During Christian conferences, organizers frequently offer a panel discussion among the invited speakers. These opportunities prove beneficial to an audience in that various perspectives are showcased in fair and informative ways. This book possesses the tone of a panel discussion among colleagues on a conference panel. Each contributor offers a perspective within the current stream of evangelical homiletics with an appreciation of other evangelical options. As such, this book can be useful as an introduction into the current state of evangelical homiletics for pastors or as a supplemental textbook for a class on hermeneutics and/or homiletics. Readers will likely find areas of disagreement, but most will be sharpened through the process of reexamining their approach to interpretation and proclamation of the Bible. Thus, this book offers a step forward as preachers grown into faithful communicator of the sacred text.

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Tan, Siang-Yan. *Shepherding God's People: A Guide to Faithful and Fruitful Ministry.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019, 263 pages, $22.99, paperback.

Originally from Singapore, Siang-Yang Tan (PhD, McGill University) serves as professor of psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary and senior pastor of the First

Evangelical Church in Glendale, California. Tan has authored fourteen books and serves in editorial roles for several academic journals. If only a single word were used to describe this volume, one might settle on "comprehensive." Indeed, this is how John Ortberg describes the book in his preface. A quick perusal of the table of contents, and a thorough reading of its content reinforces the comprehensive nature of this overall project. From the beginning of the book, readers sense Tan's commitment to plunge into the deep waters of pastoral ministry. Guided by an expert with more than thirty-five years of experience under his belt, this volume comprehensively covers the critical aspects of a faithful shepherding ministry.

Divided into two overall sections, part one consists of the first four chapters. Here Tan introduces readers to select fundamentals of pastoral ministry: a biblical perspective on ministry, the essential role of the Holy Spirit, the spiritual life of a pastor, and the personal life of the pastor. In part two, Tan identifies sixteen primary areas of pastoral ministry and devotes a chapter to each area. Some of the topics covered in these chapters include traditional components of a church service (teaching, worship, etc.), leadership (mentoring staff, volunteers, working with church boards, integrity), church ministries (small groups, missions, counseling), weddings, funerals, and the always-difficult period of time when a pastoral change occurs. In each of these areas, Tan combines a wealth of personal experience and a deep reserve of critical research. While including aspects of his personal experience throughout the volume, the substance of his assertions are grounded within the biblical text and from church tradition. Thus, his presentation avoids the idiosyncrasies often found in similar volumes. Due in part to its scope, the amount of information presented in this comprehensive book is both its greatest strength while also being a conditional weakness.

How one approaches this volume will determine its suitability for integration into ministry. Because pastors have a wide array of concerns, it proves impossible to know what readers expect from a book on pastoral ministry. Some readers desire well-researched data, while others seek personal stories and experiences shared by an expert in the field. Some readers seek a specific list of things to do, while others want less of a list and more of a challenge to thoughtfully explore areas that may not have been top-of-mind prior to consuming the text. The challenges notwithstanding, this book has import for each interested reader. In John Ortberg's preface, he claims "You might think of this book as a kind of career syllabus for pastors" (p. xii). This apt description aids in preparing the reader to tackle the material that follows. Each chapter contains topical lists related to the chapter's material. The lists are usually numbered, comma-delimited, or parenthetical inserts. Quite often, a specific item in each list is then further broken down into another sub-list. Tan clearly indicates his sources, which are numerous, and the end of each chapter presents a list of recommended reading for further study.

The comprehensive nature of Tan's work is seen primarily in its breadth, not depth. Tan's broad research forms an excellent foundation for his chapter materials, and the extensive lists proves exhaustive, even though readers may find his explanations lacking. Some are not explored in-depth, which is understandable given the need to limit the length of the book. Yet the lack of explanation stifles the application for some of the material. While none of the lists are superfluous, some deserve a dedicated chapter. Thus, a prospective reader would do well to take notes on the items that pique their interest or where the Holy Spirit nudges for further investigation, then consult the citations at the end of the book as a guide for what materials to use for more in-depth research and understanding.

Books on pastoral ministry run the entire gamut of styles. Because of the vast array of current monographs on pastoral ministry, readers can struggle to determine which ones are worth purchasing. If one is looking for a book that elucidates on years of personal pastoral experience through powerful, impactful stories, this volume will not suffice. If an individual is looking for a deep theological dive into one or two keys areas of pastoral ministry utilizing deep exploration, cultural context, or detailed word study, one will not find this work fulfilling. Instead, Tan's volume presents a survey of pastoral ministry with thoughtful inclusions of and additional resources. As such, this volume best serves as a starting source for pastoral ministry. It may not contain the suggested answers a reader may expect to find on a given topic, but it provides a survey of thought on pastoral ministry topics and it points readers to resources they can use to find their own answers. As such, pastors from any expression of the Christian faith can feel good about adding this book to their personal reference collection.

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Lee, Ahmi. *Preaching God's Grand Drama*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019, pp. 175, $22.99, paperback.

An experienced pastor and worldwide preacher, Ahmi Lee is Assistant Professor of Preaching at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Her first book, *Preaching God's Grand Drama*, is a timely, theologically rich contribution to the field of homiletics. While other works, such as Eric Brian Watkins' *The Drama of Preaching*, have explored the dramatic dimensions of preaching in relationship to the redemptive-historical narrative of Scripture, Lee builds on the work of Kevin Vanhoozer and others to present a theodramatic homiletic in conversation with prevailing models of preaching. Specifically, the book reflects Lee's experience of feeling "caught" between two competing paradigms of preaching: "the text centered, so-called traditional preaching" model and "the reader-centered, conversational mode of preaching" (pp. 1-2). *Preaching God's Grand Drama* is her attempt to draw

upon the best of these two models to articulate a third way: theodramatic preaching, an integrative model of preaching that invites the Church to participate in God's past, present, and future action in the world.

The book is arranged into six chapters. The first chapter articulates and assesses the traditional homiletic. For Lee, the traditional homiletic is typically a deductive mode of preaching that linearly teaches propositional truth. While mindful that she is sketching a kind of "homiletical caricature," she states the traditional homiletic's assumptions can be captured in four metaphors: the herald, a banking transfer, a golden key, and a still-life picture (p. 9). Lee goes to great lengths to articulate the gift of this rich preaching tradition, especially noting its "unfaltering trust in God's communicative ability to reveal himself and minister to his people through the reliable witness of Scripture" (p. 29). Still, she notes that this model is not without its potential weaknesses and dangers, such as misusing authority, cultivating an insular church culture, and delimiting sermonic forms.

In chapters two and three, Lee surveys and critiques what she labels as the conversational homiletic, a view of preaching as "a shared ministry of the church" based on a communal meaning-making process (p. 51). Drawing on Lucy Rose, John McClure, and O. Wesley Allen as recent exemplars, Lee traces how the conversational model of preaching grew out of postmodern epistemological shifts and the emergence of the New Homiletic, a movement within homiletics that emphasizes the role of listeners, favors inductive approaches to preaching, and highlights how language constitutes reality (p. 36). Despite the diversity that exists among these figures, she argues they each propose a view of preaching that prioritizes social location, subjectivity and experience, and a decentralized pulpit (p. 52). Lee applauds several aspects of the conversational model, such as how it takes large-scale cultural changes seriously and insists that hermeneutics should be a hospitable practice. However, she offers a strong and substantive critique of the conversational homiletic's lack of confidence in Scripture's ability to authoritatively convey meaning and its reliance on a "community of readers to generate meaning from their experience of the text" (p. 77).

In chapter four, utilizing Hans Urs von Balthasar's description of theology as epic, lyric, and dramatic, Lee articulates a dramatic view of theology to reunite the traditional homiletic's focus on doctrine (epic) and the conversational homiletic's focus on life (lyric). Informed by Balthasar, N.T. Wright, Nicholas Lash, and particularly Kevin Vanhoozer, Lee's proposal for dramatic theology aims to uphold the "*coherence* and *consistency*" of the story of Scripture as it is embodied in diverse contexts in the world (p. 111; author's emphasis). Building on this notion of dramatic theology, the fifth chapter sketches Lee's theodramatic homiletic. In brief, a theodramatic homiletic conceives of preaching as a performance of the story of the gospel through which the church is reoriented toward "the reality of being in Christ" as they participate in God's mission in the world (p. 144). The final chapter

considers four perspectives that guide a theodramatic homiletic: retrospection (attending to God's work in the past), introspection (attending to God's work in us), extrospection (attending to God's work in the world), and prospection (attending to God's future work).

Preaching God's Grand Drama is a wide-ranging, substantive theological account of preaching as a theodramatic practice. In less than 200 pages, Lee offers a clear, balanced, and nuanced treatment of the drama of preaching in the context of major contemporary homiletical models, the changing Western epistemological milieu, and prominent theological voices on theology and narrative. In addition, while unable to provide an extensive biblical and historical foundation for her proposal, Lee offers several illuminating Scriptural soundings throughout the book as well as intriguing brief allusions to figures in the history of preaching (e.g., pp. 7, 87, 126, 130, 151-152). While some may quibble with Lee's presentation of the traditional and conversational preaching models, in general, her work is fair and judicious—especially given the careful qualifications she makes throughout the book. Of course, Lee's engagement with a diversity of perspectives by necessity limits her exploration of some voices and traditions. For example, while the book does briefly mention African American preaching in relationship to conversational preaching, a future project might explore how African American preaching traditions could enrich the theory and practice of theodramatic preaching (p. 37). As James Earl Massey asserts in *Stewards of the Story* (Westminster John Knox, 2006), the Black church has often conceived of preaching as "telling the Story." Furthermore, while Lee acknowledges that issues of "methodology, sermon forms and language, and delivery" are outside the scope of her present study, a sample of a theodramatic sermon would have coupled well with her stimulating insights and questions in the concluding chapter of the book (p. 5).

Preaching God's Grand Drama is an important work that proposes a fresh paradigm on preaching that is biblically alert, historically aware, and theologically anchored. Pastors, preachers, theologians, and students of all backgrounds will benefit from Lee's insightful treatment of preaching as a thoroughgoing theological practice. Students will particularly find the book a helpful introduction to some of the major theological assumptions that undergird traditional and conversational preaching models. For example, Lee's informed and respectful delineation of potential weaknesses and dangers of the traditional homiletic will be sure to stir reflection among those who are not prone to critique expository or expositional preaching models. Likewise, her extensive assessment of conversational preaching will be invaluable, especially for those who may not be familiar with this model of preaching and some of its philosophical and hermeneutical assumptions. Students who are acquainted with Kevin Vanhoozer's scholarship, especially his response to George Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic model of theology in *The Drama of Doctrine* (Westminster John Knox, 2005), will likely get the most out of Lee's creative

and theologically robust proposal for a theodramatic homiletic. However, there is something for every thoughtful listener or preacher of sermons in this fine work. In short, Lee's exemplary book opens up new forays for understanding and practicing preaching as a dramatic act in the unfolding story of God.

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Reed, Rick. *The Heart of the Preacher*: *Preparing Your Soul to Proclaim the Word*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019, xx + pp.216, $13.99, hardback.

"Preaching is not just hard work; its *heart* work" (p. xvi). It seems apropos for Rick Reed to speak to this issue, a veteran of preaching and pastoral theology, with experience in the church and the academy. Dr. Rick Reed (DMin, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) serves as the President of Heritage College and Seminary in Cambridge, Ontario, Canada where he is Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Studies. He was Senior Pastor at the Metropolitan Bible Church in Ottawa for fourteen years. He has been a plenary and seminar speaker for the Billy Graham School of Evangelism and a master coach for Global Proclamation Academy in Dallas, TX. He is a regular contributor to the "Ask the Religion Experts" column of the *Ottawa Citizen*.

The Heart of the Preacher is a timely and insightful book that every practitioner of Christian preaching and pastoral ministry will want to explore. It is a tonic for the ailing ministry *heart* and a preventative to the potentially unhealthy preacher's soul. Reed's *heart* is to "help your heart as a preacher" (p. xviii). His goal is to "pass along the heart-level lessons God has been teaching me over the past thirty-plus years of preaching" (p. xviii). He organizes his work into two sections: *The Testing of a Preacher's Heart* where he highlights fifteen *heart-level* challenges. These tests – such as boasting, laziness, and failure "are commonly faced but not commonly addressed in preaching books or at pastoral gatherings" (p. xviii). Also, *The Strengthening of a Preacher's Heart* provides examples that God used in Reed's life to strengthen his soul to better proclaim God's Word. These tests are God-honoring and soul stabilizing, for "while we cannot keep our hearts from being tested, we can take intentional steps to get ready for the tests" (pp. xviii-xix). Reed graciously invites the reader to join him in the *demanding* work of *heart* work (p. xix).

Concerning preachers with *heart* failure, "They didn't lack aptitude or ability; they had a heart problem. In some cases, their hearts gave way to sinful attitudes and actions. In other cases, their hearts gave up from being worn down and hardened by the sins of others" (p. xviii). In *The Testing of a Preacher's Heart* we see that God desires to refine the preacher's *heart*, "He often uses the crucible of a preaching ministry to do it" (p. 1). In our preaching ministries we can become shipwrecked on many a selfish sandbar. How many have polluted their *hearts* from comparison,

insignificance, criticism or ambition? Reed reminds us that "we are servants and stewards–not celebrities, we must test our own hearts, but not fully trust our own test, Christ will evaluate our motives and not just our actions" (pp. 7-8). When we feel the urge to boast "we must let the cross have a lethal impact on our innate tendency to glory in our ministry impact" (p. 24). The preacher will face disengaged listeners, Blue Mondays and the temptation to be lazy or quit. Nevertheless, "The God who starts us as preachers sustains us as preachers" (p. 121). We fail, we suffer, and we experience pain and though "while we may not be able to publicly explain our pain, we can publicly proclaim God's truth" (p. 110).

In *The Strengthening of a Preacher's Heart*, Reed focuses on proactive measures of *heart* care, "We must not only play defense; we need to go on the offense. We must intentionally fortify our hearts" (p. 124). Through communion with God, delighting in Him, repenting of sin and allowing His grace to strengthen, the preacher cares for his soul. Reed asserts, "If I had to choose, I'd much rather step up to preach with my sermon unfinished than my soul unprepared" (p. 132). The preacher integrates the whole sermon process with prayer, and he studies *coram Deo* – before the face of God. Fortifying your *heart* means having to right-size your expectations, listen to your closest ally (your wife), make the most of your Saturday nights (soul preparation, not sermon preparation), and don't kill the horse (take care of your physical body). Reed encourages us to highlight our salvation calling *before* our service calling, for if we get the order reversed, we "actually become dangerous in ministry. Instead of preaching to meet the needs of others, we preach to meet our own needs" (p. 165). Foundational to all proactive *heart* care, "When it comes to motivations for preaching, we sometimes miss the most basic of all motivators: love for Jesus" (p. 201).

Just a few strengths of note. *First*, the chapter on fear was encouraging, specifically the fear of "freedom from notes" in the preaching task. Several reasons may deter us – "I want to get it right", "I do not have a good memory", and "I do not want to embarrass myself" (pp. 60-61). Reed reveals a grim truth, "The desire to connect more deeply with our hearers should move us to get free from our sermon notes. Our motivation is not to impress but to impact … Ironically, when tied to our notes, we actually draw more attention to ourselves" (p. 62). The goal is to internalize the message (*thought* for *thought*) rather than memorize (*word* for *word*). *Second*, in terms of leadership and vision, it is preaching that leads the way in casting a vision (p. 72) and "preachers set the climate for the congregation – that's called leadership" (p. 73). The good news of Christ's redemptive work is always at the forefront and a "gospel move" is integral to any expository message. This "gospel move" "grows organically out of the soil of every text we preach" (p. 74). *Finally*, a commitment to sound expository preaching. This conviction "will strengthen your soul to proclaim God's Word" (pp. 143-144) and provides – more authority in your sermons (Word-based), more nourishment for your people, and more variety in your sermons (pp. 146-147). He rightly concludes that "the passage is not just the trailhead for the

sermon; it is the trail!" (p. 149). Only one minor limitation, while there are footnotes, it would have been nice if the publisher had chosen to include a bibliography.

Where does *The Heart of the Preacher* belong? This book is homiletically and pastorally rich and most certainly in the preaching endeavor we must remember, "The rhythms and routines we follow to keep our hearts not only prepare us to preach, they do something even more important: they draw us closer to Christ" (p. 208). *Heart* care for the preacher is not optional, "Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life" (Prov 4:23). This excellent work by Reed is recommended to: 1) the preaching novice, for traps to avoid and paths to follow, 2) to the experienced expositor who may be in need of a *heart* check-up, and 3) every homiletics professor as a companion work to preaching and pastoral ministry. This volume fits nicely on the preacher's shelf next to Mac Brunson and James W. Bryant's *The New Guidebook for Pastors* (B&H Academic, 2007) or Derek J. Prime and Alistair Begg's *On Being a Pastor* (Moody, 2013). This is a must read for every preacher who takes his calling and his *heart* seriously.

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Swartz, David R. *Facing West: American Evangelicals in an Age of Global Christianity.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2020, pp. 322, $34.95, hardback.

David R. Swartz, Associate Professor of History at Asbury University, has written a pathbreaking study of the complex interactions between American and non-Western evangelicals since World War II. *Facing West* deserves a broad readership and will become a standard text for students and specialists studying the changing demographics of evangelical Christianity and how they have reshaped evangelical culture, theology, and politics.

Equipped with extensive archival research and interviews, *Facing West* portrays one major theater in the seismic demographic changes in Christianity in the last century. In 1900, about eighty percent of all Christians lived in North America and Europe. In 2000, the clear majority of all Christians lived outside of North America and Europe. A change so large has affected all major Christian traditions, including and especially evangelicalism. Because of their commitment to missions and decentralized structure, successive generations of evangelicals spread the gospel and planted churches in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Most of the new churches indigenized their leadership and, by the 1960s, began to significantly recontextualize Western evangelicalism for their own communities. The "global reflex" between the older, whiter, more affluent Western evangelicals and the newer, often poorer Global South evangelicals created both tensions and opportunities, which Swartz explores in detail (p. 6). Through nine chapters, each anchored in a year and city around the globe,

Swartz narrates how evangelicals navigated the distribution of power within their sprawling community, the evolving theological emphases, and ultimately the way non-Western evangelicals levelled serious critiques against Western evangelicalism beginning in the 1970s.

These critiques, as Swartz shows, often centered on the Western evangelical tendency to prioritize evangelization (sharing the gospel and winning converts) over social justice (reforming society and improving material conditions). For the leaders of American evangelicalism, including Billy Graham, social transformation happened through individual conversions, and prioritizing social justice in the work of missions was regarded as a deviation from evangelicalism. The social gospel was what evangelicalism's primary American rivals, liberal Protestants, did. Outside the context of American Christianity, however, this division between evangelization and social justice made little sense. For Christians in Peru, or Ghana, or India the plight of the poor and dispossessed was seen as inseparable from the need for individual conversion. Theologians such as Samuel Escobar and René Padilla diagnosed systemic or social sin as well as personal sin. Moreover, they claimed that Western nations, including the United States, had implemented sinful systems of racism, imperialism, colonialism, and exploitative capitalism. The legacy of Western Christian missions was thus mixed for Global South Christians—bringing the good news but also foreign domination and cultural influence.

Swartz traces the emergence of this Global South critique through the figures and events that brought evangelicals around the globe together. The major sites of interaction between American and non-American evangelicals were international conferences and within the structures of evangelical institutions including World Vision, the National Association of Evangelicals, and the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. No single event was more consequential in Swartz's telling than the Lausanne Conference on Global Evangelization, held in Switzerland in 1974. This gathering—"the most important evangelical gathering of the postwar era"—consisted of more than 3,000 evangelicals from more than 150 countries (p. 87). The conference witnessed "the chastening of America…from many quarters of the Majority World," exposing divergent understandings of evangelization and social justice developing across the globe (p. 87). It also revealed trends that would only accelerate in coming decades: the growing influence of Pentecostal and charismatic theology on Global South evangelicals and, at the same time, the continued consensus among all evangelicals around relatively conservative social attitudes on sexuality. Swartz expertly captures the interplay between these various issues, and the unexpected ways evangelicals in different settings grappled with them.

Swartz's later chapters bring the story of the "global reflex" up to the present by profiling fascinating examples of American evangelicals adapting to foreign contexts. He examines the changing work of International Justice Mission (IJM), a non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in the 1990s to combat human

trafficking. For evangelicals, this often meant a focus on sex slavery in countries such as Thailand. In its early years IJM aggressively pursued high profile sex slave breakups, becoming known in Chiang Mai, the capital of Thailand, as "Cops for Christ" and using "Rambo" tactics (p. 240). In the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, IJM aligned with (and received aid from) the US government's new focus on human trafficking. While this approach did produce some high-profile results, ultimately it proved less effective at solving the intractable systems that enabled human trafficking. Over the course of the 2000s and 2010s, IJM radically changed its tactics while keeping the same goals. "The twenty-first century social justice movement," Swartz writes of IJM, World Vision, and the Lausanne Movement, "took a more flexible and diverse shape" (p. 241). In Chiang Mai, IJM began to prioritize understanding cultural context, partnering with existing local organizations, and addressing systemic problems alongside individual bad actors.

Swartz ends *Facing West* by examining American evangelical responses to the changing demography of the United States. While Boston, and New England more generally, is one of the U.S.'s most secular regions, the growth of immigrant and non-white evangelical churches is a notable exception. The year 2045 is when demographers forecast the US will become a majority- minority nation, and the same change is already well under way in American evangelicalism. Immigrant evangelical churches founded by Korean- and Spanish-speaking congregations, among many other languages, have brought with them the same changes in priorities that Global South evangelicals brought to the Lausanne Conference in 1974. Concerned about poverty, immigrant rights, and social justice, while also socially conservative, these evangelicals "simply do not fit the archetypal conservative–progressive binary as it stands in the United States" (p. 6). They are redefining what it means to be an evangelical, even as a significant white evangelical reaction has become entrenched in the ongoing "Christian Americanism" that defined early postwar evangelicals. Today, Christian Americanists resist or seek to reverse both theological and cultural changes in evangelicalism. Ultimately, in Swartz's assessment, the contemporary moment is defined by these divergent attitudes toward the global reflex. That there is a powerful reflex, however, is not up for debate.

The most hopeful signs of change for Swartz is the growth of a "burgeoning evangelical multiculturalism" in some segments of the West (p. 283). This new evangelical milieu is theologically rigorous, socially engaged, and also a prophetic witness. In the United States, multiculturalism holds out the possibility that American evangelicals will "contextualize themselves" and rethink "the triumphalist paradigm within which they operate" (p. 299). Global evangelicals help drive home the point that, at their best, American evangelicals have also acknowledged: "modern American categories cannot contain an ancient and global faith" (p. 297).

Facing West is a crucial new entry into a growing scholarly conversation about the ways American evangelicalism has existed in international and global contexts.

Swartz's work should be compared alongside Melani McAlister's *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders: A Global History of American Evangelicals* (Oxford University Press, 2018) and Lauren Turek's *To Bring the Good News to All Nations: Evangelical Influence on Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Relations* (Cornell University Press, 2020). For students of biblical and theological studies, these works together highlight how historical contexts are critical to understanding the reading of the Bible and the production of theology. Without an appreciation of the changing shape of evangelicalism, it is difficult to accurately assess how and why evangelicals from different parts of the globe came to prioritize different aspects of their faith. Swartz's work significantly advances our understanding of these issues.

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Baldwin, Erik and Tyler Dalton McNabb. *Plantingian Religious Epistemology and World Religions: Prospects and Problems*. London, UK: Lexington Books, 2019, pp. 315, $95, hardback.

Baldwin and McNabb's *Plantingian Religious Epistemology and World Religions* is the first in-depth assessment of the prospects of extending Alvin Plantinga's strategy for defending the epistemic rationality of Christian belief to other religious contexts. To this end, the authors engage representative positions in Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Judaism, and Islam for determining which, if any, are able to sustain something at least analogous to the Plantingian religious epistemological model. This project is important in light of the well-known *Pandora's Box* objection to Plantinga's religious epistemology: some are weary of Plantinga's theory if just any proponent of any major world religion can employ it to congratulate themselves for having epistemically rational religious beliefs.

The book is structured in four parts. The first introduces and defends the main outlines of Plantinga's religious epistemology; the second evaluates select eastern religions in their capacity for integrating that epistemology; the third evaluates Judaism and Islam with respect to the same question; and the fourth engages the aforementioned Pandora's Box problem. Ultimately the authors conclude that, while the Abrahamic religions have resources for developing Plantingian-type models of rational religious belief, the Eastern religious systems will struggle more considerably. Below I will pick out just some of the key stands in the authors' arguments, raising one or two concerns where applicable, before offering a closing assessment.

Readers looking for an accessible overview of Plantinga's religious epistemology and the discussion that has evolved around it since its introduction will certainly find it in the opening chapters of the book. Here the authors also advance some new lines of argument in defense of Plantinga's views; e.g., for thinking that intelligent design is necessary for proper function, for thinking that proper function is necessary for

warrant, and for bolstering Plantinga's well-known evolutionary argument against naturalism (EAAN).

With regard to the claim that intelligent design is necessary for proper function, I am not confident the authors say enough to dislodge a sensible naturalist conception of proper function. It is important for the authors that they accomplish this, not least because they later go on to identify the failure to invoke an intelligent designer as a key reason for thinking that Daoism and Confucianism, among other religious systems, are very probably screened off from adapting Plantinga's religious epistemology.

I think that our notion of "proper function" is very likely a *thin concept*—something like a roughly drawn sketch that might legitimately be filled out in different ways. One such way captures proper function by way of intelligent design, the other by way of natural selection. And so, e.g., I do not see why we cannot say that your heart functions *properly* when it pumps blood for either (or both) of these two reasons, stated roughly: (1) God designed and created your heart to accomplish this feat; (2) a heart's accomplishing this feat is a significant part of the explanation for why your ancestors were able to survive to reproductive maturity. Neither concept to me seems entirely correct nor incorrect—but useful for theorizing for this or that purpose. Baldwin and McNabb's central objection to the naturalistic notion is that it permits the acquiring of a new design plan in cases that disagree with our intuitive judgment (for details, see pp. 31-32). But this hardly strikes me as an argument that proper function could not coherently be conceived as a natural property, so much as simply reflecting the author's prior commitment to the first way of filling in the conceptual sketch.

In part two of the book, the authors proceed first to engage theistic and non-theistic versions of Hindu religious philosophy, for determining whether these systems are in position to adapt a version of Plantingian religious epistemology. The authors conclude that, partly owing to their viewing reality as "propertyless and qualityless Brahman," and partly owing to their rejection of an intelligent designer, the non-theistic strands of Hindu religious philosophy do not look promising on this score. Theistic versions like Visistadvaita Vedanta might fare better, the authors suggest, were it not partly for the reason that the view "maintains that individual souls are modes of the divine substance of Visnu," because it is "not at all clear how modes are the sorts of things that can have design plans" (p. 105).

But can I just register that Descartes thought that beliefs, among other mental states, were *modes of thought*. But why should that fact preclude us from thinking that beliefs have design plans? I should think a theist might find it natural to say, e.g., that even if beliefs are modes of thought like Descartes envisioned, they still have design plans, and a proper function to perform—namely, to purport to represent the world as it is. Perhaps more discussion on the metaphysics of modes might have been helpful here.

In part three the authors engage the non-Christian Abrahamic religions. While the authors are quite optimistic that these systems can accommodate Plantinga's epistemology, they do list some minor reservations that may interest the reader—viz., the fact that these religions seems to support obligations to have one's religious beliefs backed by evidence and argument; and, in the case of Islam, the fact that defeaters for Islamic belief may arise in connection with their seeming inability to rule out divine deception. Finally, the authors conclude with a rather rich discussion of strategies for answering the Pandora's Box objection. This discussion is particularly important since unless this objection is turned aside then Plantinga's religious epistemology is in big trouble, especially given the author's take that all Abrahamic religions are likely able to invoke that epistemology for defending their own non-Christian religious beliefs.

Portions of the book will certainly be of interest to anyone doing research in reformed epistemology, proper functionalism, religious disagreement, and comparative religions. The book is ambitious, as the authors themselves recognize. Some may find it too ambitious and would have preferred a reduction in scope. Still it certainly represents an excellent first pass on the questions it raises, and clearly reflects very diligent scholarship. This is sure to be the starting place for anyone curious about just how far and wide is cast the net of Plantingian religious epistemology.

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Williams, Richard N. and Daniel Robinson, *Scientism: The New Orthodoxy.* New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. 208 pages. $42.95.

As anyone in the academy will admit, the natural sciences have been extraordinarily successful. That success translates over into wonderful (even if sometimes dreadful) technological innovations: the light bulb, GPS, laptops, transportation, iPhones, vaccines, atom bombs, television, the Internet, the plane, telescopes, et al. The list is long and growing. The methods of science appear to be so powerful that some thinkers begin to ask themselves the following questions. What if one *needs* the sciences to *really* know anything at all? What if other disciplines have been using methods that do not lead to knowledge? Why is it that the sciences have a marked history of measurable progress that the other disciplines do not have (and if they do have it, why does it take so long, and why is it so small and inconsequential?)? If the methods of science have been this powerful, why are not such methods used in *all* domains of inquiry? Thus, if the sciences are the only way to have *real* knowledge of the nature of reality, then other disciplines seem to have two choices: either gradually go extinct (or fade into obscurity) or adopt the methods of the sciences to remain

academically relevant. Going extinct does not seem desirable and adopting other methods seems too Faustian. What are the non-sciences (or the soft sciences) to do? Well, thinkers are rightly pushing back. This book is an example of the push-back. Each academic contribution critiques scientism from a different angle. The book is not exhaustive (indeed, it cannot be) and so does not say everything that could be said against scientism. But it is an invaluable *part* of all that could be said against it. In the book, there are nine contributors, each pointing out a different way that scientism comes up short, including an excellent introduction from Richard M. Williams. Williams provides the reader with a helpful way each contributor approaches the *new orthodoxy*.

What is this *new orthodoxy*? The first step toward critiquing an idea is to understand it. Williams' introduction provides four features of scientism: method, imperialism, hubris, and naturalism. First, method has to do with how a discipline goes about getting its knowledge. In this case, the method will be *empirical*, which is a method that confirms what one can see, hear, touch, taste, or smell. In itself, there is nothing inherently wrong with this. Things begin to go awry when one argues that if a discipline does not use the method, it is no longer scientific. The discipline thereby loses that honorific title. For example, the philosopher may partly base her belief in the existence of universals using a method of reasoning that cannot be confirmed by what one can see, hear, touch, taste, or smell. The *new orthodoxy* then disqualifies philosophy for not being scientific. And if not scientific, then not knowledge. Second, imperialism is the idea that the *new orthodoxy* become zealots and seem to go on a crusade against other disciplines to convert them to their methods (perhaps calling it a *mission of mercy*). To the extent that such disciplines adopt such methods is the extent to which that discipline survives within the University and the academic community. Third, hubris refers to the over-confidence scientism has in the power and applicability of science's method(s). It is an over-stepping of the method's boundaries, thinking that its ways can either solve all problems or show why an alleged problem (according to a non-scientific discipline) is really a chimera. For example, given scientism, a literary critic who becomes a scholar of John Milton, and spends her career interpreting *Paradise Lost*, will not have knowledge of *Paradise Lost* unless she uses the methods of science. But literary criticism is not a hard science, or even a science at all. Scientism then assumes that because literary criticism is not scientific, it is therefore not knowledge nor could it be objective. Finally, naturalism is the idea that there is nothing supernatural. There is no God, gods, spirits, ghosts, or anything outside space-time and whatever space-time contains. It will only make sense, then, for the methods of science to go along with such a picture, and investigate the nature of reality with that naturalistic backdrop in mind. Why is scientism called the *new orthodoxy?* According to Williams, it is because the view has a new air about it. It is not *mere* academic disagreement. It is a monopolistic claim. The very weapons of disagreement are (if not scientific) rendered impotent, and the very success of its

method is itself reason to endorse its naturalism. It therefore threatens to colonize the academy with its methods, and force all the disciplines to subscribe to naturalism. Fortunately, scientism is seriously flawed.

The eight contributors provide the opportunity to touch on eight different ways to attack scientism (the book itself provides much more detail and many more *ways*). Daniel Robinson makes a case that scientific explanation and scientism do not sit well together. A scientific explanation involves reasoning from a set of data to a best explanation of that data. For example, suppose the car is not starting. Is the best explanation that there is something wrong with the car's engine, or is it that aliens tinkered with the engine? It would certainly seem outlandish to prefer the alien-explanation over the engine-explanation; the latter explanation is simpler, it takes into account more of what we already know (and so on). Scientists use the same method on a much larger (or a much smaller) scale. But here is the issue. What assurance does scientism have that such reasoning will not go against naturalism? To keep it from doing this, scientism will have to frontload such reasoning with a method that automatically commits itself to naturalism. If it does this, scientism itself is not purely scientific anymore; the frontloading becomes a philosophical add-on. It would be like affirming the unintelligibility of the English language in the English language. The affirmation is cutting one off from what it wants to affirm; the frontloading cuts scientism off from its claim to be purely scientific.

Lawrence Principe calls attention to the idea that science is more of a friend to religion than it is to scientism. This is not good for scientism, which will want to ally itself with science and against religion. Principe points out that history shows science growing out of a religious context. Many scientists were religious. It may look like science and religion are at odds now. But they were not adversaries when science began. That did not come until later. Principe argues that the reason it came later was because the times had changed. The religious began to see their religion as threatened by science; and scientists began to see that religion was in the way of its progress. As science began to change the way we understand the world, it was but a short step to thinking that science should be the only way to know anything at all, with religious people stuck in the mud. This is a hasty generalization. It could also be that science and religion get along with each other just fine, and that the scientist and the religious began to view science and religion in a way that doesn't do justice to the way science and religion related to each other in history.

Bastiaan van Fraasen argues that scientism is incompatible with empiricism. Remember that scientism's method of getting knowledge is empirical. But it also believes that naturalism follows from empiricism. What if empiricism does not necessarily lead to naturalism? What if empiricism leads to non-naturalism? What if the very method that scientism relies on leads to the conclusion that scientism is false? This is very easily seen if you remember the philosopher George Berkeley. Berkeley was an empiricist, but he was not a naturalist! He believed that the world

was a collection of ideas divinely communicated, i.e., mind-dependent where the mind is an immaterial substance that communicates ideas.

P. M. S. Hacker compliments Robinson in that it is a further reason to think that scientism and scientific explanation do not go together. Where Robinson talk about frontloading reasoning to the best explanation, Hacker makes the case that successful scientific explanations cannot go to support a metaphysic. Hacker works from within the growing discipline of cognitive neuroscience. Thinking goes on all the time. Thinking involves neurons. Cognitive neuroscience studies what goes when we think, and now such neurons are related to thinking. Consider the question of whether or not we have free will, a question that has been studied by philosophers for centuries. If such neuroscientists gave a scientific explanation for why the neurons in our brain are the way they are, and then says that such an explanation settles the metaphysical issue of whether or not we have free will, that is scientism. It is scientism because it oversteps science's boundaries. The nature of scientific explanation does not have anything to do with demonstrating a metaphysic. That is the job of philosophers.

Richard Swinburne's arguments demonstrate that because scientism implies naturalism, and naturalism implies determinism, and determinism is false, it follows that scientism is false. Determinism is the idea that there is no free will. If naturalism is true, it seems that humans are physical objects. If humans are physical objects, then they are subject to the laws of nature. If the laws of nature determine everything, it follows that humans are determined to act as they do. But there seems to be something that naturalism cannot account for. For example, a neuroscientist cannot open up my brain and observe my pain. One has privileged access to one's pain. It is private. The neuroscientist can find out about the pain by asking. Merely looking at neurons will not do the trick. Such private properties indicate that humans not only physical objects, since physical objects have all and only those properties that are public, open to view, able to be seen and documented by the neuroscientist. If humans are not only physical objects, then the laws of nature do not determine their actions, which means that determinism is false. If determinism is false, then naturalism is false. If naturalism is false, then scientism is false.

Roger Scruton shows that scientism is incompatible with the methods of the Humanities. One of the methods involved in the Humanities is an appeal to first-person, subjective experience. This harkens back to what Swinburne was talking about regarding the irreducible reality of private properties: only the person in pain knows they are in pain. In the Humanities, one discovers cinema, music, literature, poetry, philosophy, history, literary criticism, etc. Take Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* or Dante's *The Divine Comedy* or Soren Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* or Thucydides' *The History of the Peloponnesian War* or C.S. Lewis' *A Preface to Paradise Lost* or Mozart's *Don Giovanni* or Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. Scruton would say that such works of art, crafted by the private, subjective, first-person point of view of the artist bring about a world that science cannot get

to with its methods. Such beauty and insight gets at something real and worthwhile about the human condition. They allow us to vicariously experience transcendence, misery, elation, despair, and the seemingly unfathomable range of human experience and emotion. The methods of science exclude this. If scientism will only allow such methods, it will cut the human race off from this. Culture itself will be cut off. This is, once again, science overstepping its boundaries and becoming scientism.

Kenneth Schaffner argues that scientism is incompatible with neuroethics. Neuroethics studies the ethics of neuroscience, and how neuroscience itself is relevant to ethics. Scientism is incompatible with neuroethics because it depends on qualitative states of subjects who have phenomenal experiences and are able to access those experiences in a way that requires a first-person consciousness.

James Smith gives reason to think that scientism frames the entire debate about religion and science wrongly. This serves as a nice compliment to Principe's chapter. Smith argues that science is not sitting outside all contexts as a tribunal. It does not get to judge every other discipline while remaining itself unjudged, or even unjudgable. It is not that we have Nature on the one hand, discovered by science, and Religion on the other hand, which constitutes culture. Smith tells us that Science itself is a culture and so to pit Religion against Science is to pit one culture against another culture. Reframed in this way, one can see that rather than seeing the issue in terms of Nature vs. Culture, perhaps one could see how the different cultures reveal Nature in its own way. For example, science could tell us about the physics of nature; religion could tell us about the metaphysics, or even the origin, of Nature. Science might tell us about the evolution of Nature, whereas religion might interpret the meaning of such an evolution as having this or that intelligent guidance, or this or that purpose or *telos*.

The New Orthodoxy exposes the shortcomings of a scientistic naturalism of which they are legion. Addressed from several disciplinary perspectives and from a sampling of some of the most important interdisciplinary scholars in the world, all who are in the humanities and in the sciences will benefit from reading this fine collection. Graduate students will also find a useful, albeit technical, survey of the issues concerning scientism. The present text would be a useful advanced text in undergraduate and graduate philosophy, humanities on topics of philosophy of science and theology and science.

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Kinghorn, Kevin (with Stephen Travis). ***But What About God's Wrath? The Compelling Love Story of Divine Anger.*** **Downer's Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019, pp. 157, $18.**

Kevin Kinghorn (DPhil, Oxford) is Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Asbury Theological Seminary. He has authored *The Decision of Faith: Can Christian Beliefs Be Freely Chosen?* (T&T Clark, 2005) and *A Framework for the Good* (Notre Dame, 2016) along with numerous articles and book chapters. While this book is written by Kinghorn, he acknowledges extensive dependence on the Biblical exegesis work of Stephen Travis (PhD, Cambridge), which is why Travis is referenced on the title page.

The issue of God's wrath is a practical point of contention in contemporary theology, as it has been throughout the history of Christian theology. In *But What About God's Wrath?* Kinghorn seeks to defend the thesis that God's wrath is a pattern of action of God "pressing on us the truth" of our sinfulness rooted in his love for all humanity (see p. 92). Kinghorn attempts to accomplish this in two ways. First, he provides a philosophical argument beginning with biblically and philosophically reasonable theological commitments for the conclusion that "God's wrath is entirely an expression of God's love, in specific contexts" (p. 2). Second, drawing on the work of Stephen Travis, he attempts to show how this thesis is supported by an accurate reading of the biblical texts.

Kinghorn begins by arguing that God's anger/wrath (he uses the terms interchangeably), while often accompanied by emotion, cannot be explained fully in terms of emotion; rather, God's wrath should be understood as a pattern of action with a particular purpose (Ch. 1). He then turns his attention to the nature of God, arguing that God is *essentially* loving, while the divine attributes of justice, holiness, and wrath are not essential to God (Ch. 2). He defines God's love as "*benevolence:* a seeking of others' well-being, a seeking of their fullness of life" (p. 26). From the truth that God is essentially loving, Kinghorn argues that God desires the well-being of every person, and that all his actions toward people will be benevolent (Ch. 3). From the premise that God acts benevolently toward all, Kinghorn proceeds to argue that God's concern for his glory, holiness, and justice are never at odds with his benevolence (Ch. 4). As a key aspect of the argument of Chapter 4, Kinghorn contends that justice is an expression of God's benevolence.

With these conclusions in place, Kinghorn returns to the subject of God's wrath (Ch. 5), arguing that God's wrath is the pattern of God's action of "pressing on us truths about ourselves" and the "kinds of truths about ourselves at issue here are truths about how we have acted sinfully toward others," (p. 92) others here including God. This process can be painful, but it is for our own good and so it is benevolent. Kinghorn argues that God's wrath is appropriate because humans are particularly prone to avoid acknowledging their sins (Ch. 6). He then addresses an objection to

his view, namely, that this concept of divine wrath is not severe enough to capture the biblical data. He argues that God's revealing the truth of human sin and unrepentance will cause severe suffering for those who do not respond with repentance, suffering that is appropriately described by the strong (though often analogical/metaphorical) scriptural language about divine wrath (Ch. 7).

In his final chapter (Ch. 8), Kinghorn addresses two issues. First, he argues that God's wrath is intended to lead to repentance; so, whether a human experiences God's action of pressing the truth of one's sin on oneself as continued wrath or as a catalyst for sanctification is up to the individual human. Second, he addresses the question of God's eternal wrath: if wrath is a catalyst for change, then how can we make sense of God's wrath after death when there's no possibility of repentance? His analysis here turns on a distinction. Those in hell do not experience God persisting in pressing the truth about their sin on them, and so, in that sense, do not experience God's wrath eternally. But they do get the outcome of rejecting God: eternal separation from God and all that is good, so "there is a clear sense in which they can be described as having eternally placed themselves under God's wrath" (p. 145).

Kinghorn's book has a number of strengths. One particular strength is the serious interaction with the particularities of Scripture. There are well over 250 entries in the Scripture index of the book, and I was impressed by the analysis of these texts in terms of the account of wrath that Kinghorn develops. As mentioned, Kinghorn acknowledges his dependence on the detailed biblical commentary on passages dealing with wrath provided by his colleague Stephen Travis, and Kinghorn has done a good job with explaining this material as he develops his philosophical argument. Probably the best example of this is the treatment of Romans 9, where Kinghorn argues that the proper understanding of this passage rests on understanding that it "is part of Paul's larger story of the complementary roles that Israel and the Gentiles are playing in God's grand plan of reconciling the world to himself" (p. 58).

Kinghorn also winsomely explains how God's glory, holiness, and justice are not at odds with divine love. One helpful argument Kinghorn gives on this score is that many of the attempts to pit holiness or justice against divine love assume that love apart from considerations of holiness and justice leads to permissiveness. But Kinghorn notes that love itself—as a concern for the well-being of the beloved—avoids the excesses of permissiveness without needing a motivation outside of the love itself (see pp. 69-79)

There are, however, some problems with Kinghorn's analysis. My first concern is the lack of interaction with the views of others in the Christian tradition, whether for or against Kinghorn's thesis. I have a colleague who, whenever we discuss a particular theological view, invariably asks, "Who in Christian history has held this view?" This is a good sentiment to have when doing theology; for, having a novel view in Christian theology is a *pro tanto* reason against it. While Kinghorn does not need to *focus* on the views of theologians through the centuries (the book is not a text

of historical theology), it would have been helpful for his case to interact with *some* significant figures from the Christian tradition. One important reason would be to point out to his readers that his thesis is not novel.

A second reason for interacting with the views of significant Christian theologians connects with another concern I have about this book. Kinghorn, for most of the book, provides little specific criticism of the position he defends. With the exception of his argument that love is not at odds with justice, where he interacts with arguments from Emil Brunner and Arthur Holmes (pp. 72-77), there is little interaction with clearly stated objections to Kinghorn's thesis and supporting arguments from other theologians or philosophers. By interacting with significant figures for Church history who disagree, he would have strengthened the case for his position.

This connects with another concern I have. Kinghorn's lack of interaction with opposing positions is significant for evaluating a key premise in his argument. Fundamental to Kinghorn's argument that God is benevolent toward all (Ch. 3) is his claim that the primary biblical model for describing divine-human relationships is God as father, and that "an earthly father would not merit the description *loving* if he ceased at any point to have his child's long-term well-being as an ultimate goal" (p. 47). But in order for this to support his conclusion that God acts benevolently toward everyone, the language of Scripture must refer to God as father of everyone. This, however, is a controversial claim. To pick just one example, while J. Gresham Machen acknowledged that *some* New Testament references indicate God can be conceived of as father of all people on the basis of God's being the creator and sustainer of all, he points out that "[o]rdinarily the lofty term 'Father' is used to describe a relationship of a far more intimate kind, the relationship in which God stands to the company of the redeemed" (*Christianity and Liberalism,* 1923 [reprint Eerdmans, 2009], p. 53). Simply assuming that the biblical language about God as father captures analogically his relationship with all people is a major problem for this position, which serves as a significant plank for Kinghorn's argument about God's wrath. (To be clear, I believe Kinghorn has sufficient philosophical and theological grounds to affirm universal benevolence without appealing to this biblical metaphor.)

One final issue: Key to Kinghorn's argument that divine wrath is not an emotion is that emotions are non-rational. He claims "the very nature of emotions . . . is that they propel us toward action without us having to make any rational judgments at all" (p. 20), and since God's activity is always intentional, we cannot understand divine wrath as an emotion. In this argument, Kinghorn assumes a non-cognitive account of emotions. While this may be the traditional view of emotions, there are many contemporary accounts that understand emotions as cognitive and evaluative (I think of the account of Robert Roberts or Robert Solomon). Kinghorn's lack of interaction with this view weakens his case for the nature of divine wrath.

With these problems noted, I still think this book serves as a good lay-level presentation of an argument that God's wrath should not be pitted against God's

love, but rather should be seen as an expression of God's love for all people. I take Kinghorn's argument to be fundamentally sound, and I see this position on God's wrath as fundamental for a grasp of who God is, so I commend this book for undergraduate theology courses and to pastors and thoughtful lay Christians.

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De Florio, Ciro and Aldo Friderio. *Divine Omniscience and Human Free Will: A Logical and Metaphysical Analysis.* Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Frontiers in Philosophy of Religion, 2019, pp. 264, $80, Hardcover.

The problem of divine foreknowledge and human free will exists at the impasse of two seemingly independent, yet, arguably mutually exclusive propositions: that God has foreknowledge of future contingents and that human beings possess libertarian free will. Roughly stated, if God knows at some past time (say, the creation of the world) that tomorrow I will drink coffee for breakfast, then, when tomorrow arrives, it seems that I am not free to do anything other than drink coffee (call this the foreknowledge dilemma).

In their recently co-authored book, *Divine Omniscience and Human Free Will*, philosophers Ciro De Florio and Aldo Frigerio highlight an often overlooked aspect of the foreknowledge dilemma, namely, the metaphysics of time, arguing that solutions to the problem that do not account for the nature of time often are found wanting. Thus, the authors' *primary* goal is not to provide a solution to the problem; rather it is to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the most common solutions in light of differing metaphysics of time.

The book consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 (The Battle for Free Will) and Chapter 2 (Metaphysics and Logic of Time) provide a comprehensive layout of the foreknowledge dilemma, as well as a detailed layout of the logical and metaphysical framework the authors use to evaluate various solutions to the problem. Specifically, as it relates to the metaphysics, the authors define and detail the interplay between different ontologies (presentism, eternalism, growing block, and shrinking block), dynamics (A-theory and B-Theory), and topologies (open and closed universe) of time, as well as the underlying temporal logic of each view.

In Chapter 3, De Florio and Frigerio highlight two prominent revisionary solutions (what the authors call "extreme measures") – approaches that either re-define the traditional understanding of omniscience as lacking knowledge of the future or that re-define the notion of free will as one that lacks the ability to do otherwise – specifically, open theism and theological compatibilism, respectively. As it relates to Open Theism, the authors point out that, "From a conceptual point of view, the theses of Open Theism are coherent…The difficulties of Open Theism are…more theological than philosophical: is the concept of God advocated by the

open theists really in accordance with the God of the Bible?" (p. 92) On the other end of the spectrum, the authors argue that theological compatibilism is problematic, both philosophically (having to address the same issues faced by non-theological compatibilism) and theologically (specifically, as it relates to the loss of the free will defense for the problem of evil) (pp. 110-11).

Three moderate solutions are analyzed in chapters 4, 5, and 6: Ockhamism, Molinism, and the Timeless Solution, respectively. Methodologically, in order to parse out the more promising solutions from the problematic ones, De Florio and Frigerio place each position within differing temporal ontologies, dynamics and topologies, resulting in something akin to a cost-benefit analysis of each view. Somewhat surprisingly (and convincingly), the authors argue that all three views better fit within an eternalist framework. Some of the reasoning motivating this conclusion relates to the grounding problem: if, in order for a proposition to be true, there must exist something that makes it true, then what makes future contingents true?

The authors argue, for example, that for the presentist Ockhamist, "What is problematic is the combination of an open future with the statement that the future does not exist: in this situation, there is no ground for future truths" (p. 151). For the Ockhamist who holds to eternalism, the problem is resolved due to the fact that the future is on par ontologically with the past and the present (and, as a result, there is a grounding for future truths). This problem is amplified for the Molinist, where God not only knows future truths, but also the truth of future conditionals. De Florio and Frigerio argue that, even within an eternalist framework where past, present and the actual future truths can be grounded, "No past present or future states of affairs can be called for in order to ground the truth of [future conditionals]" (p. 190). This is a problem for the Molinist that the authors show is hard to resolve even on different metaphysical interpretations of time.

Regarding the Timeless solution to the foreknowledge dilemma, the authors argue that this view, again, fits well in an eternalist framework because "a timeless God can observe the entire temporal series and know the outcomes of free human decisions" (p. 256). In turn, there is no grounding problem for the advocate of the timeless solution.

One wonders why the authors do not address the possible solution of grounding the truth-makers of future contingents in the mind of God. This seems like a reasonable approach that some philosophers have taken and, if successful, eliminates many (if not all) of the difficulties of integrating solutions to the foreknowledge dilemma with the metaphysics of time. That said, the problem of divine foreknowledge and human free will lies at the intersection of a number of different disciplines, making it seemingly impossible for one book to cover every related issue.

De Florio and Frigerio conclude the book by putting forth a novel solution to the foreknowledge dilemma that combines a non-standard A-theory with a Timeless God, a view they call Perspectival Fragmentalism (see, pp. 240-256) Their solution

integrates Fragmentalism – the view that reality is fragmented, with each fragment "contain[ing] a privileged time (the present of that fragment), which determines the tense facts of that fragment" (p. 254) – with a perspectival semantics, where the indeterminacy of future tensed facts depends "not only on the instant at which it is evaluated but also on the perspective from which it is evaluated" (pp. 242-243). On Fragmentalism, neutrality (the thesis that there exists no privileged time) is affirmed, which distinguishes it from conventional A-theories.

With this dynamic of time and semantical framework in place, "a timeless God can be omniscient, since He can retain a constant epistemic relationship with all of the fragments, thus knowing all the propositions that are true in them" (p. 255). For instance, say at time t_1 I am deciding between choosing coffee or tea with my breakfast. At t_1 my decision is indeterminate. If, at t_2, I choose coffee, my action becomes determined. A timeless God can know from the perspective of the configuration of the world at t_1 (fragment t_1) that my decision is indeterminate and, at the same time, know from the perspective of the configuration of the world at t_2 that I chose coffee.

De Florio and Frigerio's model arguably address the foreknowledge dilemma given that indeterminacy (and free will) is retained, along with God's foreknowledge of future contingents (all past, present and future fragments exist, similar to an eternalist ontology). In turn, the grounding problem is also impotent. That said, the authors move fairly quickly through their model, making it difficult at times to parse out some of the relevant nuances. Fragmentalism is a rather esoteric position, and its assimilation with perspectival semantics and a Timeless God – for a sufficient representation – to my mind requires more than the 15 or so pages the authors devote to the topic.

This point aside, it is hard to express the depth and intellectual rigor De Florio and Frigerio devote to their analysis of the problem of divine foreknowledge and human free will (especially in a short book review). Their work provides both the philosophical and theological communities with a crucial resource that will certainly aid future theories in resolving the foreknowledge dilemma. With a bit of work, the logical and metaphysical analysis done by De Florio and Frigerio allow the reader to grasp both the nature of the foreknowledge dilemma and the adequacy of the available solutions, better than any single text within the cannon of literature devoted to the topic.

Students in biblical and theological studies who are looking to get a better grasp on the problem of divine foreknowledge and human free will more specifically, but also, more broadly, the exchange between temporal logical, the metaphysics of time, and the nature God, will find this book to be a valuable resource. One point that De Florio and Frigerio make clear and convincing: *any* solution to the foreknowledge dilemma needs to account for the nature of time. Consequently, the authors provide students with a proper framework to serve as a genesis for such an exploration.

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